How does my living value of inclusive cultural competence, contributes both to practice and knowledge creation with the marginalised?

Introduction

This paper sets out snapshots of my life journey and learning, researching my practice through creating knowledge of myself as an active learner. I have charted some of the critical incidents (Tripp, 1993) and experiences along this journey. Tripp defines critical incidents as a value judgement and interpretation of an event that is significant for us. I begin my interpretation of events with narrating how my immersion in family trauma and conflict as a teenager, caused me to respond to injustice instinctively and without reflection. Then I will describe how my reflections on myself as a professional, both in and out of my practice, demonstrate how my ontological values have influenced my decisions to continue to be immersed in resolving conflict, learning how to work 'alongside' (Pound, 2003) those who are vulnerable, marginalised and stigmatised for their behaviour, lifestyle, or barriers to learning and more recently, those from BME communities, who are frequently reduced to dualistic polarities (Lederach, 2005) by generalisations/ stereotypes about faith, race or culture.

In the course of my research I clarify and communicate my embodied values as explanatory principles in my account of my educational influences. I trace the time-line of some of the critical incidents that have influenced my practice and added to my embodied knowledge, providing opportunities and an evidence base for the dramatic influence of living my core values, inspiring me to change direction in my career, drawn towards working alongside and on behalf of BME and other marginalised groups, to heal and bring justice. Sen describes this marginalisation as reductionism, ' Seeing each person as firmly embedded in exactly one affiliation, replacing the richness of leading an abundant life with the formulaic narrowness of insisting that any person is 'situated' in just one organic pack'. (Sen, 2006).

Sen talks about 'the appalling effects of miniaturization of people' which I would liken to the use of labels to compartmentalise individuals, consequently limiting our view of the person who is given a label and influencing our reactions and expectations of them. Sen is concerned with ethnicities and societies, while my concern goes wider to include communities and educational settings. Sen describes this as 'individuals put into little boxes' and 'inmates rigidly incarcerated in little containers'.

Through this paper I have built on my core understanding of educational research methodology, which I have learned and practiced with students, practitioners and adults across many settings, offering a response to Snow's challenge, '… to enhance the value of personal knowledge and personal experience for practice. The challenge here is not to ignore or downplay this personal knowledge, but to elevate it' (Snow, 2001 p.3).

I intend to contribute to the professional knowledge base of education. I have absorbed knowledge and experience as an educator, trainer, policy adviser and project manager, using this embodied knowledge to improve my practice as I came

full circle and returned to being a practitioner. Adler (1927), develops 'a graph of life' to be able to plot childhood impressions and rate of change through to adulthood:

> 'We will succeed in many cases in being able to plot this graph of life, the spiritual curve along which the entire movement of an individual has taken place. The equation of the curve is the behaviour pattern which this individual has followed since early childhood'.

Adler goes on to state that energy and meaning change little beyond what is set in early childhood (Adler, 1927, p.80). I want to intervene in that behaviour pattern and influence that 'spiritual curve' at whatever point along the 'graph of life' that I can exert influence through positive interventions in my practice.

I strive to maintain authenticity (Crofts, 2003) through ensuring that my motivation remains intrinsic (Deci 1995). Increasingly, I avoid compromising my values to 'tick boxes' or meet extrinsic imposed criteria. Deci sites de Charms (1968) describing the concept of 'personal causation', which is 'the desire to be the origin of one's own action', which he believes is the key to intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1995).

I believe that the target driven culture that we inhabit, is responsible for the many compromises on moral judgement being made by professionals. In de Charms (1968) words 'a pawn manipulated by external forces'. If our targets are externally imposed and we are judged by our outcomes, then our motivation moves from intrinsic to extrinsic as we strive for acknowledgement of personal achievement:

> 'Able, brilliant and skilled professionals do not thrive in an environment where much of their energies are absorbed by the need to comply with a raft of detailed requirements' (House of Lords, 2009, p.15).

My recent experience of running numerous Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses for practicing teachers has demonstrated to me that the focus for schools on meeting OFSTED criteria may be at the expense of both the marginalised and those with barriers to learning or communication, which I believe leads to injustice.

Through my writing, I have developed a fresh understanding of how each critical incident that I have described, has built on my valuing inclusive cultural competence and confidence, enabling me to have imagined possibilities, and 'moral imagination':

> 'The moral imagination is built on a quality of interaction with reality that respects complexity and refuses to fall into forced containers of dualism and either-or categories. As such, this kind of imagination is infused with a paradoxical curiosity.' (Lederach, 2005, p.36)

Through reflection, I am seeking to clarify and communicate my meaning of inclusive cultural competence and justice as explanatory principles in my continuing professional development, which I believe is infused with paradoxical curiosity. Mendeley (2005) suggests four components to cultural competence, which are, self-awareness of our own cultural worldview, our attitude to cultural differences, our knowledge of cultural practices and, transferrable skills. I will conclude by explicating my inclusive values and explaining how my embodied knowledge and

educational experience alongside learners, particularly those who are marginalised, contributes to my developing practice and knowledge creation with communities, with a focus on my meaning of cultural competence and justice.

I want to communicate my subjective understanding of the world via a text (Czarniawska, 2004, p.663). I have created causal links (Elliott, 2005, p.43) between significant historical events in my life (critical incidents), in order to make connections and add an evaluative element. I will make clear to the reader, the meaning that these incidents have for me, creating a narrative that demonstrates the personal learning from experience that each incident has given me. Narrative is described by Elliott as, 'understood to organize a sequence of events into a whole so that the significance of each event can be understood through its relation' (Elliott, 2005, p.3) to that whole.

By presenting my research account of my own learning, I will describe how I believe that my practice has evolved as I seek to have influence on others through my role as adviser and trainer and facilitator of learning. I will describe the influences on my personal career path, which began with early recollections of intervening in conflict and standing up to injustice during incidents of experiencing faith and race intolerance at home and consequently my deepening understanding through life events that enabled me to understand the impact of marginalisation, victimisation, stigma and the emotion of shame.

There was no conscious intention when I began teaching, to become an advocate for the marginalised and vulnerable. However, on reflection, I can see clearly from this narrative, 40 years on, how my career choices shaped my values and transformed my practice. Each of these experiences has resonance with my values of respect for difference, leading to my continuing engagement with causes of injustice and a conscious decision to live authentically, putting aside over a decade of my Home Office career to work with minority communities, the simple goal being to make a difference: 'We cannot do great things, only small things with great love'. (quotation attributed to Mother Theresa of Calcutta).

Crofts (2003) describes authenticity as listening, trusting and acting on our instincts. He suggests that once you become honest with yourself, it becomes more difficult to be dishonest. Furthermore, he says that when we are honest, we can trust our own judgement and increase confidence, which he describes as authenticity.

