

MAPPING CREATIVE RECOVERY

SANA MURRANI AND IOANA POPOVICI



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Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who fled conflict and other adversities in their homelands are facing challenging times here in the UK as they are trying to integrate and build a new life. Being uprooted from one's home and community is not easy - especially when one is faced with new struggles in life around navigating the UK Migration System, searching for adequate housing, learning a new language and most importantly, defining one's existence again in this world amongst other concerns.

Creative Recovery focuses on the narrative that the media misses from those who show resilience and courage as they fled war-torn countries and others suffering from conflict. A narrative that visually represents displaced people's cultures and the way they feel it is appropriate to remember their homes and homelands. Through a creative participatory action research process and deep mapping, the project aimed to answer important and challenging questions like: Where is home? And, What is home to you? These questions were amplified for all those who have crossed the borders into Europe from the Middle East and Africa in recent years. While such questions have dominated anthropological and sociological research, they have rarely been answered visually and spatially. *Creative Recovery* focused primarily on celebrating displaced people's resilience and their striving to build an inclusive and just society while contributing to their wellbeing as they heal from their traumas. To that effect, the project developed its series of workshops and deep mapping process in light of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those championing reducing inequalities (SDG 10), making cities inclusive, resilient and sustainable (SDG

11) and promoting the wellbeing (SDG 3) of those displaced.

Funded by the European Cultural Foundation and in partnership with the British Red Cross, Associate Professor Dr Sana Murrani worked alongside Photojournalist Car-ey Marks and 12 refugees and asylum seekers in the Southwest of England on a participatory action research project that visualises the meaning of 'home' for the 12 protagonists. Through a series of 9 workshops over 9 months, the team mapped familiar journeys participants took as part of their everyday life in their homelands. These journeys were overlaid with memories and objects from home and their childhood. Old photographs, personal belongings, language, and storytelling were used as props that triggered conversations. Funded by the Sustainable Earth Institute as part of the Creative Associate Scheme of 2019, the photojournalist documented the process of the workshops that revealed participants beyond their 'displaced' statuses. The work was exhibited as part of Refugee Week 2019 and appeared on BBC Spotlight Southwest as well as on local radio channels.

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INTRODUCTION



Creative Recovery:

Mapping Refugees' Memories of Home as Heritage is a refugee-focused pilot project launched in Plymouth at the initiative of Associate Professor Dr Sana Murrani, founder of the Displacement Studies Research Network at the University of Plymouth. The project was one of just 31 awarded a grant from the European Cultural Foundation's Courageous Citizens 2018 programme, out of more than 500 applications from across the world. Through a creative participatory action research methodology, the project shifts the focus onto refugees as creative agents in the process of recovery after trauma and displacement, enabling them to become co-researchers and co-producers of vibrant and revelatory representations of their original home environments, and to explore how valued aspects of this material, spatial and social heritage can be revitalised as they integrate within new communities.

The project has developed a highly distinctive and innovative approach to mapping refugees' memories of making-home, bringing to light: their exceptional awareness of transnational connections; related skills in digital social media; and a complex and instantaneous (responding to continuous disruption) understanding of what it would take to make themselves truly at home again. Through a series of workshops, the refugees have been introduced to the potential of experimental, deep mapping techniques (geographical, memory, narratives and stories, objects), which have provided a particularly appropriate and stimulating focus for capturing their memories of home.

- Project participants/funders:
- Principal investigator: Associate Professor Dr Sana Murrani
- Co-researchers/creators: Arzu (Azerbaijan), Basma (Iraq), Deborah (Nigeria), Honey (Pakistan), Isatta (Sierra Leone), Maria (Honduras), Mahmoud (Syria), Mohammed (Palestine), Tarig (Sudan), Trisha (Pakistan), Waleed (Sudan), Zahra (Sri Lanka).
- Research mentor: Professor Dr Michael Punt
- Researcher: Dr Helen Lloyd, Lecturer in Psychology and Refugee Health and Wellbeing Social Worker
- Research Assistants: Dr Ioana Popovici, Jordan Beh, Richard Wells, and Dr Joanna Griffin
- Creative Associates: Carey Marks; Sustainable Earth Institute (2019)
- Project funders: European Cultural Foundation (ECF); Sustainable Earth Institute
- Project partner: British Red Cross

Conflict across the Middle East and Africa has largely driven the recent rise in the number of forcibly displaced people. For those people, the loss of homes, communities and sense of belonging is nostalgic as well as material. Mapping these sites of memory mobilises collective spatial heritage that has been displaced and currently lacks representation and expression. Refugees face daunting personal and collective challenges when they are forced to leave their homes. Responsive and adaptive initiatives, and related research and development, have tended to focus on surviving

the immediate crises of transit. Yet their struggles have a much longer, and equally courageous but neglected dimension - if they are to build a new many-sided life, maintaining their cultural identities, yet become full citizens of their destination communities.

The research project questions:

How can refugees make new homes which draw upon the culture of the material, spatial and social environments from which they have been displaced, recovering and re-inventing their heritage in a very different context?

The project has pioneered creative ways of addressing this question by:

- enabling refugees to gain confidence and develop skills, especially through deep mapping;
- recovering, representing and expressing publicly, locally, and domestically the varieties of making-home memories and heritage which are most meaningful to them;
- encouraging refugees to consider how their heritage can contribute to the vitality of the wider neighbourhood;
- fostering mutual aid and interests between different refugee groups, and with local community networks;
- demonstrating to the wider community how refugees can enrich the diversity of a shared, often informal, cultural life, through an exhibition, related publications, and online and media coverage.

Creative Recovery acts as a catalyst for unpacking the spatial manifestations of making-home practices and social communities of refugees' former lives, before they became displaced. Through a series of innovative deep mapping of photographic memories and journeys that displaced people have of their homelands, we put together an exhibition of the work in the city of Plymouth (UK). The project revealed the informal and intangible heritage of the everyday of refugees. These maps of former homes and communities were co-produced with refugees through a series of workshops in partnership with British Red Cross. The purpose of the project was to pilot an innovative and direct way for refugees and their destination communities to recognise the differences and similarities that will need to be absorbed into a coherent social whole.

The project sits within the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) cluster of initiatives focused on nurturing the social integration and wellbeing of refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers – such as *Displaced in Media*. It is supported by the Displacement Studies Research Network (DSRN), a global interdisciplinary research community founded by Plymouth University's Associate Professor Dr Sana Murrani, through world-wide academic links and the sharing of knowledge and methodologies. The initiative promotes the involvement of educational establishments in research and activism with a focus on displacement and the creativity and wellbeing of those who have been displaced.



