



# Post Conference Report

Employability and Muslim Women in Scotland

March 2017

Radisson Blu, Edinburgh

[www.mwrc.org.uk](http://www.mwrc.org.uk)

#AminaWorkingTogether



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## Who are we?

Amina is an award-winning organisation, recognised by Muslim communities and key partners within Scotland for its pioneering approach to addressing the often complex and intersectional issues and needs of Muslim women across Scotland. Having invested in this specialist area where there was previously a gap in services, Amina is recognised as the national hub for gaining access to, and consulting with Muslim women; ensuring women of all backgrounds can fulfil their true potential and participate fully in all aspects of society without fear of discrimination or inequality. We provide:

- A confidential, non-judgemental 'listening ear' national Muslim Women's Helpline.
- Ending Violence Against women and girls project.
- School's Project – delivering workshops in Secondary Schools tackling prejudice and stereotypes.
- Women's Friendship Group.
- Refugee Support Project – providing Arabic speaking support to families arriving in Dundee.
- Building Bridges Project – bringing Muslim and Minority Ethnic women together in Dundee.
- Over 50's Befriending Project - offering workshops and recreational activities in Dundee.

## The Project

Premised on inclusion, equality and participation, the 'Inspiring Aspirations' Employability Project aims to empower Muslim and Minority Ethnic (ME) women on their journey to self-sufficiency, making paid employment, volunteering and training more accessible and sustainable. Providing a responsive, barrier free learning environment, the project confronts complex, multi-faceted and reinforcing barriers which remain insufficiently tackled by mainstream employability services.

In a heightened socio-political climate with increasing levels of anti-Muslim sentiment, particularly targeting Muslim women, it is imperative we enable, upskill and empower Scotland's women to provide a counter narrative to the negative statistics, stereotypes and misconceptions.

This work would not be possible without the support of our funders to whom we are grateful;



“Happy to be around similarly likeminded people”.

**42**

**Participants**

**4 Speakers**



**28**

**organisations**

**96%**

**Of evaluations reported an increase in awareness of barriers for Muslim women.**

**“A reminder that the equal opportunity ‘struggle’ is not won!”**

**#Aminaworkingtogether**



### Organisations represented:

Al Waleed Centre, University of Edinburgh  
BBC Scotland  
BEMIS  
Canongate Youth  
Community Help & Advice Initiative (CHAI)  
Close the Gap  
Dare2Lead  
Doha Institute for Graduate Studies  
Dundee City Council  
Edinburgh College  
Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council  
Edinburgh Women's Aid  
Engender  
Forth Sector

Leith Jobcentre Plus  
Midlothian Council  
PKAVS Ethnic Minority Hub  
Saheliya  
Scottish Government  
Scottish Women's Aid  
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations  
Skills Development Scotland  
Smart Works Edinburgh  
STUC Black Workers' Committee  
The Action Group  
The City of Edinburgh Council  
University of West of England Bristol  
West of Scotland Regional Equalities Council

“Very interesting statistics and research results that support our experience as practitioners”.

“Muslim women are at a disadvantage and this hasn't changed much in the last 13 years”.

“Surnames can influence interviewers in a profound way”.

Chaired by Samina Ansari, Amina MWRC CEO, the conference brought together policy makers, academics and practitioners to discuss the theme of 'Employability and Muslim women in Scotland'. Speakers addressed topics ranging from Scotland's rich diversity, devolved employability provision, economic inactivity levels, unconscious bias, the impact of religiosity on unemployment levels, as well as best practice models for supporting Muslim and Minority Ethnic women.

Samina Ansari highlighted:

*"We're delighted to be leading the way in bringing together agencies, mainstream, voluntary and other, that are committed to ensuring that Muslim and Minority Ethnic women do not get left behind; are given the right support they need in order to flourish, like everyone in Scotland has a right to.*

*In order to better our services and partnerships, there must be continued dialogue and a proactive approach taken to understanding the needs and lived experience of Muslim women. Annually, a small but very effective Amina Employability team of 4, works with 500 Muslim women across Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Research and our own experience on the ground means we're well versed in the barriers that Muslim women experience as a result of their gender, ethnicity and religious identity, further compounded by factors such as poverty, lack of opportunity, lack of support and low confidence.*

*By creating this space, I hope we can collectively think about and share how our services can be more empowering and inclusive, and take away at least 1 recommendation to implement"*



## **Setting the Scene – The Evidence**

According to recent UK Parliamentary research, Muslims experience “the highest levels of disadvantage in the labour market” (2016)<sup>1</sup>. Confronted by a triple penalty – being female, Minority Ethnic and Muslim - Dr Nabil Khattab notes Muslim women are 71% more likely than white Christian women to be unemployed, even with comparable levels of educational attainment and English language fluency (2015)<sup>2</sup>.



