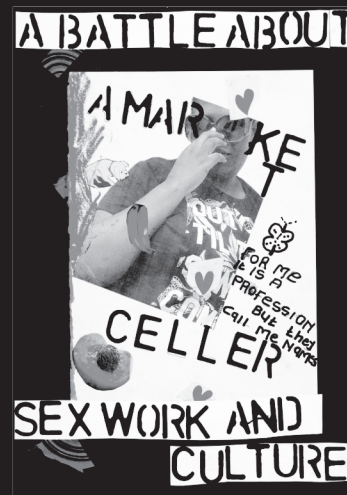
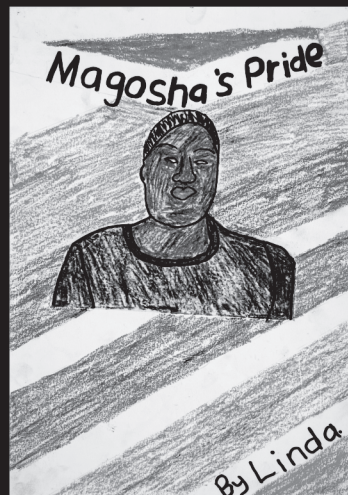
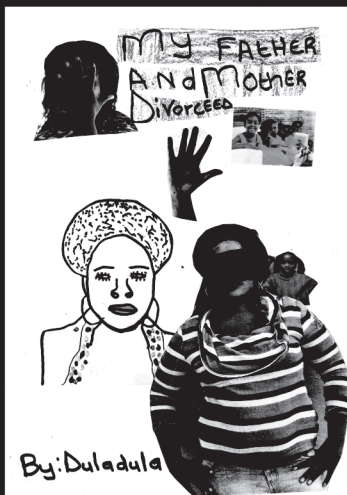
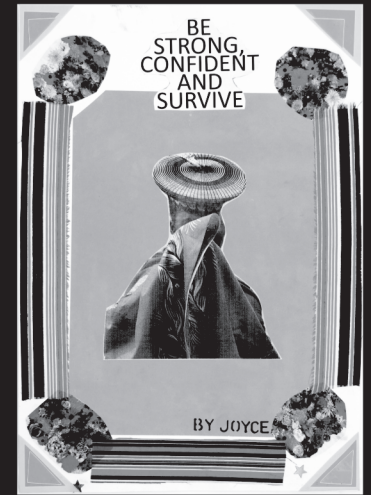
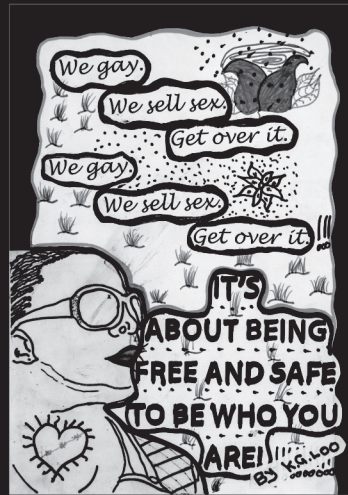


SEX WORKER ZINE PROJECT

2015

www.facebook.com/themoveprojectsouthafrica
www.migration.org.za/page/about-move/move
www.issuu.com/move.methods.visual.explore
www.methodvisualsvisual.explore.tumblr.com
www.instagram.com/movesafrica
www.twitter.com/MoVESAfrica



Zines are self-published works that normally deal with topics that are too controversial or niche for mainstream media. The body of work in this project was produced by 24 men, women and transgender participants who lived and sold sex in Johannesburg, South Africa and in the rural Provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, South Africa. The zines produced by the participants feature a diverse and complex range of issues. Some of the zines focus on trajectories and experiences as sex workers, whereas others chose to focus on other lived experiences such as, calling for attention to infrastructure needs in rural communities, migration histories, cultural traditions, and family relationships. These zines offer an important intervention to counter the incomplete—and often inaccurate—representations of migrant men, women and transgender persons engaged in the selling of sex. This project is the fourth iteration of participatory visual and narrative work conducted in partnership with Sisonke, and was inspired by the success and challenges of the previous projects.

