Local young people go back to their roots

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Starting during October's Black History Month the project, supported under the HLF's Young Roots programme, will also focus on the development of modern black culture in both Moss Side and Hulme. Working with Manchester Museum the Back to Roots project will recruit volunteers from both areas of Manchester to research the historical origins of dance and music so as to understand how their roots affect and shape modern society and the local environment.

It will be steered by a group of young people who established Back to Roots in June with active support from the Zion Arts Centre. Working with the local communities the organisers are looking to act as positive role models and ambassadors for young people in the wider community.

Those taking part – aged 13 to 25 - will explore black history from ancient Egypt and Ethiopia looking at the contribution that black people have made in history contributing to today's society. Workshops will look at cultural arts, African dance and music. The young people will also film their own personal documentaries relating what they have discovered to their own development. These will be screened at a special event taking place during Black History Month 2011.

Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, Sara Hilton, said: "This project will introduce young people from diverse communities to the concept of heritage, helping them explore how different ethnic traditions have shaped the music we listen to today, and impact on their own identities."

For Back to Roots, Naomi Pemberton, said: "This is an amazing opportunity for us to use arts to share first hand knowledge and information, using our experiences in Africa to educate. It's really important to shed light of this beautiful continent and look at it as a whole and not only focus on the famine, disease or slavery, but broaden the minds of the young people so they are proud of the heritage and roots. We are really excited about the project and hope to show a true yet positive insight into the real Africa and its amazing history."

Simeon Malcolm, Naomi Pemberton, and Parmjit Kaur the co-founders of Back To Roots will be putting on an event in Black history month at Zion Arts Centre 23rd October 2010, where they will be screening their footage documented in Ethiopia, which was self funded and edited by themselves. There will be live artists on the night and refreshments will be provided.

For more details on about the event or getting involved with the project contact Back to Roots @ Zion Arts Centre, 355 Stretford Road, Hulme M15 5ZA or call 0161 226 1912.

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

For further information please contact

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