

# Working With Ethnic Minority Groups

*Template for  
Bollywood at Waddesdon  
as piloted at  
Waddesdon Manor*

# Working with Ethnic Minority Groups

## Introduction

Ethnic minority groups have been identified as non-visitors by museums across the country. The staff at Waddesdon Manor particularly felt that the local Pakistani community in Aylesbury were disconnected with the site and the collection.

This template has been designed to be used as an aid when approaching, working with and delivering projects for ethnic minority groups.

It should be noted that this pilot was site-specific to Waddesdon and would need to be modified quite extensively for each site. However the same principles apply universally.

Working with a group of ethnic minority children/ families needn't be any different for working on any other project. However something must be born in mind to make sure that participants feel comfortable.

### Aims and Objectives of Working With Ethnic Minority Groups

- To engage ethnic minority groups, especially young women, with the collection.
- To encourage interaction and enduring relationships between sites and ethnic minority community groups.
- To explore the use of site collections with young women.
- To raise site profiles within the local area..
- To support the aims and objectives of the Museum Network.

## Key Considerations

There are several key considerations to take into account when working with ethnic minority groups:

Questions	Check
If using artwork are you confident that it won't offend religious/ cultural sensibilities?	
Have you discussed any potential issues or concerns with the centre/ faith leader?	
If you provide food have you checked dietary requirements?	
How many people can you accommodate?	
Does your group meet your target demographic?	
If offsite, can you provide images of the museum and reproductions?	
If offsite, does the location have all of the required facilities?	
Can you support your themes with a handling collection?	
Have you organised photographic release forms?	
Does your evaluation cover what you wish to find out?	
Do you need to provide a risk assessment?	
Does your freelance educator have public liability insurance and CRB check?	
Do you have any ESOL people in your group?	

## Making Contacts

- You must make sure that the group you approach fits the demographic that you are want to work with.
- A quick search on your local council website will point you towards departments such as METAS (minority ethnic, Traveller, refugee and asylum-seeking) and local groups such as women's groups and faith centres.
- When approaching your group be clear about costs, dates, timings and any commitments that they will need to make.
- A personal visit always helps.
- The pilots showed that some of the parents and the Imam had some reservations about the project. It is recommended that you are clear about content, topics and themes to put people's minds at ease.
- Make sure that the participants are appropriate- for example single sex groups.
- The centre or faith leader will be able to answer any questions that you might have.
- Try to organise the sessions at a convenient time, for example after school or in the holidays. Avoid holy days.
- Organise three to six initial sessions to allow you to assess how successful the programme is.

## Developing Sessions

- Before you begin developing your sessions consider your own collections and decide what would be an appropriate focus.
- Themed sessions are essential, as they provide a focus for the group and allow you to select appropriate collection items.
- You might want to consider developing the sessions with the help of an advisor from the centre/ faith group or run the ideas past them to make sure that the sessions are interesting and appropriate.
  - E.g. we were advised to avoid sketching or focusing on figurative images or iconography.
- If possible discuss the sessions with the group during the development stages to create a sense of ownership.
- If you are going to take photographs during the session, make sure that photograph release forms have been signed.
- Make sure that the venue looks welcoming upon arrival.
- If you provide food make sure that it is appropriate e.g. Kosher/ Halal.

### Template: Bollywood at Waddesdon

This workshop was devised as a means of giving young Muslim women in the Aylesbury area a chance to experience a heritage site whilst learning new skills. The aim of the workshop was to provide the girls with an entertaining project during the summer holidays.

The project was created around the theme of Bollywood, as a prominent Bollywood movie was filmed onsite. The girls were introduced to skill such as silk painting, embroidery and silk painting. The participants took inspiration from the patterns, colours and shapes present in the collection and house.

The sessions ran as follows.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Venue</u>
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> August	Introduction to project and talk on Bollywood poster art	WM
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> August	Tour of Manor and sketching	WM
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> August	Silk Painting	AVMC
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> August	Press Printing	AVMC
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> August	Completion of Work	AVMC
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> August	Exhibition and Family Celebration	WM

### Useful Contacts

Below are a few useful contacts that should be available in every area:

- METAS (available at most Councils)
- Your local council can provide you with lists of local faith groups and community centres
- Extended Schools
- Family Services Information
- ACORN: Postcode analysis showing affluence, resident types, C2DE groups <http://www.caci.co.uk/acorn/>