

About Us

The **Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre** is an anti-racism library and archive that collects material about race and migration. It was founded in 1999 by Lou Kushnick, Professor of Sociology at the University of Manchester.

The AIU Centre is named after Ahmed Iqbal Ullah, a 13-year-old Bangladeshi pupil living in Manchester, who was murdered in a racially-charged attack in the school playground in 1986.

As a special collections library of The University of Manchester, an Education Trust, and a member of the Archives+ partnership, **we aim to:**

- **Ensure the accessibility and openness of resources and world-leading research focused on race, ethnicity and migration to university, community and school audiences.**
- **Deliver school projects and activities for young people that promote inclusion, equality and diversity.**
- **Support local BAME organisations in the exploration and preservation of their heritage through engaging consciously with communities of Greater Manchester.**
- **Acquire and preserve archives to create a nationally significant collection documenting the contributions of BAME people to Greater Manchester and to Britain.**

**Ahmed Iqbal Ullah
Race Relations
Resource Centre &
Education Trust**



Refugee Week 2019

Since it began in 1999, the AIU Centre has organised and supported several projects that work with refugee communities across Manchester. The aims of these projects have been to promote the sharing and celebrating of different cultures and to create safe, supportive spaces for refugees in Manchester.

Most of the material collected during these projects, along with past Refugee Week events and festivals, is stored in the AIU Centre's archive. You can request to view the collection by emailing rrarchive@manchester.ac.uk or visiting us on the lower ground floor of Central Library.



Definitions and Facts (Refugee Council)

Refugee

In the UK, a person is officially a refugee when they have their claim for asylum accepted by the government.

Asylum Seeker

A person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country but whose application has not yet been concluded.

Refused Asylum Seeker

A person whose asylum application has been unsuccessful and who has no other claim for protection awaiting a decision.

Migrant

Someone who has moved to another country for other reasons, such as to find work.

The UK is home
to less than

1%

of the world's refugees

Since 2004, Britain
has resettled around

750

refugees
every year

through the Gateway
Protection Programme.

In September 2015, the Prime
Minister committed to resettle

20,000

refugees by
2020.

About
85%

of the world's refugees are
living in developing countries,
often in camps.

Almost all asylum
seekers are not allowed
to work and are forced
to rely on state support
- this can be as little as

£5
a day
to live on.

In 2017
2,399
children

applied for asylum having
arrived in the UK alone,
with no parent
or guardian.

Since 2014
SYRIA

has become the largest country of
origin for resettled refugees.

Other top countries include
the Democratic Republic of Congo,
Iraq, Somalia and Myanmar.

68.5

million people
around the globe have had
to flee their homes.

Lisapo – The Congolese Tales (2013-2014)

Distance from
Manchester:
6,800
miles

Population:
78
million

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a country in Central Africa. Heavy conflict, violence and human rights violations during two civil wars in 1994 and 1998 caused many people to flee to safety, many settling in the North West of England.

Did you know?

The capital city of the DRC, Kinshasa, is home to Ndombolo, a rumba-like style of music which has influenced music across the continent since the 1980s.



Lisapo – The Congolese Tales was an oral history project organised by Community Arts North West (CAN) which ran from 2013 to 2014.

The project gave Congolese people the chance to record and share their untold stories about migrating to and living in Manchester.

Once recorded, the stories were given to us to preserve in our archive. This includes 29 summarised interviews in English, French and Lingala. In our library you can find a bound copy of these transcripts, alongside audio tracks of each interview and a DVD of the documentary film generated from the project.

These stories are an opportunity to learn about the Congolese refugee experience in Manchester, but also the differences in family, food, music and education between the UK and DRC.

Jean-Claude Kayumba:

"I was like completely lost. I had never been to the UK before. Not even been to Europe. I did not know the language. I was completely in the dark. I did not know what was going on around me. I was completely in the blue."

"People didn't have millions of pounds, the economic situation wasn't the best. But people are happy. Wherever you go people are happy. In my country I see the happiness on people's faces."

I did like the culture [in Congo]. You know some stuff today, I really find it funny. Since I was a child I believed that, for example, seeing cats at night would mean a witch is around. Stuff like that. I am in the UK, and I find out it's not the same. Found out in the UK that people like pets, didn't understand it originally.

Theresa Badifu:

"Because some women at home never got a chance to go to school. They never got a chance to go to work. So your job is just bearing kids – that's it. But as for here, a woman is given an opportunity. Even in a cleaning job. She can manage her own life even if a man is not around."

"So people will say things like you are a refugee – you cannot work, you cannot do anything. All that has affected us."

"You know it's your own story. You have to share it with people. People need to know what exactly is going on in our country. Because, it's not only me. Many, many people have gone through the same thing."



