



Muslim Women's Network UK

"We connect through our differences"

ANNUAL REPORT

November 2009

MWNUK AGM Report 2009

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ABOUT MWNUK

Having operated for four years under the umbrella of the Women's National Commission, the Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) established itself as an independent national organisation in 2007 and registered itself as a Community Interest Company (No. 6597997) in May 2008. MWNUK has two part-time staff, an inter-active website (www.mwnuk.co.uk) and an office located in central Birmingham.

Since 2007, membership has expanded considerably and the MWNUK now has over 150 members, most of whom are linked onwards to a wide range of women's groups, organisations and networks locally, nationally and internationally. These include academics and students; workers in voluntary sector support services; health professionals; experts in women's rights, diversity policy, disability, and refugees; businesswomen; local government and law enforcement officers; and artists. Membership is diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and location.

In June 2009 the Interim Board was replaced by MWNUK's first elected Board which consists of 13 members, some connected with the network since its founding, and some drawn from newer members. Board members are responsible for ensuring that the organisation fulfils accountability as required by law. Any decisions taken by the board member are majority decisions. In case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second vote or casting vote. If a perceived or actual conflict of interest arises, during decision making, board members must declare their interest. If there is a possibility of conflict between the interests of the board member and the organisation, then the board member may not vote on the matter.

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

The vision and mission statements were revised by the new board in August 2009.

VISION

“Our vision is a society where Muslim women have an effective voice and opportunity to contribute equally to society.”

MISSION

“A network of women to share knowledge, connect the voices, and promote the needs of diverse Muslim women.”

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of MWNUK are:

- To empower women through access to knowledge of rights and services
- To raise the profile of Muslim women
- To create a critical mass of voices that will affect change
- To enable women to connect with each other to share knowledge, skills and experiences
- To influence policy and policy makers at community, local and national level
- To give women power in decision making
- To act as a facilitator and support to local groups to help them achieve their aims
- To be UK- wide
- To showcase the work of other women's groups, individuals and organisations
- To be a resource on Muslim women's issues and a first port of call
- To mobilise and maximise the network

These aims and objectives will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that Muslim women have free and easy access to a wide variety of resources which will enable them to make informed choices about how they live their lives at both individual and societal levels.
- Challenging and advising on information given to Muslim women by giving them access to a wide range of alternative views and possibilities so that they can make their own, informed, choices.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Honorary President (and founder)

Baroness and Professor Haleh Afshar OBE

(Resigned from board and as Chair August 2009 and became Honorary President with no voting powers)

Current Board Members

Cassandra Balchin (Chair)

Batool Al Toma

Fariha Thomas

Robina Iqbal (Vice Chair) (from July 2009)

Parveen Hassan (Treasurer) (from July 2009)

Gemma Dua Ibrahim (from July 2009)

Mussarat Zia (from July 2009)

Souad Talsi (from July 2009)

Hakmah Ibrahim (from July 2009)

Sajida (from July 2009)

Naz Koser (co-opted from August 2009)

Dr Iram Sattar (co-opted from August 2009)

Ex Board Members

Parvin Ali (resigned June 2009)

Nada Hakki (resigned June 2009)

Rohema Miah (removed November 2009)

Executive Director

Shaista Gohir MBE (no voting powers)

Muslim Women's Co-ordinator

Faeza Vaid (no voting powers)

For biographies of current management – see **Appendix 1**

ACTIVITIES OF MWNUK

Overview

Having operated for four years under the umbrella of the Women's National Commission, the Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) established itself as an independent national organisation in 2007, registering as a Community Interest Company (No. 6597997) in 2008. A two-year JRCT grant was crucial in this transition. A part of this grant was received through a partner organisation. Since becoming independent the organization has undergone three phases in its development:

Phase 1 (Sept 2007 – Dec 2008) – Due to limited resources, MWNUK operated from a P.O. Box with one part time member of staff who mainly focused on raising the profile of the organization, expanding membership, registering with Companies House as a not for profit community interest company, setting up an interim board, opening up a bank account and receiving funding through a partner organization, Fatima Women's Network to carry out projects. The projects delivered were the Gender Islam and Advocacy workshop and the Health workshops.