Through this reflection, I can chart the path that I chose, enabling me to enrich my professional practice with what I describe as 'inclusive cultural competence'. Menderley (2005) defines cultural competence as 'an ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures'.

I feel 'driven' to find opportunities to empower the marginalised and to find justice for the discriminated against, through gently changing 'hearts and minds'. I want to communicate to 'significant others', different and positive ways of perceiving and responding to 'difference'. Through my writing, I want to assert influence, while adding to my embodied knowledge. Now I am at a stage where I avoid compromising my living values. I strive to operate authentically actively seeking opportunities where I believe I can put my experience and skills to make a difference.

I am aware that my combined experience and skills enable me to quickly gain trust, engage, support and work alongside (Pound, 2003) individuals and groups. This embodied knowledge enables me to be authoritative when facilitating training courses for education and other professionals.

My practice has straddled both theory and practice; I offer a unique perspective and want to share my experiences widely. I want to be a catalyst for change and a vehicle for healing in an unjust environment. This includes eliminating dualistic polarities (Lederach, 1995) which reduce our perception of those 'different' to us into 'either/ or' categories. We are used to categorising individuals as autistic, Muslim, BME, SEN, Free School Meals, migrants etc. These labels are assigned with good intentions but may lead to stereotyping, stigma and reduced expectations that reduce the individual to that single category.

My mission is to open minds to the complexity, the connectedness of each of us, rather than the differences and to share the richness of our diversity and the sense of responsibility for justice across our pluralistic society. Sen (2006 p.47) suggests that there exists a 'descriptive poverty' in the reliance on presumptions of 'singular categorisation' and ignoring the diversity of each of us.

The following stories from my professional and personal life serve to illustrate some of the critical incidents that have contributed to my understanding and development of inclusive cultural competence. These personal and professional contexts comprise the complex ecology of my research. Each account comprises a reflection on my emerging values as I move from a desire to support, protect and bring justice, to a position of authenticity and self empowerment, which enables empowering others.

Critical Incident 1: 1960s Family Conflict

This account reflects on how my early experiences have developed in me an acute awareness and sensitivity to discrimination, stigma and shame. From my early teens, I was moved to challenge injustice and to observe the damaging impact of discrimination both from the complexity of our perception of how others see us but also about how we see ourselves.

Challenging injustice: My sense of justice was developed very early, as a survivor of a childhood where my mother's origin (Southern Irish) and faith (Roman Catholic) was used by my father as a password for lacking intelligence, being stupid (the butt of Irish jokes) and being a supporter of terrorism (the IRA). 'A fostered sense of identity with one group of people can be made into a powerful weapon to brutalise another' (Seth 2005 p.36).

Even now, this discrimination and stereotyping continues, recently illustrated by an email I received titled 'not very PC but very funny' listing 10 'stupid' Paddy Irish jokes. We still don't get it.

My early experience embedded in me the necessity to stand up to the bully and to defend the bullied. In my case, my father repeatedly used 'The Troubles' (IRA) as a 'stick' to 'beat' my mother. I believed then that in order to defend my mother, I had no choice but to 'fight' or 'flight', leading me to challenge my father. Lederach (2005) suggests that apparently minor issues in a family, such as whose turn it is to washing up, are rarely about that domestic chore but are likely to be about power struggles,

justice, fairness and equality. I believe that my father's choice of creating conflict over my mother's Irishness ran deeper than that of her racial identity.

I remember the adrenalin rush, the rapid heartbeat as I braced myself to 'attack', despite the terror of another confrontation. It became automatic, like climbing stairs- because to think and consider my actions would bring hesitation, maybe I would back down and 'lose'. There was no discernible thought process then, just a primeval response. Though I hesitate to admit it, it is sometimes there even now. Was this the foundation of my values of inclusive cultural competence?

Shame: In my early teens, my father was unfairly charged with embezzlement and sentenced to three months in prison. This was a life-changing event for my mother and myself. We wore our shame like a cloak, sensing the stigma that we believed was inevitable (Goffman, 1986). My mother's pride and self-worth were destroyed irrevocably. Overnight, we learned great humility and how to live in poverty.

In writing this paper, I realise that I still carry that shame like a dark secret, as though having a close family member with a prison record is one of the last taboos. I hesitated before including this personal piece of my history in this account but realised that by omission, I was perpetuating the shame. I reflected for the first time why I should still wear this 'cloak' after more than forty-five years.

I decided to share this knowledge with the research group in a draft of my paper. It was picked up by the group members who stated that they felt that it was powerful evidence of why I feel strongly about injustice. It prompted much empathic discussion with one group member sharing that it had influenced his responses to the rest of my draft because it had profoundly influenced his understanding of my described identity. By including this important event from my history, I feel released from my shame. I ask you the reader, to pause and reflect on your reaction to my admission from my past and consider whether this disclosure may have adversely influenced your judgement of me.

Sen (2006, p.20) describes a type of reductionism as 'singular affiliation', which is the assumption of an individual belonging to a single 'collectivity'. My mother and I placed ourselves into that singular affiliation and witnessed others also categorising us differently as a result of my father's shameful fate.

My embodied knowledge from this history has encouraged me to seek fairness and be empathic towards the pain caused by past events and scars on our identity. I carry with me a humility, a connection with those who suffer hurt caused by their own damaged sense of self and the damaging messages that they receive from others. I want to heal through my messages of hope for humanity through my practice, my life affirming energy, my experience and my skill.

Stigma: My best friend was told to find a new friend by her parents as though I was contagious. I learned how the reaction of close others can cause 'ripples' of hurt and harm. Perhaps this explains my passion to eliminate 'dualistic polarities' (Lederach, 2005), when a person is reduced to being judged by one aspect of their being- 'either/ or' categories.

I have realised that I chose to take on the emotion of shame but others impose stigma upon us. Gofmann (1986) describes the stigma that is visible (e.g. for those

who are black, wear a hijab or have a disability) and for others, when we speak (language, dialect, impediment). For a further cohort, stigma will only exist when there is knowledge which effects the person negatively e.g. family member in prison, being of Irish origin etc.

I believe this early trauma enables me to observe, understand and get alongside the marginalised as somehow, I know how to be. In my current work, I am valued as someone who can be trusted, will listen and will be an advocate. Recently Celia (chair of an African Caribbean Elders social group) thanked me for supporting them through a difficult time for the group. 'I am only doing my job' I responded. 'Yes, but you do it with passion and that makes the difference', she replied. (July, 2012)

Critical Incident 2: 60s/70s Emerging Passion for Justice

As I slowly emerged from a life of tension and conflict at home, I found that leaving school at 16 to pursue an art school course provided the opportunity to emerge as the person that I desired to be. The years of suppression through an institutionalised convent education were blown away by a new freedom to express myself through my art, dress and lifestyle, embracing freedom and individuality. I felt that the cage door had finally been opened.

