

# Case study: parents and toddlers twinning projects across Dewsbury and Mirfield

## What was the issue to address?

**People tend to identify themselves with the areas where they live rather than neighbourhoods or wards and within that there has been a lack of interaction between South Asian, white, and newly arrived communities to Dewsbury which can result in mistrust or misunderstanding of each other.**

We aimed to raise awareness, build one to one relationships and increase understanding between communities but also to support groups to plan and develop fun and creative activities which cut across cultural barriers.

## What difference did we make?

We supported committee members from four community groups to plan and deliver a series of joint activities. The groups involved were Ravensthorpe Parents and Toddlers Group, Mirfield Tykes and Trykes playgroup and Global Families - a Dewsbury wide project supporting families with either refugee or asylum status.

A core group of volunteers organised the following activities over a period of 18 months:

- Two trips to Sundowners Adventure Land attended by 120 people, including families and children
- Ravensthorpe Parent and Toddler groups invited other groups to their annual 'fuddle party'.
- Global Families organised a cultural celebratory event attended by Ravensthorpe Parents and Toddlers.
- A visit to Aladdin pantomime, at the Alhambra Theatre in Bradford.

Parents fed back that it was a "great way to break down barriers" and that it was "enriching for children to mix with different sections of the wider community".

## What were the keys to our success?

- Joint planning with community development workers across the neighbourhoods who were able to identify potential volunteers willing to take this approach back to their groups and recruit people.
- Going slow, as the process of building relationships across communities takes time and can be a delicate process.
- Activities were identified by group members - members of the group selected and negotiated the most appropriate choice for the whole group.
- Issues which may seem minor can 'make or break' an activity and were discussed at the early planning stages to make sure everyone's needs were met.
- We undertook evaluation with the groups to find out what went well, identify areas for improvement, and what lessons could be learnt for future events.



## What are we doing next?

Four community groups from Mirfield and Ravensthorpe have organised a 'culture share' event to take place in February '08. The event will be open to parents with children during the school break where there will be fun activities for the children to take part in. The 'culture share' session follows the National Coalition Building Institute's (NCBI) model to give parents a chance to share their background with each other proving that people have more in common than first thought.

The core group have now built their confidence and have embraced their role in publicity, recruiting numbers and planning future events.

**Shaping our future Together**  
**Kirklees community cohesion strategy**