The number of Muslims in Scotland is growing. The 2011 Census shows that Muslims constitute 1.45% of the population of Scotland, marking an 80% increase over the past 10 years.<sup>3</sup> Inhibited by complex, multi-faceted and reinforcing barriers which remain insufficiently tackled by mainstream employability services, Muslim and ME women experience higher levels of unemployment and under-employment and are over-concentrated in low skilled and low paid work than the indigenous white Scottish population (Dr Emejulu, 2016)<sup>4</sup>.

Dr Elshayyal (University of Edinburgh, 2016) states in her report ‘Muslims in Numbers’ “25% of Muslim women aged 16 or over are ‘looking after the home or family’, compared with 5.6% of the total population”<sup>5</sup>. This echoes our own online survey findings (Amina, 2017) which note 34% of women identify ‘caring responsibilities’ as their greatest barrier to economic participation. 26% of survey respondents selected ‘not knowing where to start’ as their greatest barrier, 21% felt they did not have the language proficiency and jointly at 18%, are women feeling they do not have the confidence and sufficient work experience to access the paid labour market.

In a recent report, Scotland’s Equal Opportunities Committee stated; “employment is such a pivotal aspect of our lives that achieving equality in the workplace is a vital part of ensuring that Scotland as a nation is fair and inclusive to all” (Equal opportunities Committee, 2016).<sup>6</sup> Despite legislation and equalities training, “the world of work is still not representative of the communities and people of Scotland” (Equal Opportunities Committee, 2016).

<sup>1</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/89/89.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Khattab, N. and Modood, T. (2015), Both Ethnic and Religious: Explaining Employment Penalties Across 14 Ethno-Religious Groups in the United Kingdom. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 54: 501–522. doi: 10.1111/jssr.12220

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish\\_muslims\\_in\\_numbers\\_web.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish_muslims_in_numbers_web.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.parliament.scot/S4\\_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Inquiries/Dr\\_A\\_Emejulu.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Inquiries/Dr_A_Emejulu.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish\\_muslims\\_in\\_numbers\\_web.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish_muslims_in_numbers_web.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.parliament.scot/S4\\_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/EOS042016R01Rev.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/EOS042016R01Rev.pdf)



## Minister for Employability and Training, Jamie Hepburn

Annual day for elimination of racial discrimination is tomorrow – a poignant reminder of the negative consequences of racial discrimination and our obligation to combat and stamp it out globally.

“We know that despite having higher than average levels of qualifications, Muslim students’ educational attainment does not translate to labour market advantage.”

Scottish Government is working towards creating equality. Fundamental to hear the voices of the under-represented.

Scotland welcomes those that seek to build a life here. Need to harness their talent. “Diversity is our core strength”.

Scotland’s Economic Strategy based on the fundamental principle that “we will become a more productive and prosperous country if we become a fairer and more inclusive country” providing opportunities accessible by all.

Publication of Race Quality Framework in March 2016.

Minority Ethnic Women’s Network.

Scotland’s ESOL Strategy 2015 - 2020, provides the strategic direction to ensure high quality learning and teaching of English language in Scotland.

Responsive Modern Apprenticeship Programme. Evolving and responding to need for flexibility.

Acknowledgment of the lack of flexible childcare provision and reality of discrimination. Employability is a key focus. “Devolved employability service is committed to tackling inequality and will focus on those furthest from the labour market”.







There is a youthful Muslim population in Scotland. “The most significant increase in terms of absolute numbers and share of the total Muslim population is in the 25-64 age bracket”<sup>7</sup>. This carries cultural and economic significance including the greater proportion of households with dependent children which in turn impacts the range of accessible employment opportunities.

Realistically, there is a challenge of unifying women’s traditional domestic roles and personal ambitions. Difficulty of accessing and remaining in paid employment without the support of the wider family.