As I studied art, I was able to find creative ways to communicate my sense of injustice through my paintings. A single subject dominated my large painted canvases. I studied and painted great apes, caged and distressed. I was able to regularly observe these majestic silent creatures at the zoo.

I am aware of my passion to communicate my message of hope for the future through my art. My intrinsic motivation in producing five-foot canvases was to demonstrate to others, the tragedy of captured apes. Were these paintings a metaphor for my own life history? (**Appendix 1**: Paintings of Caged Apes)

I hold dear a photograph of me taken years later, touching hands with an orangutan in the Sumatra rainforest.

Meeting a free Orangutan in Sumatra

My passion has never diminished though my experiences of life have turned my attention to what I now consider as greater injustices.

Critical Incident 3: 70s/ 80s Practitioner

In the following story of my teaching years, I have reflected on a stream of incidents that validate my journey and emerging occupation with finding effective methods towards inclusion and creative, often intuitive responses to injustice.

Diversity was not a term with any currency and there were no theories or policies of which I knew. I have reflected on myself as a 'living contradiction' as Whitehead, (1989) describes, feeling discomfort about the way things were and seeking ways of changing perceptions.

I recall my time as a tutor of a majority white group who constantly called the only South Asian pupil, 'Paki'. Perhaps the derogatory label struck a chord with my own history. I felt moved to intervene and heal the hurt, first by reprimanding them and then using an atlas, showing the group the distance between Pakistan and the area of the country of origin of the girl. It was my first clumsy attempt to positively influence through correcting information. It didn't work- they didn't understand because their racism was learned. They didn't want geographic accuracy, they had already discovered an effective way to hurt, to demonstrate disapproval of 'others' who seemed to fit that crude overarching category. Perhaps my ineffective response was my first realisation of the need to find ways to win hearts and minds, as a pre requisite for exerting positive and loving kind influence.

I remember an African Caribbean girl asking me how to mix 'skin' colour for her painting. I asked whether it was the pinky/white flesh like mine or her own brown tones. The girl was embarrassed and flustered by my question. She had wanted to paint 'white' skin. Sadly in my experience of art teaching, the non-white students usually did.

Although a teacher of art, I continually felt drawn to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) students. Consequently I volunteered to become a tutor of a 'remedial' class (the term commonly used in the 80s). These 'bottom stream' students were described by many colleagues as being hard work and difficult.

I became determined to find ways to encourage engagement, to improve self esteem and to develop trust. I was not then aware of any blueprint or methodology, to enable these learners to reach their potential:

> 'The gap is so great that the required subject matter, the methods of learning and of behaving are foreign to the existing capacities of the young. They are beyond the experience the young learners already possess.' (Dewey, 1938, p.19)

I have reflected on myself as active learner and knowledge creating researcher, as I developed a growing awareness of the 'gap' as described by Dewey and began to build on my trial and error classroom practice to learn what would work. My concern was with those who found their barriers to learning excluded them from participating and engaging fully. I brought compassion, enthusiasm and encouragement and valuing of their achievements. I was a mentor and advocate, learning as I went along, getting lots wrong but hopefully some things right.

Meanwhile my art room became an inclusive sanctuary as I offered lunch and after school sessions. It was a place of calm and acceptance and meaningful occupation (Nelson 1996). Pupils began to disclose their troubled lives, voiced in the safe environment of an art room, where trust was developed and difficulties shared.

These informal creative activity sessions and open discussion became therapeutic as I listened and tried to offer unconditional regard. As Rogers described it: 'for a

person to "grow", they need an environment that provides them with genuineness (openness and self-disclosure), acceptance (being seen with unconditional positive regard), and empathy (being listened to and understood). (Rogers 1951).

I took counselling training, often feeling ill equipped to respond appropriately to some disclosures. Perhaps this caused me to reflect on my own history, where there had been no opportunity to share my experiences. Was this my motivation for wanting to offer support to vulnerable young people?

Many years later, I met a former student from my tutor group who told me of her years of family abuse while at school. She had been unable to share her situation with anyone until a crisis caused her to finally confide in a teacher who took the necessary action. I still meet Mary occasionally and her life has moved on but she bears the scars. I know the importance of being assertive enough to have your needs met, to feel safe and to be able to trust, denied for so long to Mary. (**Appendix 2:** Mary's story).

I was motivated to write scripts for large school productions, to create parts for the reluctant or disengaged students and encourage them onto the stage. I found that even the most reluctant learner found tremendous satisfaction in being part of the co-operative community that a drama performance can create (**Appendix 3:** Inclusive drama productions).

I was observing how learned information alone could not change attitudes. I would soon learn that working with attitudes and skills and engaging the individual in focussed discussion would be effective in bringing about change. The pedagogy introduced by Leslie Button (1974) 'Developmental Group Work (DGW) ' was already being developed (**Appendix 4:** Late 80s- delivering 'Active Learning Developmental Group Work')

Robinson (2009) discusses, more than 30 years on, the relevance of DGW today:

> 'Developmental group work still has an effective role to play in these situations. It is an ideal methodology for working with young people in a reflexive, participative way to develop alternative strategies for developing their capacities in the areas of emotional literacy, social competence, self efficacy; self confidence; and motivation to learn.' (Robinson 2009)

How my embodied knowledge has informed the way that I approach researching my current practice:

Whitehead (1989) describes the 'living contradiction' that exists when one wants to live certain values, which they feel but in practice are being denied. He suggests that this tension can 'stimulate the imagination to create possible ways forward into action'. I had felt this tension throughout my years of mainstream teaching and even more strongly when worked as an advisory teacher, finding that my values were sometimes compromised by the beliefs and attitudes expressed by others.

I decided to take a greater personal challenge and to accept the role of art and PSHE teacher in a secure unit for serious young male offenders. By this time, I felt an inner confidence, that my embedded knowledge would enable me to work comfortably alongside these incarcerated young men. I believed that I might have

the skills and experience to enrich their lives with compassion and unconditional regard (Rogers, 1951), through the media of art.

This was my most profound teaching experience as I had an opportunity to experience and gain an insight into the potential of even restricted lives such as these young men lived after being sentenced for serious crimes. I believe that I was able to use my imagined possibilities to believe in them, gain their trust and to enrich their lives through developing their creativity while demonstrating love and kindness in a cold and hard environment. (**Appendix 5:** The Secure Unit Demonstrating love and kindness and learning my limits).

My desire to be a catalyst for change through changing hearts and minds, continued to develop. I created opportunities for taking responsibility for challenging discrimination and specifically racism. When working with a small anti racist charity, I developed materials using active learning methods as a vehicle to challenge professionals and parents. (**Appendix 6:** The Anti Racist Charity).

