The Xenophobia Project

Using Expressive Arts Therapies To Educate South African Learners About The Experiences Of Migrants

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ABSTRACT
This paper describes the Xenophobia Project, a social justice outreach initiative which the author, Sarah Penny, led in Cape Town between 2017 and 2019. The goal of the programme was try to put in place resources as a strategy to change xenophobic attitudes in teen learners in the city. The paper examines how the project was conducted, referencing theory from the growing field of Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes (CWTP). It also looks at the impact of the project, and considers why CWTP is a powerful and ethical route to working with social justice in communities, particularly in communities with limited resources.

The Xenophobia Project was a community outreach programme I led in Cape Town between 2017 and 2019. The goal of the programme was to try to put in place resources as a strategy to change xenophobic attitudes in teen learners in the city. *Writing in Practice* was created to explore the art of imaginative writing, from an authorial perspective, highlighting and evolving current academic thinking and practice. I offer this paper to readers of the journal who have an interest both in social justice, and in how our discipline can embrace a more diverse and inclusive outreach.

Xenophobia in South Africa is an urgent social problem. Because many migrants are undocumented it is difficult to get exact data on the prevalence of the attacks, but to give some idea of the scale of the problem, in one small town alone, Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, during 2015, 500 people were displaced and 300 shops and homes looted or destroyed through xenophobic violence (Crush and Pendleton, 2008). The South Africa government is widely perceived as taking very little initiative to combat xenophobic violence, and is often accused of fuelling violence through the public statements of ministers and public figures. Gwede Mantashe (the ANC secretary general) has proposed that all foreigners be confined in refugee camps. The Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini suggested all migrants "must pack up and leave the country", and Small Business Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu has also said that "foreigners need to understand that they are here as a courtesy and our priority is to the people of this country first and foremost… They cannot barricade themselves in and not share their practices with local business owners" (Wilkinson 2015). The nation's former president, Jacob Zuma, contributed his view that "we must respect those who are legally in the country" (Whittles 2015), a deeply divisive and dangerous comment because it endorses the perception that those who are not there legally deserve no protection. Loren Landau, Associate Professor at Wits University's African Centre for Migration and Society has argued that only by realigning institutional and political incentives can South Africa counter exclusion and xenophobic violence, but "that is something the government does not yet seem prepared to do". (Landau and Amit 2014)

South Africa was isolated from the rest of Africa during the apartheid regime as almost all other African countries had a closed border policy to South Africa. So unless you were training in one of the *Umkhonto weSizwe* camps in Tanzania, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe (*Umkhonto weSizwe* meaning "Spear of the Nation" in Zulu: the armed wing of the African National Congress), you could not visit most African countries until the borders began to open after Mandela's release in 1990. But since the first democratic elections in 1994 there has been a steady flow of migrants into South Africa, fleeing war, drought and poverty and attracted by South Africa's relative stability and wealth. A 2011 census calculated that there are 2.2 million migrants in the country (4.2 percent of the population). But the figure is inevitably higher given the porous borders and the difficulty of counting migrants with no legal right to be in the country. The unemployment rate in South Africa currently stands at 34.9 percent. The combination of poverty, unemployment and competition for resources with people perceived as strangers, has a deeply negative effect on integration in South Africa, and in urban centres in particular. In 2016 the Mexican Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice named Cape Town, based on homicide rates, the ninth most dangerous city in the world.

Given the scale of the problem, readers might justifiably ask – what role could creative writing possibly play in redressing entrenched xenophobia in Cape Town? To begin to answer that question I would like to look first at the history of the relatively new but fertile and fascinating field of therapeutic creative writing.