A **UNIQUE ORAL HISTORIES** project for the Congolese community in Greater Manchester

Are you Congolese? Would you like to **SHARE YOUR STORY?**
Or create a music narrative to tell the powerful story of the Congolese migration to Britain in recent years?

LISAPO - THE CONGOLESE TALES is looking for volunteers and participants.

For more information please contact: peggy@can.uk.com
or telephone **0161 234 2940 / 07456427741**

can
community arts north west
Exodus
GREATER MANCHESTER
REFUGEE ARTS
PROJECT



Scan this code with your smartphone camera to hear some comparisons of life in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Manchester.

Voices of Kosovo in Manchester (2014-2016)

Distance from
Manchester:
1,800
miles

Population:
1.82
million

Kosovo is a disputed territory located in south-east Europe in which 90% of the population are ethnic Albanians. Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, these people suffered discrimination and major political unrest, causing many Kosovars to flee their home to escape ethnic cleansing. Between 1991 and 1993, the number of ethnic Albanians registered in the UK rose from 338 to 2,500.

Did you know?
Pop singer Rita
Ora was born in
Pristina, the capital
city of Kosovo.



Jehona Bogujevci:

"We survived the war. We have never given up. We have moved forward. We have aimed to live our lives to the fullest but never forgetting the past."



Voices of Kosovo in Manchester was an oral history project run by Manchester Aid to Kosovo (MAK) in 2014. It aimed to record and preserve memories and experiences of the Kosovar community in this city. The interviews include stories told by refugees who mainly came to the North West of England in 1999, after being evacuated as part of a global humanitarian response to the conflict. The participants of the project tell of the struggles they endured and their memories of the journey.

Exhibitions were held to display the stories and photographs from the project, and this material is now in our archive. It includes 30 audio recordings of interviews, as well as summaries, transcriptions, pen sketches and photos of the interviewees.

Rina Ahmetaj:

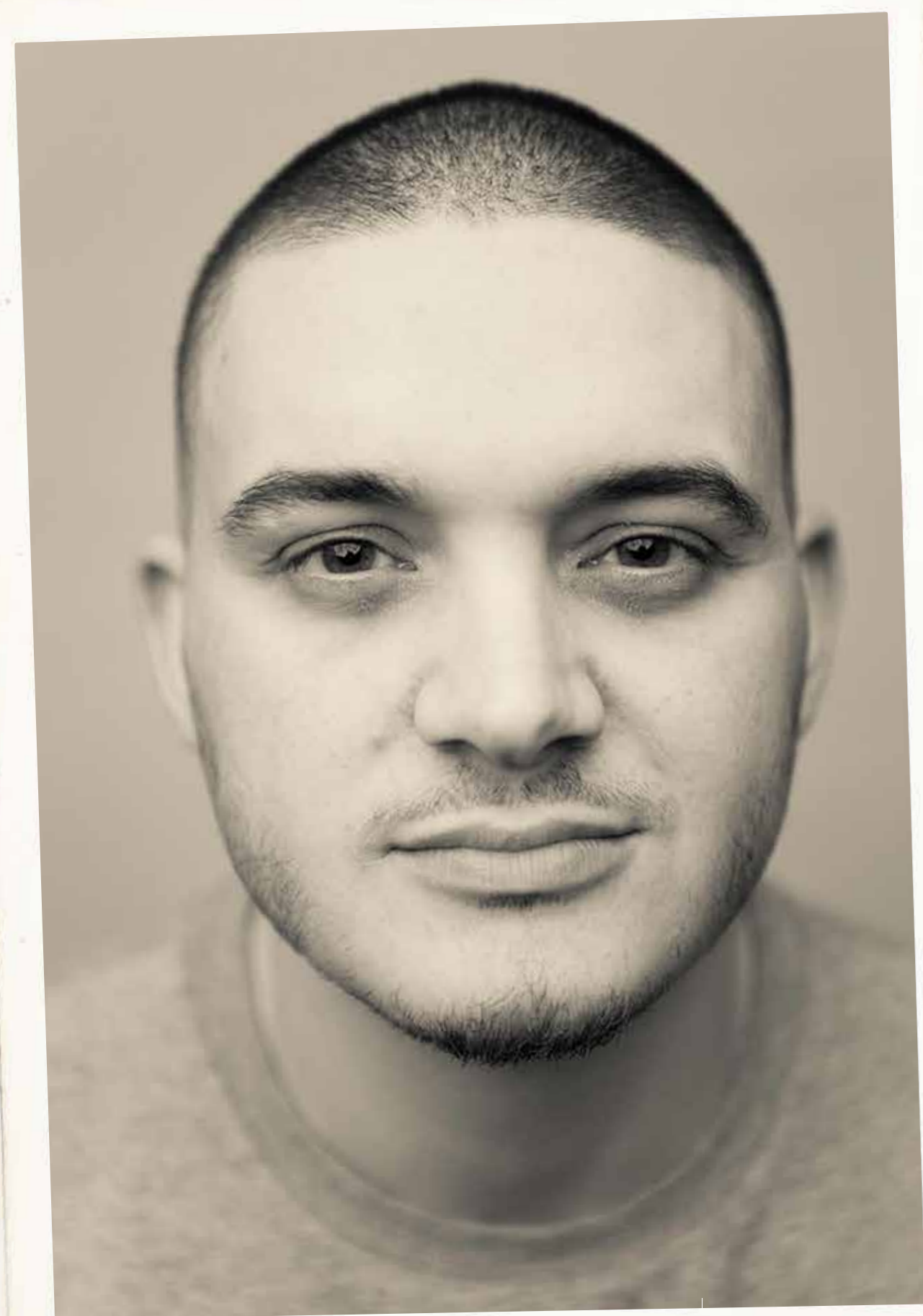
"All of a sudden, the town was kind of flooded with tanks and military equipment and soldiers, Serbian soldiers, and we were starting to get the picture."