Phase 2 (January 2009 – August 2009) – During this period MWNUK has launched a website; registered for newsfeeds; accessed further funding to have an office located in Birmingham City Centre and employed an additional member of staff (although part time); and utilized volunteers as a resource. In addition board elections were held in June 2009 and the new board worked out our strategy for the next three years. During this phase, the following activities were also carried out: fund raising; building international linkages; membership expanded; revised mission and vision statements; completed strategic planning for 2009-11; and maintained visibility in national and local media.

Phase 3 (September 2009 – November 2010) – This is the new phase we are currently entering. Due to having office space, we are now able to utilize volunteers as a resource; applying for funding; started a newsletter; started responding to consultations; generating new ideas and attempting to progress them within our limited budget; through volunteers or by applying for funding. In addition we have been involved in developing a website called 'Big Sister' which will make Muslim female role models from the past and present more accessible. This website will act as an interactive information hub where users will be able to test their knowledge through quizzes, access current opportunities, and gain advice on improving their skills, amongst other things.

Identifying a Suitable Institutional & Governance Structure

It was decided under current circumstances, the most suitable structure for MWNUK was to set up as 'community interest company' rather than a charity which is a structure we intend to pursue at a later date. An interim board was set up in 2008 to ensure accountability with a view to having elections in 2009, which were held in July.

Pursing Legal Status

MWNUK was registered as a community interest company on 20th May 2008. The company number is 6597997. It was decided to open a bank account with an ethical bank and the Co-operative bank was chosen.

Workshops

- **Health Workshop:** We facilitated two workshops focussing on barriers to healthcare faced by Muslim women. The workshops were held in January 2008 in Bolton and Blackburn. A copy of the report submitted to the Department of Health is available on our website. Funding was received from the Department of Health through our partner organisation, Fatima Women's Network therefore not shown on current accounts.
- **Gender, Islam and advocacy workshop:** We conducted a 5 day training workshop in collaboration with international experts to empower Muslim women by exploring the principles of equality and justice. The workshop was held in March 2008 in Leicester and attended by women from around the UK. Funding was received from Department of Communities and Local Government through our partner organisation, Fatima Women's Network therefore not shown on current accounts.

Development of the Muslim marriage contract

MWNUK was one of six leading Muslim organisations in Britain to endorse the launching of a model Muslim marriage contract for the UK, designed to protect the rights of women in unregistered marriages, in August 2008. Cassandra Balchin, the Chair of MWNUK, was one of the three developers of the contract.

Building Capacity and Infrastructure

There has been a focus on building the capacity and infrastructure of the Muslim Women's Network UK in order to expand the membership of the network. This has been done in the following ways:

- Identifying and securing office space in central Birmingham to establish a base for MWNUK
- Launching of the MWNUK website
- Recruitment of a co-ordinator / administrator to maintain and update the MWNUK website and to identify new potential members to expand the membership of the network.

Media coverage

Since becoming independent, MWNUK have made comments in the media on issues relating to issues affecting Muslim women. Media contributions have been made to a broad range of media outlets including: BBC online; BBC News 24, BBC radio, Al Jazeera, various ethnic minority / Muslim newspapers, broadsheets (e.g. Times, Telegraph), international newspapers, Middle Eastern websites.

Speaking at events

Shaista Gohir and some of the board members have spoken at a range of events where they have represented MWNUK, locally, nationally and internationally. Details can be provided on request.

International linkages

MWNUK has strong international linkages. Cassandra Balchin, the Chair of MWNUK, attended the Association for Women's Rights in the Development (AWID) biannual forum in South Africa in November 2008.