The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) resettlement handbook *defines Integration* as: “A mutual, dynamic, multifaceted and on-going process. From a refugee perspective, integration requires a **preparedness** to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one’s own cultural identity. From the point of view of the host society, it requires a **willingness** for communities to be welcoming and responsive to refugees and for public institutions to meet the needs of a diverse population.”

Recent studies have highlighted the imbalance between the high standard expected for the immediate social integration of refugees and the lack of policies and institutional frameworks of support required for: recovery from trauma (physical and mental health); cultural adjustment; balanced evaluation of existing and needed skills for employment; stability and quality in housing/accommodation to support recovery and promote social integration. Most of the frameworks of support are run from an economic, utilitarian and legal standpoint, predominantly by insufficiently diverse groups of policy-makers, resulting in the exclusion of: women’s voices, alongside their essential contribution to social integration; the socio-cultural aspects of housing – fostering community, gradual transition to a blended cultural environment; refugees’ professional backgrounds and ability to contribute (in particular, the reduction of women to childcare and domestic labour). Through the series of workshops and discussions with the 12 participants, it was apparent that the lack of cultural adjustment did not only exist between the displaced and the host community, but also between the displaced and other displaced people too. One participant, an asylum seeker who shares rented accommodation with four individuals, identifies that

not only does he need to grapple with the complexities of integrating within the local community as he navigates the UK asylum system, but he also has to define new ways to help him understand how to live with four other asylum seekers who are strangers to him, each coming from a different part of the world.

Refugees are often expected to integrate into their host countries without a deeper understanding of their heritage and needs regarding home practices. In 2000 when 2% of the Plymouth population were of BAME and other mixed backgrounds, the Home Office designated Plymouth as a dispersal centre for asylum seekers in the UK. By 2011, this percentage had risen to over 14% and is still rising. This shift has greatly impacted local communities that have found it difficult to adjust; especially those that are deprived which are most likely to have a high percentage of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. The Southwest of England has been further marginalised by government funding cuts and scarcity of provision addressing issues of migration and integration. This rapid, poorly resourced increase in ethnic diversity has greatly impacted many already low-income local communities in a region unaccustomed to immigration. Negative attitudes to immigrants are therefore widespread, occasionally extending to hate crimes, and exacerbating the challenges of recovering a settled sense of belonging through a flourishing home life that reflects their cultural heritage. These conditions are not unique to the UK, they are in line with EU context, as reflected in the Displaced in Media report.

Despite the bleak image of deprivation, Plymouth City Council together with a num-

ber of refugee and asylum seeker support charities and NGOs such as the British Red Cross, work tirelessly to provide a welcoming city which has of late been designated as a City of Sanctuary. At the same time, the University of Plymouth provides support for the city by striving to become the University of Sanctuary. This status will inevitably improve services and support mechanisms, as well as provide funding for displaced people to start local initiatives.

*“The **UK** has one of the **largest immigration detention systems** in Europe”*

In the UK, the dispersal system is largely isolationist, with prolonged periods spent in dispersal centres, and even longer periods of legal uncertainty until status resolution. This protracted legal uncertainty is due to central government’s lack of transparency and adequate support of local authorities, resulting in limited local authority engagement in the settlement process. The UK’s immigration housing (COMPASS housing contracts) is monopolised by three companies, of which only one has experience in the provision of asylum accommodation.

“Although the system of three Providers looks straightforward on the surface, below it lies a complex network of contractors, sub-contractors and hundreds of private landlords.”

According to the Asylum Accommodation 2016-2017 report, housing conditions are: often inadequate (people housed in 19-day temporary accommodation long-

term whilst their cases are processed); subject to frequent relocations and further displacements; unsafe and inadequate for vulnerable persons, children (safeguarding), and women, mothers and expectant mothers (e.g. lack of facilities for children, women-only spaces, etc.). These conditions are not conducive to the beginning of recovery from trauma, or the adaptation of spatial making-home practices needed for the refugees to begin engaging in the self-affirmation work required for social integration and building community links. Most of these conditions have been confirmed by the participants in this project and in particular those who are asylum seekers awaiting refugee status. This report highlights four concerns based on the overall literature and legislation reviews, and findings of the COMPASS reports:



- Lack of opportunity for the migrant and refugee community to engage in media discourse and put forward their own narratives of personhood, community, spatial practices of their homelands;
- Enduring problems within the dispersal and settlement system, particularly at a central government level:
 - Problems with COMPASS contracts for the provision of asylum accommodation, resulting in “substandard, unsanitary or unsafe conditions”, due to the lack of oversight on a local level, clustering, uneven dispersal, inequity, pressure on local authorities and communities, without the benefit of consultation, decision-making power, or adequate funding and support.
 - COMPASS replacement process – undertaken at a central government level, again without adequate consultation and involvement of local authorities resulting in “dispersal authorities to consider withdrawal from the dispersal scheme” due to risks of “undermining the support and consent of local communities”.
- Expectation of quick and seamless social integration in the absence of adequate support frameworks (Home Office, local authorities) and a more nuanced understanding of housing needs and cultural practices (on three levels: refugees understanding and being able to articulate and express what constitutes positive spatial practice in terms of domesticity and community integration;

local authorities providing generic, bare-minimum shelter-housing with no differentiation according to cultural needs, and generally located in low-income, problematic urban areas; local population is generally resistant to refugee integration due to lack of information, media mis-representation, etc.).

Creative Recovery intentionally puts a spotlight on participants as creative agents empowered to gain control over their own representation by exploring markers of identity. The project followed a creative participatory action research (PAR) method of co-production and co-design with the participants, who took a leading role in constructing memories of home through maps, drawings, and personal photographs. As an imagination-releasing process, mapping oscillates between the acts of remembering, creating and archiving. Departing from Michel de Certeau's 'Spatial Stories', the maps traced and reframed the spatial stories of our participants' memories of their making-home practices. Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge in their *Rethinking Maps* assert that maps are contingent, relational, and fleeting, produced while negotiating and re-territorialising with space and time. *Creative Recovery* utilised participatory informal deep mapping as a method for writing history and revealing intangible heritage to enable us to make sense of the future. The act of mapping facilitated the creation of alternative spaces of memory, or memoryscapes, that provide a valuable method of reclaiming a sense of recovery, integration and making-home in diaspora.

