

Institution: Nottingham Trent University (NTU)		
Unit of Assessment: D27 – English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: The Changing Wor(l)ds Partnership: Enabling Cultural Self-Representation for Marginalised Communities.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Names:	Roles:	Periods employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Anna Ball	Associate Professor	2007 – present
Dr Jenni Ramone	Senior Lecturer in Postcolonial Studies	2012 – present
Dr Nicole Thiara	Senior Lecturer in English	2012 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: June 2014 – December 31, 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Building on their research on culturally and socially marginalised communities, members of NTU's Postcolonial Studies Centre (PSC) formed the Changing Wor(l)ds Partnership, a flourishing network of literary professionals, arts venues, community organisations, publishers and translators. Dr Anna Ball, Dr Jenni Ramone, and Dr Nicole Thiara worked collaboratively with Changing Wor(l)ds partners and developed a programme of cultural events to support marginalised communities in the UK and India – particularly women from refugee backgrounds and Dalits (formerly 'Untouchables'). The partnership and programme empowered members of marginalised communities to produce poems, books, exhibitions and translations that gave voice to their concerns and expressed their experiences. These opportunities had transformative impacts upon their individual, social, and economic wellbeing whilst impact on creativity and culture was achieved through collaboration with publishers, translators and community organisations, allowing these partners to enhance their contribution to public discourse on refugeeism, ethnicity, and discrimination.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The Changing Wor(l)ds (CW) Partnership emerged from PSC members' shared research focus on the relationship between social marginalisation (on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, caste, gender and/or sexuality) and the resulting constraints on cultural self-representation and creative practice. Thiara's AHRC-funded interdisciplinary network 'Writing, Translating, Analysing Dalit Literature' (2014-2016) [G1] revealed the social and cultural injustices faced by radically marginalised Dalit (formerly 'Untouchable') writers, including lack of international awareness of their work, and a dearth of interest from international publishers. The network provided a context in which some of the earliest critical work on Dalit literary texts was developed. It delivered series of international conferences (6), symposia (2), and other events dedicated to the analysis of a tradition of writing that has been almost invisible outside of India, establishing a dialogue between prominent scholars from India, the US, Canada, Germany, France, and the UK. These events also trialled innovative collaborative models of public platforming and research co-production that brought academics, Dalit authors, translators and publishers together. Thiara commissioned and produced collaborative outputs drawn from network activities [R1, R2]. Research resulting from Thiara's AHRC Follow-On Funding award [G3] further revealed how literature and the dramatic arts can and should act as important mechanisms for counteracting Dalit marginalisation in India and within international social and cultural arenas. Ball's 2012 monograph on Palestine literature and film [R3], the first sustained study of gender-consciousness in the Palestinian creative imagination, revealed the relationship between power, identity, nation, resistance, and self-representation. It emphasised the importance of making visible marginalised female authors and filmmakers to counteract the international tendency to sideline Palestinian creativity. Her 2018 edited collection [R4] also revealed how disenfranchised communities across the Middle East have turned to digital platforms, popular music and even graffiti as cultural mediums for self-empowerment. Ball's 'Moving Women, Moving Stories' project began in 2016 and advanced through a Leverhulme</p>		

Research Fellowship [G2] awarded in 2018 for her 'Body in Flight: Creative Responses to Women's Forced Migration' project (leading to the first monograph in this field, to be published in 2021). This research and her partnership with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF) revealed few opportunities for refugee women to produce their own writing and other creative work, as well as a cultural marketplace overcrowded with reductive representations of refugee women by non-refugees. Ramone's edited volume *Bloomsbury Introduction to Postcolonial Writing: New Contexts, New Narratives, New Debates* [R5] facilitated publication of new research on various forms of global marginalization experienced by communities affected by climate change, forced migration, and uneven global access to digital platforms. Ramone's essay contribution to this collection considers the social and economic forces that shape book production by marginalised writers. Her 2020 monograph *Postcolonial Literatures in the Local Literary Marketplace* (resulting from research started in 2015 [R6]) demonstrated how local literary marketplaces in Cuba, South Asia, Nigeria and the UK have emerged as sites of unexpected activism, working to counteract the marginalisation of communities through diverse cultural strategies.

The collective insights drawn from this research contributed directly to the establishment of the Changing Wor(l)ds research and networking partnership in 2018. In order to undertake this research, Ball, Ramone, and Thiara worked with a large number of writers, publishers, translators, and community groups including Booker Prize winner (2019) Bernadine Evaristo, Mudnakudu Chinnaswamy, NNRF, Nottingham Black Archive, and Palewell Press. Many of these subsequently joined the Changing Wor(l)ds Partnership.