People have always written personal documents in a way that enhances their sense of wellbeing, keeping journals as a record of their lives and feelings, writing letters as a way of connecting with their attachment figures. But in the late 1980s an American social psychologist, James W. Pennebaker, pioneered a new therapy, which he called expressive writing. Pennebaker conducted an experiment in which he divided participants into two groups. Participants in the experimental group were asked to write about a past trauma, expressing their rawest and deepest thoughts and feelings surrounding their memories. On the other hand, the control participants were asked to write as objectively and factually as they could about neutral topics, and were requested not to include any emotion or opinion in their writing. By charting health measurements before and after the experiments, Pennebaker found that, relative to the control group, in the

months following the experiment the health of the experimental group improved, with significantly fewer visits to doctors. The experimental group reported that whilst they were upset by the writing experience at the time of doing the writing, they also found it valuable and meaningful. Numerous subsequent studies confirmed these results, one study even suggesting that expressive writing had the potential to boost the immune system (Pennebaker et al. 1988). Pennebaker's experiments have, over the last thirty years, been extensively replicated and validated, and writing for therapeutic purposes, also known variously as bibliotherapy or poetry therapy, is a rapidly growing field of research and practice. Training has also been formalized. In the USA, poetry therapists are credentialed for clinical practice, their accreditation on a par with drama therapists or art therapists. Whilst creative writing therapy has yet to be formally credentialed in the UK, the Metanoia Institute's MSc in Creative Writing For Therapeutic Purposes trains practitioners to work in a range of non-clinical settings, although their student intake often includes licensed therapists seeking to extend their training in this direction. Metanoia uses the term Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes (or CWTP) for expressive writing, and I will use that acronym through the rest of this paper.

One of the most exciting developments in creative therapeutic writing has been its recognition of the seminal role it has to play in delivering social justice. There is increasing recognition by practitioners that creative writing can bring agency to groups of people who have historically been discriminated against.

Paré (2014), in considering the relationship between social justice and counselling and psychotherapy, observes, "What links these various movements is a view of person-in-context, both buffeted and supported by wider forces in society." Reynolds (2012: 19) writes, "Our work occurs in contexts that lack social justice because we have not delivered on a just society". A concern for social justice in relation to practice is a mindfulness of the social backdrop to our therapeutic conversations, where "advantages and disadvantages are distributed to individuals in society" (Miller 1999: 11).

My specific interest is in harvesting stories; often from people who don't realise how much power their story holds. Bolton (2007: 44) surmises "Once storied, complex events can take on an appearance of greater coherence and comprehensibility." The concept behind this work was that the hidden experiences of the migrants, once storied, could be accessible to people who would not otherwise think of them as anything other than competitors for scarce resources.

But to return to my earlier question – given the tidal wave of xenophobia that has engulfed Cape Town, how can creative writing have any role to play? It is true that the scale of the problem can make any intervention seem meaningless. And yet there are Capetonians with whom we could work meaningfully to change attitudes because they are still young and they are still in the school system. My belief in leading this work was that for small groups of teen learners in targeted workshops, using expressive arts techniques and led by trained facilitators, hearing migrants' stories and responding to them creatively could lead to profound change in perspective about how migrants deserve to be treated.

The Scalabrini Centre is a human rights organisation in Cape Town. The organisation is committed to alleviating poverty and promoting development in the Western Cape area of South Africa while fostering integration between migrants, refugees and South Africans. One of their programmes is Unite!, a youth programme which works with high school students to build social cohesion and transformation in South African society. For the Xenophobia Project, I teamed up with a South African drama therapist, Amelda Brand. The project had two main aims: to gather material from migrants about their personal experiences in coming to South Africa, and to develop capacity to use this material effectively within the Unite! Programme, using integrative expressive arts content based on the experiences of migrants. We did this work in three phases. In the first phase, which happened in March and April 2017, we worked with a group of twelve migrants to map their memories of why they left their homes, their journeys to South Africa and their experiences since arriving. Then in April 2018 these resources were used as the basis for a pilot workshop for teenagers from four local schools.

This arts-orientated creative approach to working for social justice was new to Scalabrini. Their training model is talk-based; the facilitator writes notes about topics on a whiteboard and then the workshop members discuss the topics. To bridge the gap

between the way staff was used to facilitating and our arts-based approach, as the final phase in September 2018, we delivered training to staff at Scalabrini in how to use some of the expressive arts methods we had ourselves used with the teens, and created a manual for them on using the techniques we had explored with them in the training.