In the early 90s, there was much debate about political correctness and discomfort around saying the wrong thing. This small organisation had already been reported on in the national press about objecting to the sale of golliwogs in toyshops, racism had become a very sensitive tissue.

I was aware that as a white anti racist trainer, I would need to be able to articulate sound justification. I went to hear an exiled Black South African speak about the 'Ideology of White Supremacy', a term used in academic studies of racial power which describes a perceived system of structural racism that gives advantage to white people over others, regardless of the presence of racism (**Appendix 7:** The Ideology of White Supremacy). I gave a key note speech at an education authority diversity conference which demonstrated my philosophy, values and training style (**Appendix 8:** Power point slides from Key Note Speech of Early Years Conference on 'Diversity')

I moved to the Civil Service as a substance misuse adviser in the Home Office. It was an enormous cultural shift from education but I felt confident and competent that my embodied knowledge of working with young people and professionals, as well as my participative methods to engage an audience, would equip me well for this latest challenge.

I found that I was drawn to the vulnerable cohort of drug and alcohol users, researching and consulting with users and treatment providers to develop effective ways of reducing use and consequently harm.

In the last years of my Home Office career, I volunteered to take on the new responsibility for the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVA) agenda. My consequent involvement with the region's Muslim communities triggered in me such passion towards bringing justice to these maligned communities that I began to realise that my role in the civil service was continuing to stifle my creativity and compromising my values of inclusive cultural competence. By now I had developed a network of committed and engaged colleagues from the Muslim community and was able to work alongside Imams, activists and concerned individuals who valued the opportunity to have a voice, be heard and supported through difficult events. These included the crisis in Gaza and the two young radical bombers in the South West.

Despite these two vulnerable young men being both white and Muslim converts, the the governments increasingly targeted agenda risked a return to alienation and disengagement by the Muslim community. I realised that this was a catalyst for change and that I needed to remain authentic and distance myself from being a living contradiction and I left. Since then I have immersed myself in returning to being a practitioner and working alongside BME communities.

This was so liberating and I have not looked back, following paths that have involved me with many BME community projects including speaking at conferences

(Appendixes 9 and 10), running a new migrant service forum, presenting at a

conference in Brussels: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgE204Hn-S0 (3.50),

lecturing, running courses for young Somali women and since, developing expertise in working closely to sustain and enhance BME elders social groups, being an advocate and getting their voice heard. I continue to contribute to my developing practice and knowledge creation.

Conclusion as active learner learning through knowledge creating research

I have described through this paper how my embodied knowledge and educational experience alongside learners, particularly those who are vulnerable, marginalised and stigmatised, has contributed to my developing practice and knowledge creation with BME communities and living my value of inclusive cultural competence.

I have demonstrated how I used an action reflection method described by Whitehead (2008) as a systematic process of forming problems from practice and seeking to solve them. I have repeatedly found myself as a living contradiction and sought to refine my practice over time. In order to live by my emerging values of inclusive cultural competence, 'I chose a possibility to act on, acted and evaluated the effectiveness of what I was doing in terms of my communications with my pupils' (Whitehead, 2008).

Through my writing, I have developed my understanding of how this accumulated experience has equipped me with cultural competence and confidence, which

enables me to have imagined possibilities, as (Lederach, 2005) would describe ‘moral imagination’.

In the course of my research I have clarified and communicated my embodied values as explanatory principles in my explanation of my educational influences. I have traced the time-line of opportunities and career choices taken, that provided evidence of the dramatic influence that my core values have had on my decisions to change direction and manoeuvre towards working alongside and on behalf of black and minority ethnic communities (BME) and other marginalised groups towards justice.

I have applied the four criteria of social validity suggested by Habermas (1976) which are providing a comprehensive account, achieved through my chronological narrative of the influences charting the critical incidents and learning over my lifetime; as containing the necessary evidence to back up my assertions by providing narratives of critical incidents and multimedia examples of some of the issues discussed. I have described my knowledge creation of my value of ‘inclusive cultural competence’ as explication of my values-based assumptions about ‘educational influence’; and have demonstrated through my stories from a lifelong career, how I have continued to being committed to living my values fully and authentically as living theory (Whitehead, 1985) researcher. I am making public my research story to enable others to evaluate its validity. This action learning is my living theory methodology.

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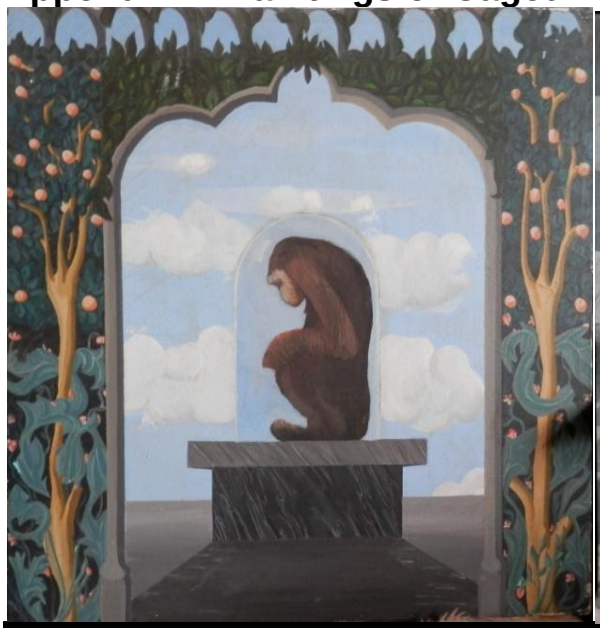
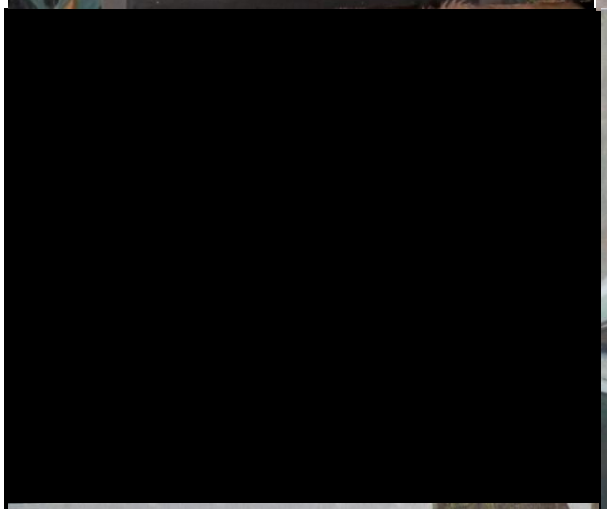
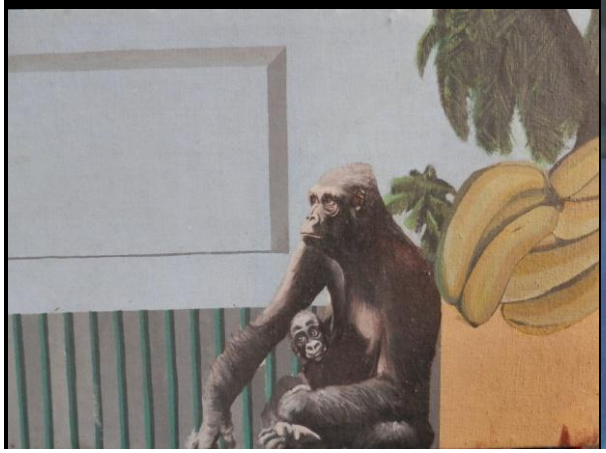
APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Paintings of Caged Apes by Shelagh Hetreed 1971-3







