



Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots

Interview with Anthony Nderitu

Interviewers: Lizzie Mee & Wendy ---

Interviewer 2 00:00:00

-solutely.

Interviewer 00:00:01

Thank you very much. Okay, so I'm recording now. So my first question is if - Anthony, if you could just introduce yourself, and maybe tell us a bit about your background -- where you come from, and perhaps a little bit about your childhood, maybe your schooling, if you like.

Anthony 00:00:21

Let's see, let me, let me press pause on something that has been going on on my, my phone. If I do that... Here we go. Just stay there where I can watch it and see. Right. [Clears throat] Let me go to some questions you had said before. Hm hm hm. I am, I am born and brought up in Kenya. And I grew up in a village and I studied in the village for the first seven years -- well, started with nursery school. I was a bit too young, so I stayed for two years that went to Standard One up to Standard Seven in a local primary school. That was started by the Scottish missions. And then I went to secondary school. A school that was started by the Anglicans in 1960? 1960 it was, that's when the Anglicans are starting that school. And I did my, my O-level and A-level in a school. And it was, yeah, it was my introduction to British education.

That was quite, yeah, quite good. I must admit, I, it was brutal competition, no, two ways about it. And it was, yeah, it was brutal, brutal, brutal. I did my A-levels there and then I, I proceeded to a school, a university that was not a public university, I went to a private university in Kenya. In the western side of Kenya, where did my degree. I did my degree in theology. It was an American sponsored university. It was an eye opener, but it it meant that I was able to open my horizons, and I, I think, I must admit, I credit that university to not having a village mind anymore; I got a very global mind from that university. And I was able to see a different world altogether.

So when I, when I graduated from there in 1984 -- 1994, I, I had finished going -- I had finished doing some work in Kenya, where I sold books, in Botswana where I sold books, in Sweden where I sold books for three months. And I was able to have an interna-, an international exposure that made it very, very difficult for me to go back and sit in my village or have the same mentality I had. I was able to see



the Global Village instead of a small little village anymore. And it meant that I could now operate from a global platform. And that was an eye opener for me.

And then after I finished, I couldn't, I couldn't get employment with my, my chosen employer. It was quite quite, it was quite restricted, because I had done theology and, you know, theological lines are quite hard to cross in different places, especially in Africa, where you have a lot more alignment of - allegiances, according to theological exposure. And I thought, hang on a minute, I'm not going to be here, moaning and whining, and I just moved out from Kenya in 1994. And went to Botswana, where I had spent three months in 1992. And I sold books and as usual I [unintelligible], and I turned 25 when I was at Botswana. Then I moved from there to South Africa, where I sat for about nine years, selling books, studying and somehow I met a very beautiful young lady and I got married. And so we got married, the rest is history. [Interviewer laughs] And --

Interviewer 00:04:58

Thank you so much that was really good. [laughter]

Anthony 00:05:00

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:05:03

I mean goodness me.

Anthony 00:05:04

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:05:05

That's, yeah, [so interesting.]

Interviewer 00:05:07

[So great] -- Yeah, it's really good and so much travelling around, I think. Yeah.

Anthony 00:05:11

Yes. Yes, I did. I did, I did my fair share of travel when I was poorest. And when I, I struggled the most, but I think - I don't know whether it was a conflu-, a confluence of events, mixed with a certain raw determination that meant that I was able to do a lot of things when most people cannot do them. And taking risks when you're young is easier. And I did take my share of risks, lots of them. And yeah, that made, that made my life turn out that way. And I'm grateful.

Interviewer 00:05:49

Thank you. Okay, I think, I think, Wendy, do you want to start with one of your question carry on, if that's okay?



Interviewer 2 00:05:58

Yes, if if Anthony doesn't mind. So, I -- there's so much to talk about there. [laughter]

Anthony 00:06:08

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:06:10

What, what about -- you got married, and how did you arrive in, in England?

Anthony 00:06:22

So I got married in 2002. We settled in Pretoria, but that was not cast in stone, as I am man who moves, who moved, like, moved a little bit, it was easier for me to say, Well, I think we will make a life where we can. So after we got married, we - I was working at university by then, on a contract basis. I was an academic assistance, and I used to take care of undergraduate students. My wife was working as a dentist, and we sat for the first year with how working 200 miles away from where I was. And then we, we made sure that we kept our books open to see where we could be. And we, we, we made do what we could. And it was during that time that we decided, well, we will see where my wife can work best.

And we had an interview somewhere in 2001. No, in 2002. My wife was not very satisfied with what she was doing and she said, You know what, let me look for new horizons. And so she got an interview with Integrative Dental Holdings in the UK, IDH. And she was recruited to come here, and she was here within two weeks. And I, I, I -- the only condition for her to come was, is my husband going to come with me? And they said yes, we will help you facilitate those things. And here we are, the rest is history. Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:08:17

That's very interesting. Where did you Where did you settle initially when you came to England?

Anthony 00:08:25

We came straight to Exeter.

Interviewer 2 00:08:30

Ah. [What were you-]

Anthony 00:08:30

[Having li-], having lived in Pretoria, we did not like the allure of big cities or metros. And we wanted something out of the big ones. The North was out of the question. I had done a bit of geography and you know, when you read, you're like, mmm I think I would like something bucolic. I want something farm-like. And the North was out of the question. London was out of question. And we decided South



West. They look like small little cities, and they are not overwhelming. So Exeter was our choice. The choice was between London, Exeter and outside Exeter. Funny enough, it was Tiverton, actually. But we did not know much about Tiverton and we decided, let's go to Exeter and then from there we can figure out whether it's a worthwhile experiment or not and, yeah, here we are.

Interviewer 2 00:09:21

Wow, very interesting. So your early recollections of Exeter? What do -- what was your initial impression?