Cassandra is also a member of the planning committee and Communications Officer for Musawah (www.musawah.org) which is a global initiative for equality and justice in the Muslim family. This initiative was launched in Malaysia in February 2009 and attended by both Cassandra and Shaista Gohir. There were 250 participants from 47 countries that included activists, academics, policy makers, judges, entrepreneurs, members of parliament and professionals, all demanding justice.

In July 2009, MWNUK's Coordinator Faeza Vaid, attended the WISE (Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality) global conference held in Malaysia. Several issues were discussed at the conference including gender egalitarian Qur'anic interpretation, violence against women, reproductive health, financial sustainability, and the implementation of Muslim Personal Laws.

FUTURE PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Strategic Priorities & Activities

In August 2009, the MWNUK Board met to identify strategic priorities and activities for the coming three years towards fulfilling MWNUK's mission. These include:

1. **Strengthening MWNUK's linkages with Muslim women, the women's movement and Government**

To ensure it can act as and be recognised as an effective and independent channel for Muslim women's voices, MWNUK needs to strengthen its membership base, linkages and profile. This includes the following activities:

- **Continuing to build MWNUK's membership base, (Year 1-3)** proactively seeking out diverse and representative membership in terms of age, ethnicity, area of work, sect and location;
- **Increasing MWNUK's national profile (Year 1-2)** through an update brochure; strengthening media contacts; continuing to attend and speak at events (both within the Muslim community, BME and beyond); continuing to appear on/in mainstream media and community media, receiving training from the marketing and communications company, Blue Rubicon (being provided free by government), and maintaining the MWNUK's independence from national and community political parties and organisations.
- **Strengthen linkages with women's organisations (Year 1-3)** in the UK (both mainstream as well as BME), through networking, exchanging website links, and possibly a dedicated one-day meeting with significant potential allies.
- **Continuing to engage with Government policy-makers, (Year 1-3)** and continuing to build links with the three major political parties ahead of the next General Elections.

2. **Building a critical mass of Muslim women's voices through sharing knowledge**

To ensure Muslim women are sufficiently empowered as a collective to raise their voice and demand policies that address their needs, MWNUK needs to collect knowledge and information about our experiences as Muslim women in the UK and beyond, and share this back with Muslim women. This includes the following activities:

- **Maintaining and improving the MWNUK website (Year 1-3)**, making it as current and interactive as resources permit. There is currently no single source listing the myriad research reports and publications about Muslim women, and many Muslim women or those interested in such issues (including Government policy-makers) are unaware of this growing resource. Funding permitting, the website will provide this.
- **Starting a quarterly electronic newsletter (Year 1-3)** which updates members on opportunities, events, best practice, other Muslim women's organisations, news items and articles of interest, policies and invites them to contribute.
- **Facilitating exchanges between members (Year 1-3)** by continuing to use social networking sites such as Facebook.
- **Continuing to respond to requests for contacts (Year 1-3)** between and with Muslim women.
- **Developing an advice pack (Year 1-2)** on policies, procedures, legal requirements, registration, funding streams, etc for new Muslim women's organisations, saving MWNUK time (through not having to repeat the advice each time a starting organisation contacts us) and helping to make new groups more effective.
- **Developing a Directory of Information (Year 2)** for Muslim women's organising in the UK. This would list Muslim women's groups with a brief description of their activities, profiling some key organisations and helplines; list useful publications; provide a brief outline of key issues and statistics. The directory/ies will be sent to members, women's organisations and various public bodies.
- **Continuing to engage with international initiatives (Years 1-3)** for women's rights in Muslim contexts, such as Musawah (global movement for equality and justice in the Muslim family www.musawah.org), WISE (Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality www.asmasociety.org/home/) and Women Living Under Muslim Laws (www.wluml.org).
- **Capacity building and rights awareness initiatives¹ (Year 2)** such as legal awareness sessions regarding Muslim family laws, marriage contracts and British law.
- **Developing MWNUK as a one-stop sign-posting service for Muslim women (Year 3)** in order to improve their access to existing services and initiatives in both the public and voluntary sectors and thereby helping to reduce the gap in securing fair life chances – for example signposting new Muslim women's organizations and locating the right services through our networking and sharing knowledge work.

