**Transcription of Interview with Woman from Malawi (MW)**

**I = Interviewer**

**MW = Interviewee from Malawi**

**I: Right, here we go. So first of all I’m just gonna ask you some basic questions about you and then will talk a bit more about equality. Right. So first of all, where are you originally from?**

MW: Malawi.

**I: Malawi. What is you native language?**

MW: Chicheua

**I: Can you spell that?**

MW: Yeah. C-h-i-c-e-w-a

**I: w?**

MW: Yeah, then c-i-c-h-a

**I: c-h-a?**

MW: Yeah, no e, e sorry.

**I: Oh e**

MW: w-a. Yeah Chichewa.

**I: Chichewa, right. How long have you been in the UK?**

MW: I think about seven yea… eight years now. No, seven years I should say. Since 2005.

**I: Yeah, ok. And how long have you been in Glasgow?**

MW: Since 2008.

**I: So did you – where were you before then?**

MW: I was in England.

**I: In England. And how did you end up in Glasgow.**

MW: I had a case with the Home Office so sometimes I don’t have a choice and they end up sending me here.

**I: Ok, right. What is your status?**

MW: I’m a refugee.

**I: You’re a refugee, so you have leave to remain. Indefinite or**

MW: No no, five years

**I: five years, yeah. When did you get that?**

MW: 2010.

**I: 2010, okay. Can I ask you how old you are?**

MW: Uh, I’m 36.

**I: 36. How many children do you have?**

MW: Two with one on the way. So maybe I don’t know three, two, two without

**I: Two, three soon. How old are the other two?**

MW: 11 and 7.

**I: Ok. So I assume you are not a single parent?**

MW: No, I was, but now I’m with my husband.

**I: Ok, your husband came here.**

MW: Yeah, my husband came – we started staying together in 2011, not far.

**I: Ok. So did he come through family reunion or?**

MW: Yes, I should say more or less yeah.

**I: Aw, that’s great. Where do you live?**

MW: Pollok.

**I: Pollok. What type of accommodation?**

MW: I’ve been so lucky to have a tenement. No no not – a house, a rental, not a flat.

**I: Ok, that’s nice.**

MW: It’s so unusual.

**I: Is it private or?**

MW: No, it’s not private, it is through GHA.

**I: Ok, well that’s nice.**

MW: So you don’t know might get a house with a garden but…

**I: Yeah. Do you get any benefits?**

MW: Yes, house and job seeker’s allowance, but my husband just got a job two months ago, so we had some cuts from the benefits, but I still receive child benefit and child tax credit.

**I: Ok. Right. So do you have a job?**

MW: No. Not at the moment. I’m studying. I’m studying at Anniesland College. I’m finishing my HNC in June. Yeah, so one of my plan was to work at the end of this year but then I’m pregnant. [Unclear], but I’m hoping to go to start working in maybe by June next year. Or March next year I should say, at least when the child is up on six months or something.

**I: Ok. What do you plan to do with the child then?**

MW: I was talking to my husband yesterday. He said that we’ll see, we’ll have arrangements about childcare but I need to work because at the end of next year I would like to go back – I would like to go to uni, so they say that I should be on paid job or voluntary job. So I’ve done lots of voluntary job, with [unclear] with the Home Office, and I really want to work to support my husband, because it’s hard enough when he’s on – him working himself. So they want you to be – to have a job experience while you are at uni, so that’s what I’m… I don’t want to do voluntary work anymore. I think I’ve done enough.

**I: Ok. What is your HNC in?**

MW: Erm, what’s the course I’m studying?

**I: Yes.**

MW: Working with communities. Yeah, it’s working with communities, so because it’s HNC level that means next year I can, I can go to uni to do the second year community development.

**I: Ok. That sounds great. Have you had a job in Glasgow at some point?**

MW: Paid job, no.

**I: No, just lots of voluntary jobs? Yeah. Have you done any other training here?**

MW: Yeah. I’ve done some training with Bridges and also with the British Red Cross. Yes, and I think also that – the place where I’m doing – I’m currently doing my work placement – I’ve been doing some training.

**I: Ok. Did you have a job back in your home country?**

MW: Yeah, I was working in my father’s business. Sort of family business.

**I: What were you doing?**

MW: I was helping in the office, more like office assistant or answering phones, typing. Those kind of stuff. But more like administrative assistant I should say.

**I: Did you have any education in Malawi?**

MW: Yeah, I did my primary school, secondary school and I didn’t go higher than that. I did study computers afterwards, but it wasn’t like something really serious like enrolling in the college and do something for two years or so, no.