3 THE PROCESS

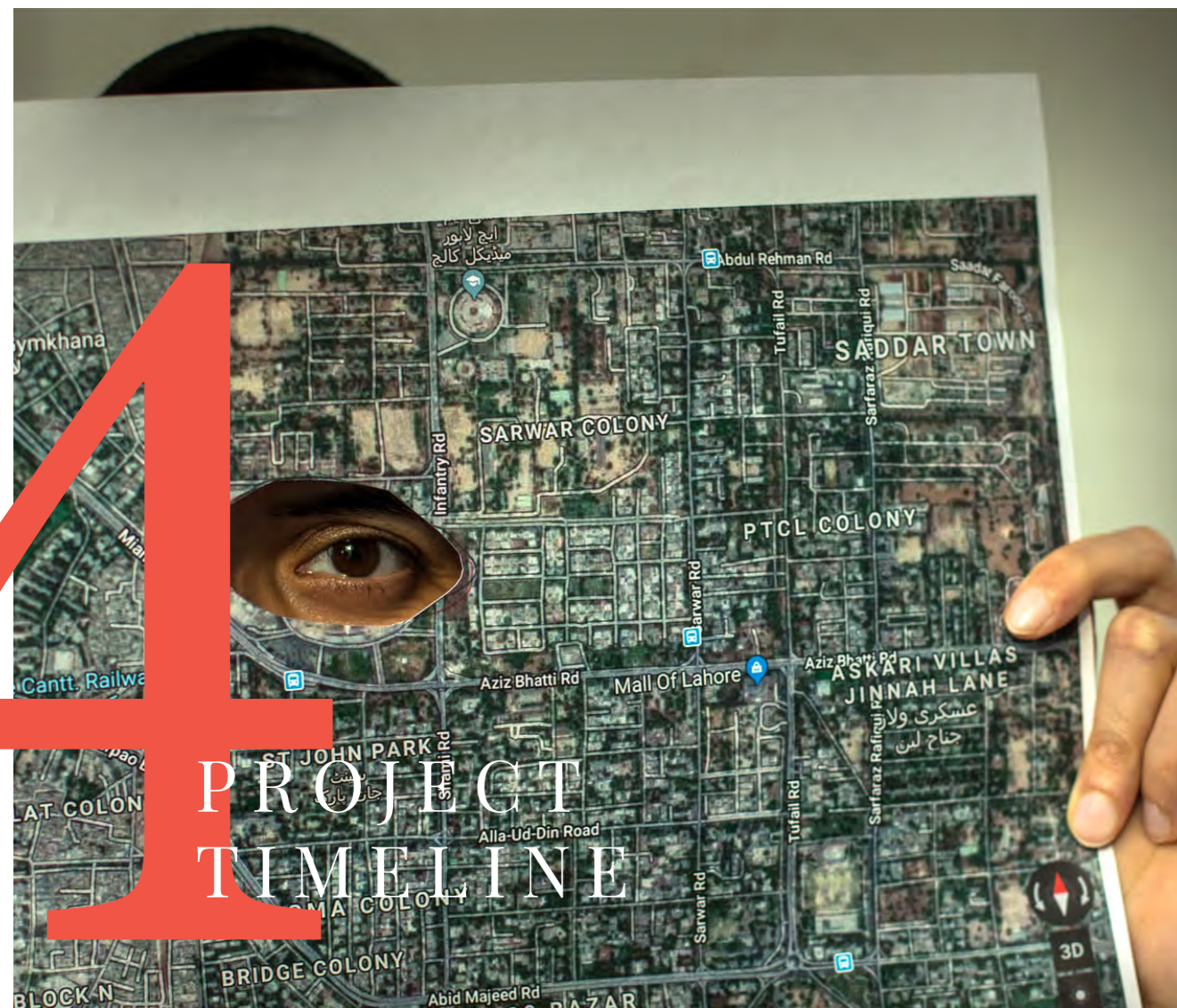




The participants were equal partners in the design and the making of the project, leading and producing it with the researchers. Through 1:1 meetings and creative group workshops (maps, drawings, photographs, films, and scans of other personal objects) they shared recollections, as well as objects like diaries, photos and home videos of everyday life in their country of origin. With this raw material, and map making training facilitated by the researchers, the participants took the leading role in creating the exhibits that were celebrated as part of UK National Refugee Week through *Refugees Mapping Memories. An Exhibition of Creative Recovery*. These creative outputs ranged from drawings and other visual material, to layered maps of former journeys participants took in their daily lives in their homelands.

The knowledge network and infrastructure generated through and around the project has had the aim to step outside the bounds of academic research to create partnerships with the displaced communities, focused on resilience and social integration. In addition to the results of collaborative research, a significant part of this project, which sits within the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) cluster of initiatives, was passing on a set of tools and giving a voice to marginalised people in society. Through the involvement of the European Cultural Foundation, British Red Cross, Sustainable Earth Institute, University of Plymouth, the international research community Displacement Studies Research Network, refugee-led initiatives such as the Give Back Project, as well as the local Plymouth community, the project has created a safe and visible platform for members of the migrant and refugee community to share their heritage and gain new skills to express their creativity and ability to contribute to society. The research methodology, toolkit, and educational pathways co-created with the project participants are also instrumental in asserting to government bodies that the long-term social integration of the displaced community hinges on its members' early and sustained involvement.





Between August 2018 and October 2019, 12 courageous citizens from the refugee and asylum seeker community have devoted time and energy to a participatory action research project designed to provide a shared space for creative recovery from trauma and displacement, and act as a catalyst for the social integration of the participants.

Following a group briefing session and 1:1 interviews with the participants, a series of 9 workshops took place on the Plymouth University campus in 2018 (21st November, 29th November, 12th December, 20th December) and early-mid 2019 (24th January, 13th February, 13th March, 21st March, 9th May). The results of the creative work co-produced by the researchers and participants came together in the exhibition *Refugees. Mapping Memories. An Exhibition of Creative Recovery* (20th-23rd June 2019). Exit interviews have also been conducted by the principal investigator. Below is a detailed timeline for the project from inception to completion.

- 25th January 2018: Launch event of the *Displacement Studies Research Network Symposium - Human and Urban Displacement: From Crises to Creativity*; part of the Plymouth University Research Festival.
- May 2018: European Cultural Foundation - launch of the open call for Research & Development Grants – themed Courageous Citizens; 500+ applications worldwide, with 31 projects chosen for integration into the network and the receipt of grants.
- 16th-22nd June 2018: Plymouth Refugee Week; highlight: *The Shroud Maker* by Ahmed Masoud, showcased on 21st June 2018 at the Barbican Theatre, followed by a Q&A led by Dr Sana Murrani.
- 18th July 2018: ECF announced granted projects: <https://twitter.com/sanamurrani/status/1019609461684654080>
- 6th September 2018: ECF tweets Incubator Workshop: <https://twitter.com/sanamurrani/status/1037623677985148929>



image credit: Alex Stewart

- 5th June 2019: *Re-thinking Post Recovery Space: Strategies around Post-conflict Space and Displacement*; 'A symposium framing participatory and creative paradigms for recovery, healing and belonging after conflict, trauma and displacement', with: Jenny Donovan, Dr Mathew Emmett, Martin Bjerregaard, Care Marks, Dr Helen Lloyd, Debra Westlake, Dr Sana Murrani, Zoe Latham, and Dr Jenny Stamboliev (<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/whats-on/re-thinking-post-recovery-space-strategies-around-post-conflict-space-and-displacement>)
- 17th June 2019: Plymouth University news coverage: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/news/exhibition-shows-healing-power-of-creativity-for-refugees-coming-to-terms-with-life-in-uk>
- 17th – 23rd June 2019: UK National Refugee Week website features Creative Recovery exhibition (<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/events/refugees-mapping-memories-creative-recovery-exhibition/>)