3. Promoting the diverse needs of Muslim women in the UK in areas that are currently key in their lives

Key concerns identified by the MWNUK Board at its recent strategic planning meeting include: racism and Islamophobia; the exploitation of Muslim women for the Government's PREVENT agenda; confusion regarding the relationship between culture and religion; FGM and other abuses; lack of rights to and within marriage including inequality in the family; lack of self-esteem and opportunities for self-expression; mental health issues; pressures to and not to veil.

To ensure policy makers within the community and in Government adequately address the needs of Muslim women, the MWNUK needs to conduct research and collate information on Muslim women's current key concerns and experiences, and convey its independent advice onwards. This includes the following activities:

- **Researching and collating information regarding key issues** – and other issues relevant to them, including researching background to the issue, statistics and what British law and Islam say wherever relevant;
- **Consulting Muslim women and those working with them** regarding experiences on key issues (including experiences of service-provision and organisations/institutions dealing with the issue), establishing credible information regarding the needs and perspectives of Muslim women and eliciting what Muslim women and those working with them feel needs to be done to address problems;
- **Responding to policy consultations after collecting views from members.** e.g. Currently MWNUK is soliciting input from members and will be responding to consultations on the preventing violent extremism agenda and the Forced Marriage Act.
- **Pro-actively raising Muslim women's key concerns** e.g. channelling Muslim women's voices to Government.
- **Continuing to comment in the media**

4. Continuing to strengthen MWNUK's institutional base

Without a stable institutional base, MWNUK recognises that none of its other activities are possible. These are often time-consuming but essential activities, including fund-raising, board meetings, maintaining the office space, ensuring staff are performing, screening and briefing volunteers, etc.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTS

Overview

MWNUK received £17 000 from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and £20 000 from the Department Communities and Local Government in March/April 2009. However, most of this funding was for 2009/10.

We calculated the amount of funding for up to 31st May 2009, which amounted to £11 813. Hence the accounts for 2008/09 below show the expenditure covering this funding only. The remainder of the funding has been carried forward over to the next financial year for 2009/10.

Please note that as MWNUK only became a legal entity and opened a bank account in 2008, any funding raised before this period does not feature in these accounts as any funding raised and received was through a partner organisation.

Currently we are also in the process of applying for funding from a range of charitable sources. Although MWNUK is actively pursuing other funding opportunities, funding streams for Muslim women's organising and rights are limited. As we are based in a developed country, international development funding is generally not available even though Muslim women are profoundly affected by issues of under-development. In our experience, governmental sources are either focused on service delivery, rather than rights advocacy work such as ours, or are subject to political trends and policy fashions that may raise concerns regarding our independence and long-term institutional stability. This therefore leaves charitable sources as our main hope for securing adequate and appropriate funding.

However, we are also examining ways to raise a stable source of income to support core costs while ensuring that we guarantee our political and institutional independence. This has involved: developing funding proposals; discussing membership fees; and possible donations from generous individuals and businesses. However, we would need more visibility and a stable institutional base to be able to justify these steps.

Accounts

1. Income and Expenditure Account for the period ended 31 May 2009

| | Period ended 31/05/09 |
|--|---|
| | £ |
| Receipts (funding) | 11 813 (received March 2009) |
| | |
| Payments | |
| Sub contract | 6 776 (staff employed on sub contract basis until salaried) |
| Wages and Salaries | 2 557 |
| Employers NI contribution | 205 |
| Staff costs | 32 |
| Rent | 500 (May 09 rent only as that is when we moved to offices) |
| Printing, postage and stationary | 282 |
| Telephone | 334 |
| Travelling and entertainment (food) | 561 (travel and food for board meeting and staff travel) |
| Legal and professional | 670 |
| Accountancy | 670 |
| Depreciation of computer | 279 |
| | |
| Total Payments | £6 090 |
| | |
| Balance (operating loss) | £1 053 |
| | |
| Interest receivable on bank deposit | £ 7 |
| | |
| Net Deficit for the period | £1 046 |

