



## Project Report



### Information

1. Project Name: Libraries of Sanctuary 2020-21
2. Dates: Jan 2020 – November 2021
3. Venue/s or digital platform: Bolton High Street Library, Manchester Central Library, Chadderton Library, Bolton Central Library, Northmoor Library, Oldham Central Library, Forum Library, Longsight Library, Beswick Library.
4. Partners: GMCA, MCC, CAN, Crossing Footprints, Bolton Library Service, Oldham Library Service, Manchester Library Service.
5. Artists: Serge Tebu, Emmanuela Yogolelo, Seyed Ali Jaber and the Hamdel Ensemble, Britannia Rumba, Arian Sadr, Mei Yuk Wong, Michael Cretu, Mina Salama, Kani Kamil, Kooj Chuhan, Apu Chowdhury, Rabia Begum, Sarah Yaseen, Murad Chowdhury, Masresha Wondmu, Gloria Saya, Imani Jendai, Sens Sagna, Tshepe Tshepala, Lubna Ali and Fatimah Fagihassan.
6. Other artists and staff, including partners: Arvind Mistry (design), Clive Hunte (photography), Ricardo Vilela (videography and live streaming), Shirlaine Forrest (photographer), Klaus-Dieter Michel and Maya Chowdhry (Climate Connections artists).

7. Producer/s: Katherine Rogers, Kooj Chuhan + Assistant Producer: Remi Adefeyisan
8. Funders: MCC, Arts Council, CILIP, Great Big Green Week.

## Data

1. Number of artists, participants and audience and their data (diversity info and postcode or where they live)

Artists = 33 refugee or ethnically diverse artists employed (Bangladeshi, Barbadian, Ethiopian, Chinese, Cameroonian, Congolese, Iranian, Kurdish, Pakistani, Roma, Egyptian, Senegalese, Kashmiri).

Producers = 3 (1 x Indian, 1 White British, 1 x Black British)

Audiences for Artists showcases = 398 (of which 172 were online)

Participants for Welcome events = 255

**Total Audience and Participants for Welcome events and artist showcases = 653**

Of audience members who responded, 25% were African, 22% were Pakistani, 22% were White British, 17% were from a range of other Asian heritages (Indian, Bangladeshi and Iranian), 14% were from other diverse heritages.



## Climate Connections

Participants for Climate Connections workshops = 45 (25 Pakistani, 2 Bangladeshi, 2 African, 16 White British)

Live audiences for additional Climate Connections Events = 51

Total live exhibition visitors (UK only) = 15,818

Total Live Exhibition Visitors (including Germany) = 17,818

Total online video views = 1,702 (of which 1,530 were for the artist and community video commissions)

Climate Connections audience and participants = 19,616

Combined Audience and Participant Total = 20,269

## 2. Number and length of sessions or events and attendance

- 6 x Welcome events (2-3 hours in length)
- 3 x Artist Showcases (half day events)
- 17 workshops and 2 online events (Climate Connections)

## 3. Library Attendance

- Of 152 people surveyed, 47% said it was the first time they had attended the library.
- 99% of people surveyed said they would return to the library.



## Summary of Project

### 1. Introduction - Aims, Objectives and Rationale.

To support Greater Manchester's Libraries of Sanctuary status, Community Arts North West (CAN) in partnership with Crossing Footprints and Bolton, Manchester, and Oldham library services, worked together to deliver a series of bespoke, cultural events designed to engage with new migrant and sanctuary seeking communities. This included:

- Three artistic showcases at Main Libraries
- Six Welcome events at Community Libraries – A series of participatory events across Oldham, Bolton and Manchester aimed at supporting libraries in their ambition to become welcoming spaces for new migrant communities.

The events spanned live music with internationally acclaimed musicians, including Britannia Rumba and members of Manchester International Roots Orchestra (MIRO), to art and digital showcases, discussion, dance, family-friendly art workshops through to creative climate change campaigning.

### Libraries of Sanctuary Overall Programme Aims

- ▶ Raising awareness of what it means to be a sanctuary seeker with staff, volunteers and library users;
- ▶ Embedding 'welcome, celebration and inclusion' across the service, addressing barriers to access, empowering sanctuary seekers, etc
- ▶ Sharing good practice, encouraging other libraries to become libraries of sanctuary.