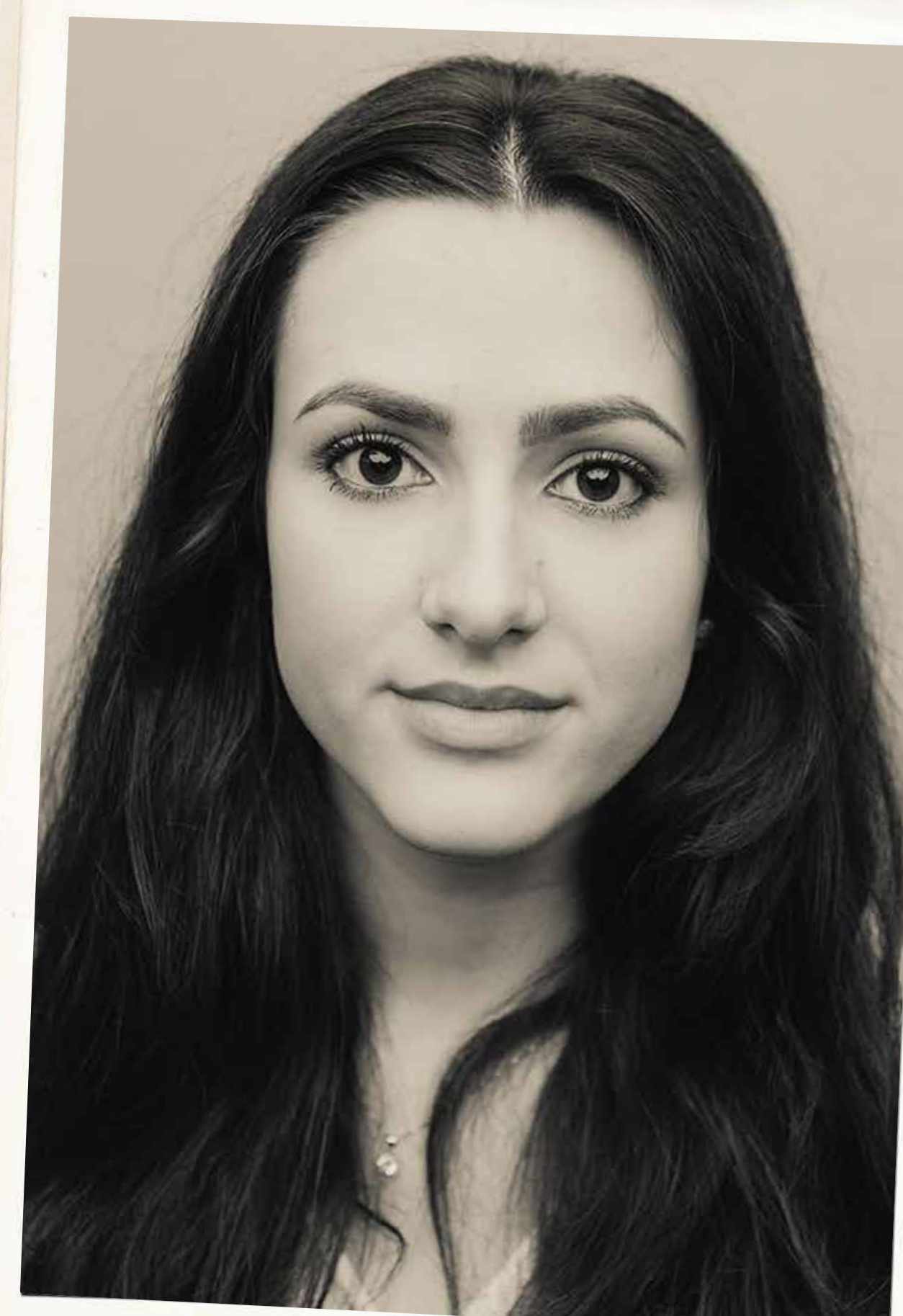
Rina Ahmetaj

"We were all boarded onto these buses and taken to the train station, put on a train and then out of Kosovo into Macedonia. And I remember we waited on the border for five hours: a packed train, five hours. And it was just the most ridiculous situation to be in: kids crying; people being sick; old people not feeling very well, feeling tired; most of the people didn't have a seat, they were standing up on a train. It was terrible."

