



The Project: The Muslim and Sikh Media Monitoring and Response project is primarily targeted towards Sikh and Muslim communities within West London and targets a variety of groups such as students, parents, religious and organizational leaders and individuals involved in the political life of this country. The Muslim and Sikh Media Monitoring and Response Project involves taking groups of 5-10 members of each faith community and arrange a neutral meeting place where people of diverse backgrounds can come and meet each other and in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance and where differences can be acknowledged, explored and accepted, and issues discussed openly.

On Saturday the 5th of March, Sikh-Muslim group members gathered at the Muslim College in Ealing to discuss a number of issues over a delicious Afro-Caribbean lunch. I catch up with the groups' newest project coordinator Amardeep. She talks about what she gathered from her first meeting with the team, how she feels about the work and what the future holds for the project!

S: Amardeep welcome to the Faith Matters team! So Amardeep what initially interested you about the project?

A: As a young Sikh woman I'm familiar with the issues the project faces. It looked like a good opportunity to do some grass-root work on a deep rooted area of tension.

S: What did you think of your first meeting with the group?

A: The group are a really interesting diverse bunch of people. I loved the fact that everyone was open to different concepts, ideas and opinions. Everyone's really well informed and I think the group is a shining example of tolerance and understanding.. They have lots to offer to both their own communities and to the project, and think I'm going to learn a lot from them!

S: What did you discuss at the meeting?

A: There was a lot of juicy stuff on agenda! We looked at the Media Monitoring Report which I really enjoyed compiling with Hasina. It was particularly interesting to see that the EDL's march in Luton had a strong anti-fascist backlash from both religious and nonreligious communities. It was really encouraging to see the 'Sikhs Against the EDL' movement, which emerged as a result of various Sikh organizations coming together to condemn the EDLs recent policy of targeting young Sikhs. In the meeting we also showed the group the first newsletter and had great suggestions from members on how we could move forward with. Following this we had a visit from Oscar who works for our PR company Journalista. He talked to the group about available opportunities to do some media work including broadcasting on national radio stations which the group was very interesting in! This will be great for boosting the message of tolerance and cohesion the project seeks to express. Lunch was also great!

S: What work are you looking forward to doing with the group?

A: Everything! The radio work should be interesting. The next piece of work will be developing

Low-Down from the Sikh-Muslim Project's newest co-coordinator Amardeep

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the project newsletter to include personal stories. We're also planning to include the positive news stories that don't always get told – like the Shrine to Guru Nanak Dev Ji in Baghdad that still stands today. Also I'm looking forward to engaging a wider audience with the work the group does.

S: Fantastic. Any last thought?

A: I think the work Faith Matters does is really valuable. It's so important that we engage in these conversations about respecting each others faiths. If anyone wants any more information about the project, or has any ideas, we'd love the hear from you!

Thanks Amardeep!