“25% of Muslim women aged 16 or over are ‘looking after the home or family’, compared with 5.6% of the total population”. This accounts for 2 in 5 Muslim women who are economically inactive.

Inflexibility of job roles and the need to create more flexible forms of employment to enable more Muslim women to join the paid workforce.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish\\_muslims\\_in\\_numbers\\_web.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish_muslims_in_numbers_web.pdf)

Triple penalty (female, ethnic minority and Muslim) pushing women into self-employment – more research needed to establish correlation. Strong capacity for entrepreneurship and independence.

'Language skills are not as big an issue as they might popularly be assumed to be'. Contrary to the level of attention drawn to this particular barrier by former Prime Minister David Cameron in 2016, the 2011 Census found that 4.5% of Scottish Muslims stated they had no English skills or difficulty with English. Despite this relatively small percentage it is useful to consider classes for jargon busting, body language and for interview prep. There is a need to build confidence in Muslim women and highlight role models to which the community can relate to.

Questions were raised regarding Islamophobia and unconscious bias. How fair are adverts, recruitment practices and processes?

## **Dr Nabil Khattab, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies**

Popular claim – it is the unique cultural and religious heritage of Muslims that leads women to “choose” not to participate in the labour force. (Raed 2004, Köbrich León 2013, Koopmans 2016).

The same gaps in employment that existed in 2003 remain in 2016. There has been no change. How do we explain the persistence of the gap?

- Culture – wider attitudes to work.
- Levels of religiosity.
- Migration issue? 2<sup>nd</sup> generation twice as likely to be in employment as 1<sup>st</sup> generation. Higher levels of human capital.

“Second generations are able to participate at a higher level due to human capital”.

57% of those married with children with a degree are active in the labour market. Those with no degree or qualifications.

Market value of those with a degree is higher. Outsource childcare.

Main causes of high unemployment;

- Availability of employment opportunities.
- Human capital.
- Choices and preferences on personal, cultural and religious grounds. Self-selecting from job roles ie working in a bar.
- Discrimination by employers,

Chances of Muslim women being unemployed 5 times higher than white counterparts. Study shows Muslim women face an extra penalty if they are perceived as being more religious.

- Economic activity:
  - No evidence that religion or religiosity is behind the low economic activity
  - This is likely to be associated with the employability of women, given their human capital and the economic decisions made at the household level
- Unemployment:
  - Muslim women are likely to be facing an extra penalty due to religiosity.



Economic activity\* (in %) by marital status, dependent children and qualifications, LFS 2002-2013, women 24-45, N=113,348

|   | <b>Muslim women</b> |
|---|---------------------|
| <b><i>Degree level qualifications</i></b> |                     |
| <b>Single no children</b>                 | 92                  |
| <b>Divorced/separated no children</b>     | 90                  |
| <b>Married no children</b>                | 87                  |
| <b>Divorced/separated with children</b>   | 59                  |
| <b>Married with children</b>              | 57                  |
| <b><i>Less than a degree</i></b>          |                     |
| <b>Single no children</b>                 | 63                  |
| <b>Divorced/separated no children</b>     | 45                  |
| <b>Married no children</b>                | 48                  |
| <b>Divorced/separated with children</b>   | 26                  |
| <b>Married with children</b>              | 21                  |



## **Lori Hughes, Employability Coordinator, Amina MWRC**

Amina's Employability project works with a continuum of clients; from Syrian refugees with no primary education or women wishing to work in UK for first time to women seeking to re-join labour market and highly educated women with overseas qualifications. We are proud to support women from all backgrounds, ethnic groups, faith and cultures. Many of our clients are pre-stage 1 of the Scottish Government employability pipeline. As a team we focus on stages 1-3; primarily barrier removal and preparation for work.



Meet the team from left to right;

- Samina Ansari, Amina CEO.
- Maheen Saeed, Employability Officer.
- Lori Hughes, Employability Project Coordinator.
- Nahrumah Huq, Employability Officer.
- Vijiha Bashir, Employability Officer.

Project delivery is centred on Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow and in partnership with PKAVS ethnic minority hub in Perth, where we deliver holistic, tailored and assets based provision. Our aim is to nurture the skills, talents and experiences held by our clients, whilst increasing their self-confidence, resilience and upskilling to meet the changing demands of local employers.

The project accepts both referrals and self-referrals. Referral forms are available at [info@mwrc.org.uk](mailto:info@mwrc.org.uk) if required.