**I: Ok. Right. So would you like to just tell me a bit about yourself? How would you describe yourself?**

MW: Oh, that’s hard. I don’t know how I can describe myself, but I’ll... from maybe what people say about me. I don’t know. I’m… I think I’m quite hard-working if that’s what you’re asking. I’m quite strong. I’ve gone through a lot of stuff and sometimes I’m very… I don’t know, I’ve got the courage to do stuff, but even though people say you can’t manage that or you can’t go through with that, I always try so hard to… yeah. So… I’m friendly. I don’t know if… what kind of, what kind of stuff would you like to know about me so?

**I: Just maybe, what’s the most important things to you in your life?**

MW: I think, as of now, I would say my family is very important to me. My children is my everything. It’s the reason I’m alive today and what’s important again to me is good health, to be in good health, good relationships and good friendship and also security maybe I would say.

**I: Yeah, ok. How important is your ethnicity to you? That – being a black woman, is that important to you?**

MW: I don’t know. I would say to know where you are from, to value your culture and all that, it’s quite important to me, but being black or white I don’t think that is something that is very important to me. I’m not saying that I’m not proud of being black, no I am, but it’s not something that… I don’t know. It’s not something that it’s like something it’s because I’m black I feel this or that no. Because I just feel like it’s the same. It’s just the colour you know. Yes, we so the same things. We go to bed, we wake up in the morning, we’ve got the need to eat, to do… So it’s just the same as any person, black, white, Chinese, it doesn’t matter. Yeah. But I value my background, my culture, where I come from, I do value that you know yes. But it’s not like… I don’t know. I think it’s because I’ve sort of travelled – education is not only going to college or going to school, I think it’s about travelling and whilst you travel you sort of try to understand and see things from a different point of view, so yeah.

**I: Yeah, definitely. Ok, so try to imagine that you were a white Scottish person. How do you think you would describe you then?**

MW: If I was white Scottish? I don’t know. Maybe because I’m here I would feel that this is my country. I would feel more way more free, if you know what I mean. I would feel very, I don’t know, very secure, very free, like peace of mind, like this is my country – I’m Scottish and I don’t have… do you understand? Yes. I’d feel more accepted and all that, yeah.

**I: Ok, so you think if you were Scottish, you would feel more accepted here? So do you sometimes feel you’re not accepted here?**

MW: Not accepted as such, but fitting in. And not – also not only fitting in, but maybe sometimes I feel like things might – can be easier, can be easier to Scottish people than to black people. It’s like people won’t look at you in a different way or maybe question or doubt or point, you know, that kind of stuff. Because you all this time [unclear] when you’re black, always people think of some other things. And it’s this again as of today, because my eyes are open, I can see it’s the same as a white person being in Africa. People look at her in a different view. They’ll make loads of – they have loads of ideas about her. It can be good or bad and all that, you know, mixed feelings, yeah.

**I: Right, ok. So do you think you would have described yourself very differently back in Malawi compared to** **now?**

MW: If I was home?

**I: Yeah, when you were home. Do you think you’ve changed a lot since you came to the UK?**

MW: Not changed a lot. I’m still the same person, but I would say that I’ve grown. Like there’s so much maturity going on in me right now, and also yes I see things in a different view like I said before. Maybe there are some things that I took for granted or there are some things that I, I had a different opinion, but now because I’m a grown-up person and I have experienced a lot of stuff, then I’ll always have a different view somehow.

**I: Ok, so do you see your country in a different view now?**

MW: In a different vi… in what way, like?

**I: Like just you said you’ve grown and stuff and…**

MW: Not seeing my country in a different view, but maybe seeing some of the things and… just some of the things but not the country.

**I: Ok, what kind of things then?**

MW: I don’t know. Mmm. I don’t know, maybe I would say sometimes maybe I can understand how… I can understand how people strug… the way people struggle or why do they have to do things, the way they raise their children, why do they have to do that? Even the… it’s like, you know, beliefs. Some of the things I was taught when I was young or some of the things that I believe in so much, it’s some of the things that I’m questioning right now that do I really have to do that or was that correct? You understand, something like that? Because I see things at a different perspective, so not the country – the country is just ok – but it’s just the way people do things or yeah the way things can be.

**I: Yeah, can you tell me more specifically what kind of things?**

MW: Erm, I don’t know what examples I can give. Erm, I don’t know. Maybe, maybe some of the family values.