Anthony 00:09:38

Right. Britain was very different from when we arrived. Oh, my goodness, it was nothing we had imagined. Nothing at all. My wife came in first and she came in July, and I joined her in October, which was a very lonely time for her because the only person she knew was far away in London. And when I got here, I knew nobody as well. The only people I knew, they were -- I think the closest was in Reading. So it was quite isolated. But we, we forged alliances here and there. The first thing was to struggle to get a job for me. For my wife it was not hard because she had been recruited straight to work, for me it was quite hard. Can I - if I be honest, it was very hard.

The first month -- I came in October, I spent a month, saw what it was, and we thought, I think this could be workable. So I went back to South Africa, I finished my contract, sorted out things that needed sorting out, and then I came in December, just before Christmas - 2003? No, 2002 before Christmas, I came in. And January, I started looking for a job here and there. And tragedy struck. And we had to pre-organise here and there. But anyway, I looked for a job and managed to get a job after many, many applications. I, I wrote, I remember, for me, it was a shock and a rude awakening. I remember, I sent about 110 application letters. And I got rejected 110 times. And I wondered why.

I sat down and I wondered why. It's not for lack of education, I wasn't qualified. In many cases, I think I was overqualified. But then I decided to change tact and see if I can, first of all appear in a place of prospective employment, let them see my face. And then I can apply. That changed a little bit, actually. It meant I could get a lot more personal feedback about an interview, or any job application I had done. Before then it was, it was not pretty, it was unpleasant. I did an experiment. If I can be honest, I'll tell you what it is. I did an experiment about, and it left me with a really sour taste in my mouth. I could change my name, and nothing else, and I applied for a job. And six times my pseudo name got letters of interviews. And my real name didn't get letters of interviews. All I got were negatives.

Interviewer 00:12:44

Was your - was the name that you used, was that -- What kind of name did you use instead of your own name?

Anthony 00:12:51

I decided to take an English name.



Interviewer 00:12:53

Mm, yeah.

Anthony 00:12:54

And it was very revealing. Same address, same age, same CV, same email address, same telephone number. That was the key thing. And I said, I think I need to, to change the way I work here. I got an interview here and there. I did some temporary jobs here and there. And then finally, I managed to work with a Devon courts, magistrate courts committee. And then that was about for a year. And I go from there. It didn't suit me. I can't sit, I can't sit behind a desk for the whole day. It's not my persona.

[Interviewer hums] I think it was going to kill me, bit by bit.

Then I moved on and I decided, let me work with social services. At least it's a bit fulfilling, because I'm a people person. And I did that. And it has been -- [Speech rendered unintelligible by computer glitch] exposed to driving around Devon, working with the intervention team, and then working with residential and community support workers.

And then from there I applied to be a teacher. And not a smooth sailing. There was a, there was a kerfuffle. But then that agency was disbanded because it was not great. And then I got in the second time round because they said you're exactly the person we need. And I became a teacher and I've been teaching for - now it's 14 years.

Interviewer 00:14:33

When - but when you were, when you become a teacher, did you have to do your PGCE or the kind of training year, or did you just go straight into a school and just because you're quite you know, very well qualified. Did you just, were you able to get into a job?

Anthony 00:14:46

You had to do adaptation by doing a PGCE in UK. So I had to do that.

Interviewer 00:14:53

So you did your training year -

Anthony 00:14:54

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:14:54

And then you got your job in the, in Tiverton, in the high school?

Anthony 00:15:00

Yes, yes, I did that.

Interviewer 00:15:02



Okay. Sorry, Wendy, do you want to? Is there? What's the next question on your?

Interviewer 2 00:15:10

Well, Anthony has been very kind to share his experiences. And a lot of the questions I were, I was going to ask was, you know, your feelings. And you've told us you have, you know, good, good experiences and some not so, so good. But since you, since you, since you qualified as a teacher, and you started teaching here in Tiverton, [Anthony hums] how's that? How do you feel about working and living in the vicinity of Tiverton?

Interviewer 00:15:49

Yeah, was that different to when you arrived in Exeter, or is that similar? Did you feel like you had that, that similar kind of -- because obviously, you had that experience of having, of changing your name and finding you had a different perception? So there was race-, there was institutional racism going on, Wasn't there? So did you feel that was present in Tiverton? Or?

Anthony 00:16:07

Having -- Oh, I didn't come straight to Tiverton for when I finished my GTP. The first thing I did, I did my GTP in - the Graduate Training Programme - I did it in Queen Elizabeth's College in Crediton. That introduced me to the educational setup in very rural Devon. I had a - it's a good school, very supportive. And I had a fantastic time. I will not begrudge anybody that. Yes, you have to earn your place with the students. Remember, these are kids who, by and large, in rural Devon, the first black person they have interacted with is not face to face. Most of them is on TV. And you have to earn your place in a society. It did mean that I had to adapt here and there.

I'll tell you what I did firstly. When I was in Queen Elizabeth's, I remember one day, it was an eye opener. I went to Tesco, in Tiverton. And I, as I was doing my shopping, you can tell. We, I am a black person, I am attuned to knowing when people are looking at me. There're, there're, there're things you see. And you notice them. And you begin to see, ooh there's something here. I managed to catch the attention of there was a child in the shop. And she was something like, oh, hold on, she was about four. She was about four -- no, four or three-ish? That expressive age where they don't hide anything and they talk openly. And I caught the attention of this girl. And I noticed that whenever she - whenever I go in that aisle, she's following me. And she's looking keenly, and she watched and looked. Somehow we met at the till. And I could tell she was still looking at me. The mother did not know what to make of it. And the mother started getting a bit edgy about it. Oh, but anyway for me, kids are kids, you know, you have, you have enough. You have enough tenacity and strength to know [exhalation noise] people will have to learn. If they're eager, if they are keen, and they want to ask questions and they go about it the right way, reward them with a good knowledge. So I said I will, I will go with it and see what happens.