We pride ourselves on being responsive to need. Our project is informed by the communities we serve and the clients with whom we closely work. For example, in a recent survey – 81% of respondents are looking for full time or part time work, are interested in owning their own business, or wish to progress to training, education or volunteering opportunities. This influences and shapes the workshops we deliver and the training sessions we schedule.

## What do we deliver?

- English conversation classes.
- ESOL in partnership with WEA.
- Employability skills training – skills identification, goal setting, CV, application form, job search and interviews.
- Confidence through drama.
- Personal development workshops – assertiveness, product making, budgeting.
- One off events – Speed Mentoring, 'Human Jobs Library'.
- Intensive one to one support sessions.



Speed Mentoring Event, Glasgow.

### **Impact financial year (2016-2017)**

- Team of 4 supported 611 women.
- 113 women progressed to employment, further education, training, volunteering opportunities or set up their own enterprise.
- 55 moved into paid work.
- 9 women started their own business.
- 129 one to one appointments.
- 206 hours of English language support to 90 women.
- 165 hours of employability training to 83 women.

### **Learning from Experience**

- Don't pre-judge. Everyone and anyone can be a victim of circumstance and life's experiences, irrespective of background.
- Women want to be heard and consulted, treated with respect. Diverse spectrum of opinion.
- Women have so much potential. Real capacity to contribute and desire to do so. Assets based. Amina has the recipe guide but the women have the ingredients. Nurture and grow. Need opportunities to showcase talent.
- Be patient. Build robust relationships built on trust. Collaboration.
- Asking for help is difficult. Unpredictable socio-political and economic climate, rising anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination. Fear, perceived or real, and the impact on your behaviour. Self-segregation.

### **Partnership Working**

- Track record of positive partnerships with WEA, WSREC, PKAVS, Shelter and Dundee Rep to name but a few.
- Value the experience and expertise of others. How to best serve the needs of the clients.
- Welcome conversations on collaborative working.
- Only by pulling resources can we make sustainable positive change.



## Case Study

### Staff Perspective

Client A was very anxious, concerned and shy when she first came to visit us and register with the project. There has been a huge change in her confidence and outlook on life, since the first day she came to the AMINA office, looking for support. She, herself, has shared that she feels like that was a completely different person to who she is now. She attended various workshops and events at AMINA, as well as our 4 week Employability Programme. Initially anxious, she grew in confidence and began to engage well in all sessions, comfortably sharing her views and thoughts. Also hearing common stories amongst the group of their life/marriage struggles (shared confidentially), has helped her open up.

With her on-going life and family challenges; Client A is slowly finding a new sense of what she wants in life and how she wants to be treated, by those around her. She has shared with us that she feels that her confidence has grown since coming to Amina. As well as attending classes and events, she is now becoming more self-sufficient. She now feels confident to ask for help and support.

She was not allowed to pursue her dreams and grow personally and professionally when she lived with her in-laws, therefore the isolation and barriers created did not expose her to the abundance of opportunities she wanted to have access to. She now wants learn and participate in as much as possible and would like to secure work in the near future.





## Client Perspective

"Before I came to AMINA my confidence was very very low. Since attending the 4 week Employability Programme, the first thing I noticed was my confidence built a lot. I now have that thing in my mind that I can go out... I can do something, I can do a job, I can build my life.

Coming to the classes at AMINA showed me I have a lot of skills and opened my eyes. I am now thinking positive towards my future, and looking forward, and I want to be in some place better in my life. Before I was so down and thinking I can't do anything, I won't manage and I can't do anything." Now I think, if I go out for 4 hours for these classes, then I can go out every day for 3-4 hours, I can do that, I can manage that easily. My inner confidence has built inside of me, and I think,...now I am going to do something with myself - with my life. This is the best thing coming to AMINA has given me.

Two weeks ago I started a volunteering placement, taking a children's Urdu class. I do this every Saturday and Sunday for 2 hours. After 3 months they offer me a 2-year work contract. I used all the skills that I got during the classes at AMINA, to get this opportunity. I was well prepared, and used all the class materials I had to prepare. I showed confidence and really showed a good positive attitude kept good eye contact and body language, which I learned in class. They gave me good feedback that I was very co-operative, confident and showed enthusiasm. It's made a big difference to my life, there is a big increase in confidence, this is the main thing. I now always think to myself 'You can do it'.

