

Case study: Common Threads

What was the issue to address?

The Khoosh Women, a South Asian women's group, and The Silver Ladies had both expressed interest in developing activities jointly and wanted to expand their membership to be inclusive of the whole community. These two very different groups joined forces for a craft project based in Heckmondwike.

What did we do?

Supported and motivated by a community support worker, the groups developed a series of shared activities beginning with a joint session to design a piece of art work.

Having decided that they would like to base the project on the history of Heckmondwike and the carpet industry, the women explored what they would like their finished design to look like.

All the women were keen to include aspects of their lives within the design and chose to create a textile piece with a central focus of Heckmondwike clock, surrounded by their favourite foods and places that they enjoyed.

During the course of their meetings the participants discussed their lifestyles, religion and cultures. The informality of the sessions created an environment where the women were able to develop their friendship and learn about each other, while at the same time dispelling some of the myths they held.

The finished product is a stunning textile which surprised those women who took part. The textile is currently on display in Cleckheaton Library.

As a celebration of the project the ladies held a family picnic in Heckmondwike Memorial Gardens and invited members of Global Families, a group offering support to asylum seekers and refugees.

What difference did we make?

Below are some quotes from those who took part:

- "How beautiful the end result was because none of us thought we could do it!"
- "Uniting two communities together."
- "Working together so well with another group."
- "It's all been about togetherness and understanding each other."
- "How easily we all worked together."
- "Being part of this group has really raised my confidence."
- "At first it seemed like 'them and us' (the two cultural groups) but we all naturally came together and became just a group of women rather than Asian and white."
- "The moment when at the end when everyone's work came together, it was amazing!"



What were the keys to our success?

- Consistent support from a Community Worker.
- Listening to local people and facilitating meetings.
- Being led by the group members and taking things at their pace.
- Accessing relevant funding.
- Support with planning for future projects.

What are we doing next?

The groups have gone on to create a stained glass window celebrating the life of John Curwen and will shortly be sharing their skills with other groups – inviting them to contribute to a new history project called 'Take your shoes off', exploring people's personal connection to Heckmondwike.

Contact: [Community Support Services](mailto:Community.Support.Services@kirklees.gov.uk) 01924 482181

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