Appendix 2: Late 80s - Delivering 'Active Learning' (Developmental Group Work) (Button)

After a decade of teaching, I left the classroom to take on an advisory role, introducing active learning and particularly drug education across a county. I had been excited by the introduction of a pastoral system being introduced to schools based on Leslie Button's Tutorial Work. Button described his work as 'helping children in their growth and development, in their social skills, their personal resources and in the kind of relationships they establish with other people' (Button 1978). I was first part of a county team, seconded for a day a week to promote these student-centred methods across the county, demonstrating the techniques in schools and receiving national training along the way.

For me, this initiative offered the opportunity for me to enrich my practice. I was recommended to apply for a new post of County Drugs Education Co-ordinator and consequently spent the next four years learning and delivering the techniques of active learning, attending regular nationally arranged 'Tacade' (www.Tacade.com) courses, promoting and demonstrating these effective strategies. I felt equipped with the tools necessary to make a difference to pupils including those with barriers to learning. I designed and delivered a wide range of programmes and courses to teachers in all settings, as well as giving observed demonstration lessons to pupils. I also planned and delivered many parents evenings on sensitive subject such as drugs and sex education, inviting the parents to go through the same participatory card sorting and attitude continuum exercises. I could see the power that these techniques had for challenging attitudes, correcting misinformation and changing hearts and minds. I had the evidence through course evaluations that these tools (active learning techniques) could be applicable and effective in a wide range of contexts. I had found an effective method to facilitate learning, which went beyond 'chalk and talk' and was inclusive.
In a sixth form resource edited by Wells (1985), giving the rationale for the preference for small group work, it states: 'It is the purpose of active tutorial work to provide pupils with practical situations where they are in constant interaction with others, can try new approaches, experiment in new roles, develop insights, come to know and to help themselves and seek to establish personal goals'.

I sometimes meet professionals who remember my courses from twenty years ago and the impact on their practice, so memorable were the methods for bringing about positive change with learners. My professional mission became to practice and share these methods to impact on lives, including the young and also to continue to communicate this message of hope by teaching by example. I would bring these tools to every aspect of my life in a wide range of settings beyond the classroom.

I have used group work and active learning methods as an anti racist/ diversity trainer, throughout my time in the Home Office, working with BME communities, conferences, as a tutor for CPD day courses across the country, during a consultation with elderly BMEs, running a primary after school drama group, running life coaching days for women (Journeying), workshops on many themes and as a research tool at a young peoples Apex conference.

Active Learning is a constant and important part of my communication and facilitation of learning.

Appendix 3: Mary's story.

Mary and her sister Ruth were pupils at my secondary school in the early 80s. Mary would be described today as SEN but then she was in the 'bottom stream' and labelled 'remedial'. I could never put my finger on why these girls were so isolated. They were unkempt, poorly dressed and not very clean but they were sweet and friendly girls towards adults and the teaching staff. I knew Mary well in my tutor role.

I can remember a nagging feeling about their inability to integrate with their peers. I just didn't know why they were unpopular and I didn't know how to make it better.

It was 6 years after I had moved on from the school that I met Mary with her daughter aged six, on her way to school. I was surprised and delighted that Mary looked so happy and had obviously flourished as a mum.

We talked about how her daughter loved art, about her older sister Ruth who was also now a mum and about how Mary had loved the art room when at school.
I asked her if she had a partner. Mary stopped in her tracks. 'Oh, she said, Mrs Jones didn't tell you then'. I sensed I had stumbled into confidential territory. I confirmed that Mrs Jones had said nothing.

Mary came right out with it. 'My father is my little girl's dad' she said. 'He's in prison now, I am dreading him coming out. I love my little girl to bits' she added 'but I don't ever want a relationship!'

I met Mary several years later and she did have a partner- and another child. She introduced me to him, adding that he understood her past as he had lived through something similar himself. Many years on, Mary's children are adults and Mary works with her sister Ruth near my home. They are still looking out for each other. Mary frequently suffers from bouts of depression and her sister supports her.

I have defined this story as a critical incident for me because I carry a sense of disappointment in my own practice, that Mary went through school being continually raped by her natural father and I didn't know.

Each time I bump in to Mary, I reflect on my own shortcomings and have the importance of my own core values in supporting vulnerable and excluded young people reinforced.

Appendix 4 : Inclusive drama productions

Imagined possibilities, through including substance misusing truants in a school play. They were delighted to take a full part in the play 'I Scream'.

I sought out the marginalised- the substance misusers (glue sniffers) truants, those with barriers to learning and the chronically shy. I was sure that being part of a production could be a rich and life affirming experience, as it had been for me when I had joined a street theatre as a new teacher and had continued to grow and love drama and acting. Performance was not just for the confident.

These fantasy productions were my early gestures towards inclusion. The validation took place through the joyful engagement of many young people who successfully took part. One girl with quite severe learning barriers was an owl, dressed in a fine brown costume and was able to 'hoot' on cue. She glowed with pleasure! The boys who were always in the wrong place at the wrong time and were absent from most lessons were transformed into circus clowns, never missed a rehearsal and were full of pride at their performances. I had found a vehicle to include and take people along with me. For some students, these performances might be rare joyful memories in an otherwise negative school life. These crazy drama productions were proud chapters in my teaching history.

The first play, about a girl who stumbles across a chalk mine and meets 7 (very tall) dwarfs who say 'you're gurt white', to which she replies 'how did you know my name?'

Appendix 5: The Secure Unit- Demonstrating love and kindness and learning my limits

The boys at the secure unit were aged between 14 and 18. Those who reached 18 were transferred to adult institutions. Their offences rendered them at harm to the public or to themselves. These ranged from arson, repeated motoring offences to grievous bodily harm (GBH), manslaughter and rape. My first impressions were how 'ordinary' they appeared and behaved. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I saw from their records that many were from deprived backgrounds and had troubled pasts. I also observed the level of evident special needs and mental health problems, though there seemed no diagnosis (label) or special provision. These boys had been assigned a singular affiliation (Sen 2006), of being simply classified as young offenders.