I have applied what I learned in my daily life. I want others to also take advantage of the programmes at AMINA and learn from it. I learned so much. I can compromise on things and make time for myself and a job. I can now work better with people... better at team work. I have enjoyed all the tasks and have many skills. My mind-set is different. How I was when I first came to AMINA and how I am now, there is a huge difference, I am a completely different person - for the better."



## **Roundtable Discussions**

*“When you are visibly Muslim ie wearing a hijab I think employers can assume that you are very religious and that you won't fit in or you will have your own barriers that you bring with you”*



**What do you think are the most significant barriers preventing BME women from accessing paid employment? How these be overcome?**

- Lack of confidence.
- Personal responsibility, need to take initiative to learn new skills.
- Discrimination: employers feel that Muslim women won't fit in, may be hesitant to work regular hours etc. If it is service sector, employers may feel that customers may not interact well with Muslim women.
- Negative stereotypes about the hijab portrayed by the media.
- Need to be persistent, accessing paid employment is not just a one-time act but an on-going battle.
- Unfamiliar with the job market, CVs, interview techniques etc and are therefore unable to navigate through job market.
- Childcare affects all low paid works negatively, and if BME women are in low paid jobs it may be too expensive to get child care.
- Choice of work is narrowed due to cultural preferences, e.g Muslim women will not work in a bar, may need flexible hours etc.

- BME women may lack transferable skills, and their qualifications may not be recognised in the UK.
- BME community needs to change attitude towards working women.
- Need for staff training and on the job learning.
- There needs to be policy changes, employers need to prioritise diversity.
- Needs to be name blind recruitment.
- If more BME women were employed it would increase exposure to BME women and combat negative stereotypes.
- There needs to be free childcare, and better paid jobs with flexibility.
- Networking events for BME women to get to know employers.
- Education and awareness campaigns in schools and organisations.
- Employers need to recognise the effects of discrimination on their organisation.
- Cannot just have one person responsible for BME support, the whole organisation needs to reflect support for/representation of minorities



*“The lack of diversity in mainstream workplaces needs to be explored. One way this can be done is by having anonymised recruitment processes and ensuring a diverse interview panel”*



*"I read about a teacher that was applying for work for over a year and he wasn't even being acknowledged. He then applied again but changed his name to an English name and got a reply from a school within 7 hours. I feel that is racial discrimination"*



### **What is the impact of discrimination (real or perceived) on BME women? How can they be overcome?**

- Discrimination can create fear. Women can lose confidence, and are less likely to apply for jobs that are outside the community.
- Low confidence, low self-esteem, low self-efficacy.
- There are sometimes perceptions about BME women's language ability, this can prevent them from even reaching an interview stage.
- Communities can start self-segregating, which can worsen the problem, providing fertile ground for even more stereotypes and discrimination.
- Feel pressured, feel like you can't be yourself at work. You have to act and fit in and leave yourself and your culture behind.
- Discrimination does not have to be overt and aggressive, it can be as simple as not recognising overseas qualification or not having options on application forms to state overseas qualifications. It disadvantages one group and makes them less likely to apply for/get a job.

- Sometimes there is unconscious bias because of all the negative images on the media. Employers may not even be aware that they are discriminating.
- Discrimination can also result from ignorance.
- International work experience is not valued. This can lead to women getting low paid jobs, and then exiting the job market early because of caring duties.
- Can lead to hate crime.
- Individuals can challenge discrimination and defeat the stereotypes.
- More education on different cultures. This needs to be prioritised as government policy.
- Campaign videos to challenge discrimination.
- Name blind applications.
- More female managers.
- Information about the types and the impact of discrimination readily available.
- Build pride in yourself and your community and background. Use cultural resources.
- The responsibility needs to be on employers to examine their own perceptions and take actions to address them.