**I: Yeah?**

MW: Yeah, like, I don’t know, the way people, fami – what family means here and what family means there. The way people treat each other. The way we treat our children. Yes. It’s like, you know like, something like when I was, when I was young, because I was quite – I was quite well-behaved in my family. I didn’t get loads of lashes from my parents, you understand? I didn’t get loads of shouts from my parents, but… it was my parents would say ‘do this then if you do that, you’re bei… you’ll be ok’, but if you don’t and you really misbehave there will be time when you will be whipped and all that – like smacked and all that. And you’ll be disciplined. You’ll be taught how to behave in a certain way and all that, especially when you’re a girl and all that. But here the way I see children standing up to their parents, like the way they talk to their parents, it’s not something that is very common back home. There’s so much like things, the way people think that things… I think things, some of the things have been taken for granted, like even human rights. Because you have your [unclear] telling that I know my rights, there’s nothing like that in Africa even though it’s good. Even though I admire the way they work here, like getting children very protected, you understand, but sometimes I feel like it goes way too far, that now the children take advantage of those kind of things. So that, in Africa it’s more like that you be told that you need to do your, do your chores, help and all that by twel… when you’re twelve-fifteen you should know how to help around the house, even to cook some of simple meals and be responsible, but here 15-year-olds, 14-years-olds, 13-year-olds they are not like that. And if you try to talk to them and all that, you gonna end up being reported at the social services. That, something like that doesn’t happen in Africa and now I’m grown up but I don’t regret the way I’ve been raised up, even my mum shouting at me or smacking me for being misbehaved. I thought that was part of disciplining me and teaching me things. I didn’t… I can’t say that my parents abused me, you understand? But here, if you do that, you’re gonna be reported as if you’re abusing your children. Yeah, here that is something that I miss. Even my, my, my oldest sister who was quite challenge and maybe someone who could lot of trouble sometimes, she is the one who even miss my father so much or even my mother so much, now that they’re gone, you understand? She doesn’t have any grudges, any bad feelings. She even said that ‘oh I learned a lot from the discip… the way our parents disciplined’, but here it’s not like that. You see children taking their parents to the talkshows, being like they [unclear] or things like that. Yeah.

**I: Right. So you said something about you get disciplined in Africa especially when you are a girl?**

MW: Yeah.

**I: So it’s different to be a girl than a boy in?**

MW: Yeah. Not ver… yes, yeah, it’s quite different, because you, you, you, you’re expected to behave in a different way. There are some responsibilities that you have to take like a girl. It’s different. See even the closeness the parents have with the children here, it’s different. Maybe now, seven years on, things have changed but because maybe people on my age they still, maybe my generation, but with my parents, things were not the same. I wouldn’t say I would go next to my dad and say ‘alright, all that…’ you know. You you… I’ll say that maybe I was very close my dad, I would feel that my dad really loved me so much than my mother, but maybe because I wasn’t, my mother wasn’t always there for me, she – because of some other family issues - we always stick more with our dad than with… our dad is the one that take of us than our mother, but then, there wasn’t that kind of closeness. Not in a bad way, but you know the way children run about, hugging their parents and all that, no, for me I didn’t experience that with my, ah ok, my dad would do that, you understand? But not like here. Even with my brother, it was ok, and… but they’ll give you all their love, all their support and everything, yeah. But that’s one thing that I learned here like just getting that kind of closeness from your children, hugging them, giving them cuddles and all that, talking to them, chatting with them. You just don’t have to provide food and shelter and, yeah, but warmth [unclear].

**I: So there is both good and bad things in the family structures in the two countries?**

MW: Yeah.

**I: Yeah, right. Do you think you have changed a lot as a person since you came to the UK?**

MW: I think… the only thing that change med is because, like I said, again growing up. There are some things that I put first, there are some things that I think are more important than others because there… not coming to the UK, maybe, no, but maybe just because of growing up, I, I think I sort of weigh what’s important. You understand? It’s like destructions. I used to be maybe wasting time doing something that wasn’t important, not… as of now I’m going back to uni, I’m going to college – this is not time for me to be studying. I should have concentrated on my studies way back when I was young. Yes, and also… for me sometimes there’s a lot of going on, things going on, like parties or events, you know, African stuff and all that. Sometimes I feel like, I don’t know, maybe I don’t socialize a lot in a way, but I try to avoid some other things thinking like… I can’t… I don’t take that stuff as something that is very important. I do sometimes, yeah, but not like, not like it’s a must. You understand? But maybe way back I would have said ‘oh, there’s a holiday, I have to go’.

**I: So your priorities have changed?**

MW: Yes, yes, they have, yeah.

**I: Ok.**

MW: I’m thinking more of the future now than [unclear]. I just want to be in a place whereby I feel like I’m more secure, there’s a future for my family, I can provide, I don’t have… not also depending on the government as such, but now that I’ve got the status, doing things on my own.

**I: Ok. Can you explain to me what equality means to you?**

MW: I think to me it means like equal opportunity. Like having a fair share of opportunities that are there for people regardless of the – where they are coming from, age or colour, background, stuff like that.