3. References to the research

The quality of this research is evidenced by the funding received from the AHRC and the Leverhulme Trust.

R1 Nicole Thiara, Judith Misrahi-Barak and K. Satyanarayana, eds., *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 54:1 (2019) Special Issue on 'Dalit Literature'. Includes Thiara's co-authored introduction (pp. 3-8; DOI: [10.1177/0021989417726108](https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989417726108)) and interview with film director Jayan K. Cherian (pp.96-104; DOI: [10.1177/0021989417710303](https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989417710303))

R2 Nicole Thiara, Judith Misrahi-Barak and K. Satyanarayana, eds. *Dalit Text: Aesthetics and Politics Re-Imagined* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2019), including Thiara's Foreword and co-authored introduction [edited collection]: '*[this book's] political commitment to representing a diversity of voices – in several different languages – from within Dalit literary and scholarly circles in India and its diaspora will play a critical role in contributing to the growth and sophistication of the field of Dalit literary studies. This volume is desperately needed*'. (Review for Routledge, Laura Brueck, University of Texas at Austin)

R3 Anna Ball, *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (Routledge, 2012) [monograph]: '*Highlights the irony of Palestinian marginalisation in postcolonial studies; provide[s] a swathe of evidence that [Palestinian women writers] actively engage in feminist analysis and critique*'. (Review, Lindsey Moore, Lancaster Univ., *Journal of Postcolonial Studies*)

R4 Anna Ball and Karim Mattar, eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to the Postcolonial Middle East* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019); 24 contributors including Ball, 'Biopolitical Landscapes of the Small Human: Figuring the Child in the Contemporary Middle Eastern Refugee Crisis in Europe', pp. 446-468, co-authored introduction and afterword, and 'Interview with Ahdaf Soueif', pp.57-66. [edited collection]: '*The wide-ranging and thought-provoking essays...illuminate...colonialism, modern imperialism and global capitalism in the region...Set to become a landmark in the field*'. (Book endorsement, Ania Loomba, University of Pennsylvania)

R5 Jenni Ramone, ed., *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Postcolonial Writing: New Contexts, New Narratives, New Debates* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017) [edited collection, 18 contributors including Ramone]: '*underscores the continued relevancy of the field whose conceptual framework allows scholars to consider alternatives to imperialist imperatives*'. (Review, Jennifer Howell, *Illinois State University, Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature*, 2019)

R6 Jenni Ramone, *Postcolonial Literature in the Local Literary Marketplace: Located Reading* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2020), [monograph]: '*In this remarkable, stimulating and urgent book, Jenni Ramone superbly underscores the power of reading to contest authority's demands*'.

(Book endorsement, John McLeod, University of Leeds)

Key underpinning grants

G1 AHRC Research Networking Scheme award; Writing, Analysing, Translating Dalit Literature; £35,886; 2014-16.

G2 Leverhulme Research Fellowship: Moving Women, Moving Stories: rethinking representations of forced migration; £43,436; 2018-19.

G3 AHRC Follow-On Funding award: On Page and on Stage: Celebrating Dalit and Adivasi Literatures and Performing Arts; £80,350; 2020-22.

4. Details of the impact

Through a multi-strand programme of activities, the Changing Wor(l)ds Partnership has achieved impact in the areas of creativity, culture and society, wellbeing, and social welfare by turning words – written, spoken, and heard – into tools that enable self-representation for marginalised communities. In doing so, it has challenged stereotypes, forged support networks, established new platforms, and started to overturn the sociocultural structures that have marginalised them. Working with Dalit and refugee groups in Nottingham, the UK more widely, Europe, and India, its reach extends from the local and regional to the national and international, establishing cultural partnerships that ensure the continual flourishing of these voices. The Partnership continues to support writers, publishers, translators, and cultural organisations. Writers benefitting from the Partnership continue to produce creative works and contribute to networking events.

Enabling co-production and co-delivery of new and diverse cultural outputs that improve self-representation for marginalised communities

CW activities allowed Dalit and female refugee authors to produce, publish, and promote public discussion of their work, advancing their reach within the literary marketplace and international cultural arena. Through the 'Writing, Analysing and Translating Dalit Literature' strand of the project [**G1**], Dalit author Mudnakudu Chinnaswamy came to the UK for the first time in 2015 and again in 2016 [**S1**]. It created channels for him to showcase his work among international publishers and readers in Norwich, Nottingham, and Paris – a '*rare opportunity*' for his work to gain international visibility [**S1**]. He wrote: '*My poetry has been exposed to a larger audience and sharing Dalit experience with the people from different cultural background was indeed exhilarating*' [**S1**]. This resulted in radical cooperative publisher Erbacce Press producing the first English translation of Chinnaswamy's poetry in 2016 [**S1**]. This publication prompted Delhi-based Yoda Press to publish his work in English translation in India for the first time [**S2**], which, in turn, led to the Government of Karnataka publishing Chinnaswamy's complete works in four volumes. Chinnaswamy's described this as a '*landmark testimony in my literary journey*', noting that '*This has given a fillip to my endeavour. [...] I would continue to associate with the network as long as your dynamic stewardship is available*' [**S1**].

