

Case Study – MENACA

Amount Granted: £9,000 (Birmingham City Council, Emerging Communities) – Date Completed: February 2010

The Project: MENACA

MENACA provides social, recreational and educational activities for families of Middle Eastern and North African heritage. Our core activities are Saturday Arabic Cultural Club and holiday play schemes. We are currently in the process of developing our service in family support, advice and guidance.

Total number of people benefiting from this project:
130 (70 men & 60 women)

Area of Benefit: Birmingham



Why was the project needed?

MENACA was established as a reaction based framework in response to the lack of inclusive services for the Arab community of Birmingham. There was nowhere we were able to feel part of a community. Existing services for Muslims were based on ethnicity and could not incorporate the diversity of other Muslim nationalities. The consequence was that our community felt isolated, lonely and without a place in this country. This feeling of displacement has filtered down to the children who as a part of a minority in a minority have no real sense of identity or belonging.



In addition to this we face difficulties as a by-product of low incomes. Most of our community suffer from unemployment or low-paid jobs due to language barriers, lack of recognised qualifications, and confidence. This, again impacts heavily on our children who cannot enjoy extra curricular activities or educational support from their parents.

The difference the project has made:

By bringing the community together, MENACA has given the Arabs an identity and a sense of belonging. Families have been brought out of complete isolation and their children enjoy being with one another, without having to explain how they are Muslim, despite not having the same skin tone.

This funding has enabled us to give our children the chance to take part in activities that they would not normally have had exposure to such as; rock-climbing, canoeing, skiing, visits to Highgrove to name but a few. Parents have organised training days and activities previously inaccessible due to language, religious and cultural barriers.

Quote:

"The funding for the Emerging Communities far exceeds its monetary value in that it has given so many people so much happiness over the years, as well as providing opportunities to work for some who needed that first chance.

A very heartfelt thank you from all the families of MENACA."

(Lida Rouabah, Project Development Manager)

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