**I: Ok. Do you feel like you have equal opportunities here in Glasgow?**

MW: I think loads of organisations and companies are trying to fit in in that act, but – in theory – but I don’t think in practice it really it does happen. Some places yes, but it’s difficult to be honest. It is difficult to be honest. Sometimes maybe you just say I’m just, I’ve just been lucky, like I said. But I don’t know. It’s different. It’s hard.

**I: Yeah, so what are you thinking? How is it hard for you?**

MW: Let’s say for example, sometimes it’s ok, but sometimes it depends on what kind of areas. If you’re talking in terms of job and all that or services, I don’t know. I think sometimes it’s hard, it depends, I would say. You see I’m here, I’m going to college and this college I’m not paying, it’s the government that paying and despite that I’m not originally from here I’m receiving the same education than like some people that are here. And maybe some people that are from here, they are paying than us. So that equal opportunities it’s not only affecting me, because – as a black person – but I know some white people also are not getting this, the opportunities. You understand? So I… this is me, my opinion and I think that a lot of people would argue ‘how can you say something like that?’ I was, I was telling one of my friend, my friend – I should say my husband – when he was looking for a job, he got a lot of problems – going there – going there – trying an agency [unclear] thought he was being discriminated maybe because he was black and all that. Then I told him that you know sometimes you have, you have to understand that a lot of people face discrimination even though they are not black. It’s not only black people, it’s also even Scottish. Even people from England coming here, they get discrimination. I’ve gone through a lot of [unclear] and I’ve heard people, white people, people from America, talking about how they’ve been, they’ve been facing discrimination, racism and all that. You can just think of how the Irish, the Scottish and English hate each other. You see? So you should understand, sometimes you should think that ‘let me just go there to work, because I need the job, I need the money, maybe with time people get used to me’. If it gets way too too much that’s when maybe you should moan, but just from the beginning don’t make assumption that people are looking at you and they say because you’re black and all that. But it’s hard. Sometimes it does happen, but sometimes we have that fear in our soul ‘oh, maybe because I’m black, then then’. Yeah. I’m going to college like I said and I’m not paying. It’s the government who sort this thing for me, but I know some Scottish people who are paying too much of that. Do you understand? So is that equal opportunity for them when, yeah. So that’s how I take things. Some areas they are, but sometimes some areas they are not and even if it’s in Scotland it’s not only good. It can be good to me as an African or an outsider, but it can be good to Scottish people. So is that equal opportunity?

**I: Yeah.**

MW: Yeah, and the other thing, the other thing – that’s for college and all that – for housing; I know people from the housing department or whatever it is, they are trying to mix people. There are some areas where you go, you find that there is no whi… black people, it’s just white and when you go there you feel like an alien. But there are some areas where they are trying to mix, but the government will try to do that, the housing provider will try to do that, but it’s the people – how they receive you in that neighbourhood. Yes. I did try to apply for different organisation for housing, I got direct maybe discrimination only [unclear] from the [unclear], tenement who can put you in that area, who can give you the house. It was… because you’re black – she actually said because you’re black…

**I: She said that?**

MW: Yes. And it was hard. I didn’t like, I did complain and Bridges helped me through that. In the end I said ‘I’m not gonna win this’, I just dropped it. But in the end, I end up having a house. Where I live it’s a good house with garden both sides. A lot of people are like ‘how lucky are you?’ or ‘how did you get that house?’ You understand? And I still don’t understand how I got the house, but my neighbours are nice to me. I don’t know behind the door, you understand? But when they see my children they say hello, they say hello to me, I’m ok, I don’t have any problem. I try not to cause any problem. I feel safe. Maybe I’m there like one year now, I haven’t had any problems. Do you understand? I don’t know how – I don’t know what they think. I know some people wish they could have that house. I had a – I had one lady coming – we met few times at the housing, the housing office together. Then when she saw my children play along she said ‘did you move this area?’ I said ‘yes’, she said ‘what house?’ Then my daughter told her the house, then she came later on around six at our house, then she knock. I open and she say ‘hello, hello’, but she didn’t – after greetings she didn’t left so in Africa we invite people in so I invited her ‘do you want to come in?’ ‘Oh yeah, if that’s ok’, then she came in with her two boys. Then she sat, we offered her tea, she was chatting and she was all very very happy and all that; ‘oh this is nice’, but then she did tell us things like that ‘I’ve been waiting almost ten years to get a house like, but I never got a house like this. I’m surprised you end up getting a house like this, because they get me high rise again like in the flats again’. And she was saying stuff like ‘oh, that’s a bit TV, that’s a big… how did you get this stuff?’ You understand? Then, that was ok, but then afterwards my husband said there was some awkwardness in there, isn’t it. Then I said yeah. Two days later I met her on the road, she just said hi – I’m the one who said hi and she just said hi and she passed. I [unclear] her again, yeah, you understand? It’s like…