ABOUT THE SEX WORKER ZINE PROJECT

Elsa Oliveira

Since 2010, the MoVE Project at the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) located at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa has been involved in a range of collaborative visual and narrative research projects with the Sisonke Sex Worker Movement (Sisonke). The 2015 *Sex Worker Zine Project* forms part of this longer working relationship with Sisonke.

All of the projects to date have relied on the use of mixed methods- including a range of participatory visual and narrative methods alongside more traditional qualitative methods- to explore the lived experiences of migrant sex workers in South Africa. In addition, a central aim of the collaboration has been to generate material that is created—and selected—by the participants for public dissemination. These projects include: the 2010 *Working the City* participatory photography project, the 2013 *Volume 44* participatory visual and narrative project, and the 2014 *Equal Airtime* body mapping and narrative writing project. These bodies of work have circulated widely across public and private spaces including in local, national, and international forums, on social media sites, in various Sisonke run civil society meetings and initiatives, and in a variety of popular and academic publications.

In 2015 the Open Society Foundation (OSF) funded the MoVE Project, in collaboration with the Sisonke Sex Worker Movement, to conduct two new projects: a Gauteng based newsletter project called, *Izwi Lethu: Our Voices*, and a zine making project in the rural provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, South Africa, called the *Sex Worker Zine Project*.

*Zines are self-published works that normally deal with topics that are too controversial or niche for mainstream media. Zines can be created by anyone on any topic; they often employ unpolished designs and layouts and are printed in mass for wide distribution. Zine productions are often popular in 'underground communities' that want to share about a particular topic or issue. Nikko Snyder who writes the 'good girl' zine says, 'for me, women making zines, or art, or anything else creative is about taking the media back—challenging the bullshit that goes on in the mainstream media, reclaiming public media space, and above all, expressing ourselves creatively. It's about creating our own spaces where this creative expression is possible, on our own terms.'*¹

The *Sex Worker Zine Project* features work that was produced by 24 men, women and transgender participants who live and sell sex in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces of South Africa.

1. <http://www.womenactionmedia.org/2011/08/12/feminist-media-activism-zines-where-are-we-now/>

Two separate 2-week workshops took place in Makahado, Limpopo and Nelspruit, Mpumalanga. The workshops were facilitated by Elsa Oliveira from the MoVE Project at the ACMS and Quinten Edward Williams, a Johannesburg based artist. Linda Monane—a participant from the 2013 *Volume 44* project and current contributor to the *Izwi Lethu: Our Voices* newsletter—and, Katlego Rasebitse—Advocacy Coordinator, Sisonke—were critical to the workshops' success.

During the first week of the workshop, the facilitators took the participants through a variety of multimodal visual and narrative exercises. Storytelling, art critiques, and art making were central to this phase of the workshop. During the second week of the workshop, participants selected the story or theme that they wanted to write about for their individual zines. Peer and facilitator support guided the making of each zine story.

The zines produced by the 24 participants feature a diverse and complex range of issues. While some of the zines focus on trajectories into sex work, many focus on other socially relevant and pressing lived experiences, such as, infrastructure needs in rural communities, migration histories, cultural traditions, family relationships and the call for the decriminalisation of sex work.