- 17th – 23rd June 2019: The Big Issue feature on the exhibition – special edition, Windrush Day: (<https://twitter.com/MappingRecovery/status/1140561806085279744>)

- 20th June 2019: *Launch of Refugees. Mapping Memories. An Exhibition of Creative Recovery* at UNDER (18 East St, PL1 3NU, Plymouth, UK); duration: 20th -23rd June 2019.
- 20th June 2019: BBC Radio Devon coverage of exhibition/project: 7:30 – 8:20am; followed by BBC TV Spotlight coverage on the 25th June 2019 at 6:30pm.
- July 2019: series of 1:1 exit interviews with the 12 participants.
- 1st July 2019: Radio Plymouth news coverage – interview with Dr Sana Murrani (<https://www.radioplymouth.com/news/local-news/refugees-and-asylum-seekers-map-their-past/>); tweet on 3rd July 2019 (<https://twitter.com/sanamurrani/status/1146503359580594177>)
- 14th August 2019: ECF, Courageous Citizens 2018, Interview with Dr Sana Murrani: <https://www.culturalfoundation.eu/library/courageous-citizens-sana-murrani>
- 24th October 2019: Dr Sana Murrani was invited to give a talk about her research on memory and post-conflict spatial practice through Creative Recovery project at Oxford Brookes in the School of Architecture's Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP).
- 3rd November 2019: Dr Sana Murrani was invited to speak at the Global Health café, University of Plymouth about Creative Recovery, trauma and memory and the findings of the project.
- 21st – 22nd November 2019: ECF selected *Creative Recovery* to represent ECF at the European Foundations Centre for Arts and Culture in their annual event, theme: “Cultural Welfare: what role arts play in the health and wellbeing of citizens?” Turin, Italy. The project was selected as exemplary and has been included in the EFC and ECF's projects repository.





The project has so far generated:

- <https://mappingcreativerecovery.org/> - a website documenting the process, in real time, and reflecting the malleable, adaptable nature of the methodology used. The multi-modal methods used (storytelling, remembering, creative writing, and deep mapping) have enabled an individual creative expression for each map produced. The depth of the exploration was enriched by the acts of revisiting, adding layers and self-expressions to each map over the 9 months of the workshops (bearing in mind that only a couple of the participants had any previous artistic background).
- An exhibition showcasing the creative work of the project participants - *Refugees. Mapping Memories. An Exhibition of Creative Recovery* at UNDER (18 East St, PL1 3NU, Plymouth, UK); duration: 20-23 June 2019.
- An exhibition catalogue, also available online: <https://creativerecovery1819.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/mapping-memories-excatalogue-online.pdf>
- This report - an accessible, illustrated and co-produced publication assessing the development of the project, circulated to the funder, the Red Cross, Plymouth Housing Association, Plymouth City Council, local Members of Parliament, UK Home Office, and refugee support organisations or NGOs who

are members of the DSRN. The project report also details the project process and methodology, suggesting an adaptive, 'open-source' toolkit (see next section) for the use of similar creative research initiatives.

- Online coverage on the global interdisciplinary research community Displacement Studies Research Network: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/displacement-studies>
- Lively social media coverage through a dedicated Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/MappingRecovery>)
- Research paper that discusses the malleability of the concept of home in forced displaced, authored by Dr Sana Murrani and published in September 2019 in the *Journal of Culture and Psychology*, titled: *Contingency and Plasticity: The Dialectical Re-construction of the Concept of Home in Displacement*. And a further paper (forthcoming) on the findings of the project in relation to memory of home and mapping through trauma and recovery.

5

THE TOOLKIT – WORKSHOP MIX AND MATCH (DIY)

- WORKSHOP 1 – Mapping roots and routes
 - Storytelling: participants share stories and photos of their home and homeland;
 - Mapping the route of migration: participants trace their journey on a physical map using push-pins and thread (sensory/tactile), also sharing thoughts and memories with the group providing an opportunity to generate multi-voiced accounts of migration that are not reduced to demographic data, or distorted by media reporting;
 - Seeds of hope: each participant writes down a thought/memory/wish to attach to their mapped route, using their mother tongue; opportunity for participants and facilitators to learn words and phrases from each other.







- WORKSHOP 2 – Rights and rites – the space of legality and the space of the everyday
 - Discussion of the participants’ arrival to the UK, and navigating through the Dispersal and Housing Systems; opportunity to raise awareness among participants of their legal rights and identifying instances where their own experience falls short of the legal requirements; identifying potential links and avenues to find help and a range of resources;
 - By contrast, a discussion centred on the participants’ positive memories of favourite daily journeys in their place of origin, supported by visual/audio materials the participants are happy to share; the aim is for the participants to reconnect and re-examine a time and place of personal and spatial agency. Via storytelling, they take the group on a virtual journey by sharing and reaffirming aspects of their identity and personhood that are eroded under the refugee appellation;
 - Opportunity to create international links for grassroots initiatives: some of the participants had close friends in different countries, with whom they kept in touch; beginnings of digital platforms for support and connecting with people in the country of arrival on the basis of shared experiences, culture of origin and navigating the integration process.



- WORKSHOP 3 – Space, place, remembering in order to build
 - Mapping exercise combining the sharing of memories and stories of everyday places, relationships and interactions weaved around the nexus of the home, with the production of personal maps using digital and physical open source maps through the act of layering;
 - The creative act of making these maps and embedding them with positive memories and relationships chosen by the participant helps (re)affirm their complexity as a person (outside refugee status); clarifies their take on rootedness and belonging beyond the geographies of space and places; highlights transferable skills for social integration in a culturally diverse environment.



- WORKSHOP 4 – I am more than a ‘Refugee’

- Photography/portraiture through collaboration with photojournalist, Carey Marks, to generate portraits of the participants that convey the essence of their personalities, rather than their refugee status;
- Discussion focused on sharing current experiences with accommodation, and how these contrast with the participants’ needs, expectations and domestic practices in their country of origin;
- Spaces on the map and places of the mind: participants originating from disputed geo-political territories have valuable contributions to make towards understanding the reality of daily spatial practices, often dismissed (or misleadingly represented) on widely available digital open source maps and resources.