And then we were driven into the camps: refugee camps."



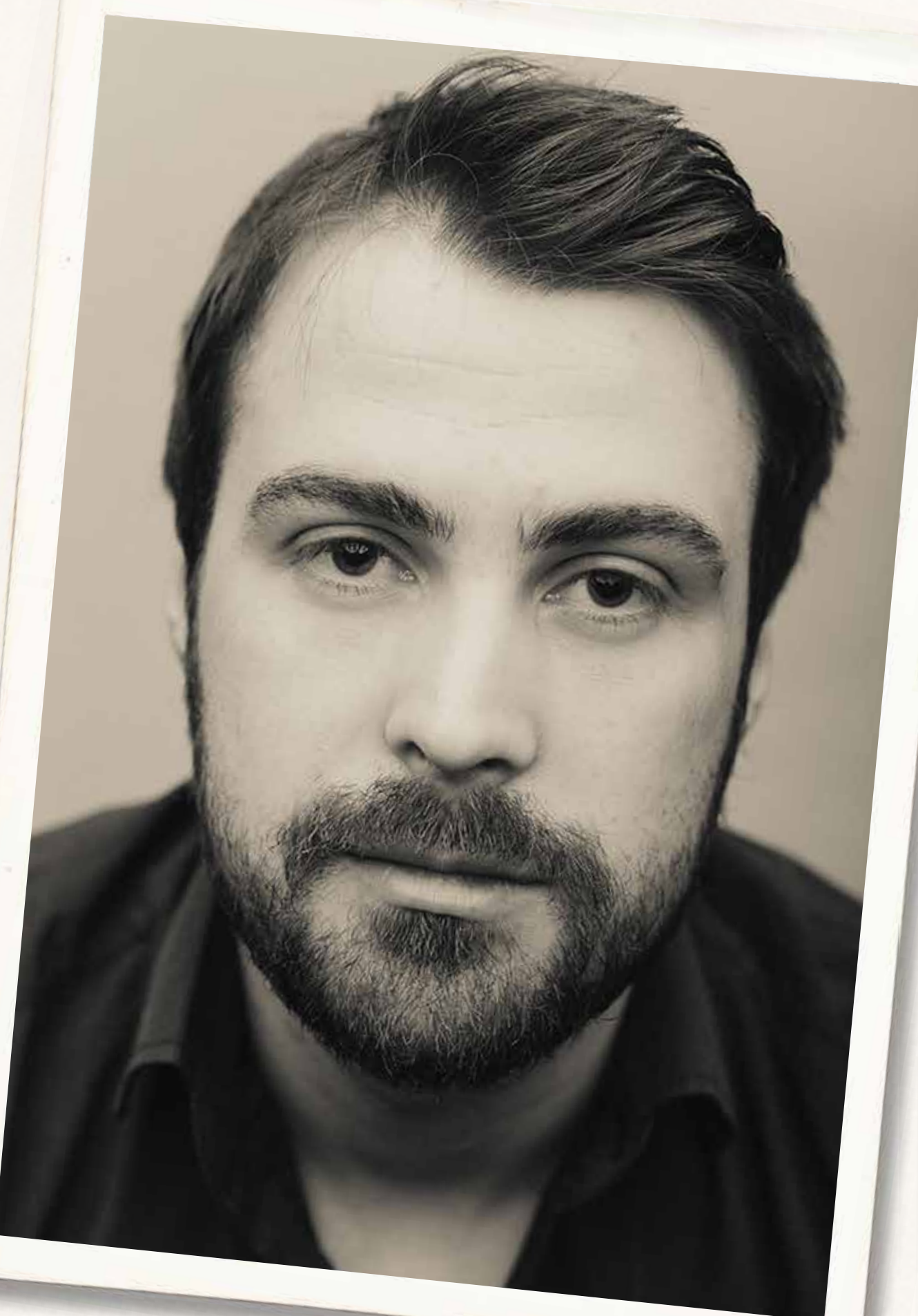
Adonis Alaj



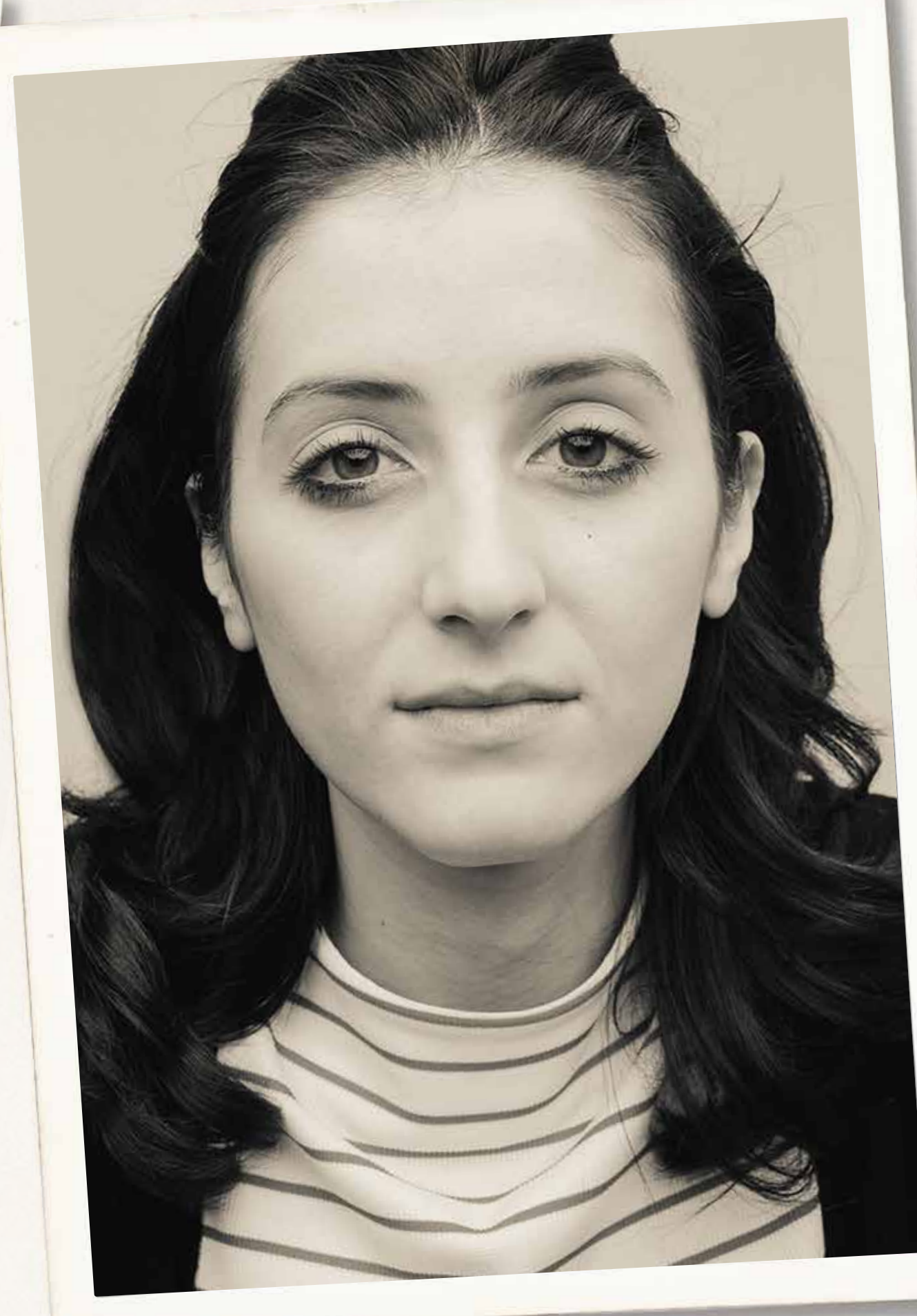
Jonida Bujupi



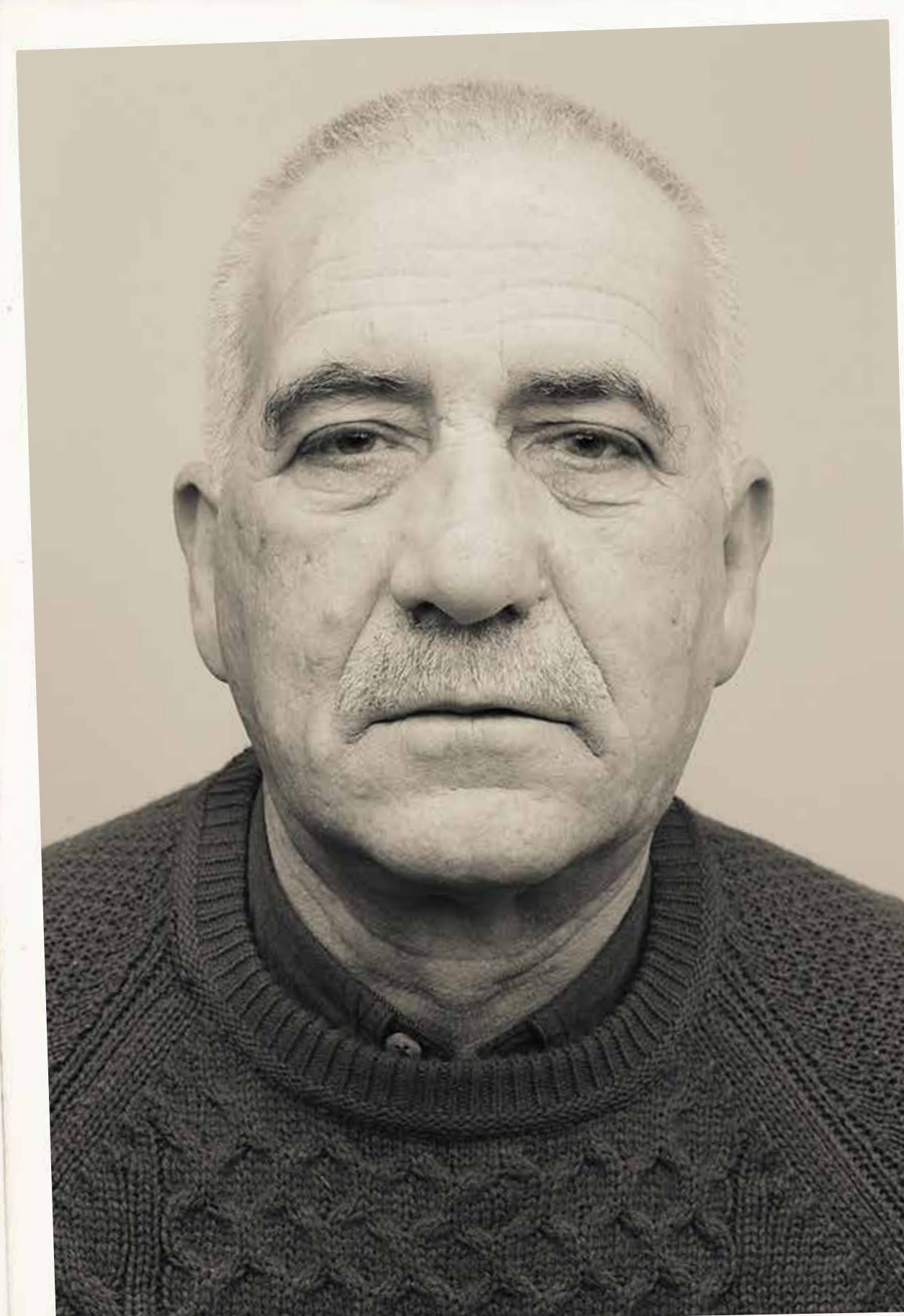
Bledar Bujupi



Fazli Blakcori



Jehona Bogujevci



Selatin Bogujevci

Fazli Blakcori:

"When the war came we had to leave. All together, in the night, into the mountains. We were chased every step. We didn't have any clothes; we slept in the open air. Whenever we found food we would share it with everyone. That was pretty much it, for three months, until the Liberation."



Lumniye Mustafa

MRSN (Manchester Refugee Support Network) Archive Collection

This collection was created through a heritage project that started in 2015 aimed at archiving the history of refugee communities and the various projects and activities the network supported. MRSN was formed in 1995 by and continues