The migrant group with whom we worked initially comprised six men and six women, from the DRC, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Rwanda. All had entered South Africa illegally and were in the long, complicated, often fruitless task of being officially registered as refugees. Some had flown in on an airplane, pretending they were coming for a holiday; others had trekked for months across Africa before finally penetrating the border with the help of migrant smugglers. What they all had in common was that life in their home country had become untenable; through poverty for some but for others because they had become political targets and had to flee to escape being killed.

We worked first with the women and then with the men. Although an essential aim was to gather material around their personal experiences that could be used for Unite!, it was equally important that both groups felt able to express themselves artistically and authentically, and that this expression felt both safe and beneficial to them. Bolton (2010) advises that a group "has to be formed with care, looked after knowledgeably and terminated thoughtfully." In the chapter "Group processes and facilitation" in her book *Reflective Practice* she lists six foundation principles that a facilitator should model: responsibility, trust, self-respect, generosity, positive regard and a valuing of diversity. It was also singularly important to bear in mind that the groups be respectful and esteem-building spaces, because migrants in South Africa are treated with so little respect. Yalom (1985: 59) observes that "the more the group matters to one, the more one subscribes to the group values, the more one will be inclined to agree with the group judgement." He underlines the clinical relevance of this statement, pointing out that the more attracted a group member is to the group and the more the group member respects the judgement of the group, the more "one will attend to and take seriously any discrepancy between one's public esteem and one's self esteem. A discrepancy between the two will create a state of dissonance for that individual, and one will initiate activity to remove the dissonance." (ibid).

We wanted to finish the work with the migrants having gathered the stories we needed. But we also required the group process itself to be a positive marker of self-esteem for the participants.

Formal schooling in many African countries tends to be authoritarian, rigid and product-driven so I like to begin any project with a very play-based introductory session where participants can relax and absorb that the activities are not a 'test' and there is no right or wrong response. Both CWTP and drama therapy create opportunities for learning through play that, although strange for participants in the beginning, can produce honest and powerful testimony that participants might feel hesitant to voice in a more formal context. Foregeard et al (2017: 328) argue that: "Play is inherently related to affective processes, as it allows for the expression of emotions, stimulates the development of emotion regulation, and creates feelings of positive emotion and enjoyment." Seminal to the concept of creating through play, was making it clear to the group that all the normal "rules" they associated with a learning space did not matter here. While they were in the play space, the focus of their writing should be on the processes of writing rather than the product. Bolton (2004: 2) says "To be therapeutic, the initial stages of writing need to be encouraged to be personal, private, free from criticism, free from the constraints of grammar syntax and form, free from any notion of audience other than the writer and possibly therapist and another reader". After the workshops were finished, I met with each group member individually to make a "product" from all of their writing that they were happy to release into the public domain and those stories were heard and celebrated by the whole group at the end of the process.

Creating the "product" – the migrants' life stories that would form the focal point of work with the teenagers raised a further set of considerations. The point of sharing the stories was to foster empathy and to get the teenagers to see that the migrants, seemingly an alien and intrusive mass of strangers invading South Africa, are just people like themselves with their own histories and their own hardships. Choosing which activities to include in a CWTP workshop is of great importance. With the Xenophobia project, the activities needed to be a fairly reliable prompt to elicit the testimony needed for the Unite! Programme. McAdams argues: "Life stories are psychosocial constructions, co-

authored by the person himself or herself and the cultural context within which that person's life is embedded and given meaning. As such, individual life stories reflect cultural values and norms, including assumptions about gender, race and class." (McAdams 2001: 101). But the activities also needed to allow the migrant group to search, think and feel about their own experiences in an appropriate space without feeling rushed or pressured. Eisner (2004) describes this appropriateness in learning through arts as "rightness of fit", emphasizing that learning through arts needs to be both cognitive and somatic. This is why I find workshops using both drama therapy and CWTP so dynamic. Drama therapy, in which participants embody their memory in playback, is inherently somatic. Linking that work to the act of writing has the dual function of translating the somatic into the cognitive, but also of making something that is transient, permanent.

