

DIFFERENCE IN A DAY

Organisations Involved & Contact Details

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Aims & Target Group

The main aims of 'Difference in a Day' are to:

- work with schools to foster positive relationships between young people from different cultural backgrounds,
- work in partnership with community arts groups and organisations to promote community cohesion, and
- facilitate greater understanding of commonality, and encouraging young people to celebrate this.

Project Description & Components

According to the 2001 Census, 7 per cent of Gravesham borough's population are Sikh – the second largest Sikh community in the southeast. 'Difference In A Day' is a step towards realising social inclusion in the local community in area.

Vaisakhi is one of the most important and colourful events of the Sikh calendar. It happens in mid-April and coincides with the first harvest of the year in the Punjab. An annual Vaisakhi Procession attracts up to 6,000 people every year.

The Vaisakhi Education Day is organised by the North West Kent Racial Equality Council (NWKREC) and supported by Gravesham Borough Council. The day involves drama, music and dance as a means of teaching primary school children about the religious and cultural significance of Vaisakhi for the Sikh community. The children also learn about other cultures and how they celebrate harvest. In doing so, the Vaisakhi Education Day promotes positive relationships between young people from different cultural and faith backgrounds.

In the lead-up to the day, local schools work with community groups and arts projects to develop drama, music and dance performances. These culminate in a range of performances held at the theatre. The Vaisakhi Education Day has become an annual event in Gravesham.





The council and the NWKREC market the event as part of Gravesham's general Vaisakhi celebrations and there has been successful and broad coverage on television, radio and in the print media since it began.

For the last three years a booklet has been produced which is given to the children as they leave. This gives information on some of the performances and includes activities, such as word searches and crosswords.

Process

Communication

- The council and the NWKREC market the event as part of Gravesham's general Vaisakhi celebrations.
- There has been successful and broad coverage on television, radio and in the print media since it began.
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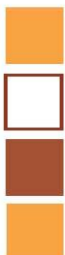
Participation

The stakeholders in this project are:

- North West Kent Racial Equality Council,
- Gravesham Borough Council,
- Cultural Beats, and
- community partners
- Schools are pleased to participate. Feedback from schools has been positive every year.

Outcomes

- Young people learn about their community and can participate in culturally diverse activities. This has promoted understanding of what Vaisakhi means to the large local Sikh community.
- The Education Day traditionally takes place the week before the Vaisakhi procession. This means the children have a greater insight and appreciation of the festival itself.
- The event has proved very popular with all the borough's schools. It has been particularly successful in bringing issues around diversity to rural schools where there are smaller ethnic minority communities.





- The Education Day Community Lunch, held during the day, provides an excellent opportunity for the council to network with representatives from the local ME communities and build sound working relationships.
- The event has proven that children, especially those from rural schools where there are smaller minority ethnic (ME) communities in comparison to urban parts of Gravesham, have a better perception of the importance of Vaisakhi.

Challenges & Obstacles

Funding and resources are an issue every year. The NWKREC has limited resources. It is also important to ensure that each year that the content is different so that the audience can learn something new.

Early planning is critical to the success of this initiative. As with all initiatives in schools, it is often difficult to work with the academic timetables. The event is now in its sixth year and more firmly fixed in the local school timetable.

The NWKREC and the council want to expand the event. They are looking at the cultures of other ethnic groups who have arrived in Gravesham more recently.

Funding

- The NWKREC funds the event.
- Gravesham Borough Council provides the theatre venue.
- Community partners also contribute in-kind to some of the performances developed with local schools.

Images

Acknowledgement: Material for this case study was drawn from <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=6932631>