And this child, when we met at the till, the first thing she did is tell the mother. Ooh, Mummy, ooh, he's dirty. We were at the till and they had some chocolates by the till. And I looked at the mother and she was, she went red with embarrassment. And I said, May I? And she just, just yet and said yes. So I took



the chocolate bars, and these chocolate buttons. I took the brown ones and the white ones. And I asked Do you like them? She said yes. Do you like this one? Yes. Do you like this one? Yes. You are this one, I am this one, enjoy them. And I put them back. And the mother was like, phew, gosh, you're not offended? I say no.

The child has to start learning from somewhere. I can either make her experience horrible, or a learning moment that she will remember. And the mother was like, Oh thank God, yes, that's lesson three. That child got to meet a black person and was very comfortable with it after that encounter. This is me who decided to do that. There have been others who will meet you and they'll tell you, and you hear, they'll tell you things that are horrible. Oh, you shouldn't be here, you migrants, they are like sperms: only one works. And I'm like, you know what, [Interviewer hums] it's your problem, not my problem.

Interviewer 00:20:15

Yeah.

Anthony 00:20:17

I take it easy. If you put your finger in my mouth, I'll bite you. [Interviewer laughs] I'll bite you. If you do not affect me, I'll stand in my corner. And I, I fear - I don't, I don't think I fear anybody. I feel that nobody has a gel [?] in their stomach. And I'll confront it when I need to, but I will do it for free without fear and tell you off when I need to.

Interviewer 00:20:39

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Anthony 00:20:39

So-

Interviewer 00:20:41

Is that how you, kind of, approach your teaching as well a little bit?

Anthony 00:20:45

The kids know that when I'm in school, and they want to refer to me, I use legally accepted terms, and they don't need to fear. Black And Minority Ethnic reference is a term designed for people who are non-white, in Europe, if you prefer me to use that. And kids take - they took a long time to get to that. I said, No, this is a legally accepted term of reference and definition. Yeah, but you're not black. I say, Well, I use the words of Steve Biko: you're not white, either, you're more pink than white. And I'm more brown than black. But if you look at the terms of reference, it's something to make sure that at least you can identify and cover as much spectrum as you can. And until the government changes, we'll go with what we have. Otherwise, beforehand, they used the words that we, today, will find quite offensive when you refer to people as coloured or some other words that will not be deemed appropriate by, by anybody.



Interviewer 00:21:47

Thank you, I [unintelligible] we'll come -- there's I think there's parts in the interview later on, where we'll come back to the, kind of, what you've given to the community because I think that that links with what you're saying now. But, Wendy, was there something more about -- shall we go back to talking about heritage? And Anthony's perhaps - Anthony tells you, but also the things that he's brought to this country? Have we got to that stage yet?

Interviewer 2 00:22:13

We we, we certainly can, we can certainly jump straight in there. Can I just ask, Anthony, when you started working at Tiverton High School? [Anthony hums] Did you feel welcomed?

Anthony 00:22:28

Yes. Without a doubt, yes. the the staff - the Head, he's now moved on to something else, Mr. Lovett, and the deputy was Mrs. Crook. And, and Miss Ton [?] are fantastic, fantastic, supportive, very protective, I must admit. And they made it very clear that I have a place and that I can call workplace home. And I have a contribution to make. And I should do so without fear of failure. And I did that. And I have earned a place. I think over the last twelve years, I have earned enough confidence in the school. And by-and-large, in the community and --

Interviewer 00:23:14

Oh, have we frozen?

Anthony 00:23:15

-- class and you cannot walk and not get noticed, you have to be noticed. You might as well wear pink in the corner you go. But that does not make me feel uncomfortable. Because having been there, the kids will have been born and they are in high school now in year seven, they have been born and I've been here. Yeah, so that has made a big difference. But making sure that I have been visible, has helped. Before then you have to earn your place where kids who look at you, they want to know you. They want to know who you are, they'll ask personal questions and they will struggle in their understanding of a black person, or the black person's struggles, or your heritage, or where you come from.

Many a times I had kids asking me, Can I touch your hair? I want -- I say, you, you, have you never touched the hair of a black person? No, I would like to. And I would make it humorous by saying, Well, what is in - what's in it for me if you touch my hair? [Interviewer laughs] I say what can I do? I say you have to support a charity so that you can feel you have done something without just looking at my hair because I'm not my hair. And they'd be like, Oh, actually, that's quite good. And there's a lot of charities and we do things, we do talk about in class, be it Devon Air Ambulance, or be it TFI [?] or whatever and I say, put things in there. And that's a way of humorously showing them that actually I'm not a specimen.



I am a person and I have my own life and I would like them to - as much as they want to learn - and then feel, Ah, I can learn in the process and they do something good, not commodifying you, but saying, Oh, that's a charity you like, I like that charity. And those charities come over and over again in our discussions. And so the kids can see what they like and what they are for and what they do. And it's just a way of me saying, Let's learn as you as you explore and you explore and learn in different ways. Yeah.

Interviewer 00:25:25

Yeah, that's great. Thank you. [Awesomely positive].

Interviewer 2 00:25:28

[That ties] -- it. I was just gonna say, that's very insightful. And and it's a - thank you for sharing with with us. This was going to tie into my next question, which was talking about your, your culture, and your faith? And how -- are you -- Do you and your family talk about your culture and your faith?

Anthony 00:25:54

We do talk a lot. We have different things that we do in the house to, to capture that. We have -- We can use foods, we can use dress, we can use music, we can use visits, we can use things that we watch on the TV, we can use anything that we feel is appropriate. Like, at the moment we do have, you have the racial sensitivities that are happening in America. My, our son is a 14 year old student and he he has to be part of it. He is aware, he became quite awakened early, quite early. And he, he begins to pick up, pick up these things.

