

Mass migration following India's declaration of independence GN Kazi/Creative Commons

Two Birmingham-based projects are marking the 70th anniversary of India’s independence, and its partition into the two countries of India and Pakistan.

The partition led to one of the largest mass migrations in history, as well as huge loss of life. The projects will focus on its lasting impact and the effect of South Asian migration on the West Midlands.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: “South Asian migration to the West Midlands has played a significant role in shaping the culture and heritage of the region. We’re delighted that money raised by National Lottery players can be used to explore and record this important moment in history, as well as providing fantastic opportunities for young people to develop their skills and knowledge.”

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The Partition Trail - Voices of 1947

Sampad Arts will uncover the Partition’s legacy for those of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent in the region.

The project was made possible by £69,000 from HLF. It will see participants interview people who were there and use their research to create a theatre-in-education piece with local schools, a commemorative event and an exhibition with Birmingham Museums Trust.

Urmala Jassal, Project Manager, said: “We hope that the real-life stories will help people to develop a better understanding of the diverse communities of the West Midlands, while encouraging younger members of those communities to find out more about their cultural heritage.”

Indian Independence, the impact on communities in Birmingham

Led by journalists from DESIblitz, Aidem Digital’s project will capture the first-hand experiences of existing Indian and Pakistani populations in the UK, new migrants to the region and the wider community after 1947.

Thanks to a £45,000 HLF grant, volunteers and media students will learn from Library of Birmingham professionals and create a permanent film archive, culminating in an exhibition and film screening.

Indi Deol, Aidem Digital founder and director, said: “We are thrilled to have received the support of HLF. It is essential we capture these stories before it is too late.”

UK-India Year of Culture 2017

The announcement comes a week after the launch of the UK-India Year of Culture 2017, which celebrates the country’s anniversary of independence and its historic, cultural and economic ties to the UK. Follow the celebrations with #UKIndia2017.



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The Library of Birmingham Christian Richters

South Asian heritage to be celebrated in Birmingham