Amelda Brand, the drama therapist with whom I worked, and I endeavoured to create activities that could work in tandem. To take one example, one of the workshops was devoted to exploring the journey that the participants had made between their home country and South Africa. Amelda presented them with a large box of scarves of different fabrics and textures and asked them to map their journey choosing different scarves for different parts of the journey which they felt represented their experiences at that time. Then I asked them to sit next to one area of their map and to write a letter to someone connected to their migration at that point, towards whom they felt they needed to express feelings that they had not been able to express at the time.

The life stories give migrants a human face. The stories underline that although different communities have different norms, many human experiences are shared, like feelings of bewilderment in a new environment. Sally (all participant's names are changed in this essay) recalled an outing to a local shopping complex shortly after she arrived.

> *When I got to South Africa so many things were new and strange. My brother in law took me to the Waterfront. Everywhere I looked there were pigeons. Pigeons are a big delicacy for us at home. We put out peanuts and catch them if we can. We like to eat them on special occasions like when we have important visitors. So, when I saw all the pigeons I was delighted. I thought I can eat pigeon with pap* [porridge] *tonight. I had some peanuts with me so I scattered a few and jumped at the pigeons and managed to catch one but before I could wring its neck my brother in law was shouting at me "Let it go. They don't eat them here. If they catch you killing it they will call the police." I thought the South Africans are crazy. There is free meat flying about everywhere and they are not allowed to touch it?*

Other aspects of the life stories are very familiar to a South African ear – particularly stories about poverty and the frustration of trying to cope with extremely limited resources. Miriam explained how to make a fire in a shoe so you can feed your family.

> *And to make fire you have to have enough charcoal and petrol. And for petrol you need money and a container. We put three stones in a triangle in the middle of the fire because stones keep hot for a long time. If we can find an old shoe we put that in the middle and make the fire inside the shoe. Things can go wrong. Sometimes you end up disappointed and just give the kids sugar water instead. Even our pap is more difficult than your pap. Because it is made from cassava it takes forty-five minutes to cook. Otherwise, it is bitter and you can't eat it.*

During the workshops I constantly took notes, writing down everything the participants offered. When we came to write the final stories I had my notes and their own writing. I sifted through the material over several hours with each person in turn, deciding together what to include or omit and often adding material that came to the surface in these one-on-one sessions. Inevitably memories are coloured by their present experiences – the past in contrast to the hostile reality of life in a nation where they are not welcome. Their agency in how these memories are structured is vital. McAdams (2001: 117) says: "Autobiographical memory encompasses a vast range of personal information and experience, whereas the life story consists of a more delimited set of temporally and thematically organized scenes and scripts that together constitute identity." The challenge was to select, from all the material that came to light in the workshops, those parts which were most meaningful to the person with whom I

was working.

Jill's poem, "Kinshasa", acknowledges that life was unpredictable and harsh at home. And yet it hurts her to be away from the DRC because of her treatment at the hands of South Africans.

I love Congolese music
I love listening to the word of God
On the video on my phone
On the roads they're cooking fish and chicken
That smells good
But malewa, I don't like it.
It gives me a sick tummy
So that smells bad.
I catch the chickens to cut their throats
So I can cook them.
I slice the fish to take out their guts
And remove their scales.
I peel bananas to eat them
Because I like them a lot.
I like to eat pondu, salted fish and foufou.
But our electricity come and goes
We only have water two days a week
People don't have jobs
People don't have homes
But to leave my country was painful
Because of how I am treated here.