And we do talk about all those things and how they relate to who we are. We go to Kenya, where I'm from, and to South Africa, where my wife is from, and we visit family. And he's able to see all those things. So we do talk about, about those things. We, my wife and I, will have robust discussions in house and we were not afraid to look at things. And it's important that our son feels, Oh, I think I'm comfortable with my - with who I am. He wears dreadlocks, he's never had his hair cut. So that's quite a very loud statement for him. And we want him to feel actually, it's, it's important that he, he feels he's a person and without, without being commodified, without feeling that, in as much as he's different, he is not inferior. And as much as he may look a bit different, he is not - he's not less than human. He belongs and he's part of a wider society. And what we, we make it known to him is that with with kindness and respect, he can go very, very far.

Interviewer 2 00:27:59

Are there any? Are you linked - within the community that you live in - by church or or groups or other people?

Anthony 00:28:13

Um.



Interviewer 2 00:28:14

I'm thinking more about your, maybe your heritage or your faith?

Interviewer 00:28:18

Are there, yeah. Are there any other Kenyans around? I suppose it's like, cause with our Polish group, there's like a Polish society, and they kind of all, they come together and actually, there's a guy's house, where they come together. And is there, is there a kind of black community that you can do that with or is it not really like that?

Anthony 00:28:35

There, there is there is a black community that is very small in in and around Exeter. Very small. We, I think the last time I checked, we are less than - we are less than 10 Kenyan families that I know and have met around here. What do we do? Because my wife is South African and I'm Kenyan, we - and black people do this anywhere they go - they will meet regardless of where you're from in the continent. If you find yourself in a minority, we tend to meet together.

And so we have friends from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana. And somehow there's a, there's a shared, there are a few shared languages that stretch from Zimbabwe to South Africa. And my wife and I will, will be lost with those languages. We'll get straight in and we'll talk those languages. The race language in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Zaire, Swahili I'll get in. So from Kenya to Cape Town, we are not disadvantaged with the languages that are in there. We will somehow make use of them very well. So we we do we do not suffer for that. And we we don't limit it to just Kenyan. We, we do we do, we do go across the board. And we have, as you say, a whole collection of friends from the East Central and South African corner of Africa, and we have others from the West. So, yeah, we have quite a rich spectrum of people we get on with. Yeah?

Interviewer 00:30:35

Yeah. Can I ask how many languages do you speak? Do you have any ideas or like because it sounds like it's loaded sounds like you can just go go [unintelligible] how many languages do you speak, Anthony?

Anthony 00:30:46

Because Because those languages are closely linked, especially if you look at Bantu languages, they refer to a person using, using similar roots. Whenever you find those Bantu languages, and they stretch all the way from Kenya to tip of the continent in South Africa, and then from the East Africa to Central Africa, right on the West Coast, you can easily, you can easily pick up things. You just, you don't need to have been born there. You just sit there for a few days and you'll be like, I know what you're talking about. I know what you're talking about. Yeah.

Interviewer 00:31:20



Maybe like the Latin roots, the Latin roots of our, like, say French and Italian, maybe because I, you know, I don't know, they're a bit [unintelligible], aren't they? So you can kind of go between those a little bit. Yeah. Okay.

Anthony 00:31:31

Yeah. It's like It's like Dutch and and German. So in the Netherlands, you, you don't need to have been born in Germany for you to pick up blume is a flower. You'd be like oh, that I know. And then you hear hospital - hospital. Oh, that I know. Oh, danke schoen, danke. And you pick up those things. Okay, okay. There are a few things like I don't need to go to school for, they are just in-built, because they are from the root words or common words. So in in in Africa, we have a lot of the Bantu languages, they're found in East, Central and Southern Africa, you do have a sprinkling of it, somewhere in West Africa, but majority are in our corner.

So it is it is very easy for one who, who likes languages to learn. I like, I like languages, and I find it easy to learn. So in South Africa, if it's Zulu, or Xhosa or Tswana or Sotho, I don't need translation, I'll just sit in a meeting and I'll hear, I'll pick them up. If it's in Kenya, I will pick about four or five different languages in Kenya quite easily. [Interviewer 2 laughs]. Swahili is common in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Zaire or Democratic Republic of Congo. I'll pick that up quite easily. And my wife speaks Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Tswana. So we, we --

Interviewer 00:31:35

Yeah. Lots of languages. Almost too - like more than I've got fingers, I think. [laughter]

Interviewer 2 00:33:04

Exactly.

Interviewer 00:33:05

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:33:05

Exactly.

Anthony 00:33:06

Well, because they share here and there, one can easily pick without fear.

Interviewer 00:33:11

It's impressive though.

Interviewer 2 00:33:11

What about your children? Do they? Do they speak multiple language?



Anthony 00:33:17

My son can tell what is what. He doesn't speak any of it, but he can tell what is what.

Interviewer 2 00:33:26

Okay. Is, is that because he he, well, he's surrounded by it, I mean, obviously in the home. But does he? Is that because he does -- You know, it's just age as well. Do you know what I mean? There's so much to do with wanting to fit in with your existing --?

Anthony 00:33:46

I think one of the things that we picked up when we introduced him to the African languages is this. He did struggle in one way because it was -- we first of all wanted to introduce him to his mother tongue, what my wife speaks, but it came in when he was learning critical things in school, in preschool, and reception. He - before then he could hear and he could follow. But it did clash a little bit here and there. And he kind of left it and we always said we will never force it on him. We will never foist it on him. So we said let him pick it up on his own.

So what we have done, we have left him open when we go to Kenya. He sits there and he'll say - his grandmother will ask him, Do you want this? And he'll respond, Yes, I want that one. Not that one. I want the other one. Not that one. I want the other one. So he has in it things that he will pick up very quickly without fear. And we have decided we are going to leave that. The other thing that we do with him is we listen to music and he loves that and that music introduces him to things that he likes. So he's like, what does that music say? And he will hear, ask and learn and put that in mind. When he meets his cousins in Kenya, he, he will learn, he'll come and surprise us and say something and you're like, when did you know that? That's not - That's not not what - boy talk. [Interviewer laughs]

Interviewer 00:35:22

That's great. That gives us a good good sense of how your son's learning it. And it's kind of it feels like it's quite -- not natural, but it feels like you're trying to do it in in just nice ways that through things that are pleasurable, which is really nice. So I was gonna move on and ask about if you have any festivals or things you celebrate a home that perhaps different to the traditions that we have here. Is there anything that you do that's a bit different?

