

## ALHAJ MUHIB UDDIN (ANGUR MIAH)

### **1. When did you first come to Britain? (What was the reason, why choose Britain?)**

I used to watch people from the UK come to Bangladesh have money and enjoy spending it. So I thought if I come here I could make some money to take back home and settle in Bangladesh.

### **2. Where did you settle and why? (If not Westminster where was it? What made you come to Westminster?)**

My family friend lived in London and found us a flat to stay in.

### **3. Did you come on your own? (If not who were you accompanied by anybody? With relative? With your children?)**

I went back to Bangladesh got married and then came back with my wife.

### **4. Did you come to join other members of your village/neighbourhood/ family who had previously migrated to the UK?**

When I came I didn't know anyone.

## **UK**

### **1. When coming to the UK what were you thinking? Were you excited (about?) or fearful (of coming to a new country-environment?)**

It was cold and lightly snowing, I was very shocked that daytime looked like night time.

### **2. What were your first impressions of the UK?**

The police was so helpful they saw us lost and saw the address I wanted to go to written on my piece of paper and ordered me a cab and explained to the cab driver for me where we wish to go.

### **3. What did you find different (to Bangladesh-people/accommodation/weather/transport/built environment?)- (Any familiarities with Bangladesh?)**

There were no familiarities to Bangladesh from the cars that were around and even the food.

4. **Did you bring anything from Bangladesh to remind you of back home? (For your children? What items?)**

I did not bring anything because when I came we brought minimal amount with us literally two trousers and two shirts.

5. **What were your expectations of the UK if any? (Expectations from relatives/people who had been to the UK/images/media/films etc)**

I thought if I could come and make at least 20'000 I could go back to Bangladesh and start my own business as that amount of money in those days would set you for life

### **WESTMINSTER**

1. **How did you find Westminster at the time? What was it like?**

I had to live here and work in a hotel in Piccadilly all 11 of us used to work there.

2. **Did you know English? (Level-fluent, to get by, none?)**

I did not have time to go to school as I had to work to provide for my family and that's where I learned English at work very gradually.

3. **If not, how did you communicate with non-Bengalis? Learn English? (Class, course, friends, relatives, neighbours, community groups, TV, radio, cinema)?**

At first I could not speak English at all even with doctors. However, If you said a few basic words they would understand what I was saying.

### **Language barriers, cultural differences and religious obligations**

1. **If you didn't know English initially how did you communicate with neighbors, doctors, milkman, post office, on public transport, in shops?**

They would try and communicate with me and be very welcoming.

2. **Were your neighbours helpful? (Who else?)**

They were very helpful especially in Easter holiday they used to invite me over for tea and cakes which helped build a better relationship and helped me learn more English.

**3. What clothes did you wear (for women was sari a problem-how was it viewed by English people?) How did you cope in cold weather coming from a hot country?**

I wore a normal buttoned shirt and trousers. After three months I was able to buy some suits which I wore too.

**4. Did you face any difficulties (What were they? How did you overcome?)**

Every day I would feel like I wanted to go back to Bangladesh. Especially every morning I would wake up I couldn't open the house door and the water would not come out from the taps because it used to be so cold everything used to get very icy. So I had to always have to clean it all up. Bangladesh was warmer. I faced two difficulties where I had to pay a fine

**5. Was halal food easily available? No – What did you eat?**

There was no Halal food at that time. There was no rice either, just the rice pudding rice which we could not eat the way we eat our Bangladeshi type of food. So I would just eat bread and egg.

**6. Did you find any difficulty in practicing your religion? Did you have to make compromises? How do you feel about that?**

I did not face any difficulties practicing my religion. Here and there when the racism began we just would wear our 'toki' out of fear as everyone would have to compromise that in case it attracted bad attention.

**7. Do you feel you are able to freely practice your religion in the public sphere in the UK.**

We were very free to practice as the government did not stop us.

**8. What was Eid day like when you first came here, and has it changed now?**

First two years we were here we did not celebrate Eid at all. However after that in Seymour place everyone would hire a hall together and pray Eid prayer there. Then gradually we would do our five prayers in Regents Park.

**9. Do you observe Ramadan? Does your daily life change or do you do things differently during the month? – Pray more or abstain from anything you do usually?**

We could not really keep our fasts properly the first few years because it was really hard in that environment especially working a lot and there was not a large community of support. Until later when mosques were built like East London mosque there were more Muslims which helped Ramadan awareness and give

support.