In an introductory chapter for the anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff's book, *Remembered Lives*, Mark Kaminsky reflects on the ethic that Myerhoff develops in her fieldwork. Kaminsky suggests that an appropriate phrase for Myerhoff's position is the "third voice" (Kaminsky 1992: 7-8, 13-15). This voice is neither the first voice of the anthropologist, nor the second voice of the people whom the anthropologists are interviewing. It is a third voice –a collaborative voice located between the anthropologists and the people they study. The essentiality of collaboration Kaminsky captures in anthropological fieldwork is a sound template for ethical life-story making, and particularly where the researcher is more advantaged than the research subject. In my practice I strive to be accountable throughout the process. Fundamental to that accountability is ensuring that the story really is in the third voice. This needs to be achieved in two ways – firstly by negotiating thoroughly with workshop participants as the stories are being created in the one-on-one sessions, but also by making sure that the participants are given the opportunity to collaboratively edit their stories once they have had a chance to reflect on the content of the story.

There cannot be enough stress on these concepts of accountability and genuine collaboration. A researcher needs to constantly, reflectively and reflexively, examine her own practice, particularly if, like myself, you are part of an output-driven environment like a university which exerts its own pressures. Because ultimately the workshop participants need to find the process both safe and beneficial. Michael Nutkiewicz, writing about gathering oral testimony from Holocaust survivors, argues that survivors live with countervailing pressures; on one hand to forget and move on, but on the other hand to tell and memorialize. "Oral testimony's communal, didactic and therapeutic nature make it a unique platform for these conflicting forces to work themselves out by transforming narratives of suffering into narratives of witnessing." (Nutkiewicz 2003). The life story researcher, Kim Etherington (Etherington, 2009: 231), also considers the transformative potential of life story narrative. "Resilient trauma survivors often use their own experiences to help others. By helping others, they help themselves maintain a continuous sense of self-transformation; they give of themselves in nurturing ways without expectations of immediate benefits." All of the migrants voiced that, in participating, they hoped their stories would cause migrants to be treated better and would encourage South Africans to rethink their behaviour. Several of them chose to end their life stories with a direct appeal to the better nature of South Africans, emphasising togetherness and shared humanity. Sylvia wrote:

*People are so rude to us. The lady from SARS (*South African Revenue Service*) said I had to get proof of address but when I came back with it she didn't even look at it. She just threw it at me. I wanted to know what the mistake was but she didn't bother. I cried and cried because I felt I can get nowhere as a foreigner. It is difficult for me because my English is not good. If I could explain properly I might go to the police.*

But with no papers and no job only God can help me. I would like to ask South Africans to like us. We are the same people. We are all the same in the eyes of God. You don't know what our life is like. We never know what to expect. If people are united they are strong. Our coming here will help you in the end because we are together, and together we can build

a strong country. We did not come here to be bad or to take things from you – we came here to make a good future with you like a sister and brother supporting each other. I love you, South Africa.

A year after working with the migrants, Amelda Brand and I returned to Scalabrini to work with their youth programme, Unite! Unite!'s mission statement describes itself as "exploring ideas of identity, integration and diversity with youth living in South Africa." They run weekly after-school sessions in local secondary schools, as well as holiday programmes – we timed these workshops for the spring break so they could be offered as a holiday programme.

A core objective of offering the life stories to these teenagers lay in challenging the generic metaphor about migrants to which South Africans are continually exposed. In Ransford and McDonald's 2000 survey of mainstream press attitudes to migration in South Africa they found sensationalism typifies reporting on migration issues in the press. Headlines are particularly bad in this respect, with bold titles like, "Illegals in SA add to decay of cities", "6 million migrants headed our way", "Africa floods into Cape Town", and "francophone invasion" being common examples. We also come across repeated references to aquatic or mob metaphors like "hordes", "floods", "flocking", and "streaming" in the text of articles. In total, 25% of the articles surveyed used sensational headlines and 9% used sensational metaphors in the text of the report.

Bolton (2005: 3) writes: "The way an issue is understood cannot be changed without changing the metaphors, or metaphorical systems, which express it. By paying attention to the metaphors we use, we can become critically aware of hitherto uncritically accepted and repeated worldviews. We can choose the conceptual frameworks which construct our values, understandings, and feelings and therefore our actions." Our challenge was to contest these existing hostile metaphors by introducing the real lived experience of the migrants, and then encouraging the students to reflect on these specific people and their specific lived experience. As Bolton (2014: 3) says: "'Reflection is looking at whole scenarios from as many angles as possible: people, relationships, situation, place, timing, chronology, causality, connections to make situations and people more comprehensible."