2. Balance Sheet

| | Period ended 31/05/09 | |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| | £ | |
| Fixed Assets | | |
| Tangible assets | 565 | |
| Current Assets | | |
| Debtors | 3 930 | |
| Cash at bank in hand | <u>26 156</u> (funding received in advance for 2009/10) | |
| Total | £30 086 | |
| Creditors amounts falling | | |
| Due within one year | 31 697 | |
| Net Current liabilities | | 1 611 |
| Total assets less current | | |
| Liabilities | | 1 046 |
| Deficiency of Assets | | 1 046 |
| Reserves | | |
| Profit and loss account | | 1046 |

Accounts were signed off on behalf of the board by

Cassandra Balchin (Chair)
November 2009

Parveen Hassan (Treasurer)
November 2009

Announcement of Auditor

The board has decided to appoint RUS Chartered Accountants of 1190A-1192 Stratford Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 8AB to audit the accounts.

MWNUK CONTACT DETAILS

Address

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Birmingham
B1 2RX

Email: Info@mwnuk.co.uk

Tel: 0121 236 9000

Fax: 0121 236 9001

Website: www.mwnuk.co.uk

Registered Company Number: 6597997

APPENDIX 1: MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The management structure of MWNUK is as follows:

Executive Director

Shaista Gohir MBE

BIRMINGHAM

Shaista is a member of the National Muslim Women's Advisory Group (NMWAG) - an independent group to advise government on empowering Muslim women. She is also the founder of Muslim Voice UK, an online polling organisation. Shaista is also an accredited specialist peer for the Improvement and Development Agency - a role that will involve developing and sharing best practice with local authorities to prevent violent extremism. She is a mentor for Mosaic, a network of Muslim professionals established by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales. In recognition of her work, she was awarded the MBE honour in the Queen's birthday honours list in 2008 for services to the Muslim community and community relations. In 2009, was included in the EHRC Muslim Women Power list and won the Asian Woman of Achievement Award in the Social and Humanitarian Category.

Muslim women's coordinator

Faeza Vaid

BIRMINGHAM

Faeza is also Chairperson to a grassroots group called 'Sister 2 Sister'. The group aims to provide women with a platform to discuss issues impacting them on a daily basis, by facilitating an open and supportive environment for women to interact and share experiences, whether on moral, social, religious or cultural issues.

Faeza has resided in Birmingham for the past 15 years with her family but is originally from South Africa. After completing a law degree at the University of Leicester, UK in 2005, she went on to do an Honours degree in Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town, focussing on feminist theology and its relation to Islamic law. Faeza is currently completing a LLM in Socio-Legal Studies at Warwick University, UK. The specific topic of her dissertation is; *'Notions of Scholarly Religious Knowledge Authorities in Muslim Societies and Muslim Women's Movements as Challenges to the Current Status Quo'*.

Honorary President

Baroness Professor Haleh Afshar OBE

YORK

She is Professor of Politics and Women's Studies at the University of York and in 2007 was appointed to serve as a crossbencher at the House of Lords. She has also served on the British Council and the United Nations Association of which she is Honorary President of International Services. She has authored and edited over 15 books and has written extensively on Iran and Iranian politics both for academia and the media in Europe, the United States, the Middle East and South East Asia.

Board Members

Cassandra Balchin (Chair)

LONDON

Cassandra is a freelance researcher, writer and human rights advocacy trainer, specialising in the interconnections between gender, law and culture. She is a convert to Islam and has been involved in initiatives to strengthen women's rights in Muslim communities for nearly 20 years, as a staff member at Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre in Pakistan, part of the International Council of the international network Women Living Under Muslim Laws, and the Planning Committee for Musawah: a global movement for equality and justice in the Muslim family.

