

Mundanda Jose - INTERVIEW

Speaker key

IR Interviewer
IE Interviewee

Speaker	Transcription
IR	Good morning Mr Mundanda. My name is Shadrack, a Volunteer from Community Active Support (CAS). This interview is about Bridging Cultures. Our heritage project funded by Heritage Fund to collect stories of Congolese who migrated in East London. The project is run by Community Active Support (CAS).
IE	Good morning Shadrack
IR	Please can you introduce yourself to our Listeners?
IE	My name is Mundanda Jose, I was born in Mbuji Mayi, in Kasai Oriental Province, Central of the Democratic republic of Congo (DR Congo) in 1960. My Father was a Civil servant and died when I was still very young. Being the sole bread winner. We were forced to go to the Village where I continued with my primary school Education.
IR	How was the primary education those days? Teachers, pupils etc.
IE	<p>I can still remember some of the friends from primary school, like Jeremy, whom we had spent good time together. I remember one day, I was selected to perform at the end of term ceremony. I inexpertly did it very well that I became popular and famous within our school.</p> <p>After that I continue to preparatory level, where I had obtained my primary school certificate. I was different from other children as I was a City Boy. People can tell from my upbringing. I did not have the mentality of village children, I was different to most of them, they would not like the idea of going to school every morning, some villages children were not interested in Education, sometimes I would find myself alone on the way to school.</p> <p>Usually in the village people are more interested in agriculture, planting and farming; it is hard to find families that have put all their children in Schools. People</p>



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	<p>have their interests in other things. We played together at school as well, with other kids. The native language was spoken everywhere in the village. However, we had to speak French in school. it was difficult for me because I could not speak the native language but eventually, with time, I got the grip and started speaking the native language fluently and helped me enjoy the village way of life.</p> <p>After the primary school, at the age between 10-11, I was supposed to move to a school about 20 miles away from the village but I could not walk forth and back to home. Therefore, I have to move near the secondary school. It was not easy for me to live alone as a younger boy but I had no other choice because I wanted to study; the other children from the village stayed in the village because they could walk forth and back to their homes.</p> <p>I started renting a place near the School, I couldn't cook, it was quite a challenge for me. After my third year, I had to move to another city and I become mentally prepared, knowing that I could move from one city to another, pursuing my education.</p> <p>I progressed to year 4 and I had to choose to do my second language between Spanish and German, and I choose German.</p>
IR	Tell me a bit more about your family?
IE	I am born in the family of 8 children and one died. The remaining other 7 children including myself still live till today. After my dad passed away, most of my elder brothers and sisters went to live with family relatives and my little sister and I, stayed with mother. My mother took care of us two because we needed more maternal support than the others. The other five siblings were well cared for by the extended family and they are all settled and live their lives.
IR	Are you in contact with all your siblings?
IE	Constant contact. We are a very closed family.
IR	You went University as well?
IE	Of course. After getting my baccalaureate, I went to University to study Law, in the memory of my late father who was a civil servant and I wanted to follow on his footsteps.

	<p>While at University, I became leader of music club and president of philosophic club. I was very ambitious boy and sometimes wanted to embrace everything. I was also interested in Medical Science; my mom relatives run a small hospital and I used to spent time helping them with bits and bits, they invited me to attend the first aid and wound dressing trainings. I used to do at no cost and I was really enjoying doing it. At the same time, I was reading law.</p> <p>I had my Law Degree and kept that interest in day to day medical intervention and small emergency that we faced during that time.</p>
IR	In which field did you finally work?
IE	Despite having interest in medical field where I worked as assistant surgeon, the degree in Law was more prestigious. I opened a law firm and kept working for years.
IR	Were you comfortable in your job?
IE	I am not a complainer, I was better off. I lived a descent life. If it was not for my political views, I would have been a big guy by now.
IR	Apart from that. What else have you done?
IE	I worked Lawyer, a broadcaster and campaigner trying to influence the youth. A critic to the government. I was arrested and tortured several times, until It become untenable and I had to flee for my life.
IR	How did you end up in England?
IE	I took the visa and came to England, I arrived from Manchester and then took a train to East London. Few days later, I presented myself to the home office and applied for Asylum in Croydon.
IR	Did you feel ashamed applying for Asylum?
IE	Claiming Asylum is also a fundamental right; when you have an objective fear for persecution, I do not see why it would damage your credibility. I did my interview and explained what really happened to me.

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IR	What was your first impression of England?
IE	<p>From Manchester to London, a friend was expecting me; could not cope with the weather and I did not know anybody except from my friend. The English language was also difficult because I am a Francophone even though I can speak few words but the way everything sounds and pronounce is completely different to what we learn in Africa. Believe me! I still have difficulty understanding British accents; I would say I can speak 40% of English, after all these years.</p>
IR	Did you fell welcomed? And How is it different today?
IE	<p>The first person I met from Manchester Airport was a Pastor on his clergy shirt. I asked him to show me how to get to London, he helped me to buy the train ticket, I did not know where to sit, there were numbers on the seats but I just sat randomly.</p> <p>I had to telephone my friend in London to let him know that I was on the train, I asked the person next to me if I can use their phone, he was generous enough to allow me to use his phone, and I would like to salute their kindness.</p> <p>Once in London, my friend bought me a Bus ticket to go to his house and after two days, we headed for the Home Office in Croydon, I went there and asked Asylum, I did my Screening interview and I supposed to be given an accommodation because my friend couldn't keep me. I was given an ARC (Asylum Registration Card).</p> <p>I was given a Hostel in Croydon, I shared a room with another guy. On the fourth day, I supposed to go to Wakefield according to the confirmation letter I have received, few weeks later, the accommodation was cancelled. We had to provide new evidence attesting that we did not have anyone to accommodate us.</p> <p>It was a nightmare. And finally, the accommodation right was reinstated.</p>
IR	What kind of accommodation you were given?
IE	<p>A shared accommodation. It was a shared house, I live with 3 other guys; we have one room each and shared kitchen and Bathroom.</p>



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IR	How are you copying with the new environment?
IE	We were given pamphlets with different documents for the local services, including Map, GP surgeries, Leisure Centre, Shopping centre, churches etc. Being a Christian, I went to a church and presented myself to the pastor, we spoke and he asked me if I was interested in being baptised and I accepted.
IR	Did you go to college then? What did you do to improve your English?
IE	From the documents given to us, there were different Centres and Colleges. I went to the Library and they told me to go to College, I went there but they told me that I have to be in the UK for at least six months to get enrolled.
IR	How is life here?
IE	Integration is quite hard because we have different culture, we are used to talk to neighbours back home, which is not the case here, sometimes you would spend all day alone, it can affect you mentally but I am trying to cope, you just need to be mentally strong.
IR	Do you miss home?
IE	Yes, I miss home. My miss my country, family, my mom; it makes me question how long again am I going to live here? I miss my culture.
IR	Do you think of returning to Congo?
IE	Yes, but right now I need finance. I am home sick
IR	Is there any big Congolese community here?
IE	Yes, there is a big community
IR	Do you speak other language apart from French?
IE	French is the official language but we have almost 450 other languages in DR Congo. I speak 3 of 4 main national languages, a little English and a bit of German



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	as well.
IR	We are getting to the end of the interview; do you have anything to add?
IE	I would like to express my gratitude to you for allowing me add my contribution to this project. I always support this kind of projects and I would be always available whenever you need my contribution.
IR	Thank you very much for your contribution
IE	It is my pleasure, thank you.

[00.48.48]

[End of Audio]

Duration 48 minutes and 48 seconds



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