### 2. Description of activities and interesting developments – How was/is the project delivered? Creative and other outcomes and outputs.

The programme was initially planned to be delivered between January and May 2020. To this end, CAN facilitated a co-design meeting with library staff and migrant and refugee heritage artists early in 2020 in which a structure and values for the programme were co-designed.

Following this, CAN developed a menu of potential performances and workshop activities for the Libraries to choose from and contracted Kooj Chuhan from Crossing Footprints to produce and manage the overall programme.

Kooj made contact with all the libraries and designed and set up the initial series of Welcome Events and Artist Showcases, delivered a very successful Welcome event at Bolton High Street Library, and was on the cusp of delivering the first artist showcase at Manchester Central Library when Covid-19 struck.

We then had to cancel all planned activity, and press pause on the project delivery due to lockdown and very intense restrictions in Greater Manchester.

This break in activity, whilst very challenging for everyone, did enable Crossing Footprints to develop a successful ACE funding bid to support Oldham Library Service's successful Building Bridges proposal to deliver work in Oldham and partner libraries in Germany with new migrant communities. This bid had a climate justice focus which was a strong area of interest for Oldham Library service and their partner libraries in Germany. The bid also complimented and strengthened Libraries of Sanctuary welcome activity, thereby adding value and project management capacity to the full programme, without which the original budget would have been insufficient.

We re-visited Libraries of Sanctuary programming in early Spring 2021 and attempted to re-schedule activity at this point, but Covid restrictions made it very difficult to deliver live work until late Spring 2021. Thus the events programme was again rescheduled to take place between July and October 2021.

However, Climate Connections activity through Crossing Footprint's partnership bid did take place from March – September 2021 enabling engagement with diverse communities in Oldham and Germany to take place. This engagement was delivered via Zoom and a series of socially distanced workshops with Adult Learning groups and Fatima Women's Association in Oldham. The workshops led towards a series of mini-social media films being produced engaging a diverse range of lesser heard voices in issues of climate change and climate justice. For a full project report on this fascinating and important work, please contact Crossing Footprints.

### **Libraries of Sanctuary Delivery**

Together with Crossing Footprints and library teams, from July to October 2021, CAN designed and delivered a series of live Artist Showcases and Welcome Events featuring music, art, discussion, social media films, poetry and family friendly workshops in Bolton, Manchester, and Oldham Libraries. One Welcome event took place pre-lockdown at Bolton High Street Library.

### **Artist Showcases**

#### **Saturday 17 July – Manchester Central Library Seyed Ali Jaber and the Hamdel Ensemble**

We launched the Libraries of Sanctuary artist showcases with one of the first live music events after lockdown. Highly acclaimed Sufi musicians, Seyed Ali Jaber and the Hamdel Ensemble performed two socially distanced performances to a sell-out crowd at Manchester Central Library with contemplative Persian music inspired by the 13<sup>th</sup> century poet Rumi and Sufism. The audience had high numbers of Iranians, as well as other diverse audience members. The

feedback from artists and audiences about this event indicated how delighted people were to experience live music again.



**Saturday 18 September – Bolton Central Library  
Britannia Rumba**

The second in the Artist Showcase series featured two performances by high energy, Congolese band, Britannia Rumba performing African and Latin sounds and featuring leading Congolese musicians living in Greater Manchester. The band has toured all over the UK, Europe, and Africa. This event which coincided with a food festival at the library, had excellent audience attendance including a large contingent of local African families. The band had people up and dancing and which was a real tonic after long months of lockdown.



## Saturday 25 September – Oldham Central Library

### Voices for Action

The third showcase took the form of a mini-festival led by Crossing Footprints, with a world perspective on climate change and its impact on people. The event featured:

- African music, storytelling and reflections on environmental destruction in DRC from singer, Emmanuela Yogolelo
- Contemporary Sufi music based on her climate conversations with Pakistani women from Sarah Yaseen,
- An interactive eco-art installation led by Rabia Begum, with Lubna Ali and Fatimah Fagihassan.
- A sharing of micro films designed for social media from Murad Chowdhury, and diverse participants in Oldham and Germany.
- Live and online discussion with Oldham audiences and partner groups in Germany.