Anthony 00:35:51

Not much. We. We, we work in tandem with the many holidays there are in Kenya and South Africa and we follow those a little bit. What we have started picking on and we have COVID to thank for that failure is this. We were, we had started looking at things that are here in the UK. Like there's a hair festival that was coming in Birmingham. And I went to a teacher's conference and I met teachers and who celebrate black hair, dreadlocks, and we want to go to it and COVID's spoilt all that.

Interviewer 00:36:30

Aw. [That's a shame].



Anthony 00:36:30

[So we cannot], cannot, cannot go.

Interviewer 00:36:33

Aw.

Anthony 00:36:34

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:36:35

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:36:36

Yeah. Okay, that's good. So nothing, there's no kind of traditional sort of festival or things that you would do that maybe your family would do that you've brought back here? So it's more like, it feels like you're interested in the kind of new things coming up?

Anthony 00:36:50

Yes, we nothing from home that we have brought here. But there are things that culturally are done. And we have done that with our son and my wife. And we will, yeah, we will celebrate those things. If there's a milestone, you hit when you're a certain age, for example, you're introduced to we don't suffer for, for freedom of communication in our house, because we want him to learn as much as possible. And we feel, we feel if he needs to learn this, he will learn this and we will teach it and say when boys reach this age, they have to know this. When girls reach this age, they have to know this, and especially the things to do with puberty and and that teenage life. He, he we want him to feel he's part of it. So when he goes to visit his cousin's at home, in Kenya, he will slot in and say Oh, I've gone through this. I know this. And you see them exchanging notes. What did you learn? What did you learn? And they will do that. And yeah, it's something we do.

Interviewer 00:37:57

So there are kind of rites of passage that, you, you, and knowledge that you want to impart on him, and that kind of is, yeah, okay.

Anthony 00:38:05

Yes, yes. Like, like in school, we don't have to wait for sex education in school for that to happen to him. We have preempted that, and we will do it in a way that will make him feel I know that. I know that. I know that. So when he goes to school, it's nothing afresh, nothing new. It is something Oh, I've done at home. And I've talked with my mum and dad about those things. And yeah, yeah.



Interviewer 00:38:29

Right. Thank you.

Interviewer 2 00:38:30

That's good.

Anthony 00:38:31

Yeah?

Interviewer 2 00:38:31

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:38:32

I think, Wendy, we've kind of gone through ideas of sort of identity and the idea of inheritance. I suppose there's this question about kind of British traditions that has your family adopted British traditions? So that would be the next question, I think, wouldn't it? So things like Christmas, and all the other kind of celebrations that I suppose are done because a lot of our celebrations are kind of Christian based, aren't they? So do you? Do you do those kind of celebrations as well at home?

Anthony 00:39:05

Africa is notoriously religious. Now those -- Those are the words the opening words of a book by Professor John S. Mbiti, who wrote African Theological Thought. I had the joy of meeting him. And, as such, if, wherever you go in Africa, you are immersed in a religion that was brought about by missionaries who came, first, from the land of the colonial masters, or second, from a land of the neighbouring colonies [computer glitch] you go to - if you go to Kenya, Kenya is about 75-80% Christianity. And you have either Scottish missionaries or Anglicans from Church of England, or you have the Roman Catholics or you have a plethora of American influence that has come in from the Methodists. And you have Lutherans from Germany, you have Seventh-Day Adventists [?] you have Mormons, you have -- It's a whole lot. It's a cacophony. And wherever you are in in Africa, you, you will not run out from Christian- Christmas traditions or Easter celebrations or other Christian celebrations that fall in between.

What we do, the first thing we did with my wife, when we came to UK, the year 2003 - we never, we never celebrated Christmas indoors. No. Christmas is outdoors. Why? The temperature is about 40 degrees. So you have a, you have a barbecue in the beach or outside. And then it came here and it was this inward-looking, claustrophobic atmosphere. It's spoil- it killed us. Oh My Goodness me. We we drove to Sheffield, to meet my wife's classmates, whom I had known as well. And we spent that Christmas together. That's how far we needed to go. And after that, the second Christmas, 2004, we said we -- I don't know what it is. My wife said I'll go to bed. I was working. She said you work, because I got paid three times over. So we - I worked. And then in January, no, after Christmas - on Boxing Day - we took a flight to Kenya. And we spent Boxing Day in Kenya with my family. Outdoors. And then New



Year, we went to South Africa and spent with them. Then we came back. And from then on my wife says Christmas, I think we spent it twice as a family of three. After that, never again. We don't want it. If you are with -- if we are alone, we go to a different country. If we are not, because it's quite -- ooh, yeah. [It's a, it's a killer].

Interviewer 00:41:50

Are you -- [Unintelligible] at Christmas time that's, yeah. Okay. Thank you, that very much answers the question.

Anthony 00:41:54

Or, or, or or we get friends.

Interviewer 00:41:57

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:41:57

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:41:58

So everyone comes here, so you might have someone here as well then?

Anthony 00:42:01

Yeah. Yes.

Interviewer 00:42:03

Thank you. That's an excellent answer. [laughter]

Anthony 00:42:08

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:42:09

That's so interesting.

Anthony 00:42:11

Yeah. How can you have a cold Christmas? It should be hot. Blistering hot.

Interviewer 00:42:15

Yeah. But then I would go to Australia, and I wouldn't know where I was at. So it's so funny, isn't it? It's just -- but anyway.



Anthony 00:42:21

Oh yeah. [Interviewer laughs] Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:42:24

Oh, my gosh.

Interviewer 00:42:25

Where are we?

Anthony 00:42:27

That's an eye-opener for you? [laughter]

Interviewer 00:42:28

Well, yeah, the idea of a warm Christmas is so weird. I've never had a warm Christmas. I'm not I'm not sure. We'll see, maybe we'll see.