to be run by refugees, the first of whom (from Bosnia, Iraq, Vietnam, Somalia, Brava, Sudan, Kurdistan and Chile) settled in Manchester due to civil wars in the 1970s -1990s.

Anon (Eritrea):

“At the end of this project, the final outcome will be the refugees and asylum seekers in Manchester, they will feel more confident, they will feel like having some status. So MRSN is not just helping, it has moved one step up so the people in MRSN will feel that ‘Wow, we are somebody now.’”

Anon (Zimbabwe):

“Since we joined MRSN it has been like a second family for us, where we come together. People of shared concerns, shared values. You talk about your concerns, you talk about your status. It improves your mental wellbeing knowing at least I have support from other people.”



MRSN still operates today providing support services to refugee community organisations. The material in our archive has been collected from festivals, workshops and educational programmes run by refugee communities from 1968 to 2015. You can find everything from photos of traditional food and dances, to leaflets offering volunteer opportunities and training workshops.

Manchester Refugee Cultural Festivals, Shine and Exodus

MRSN launched the first **Manchester Refugee Cultural Festival** in 1997. It celebrated diverse refugee heritage and culture including fashion, music, dance, food and art. The festival became 'Shine' in 2004 and 'Exodus' in 2005. You can see hundreds of photos from the festivals in our archive, plus a range of publicity material.



MRSN also held the first **Refugee World Cup** in 2000 to welcome the Kosovo community to Manchester. The event has become very popular, and has grown from 4 teams to 20 taking part. We have many photographs and some video footage of the tournaments in our archive.