**I: So she was very jealous?**

MW: I’m… I hate to say they were jealous, but somehow… because, yeah, here in Govan and some else ah… some else where I’ve met a lot of Scottish people and I chat about with him and they talk about how much they wish they could have a house – a big house, a house with a garden and how much it’s painful that for them to see this asylum seekers and refugees coming in and getting this nice houses. Do you understand? It’s not like I’m judging but somehow I can understand where they are coming from. Even though it’s not fair for them but the government are trying – I don’t know how things work, I seriously don’t know what to say to that. There’s this guy I work with, I volunteer with, he said to me ‘here, when there’s this this, they moved us, they demolished our places, they give us another house, we didn’t like the house they put us in, the flats. Now they… two years, for the past two years here in Govan there have been very nice houses built, all this great house and they are not giving us. They are giving this to people that are…’ Do you understand? Yeah, and you could feel his pain, but I don’t know. Sometimes things are not – or don’t work the way you want. Sometimes life is not fair, so…

**I: Yeah, no that’s how it…**

MW: Yeah.

**I: But do you think you have better opportunities here in Glasgow compared to in Malawi?**

MW: You know, if I say this, you might not understand, because a lot of people say if that’s the thing in Africa, then why are you here? But I’ll tell you, in Malawi you can’t work, for me, I can’t do cleaning job in Malawi, but here I can do cleaning job. I don’t know how things work. There is nothing like care work. If you working like that it’s gonna be you’re a nurse or you’re a doctor. But here people are doing this personal care thing. In Africa this doesn’t happen, that’s for the nurses or – do you understand? But for person like me, you can’t go and say I do care work. Even some a lot of Africans here, they don’t disclose to people back home what kind of things they’re doing. But it’s that kind of dirty jobs that gives you a lot of money here comparing to home. Because people doing all this cleaning, care all this, they do this and they sent a lot of money. It’s just the value of the money. I don’t know how it works, but I can’t… but you never find a job like I’m working, I’m a security guard and all that. It’s like, it’s a crust… I don’t know if it’s a [unclear] or whatever [31.55], but it doesn’t work like that. But here you work, the money is good, if you put £1000, sending it home, it’s a lot of money, you can do a lot. But if you got £1000 here it’s not gonna do the same thing there. You can work for two years, three years here, the money that you get here, it’s not, it’s enough to manage everyday life but the same money in Africa, it’s [unclear] a lot of money. So in Africa when you work, say I’m ok, that means I’ve got a house, large four bedroom house with a yard with two cars, nothing is for mortgage there. It’s your own money, your own stuff. But here you work, you got two bedroom house, three bedroom house, and if it’s better if you’re Scottish people, that means maybe you own mortgage. Every month you have to pay for that car you have, you have to pay for this sofa, you have to pay… it’s like all mortgage till you retire. In Africa there’s nothing like mortgage and there’s nothing like benefits.

**I: No, but that also means that you have to earn all the money.**

MW: Yeah, you really have to earn all the money. You really have to work so hard. But there are some people that are very poor, and there are some people that are well to do or there are some people that are rich.

**I: So do you think there are a lot of inequalities in your home country?**

MW: No. It’s just – I don’t think it’s inequality thing, because if you, you, if you lucky enough to have education, that means you gonna work, that means you can support yourself. If you’re not from education route, that means your family has been to businesses, that means you carry on from that, you’re ok. You understand? If you… but it’s… there’s nothing like government helping the poor people. Maybe that’s the thing I would… here if you’re poor the government will help you, but in Africa the government won’t help you, not even from the childcare. Not even from the benefits.

**I: Do you see that as a problem?**

MW: Yes, it is. Yes, I think it’s a problem because there are some people who can’t manage.

*[An employee from the Bridges Programmes comes in to make tea and makes a lot of noise]*

**I: Let’s just wait till we can hear something again.**

MW: Because I would say – I don’t know if that’s from that’s the collective point of view, but for me I would like if I could see the government helping those who cannot afford. Yeah. That’s the only thing I would say. If the government could do something, because there is a lot of poverty in Africa, but that poverty doesn’t affect everybody. You understand? So at least the government would do something to help – here they say people from low income – yeah, so if they would do that, there is a lot of people that would benefit a lot from business in Africa. Some people they believe that education is just a waste of time. You’re better off doing business. My parents were not educated, they went to basic school, but they were not educated like higher education, but they were rich. They had loads of money, lots of business. Yeah, so maybe if the government could help out on people that are affected by poverty. Because there is poverty in Africa, very very who is bad.

**I: Very bad poverty, yeah. Ok. Have you ever heard about the Equality Act and**

MW: Yeah

**I: You’ve heard about that? And the Public Sector Equality Duty, you heard about that?**

MW: Mm.