### Welcome Events

From March 2020 to October 2021 we ran a series of family friendly welcome events featuring art, music and dance workshops and performances in Oldham and Manchester. There was obviously a big break between the first pre-Covid event, and the main series delivered in Autumn 2021 and the latter events had to be ticketed and numbers limited in keeping with restrictions of the time.



### **Saturday 7 March 2020 – Bolton High Street Library**

Delivered prior to lockdown, this event took the form of a family friendly welcome party, with food and engaging workshop activity including West African percussion delivered by Sens Sagna and West African dance delivered by Imani Jendai. The event engaged strongly with diverse, migrant communities and was very well received.

### **Saturday 11 September 2021 - Chadderton Library in Oldham**

A live international music performance and workshop session was delivered by musicians, Michael Cretu (Romania) and Mina Salama (Egypt) of the internationally acclaimed Manchester International Roots Orchestra (MIRO) plus a doll-making workshop with Kurdish visual artist, Kani Kamil. The event was attended by diverse local audiences but we feel it suffered through programming shortly after the summer break, so was smaller in attendance than subsequent sessions.

### **Saturday 2 October – Northmoor Library in Oldham**

We hosted family friendly workshops with Bangladeshi heritage artists, Apu Chowdury and Rabia Begum. Rabia Begum ran an art and poetry session that created beautiful decorations on the library's bookshelves inspired by nature and climate change, whilst Apu Chowdury entranced families with the tale of *The Monkey and the Greedy Crocodile*. The event engaged strongly with local Bangladeshi audiences.

### **Saturday 16 October – Forum Library in Wythenshawe**

A family-friendly sub-Saharan singing and percussion workshop and performance by Amani artists, Tagne Tebu and Emmanuela Yogolelo, in an exciting afternoon at Forum library. Families also got involved in a doll-making workshop delivered by Congolese maker, Gloria Saya. The event engaged with sanctuary seekers and was supported by an access budget. It benefitted from being in a very public space which meant that passers-by were also able to drop in and engage with the activities.

### **Saturday 23 October – Longsight Library**

Families in Longsight enjoyed an afternoon of performance with the chance to join in with Ethiopian dance and learn circus skills with Masresha Getahun Wondmu. There was Persian percussion with Arian Sadr, and an Art of Protest art workshop with artist, Mei Yuk Wong. The lead member of staff for the library was unfortunately unwell for this event, so we were unable to administer access costs but the event nonetheless had good attendance by diverse local audiences. We feel there is possible learning in relation to the upstairs location of the sessions which meant they were less visible to passers-by who might otherwise have engaged.

### **Saturday 30 October – Beswick Library**

A family-friendly workshop and performance featuring an African percussion and West African dance workshop with Imani Jendai and Tagne Tebu and a doll-making workshop with Gloria Saya delighted library users in Beswick. There was strong local audience engagement and the

event was supported by an access budget which also enabled sanctuary seeking audience members to attend.

### **Climate Connections Delivery (through partnership bid)**

Led by Crossing Footprints, the project delivered a series of climate justice related, digital art workshops involving diverse community groups, connected with Oldham library, and partner libraries in Germany.

Participants from new migrant and established communities, generated their own micro-story to share as part of a social media campaign, connecting climate imagery and text as short video pieces.