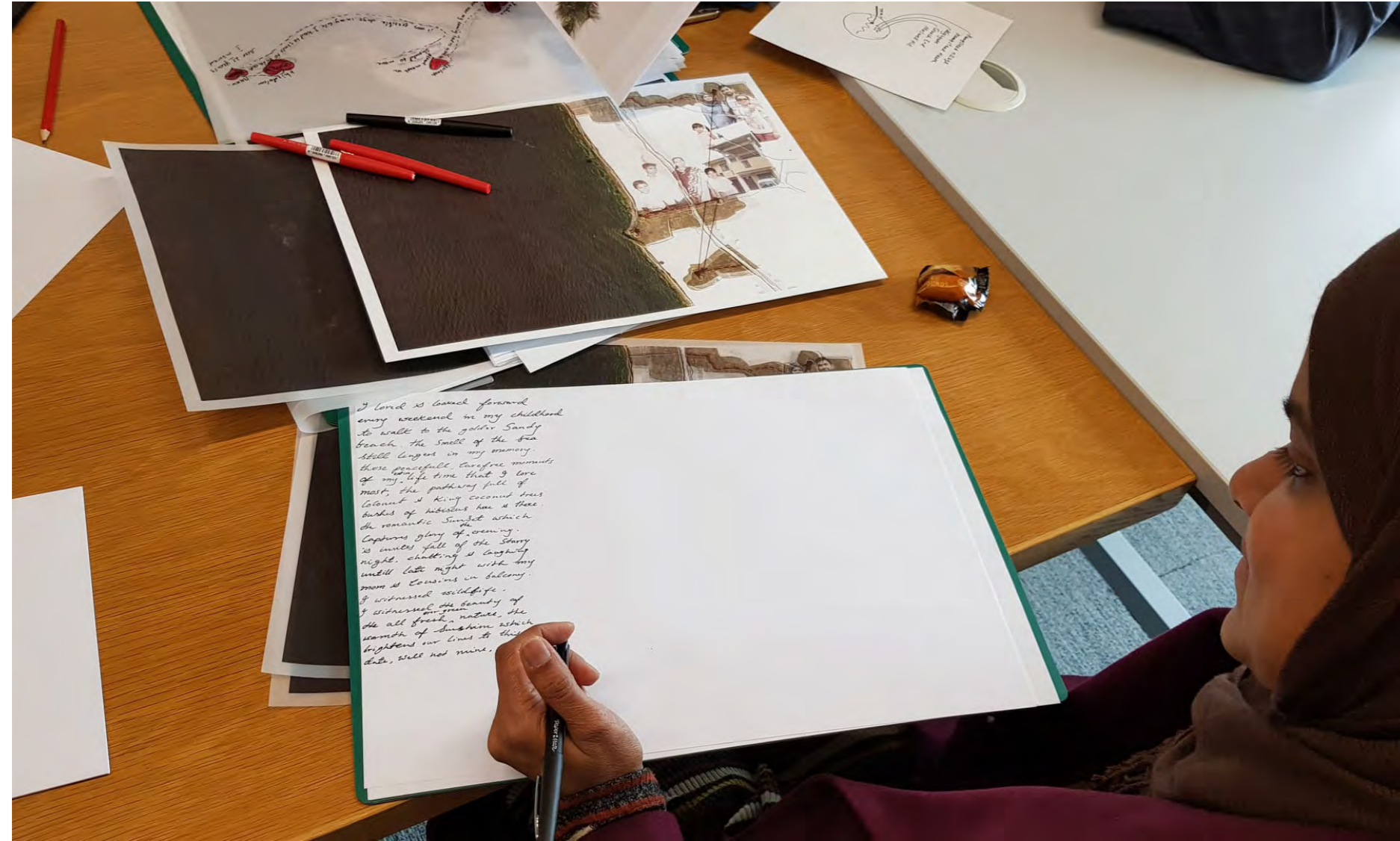




- WORKSHOP 5 – Revisiting and remapping

- Revisiting the maps created in the previous exercise encourages the participants to keep adding layers of experience and meaning; this exercise invites reflection and comparison with their current experiences around home/housing, and the challenges faced while integrating with a new social network in their country of arrival;
- Discussion around the idea of community and its intersection with the concept of home; opportunity for participants from different geo-cultural backgrounds to share and reflect on the size, nature, and involvement of their immediate social circles (family, neighbours, religious and professional community, etc.) in their day to day life; this can help highlight different needs and expectations providing a diversity lost in most reports for local authorities and dispersal cities;
- Creative exercise: reimagining the home – blending elements of the lost home of origin, strengths, resilience and creative and adaptive responses developed along the way, and the parameters of home in their new country/city.





- WORKSHOP 6 – Mappings of spatial memories
 - Revisiting the maps and perhaps acquiring new creative skills – digital imaging, crafting and collage, etc. Understanding the importance of the iterative process of mapping and layering on the act of remembering and recovering;
 - Discussion on what skills the participants feel are needed for the maps to become even richer, more layered expressions of their journeys to recovery through the exploration of home; positive exercise reaffirming the participants as creative agents with agency over their own development as producers of own narratives.







- WORKSHOP 8 – Letters of hope
 - Creative writing exercise: the participants wrote a short description, message, or reaction to their own portrait (co-produced with the photographer in an earlier session), or a companion piece (prose, poetry, etc.) to the map they created over the course of the project.



Mi gran deseo es que los niños de mi país crezcan con oportunidades, con sueños y que puedan acceder a un futuro justo y positivo.

¡Que termine la violencia y la corrupción, el hambre y la pobreza! Que los Hondureños vuelvan a encontrar esa sonrisa que nos caracteriza, que vuelvan a vivir en paz, en armonía, en unidad y en amor! Por un gran presente y futuro!

آتمنى أنه يتنقل العالم والشعوب بسهولة في الدول جميعها دون الاحتياج الى تأشيرات لدخولها ، دعونا نحيش بسلام وحرية

حرية و سلام
فلاحين

Isatta (Sierra Leone): I studied youth and community development at university. I am from Sierra Leone, the northern part of the country with beautiful landscape which is surrounded by hills and mountains like the Wara Wara mountain, Solar and Bintumany mountains. As a child, I grew up playing outside, enjoying the beautiful smell of fresh herbs and plants.

Most evenings, my siblings and I always take long walk to my grand parents' house for some TLC. I have very large family, including extended family from both parents. What I loved most was meeting up with all my cousin's during festive season as they will all travel from far and near to come to my parents' house and spend days sharing family meals together. Most of all, when we have relatives staying with us, as a sign of unity and love, my mother will dish our food in a large bowl for all the family to share, eating with our hands. This is very significant in our tradition. Since the war started in the 90s, my life had never been the same. I hope that the Land that We Love, Sierra Leone will create equal opportunity for everyone regardless of their respective believes and opinion.