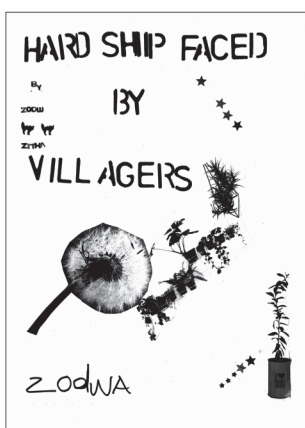
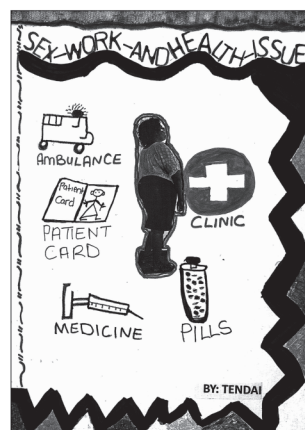
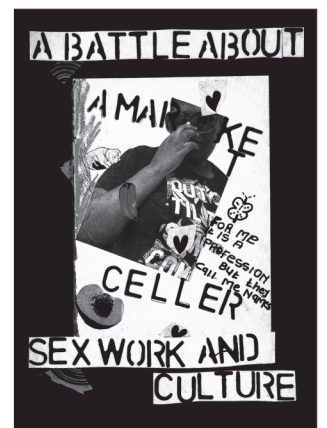
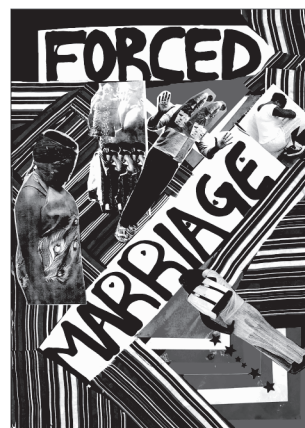
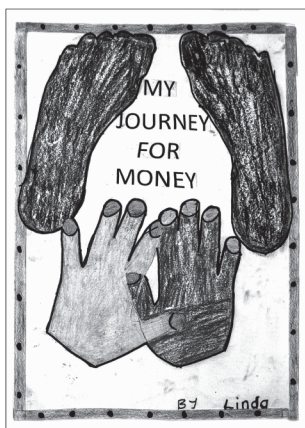
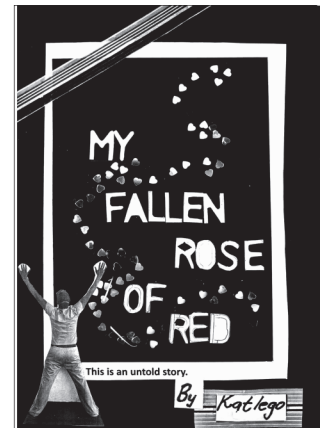
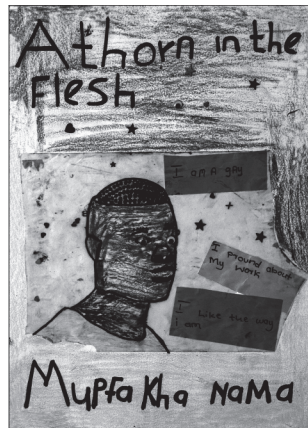
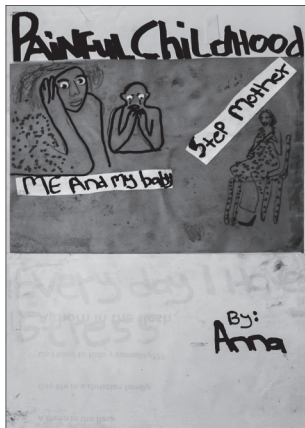
In a social-political context such as South Africa where sex work is criminalised and heteronormative pressures of conformity prevail, these zines offer an important intervention to counter the incomplete—and often inaccurate—representations of migrant men, women and transgender persons engaged in the selling of sex.

Elsa Oliveira
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African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS)

Publication and Exhibition Designed and Curated by Quinten Edward Williams



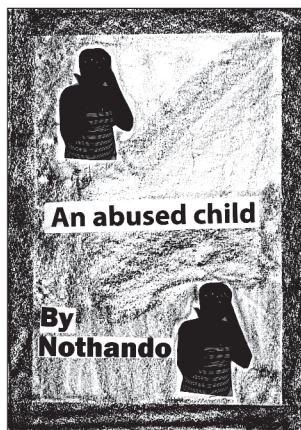
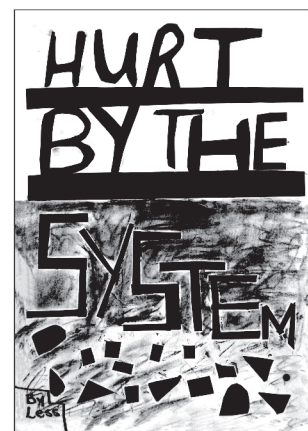
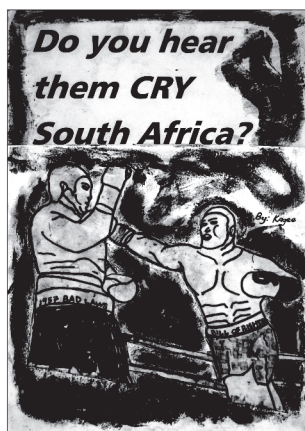
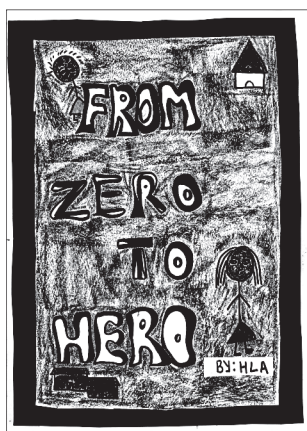
ZINE COVERS MADE IN MAKHADO



