

Nari Kallyan Shangho International Parents' Forum

Overview:

On Saturday 19th November 2011, a group of women from different cultural backgrounds met to discuss the subject of parenting in a cross-cultural, inter-generational exchange of ideas. This included women from English, Scottish, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese backgrounds. Within this forum, focus groups talked about four key areas relating to the lives of children: Studies, Friends, Responsibilities, Respect and Ambition. These themes reflect the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors. The following points were raised.

Studies:

- Everyone in the group recognised the importance of education
- Private tuition is provided, if necessary, to supplement schooling
- All the participants attend parents' evenings
- It is not always easy to have a good quality discussion with teenage children
- We are reflective parents and ask our children about their studies

Friends:

- We know our children's friends and are friends with their parents as a result of meeting each other at schools
- Within Asian cultures in particular, the extended family is important and children form friendships within the family
- There is value in the intergenerational structure, especially when the nuclear family is becoming smaller with more separate units

Responsibilities:

- It was mentioned by a white British woman at the forum that she felt that perhaps white British people take responsibility for granted; they are not so conscious of their responsibilities in society
- It was felt by the whole group that within non-white cultural groups living in the UK, there is a greater awareness of responsibility relating to British society and citizenship
- We agreed that responsibility begins in the home

- One participant said she cannot expect her children to behave in the UK as they would in Pakistan
- Even though children are born and brought up in the UK, it is important to remember cultural roots

Respect:

- Traditionally, children used to belong to the extended family, but this has changed
- Respect and discipline have deteriorated
- There should be respect for other religions
- It was felt that there is too much freedom in the UK and not enough boundaries, especially in the area of relationships
- Cultural diversity in the UK is a positive thing and there are many strengths, including access to information
- Children are speaking to their parents differently, compared to how we spoke to our parents
- Being away from one's home country allows for reflection and individuals felt more Indian and more Pakistani
- Asian children are trying to become more like British young people

Ambition:

- There are greater opportunities for women to gain higher education qualifications and pursue careers

The forum concluded by acknowledging women's capacity to support one another and this is especially evident within the Nari Kallyan Shangho Community.

The next meetings for 2012 are as follows:

Monday 20th February
 Monday 14th of May
 Monday 6th of August
 Monday 5th of November

Time: 10:30 –a.m. - 12:00noon

Venue: NKS (Nari Kallayan Shangho) Darroch Annex, 7 Gillespie Street, EH3 9NH

Please contact NKS if you would like to attend the forum.

Contact person - Sadia Kadri, 01312211915 or email scotheritagens@hotmail.co.uk