The collaboration between Dalit writers, translators and publishers facilitated by Thiara has ensured that Dalit voices are heard throughout India by translating them for audiences who do not read Kannada, Bangla or Punjabi. This has galvanised support among translators including Sipra Mukherjee, who has worked to make writing by forced migrant communities and by young people living in villages in the Sundarban Delta more visible [**S3**]. As a result of a CW workshop, Mukherjee facilitated the performance of poetry, songs and drama by one disadvantaged community of young adults to another disadvantaged community group in order to inspire debate over the ways in which they could overcome obstacles that they both face [**S3**]. Other Dalit writers who benefitted from CW include Bengali feminist poet Kalyani Thakur. The CW network launch provided Kalyani with an opportunity to read in the UK for the first time; her work received coverage on BBC Radio Nottingham and in *Times Higher Education* [**S4**]. A 'Translating Activism' workshop organised between CW and Nottingham Contemporary, one of the largest contemporary art galleries in the UK, connected Thakur to local writers and activists who similarly seek to counteract their own social marginality. Thakur coached and inspired workshop participants to produce acts of self-representation expressing solidarity with Dalit writers. These works were published in regional media and a local poet performed one at the Nottingham Poetry Festival [**S4**], again raising awareness of Dalit women's marginalisation and resistance

through self-representation. New opportunities for Dalit dramatists to see their work performed across India and beyond have been established through 'On Page and on Stage', supported by an AHRC Follow-On Funding award [G3]. This led to new public appearances for Dalit poets Jacinta Kerketta and Jameela Nishat in Paris in March 2020 [S5].

Enhancing social visibility, welfare and inclusion, promoting wellbeing and improving access to services for marginalised communities

PSC research examined how forced migrant women are severely marginalised by gendered, national, racial and economic structures in UK society. CW partners worked with 30+ asylum-seeking, refugee and irregular migrant women from the PAMOJA Women Together group at NNRF to co-design opportunities for spoken, written and visual self-representation that raised the group's profile [S6, S7, S8]. The group operates as a safe space for women, many with young children, who are facing difficulties in their lives as asylum seekers or refugees. They collaborated with Ball, NTU student photographer Rasha Kotaiche and performance coach Irinya Muha to create the 'And Still I Rise' exhibition of poetry and photography, produced by group members. Coinciding with the national Refugee Week festival, this exhibition toured Nottingham Central Library, THINK independent gallery space, and Surface Gallery, Nottingham in 2018, attracting c.1,000 visitors between June and July 2018 [S5].

The PAMOJA group organiser, also a Refugee Forum caseworker, underlined the importance of the initiative for women who have accomplished a high level of education in their home countries: '*Some of the[ir] key needs relate to their ability to realise their academic and creative potential*' [S6]. Noting significant improvements to social visibility, community support and access to cultural venues, along with an '*empowering*' sense of pride, she wrote: '*I observed a profound psychological and social impact on members of the group ... These included huge leaps in confidence levels ... Women reported feeling less lonely and depressed ... I also observed huge leaps in aspirations*' [S6]. In the longer term, this has '*attracted an unprecedented amount of positive support*' [S6]: a local branch of the Labour Party invited the PAMOJA organiser to speak at its 'Women Aloud event', where poetry extracts from the exhibition '*moved some of those who attended to tears*'. The Workers Educational Association offered educational opportunities in creative writing, literacy and maths. PAMOJA were invited to partner on the Heritage Lottery-funded Soul Food project, a collaborative cookbook based on family recipes.

Through the CW network, PAMOJA partnered with Palewell Press to publish a collection of their work. Ball worked with PAMOJA to create anthology materials that were published in 2019 as *The World Is for Everyone: New Writing by PAMOJA Women Together*. Launch events facilitated speaking opportunities for Palewell's chief editor at the National Justice Museum, Five Leaves independent bookshop and the 2020 Refugee Week launch event. Recordings of poems were disseminated internationally for National Poetry Day via the Nottingham City of Literature Poetry Pulse Project. Palewell's chief editor stated that CW had helped her to sell books, raise her profile, and generate income that helps her to reach more refugee writers. She commented that '*being a part of Changing Wor(l)ds has strengthened my belief that the books published by Palewell Press can play their part too in creating a fairer world*' [S9]. Profits from the book are returned to PAMOJA; exceeding £600 in 4 months, this provided funds to support future activities [S5]. PAMOJA members reported improved mental wellbeing and educational/career ambitions: one participant subsequently published an advocacy piece for refugee women in the *Huffington Post*, obtained a place on the National Refugee Week Leadership Scheme, and in 2019 enrolled on NTU's BA in International Relations as a result of the skills and confidence she acquired through the project [S7]. In relation to her campaign work on women's and refugee's rights, she noted that: '*Through the project, I've realised that creativity can be a platform for politics*' [S7].