Makhado Zine Workshops:

- Anna
- Arnold
- Joyce
- Katlego
- Linda
- Meme
- Muffin
- Poppy
- Sakisi
- Suzy
- Tendai
- Tshidi
- Zodwa

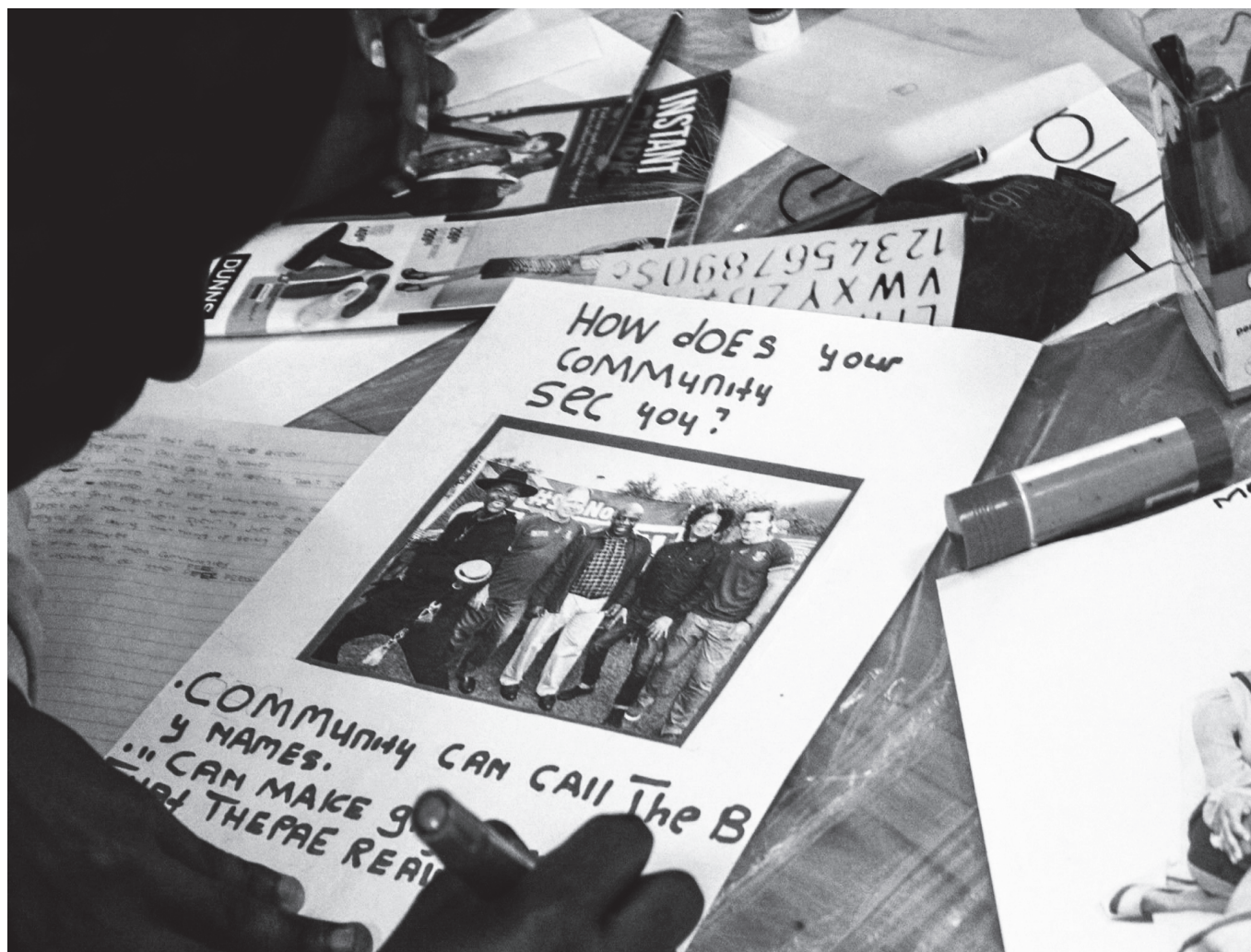
ZINE COVERS MADE IN NELSPRUIT



Nelspruit Zine Workshops:

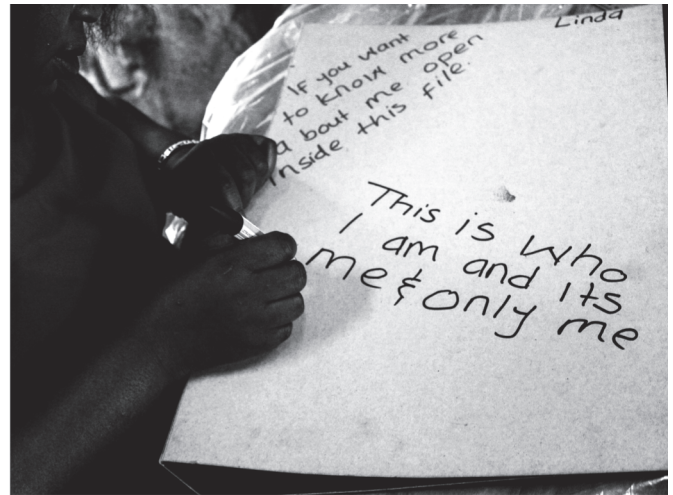
Doe Doe
Lebo
Duladula
Freedom
Hla
Kagee
K.G. Loo
Less
Linda
My Baby
Nothando

