



**The Hangleton
& Knoll Project**

Working for a better community

Inclusive Communities Project 2009/10

Our aim was to engage with seldom heard communities and to involve them in community activities.

In 2008 we surveyed people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities of Hangleton and Knoll. We found that most people were happy living in Hangleton and Knoll and that the most popular activity was visiting friends and family at home. The main reasons for not getting involved were

- Lack of information
- Too busy
- No one to go with
- Language barriers
- No childcare

People most wanted to get involved in

- Improving their English
- Health activities
- Computers
- Groups for families and children

Key things to help people get involved were

- Convenient time and location
- Free or low cost
- More helpful information
- Special introductory sessions and knowing there will be a mix of people



'happy meeting people and talking English'

What we did

We worked with Bangladeshi, Arabic and other BME groups and focussed on engaging with women because they were usually the most isolated.

Step One – Identify members of the community and their interests

Through the survey we contacted families via primary schools, local businesses and community networks with the help of interpreters.

Step Two – Bring people together and agree common interests

We brought interested people together at two survey feedback events and the group arranged to meet regularly, share refreshments, to hear from speakers and plan activities.

Step Three – Offer a regular, supported place to meet

We started to meet fortnightly to explore the women's interests and plan activities. With HaKIT we offered taster digital photography sessions and had speakers from the Police, local Councillors and the Council's Domestic Violence Team.

Helped by an interpreter, the women found it a really useful opportunity to find out about and access the different services.

Step Four – Work with partners to offer new and existing supported activities The group....

- Set up subsidised swimming sessions at the King Alfred Leisure Centre.
- Set up their own Healthwalk led by members of the group.
- Accessed ESOL classes from the Friends Centre
- Offered Egyptian dance classes with Community Skills and Learning
- Ran computer and ESOL classes with HaKIT

Step Five – Diversify activities and the membership of the group

The group has gained confidence and diversified their activities and women from other backgrounds have joined the group.

The group is **constituted** as the **Hangleton and Knoll Multi-Cultural Women's Group** and is opening a **bank account**. They have secured their own funding from NovasScarman through the Can Do Health Programme and the Healthy Neighbourhood Fund.

What was the impact?

The impact of the project has been to

- Increase the confidence, skills and knowledge of the women in the group
- Be an example of good practice and a catalyst for the City and nationally.
- Introduce different service providers to the needs of seldom heard communities and how they might deliver that service in a more appropriate way
- Improve links with key service providers such as the Police
- Strengthen links between the local BME communities and the wider community
- Raise the profile of minority communities in the area



'I always used to stay at home. Now I just feel like going out all the time'

What barriers, challenges or points of learning did you identify from the process?

- Don't assume anything, ask the community you are working with what works best for them
- Work with a member of that community, perhaps an interpreter or community development worker
- Be prepared to pay for a professional interpreter and a crèche
- Develop a 'stepping stone' to act as a hub from which other activities can be accessed and information can be disseminated
- Don't be surprised by the energy and enthusiasm that can be unleashed from communities who haven't participated in community activities before
- Be creative in how meetings are run – formal meetings aren't for everyone
- Let the group set the pace, it takes time to build trust and develop confidence
- Network with potential partners and find ways of joint working that meet the needs of the group
- Make use of the often untapped skills within the group

There's more to be done, with community development support the group are working towards sustainability and are seeking independent funding.

The Hangleton and Knoll Project is a Community Development charity based in the Hangleton and Knoll ward of Brighton and Hove, England. A part of the community since 1983 we are a project working *for* the community *with* the community and managed *by* the community.

This project was funded by Community Development Commissioning, Brighton and Hove City Council, Lloyds TSB and Health4 Communities, NHS Brighton and Hove.