① مجھے پاکستان جا کے لوگوں کی مدد کرنی ہے۔

② مجھے دنیا گھومنی ہے۔

Tarig (Sudan): The east side of the River Nile witnessed my birth; in a historical city called Khartoum North. I grew up in a spacious house with yards opening against each other; in an extended family which surrounded me with constant and unconditional love. I grew up observing and spent most of my life in search for my voice, until I found film which became my voice. I recently graduated from a Film Studies Masters degree at London Film School. Now I make films mostly about unnoticed details of life; aspiring to make change, and one day I will.

Mahmoud (Syria): I escaped from Syria. The fighting became too intense and one day an opportunity arose. Back home I was studying to become a doctor. Here I am a delivery driver. It sounds a big difference doesn't it?

Maria (Honduras): Honduras will always be my home. I am always very proud to represent and talk about my country wherever I go. Being a Honduran is a big part of my identity because I believe Honduran people are hard-working, joyful, caring and kind. I hope I can go back one day to change things and to improve our people's present and future. There is so much beauty it is truly unfair it can all be shadowed by the corruption and violence but I am hopeful that it will get better. I miss home very much: our food, our views and our warmth but I am very thankful to be here!

Alm üniel elikrm ei, bir gün
yoşardıñun biñün nis gününür
unulacanı. vı guruda xoşbax
olacanı n.

Debra (Nigeria): I escaped a dangerous situation in Lagos. I love going to church, singing and visiting my friends.

انتمنا لو تنعدم كل السلاحه
 من العالم وتتوقف الحروب
 لينعم اطفالنا بعالم سعيد

Mohammed (Palestine): For me what I like the most about Gaza is how motivated Gazans are. They have never given up with all the destruction around them and they are not just trying to reconstruct their city but also the whole world. I wish in the future to set up an initiative to support real peace building for a sustainable world where each and everyone of us [humans] can live the life he/she wants, not a life we are forced to live in.

Waleed (Sudan): I am a human rights activist and a former interior designer. I am a refugee from Khartoum. I love Khartoum and its lights and intellectual evenings of art, music and exhibitions. I am from a country torn apart by war... I wish to live in a world without weapons. A peaceful, kind and generous world.

① စာတင် ဗျာဠာအား နိမ့်နိမ့် နာမည်ပေးရန်၊
 အစကလေးကို နိမ့်နိမ့်ပဲ ဘာသာစကားဖြင့် ငါ့ကို ခေါ်စား
 ရအောင် !

② စာတင် အင်္ဂလိပ်စာ စာတင်ကို အသံဖြင့် ဖော်ပြပါ !

Arzu (Azerbaijan): I'm a human rights lawyer with 14 years of experience. I was the candidate for Parliament in 2010 when 7000 people voted for me. I was a lecturer at the Western University in Azerbaijan while working on various UN projects. I speak 5 languages and I'm the author of 2 books and 70 scientific articles. I have a PhD in human rights. I moved to the UK nearly a year ago with my daughter. I got my refugee status in March 2019. Now I have plans to improve my English and I have already started working on different projects with women and refugees. After that I'd like to study law (for a Masters degree) in the UK, but my aim in the future is to become a barrister in the UK. I'm happy that in a very short time I managed to integrate within the UK life, and have many friends from different countries. I feel very safe and I think it's becoming my second home. I no longer feel as homesick as I used to feel before.

Mapping Refugees Memories was open for just over three days during June's Refugee Week 2019. It was attended by over 100 visitors on the opening night alone. More than half of the 12 participants attended the opening night which also witnessed a session for reflection that was led by them.

In order to better track the impact of the project on audiences exposed to the creative narratives of self-representation produced by the participants, the exhibition collected visitor feedback through four interactive question panels, and the opportunity to leave comments on cards attached to a map model of the refugees' journeys of displacement. The questions focused on tracking the most impactful elements of the exhibition, exploring the meaning of home, collecting ideas for future follow-on projects, and highlighting the reasons behind the audience's interest in the project and exhibition. All questions combined multiple-choice answers with the open-ended invitation to write down individualised answers.

- Question responses

The feedback thus collected suggests that the exhibition and project elements carrying the most impact pertained to the individual, deeply personal narratives of self-representation co-produced by the project participants and researchers. This combination of storytelling and shared memories, photographs and portraits capturing the essence of each participant beyond their refugee status, and the maps exploring their creative journeys of recovery, were the top three areas of impact for the visitors. The project's focus on the participants, the opportunity to understand

the research process, and openly conversing with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, as well as the participants themselves, occupy a second bracket of visitor interest. Noteworthy free-form answers in this category touch upon the exhibition's curation and display space, and a powerful quote from one of the participants, contrasting his highly-skilled career path before displacement with his current employment opportunities in the UK.

EXHIBITION IMPACT





The second question invited reflection on the meaning of home among exhibition visitors, with the majority of responders placing this in the sphere of familial relationships. Home was thus defined as a nexus of human relationships pertaining to the immediately intimate social circle of kinship, comprising bonds of blood but also of choice. In the second most popular answer, this social nexus extends to home meaning 'community and neighbourhood', followed closely by 'culture and identity'. The slight edge of community links over cultural parameters is deeply relevant for the social integration element of this project, consistent with insights shared by the participants, who have reported feelings of isolation and frustration over the barriers to integrating community life here in the UK. In the next bracket, home as memory is closely followed by the visitors' own definitions of home; as an answer category, the free-form answer outstripped another three multiple-choice answers, demonstrating the importance of providing a space for self-definition. Although the visitors' answers touched on a few common themes (safety and belonging, love and acceptance, calmness and contentment, the familiarity of the everyday), they also indicated that home is a space-in-flux for growing, for becoming, a non-defined entity constantly re-worked through the practices of the everyday. Home, according to one visitor, is also an element of conscious choice – a view in contrast with the penultimate multiple-choice answer equating home with one's country of origin. Of vital interest despite its low popularity is also the multiple-choice answer defining home as religion, chosen by only 4 respondents, as opposed to the 36 for whom home means a





network of close relationships. In alignment with the project aim of helping shift the British public's reductive view of the refugee community as primarily associated with their place of origin and religious traditions, the spectrum of responses collected for the meaning of home further illustrates the importance of genuine, human connections and self-actualisation over issues of geographic origin and personal faith.

