

Manchester's invited to a Big Fat Asian Wedding!

A project exploring the rich heritage of South Asian wedding traditions will begin next month, thanks to £43,300 from National Lottery players.

Run by the charity Community on Solid Ground (COSG), the ‘Big Fat Asian Wedding’ project will introduce people all of ages, faiths and backgrounds to South Asian culture by researching the Islamic Nikah, or marriage ceremony, from the 1940s to the present day. The project aims to improve community wellbeing and cohesion in South Manchester.

[quote=Nusrat Ahmed, COSG]"We hope that through this project women become more active members within their community."[/quote]

Adapting to a new culture

COSG will carry out intergenerational oral history workshops to capture women’s memories and preserve these customs for future generations, some of which have been lost as Indian and Pakistani migrant communities adapted to British life and culture.

Nusrat Ahmed, Project Coordinator, said: “We hope that through this project women become more active members within their community and personally develop their skills for better well-being overall."

Wedding celebrations

The project will focus on weddings from three different eras: a wedding in Pakistan carried out between the 1940s and 1960s, a wedding from the 1970s to the 1990s, and a modern day wedding in the UK.

Their research will look at the elaborate dress, traditional foods, decorative Mehndi (henna ceremonies for the bride and groom) and special Dholki (song and dance evenings), which are at the heart of South Asian wedding celebrations.

Preserving South Asian heritage

[quote=Nathan Lee, HLF]“It’s great that money raised by National Lottery players can help people in Manchester to explore such a rich and joyful part of South Asian heritage.”[/quote]

The project team’s findings will be made available online and archived at the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Resource Centre, culminating in a presentation and Mehndi ceremony event, engaging the whole community with the traditions of a Big Fat Asian Wedding.

Nathan Lee, Head of HLF North West, said: “It’s great that money raised by National Lottery players can help people in Manchester to explore such a rich and joyful part of South Asian heritage.”

COSG have previously received National Lottery funding for the ‘Traditional Best Times of South Asian Women’ project, exploring the hobbies and pastimes of South Asian women before they moved to the UK.



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Practical workshop at Manchester Museum

Passing on hobbies within the South Asian community