*“With the current climate there is inevitably challenges for Muslim women finding employment but more awareness of support groups and campaigns can help encourage women to apply”*

## **What does good employability support look like? What can agencies do to better engage BME women?**

- Good support needs more funding. It's hard to provide good support if you don't have the funds.
- Good support is client centred, client lead. It needs to respect that there are different journeys for everyone.
- Employability support needs to be able to change their focus if need be, and adapt to the client.
- Provide face to face support.
- Take the service to the person.
- Agencies need to acknowledge their own unconscious biases.
- Agencies need to have members of the BME agencies on their interview panels.
- Agencies need to disseminate material in a way that BME women can easily access them. Perhaps more online material.
- Material needs to be in languages other than English.
- Tests like the ILETS that grant you entry to the job market/universities cost money. There needs to be scholarships and funding opportunities for this.
- Employers need to be open and engage with programs that are working with BME women.
- Agencies should find a way to convert degrees from home country through courses.
- Volunteer opportunities need to be made available so that BME women can learn skills.
- Build language skills before and during employment.
- Agencies need to clearly help clients understand what is required from the local market.
- Communicate local practices e.g. NI number, email addresses etc.
- Increase accessibility of application forms to agencies but also advocate that employers improve application forms.
- Be human, focus on commonalities and not differences. Treat clients with respect.
- Clients need to know that they are not alone when they facing barriers, there are other people like them who face similar barriers.
- Some agencies care more about numbers and targets and forget about the individual. This can be alienating and promote poor practices.

*"I feel that there needs to be more development of jobs for people with caring responsibilities or those that have children but do want to do work but cannot physically go to the office"*

## **What more can we ask from the Scottish Government to better support Muslim and Minority Ethnic women seeking paid employment?**

- Local government needs to set higher targets
- National government and local government need to have stronger communication, and have better checks and balances.
- What do numbers really mean? Qualitative progress should also be captured.
- Prioritise representation within the Scottish government. Government needs to practice what it preaches.
- Create accessible child care provisions: reduce cost, add cap on cost, have council crèches, workplace crèches.
- Recognise caring roles. More benefits and entitlements should be available to carers.
- Encourage flexible working hours/options to work from home.
- More part time jobs created.
- Create opportunities for job share and self-employment.
- Highlight positive role models.
- Currently legislation gives power to employer not employees. That needs to change.



## **What Now?**

The 'Inspiring Aspirations' project endeavours to evolve and grow the range of provision offered and aims to provide an improved service for clients; continuously responding and adapting to the changing needs of the diverse client group. Complementing existing projects and avoiding duplication, we value the expertise and experience gained from collaboration and partnership. This is an area we wish to explore and grow, enabling us to reach more Muslim and ME women in other areas of Scotland.

In the near future we hope to deliver structured training to Muslim and ME women to participate in recruitment panels; offering organisations and institutions alike a route to diversify their recruitment practices. This links to our broader ambition of developing work to tackle discrimination in recruitment processes and in the workplace, including providing training to employers and learning providers on how to attract a more representative team.

We are also mindful of the growing need to develop a specific programme of support for refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants who are looking for paid employment and volunteering opportunities.

If you are interested in collaborating on any of the above topics or would like to find out more please do not hesitate to contact us on [info@mwrc.org.uk](mailto:info@mwrc.org.uk)