Batool Al Toma

LEICESTER

Batool is a Research and Education Officer at the Islamic Foundation. As a Director of the New Muslims Project, she has established a service related to the support, education, counseling and continued development of converts to Islam in the UK. She is the editor of the Meeting Point the newsletter of the New Muslims Project. She has also sat on the Cambridge Theology Board and its symposiums relating to Contextualising Muslim Thought in Britain. Batool is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism and member of the government's National Muslim Women's Advisory Group.

Sajida Ahmed Hashmi

STOKE

Sajida Ahmed Hashmi is a Diversity Advisor at Stoke-On-Trent Sixth Form College.

She worked for the BBC radio Stoke as the presenter/producer of the Asian Network (Asian Connection) for 15 years. She was the first Asian to be elected as a City Councillor for the City of Stoke-On-Trent in 1990. She was appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 1993. She was appointed as a Non-Executive Director on the Stoke South Primary Trust where she served for 8 years. She has been involved in community work for over 25 years. She served as a vice-chair of North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council . She is the founder and the chair of North Staffordshire Pakistani Women's Association. And a member of Muslim Women's Network. She is a school Governor.

Parveen Hassan (Treasurer)

BIRMINGHAM

Parveen Hassan is Chair of West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership Regional Women's Issues Group for women from new migrant communities, refugees and asylum seekers addressing social inclusion. Parveen's successfully fulfilling her role on the National Muslim Women Advisory Group Civic Participation Programme '*Play your Part Make your Mark*' increasing the profile of Muslim Women in public life. She has 10 years experience in the Equalities field in central Government, delivered the Muslim Community Engagement Conference on Public reassurance for members of the Muslim Communities. Parveen pioneered West Midlands CPS Community Engagement strategy with Muslim Women in addressing Domestic Violence, Forced Marriages and Honour Crimes, an honorary member for West Midlands Association of Muslim Police. Served as Faith Advisor for Government Office for London; commissioning the Faith Alliance Grants programme supporting Muslim released prisoners' resettlement with faith organisations. Parveen is a Trustee for Community Integration Partnership and Executive Director; EBW Consultancy.

Hakmah Ibrahim

LIVERPOOL

Hakmah Ibrahim is English and of mixed heritage; Lebanese (Arab)father/British mother. She converted to Islam last year on 27th Sept 2009, which was a wonderful night of power in Ramadan. She feels that this was the very best decision she made in her life. She has graduated from three Universities, and has a great deal of educational, work and life experience to offer. Her interests have always included active community involvement. At present she works with Somaliland Women/Children's Group; Link Health/Social Care; Joint Forum for Mental Health; Liverpool Women 2 Woman Inter-faith Peace group; and local links

between Refugees/Asylum Seekers and local people. She has been active on committees in the past, e.g. housing, health, mental health, women's issues, campaigning groups, (e.g. Gaza). She is interested in lively debate, raising issues, representation and fundraising.

Dua Gemma Ibrahim

OXFORD

Gemma is managing development of services for people with Physical and Sensory Disability in local government. She has expertise in learning disability, mental health, intervention work, physical sensory disability and acquired brain injury. Currently she is working to promote and improve access and equality of services for local minority groups and is focused on giving voice to women in local Muslim communities. She has expertise in issues around sexual minorities and transgender issues and has published on welfare and activism in minority communities. Gemma has worked with and on behalf of a wide range of minority communities in particular refugee families and children of Palestinian origin. Gemma has been a journalist for a community newspaper and published on minority community activism, specializing in equality and social inclusion. She is a current member of the Islah Steering group in Buckinghamshire, a restoration project aimed at Muslim youths for the prevention of violent extremism. She is also a member of the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign and has worked on behalf of Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association.