Sometimes this furnished unexpected results. Jill's story detailed how she became sick in the Congo with a diseased kidney. Her nephew advised her to come to Cape Town for medical care, saying he would care for her and organise an operation for her. But when she arrived in Cape Town her nephew's wife refused to even allow her into the house and he was forced to take her to his church and appeal to members of the congregation there to take her in. We asked a group of the teenagers (mainly girls) to play out the scene, reflect on their responses to the conflict and look at other possible solutions. I had anticipated that they would condemn what I saw as the nephew's wife's cruelty. But to my surprise they were whole-heartedly on her side. To me, when I heard Jill tell her story, this woman was a one-dimensional heartless character prepared to throw a sick woman who had travelled a very long way for help out on the street. But when the girls played out the scene they fleshed her out from their own life experience, so that she emerged instead as the stressed and only breadwinner for the whole family who was resentful and angry at her unemployed husband for giving her another mouth to feed, without prior discussion or agreement and in direct competition with her children for scanty resources. They came up with some energetic metaphors of their own: "*Why should the wife just lie down like a rug and do what she's told.*" "*Men are like that – always just getting their own idea and bulldozing you down about what you are supposed to do.*" And they all agreed that going to the church for help was practical and the best solution for everyone.

Being open to sharing from personal experience is also important. Brookfield (1993: 21) observes (in discussing teaching in higher education), "When professors bring narratives of their experiences into classroom discussions it eliminates the possibility that we can function as all-knowing, silent interrogators."

I like to share by doing the exercises myself that I ask the participants to do. I will do the exercise before the session and then share my writing during the workshop before asking the participants to make their own version. This is particularly important when you are encouraging participants to reflect on behaviour and choices of which they might be ashamed. In the workshops for teenagers I asked the students to write a "personification letter" i.e. a letter to an element of themselves that they felt was a flaw. My letter was written to "Intolerance of Old People",

a personal failing that is always a struggle for me.

Dear Intolerance of Old People

I don't like it when you start acting up around old people, wanting to hurry them up and feeling annoyed when they say the same thing twice and so on. I know that you are really busy and you have lots of things to do and you get fed up with having to go slowly because old people need to do things more slowly.

But you need to learn to be more patient. Everything doesn't always have to be a race. Also, you are going to be old one day, and slower and more vulnerable and people are going to need to be patient with you. Slow down a bit and take the time to give them more time and just be nicer in general.

Sarah

One of the core concepts in CWTP is that the writing itself can heal and change attitudes. This concept of the relationship between writing and reflection is echoed in the work of Charon and Herman (2012: 3): "Writing is used to *attain* the state of reflection. Not report but discovery, writing unlocks reservoirs of thought or knowledge otherwise inaccessible to the writer."

One student wrote this letter to his flaw:

Dear Quick To Judge

You always look at people and you judge. If they are a bit different from you, you judge. If they come from somewhere else, you judge. If they dress different, you judge. You think judging is a good thing, but it is not a good thing. It's not humanity. People don't always have to be the same. Why don't you look first and listen first? You might find if you get to know the other person, you don't want to judge straight away.

The Xenophobia project was the first work I facilitated after having formal training as a counsellor and a CWTP practitioner and I was very aware of the difference in my competency after my training. Both the *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 2013) and *Core Competencies for Working with the Literary Arts for Personal Development, Health and Wellbeing* (Flint, Hamilton and Williamson, 2004) are excellent resources for mapping one's readiness and ability to work with vulnerable people on material than could potentially be triggering. Flint et al suggest a number of guidelines for best working practice. Two that were particularly resonant for me in this work were that the facilitator is clear about the limits and emphasis of work where artistic activity is the primary focus – understands it is not a "therapy", nor the facilitator a "therapist" as defined in psychotherapeutic terms but also that the facilitator pays attention to care of themselves mentally and physically, knows their own limitations, obtains adequate supervision, finds appropriate support when necessary. The Ethical Framework also stresses the importance of self-care.