Many locked doors separated each room, staff carried many keys including a panic alarm. The students appeared vulnerable, naive, abandoned and disengaged – possibly victims themselves before making victims of others. I practiced unconditional regard (Rogers 1951) but was disturbed by my feelings towards 3 convicted rapists. I found it hard to suppress revulsion of their crime. Their offences were concealed but for the professionals that were aware, the boys were clearly stigmatised. I found it hard to separate the boys from their horrific and violent acts. I was a living contradiction, experiencing the limits of the term 'unconditional', realising that their actions set them apart, testing the limits of my own tolerance Goffman (1968). Working at the secure unit was my steepest learning curve.

There were daily opportunities to build relationships as the teacher role included undertaking extraneous duties on top of the teaching day. One week I would be on the rota that involved arriving for 7 am each morning to knock on locked cell doors, get them up and out and be part of the team who basically stood guard outside of the bathroom area, then accompanied them to breakfast and school assembly. Other weekly rotas were staying in the evenings, offering engaging informal creative activities or just being alongside them as they listened to music, watched TV or just chilled. This duty also included the bedtime regime, getting them back into their cells and lock up for the night.

I remember a boy called Lee. His offences were incessantly taking and driving away vehicles. He was a boy who was disliked, was shunned by other boys, had poor dexterity, was humourless and 'needy'. His mother rejected him and refused all telephone calls. Whereas most boys' cells were full of tape recorders, TVs and 'ghetto blaster' radios provided by their families, Lee had nothing in his room.

When he was assessed as able to go out on a one to one basis to buy jeans with a social worker, he immediately ran, took a car and drove over 100 miles to his home city where he was found by the police, in a phone box ringing his mother. Though he was hard to like, my heart went out to this boy. Though having poor fine motor skills, he enjoyed the art room where he could feel encouraged and included. When I left my post, he looked around his cell and gave me a small poorly made plaster cast of a black cat, with paint splodge eyes, one of his few possessions made with one of the evening tutors. It now takes pride of place displayed on my shelf, a reminder of the vulnerability of so many young people and the hope for the future of the importance of loving kindness.

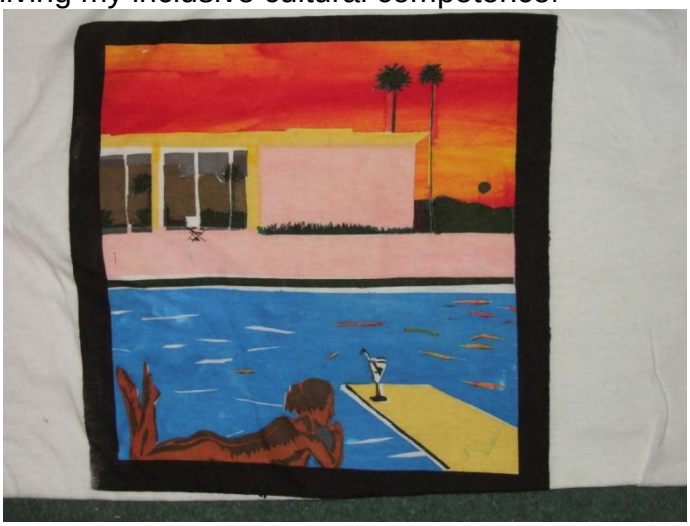
Appendix 5 contd: The secure Unit

Lee's present to me, one of his few possessions, a plaster cat.

On some occasions, I took boys out one to one or in small groups, once they were assessed as being safe to do so. We went to the local shopping centre, three boys and myself in my car. I remember needing the loo and instructing the boys to stand outside as I was not supposed to leave them. There were some strange looks as these 'bovver boys' (shaved heads, braces and long laced boots) were gathered around a Ladies loo, following me as I emerged. I remember feeling totally at ease, because we knew and trusted each other. I was able to build a strong relationship with these boys through having contact outside of the school day. Consequently, my teaching them art and particularly screen printing, turned into a passion for several of them.

I had great success in unlocking dormant creativity with several of the boys. The trust involved in letting these former violent boys use scalpels to hand cut stencils was a calculated risk. It provided a really positive challenge and the potential for them to wear their art by printing T shirts was an added incentive. One boy began the most intricate stencil cutting that I have ever found. He was African Caribbean, sentenced for a terrible manslaughter of two elderly people. He had been paid to post a fire bomb, having been told incorrectly that the couple were out.

He loved David Hockney's swimming pool paintings and reproduced one and printed it, using hand cut paper stencils. His version had added a bikini clad black girl. It was a technical and creative triumph. I have my own print of it and another treasured possession. I now realise upon reflection that this was the beginning of living my inclusive cultural competence.



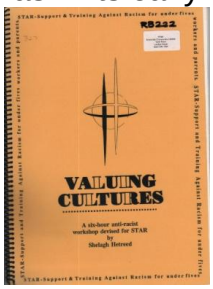
T Shirt printed by hand cut stencils

Appendix 6: Living my values of inclusive cultural competence focusing on Early Years- Writing resources and delivering training for an anti racist charity

A chance invitation to a childrens multi cultural bookshop evening opened up a whole new opportunity to share my values of equality and justice and to develop inclusive cultural competence. I was now a mother of two small children, lecturing part time at the local university on Early Years Development (being just one step of the students each week, through studying and preparing each session the day before). This was opening up a new and very relevant world of knowledge and understanding of the developmental stages of my own two daughters, both adopted as toddlers and bringing with them a 'package' of developmental delays and difficulties, perhaps I now realised, from pre natal and post natal neglect.

The discovery of being able to source 'positive image', 'inclusive' and multicultural books was an exciting revelation for me. Just realising that there was a whole industry and movement out there that shared my values and the opportunity to become involved at the Early Years stage encouraged me to engage with a local anti racist charity. As a mother of young children, I saw that this was an opportunity to bring my skills and experience to a new and important agenda.
I was able to research, study, discuss and share my values with a like minded group. Before long I was designing and running training courses across the south west and beyond for early years workers and parents, using my participatory methods. I found that I was having South Asian and African Caribbean workers on my courses, an interpreter sometimes being present, translating the course content into South Asian languages. I was delighted to be asked to write a training resource pack, for which funding had been found. I embraced this opportunity, using the knowledge of which exercises were most successful through evaluations, to develop a resource that could be used by any organisation.
My embodied knowledge of participatory methods, working with sensitive issues and incorporating knowledge, attitudes and skills gave me the framework to build on, providing me with the skills, knowledge and values that I had been living for the past decade or more. My imagined possibilities gave me hope for the future in believing that this resource would have the capacity to change hearts and minds.