Interviewer 2 00:42:37

Well, my this last Christmas, I've spent the last 20 in, in 110. So.

Interviewer 00:42:44

Yeah. You know, so Wendy was living in Phoenix, so she -- the cold, it's cold and damp now, isn't it, Wendy? It's not, you're not impressed by it? [laughter]

Interviewer 2 00:42:53

I'm still acclimatising I - it's very difficult. [Interviewer laughs] The cold? I don't know how to cope with it.

Anthony 00:43:02

So you have an idea?

Interviewer 2 00:43:04

I have an idea. And I, I sympathise, I totally understand that. [laughter]

Anthony 00:43:10

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:43:11

We might have to, we might have to initiate something like that in our house. [laughter]

Anthony 00:43:15

Oh I tell you. Yeah, yeah.



Interviewer 00:43:17

Tradition of going away. Okay, the next question is around kind of racism. And you've talked a little bit about people's responses to you. And I mean, do you -- Is there anything more that you'd like to say about racism or prejudice within Tiverton or within the country, any experiences you've had, or have you talked as much as you want to?

Anthony 00:43:42

There is a lot that happens to, to a person of - who belongs to BAME grouping. There is a lot. People don't see it. It is -- one of the things I noticed when I came here are the curtain twitchers, when you pass somewhere outside in an estate, you don't know people are looking at you until you turn around. And when you turn around, you see the curtain on that in that house shaking to a rest. And you do the same on the other side. And you have these curtain twitchers who are always aware of where you are. And yeah, you you're like - you stand out, you stick out and you're very visible. There's no two ways about that. And when you - when you, when you stick out that way, unless you're a person of good behaviour, you'll be very highly notable. Very highly notable.

So what we decided, my wife and I, not that we decided consciously but because we have always been that kind of people. We, we are aware of what it means, we know what we need to do and we do what needs to be done and we - it's in our nature to be you have to be good citizens. I'll put, I'll quote something and because I teach religion, you'll hear me when I quote what I quote. But let me say, you, you become aware that you're different. And you're, sometimes you're judged to the difference metre. That's for sure.

You have people who are a bit intolerant of you, to a certain point, not because you're not good, but because their sense of judgement is heightened way beyond what you would expect. And it is, it can be scary sometimes, quite scary sometimes, when you have that. And then you have the comments you get. The comments you get when you go places. Oh, my goodness me, do they come thick and fast? Yes, they do. Yes, they do. They come in thick and fast.

I was coming from France once and we were in a ferry - my wife and my son, we got three of us, we spent a lot of time, the three of us. And we were coming down. And we were in France. And you could tell that even in the whole ferry, and there was only the only three black people. And that was us. And on that day, I will never forget, there is a certain newspaper that had a good, big caption. It says Immigrants Are Taking Over Britain. And you could hear my wife and my son and I, we left my wife sitting somewhere and I told my son - he was only four - let's go around the ferry. Boys need to be walked and worked hard. So let's go around the ferry. We were in the ferry for four hours. So we went around, and you turn around and you hear the comments from people who are over 70, who can wear pink and say anything without fear. But comments from those people who think, Oh, yeah, how many kids does he have? I wonder how many are there after that one. Oh they never work. And you're like, you know what? And I just, you just bite your lips and you you keep quiet. And you say, Well, I will stick up. If you dare touch me, that's when things will go wrong. You can say what you want.



I never, these days, I'm tempted to record things on my phone. So if I go somewhere, and I feel I'm not that sure, I'm not comfortable here, I will take out my phone. And the first thing I do is press the video. And I have my button. If anybody starts talking, I press the button, the record button, and I'll record it. If not, I have a dictaphone and I can do that quite easily. I am not one to use violence. And I'm not one to fight. But if you direct your vitriol at me, I'll stop, I'll look at you and I'll say are you talking to me? And why don't you have a normal conversation like adults? Other than that, I'll record it, and I'll feed it to the police. You get confronted in the shops. Oh, you immigrant, you're the reason why I don't have a job. What are you doing here? You should go back where you came from. And you ask a person, why don't you do what I do? And I do what you do what you don't do? Oh yeah. I said, I'm a teacher. No violence, no killing, no swearing. I will not teach. Someone has to do it. And I enjoy it. So. Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:48:28

Anthony, do you - have you felt -- Is this how you feel you're treated today? As a -- or has it, has it changed over the years? Or would you say? I mean, under the current circumstances with all the turmoil in the States and all the rest of it? Do you feel there's a difference?

Anthony 00:48:54

At the moment, we have we have largely stayed home. And if we go we go out. We don't go to pubs. We don't we don't go to pubs. There are reasons why we don't go to pubs. There are unpalatable elements that are exposed by inebriation. That I learnt when England lost World Cup to France or to a World Cup match to France and we were in Exmouth and somebody came out of a pub, we had decided we're not football, so we went to the beach. We needed to be quiet, we went to the beach. And when they came out of the pub and they were angry that England had lost a match and the subject[?] of verbal abuse was me. And you could tell there was a certain amount of inebriation in a person and they're kicking kicking dustbins and swearing and it's all immigrants who have to bear the blame for it. And I'm like, you know, I, I can't get I can't go to those gutter of communication. So we we avoid, we don't drink, we avoid pubs. If we go to a pub it has to be in the middle of a city during the day for a meal, something that is family friendly. But by-and-large, we will keep to ourselves. So with this thing in America, it has come out during lockdown. And we haven't haven't ventured out much. Yeah. Yeah, I don't know. I haven't haven't measured it in this time, because we haven't gotten anywhere. But by-and-large, we -- I get a lot of, especially during holiday times, because that's when I'm at home with my son. And I have to go here, there. That's when you pick up things, people think you don't work, think you're on benefits, they think you're a useless person, they think that the car you're driving, it's because you're syphoning the system. Yeah, yeah. It's just an --

Interviewer 00:51:00

It sounds like it hasn't changed that much from what you're saying. Kind of still feel that people make those comments. I sort of wondered if Black Lives Matter, changed things but it doesn't feel like, from what you're saying, that you feel that it has really. So thank you. That's kind of, it's good, it's good for us to know, for the record for the museum. It's interesting. So move moving on from there, that's okay. And



we can always talk about that again. But, we wanted to just get a sense of your life in Tiverton, so I wondered if you had - so there's a couple of themes here. So maybe if you've got any hobbies that you'd like to do? Or if you socialise with any groups at all? Like is there anything that you'd like to do? Or are you a busy teacher?