## **EXPERIENCES OF SERVICE PROVIDERS IN INTEGRATING THE BENGALI COMMUNITY**

- 1. Were you able to go to any agency for help? (From Whom? - CAB, Council, GP, library etc.)**

I did not get any benefits and did not want any.

- 2. How did you spend your spare time? (TV, radio, films, newspapers, hobby, visiting friends-who, relatives-where, park, museum, places of interest?)**

We used to go to the cinema in Kings cross which would show Indian and Bengali tapes. The newspapers in those days for Asians were predominantly in Urdu so we did not really read them.

- 3. Did you go to cultural or faith events? (Where & Name the events)**

I use to go to music concerts but do not remember what they were called.

### **Children**

- 1. If you didn't come with children when & where did you have your first child? (Home, hospital? What was it like in hospital? Nurses? Doctors?)**

I had my first child in the UK. My wife had a very struggling pregnancy and had to stay in the hospital for one month. Then after two months she had to make regular visits and the nurse would come to our house to check on her. The hospital staff was so nice and caring to us. When the baby was born the nurse came over to me saying Mr Uddin you have a very nice baby. They were really nice and would tell me to bring my baby regularly to check his weight as he was premature.

- 2. What was their first crèche/school like? For yourself, your child? How were the teachers?**

I gave them to nursery and drop them off on the way to work. On the First day I was so happy got him up gave him a bath got him ready had breakfast as a family and me and my wife both took him to nursery together on the first day.

- 3. Did you get any support provided from the local community, schools, health centres, and community organisations? (If yes what kind of support did you receive?)**

The school was so helpful and the health centres sent us a midwife to help us take care of a son and advised on the right milk and so on.

**4. Who did your child play with? Who were his/her friends? Other Bengali kids or mixed?**

He went to gateway primary school and his first friend was a white boy as there was only one or two Bengalis.

**5. What were your greatest fears (if any) in allowing your children to be integrated within the mainstream society? (your thoughts/feelings) What factors predicted their successful integration? (What would have made you proud?)**

I was never afraid and normally gave them to school or my wife would take them. My main thought was that they would come home for lunch to eat.

**6. What were your thoughts (if any) about raising your children maintaining their own culture within the mainstream society?**

My main thoughts were to give them good education.

**7. Would you allow your children to marry outside your culture?**

No they will only be able to marry inside our culture, Bengali and Muslim. However two of my children did not listen and married out of my culture and I was not happy for some time. Although, both my sons wives converted to the Islamic faith which changed my perception and I accepted their marriages.

## **SETTLING IN WESTMINSTER**

**1. What struggles and obstacles did you face in adapting your life in raising your new British born child/children?**

Before I went to sleep every night I would make sure I put aside how much each of my children would need for bus fare and food. If I did not have the money I would not be able to sleep.

**2. What role did you play to educate and raise your child/children between two cultures (British & Bengali)?**

I ensured I told my children that at home they are not allowed to speak English as I did not want them to forget their language. If they spoke in English I would not respond to them. I let them play outside with their friends but gave them a curfew and they were not allowed home a minute late.

3. **Did you do anything specific (i.e. take them to Bengali/religious class/school/cultural events/Christmas parties/street parties/birthday parties/White friend parties)?**

I kept an Islamic teacher at home to teach them the Quran. There were no Bengali teachers so after much thought the Bengali community formulated Marylebone Bengali society to create a Bengali culture for our children to be aware of and to not forget the Bengali culture.

4. **How has your child/children turned out to be? (as expected/not expected).**

They have become more of a success than I ever expected and all on their own without asking me for any support which I am very proud of.

#### **FUTURE**

1. **What is Westminster like today compared to when you first came in ...? (biggest changes you have seen, how has it changed)?**

The change is day and night. It is so much more developed now as in Westminster, the buildings are better. The people are different, before the people were more English now in Westminster it is more multicultural more Arabic and Asian people. However, in Westminster it is harder for poor people to live here as it is so much more rich.

2. **How British are they? (How integrated are they? How British do they feel? Do they have many White friends?)**

I love my children's British friends and always show them love. I do not mind how British my kids are because they do not forget their religion; they fast in Ramadan and give zakat (charity) to the poor.

3. **How Bengali are they? (how much are they in touch with the Bengali community/Bangladesh/Bengali language?)**

They are Bengali and speak to me in Bengali always.

4. **How do you see their future? Would you be happy or disappointed?**

I am happy with the future I see in my children.

5. **Ideally how would you like their future to be?**

All I want is that all my children pray five times and that would be enough for me.