So in 1992, I wrote a training resource 'Valuing Cultures' which combined my expanding knowledge base of anti racism theory of the time and my preference for using active learning methods to encourage engagement with an audience. This resource was reviewed in a national magazine, bringing requests for me to run the course across the country and then we sold copies as far as Apartheid South Africa. The concept of providing an inclusive and positive environment for preschool children was in its early days and we found ourselves at the cutting edge of offering



training. I progressed to developing courses for dual heritage parents, nursery nurses and multi-agency professionals. The later course was titled 'Celebrating The Rhythm of Life', which inspired multicultural day festivals for

children at annual fringe events. I continued to listen and learn from many participants, read and attended conferences, building on my embedded knowledge and continuing to inform my practice. I grappled with the dilemma of the tendency for multi-cultural education to become ‘exotic’, picking and choosing from countries, festivals and faiths and embellishing them with snippets of culture, tradition and race. It was a melting pot that resulted in well-meaning practitioners saying that they were ‘doing’ Divali or Eid.
My solution was to offer a cyclical overview of celebration by focusing on the commonality of feasts and festivals and to seek the commonality of the traditions e.g. light, harvest, darkness, birth, love and death. This formula has stood the test of time been a much appreciated formula and offers a flexible framework on which to ‘hang’ diversity education.

I continued to be involved with the charity as their chair, living my values of inclusive cultural competence. I scheduled monthly discussion sessions for members, where we shared our understanding and values. E.g. finding our own definition of ‘diversity’

I was invited to give a key note speech at a local authority early years conference where I focused on the importance of a strong identity (**Appendix 8**). I have returned to this important theme repeatedly and with many different audiences. The presentation received a powerful response, with several educational psychologists requesting a copy of my PowerPoint and a head teacher of South Asia origin becoming tearful as she identified with the context of the themes.

I am still asked to run sessions for nursery schools occasionally. My course is now ‘Unwrapping Diversity’. The success of these sessions (for evaluations suggest that there has been considerable learning from attending them) is because I have been able to distil the years of listening, learning, researching, studying and engaging into activities that encourage cultural competence and confidence. I am truly able to live my values and share them through my training.

Appendix 7: The Ideology of White Supremacy- Becoming a confident practitioner, practicing my own cultural competence

Ansley describes The Ideology of White Supremacy as follows:

> ‘By "white supremacy" I do not mean to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily re enacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings’ (Ansley 1997).

This speaker had a strongly held belief was that racism was everybody’s responsibility, not just for black people to become employed in the ‘black industry’ of anti racism and equalities. He suggested that we needed white anti racist trainers to work alongside other white and black people and to tackle racism together with a common goal of non-discriminatory practice.

It was this man’s endorsement that gave me legitimacy in becoming a white anti racist trainer. From then on, I have carried an authority and sense of purpose that is unshakeable. This is my living my values of inclusive cultural competence. Since that time, the accepted term is ‘Diversity’. I begin any new session with this testimony: I am not black, I am not discriminated against, but I see injustice around me and believe that everyone has a responsibility to work towards eliminating any form of discrimination regardless of age, gender, race, faith, culture or sexual orientation.

Appendix 8: PowerPoint presentation from my key note speech Early Years Conference on Diversity

Sticks & Stones……..

A minefield of terminology

- Diversity
- Culture
- Race
- Faith
- Equality
- Inclusion
- Anti bias
- Anti racist
- Multi-cultural
- Ethnicity
- Identity
- Prejudice
- Discrimination
- Labelling
- Stereotyping
- Stigma
- Exclusion
- Collusion
- Assumptions
- Bias
- Supremacy
- Anonymity

Charter of Rights

by Year 3 children in Manchester

Every child has the right:

- Not to have a fight
- To expect people to be kind
- Not to be made fun of
- Not to be made sad
- Not to be scared of the teachers
- To have friends
- Not to be scared to come to school
- To be safe

What does the media tell our children?

Gender, ethnicity, disability?

- Muslims
- Protestants
- China
- Bombings
- India
- Gypsies & Travellers
- Immigrants
- Asylum Seekers
- War
- Iraq
- Africa
- Famine
- Drugs
- Yardies
- Live Aid
- Sport
- Athletes
- Nurses
- Doctors
- Teachers
- Police officers
- Models
- Pop Stars
- Politicians

Embrace and celebrate difference!

- Culture is fluid- it is not static
- We need to treat every child differently, according to their needs
- We need to engage with their parents in order to ensure we are able to meet their needs
- We need to ensure that every child sees themselves reflected in what they see around them
- We need to provide a diverse and rich curriculum and environment for every child, to help them embrace and celebrate difference
- We need to feel confident and competent in our ability to celebrate diversity
- We need to demonstrate to children that we value them for who they are
- We need to help them feel strong in their identity

‘Celebrating The Rhythm of Life’

using the cycle of the seasons

- **Darkness into light- winter into spring**
- **New life, birth**
- **Growth**
- **Festivals of light**
- **Candles**
- **Sun, warmth**
- **Summer- a time of plenty**
- **Feasting**
- **Fresh fruit**
- **Aromas**
- **Autumn- harvest**
- **Bread- staff of life**
- **Light fading**
- **Preparation for winter**
- **Light into darkness-**
- **Staying warm- fire, heat**
- **Winter**
- **Death**
- **Hibernation**
- **Storing food, herbs, spices**
- **Festivals**

Appendix 9: Preventing Violent Extremism: the catalyst for my move towards authenticity

When I moved to the Home Office, I was immersed in the drugs agenda, working closely with the agencies that dealt with the emotional, physical and societal consequences of dependence, working strategically along a continuum of prevention through to rehabilitation. I worked alongside treatment service practitioners, education authorities, police, social services and other related organisations, successfully applying my participative meeting style, warmth and compassion to a cold and stark agenda.

Frequently I found that my values were compromised as I worked alongside colleagues who were able to shift agendas with ease, being equally efficient at town planning as they were with drugs death statistics. My increasing personal struggle with remaining authentic to my values would find me as a living contradiction (Whitehead 2008) on many occasions. I knew that I was a 'square peg in a round hole' but was tolerated for my ability to develop relationships quickly with partners and my transparency and honesty when monitoring other organisations.

My ability to 'think outside the box' and to innovate and gain essential trust across agencies, maintained my value as a team member. However every now and again, I would feel the all too familiar discomfort of feeling compromised by practice that went against my values. Diversity was an important issue within this context, specifically recruitment and retention across minority communities and addressing the accusation that many drug services were institutionally racist or discriminatory through their assumptions and practice. I lent my expertise and authority to set up forums, focus groups and to ensure appropriate representation and consultation for new initiatives. I ensure that monitoring systems included questions about race and diversity. I stayed because I believed that in a small way, I was able to make a difference to the diversity agenda by offering my expertise and skills in consultation processes to inform policy.

With the new strategy of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVA), I took on this sensitive agenda area as the regional adviser. This enabled me to more fully live my inclusive cultural competence and provided the opportunity to research my practice as an active learner.