Practitioners have a responsibility to themselves to ensure that their work does not become detrimental to their health or well-being by ensuring that the way that they undertake their work is as safe as possible and that they seek appropriate professional support and services as the need arises. (The Ethical Framework, 2013: 4)

With the woman's group in particular, writing the letters connected to migration was very emotional – the whole group began to weep as they wrote, and wept collectively later as they read their letters aloud. Once all the letters had been read we talked about what it had been like to be part of the exercise. Jill said: "*Why did you ask us to do something which made us think about bad things, when we are always trying to forget the bad things*." We talked about whether it is better to try to forget about bad things, or whether the hurt from them is still inside you even if you try not to think about it. Hilary had gone through the experience of being forced to leave her children with family members who had sexually abused her as a child, knowing they would also be abused. She wrote her letter to the woman who had promised to care for her children but had later abandoned them to this situation.

I grew up in the place where you dropped my kids. In that place I suffered abuse physically,

emotionally and molestation, being beaten at times. The thought of my kids being in such a place and that I did not have money to take them, was my nightmare every night and day. The way my relatives started calling me and threatening me about the issue because my disease, pain in my womb, they never gave me rest at all. I tried to look for money but I couldn't find it until two years passed. Because of this, my past two years were so difficult.
However, one day God remembered me through someone and I later took them with me but what I found when I saw them made me hate you for a while.

Hilary said: "*It was really good for me to write the letter. It sorted out some things that confused me that I needed to say even though it bought pain. It has made me feel more peaceful*."

In assessing the impact of this project, there are several aspects to consider. There was the impact, already discussed within this paper, on the wellbeing of the migrants themselves, and the effectiveness of creative writing and drama therapy in enabling us to collect the stories. Then there was the aspect of whether the stories were communicable to the students in a way which could actually alter prevailing attitudes.

Jade Bell, the youth programme manager at Scalabrini, remarked after the workshops with the teenagers: " It was amazing to me to see that although these exact same kids have had lectures about xenophobia before, they seemed so much more aware of their own feelings and prejudices once they had been invited to write and make scenes in response to the prompts. Before it was like they had heard it but they had never really thought about their own response to it." (Bell, J. 2018. Personal communication. 6 April).

The final aspect has been how to leave resources in place that Scalabrini could use once Amelda and I were no longer working with them. This was the challenge we needed to address in the staff training workshops we led in the final phase of the project. Scalabrini has a range of platforms, to address the needs of the community it serves, and each of those platforms offers specific services. In the staff training we invited members from all the different platforms and over two days we trained them in how to use some of the techniques we had used. We followed this up by creating a resource booklet with detailed instructions in how to use the methods including warm-up games, exercises and ways of closing a workshop.

Jade Bell in feedback given to us a year after the project closed wrote. "There has been a ripple effect in how we have been able to implement Sarah and Amelda's work. For example, at Scalabrini we have the UNITE Club (which unites six different local high schools) and then we have UNITE Leadership workshops, which take students from the UNITE Clubs and trains them in leadership. We've used activities Amelda and Sarah provided in both these groups. What has been great is that at Scalabrini kids are peer-facilitated using the activities. But then they go out into the schools and they are able to peer-facilitate themselves, using the same activities." (Bell, J. 2019. Personal communication. 23 November).

It seems from this feedback that the resources are being used, and that they are adding a new dimension to ways in which Scalabrini is able to implement outreach in trying to persuade the wider community to be more inclusive towards migrants.

Expressive arts have a unique role to play in social justice work, with their inherent ability to foster empathy and to facilitate learning that is both affective and cognitive. Creative writing is particularly powerful because the overheard costs for workshops are so low but the impact potentially so wide. Our discipline holds enormous potential for enhancing both personal wellbeing and a voice in society for the marginalised and unheard.

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