

People & the DALES

Diversity Access Learning Environment Sustainability

Case Study

Black and Minority Ethnic Community Groups

Saeed has been a Community Development Worker with the NHS for the last 7 years. When he started there were 20 other health workers across Bradford. Now he is one of 6 in the whole of West Yorkshire. His main focus is on tackling health inequalities in Bradford, which is one of the most deprived wards in the UK. He works primarily with hard to reach communities, and has set up walking groups, allotment groups, exercise classes, health workshops and health checks looking for hidden diabetes. What is important for him is good communication, good relationships with people, trust, activities which suit the service users and above all passion.



“ *I have experienced racism in my job but you need to look past that. You’ve got to see why people act like this. We’re all the same. Barriers are there because of fear. People and the DALES allows us to help those that don’t have the money, the means, or friends, and has brought people from white and Asian communities together. There is a lot of fear about visiting the Dales. People think there is racism in the Yorkshire Dales because there are no police; you are out in the wilderness and therefore an easy target. However, visitors experienced that Dales folk are very welcoming, and they want to come back. People I have brought out didn’t know the Dales existed. When I was young, Asian people mainly went to Blackpool. Lots of the elderly have never seen the countryside yet they have a lot in common with people living there.* ”



An interfaith group made up of Muslims and Sikhs, which Saeed brought out to visit the Hoffman kiln included gentlemen who themselves had worked in a Hoffman kiln in Pakistan when they were younger. The Unity Club at East Bowling and the Christians and Muslims from the Khidmat Centre in Bradford having visited Malham still meet up several times a year to do walks and other activities together.

“ It is brilliant to see people out together when many experience social isolation. Many elderly men spend time at home or at the Community Centre but nowhere else. The days out in the countryside are good for their physical and mental health. People open up in this environment. They talk to each other. They find out that they have lots in common – maybe they have worked in the mills together, they relax, reflect on their life and it reminds them of home. They can become close to nature. Many of them would have had livestock at home in Pakistan and India. This has been an eye opener. The only vision for many is of the big city. This project gives them the WOW factor!! ”

People and the DALES has helped Saeed to get groups out by providing funds. He said that they would never have been able to run such events without this funding. It is, he felt, important to have a person leading the groups. He has never been on a training weekend but may attend one in the future. He felt that more funds are needed to run more events, and contacts of people and places to visit.



“ It has been brilliant. It has allowed disadvantaged groups the resources to get out into the Dales. It has been good to break down barriers, and to find out what is outside the local area. Some people fear that the Dales folk will hate them but experience like this helps to make people feel citizens of this country. Many of our men fought in World Wars. ”

People and the DALES – Diversity, Access, Learning, Environment, Sustainability - is a nationally recognised community outreach project run by YDMT, funded through the Big Lottery's Access to Nature programme. The project works with disadvantaged groups, from urban areas bordering the south of the Yorkshire Dales, who have little or no previous experience of the countryside. Running since 2009 the project has enabled over 4000 people to take part in a wide range of fun, active and thought provoking activities in the countryside.

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