Changing Bradford offers fresh perspective on South Asian communities

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Changing Bradford: Exploring South Asian Heritage in Bradford presents a fresh perspective on the impact made by South Asian people on a city which has become known for racial tension and economic blight, and will be launched at a special event to be held in the studio at Impressions Gallery on 5 October 2013.

Based on 21 intergenerational interviews, with a broad range of people of South Asian heritage, from housewives and factory workers to leading entrepreneurs and celebrities, the publication sheds light on the major contribution made to Bradford's cultural, social and economic vitality, by successive waves of immigrants since the 1950s. The personal stories and photographic portraits captured in Changing Bradford offer a candid insight into the experiences of some of the city's South Asian residents of different nationalities and religions: from those originally drawn to work in the city's textile industry, where there was a shortage of cheap low-skilled labour, to second and third-generation Asians for whom Bradford offers a rich cultural mix and a magnetic environment for business enterprise.

Material for Changing Bradford was gathered by young people from Manningham Youth Project and Impressions Gallery's New Focus group through a series of oral history interviews, research visits to museums and archives and study tours of key buildings and places in Bradford. The project is led by the Consortia of Ethnic Minority Organisations (COEMO) in partnership with Impressions Gallery, Manningham Youth Project, and West Yorkshire Archive Service (Bradford) and has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Dr Mohammed Salam, Chief Executive COEMO commented: "Bradford is a place that stirs the emotions. Though the city has much to offer, it is sometimes perceived in a negative light. For those of us who live and work in Bradford, a different place emerges when we talk about the city; a place which is far from the media stereotype, and which reflects the creative passions, community spirit, business acumen and family values of its multicultural population. We hope that, in a modest way, the publication of Changing Bradford will contribute to the ongoing story of community cohesion and social inclusion in Bradford, opening up a fresh perspective on the city which has a rich and diverse heritage and culture that is deserving of greater recognition."

Fiona Spiers, Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber said: "The South Asian community has played a vital role in Bradford's lively and varied character. By preserving the stories and memories of local community, the Changing Bradford project has helped to shed light on the wonderful tapestry of Bradford's heritage."

The publication, which will be distributed to libraries, schools and community groups, offers an accessible and visually exciting way of engaging with Bradford's unique local history. An accompanying exhibition of photographic portraits from 'Changing Bradford' will be displayed in the Studio at Impressions Gallery, Bradford until 2 November 2013.

Notes to Editors

Changing Bradford is an intergenerational community heritage project by Consortia of Ethnic Minority Organisations (COEMO). Key partners in the project are Impressions Gallery, Manningham Youth Project and West Yorkshire Archive

Services (Bradford).

Supporting organisations: BEAP Community Partnership, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, Grange Interlink Community Centre, United Sikh Association Elderly Day Centre.

Impressions Gallery is one of the UK’s leading contemporary photography galleries. For over 40 years Impressions has helped people understand the world through photography. Directions to the Impressions Gallery. Opening times: Tues-Fri -11am to 6pm. Sat - 12pm to 5pm. Closed Sundays and Mondays .