Creating awareness, establishing interest and building support networks across the public arena, and within the cultural and social sector

CW developed a 2018 Network Launch and 2019 Festival that provided opportunities for Dalit and female refugee authors to showcase their work among cultural and social bodies [S8].

Guided by a discussion event with Dalit poet Kalyani Thakur, the Network Launch galvanised enthusiasm from 18 organisations spanning publishing, activist and cultural bodies in the task of drawing marginalised voices to the fore of the cultural arena [S8]. These networks were sustained through Palewell Press's commitment to PAMOJA's 2019 anthology project [S9], and through the participation of network members in the 2019 Festival [S8]. CW partner Exiled Writers Ink used the Festival's 'safe space' to trial new workshop techniques designed to facilitate dialogue between simultaneously marginalised Jewish and Muslim authors [S5]. This model is being rolled out nationally, with workshops held in London and Eastbourne in 2020. [S10]. The founding director of Exiled Writers Ink reported that CW had led her to set up regular 'literary activism Exiled Lit Café Nights'; one event on the poetry of an imprisoned Turkish Kurdish poet resulted in a signed letter by participants being published in *The Guardian* in February 2020. CW partner Poets Against Racism focused on 'using writing for social change' in an 'inclusive' and 'liberating' 'Rhyme and Rebellion' workshop, enabling participants to counteract their cultural invisibility [S5, S8]. CW partner, poet, Nottingham Black Archive founder, and anti-racism activist Panya Banjoko (now an NTU PhD student working on literary activism) guided workshop participants (including non-binary blogger Ali Coker) from marginalised communities [S8].

During the COVID-19 crisis, CW mobilised its networks in order enable marginalised authors to speak to an expanded online audience. CW Writer-in-Residence Eve Makis created a podcast showcasing the work of PAMOJA members, ran online 'life-writing' workshops enabling international audiences to explore their own histories of migration, and published a podcast interview with prize-winning author Christy Lefteri, exploring refugee representation, on the UNESCO Nottingham City of Literature and National Refugee Week websites. She also contributed writing activities to a 'Creative Care' pack distributed by local food banks to 600 families (100 refugee families and all identified as being in high-need communities) across Nottinghamshire in partnership with Nottingham Refugee Week and Nottingham Hate Crime Action Team [S5]. Thiara cemented collaborative ventures between Dalit writers and India's Department of Kannada and Culture, the Indian National School of Drama, the international theatre festival IAPAR, the Paris libraries and Nottingham's New Art Exchange through [G3]. CW therefore ensured that collaboration, participation, and cultural production continued during a period that was particularly critical for marginalised groups.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1 Testimony from Dalit author Mudnakudu Chinnaswamy on the role of CW in creating avenues for international exposure and facilitating publication of English translations of his work.*

S2 Letter of support from Yoda Press on the role of CW in bringing Chinnaswamy's work to their attention, and their own role in promoting the work of Dalit authors.*

S3 Letter of support from translator Sipra Mukherjee, describing how CW inspired her to run performance projects with young people in villages of the Sundarban Delta in India.*

S4 Media coverage for CW, including features drawing attention to Dalit literature in THE and Nottingham culture magazine LeftLion and a BBC radio interview with Kalyani Thakur.

S5 Report: Changing Wor(l)ds: Enabling Self-Representation for Marginalised Communities. An overview of key achievements of CW, partner feedback and data analysis of the events.

S6 Letter of support from the Organiser of the PAMOJA Women Together Group, outlining improvements in women's health and wellbeing, group visibility and community support.*

S7 Letter of support from PAMOJA project participant and refugee activist Salani Mutseyami, outlining improvements in expressive ability and self-confidence, and education opportunities.*

S8 Changing Wor(l)ds Launch, Project and Festival Feedback Forms. These identify positive impacts felt by members of marginalised communities and project participants.*

S9 Letter of support from CW partner and editor of Palewell Press, confirming the tangible benefits CW has facilitated for her own small press focussed on humanitarian publishing.*

S10 Letter of support from CW Partner Exiled Writers Ink, outlining CW support for the development of their activities with Jewish and Muslim writers.*

[* denotes participant in the process of impact delivery]