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Our home our Salford: Transgressing the borders of social work education

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Abstracts Submission for JSWEC Conference 2014

Abstract Title:

Our Home our Salford: Transgressing the Borders of Social Work Education

Subtitle: In Our Back Yard

2 or 3 Key Words: borders, intersectionality and re-positioning

Sub Themes:

- Engaging and Involving Students in the Educational Endeavour
- Creativity in Social Work
- Making Connections in Social Work Education

Short Description (Proposal Description)

Showcasing a radical pioneering model of connectivity in the activism of social work education that resists the centrifugal intersectional forces of austerity, racism and other weights of oppression that fragment.

30 words

Longer Description (Proposal abstract)

Founded on the emancipatory initiative 'In Our back Yard' that directly confronted 'Not in Our back Yard' attitudes and practices and positioned community activist within the University of Salford which effectively redirected the centrifugal forces of 'insider' and 'outsider' in community engagement. The Salford Forum for Refuges and asylum seekers operates from within the university not outside of it. Built on the foundation of Black feminist theory 'Our Home Our Salford' transgresses discursive borders that constitute Western hegemonic constructions of 'place, placement, displacement; location, dis-location; memberment , dis-memberment; citizenship, alienness; boundaries, barriers, transportations; peripheries, cores and centers' (Boyce Davies 1994:53). Utilizing the tool of testimony whilst mindful of 'the *mechanics* of the constitution of the Other' (Spivak, 1988: 294) within the integration of social work theory and practice has created a ripple effect of change makers that inscribes and motivates autonomous social work student activism. The results

demonstrate unequivocally the power of performativity so that a 'word' 'perform what it names' (Butler, 1997:214). Focusing on the interpretation of the two words **Centrifugal Force** this paper deconstructs the metaphor of water; water as symbolic of asylum seekers and refugees who were flowing under and over and crossing community / university borders this initiative confronts the positions of 'outside in' and the 'inside out.' 'Our home our Salford' performs Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality as a mechanism for reconstituting oppressive centrifugal forces in order to expose and use the intersectional experience as a force for connectivity. Key outcomes are

- Creation of a live project both for academics, external research partnership and for our students.
- Concretely enables the interplay of the themes of human rights, social justice and Liberatory social work to be realised, with practitioners, community engagement and academics working together to develop a radical 'politics of positioning' (Haraway 1988:288).

298 words

Biography

A pioneering connection between the grass roots community activist group 'Salford Forum for Refugees and Asylum Seekers' and social work at the University of Salford that dismantles traditional concepts and practices of 'insider' and 'outsider' positions with remarkable ripple effects for social work education. Black feminist theory enables the centrifugal forces of intersecting oppression to be redirected to enable the action of breaking silence work as a force for emancipation.