

4.2 Oromo Community



“They understand our culture and what we need. They don't have attitude and are positive - everyone is helpful.”

The group: The group organises: cultural events, inviting over 200 Oromo people from around the country; a culture and language Saturday School for young people so that they can communicate and have better relationships with their parents; a women's group; family get together and bring a dish events, to provide informal support, opportunities for socialising and to identify the needs of the community; a youth football team; and trips and activities that develop both Oromo cultural identity and greater understanding of British culture and institutions. Oromo families are dispersed across the City and the groups are often the only times that the community are able to see one another. Four times a year, the whole community get together to prepare cultural food and to celebrate their cultural identity. This is like a holiday, as most of the community live on low incomes and can't afford a holiday.

The situation: The Oromo Community arrived in Brighton and Hove in 2006. The community group was set up in 2007 to provide a focus for community support and identity, with initial intensive support from Brighton & Hove City Council. They didn't know anything about community organising, including the need for chair, treasurer and secretary roles, and felt they didn't have enough knowledge to set up and lead the group. Also, the group members struggle to write in English, which is a barrier to running the group.

Support received: Money in Mind has helped with bookkeeping, provides an independent examination, and helps them with fundraising, including, writing their funding applications and helping them plan when they need to apply for funds and making sure they meet the deadlines. This year alone, Money in Mind has helped them apply for £18,000 worth of funding.

Benefits: Because of the Resource Centre, they use the resources they have fundraised for properly and are an example to other Oromo groups around the country. Because the other Oromo groups look to us, they have asked us to organise larger community get-togethers called “Errecha”. These are large out door celebrations of culture, religion and community. The Oromo community in North West England number around 2000 for example, but don’t have an organised community so they are not as strong. Awel says that the strength of the Brighton & Hove group is that they are getting the appropriate help to continue their collective culture and identity and to teach their family and children about their positive culture of sharing and neighbourliness. He says that without the fundraising support, they wouldn’t be able to understand the complicated funding criteria and therefore would never have the chance to come together as a community.