



UNIVERSITY *of* DERBY

Submission

I am a different person – I have got my life back.”

This testimonial from a member of the Congolese community speaks volumes about the transformational impact of the University of Derby’s work with the forced migrant group over the past year.

The university consulted with deprived communities throughout the city and worked with migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo to design a programme to tackle isolation among women and children.

Projects included a sewing group, art therapy for traumatised migrants and a drop-in centre to support community members struggling with issues such as the asylum process, job seeking and referrals to doctors. To date, 18 projects have been launched.

These schemes have benefited more than 500 local people, as well as having a general impact on the community. Among these are seven individuals who, through the help offered at the drop-in centre, have been given indefinite leave to remain in the UK, six who have been given help with health problems, and a father and daughter have been reunited.

One community member, whose four children are also now living in the UK, said that the project had been “transformational” for his family.

Shearer West, head of the humanities division at the University of Oxford and one of the judges, said: “Derby undertook a sensitive, focused analysis of the needs of vulnerable women and youth in their local Congolese community. This represents an outstanding example of knowledge exchange that has strengthened community links with the University of Derby.”