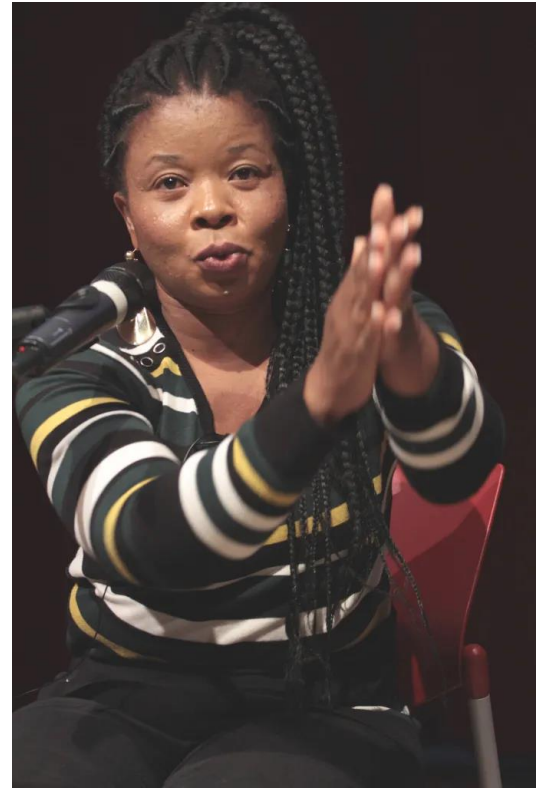
The work created within communities was further developed and edited to create a digital installation, alongside a series of micro-commissions by three refugee and migrant-heritage artists; Emmanuela Yogolelo, Murad Chowdhury, Sarah Yaseen, alongside an art installation by Rabia Begum.

These micro-commissions were shared alongside other workshops and artistic contributions at Oldham Central Library as part of the Voices for Action showcase.

It was great to see creative work addressing climate justice issues from culturally diverse and under-represented voices from Greater Manchester and Germany as part of this event which also engaged with around migrant and working class audience members, many of whom had been part of the workshops. The micro-stories were shared on social media in the run up to and during COP26, and the digital installation was displayed at Manchester and Oldham Central Libraries.

For more information about Climate Connections see <https://crossingfootprints.com/climate-connections/>





Detailed timeline and milestones met (when was the project/phase launched, delivered and completed)

#### January 2020

- Initial planning
- Co-design meeting with libraries and artists
- Menu of activity developed
- Contracting of Producer

#### February 2020

- Programme planning and liaising with libraries
- Welcome events and showcases fully planned

## **March 2020**

- Bolton High Street Welcome event delivered
- Manchester Central Showcase fully planned and contracted but had to be cancelled due to Covid

## **March –December 2020**

- PROGRAMME PAUSED DUE TO COVID

## **Feb - March 2021**

- New contract for producer
- Liaising with libraries
- Welcome events and showcases planned for Spring 2021

## **March – July 2021**

- EVENTS RESCHEDULED TO AUTUMN 2021 APART FROM MANCHESTER CENTRAL LIBRARY
- Climate Connections workshops delivered live and online in Oldham, and online to Germany
- Planning, marketing, risk assessments, contracting for Manchester Central Showcase

## **July 2021**

- Manchester Central Library showcase delivered

## **August 2021**

- Planning and project set up of Autumn series.
- Publicity design for Autumn series of events
- Marketing plan
- Video editing and Artist Commission Production

## **September – October 2021**

- Fine planning
- Contracting
- Risk assessments
- Marketing campaign
- Delivery of 5 Welcome events
- Delivery of 2 Artist Showcase events

- Participant evaluation
- Documentation of events

### November – December 2021

- Evaluation and Report writing

### 3. Budget breakdown

<b>INCOME</b>	
MCC original Budget	£12,000
MCC additional budget	£3,617
Climate Connections monies from ACE	£15,000
Building Bridges Budget	£4,000
Great Big Green Week	£1,750
CAN contribution to Climate Connections workshops in Oldham	£1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£37,367</b>

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
<b>Welcome days</b>	<b>Total</b>
Project coordinator on the day@ £150 X 6 days	900
Creative workshops/activities X 4 @£150 X 6 days (storytelling, dance, singing, craft)	3,450
Food	249
Materials	335
Travelling expenses for groups	130
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,063</b>
<b>Artist Commissions</b>	
Project coordinator on the day@ £150 X 3 days (Seyed, Britannia Rumba and Crossing Footprints)	450
Seyed Ali Jaberi and Hamdel Ensemble, and Britannia Rumba @ £800 X 2 and Crossing Footprints @ £750 + £200 cancellation fee for Hamdel Ensemble	2,550
Technician	500
Materials	35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£3,535</b>