Supporting Communities: SWITCH, Manchester Children's Fund and Asylum Seekers in Manchester

Distance from
Manchester:
6,600
miles

Population:
14.7
million

Somalia is a country in East Africa, bordering Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and the Indian Ocean. In 1977-78 the Ogaden War began over a disputed region of Ethiopia, which led to armed conflict and unrest across the country. Some 2.65 million people are still displaced within Somalia and a further 820,000 Somali refugees are living in other countries across the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

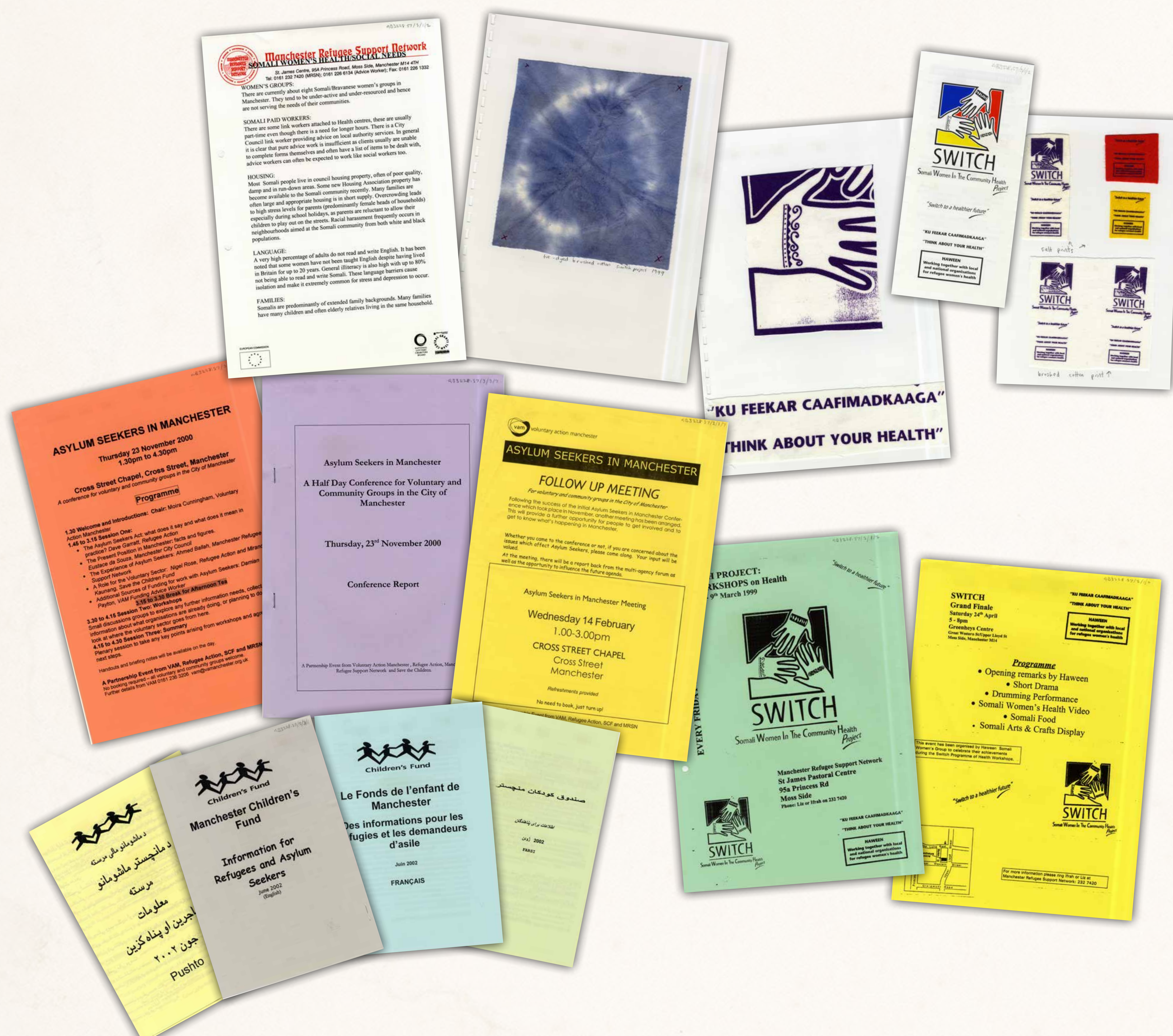
Did you know?

As well as being the birthplace of Olympic athlete Mo Farah, Somalia was known in Ancient Egypt as 'Puntland'. It is described in ancient Egyptian texts as the "Land of the Gods" and a region rich in resources, such as Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.

Somali Women In The Community Health (SWITCH)

Somali Women in The Community Health (SWITCH) held regular workshops. It held regular workshops and events to give advice to Somali refugee women on health and wellbeing. A collection of documents, pamphlets and photographs of the women involved in the organisation are held in our archive.

You can also see the material from other support groups such as **Manchester Children's Fund** and **Asylum Seekers in Manchester**.



