

**Overview of project**  
**The Power of Words: an image of Africa Past and Present** is a creative writing project in collaboration with the Sunderland African Association, a voluntary organisation enabling the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sunderland. The project was initiated by Sunderland Hub Outreach to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in Britain.

Over the course of 8 weeks 5 participants from the association worked with poet and writer, Sheree Mack to produce poems exploring slavery and its relevance in contemporary times. The group presented an African voice to the resistance of slavery, exploring ideas and attitudes about freedom and the realities of ownership. It connected the legacy of slavery to contemporary issues of human rights and 'forced' migration; recognising hope and change through the courage of African freedom fighters such as Thomas Sankara and Laurent Gbagbo.

These issues are



celebrated in the poems 'I Shall Defend my House of Laughter' and 'Communication Is Still Possible'.

The participants are originally from African countries including Nigeria and the Federal Democratic Republic of Congo. The group attended the launch of the Remembering Slavery exhibition at Discovery Museum. The poems were read out by artist Sheree Mack to audiences at the Remembering Slavery Outreach programme launch at Dance City in May 2007 as well as recorded on the Remembering Slavery dvd.

The poems provide a unique approach in

representing the legacy of slavery from contemporary African/British voices.

#### **VITAL STATS, IMPACT AND SUMMARY HERE**

'It is the first time that the association has collaborated with the museum on this level'

***Chairperson,  
Sunderland African  
Association***

'The project was an opportunity for us to project our voices from our history and memory of enslavement and recognize some of our important heroes who took part in fighting for our freedom'  
***participant***