Anthony 00:51:47

Oh, teaching doesn't give you much space for other things. But, be that as it may, I do love my walks, I do like my photography, I like my my nature, I'm a regular visitor to Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks. My wife and I and our son will go those [computer noise] places as much as we can. And we will do as much as we can. Because it's fantastic. And we we do do a lot of that. In school, we have colleagues that we work with that make life very, very good. And I think it is, it's fair to say, we have, we have earned a certain place in our in our Devon. We know where we go and what we do to make the most of it. We, we, we make do with what we have.

There is something I learnt, I learnt long ago. I teach religion. So if I quote this, you will know it's from a religious point of view. The Good Book says seek the success and the welfare of the country in which you live in, as an immigrant, for in its success, you too shall be blessed. That's that's a mantra that you get from from the Bible. That's a mantra that you get from the Good Book. And as people who have come to UK, we have sat here, we have a, have a child here. We are settled here. We make a contribution to the community. I marvel at people who look at a community and they denigrate the very community that benefits them. We don't do that. We decided from long ago, I'm an immigrant. I have lived outside Kenya more than have lived in Kenya. And I have decided wherever I go, I will seek the welfare and the success of that community, for in its success there too, I shall be successful. That is the mantra in - from which we work.

We, we feel we were not syphoning on the system. We pay our fair share of taxes we make our contribution. And if I may say here, Tiverton High School, Tiverton community, Devon County Council, I think they have expressed the highest form of confidence any organisation and any community can express on somebody. On two occasions, 2017 and 2019, in July month - and it was to be this coming year but now it's going to be the following year - they have allowed me to develop a programme that takes students to Kenya. And we go for 12 to 14 days. Could I have a better measure of confidence than that? And one of the things we do, I introduce them to my mum's house, we go see what there is in the village. It's it's an old community, as time can go. Because the community that settled there in 1700 and we can trace my family all the way back. So you go to the garden, you have coffee, it's a smallholding, you have bananas, sugar cane, papaya, pineapple, not pineapple, avocado, guava, macadamia nuts, all those things that grow in a smallholding, and the kids are able to sample what they learn about in class.

They do that, and then we go do some charitable work in a slum in the Rift Valley in this in the town of Nakuru. For me to have a measure of confidence at that level, it tells you that I am very comfortable that I do that. My wife works in Tiverton, some of the students she treats are my students. So when we walk in town, the kids go, Oh there goes Mr. And Mrs. Nderitu.



Interviewer 00:55:50

Yeah.

Anthony 00:55:51

There is a comfort in knowing that you're in a community where you make a contribution, and it's appreciated. Not by all, but you do it from the best of your ability, and you do the best you can. Yeah.

Interviewer 00:56:04

Thank you. And that's really [unintelligible].

Interviewer 2 00:56:07

Yeah, I was just -- I'm so, I'm so glad to hear that.

Interviewer 00:56:10

Yeah. It's so nice. I think, Wendy, if we move on to the concluding questions, if you want to do do you want to do the first concluding question, and I might just do another one, and then that after that.

Interviewer 2 00:56:22

Right, okay. Well, my, my, my concluding question is, do you think you coming to Tiverton has made a difference to the town? And how?

Anthony 00:56:38

As a part of, as a part of school, as a teacher in the school, the students have been able to see teaching from the perspective of somebody who's from Black And Minority Ethnic grouping. The teaching is a bit different because I bring in experiences that are from a different point of view. So when and I, I must admit, I feel very happy when the head of geography, we were teaching next - I mean, in adjacent rooms - he'll, he'll teach and he'll stop and say, Hang on. He'll come next door to me and say, Can I do what you're doing? And you go tell them what I'm telling them about Kenya? And we'll do that. And a kid will sit there and say, hang on a minute, we have learned about that. And you are, not for lack of anything, but you are like a specimen, you're you encapsulate what we learn about. I say, yes, this is what it is. And that is what you place when you are a member a minority as a Kenyan extraction, and who [speech rendered unintelligible by computer glitch]. Because it is what you, you claim your life to be made of. And that is very different. And it rewards the students who feel they have something to learn from it.

And they do appreciate that. And it's, it's a different flavour to learn. [Computer glitch] And it makes it a thing that helps them in their learning process. If you were to listen to some students who I took to Kenya, the first time I went in 2017, I remember two girls who sat with me. We were in Nakuru and we sat somewhere, and I asked them, What do you make of it? And these two students, they looked at me and they said, Sir? Yeah? Now I know why you teach the way you teach. It's not from nowhere, it's from somewhere. Keep doing that. It makes sense.



Interviewer 00:58:48

Yeah.

Anthony 00:58:49

And I, as a teacher, what more do you want to hear?

Interviewer 2 00:58:54

Yeah, I -- [I can't imagine.]

Interviewer 00:58:56

[Yeah that's great]. That's, that's that really tells us - that gives us a good answer. I think that's, yeah, it's really clear. And kind of, I think that that linked with your last answer, kind of gives us a sense of what you give to the town. And thank you. So last question. This oral history will be kept for the people of Tiverton. So they'll learn about your story, just like they learn about other stories in the town, like farmers and factory workers and things. And - is there anything that you would like to say to the people who are listening to your oral history in the future? It's a bit of a weird question, but any messages for the people in Tiverton?