The Distance We Have Travelled (2008)

The project, led by the **AIU Education Trust**, aimed to record the life stories of three refugee communities in Greater Manchester. People from Somalia, Kurdistan and Afghanistan were interviewed between 2005 and 2006 about their experiences of having to flee their own countries and make a new life here in Britain.

Anon (Afghanistan):

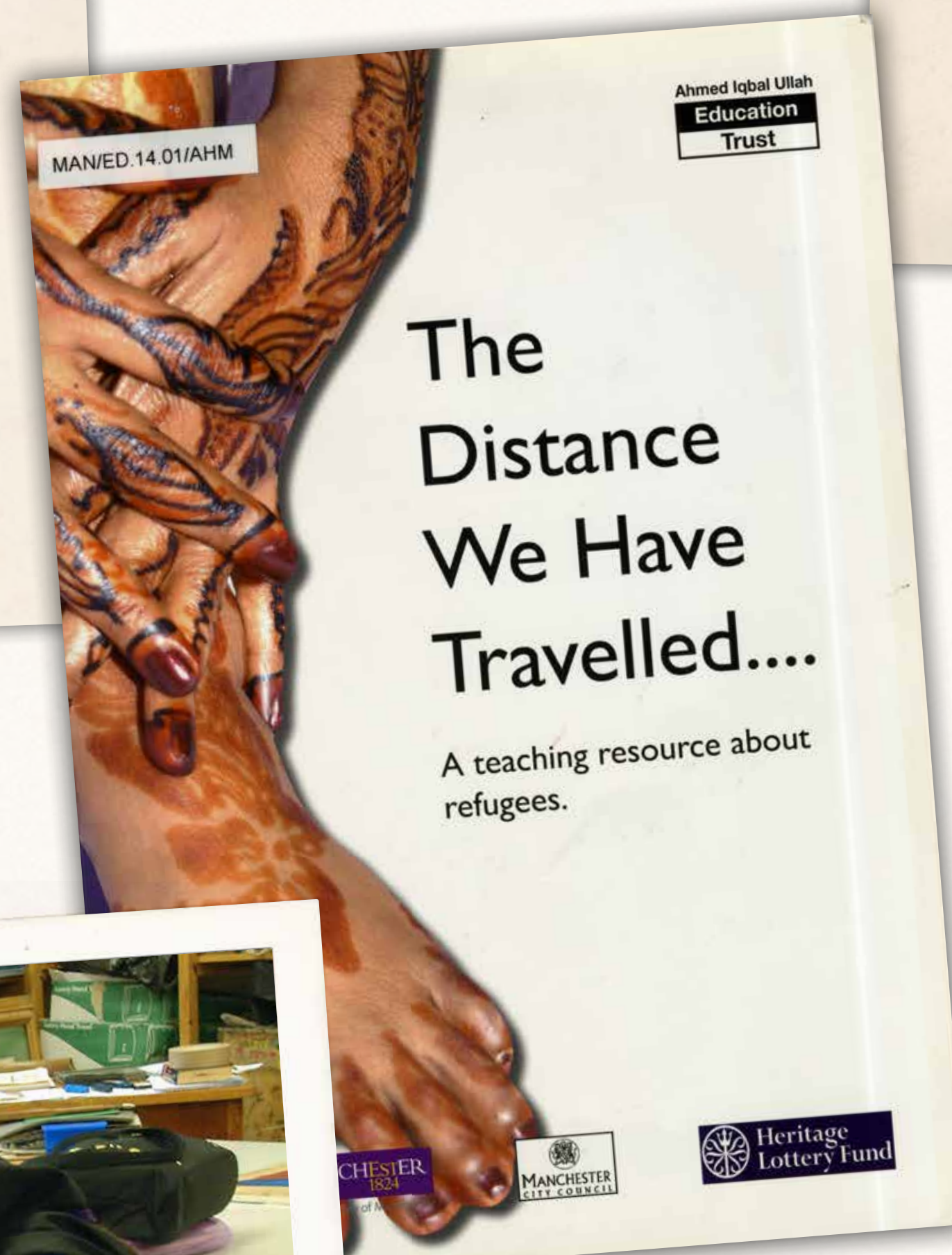
"I have three friends living in Manchester. These friends helped me so much to adjust in UK and Manchester, they helped me to get a job. These friends have been deported three weeks ago back to Afghanistan. I knew them from Afghanistan"

Anon (Somalia):

"That's what I have in my mind, only I'm waiting for peace to be there. If the peace will be there, I hope, I pray every night to go back to peace in Somalia. But the United Kingdom also is my second land on this earth. I'm not going to forget."

Anon (Kurdistan, Iraq):

"When you have a situation you can't deal with and the people are not listening to you, your life is in danger - you have to leave."



In our archive you can find interviews and photographs from workshops in schools. We also have the original clay sculptures in our Library!