**I: No? So you know your rights. You’ve already talked a bit about your rights?**

MW: Yeah, I suppose yeah.

**I: Yeah, ok. So you know what you can claim here and?**

MW: Yeah, but then… definitely [unclear]. You can say I know my rights, I’m not saying anything here – I can’t speak to you, I can’t speak what I don’t want to speak, but then let’s say if it’s police. You’re gonna speak, because they’re gonna make you speak. Yeah, so…

**I: So you don’t think the rights actually work?**

MW: Yeah, some of them, yes it does, but it’s all like… I’ve seen something like a heart shaped with all lots of rights in – I’ve seen it through a lot of organisations, but I don’t think everything works like that. And you, when you’re talking about… I did mention about employment, employment opportunities or I think it’s equal opportunities or whatever in employment, you know, sometimes, me, you’re looking for a job, you’re going to office. There is no any other black, Indian, Asian or Chinese, just white people – do you think you’re gonna get taken there? So that to me, it scares people off, I think like if it’s me, if I go to an office, then I see the office full of… if I’m looking for a job, I would doubt that I’ll get a job in there.

**I: Ok.**

MW: Yeah, sometimes I feel like, I don’t know, maybe there are some jobs or there are some offices that are just meant for only Scottish people and there is nothing I can do about it. That’s what I, yeah, seriously.

**I: So you wouldn’t think that the employer there would hire you?**

MW: Yeah, no, no. Because they are an office with 20 people, all Scottish people, no. I don’t think I would get a chance in there. They’ll always... they’ll definitely find a… something maybe not to take me, I don’t know. And also, you see, when you fill in the forms and they ask about – equal opportunity form, that think you fill – I know that they always say this is just for our records and say this is just for – I forgot what they say it is for, but I don’t think it is for that. Yeah, they say – they say nationality, they’re not asking you if you’re black or white but they say nationality.

**I: Ok, so you think the employers look at this?**

MW: Yeah. Definitely. Even if they don’t take that in account, but during the interviews and sometimes maybe it’s not necessarily their fault as such, but maybe they think you’re not gonna be able to do the job, or you won’t be the first – the good person to fit in. Let’s say it’s… because some people – some African people, they’re well-qualified, they were doctors back there or they were nurses or whatever profession you have, but then you come here… it’s a lot of things. It’s not only about the colour, but it’s things like accent. Do you understand? Even accent and it does play a major part in whatever it is because it’s, I don’t know, think about having a customer care whatever online thing, then you got a call from some company, then you got a person with a big African accent, that’s not gonna be good for them. Do you understand? They say they end up… I’m… I’m talking, I’m not talking about this only bec… for African people, even for Scottish people. Sometimes I call… like for example, I remember calling the [unclear] centre, I wanted to find out the, I wanted to find out the opening times and open, then it went straight to voicemail – not voicemail, that press one to hear, and I pressed one, I pressed – there was this guy with very thick, thick Scottish accent and I couldn’t hear anything. Do you understand?

**I: Yeah, I know.**

MW: Yes, so it’s not only the Scottish accent like I said – it’s not only the black accent, but it’s – it can be the Scottish accent. Even… the other example I take is like if you see people on the news, you don’t hear that thick accent to know that this is Scottish… hear a bit of Scottish on STV, but that English channel – BBC – do you see the people, you can’t really tell the accent. So…

**I: No, yeah. That’s true. Do you think it’s – it’s also more difficult for you to get a job because you’re a** **woman?**

MW: Yeah, yes. Yeah, yes. If I go right now like this, the employer will be worried about maternity leave and all that. Yeah. And also, I think it’s because of childcare issues, they always think how many children do you have. If you say four, and a lot of African people they got large families, so that’s –that’s a barrier to get a job. Not, not from the, from the side only that I’ve got lots of children I don’t think, but the employer – that scares the employer, so. I am, I’m studying right now and I’m thinking of going to work. My husband does the night, the shifts thing and I – he’s boss asking him ‘when is, so when is your wife finishing college?’ Then he said ‘June. May or June’ Then he said ‘why?’ ‘Ah, because I need to know, we can’t… we need to… we can’t do with this shifting thing, because you said your wife is at college and all that’. Like he needs him to be free so that he should pick each and every shift. I said ‘how about me? When I’m finishing college I want to work, so you need to tell your boss that these are days that I can work. He shouldn’t make things for you because he doesn’t know your family situation’. What if you’re alone, if you are a lone parent, how are you gonna do that? Because I was there, I just got me off sick to be honest.

**I: Yeah, yeah. No definitely.**

MW: So some day he said because he’s a man he’s expected to be available while the wife take care of the kids. That’s an African thing. I wasn’t expecting anything like that, because in Africa lots of women they stay home to take care of their family, kids – men are supposed to work. Do you understand?