Robina Iqbal

BIRMINGHAM

Robina Iqbal is a community worker employed by Birmingham City Council working with Muslim women and children around education, health, confidence building, leisure/social activities and citizenship. For many activities she has to seek funding so filling in funding applications, project management, and evaluations all her responsibilities. Along side this work she has done projects in Mental Health, Capacity Building for community organisations, Ward Development Work and Consulting with NHS on community engagement. She is the chair of Sparkhill Asian Womens Association and WAITS (Women Acting In Todays Society) Policy Forum and a board member of Groundwork UK. She is on many local committees, such as Balsall Heath Childrens Centre, The Rainbow Playgroup. She is hoping to be part of the CEDAW Steering Committee this July. She is an active member of the Institute of Asian Businesses and the MOSAIC mentoring project Muslim Youth.

Naz Koser**BIRMINGHAM**

Naz Koser is the director of Ulfah Arts which is a pioneering arts organisation working with faith across the art forms. This social enterprise engages thousands of Muslim women locally and nationally in the solution making of issues such as how they can increase their participation in economic and social life. Naz works as a freelance consultant for Unity FM which is Birmingham's first Muslim community radio station. She has worked with the British Council and European Union's Ethnic Women's development programme. She has spoken at international arts events including the World Music Expo in Seville 2008 where she presented her findings on the barriers Muslim women face in the music industry to representatives from over 90 countries. She has also advised on policy for a range of government departments and NDPBs.

Dr. IRAM SATTAR**LONDON**

Dr Iram Sattar is a full-time GP who has a keen interest in addressing inequalities in health. She is currently involved in setting up an innovative way of treating patients in the community. In her spare time she works for a medical charity (Medicins Du Monde) that runs free clinics for the homeless, non documented migrants and commercial sex workers. She also has been involved in running health check stalls for the Muslim community in mosques, cultural centres and bazaars. She is a committee member of The Passage, a homeless charity in central London. She also is an associate member of WCEN (Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network), a community empowerment organisation. Iram also has a passion for football and is a member of a Muslim women's football team. She is enthusiastic about teaching and medical education and has co-authored a chapter in a book, 'Learning to Consult.' She is undertaking a Post Graduate Certificate in Medical Education at Warwick University. She is committed to advocacy for those members of the community who do not have a voice.

Souad Talsi**LONDON**

Souad Talsi has worked as a senior caseworker at Kensington Citizens Advice bureau for the last 29 years and has been very active within the Moroccan and Arabic speaking community in the UK in that time. Souad is a founder member of the only long serving Arab centre for women and their families which has addressed the issue of inequality in service delivery for the last 25 years. The centre has pioneered research and input into policies including the establishment of GRIP – an interpreting service within the NHS. She has campaigned for better protection for Muslim women from forced marriages and has raised awareness on mental health and Muslim women which something that remains a taboo amongst many communities. Souad is a trustee at the Kensington Housing Trust Community Fund and a member of the Kensington and Chelsea Faith Forum.

Fariha Thomas**SCOTLAND (GLASGOW)**

Fariha has worked in community development and race equality in both the statutory and voluntary sectors in Scotland for over 30 years. She has worked with a wide range of minority ethnic community groups; been involved in providing anti racism and cultural awareness training to a range of organizations; and has coordinated and undertaken research, which has fed into policy development. For the last 15 years Fariha has been involved in the establishment and running of Amina – the Muslim Women's Resource Centre, a Scotland wide Muslim women's organisation of which she is currently a Management Committee Secretary.

Mussurut Zia**BLACKBURN**

Mussurut Zia has been involved in the areas of community cohesion, community enhancement and diversity for over thirteen years. During this time she has managed and developed a four year project for disadvantaged women and children in a deprived area of Lancashire. From here she went on to work for Lancashire Constabulary, where she worked initially in Burnley just after the disorder of 2001. This role was centred on community cohesion; dispelling myths; stereotypes; and working with Black Minority Ethnic Women.

Eighteen months ago she set up a community organisation, Practical Solutions, which raises awareness of forced marriage, honour based violence and much more. She currently chairs Lancashire Wide Network for Minority Ethnic Women, and sits on the Corporation Board for Blackburn College. She is also a mentor for young people, through Mosaic Mentoring, and also sits on the Mayors committee for the year 2008/09.