<b>Overall costs</b>	
Project Coordination	2,515
Photographer at 2 events	600
Project evaluation	200
Contribution to CAN Marketing of the programme	821
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£4,136</b>
<b>Additional costs</b>	
Management Fee	2,484.07
Project consultation and design workshop	398.48
<b>TOTAL MCC</b>	<b>£15,617</b>
<b>Additional monies</b>	
Climate Connections/ Building Bridges project in Oldham + contribution to LoS	£20,750
CAN Contribution to Climate Connections workshops in Oldham	£1,000
<b>GRAND Total</b>	<b>£37,367</b>

#### Budget notes

- Participant access (travel and refreshments) budget is much less than originally proposed, due to lack of library staff capacity to administer petty cash and inability to serve food due to Covid-19 restrictions.

#### 4. Quotes/feedback from participants, artists, partners, audience

##### Participant Feedback

*I enjoyed watching my children have so much fun. It was a real feel-good event. Thank you!*

*'I loved making dolls with my daughter'*

*I loved the drumming!*

*The dancing was fantastic, tricky but loads of fun. I loved learning to drum too. The atmosphere of the event has been amazing and it has been wonderful to be a part of it!*

*'Space (safe!) great service, great resources, craft work – free to explore and well supported all resources provided and a patient and good facilitator'*

*Friendly welcome. Well laid out, lots of space, good activities, nice atmosphere.*

*Everything is good. It should be every weekend*

*I enjoyed learning music from different cultures.*

*Family friendly, upbeat fun!*

*Enjoyed talking about climate change*

*I enjoyed the music, the opportunity to talk and ask questions*

*Workshop was great! Circus and dance.*

*Very kind showing us how to make a doll from a different country.*

*Well organised and friendly group of people.*

*Very enjoyable.*



### **Audience Feedback**

*The feeling of listening to live music again and the quiet virtuosity was amazing!*

*It's great to hear and see such a unique sound in an 'intimate' environment like a library performance space.*

*Was great fun, thank you. Sorry my dancing wasn't quite up to scratch!*

*We loved the dancing and the beats. We are usually bored at home but the music really cheered us up!*

*When are they coming again?*

*I enjoyed hearing from a variety of voices who don't usually get involved and the international cooperation.*

*So great to see a diverse panel of experts with lived experience.*



### **Artist / Partner Feedback**

*The return to performing live makes me very happy. Simply put, artists need that face-to-face contact with audiences. We need connection, we need their encouragement. This love gives us more energy to create more music. (Seyed Ali Jaberi, Artist)*

*It was our first live event back in the library so that was really wonderful. It was a lovely programme and such a good mix having the music, percussion and craft. Numbers were brilliant, not as huge as they have been pre-lockdown, but I think there were the right number as everyone felt very safe, the staff felt very safe and comfortable. We did have a good mix of people who had booked, which included our AfroTots group, some regular customers who joined us on the day and some of the City of Sanctuary people came along. (Leigh M'Rabberty, Forum Library)*

*The range of artists and activities that you have delivered and the quality of the artistic content was top notch. I think that's really important in terms of attracting people to come and have a good time, and*

*experience something really worthwhile. Certainly the workshops at Wythenshawe Forum that I saw, both the doll-making and the drumming were very engaging. (Zoe Williams at MCC)*

## 5. A selection of images

Images in this report by Shirlaine Forrest, Kooj Chuhan and Clive Hunte.

Please see further photos within the Libraries of Sanctuary albums on the link below:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/community-arts-north-west/albums>

## 6. Evaluation against original objectives with evidence (did the project meet expectations)

### **Aims:**

CAN was engaged to support the achievement of the following Libraries of Sanctuary programme aim:

### **Embedding 'welcome, celebration and inclusion' across the service, addressing barriers to access, empowering sanctuary seekers, etc**

