

Anika Desai

Junior Research Officer

Anthropology graduate from SOAS University of London with research placement experience at Oxfam GB. Analysed qualitative data from 24 community consultations and coded 45 interview transcripts in NVivo. Co-conducted 80 hours of ethnographic fieldwork across 3 community sites in east London for my dissertation. Skilled in qualitative methods, cross-cultural research, and evidence synthesis for policy audiences.

SKILLS

Ethnographic Methods (participant observation, field notes) • Semi-Structured & Unstructured Interviewing • NVivo (thematic analysis, framework analysis) • Qualitative Coding & Data Management • Literature Review & Evidence Synthesis • Policy Briefing & Report Writing • Cross-Cultural Research & Sensitivity • Research Ethics (informed consent, anonymisation) • Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) • SPSS (descriptive statistics)

LANGUAGES

English (native) • Hindi (conversational) • Swahili (intermediate, B1)

EXPERIENCE

Summer Research Placement, Oxfam GB, Evidence and Insights Team, Oxford *Jun 2024 – Aug 2024*
10 week placement supporting the Evidence and Insights team on a UK poverty and food insecurity research programme.

- Analysed qualitative data from **24 community consultations** (6 to 12 participants each) conducted across 8 UK towns
- Coded **45 interview transcripts** in NVivo using a framework analysis approach, identifying 7 thematic categories
- Contributed a **4,000 word qualitative findings chapter** to the team's annual research report on food insecurity
- Prepared a **2 page research briefing** for Oxfam's advocacy team, summarising key findings and policy recommendations

Student Research Assistant, SOAS University of London, Department of Anthropology, London *Jan 2024 – May 2024*

Assisted Dr. Ruth Mandel with data collection for a British Academy funded study on diaspora foodways in London.

- Conducted **15 semi-structured interviews** with first and second generation migrants about food practices and cultural identity
- Transcribed and translated **8 interviews** (4 from Swahili, 4 from Hindi) into English
- Compiled a **literature review of 30 sources** on food anthropology for the project's working paper

EDUCATION

BSc (Hons) in Social Anthropology, SOAS University of London, London *Sep 2022 – Jun 2025*
First Class Honours. Modules include ethnographic methods, medical anthropology, development anthropology, and anthropology of migration. Dissertation on community resilience and mutual aid networks in east London.

CERTIFICATIONS

Royal Anthropological Institute Student Member, Royal Anthropological Institute *Sep 2023*

PROJECTS

Dissertation: Mutual Aid Networks and Community Resilience in Tower Hamlets *Oct 2024 – Apr 2025*
Ethnographic study of informal mutual aid networks that emerged during and after the pandemic in three Tower Hamlets estates.

- Conducted **80 hours of participant observation** across 3 community sites over 12 weeks
- Carried out **22 in-depth interviews** with community organisers, residents, and local councillors
- Coded transcripts in NVivo and identified 5 core themes: reciprocity, trust, institutional distrust, hyperlocal identity, and gentrification anxiety
- Awarded a mark of 78% and selected for the **SOAS Anthropology Undergraduate Research Showcase**

REFERENCES

Dr. Laura Patel, Senior Research Adviser, Oxfam GB, l.patel@oxfam.org.uk, +44 7700 900 341

Dr. Ruth Mandel, Professor of Anthropology, SOAS University of London, rm19@soas.ac.uk, +44 7700 900 572

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITY

Volunteer, Tower Hamlets Food Bank *Jan 2023 – Jun 2025*

Volunteered every Saturday morning for 2 years, distributing food parcels to an average of 45 families per session. Trained 6 new volunteers on food safety and client interaction protocols.