Through question three, the visitors were invited to brainstorm ideas for follow-on research that would enhance and expand on the current project. Most of the respondents (43) indicated interest in projects focused on housing for refugees and asylum seekers as an evident next step after the current project's exploration of self and home. A further 35 respondents felt that the 'design and architecture of future transnational communities' was also of high importance – an idea correlating with the project's analysis of the deficiencies of the asylum seeker accommodation system. The open-ended response bracket of this question proved likewise popular, collecting ideas on the themes of: the creative engagement of refugees in development projects, as well as opportunities for artistic self-expression; sustained community outreach and involvement, particularly through the provision of 'emotional support', friendship, and help integrating in 'a society that is alien to them'; ongoing collection of shared stories, testimonies, and experiences, particularly those of 'lost, invisible' asylum seekers; shifting public opinion through educational outreach, particularly within local school communities, with the broader goal of influencing the formulation of social policies; exploring the role of the expat and diaspora communities in helping/empowering refugees. Although ranking last among the multiple-choice

answers, 'home-making practices in diaspora' also garnered interest from 16 participants, indicating future opportunities to probe into the making/re-making of home in the context of transnational displacement.

A diverse range of reasons, explored through the final feedback question, have brought visitors to the exhibition: most identify as active citizens and members of the community with an interest in similar projects, followed closely by academics interested in the research process. It is encouraging to observe here the near parity between members of the community (25) and those in the academic field (24), with the involved citizen bracket (34) tipping the scales towards a non-academic audience. Despite some overlap in these categories, the data collected through this question highlights another ambition (and achieved result) of the project: fostering resilient communities through a closer, and more balanced partnerships between members of the public and the education sector. The exhibition has also attracted interest from creative professionals, those involved in areas related to migration, and those from a health and wellbeing professional background. It is significant to note here that just one respondent identifies themselves as involved in the housing sector, indicating a future area for post-project outreach that is vital in laying the bases of more dignified and nurturing accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees. A variety of other reasons behind exhibition attendance also include those of a displaced/migrant background, or who might become migrants in the future, supportive friends, students in the creative sector, and those interested in learning more about the stories and journeys presented.



- Free-form feedback (cards)

The free-form section of the feedback invited the exhibition audience to freely write down their thoughts and messages on cards, affixing them to a 3D model map of the world. With no strict rules or specific instructions, the cards encircled the map in a symbolic gesture of love, acceptance, and togetherness. Although many of the respondents wrote about their own transnational backgrounds, the empty space surrounding the project participants' journeys of displacement stood witness to the collective recognition of the trauma, hardship, but also strength and resilience behind the red threads of forced migration routes.

In addition to warm words of welcome for the refugees, the feedback cards highlighted the moving, inspirational quality of the work presented, and its necessity in nurturing a climate of empathy and conscious efforts on behalf of the local community towards greater social integration. The commonalities of human experience regardless of cultural background were also highlighted through this open feedback method: the formative value of childhood memories and experiences, the pain of loss and relocation, the emotive relatability of memory work, and the fundamental need to be seen and heard across the eroding noise of misrepresentation. Some respondents touched on the significance of the exhibition in bringing awareness to political and human rights issues, while others resonated with the creative methodology of the project on a personal level: being transported to a different world; suggesting that home is a life-long project; being moved by the relatable geometries of geography and written language. The materiality of the creative outputs was like-

wise appreciated as high in quality and evocative in message, particularly through the juxtaposition of 3D layered maps, and photographs of the participants. Another exhibition highlight appreciated by the visitors was the project's focus on the 'wonderful and rich diversity of our refugee community', as well as the participants' 'array of talents and experiences'. Interest was also expressed in finding out more about their current lives and personal ambitions, as well as having the exhibition travel in order to reach a broader audience, also revisiting the research topics in a few years' time. The project's digital and media impact was also noticed by the visitors, who remarked on the quality and design of the project website.

- Exhibition impact on the participants / Media coverage

The University of Plymouth film crew covered the exhibition opening night and captured live reactions from the project participants regarding the positive impact the project has had on their need to be seen and heard, their ability and confidence in articulating their own stories, and their efforts to find themselves at home again in the UK and among their new communities.

Mohammed spoke about the new opportunities for social integration opened to him through participation in the *Mapping Creative Recovery* project, while Arzu reflected on the range of emotions and skills involved in the map-making process. For Waleed, revisiting the places of his childhood and young adulthood unlocked a series of forgotten memories – a process which Zahra also highlighted as an inspirational and emotive journey of travelling back through the imagination to reclaim

ownership of those positive memories. Tarig has noted the personal growth sparked by the project, particularly in identifying areas of deeply held personal meaning which he had not connected to before – this was something he appreciated as particularly helpful.

The BBC Spotlight segment celebrated the project's dedication in giving a creative narrative platform for the refugees to tell their own stories, in their own words. It also showcased the creative methodology co-designed with the participants as an example of ideal practice for similar initiatives looking to have a sustained, positive impact on refugee wellbeing and social integration. In the spirit of the project, the BBC segment also provided space for the refugees' own voices and creative work - an example of first-person representation that is often absent from mainstream media. The segment ended with a relatable reflection on home from Mohammed, for whom home is not only the country of his family and upbringing, but also Plymouth, and – in the moving spirit of borderless empathy expressed by most project participants – the world.



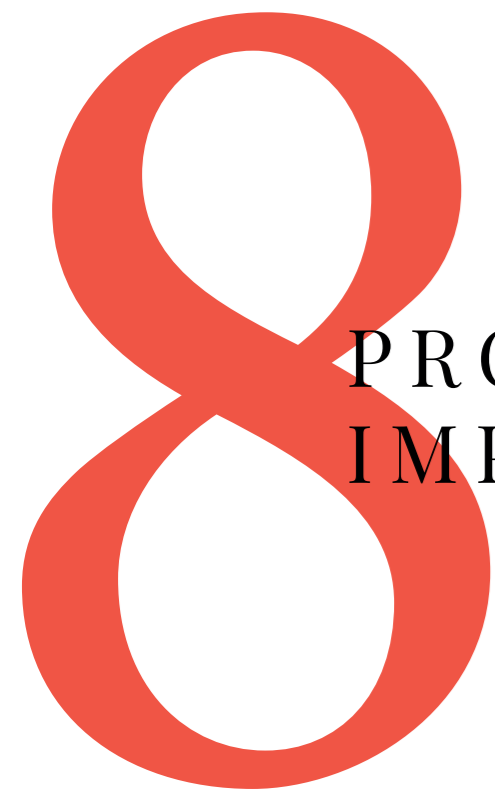
- The importance of mappings of spatial memory and creative work centred on the concept of home and the spaces of the everyday for recovery from trauma, loss, and grief. These are particularly effective when combined with the work of established communities of creative practice, as explored in the work of Murrani, Brun and Fábos, and Ahmed;
- The importance of empowering refugees to become the creative producers of their own narratives of self and home, wresting back control from the media; this correlates with other ECF-funded projects, such as the *Displaced in Media* partnership;
- The workshop process benefits most from being non-linear, revisiting various stages of the mapping process to elicit deeper responses from the participants, which come to the fore with enough time for reflection and cross-cultural dialogue during the mapping process;
- The multi-modal methods used allowed the research and creative exercise to grow, diverge, or shift focus entirely. The combined methodology of creative action research and deep mapping facilitated these creative shifts, some emerging from needs for post-trauma recovery discovered through the community contouring process; insights from participants to be integrated into the methodology as well;
- Avenues for further research co-generated with the participants: topics that emerged tangentially during the workshops:
- Refugee women, in their own words – exploring narratives of self, home-making, professional life, role in establishing and maintaining relationships across the

community and integration, navigating the displacement and settlement process from the specific point of view of gender, etc.