ZINE MAKING DOCUMENTATION



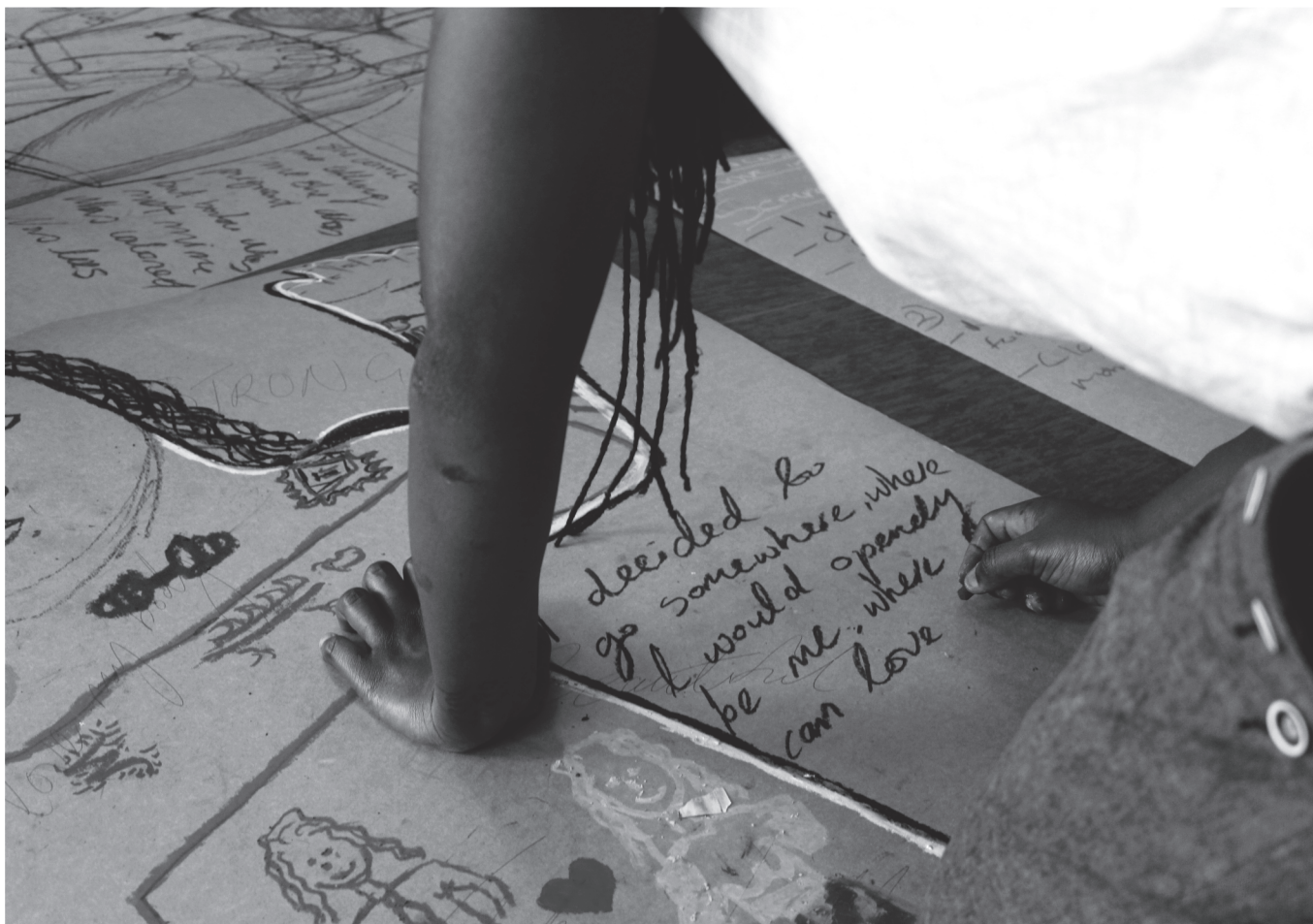
The zine workshop process involved a range of activities aimed at supporting a creative and storytelling process whereby all involved- participants and facilitators alike- were offered the opportunity to reflect on our lives.

During the first week stories were told through a range of art making activities. Every day of the workshop, participants were given open-ended questions in the form of writing exercises, and they were invited to use these questions as starting points to write about aspects of their lives: past, present and future. Sometimes participants would share these stories with the group, but often these stories would remain very private, even within the workshop space. The writing process, however, helped participants open areas which they could explore through the art processes. Throughout the first week, participants were given the opportunity to experiment with telling their stories through drawing, painting, collage, and photography in the form of expression pages. As the week progressed, the facilitators began to place an emphasis on the layering of these different working methods, and the relationship of image and text to make meaning. At the end of the first week the participants identified stories from their lives that they wanted to tell to a wider public in the format of a zine.



At the beginning of the second week, the participants, with the help of the facilitators, planned the flow of the content of their stories according to particular page numbers of what would eventually become the zines. During the rest of the week, an intensive zine making process unfolded: participants wrote their story out, and then found ways for their image making to help tell their story—and through this art making process, extend their story into unanticipated ways.

The zine making process that was undertaken by each participant during the second week, albeit more focussed on an end product than the first week's expression pages, continued to be a vibrant and explorative undertaking. Each workshop was short: it only lasted two weeks. However, the planning of the facilitators in terms of the daily flow of activities, and the dedication, courage and ingenuity of the participants in their image-text explorations, enabled some very powerful visual stories to emerge.



1.

MoVE focuses on the development of visual and other involved methodologies to research the lived experiences of migrants in southern Africa. Our approach aims to integrate social action with research, and involves collaboration with migrant participants, existing social movements, qualified facilitators and trainers, and research students engaged in participatory research methods. This work includes the study and use of visual methods - including photography, narrative writing, participatory theatre, collage - and other arts-based approaches in the process of producing, analysing, and disseminating research data. These approaches to research facilitate story-telling and self-study, incorporating various auto ethnographic approaches. Central areas of investigation relate to issues of social justice in relation to migration, with a specific focus on sexuality, gender, health, and policy.