

# Slough Learning Revolution



# Virtual Scrap Book



Organisation/Centre(s): Aurat Enterprise, Slough

Creative Partner(s): Transformation Fund Learning Revolution

Programme Leader: Sanzla Bhagi & Kieran Sheehan

Start Date: 14.01.10

End Date: 25.02.10

Aims of the project	Context	The Story	Learner's Creativity	Other impacts on learners	Staff Learning	Change	Learning from the work	Revisiting the planning	Next steps
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## *Aims*

The aims of the programme are:

- To develop a wide range of new learning partnerships that engage learners in a variety of community contexts with professionals from the creative and cultural sector;
- To use creative practice to develop a passion within the Somali Sisters Support Group for creative enterprise;
- To share this work with people outside the group's community;
- To be involved in an inspiring process of learning through art, culminating in the group becoming an empowered and autonomous entity.



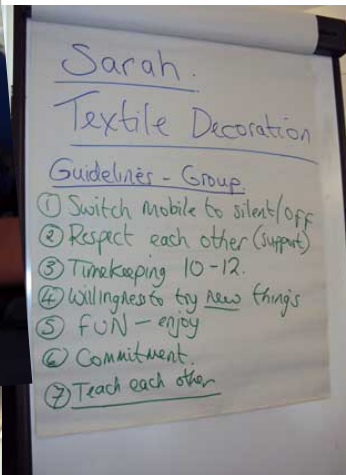
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### *Context*

Somali Sisters Support Group originated in April 2009. The group was formed as the women realised that there was a gap in existing provision available for them in the current Somali community groups. They decided to come together to provide a cohesive service to their fellow women. The group aims to increase confidence, provide motivation and offer growth and development through learning and training opportunities. Slough Borough Council, through its Enterprise and Employment Department, has helped the group to acquire a regular and safe place to meet on a weekly basis, access free training and learning opportunities and, most importantly, equip the Somalian women with self-sustaining tools of confidence and motivation which they can use in social and/or work environments. This partnership has helped in the wider integration of the women into the local community set ups and has also introduced them to key local voluntary and statutory organisations in Slough.



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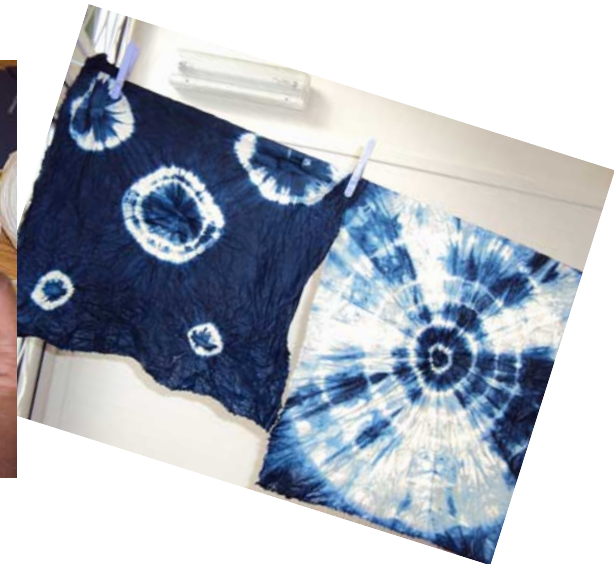
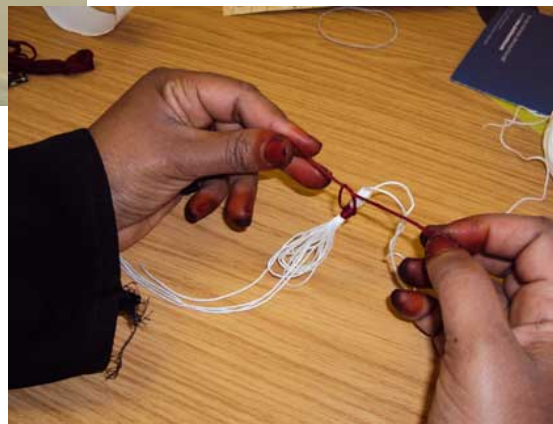


### *The Story*

The Somali Sisters Support Group comprises 25 Somali women refugees living in Slough. The group worked with creative practitioner Sarah Rhodes, who has experience of working with women's groups in Southern Africa, on textile decoration. As the women previously completed a needlework course, it was agreed that this should be followed with compatible skills, to capitalise on what they have already learnt. They decided to learn tie and dye techniques for textiles to decorate products for their homes. We met every week and learnt how to dye textiles and other art and craft techniques.

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## *Learner's Creativity*



*"I learned how to make tassels today, a new thing for me"*



Kauser demonstrating how to mark & sew tie dyed cushion covers

The Group reported –

*“We are learning – we are able to do it without Sarah, we could teach someone else”*

*“Yes, we are confident to do by ourselves for dyeing”*

*“Come out, for fresh air, cup of tea with the group – it’s a social life”*

*“Some are learning to take photos”*

*“I have more confidence than before, I can do it”*

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## *Other Impacts on Learners*

Key visible impacts were:

- Increased confidence levels;
- Constant and consistent retention of numbers;
- Motivation to accomplish goals and also to identify the need to pursue this skill beyond the completion of the programme;
- The programme provided a vital platform for the learners to practice and improve their spoken English skills;
- The learners have acquired skills which they can use in the future whether in their home environments or, if they so wish, they can use it for employment/business purposes.



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### *Staff Learning*

*‘For a complete novice, it was a wonderful experience to learn art techniques with the group and laugh at my own incompetencies!’ Sanzla*

*‘I thoroughly enjoyed the whole course and alongside my existing knowledge I learnt many new things. I would love to do a few more courses like this, so many thanks to Sarah for teaching new things.’ Kauser*

The overall impact was a successful partnership venture which was mutually beneficial for both the voluntary organisation as well as the local authority.

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## *Change*

The Somali Sisters Support Group has, as a voluntary organisation, become more stronger and has gained tremendous confidence. They are now looking to apply for future grants through various funding streams to provide ongoing learning opportunities for their client group. The women in themselves have acquired a hands-on skill which, if they want, they can take up in future as a further education opportunity.

Through this training programme, the group has developed good links with the local communities around them as well as the local statutory and other voluntary sector organisations.

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## *Learning from the Work*

Books on textile decoration that we used for reference:  
*'Fabric to Dye For'* by Susie Stokoe  
*'Colour on Cloth'* by Ruth Issett



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## *Revisiting the Planning*



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### *Next Steps*

The Somali Sisters Support Group learning future plans:

- They have secured funding for a parenting course, which will help with better parenting skills and also will reinforce their community setups;
- The group will try practice tie and dye themselves to hone their skills so they can take develop it further as a business option in the future;
- The skills that the women have learnt from this programme can be passed on to their children, hence enhancing the whole learning circle;
- On a emotional and social level the group has become stronger and the women are extremely confident with their newly acquired skills.

The group has decided that they will continue to carry on with tie and dye work in the next few weeks before the Celebration Day so that they can continue their learning and development.

The women have improved their English skills throughout the sessions. The tutor used embedded learning skills and provided spoken English opportunities for the women.