- Inter-cultural exchanges between refugees from different countries and cultures; could also help highlight the flaws and put forward alternative perspectives to the one-size-fits-all treatment of refugees during the dispersal process.



REFLECTIONS

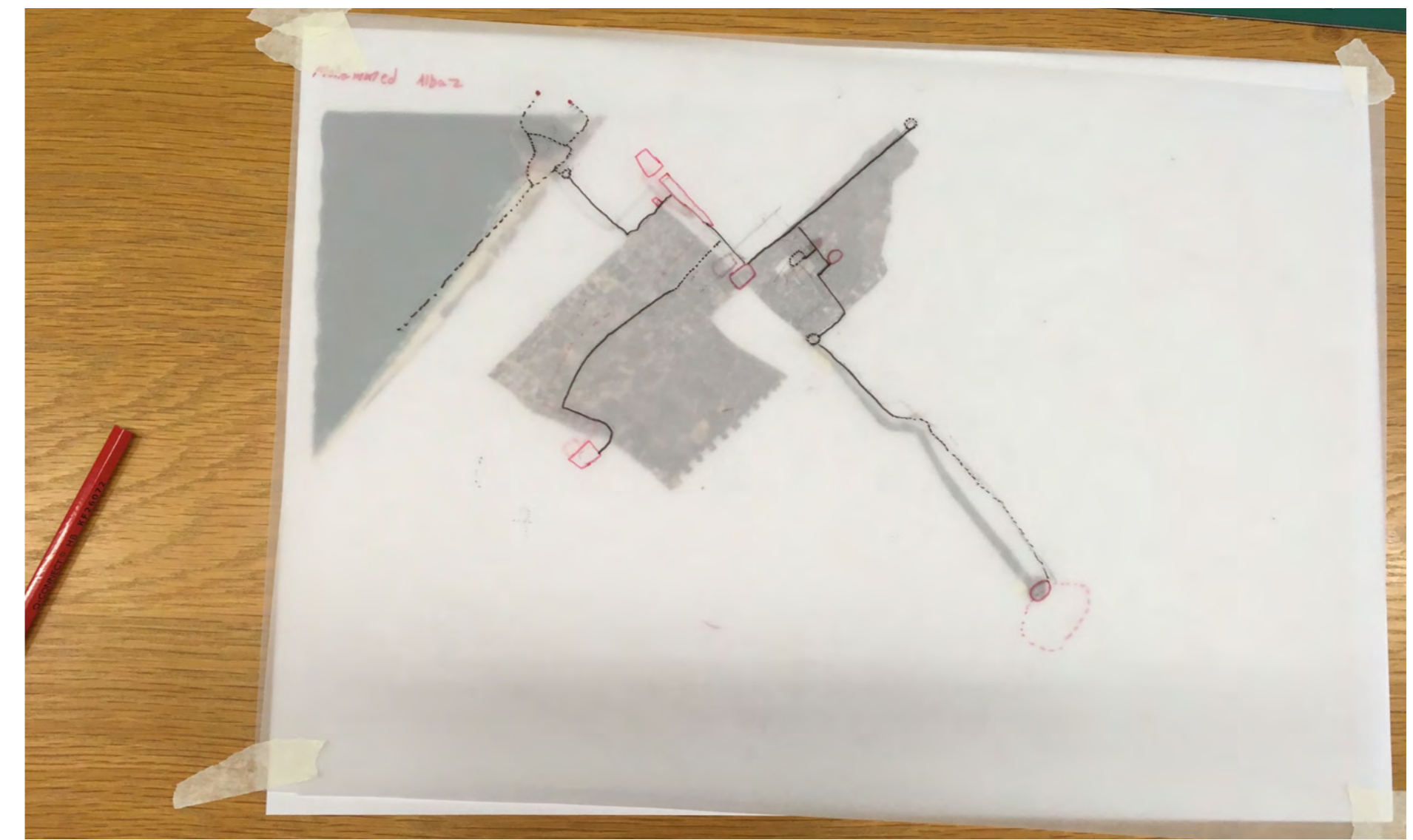


PROJECT IMPACT



The impact of the project is 'nested', rippling out from the personal healing, growth and transformation reported by the participants, to their immediate social circles (familial, community). With this in mind, the impact section of this report correlates with the recommendation section by tracing potential pathways of extending this positive impact towards Plymouth's non-refugee and migrant communities, as well as policy-makers at a local and central government level. The insights, offered before the start and after the completion of the project through 1:1 interviews with our participants and co-researchers, highlight:

- self-perceived recovery from trauma and loss;
- growing interest in social, cultural, and political issues affecting their countries of origin, the UK/EU, and themselves as individuals;
- keen interest in advocacy for social integration, as well as community and social work focused on nurturing multi-cultural relationships.



9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Creative mapping as a vital process in recovery, self-definition after uprooting and trauma, and integration by explicitly bringing together the cultures of origin and destination through creative dialogue.

Levels of recommendations based on the project process and outputs:

- Moving away from data collection and stepping into participatory partnership with the displaced community, and into the co-design of multi-modal research methods – a look beyond resilience and into thriving;
- Iterative slow process of creative deep mapping and remembering, facilitated by a safe and visible platform for members of the migrant and refugee community to share their heritage and gain new skills to express their creativity and ability to contribute to society – self-defining, healing and imagining;
- Asserting that the long-term social integration of the displaced community hinges on its members' early and sustained involvement – a journey of engagement.

The above recommendations can be useful for:

- Activists, community groups, and local NGOs;
- Researchers, educational institutions, organisations able to generate and coordinate broader scale projects (ECF);
- Policy makers: local authorities and central government.



COLOPHON

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Thanks to contributors

- Especial thanks to all contributors to this project from inception to completion, in particular the 12 protagonists who made this project possible. Throughout the life of the project, three out of the 12 participants were granted their refugee status and five went on to start community initiatives focusing on helping refugees and newcomers to UK cities in finding their feet during their early months of displacement. We also witnessed the hardship of one participant whose case for settlement has been rejected twice by the Home Office and during that time had to undergo a major brain surgery. Her fate is still hanging in the balance.

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CAREY MARKS PHOTOGRAPHY

Photo documentary of the project by Dr Sana Murrani & Carey Marks
after completion in **Plymouth**, June 2019.