At the time of the London bombings, I was seconded to the Home Office in London and witnessed the indiscriminate suspicion of anyone who was Muslim or even South Asian. My Muslim colleague experienced people moving away from her on the underground and she suffered verbal abuse in the streets. So when the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVA) agenda was included in the agenda for my unit, I volunteered to take the regional lead. I was aware that this was probably the most sensitive agenda for me yet.

However, my history of working effectively and inclusively across faiths, cultures and races assured me that my values-led practice of inclusive cultural competence, respect and justice, would enable me to gain trust with the Muslim communities and make a positive difference. I held interviews, gave presentations, attended meetings and listened carefully to gauge feelings and establish the needs and wishes of the Muslim communities across the City.

In contrast, some of my colleagues demonstrated great discomfort at the prospect of making appointments to meet community members, and were reluctant to use the term 'PVE' for fear of causing offence. My approach to Muslim colleagues had been that we all (inclusive) wanted to see an end to terrorism and feel safe. I made no distinction between this being a perceived feeling of Muslims and non Muslims. The response wherever I went was one of relief and encouragement, that someone was taking action a) to distance the Muslim community from being suspected of acts of terrorism and b) and relief that the government were looking strategically at how to eradicate extremists. This demonstrated the advantage of having developed inclusive cultural competence over years of appropriate practice.

I have reflected on my practice at that time and what I did to gain so much trust. My cultural competence informed me of appropriateness such as wearing a scarf when meeting in a Mosque, ensuring Halal meat at meetings, arranged a prayer room at every venue and avoided Fridays and Ramadan for regional events, all to acknowledging and respect the Muslim faith.

I was able to make contact with and map key organisations, Islamic faith groups and individuals. My approach was always totally transparent about my agenda (PVE) and purpose and was always greeted with warmth and enthusiasm. I was able to work comfortably alongside Muslim colleagues, demonstrating deep and genuine respect for Islam and responding to their needs through the government agenda. I still feel comfortable using the Arabic greeting 'Asalam Alikum' (God be with you) when I meet Muslims colleagues and find myself adding 'Shalah' (God willing) in conversations without a second thought.

I have found many parallels with my own Catholic faith- with women covering their heads at their place of worship, fasting during Lent and praying in another language (Latin). I am interested in learning more about Islam and the Koran and am fascinated by the fact that Mary and Jesus are mentioned more in the Koran than in the Bible.

I gauged my success by being invited to make key note speeches at Muslim organisation AGMs, being cheered by 100 Muslims at a regional conference and being commissioned to run a life skills course for Somali young women and work with another group at a Somali after school club, the commission coming from a totally Somali organisation.
I then worked with new migrant community organisations to develop a consortium with the aim of raising their profile and was business partner with a Somali national to develop the organisation.

I was invited to the EU to present on both the Somali Young women project and the New Migrant communities work at the Poverty and Social Inclusion Conference in Brussels in 2010
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgE204Hn-S0)

The same year I also presented at two conferences at UWE, The Third Global Ethics' conference (Appendix 10) and 'Beyond Borders'.
Since then I have undertaken a fixed term contract with a large city council to undertake a consultation with BME elders and again with a third sector organisation to support sustainability of BME Elders clubs across a city.

Appendix 8 contd. Preventing Violent Extremism

1.

2.

3.

4.

Photographs:

1. Speaking at a Muslim organisation AGM

2. Presenting at a large regional PVE Muslim Conference which I ran and hosted for over 100 Muslims

3. Wearing traditional Somali robes for Young Somali Womens Fashion show

4. Delivering a positive identity workshop for Muslim young women from across the region

Appendix 10: Abstract for the Third Global Ethics Association (IGEA) (referred to in Appendix 9)

Conference University of West of England
2010

Panel: Muslim gendered identities and human rights
Abstract Title: *Moving beyond 'dualistic polarities' to respect complexity in the identities of young Muslim women, growing up in the UK. A practitioners view of plural identities.*

Short Description:
Lederach (2005) described how we are inclined to artificially describe and contain social reality through 'either/ or' categories (dualistic polarities). As a society, we are conscious of the danger of stereotyping but may still make assumptions based on our attitudes and values towards the information we possess about 'other' faiths, nationalities and cultures. We can inadvertently reduce the complexity of any of these multiple identities, to a narrow and rigid construct of a few learned attributes. The work described in this paper concerns the author's exploration with groups of young Muslim women of the makeup of their individual identities and what shapes them, as they grow up as Muslims in the UK and take their influences from a wide range of popular local cultures which are mixed with established traditional values. This dialogue takes place through a programme of practical engagement and reflective critical analysis on the theme of identity.

Longer Description:
Amartya Sen (2006) describes 'singular affiliation' as a form of reductionism that assumes individuals belong to one collective only. He suggests that this view replaces the 'richness of leading an abundant human life with formulaic narrowness'. In the case of these young women, it is the inability to look beyond the hijaab or other faith/race/ cultural identity, to allow the individual to possess 'plural identities'. He talks of the critical importance of seeing the role of choice in determining cogency and relevance of particular identities which are diverse.

The 'Identity' programme is designed to 'start where the participants are' and uses visual prompts and tools to generate discussion around personal agendas. The resulting rich discussions have included racial identity, faith and beliefs, intergenerational 'shifts' and differences, relationships, racism and discrimination, ambitions, culture, loyalties, values, barriers, irritations, challenges and opportunities.

Through taking the cue from the young women themselves, initiatives are developed that enable them to express themselves creatively through culturally appropriate activities:
a) Their passion for fashion is culminating in a fashion show. A publication will consequently be produced, using photographic illustrations of the costumes, explaining to Muslim and non Muslims alike, the traditions of Somali dress codes . A further publication will explore the importance and rationale for the wearing of the hijaab.
b) A photographic journal will be exhibited which will seek to demonstrate being a minority and different and also being in the majority and the same.

Annex 10 contd. Third Global Ethics Conference:

This paper will describe the methodology and the findings from the programme demonstrating the importance of engaging with plural identities to enrich cultural connections and facilitate shared understanding.

Key words:
Identity
Dualistic Polarities
Community Cohesion
Plural Identities

Biography:
Shelagh Hetreed M.Ed has worked for many years in the field of Diversity, Inclusion, Anti Racism and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) as an adviser in the Home Office and Government Office as well as working with a charity and in educational settings.
She is now a consultant and trainer, working with migrant community services on a range of key issues around Community Cohesion and empowerment.
Shelagh's interest as a consultant and educator is in celebrating diversity and empowering individuals through the creative use of photography and performance to educate, illustrate and deliver powerful messages. She is currently developing materials for exploring identity with both adults and young people and has most recently been running Life skills courses with young Somali women.

Panel for my workshop at the 'The Third Global Ethics' Conference made up of four of my female Muslim colleagues