

We are currently working on an ongoing project focused on preserving Congolese traditional marriage customs.

We held the project launch event on the 27th of August 2023, to announce the commencement of the project. During the event, we invited the young members of our community to participate in the project as volunteers. From those who expressed interest, we selected 10 individuals to take on the roles of project manager, professional artist, and project evaluator.

We advertised the project manager position on various websites, such as jobcentre job plus, reed.co.uk, and linkedin.co.uk, for four weeks. After receiving and reviewing the CVs, we appointed the most suitable candidate as the project manager, professional artist, and project evaluator.

SCESC hired a project manager to oversee the project from beginning to end. Additionally, we brought in an illustrator to collaborate with the youth in creating a comic book based on the outcomes of the workshop sessions, transcriptionists to document the oral interviews, and an external assessor to evaluate the project.

SCESC enlisted the help of 10 volunteers from the community to support with project management. Project description.

The project's goal is to connect the youths of African immigrants and refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who were born or raised in the UK to their cultural identity and preserve the cultural traditional heritage marriage customs practised by their elders who are living in Salford.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the few nations in the world with more than 450 tribes with both patriarchal and matriarchal family structures. These tribes are divided into four traditional groups: Bangala, Baluba, Bakongo, and Baswahili. Each traditional tribe group has its unique customs for celebrating marriage and the upkeep of the family structure; the wedding procedure is distinguished by the bride price, the clothing code, and the customary food and drink; and dances to traditional music.

The project aims to explore how different ethnic groups celebrate traditional marriage, with a focus on the following aspects of cultural heritage:

- The groom's family will receive a list of items required for the traditional marriage as the bride price (dowry).
- Traditional Food and Drink: Both the bride and groom's families will prepare dishes and drinks made from palm oil to be shared during the traditional wedding ceremony.
- Traditional music and dances will be performed to commemorate the marriage.
- Dress code: Both families will wear traditional clothing to distinguish themselves during the ceremony.

The Salford Community Education Support Centre (SCESC) collaborated with the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relation Centre at the Manchester Central Library, which provided training on conducting interviews, recording oral history, and archiving project materials.

The SCESC hosted six workshops for elders from the Congolese community in Salford, who shared their knowledge of traditional marriage customs with the youth. The aim was to educate and preserve these customs for future generations.

Next steps for the project include:

- Conducting twenty interviews with members of the Congolese community who attended the workshops. The interviews will be transcribed into word documents by community youth and archived at the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relation Centre.

- Printing booklets featuring artwork created by an artist and distributing them to the local church and school.
- Organizing an end-of-project event to thank participants and community members for their support.