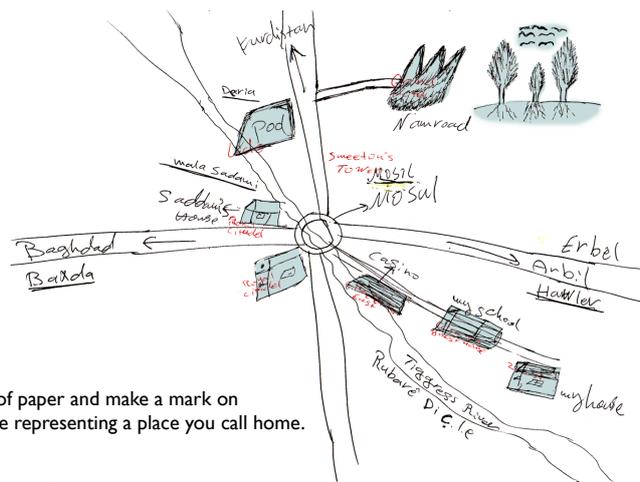


Way from home: Sharing a walk elsewhere

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1. home

Take a piece of paper and make a mark on the blank page representing a place you call home.

2. special place

Think of a place nearby your home that is special to you, perhaps a place you have made many journeys to. Map the way from the threshold of your home to this special place.

3. landmarks

Mark the landmarks that are along the way from your home to this special place. These may be features which mark locations of significant events and details of your own personal history.

4. unfamiliar place

Go somewhere unfamiliar or different to the home you have mapped and take a walk there using your original map as a guide through this place.

Start walking and use a piece of tracing paper to mark the landmarks you see along the way over those on your original map until you arrive at your special place.

5. along the way

As you walk follow the 'steps' below marking a response on your tracing paper.

step

Stop at a place where something reminds you of the home.
What details in this place remind you of that place?
What could you do here that would make you feel at home?

step

Stop at a place that is unfamiliar to you. How does this place make you feel?
What object would you put in this landscape to make it more familiar?

step

Stop at a place that is familiar to you. How is it familiar?

step

Stop at a place you find fascinating or comforting along your walk.
What interests you or draws your attention to this place.

6. last step

When you find your special place and arrive at the end of your walk mark this place and rename it.

The set of instructions from *way from home* (2002-2008) was created for refugee and asylum seeker participants across the UK to take a walk with someone. The walking partners sometimes included public officials, such as policemen, social workers, housing officials or local council members. These different audiences or participants were sought out to set up points of access for refugees and asylum seekers and to offer the partners opportunities to understand the reality of their experience from their perspective.

As they are often the people holding power to control and determine the conditions of asylum seekers and refugees' lives, the work created a space to intervene in this relationship of power by establishing an alternative dynamic whereby they walked side by side, listening and experiencing the everyday lives of these inhabitants from their perspective and in their terms (i.e. beyond those bureaucratic processes which monitor and judge the factual details of their lives and which aim to determine their ability and eligibility for asylum).

The instructions for the walk invited the walker to create an impromptu hand-drawn sketch map of a route from a place they considered home to a special place with significant landmarks marked along the way. Using their map of another remembered place as a guide, they then took their partner on a self-directed and improvised walk elsewhere. The route taken in the present was discovered as the walker made choices about scale and direction based on the memory of a route taken in the past. As they walked, they looked for landmarks in the present environment that coincided with the remembered landmarks of their map and transposed and re-named these onto their map. These landmarks, the process of searching for them and mapping them became a stimulus for a conversation between the walker and their partner, the direction of both the talking and the walking self-determined by the walker.

These walks were led in various cities and towns in the UK, which are designated dispersal areas for asylum seekers and refugees (ASRs) – Plymouth, Loughborough, Nottingham, Leicester, and Derby, where ASRs are often vulnerable in their isolation and visibility to racially motivated abuse and violence, and to media hostility. The approach of a civic cartography and creative practice of home-making proposed through *way from home* aimed to respond to the disparate needs of this population through the creation of situations that enabled the possibility for social interaction, creative agency, self-determination and self-representation, for the recognition and exchange of critical resources, capacities and contributions that these inhabitants have to offer.

Overall, around 150 people took part in the walks through refugee support and community arts organisations. Participants included Congolese, Kurds, Iranian, Romani refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Plymouth; young Iraqi Kurds and Afghans in Loughborough; Somali, Congolese and Zimbabwean refugees from Leicester; Congolese, Iraqis, Kurds and Iranians from Derby; and Zimbabwean, Eritrean, Iraqis and Congolese in Nottingham.

Five *way from home* walks in Plymouth were developed into a digital artwork (www.wayfromhome.org), an interactive interface that included audio recordings of conversations that took place as walkers negotiated and mapped the landmarks found along the way, and animated versions of sketch maps narrated using audio recordings and photo images of the walker's landmarks. My original design specifications for the platform, technically realised with Dan Harris and Adam Child of multimedia design company limbomedia, aimed to create a digital representation that would be as close to the walker's unique sketch map as possible. This map was augmented with the add-on features of the audio, animated video of the route and photo images taken of landmarks found along the way to enhance the spatiality of the walker's narrative and present how it had evolved and developed through the walk. The map became more lively through a process of storyscaping, the integration of location-specific media, story-telling and wayfinding.