**I: So you didn’t expect that to happen here?**

MW: Yeah. I was actually bit upset. I was pissed to be honest. I was like ‘when I finish I want to go back to…’ Because I like to be independent, seriously. I like to be independent. I don’t like – if my husband wants to spoil me with his pay check, ok, but not me depending on him completely, no. So I’d like to go there, I like to work and if there is that opportunity if… I don’t know, I don’t want to feel to not be able to work because that I’m a woman therefore I’m gonna have a lot of problems. There’s gonna be a lot of cancelling the shift and all that because I need to take care of some personal issues at home. But there is inequality because you’re a woman. They said they’re trying, they’re trying but…

**I: So have you had any problems finding childcare and stuff like that?**

MW: Finding… When I was… it’s nothing to do with, I don’t think it has anything to do because I was a woman as such, but at college when I was applying for childcare, they could not give me childcare. They said because, because my husband was on job seeker’s allowance and that means he hasn’t start working yet so he should be at home with the kids. Then the other year, when I asked for childcare, they couldn’t provide to me because I was doing only part time, or because of the kind of, of payment whatever that I took. So I don’t think it was necessarily because I was a woman as such. I don’t know. But I didn’t get a chance of getting childcare from college. Yeah.

**I: So what did you do with your children then? Did they stay at home with you husband?**

MW: Yeah. And now, now since he’s working, we have to do like – he needs to pick the shifts that suits me when I’m not at college, when I’m in college…

**I: Ok, yeah. So you said, you’ve experienced some discrimination in relation to work or?**

MW: No, maybe services.

**I: Maybe services, yeah?**

MW: Like the wo… like when I was applying, when I was applying for house – housing. Yeah, that was bad. That was really bad. I think sometimes when things happen, it can happen to anybody, but sometimes you feel like maybe because I’m black they’re treating me like this, but maybe in the end it’s not like that.

**I: Do you think you being a refugee has something to do with it?**

MW: Yeah, I think people always have a bad perception with refugees or asylum seekers. Yeah, they… most of the people just think like ‘oh, these people’ you know like ‘oh, these people again, oh, these people’. Even… I remember when I was staying in [unclear] before I moved you be told that wait at your house, there’ll be someone coming to do this, because, you know, we were having – ah, what do they call it, people who come to check on you – do you understand? So they check how many people are in here, yeah, stuff like that. And when you’re not there on the day that they were supposed to come, even if you just leave – they’ll say eight to eight – but you need to go and pick up children, you need to go drop and pick the kids from school. If you just leave then and they come, they won’t buy it. Sometimes you can wait the whole day, they’re not coming, it’s ok for them. If you leave it’s not ok, they’re gonna report you to Home Office and that is very, very scary, yeah.

**I: So being a refugee or an asylum seeker has meant a lot to you, has**

MW: Yeah

**I: yeah, has had a lot of effect on you?**

MW: Yes, yeah. Because of the way people look at you. Once you get your status, you feel like oh my gosh, I don’t, like you’ve been reborn or something. Even when you’re getting in the bus like you feel like, do you understand? It’s like there is a lift… a weight that’s been lifted of you.

**I: When you get your status? Yeah.**

MW: You feel like I think somehow now I belong more, I fit in. But when you are an asylum seeker or refugee, seriously even for the kids – it’s even worse. [Unclear] didn’t have a good experience from… just moving from one place to another, being – going to a new school, you know that. It wasn’t good. And also this thing of like why you came back from your country and all that. I know that sometimes it’s not like people say there’s no war in Malawi. I didn’t claim asylum because there’s war or politics – it was something that was person. Do you understand? And I could have almost lose my kids if I didn’t. Yeah, so. Yeah, but I just feel like people should be, should have, they should be human somehow. They should understand that whatever situation people go to other people’s country, wanting to stay or seek refuge there, they shouldn’t judge, because that can happen to anybody. That’s one thing that I realise now [unclear] but I think disasters, war, enemies, it can happen even here and you can be a refugee in Africa. Do you understand? It happened it would be more like pointing at you saying this or that.

**I: Yeah, ok.**

*[An employee from the Bridges Programmes enters and asks if I have another interview because another woman has arrived, and we have a short conversation about that].*

**I: Right. So do you think it would have been easier for you to get a job if you weren’t African?**

MW: Yeah. Yeah. I think it would yes. If I wasn’t African, if I was Scottish, I could work anywhere.