- This aim was achieved through delivery of an empowering and engaging cultural programme which was celebratory, inclusive and refugee-led.
- The aim of embedding welcome, celebration and inclusion was met through the design of a highly accessible, free and family friendly programme which was co-designed by library staff and refugee and migrant artists.
- Barriers to engagement were addressed through engaging culturally-specific artists and workshop facilitators who were a draw for both local sanctuary seekers, as well as more established community members.
- Barriers to access were addressed through an access budget supporting the costs of local transport to the libraries by sanctuary seekers. Initially a refreshments budget was also offered but this had to be revised due to the complications of serving food under Covid restrictions.
- Barriers to access were removed through the design of accessible publicity in straightforward English and direct invitations to groups supporting sanctuary seekers (AfroTots, Manchester City of Sanctuary etc).
- The aim of empowering sanctuary seekers was met through opportunities for active participation by local sanctuary seekers in the programme.
- The aim of empowering sanctuary seekers was met through strongly engaging artists from sanctuary seeking backgrounds in programme delivery.

## Objectives:

CAN was engaged to deliver the following events:

- Three Artistic showcases at Main Libraries – **Achieved**. Three showcase events engaging with a total of 321 audience members were achieved.
- Six Welcome events at Community Libraries – A series of participatory events across Oldham, Bolton and Manchester aimed at supporting libraries in their ambition to become welcoming spaces for new migrant communities. – **Achieved**. Six welcome events were delivered in local communities engaging with a total of 255 participants. In addition, through partnership funding achieved through the Building Bridges and Climate Connections initiatives and addition 17 workshops and 2 events were delivered to diverse communities in Oldham engaging with a total of 96 local people.
- The events were intended to be led by refugee and new migrant artists – **Achieved**. 64% of the artists were refugee or first generation migrant artists. 27% were second/third generation migrant artists.

## 7. SWOT Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

### Strengths

- Developing a strong working relationship with all libraries.
- A high quality performance and participation programme.
- All of the artists engaged in the events programme were refugees or new migrants
- Good audience engagement and attendance, despite the pandemic.
- Ethnically diverse audiences including new migrant and more established migrant communities.
- Excellent audience and participant feedback
- We adapted quickly to changing circumstances and managed to honour our commitment to most of the artists originally programmed.
- Artists really appreciated the opportunity to do live work.
- The climate justice work was featured at a Parliamentary select committee of MPs and Peers.
- Huge added value through Building Bridges programme and additional Arts Council funding achieved by Crossing Footprints for Climate Connections, and from CRF through CAN.
- Oldham Library are submitting a bid for further funding for climate-related work following the Climate Connections work.

### Weaknesses

- The programme really needed an outreach budget and work to engage wider refugee audiences. The original plan was for the libraries to do this outreach work but this was

impossible due to the impact of Covid-19 on Library capacity.

- Library staff capacity was very stretched which had an impact on their ability to fully engage in audience development and outreach.
- Covid had an impact on library attendance and footfall.
- Restrictions meant that events had to be planned multiple times, and then had to be carefully planned to limit risk, which had a huge impact on producing time.
- Limited marketing and documentation budget.
- The producing budget did not reflect the amount of work put in.
- Staff illness and capacity meant that the access budget for refugees was not able to be administered for several events

### Opportunities

- Significant local profile for CAN and the artists we work with.
- New relationships with artists.
- New relationships with libraries.
- Key exposure for new artists which could result in further library work for International Mother Language Day and other similar events.
- Opportunities to link with libraries in the development of CAN's future programme.
- Opportunities to develop strands of work around welcome and climate justice in CAN's future programme.

### Threats

- Further cuts to libraries impacting on staff ability to engage and respond to future work
- The combined impact of austerity measures and Covid-19 has hugely impacted on the wellbeing and economic prosperity of local communities, particularly marginalized and sanctuary seeking communities. This will inevitably impact on the ability of these communities to engage in future programmes.
- Funding for cohesion and integration programmes such as Libraries of Sanctuary is unknown but it seems likely that there will be less local authority funds and indeed, other sources of funding for such work and increasing competition for organisations such as CAN to access this funding.
- The combined impact of negative media and increasingly hostile immigration legislation is likely to have a profound impact on the ability of sanctuary seeking communities to integrate and engage in British society, and in future programmes such as Libraries of Sanctuary.
- The increasing divisions between communities (including sanctuary seeking and established White British communities) combined with a lack of funding for integration programmes is a serious future threat to the stability, wellbeing and cohesion of local communities, and for the work of organisations like CAN.