## **Our Recommendations**

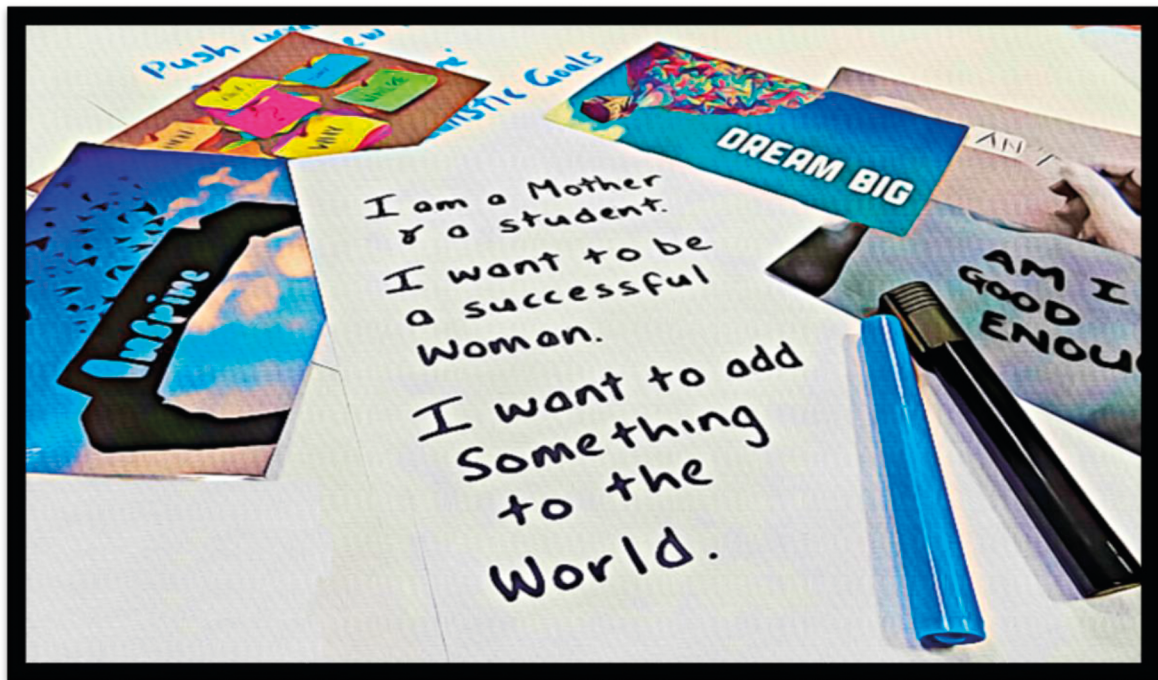
- Sustained efforts to engage and facilitate the participation of disadvantaged and underrepresented voices, using creative means where necessary.
- Establishment of an inclusive, faith and culturally sensitive devolved employability service with commitment to person centred, tailored support and inclusion of specialist third-party organisations with expertise.
- 3 year employability funding, including core costs. Payment by results model is not necessarily suitable for those working with communities where the journey to positive destinations are long, complex and permeated by complex barriers.
- Pressure on local authorities to set employability targets reflective of the ethnic minority demography in the area.
- Accessible and inclusive ESOL provision providing women only, barrier free learning environments with free English language support at a variety of levels – including jargon busting employability/industry specific learning sessions.

- Highlighting of Muslim and ME female role-models across a variety of mediums to inspire, motivate and encourage Muslim and ME women to access opportunities. Debunking of stereotypes.
- Promotion of diversity as strength and benefit to employers, rather than as a risk with negative consequences.
- Flexible, quality and affordable wrap around childcare.
- Increase in the number of carer friendly, flexible job roles and home working opportunities.
- Accessible, jargon free application forms, name-blind recruitment and representative selection panels.
- Research into the reasons for increased levels of enterprise and self-employment within the Muslim community. Does the triple penalty of being female, an ethnic minority and Muslim push people into alternative means of income generation?
- Development of interactive, participative training on unconscious bias and the impact this can have on recruitment practices.
- Campaign to tackle engrained cultural attitudes towards work.
- Scotland specific research into the prevalence of discrimination against Muslim women during the recruitment process.
- Organisations being open to partnerships and collaborative working to share resources and expertise in order to provide the best service to Muslim women.



## **Feedback and Quotes from the Event**

- “This event was probably the most informative event I’ve been to all year”.
- 96% of delegates surveyed indicated the event had increased their awareness of barriers to employment for Muslim women.
- When asked what they felt as a result of the conference, responses included;
  - “Empowered”.
  - “Inspired and motivated”.
  - “Passion to influence improvements”.
  - “Re-engaged to continue working in trying to engage more ME women”.
  - “Anger and passion to work for equal opportunities”.
  - “Happy to be around so many likeminded people”.
  - “Disappointed at such narrow points of view/ignorance shared in anecdotes”.
  - “A reminder that the equal opportunity struggle is not won!”
  - “Discrimination is more prominent than I thought it was”.
  - “Great work being done by a lot of organisations who can work together better”.
  - “Very interesting statistics and research results that support our experience as practitioners”.





[info@mwrc.org.uk](mailto:info@mwrc.org.uk)

[www.mwrc.org.uk](http://www.mwrc.org.uk)



[Amina.MWRC.1](https://www.facebook.com/Amina.MWRC.1)



[@AminaMWRC](https://twitter.com/AminaMWRC)

Amina - Muslim Women's Helpline

0808 801 0301

### **Dundee**

1/3 6 Whitehall Crescent

Dundee

DD1 4AU

01382 787 450

### **Edinburgh**

Greyfriars Charteris Centre

138/140 the Pleasance

Edinburgh

EH8 9RR

0131 667 9199

### **Glasgow**

Citywall House

32 Eastwood Avenue

Glasgow

G41 3NS

0141 212 8420

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