Anthony 00:59:38

Each of us have a contribution to make in a society. We're gonna either make it positively or negatively. It's a choice. You never, one of the anomalies of success is that you never apply to be born where you're born. You can apply to live where you want to live, but you cannot apply to be born where you're born. Neither can you apply for your parents to give birth to you. But you can apply to be who you want to be, you can choose who you want to be, you can make you can make a conscious decision on what kind of a mark you want to make in life and you can make a choice on what kind of point of reference would you leave behind for people to say, I met that person positively or negatively.

Britain, be it in a rural or in the cities or metros, has a lot of potential. And the best of Britain is found in people who go day by day, doing their charitable work, taking a few pennies here and there, doing what they need to do. Minding the welfare of another person, be it near here or far away out there. All we know, there is a lot of goodness in Britain. And if only people looked at that positive side of Britain, it will be fantastic. Yes, there are moaners and whine- whingers and whiners, they are part of it, but each of us have a place and have have something we can do to make it to make it better. I quote Nelson Mandela, when he quoted something in his film Invictus, he says, I'm the master of my ship, and my my destiny. And I think we can do that.

Interviewer 01:01:18

Okay, thanks very much. I think we can -- Yeah, we can stop on Nelson Mandela, that sounds really good to me.



Interviewer 2 01:01:23

Yeah. I, well, you I don't think we can do any better than that, actually.

Interviewer 01:01:26

No, now we can't. That's great. So thank [you].

Interviewer 2 01:01:29

[Anthony], I wanted to, I wanted to say thank you, because your, your story is very valuable. In so much as it is contemporary, in amongst a lot of other stories that we've gathered from Tiverton - you know, World War Two, you know, farming, all sorts of things - but I think I think yours is very of the moment.

Interviewer 01:01:59

Yeah it's quite different - isn't it? - to some of the other things that we've collected, it's just good to have a real range and it's great. So thank you. Thank you for making time for it and I'm sorry, that it's bothering you. But now you're free. [laughs] And you're done. You're finished.

Anthony 01:02:14

[Thank you]

Interviewer 01:02:14

[The only thing] I do need from you is your address. I wonder, do you want to email it me or don't say it now, which is easier?

Anthony 01:02:21

I'll say it now because I know you respect protocol on on information.

Interviewer 01:02:26

Sorry.

Anthony 01:02:27

And data management.

Interviewer 01:02:28

[Laughter] It means I can pop it in the post straight away.

Anthony 01:02:30

Yes, it's 24 Norman Drive. General Norman.

Interviewer 01:02:36

Okay.



Anthony 01:02:38

It's 24 Norman Drive, Cullompton. C-U-L-L-O-M-P-T-O-N.

Interviewer 01:02:43

Yeah.

Anthony 01:02:45

EX15 1XQ

Interviewer 01:02:50

1XQ? Thank you very much. I'll pop this in the post, these are your forms. It's got a stamped addressed envelope, so if you just sign them and pop them back to us. Coronavirus, unfortunately, we can't deliver because it's, you know, all of the things that are going on, but yeah, thanks again.

Anthony 01:03:07

Do you, do you need a photo of me?

Interviewer 01:03:10

That would be really, really useful actually. If you could send a photo of you that would represent your oral history on the website, that would be fantastic. If you're happy for it to go on the website. There's a few options in here about what happens. So the option that says it will be used for learning resources is the one we'd really like you to say yes to because that means we can quote you in the exhibition. You could be anonymous, but you don't - you know, most people aren't anonymous, in fact, no one else is anonymous, so you don't need to be but -- And then there's also one where you could go on the website for in, the TOSFOR website, so the Telling Our Stories website will have oral histories on it. And you might form part of that collection if you're happy. And in that case, a picture would be really useful. So if you don't mind emailing me something that you would like, that'd be great. Thanks.

Anthony 01:04:01

Are you, are you on WhatsApp?

Interviewer 01:04:03

Yeah, I'm on WhatsApp. Yeah, and you've got my number. Do you want me to? Yeah, if there's anything you need me to do, just let me know - message me or email me just to say, like I'm on WhatsApp, so you should find me

Anthony 01:04:17

What is the website you have in- ?



Interviewer 01:04:20

The Telling Our Stories website? I actually don't think the website is made yet. There is one, there's one that's a bit like the website we'll have which is a Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots: Exeter, but that's quite an old website now. And we're gonna have a new website. It's going to be online in about a month, I think.

Anthony 01:04:39

Okay.

Interviewer 01:04:39

It would have your thing on it.

Anthony 01:04:43

You're working. You're working with Devon Development -

Interviewer 01:04:46

Yeah.

Anthony 01:04:46

- Education? With Sue Errington?

Interviewer 01:04:48

Yeah, with Sue. Yeah, yeah, yeah, so we're doing a lot of things with Sue.

Anthony 01:04:52

Sue knows me very well.

Interviewer 01:04:53

Yeah. [Interviewer 2 laughs]

Anthony 01:04:55

Oh, yes. She knows me very well.

Interviewer 01:04:57

[Unintelligible] with you, didn't she? Yeah, yeah.

Anthony 01:04:59

Have I met with Wendy?

Interviewer 01:05:02



You -

Interviewer 2 01:05:03

Together [?]

Interviewer 01:05:04

Wendy you haven't met with before, no. She's just part of our Tiverton project. So one of our group here. You have met me, but only, only at the beginning of the year. Or was it about a year ago?

Anthony 01:05:16

Yeah, it's about a year ago we met.

Interviewer 01:05:18

Yeah. Last year. Hm.

Anthony 01:05:20

Yeah, it was last year when we met. I think, ladies, I must say thank you very much for being insistent and consistent. And for giving me the privilege of sharing this information. It is a privilege. I don't take it lightly. And thank you.

Interviewer 01:05:40

Well, no, thank you, that's great. I'm gonna, I'm gonna say goodbye. And yeah, best best wishes. And, yeah, hopefully we'll - our paths will cross again, but take care in the meantime.