

Identity, Empowerment and Change, Handout 31

Who's out there? – Starting points for webquest

Open circle for open minds

'The City Circle promotes the development of a distinct British Muslim identity. It seeks to assist the process of community cohesion and integration by building bilateral strategic alliances between Muslim and non-Muslim communities and harnessing and channelling the skills and resources of Muslim professionals into practical projects, thereby facilitating and empowering young Muslim women and men to "put back in" to the wider British community.'

<http://www.thecitycircle.com/index>.

Dynamic British Muslim community

'Whilst we undertake work and develop projects that impact nationally and even internationally, we passionately believe that we also need to foster and nurture the local community in which we live and work.'

'So from this Centre we have regular meetings sharing our experiences with researchers, journalists and documentary makers, professionals and others who consult us on Muslim issues. From here we also develop creative ways to support the development of the wider and local British Muslim community. This is where we put into practice our ideas and vision of developing a dynamic British Muslim community.'

'This is our space. Here, we feel safe and comfortable. Young people and women tell us they find they can be themselves here. This is a space where women, children and young people get together on their own terms. There are very few places where Muslim women can have the freedom to think for themselves and develop their own way of being.'

<http://www.an-nisa.org/>

Islam and democracy

We want younger Muslims to make choices for themselves. For far too long British Muslims have lived in a democracy but have not matured into autonomous democrats. The expectation is that communities take direction from community leaders and deliver block votes to political parties as if they are cash-and-carry sacks of rice. Some Muslim leaders have, for example, ordered their flocks to vote for Ken. Disgraceful, yes, but this is how it is on the Indian subcontinent and in Arab lands. A Muslim child is taught never to question and to follow instructions from adults, fathers, grandparents, teachers, mullahs and political manipulators. Respect for elders is admirable, but this excessive culture of obedience is stunting the development of Islamic communities.

<http://www.bmsd.org.uk/>

The real experiences of Muslim youth

Aims to raise awareness of the different social problems that affect young Muslims and provide culturally sensitive guidance to young people. The site encourages young Muslims to develop peer-support networks, access specialist services and care for their social and mental well-being. By profiling the real experiences of Muslim youth in a public forum, muslimyouth.net aims to confront the cultural stigma attached to common social issues such as mental health, drug abuse and sexuality. The forum and chat rooms will allow young Muslims to talk openly and anonymously about the issues that affect them without fear or community reprisal.

<http://www.muslimyouth.net/>