**I: You could work anywhere?**

MW: Yeah. Because especially it could have made it more easier like with the kind of person I am, wanting to learn, wanting to be there. If I go to college, if I got a chance to go to college, then I go to university, I’ve got good qualification, I’ve got good experience and I’m Scottish. I can do – I can do whatever kind of job I like. I know that doesn’t mean that I don’t appreciate how difficult it is to find a job or how many people have lost their job. No. But look at how many people, how much people are worrying about their job and even some of the Scottish people saying they job should be first – Scottish should be a priority to get the job, do you understand? That means obviously if I’m Scottish [unclear] I’m in a better place because if they’re looking for ten people, the ten places and they say three to African, seven to Scottish, you understand, I stand a better chance there.

**I: Yeah, that’s true. Right, you said before you’ve had some help from Bridges, have you had any other help** **trying to find a job or getting into education?**

MW: From here?

**I: Or from any other organisation?**

MW: Not get a job, but maybe training. Yeah, just training, like I got some training from when I get involved with the British Red Cross and also where I’m doing my placement. Yeah, they have given me a chance to going for some workshops that were very helpful. Yeah, so, yeah. But Bridges played a major role, important part of my personal development I should say.

**I: Ok. And did you feel like they understood your situation and your needs?**

MW: Bridges?

**I: Yeah.**

MW: Now that I’m learning and all that, I know that they did understood, they did try to help me and all that. But at the same time I know that it’s an organisation that they need to have clients, they do apply for funding and all that, so they have box they need to tick, do you understand? But also because of my college I kept coming and I kept asking and they kept offering me stuff, so I felt like we did help each other somehow. But I know that there is… having said that I appreciate that there’s a lot of people out there that needs help and Bridges can’t take all of them. But I was one who got a chance, who got lucky to get that kind of support from Bridges and I don’t take that for granted. But I – what was your question again? Did you think…?

**I: Just if you think that the organisations who have helped you understand your needs?**

MW: Yeah, yes, they did help me a lot and they did understand what I wanted. Or even they were able to give me opportunities that I didn’t know like I didn’t… like opening my eyes that these are the things that you can do. These are the steps you can take. I think that was very helpful. Because sometimes you can say, so I’ve gone to Cardonald college, then I did my IT, now I’ve got my IT, now I’m at home, do you understand? But Bridges were sort of there to motivate you, to push you, that you can go further, you don’t have to stop there, you can do this or, yeah. I don’t think on my own or a lot of people on their own they can just do that straight away like that.

**I: No, they need someone to push them a bit. Do you think your needs differ from other people’s needs?** **Like for instance native Scottish people? Do you think you have other needs?**

MW: I don’t know. Security is the only thing that – it’s the need that I value most. Even now, even though I’m having my status now. It was worse then but now it’s much better. But I think that needs, needs for – I think it’s the same, we all need the same thing, but it’s maybe how we get there as opposed to the kind of needs we want.

**I: Yeah, that’s more what I’m thinking about, yeah. So you think that’s different? How**

MW: Yeah

**I: Yeah. Ok. What was it… what do you think would help you to get a job?**

MW: I think exposure maybe, experience. I know I’m on the way of collecting good experience and all that. This thing that Bridges does, shadowing and all that, I think that’s very good apart from working as a volunteer and all that. Going to the shadow thing and I was – it was something that I was still even thinking after I finish my college and maybe three months just to go somewhere to do, yeah. Yeah, so I can sa… maybe more of experience and shadowing and also a good back up like recommendation, references and all that, I think that would help.

**I: Sorry, recommendations? Yeah.**

MW: Yeah, I think that would yeah.

**I: Right, I just have one last question then. What do you think the future holds for you?**

MW: Erm, I think my future is not… the only thing that is on my way as of now, I would say, is because of two years from now I need to think about renewing my status again and I keep thinking ‘am I gonna get a chance, are they going to give me?’ But by then me I think I’m gonna be at the third, second year or third year at the uni and even though I’ll be working part time and doing uni, but if ther… if there’s no… that’s a barrier for me – that Home Office coming again, it’s a barrier. If it was open I would say ‘oh, my future looks way bright. It’s all prepared’, you understand? But I don’t know what the Home Office is gonna say. But as of now, I would say I am happy the way things are. I feel more comfortable, I feel… I don’t think I worry so much. Of course, worries are always there, but I appreciate what I have at the moment. Yes, and I think I’m even more peaceful in my soul. Yeah, I think I’ve been so…. I did try so hard, work so hard on whatever I’ve achieved, but at the same time I’ve been lucky to be there or to have what I have or to achieve what I have I think.

**I: Ok. So you’re very positive about that?**

MW: So I’m positive about the future to be honest. Now my husband has got a job.

**I: Yeah. That’s great to hear. That’s it from me. Do you have anything you would like to say?**

MW: No.

**I: No? Well, thank you very much. It’s been really helpful.**

MW: Ok, thank you.