

YORKSHIRE CHAMPIONS GROUP



Shazia Awan

Radio Programme Developer/Learning Support Assistant

Beckfoot Thornton Academy in Bradford

Background Information:

Shazia comes from a hardworking Pakistani Asian Immigrant family whose father came to the UK at the age of 12 and was a mill worker until he succeeded in the Restaurant/Takeaway business, her mother has always been a housewife. Shazia is a mother of two and the third of seven siblings, who were born in Bradford, but grew up in their parent's homeland left the UK at the age of seven, returned back to Bradford married at the age of 18.

As an ambitious young girl, her teachers had big hopes for her. However, Shazia was given no choice to leave education under pressure of cultural heritage and upbringing and was persuaded to get married at the age of 18, that restricted her opportunity to gain a higher education. She has experienced first-hand the cultural barriers placed on her in early adulthood. Marriage forced restrictions on what she was permitted to do or go.

When her husband became unemployed after a terminal illness they struggled to make ends meet. Financial issues and not having a career, really affected her mental health as she struggled to sit at home. That changed when she was self-driven to grow, and she changed it, pushing through the cultural barriers and control, determined to be a positive role model for her daughters so they didn't have to face the same challenges she faced. Shazia has put her marriage on stake to push through the challenges and she gained a degree as a mature student, being the first lady in her immediate family to go to university and secured an honours in Childhood and Youth Education through part time study, whilst being a full time carer and mum. She believes education never stops and there are many ways of accessing education at many different levels and approaches.

Shazia paved her way through various part-time voluntary work experiences over the years which she believes has helped to develop her confidence and sense of engagement with individuals, parents, community and voluntary organisations; harnessing wealth of experiences and transferable skills working in social and education practices has enabled her to make a smooth transition into the education sector. She is a passionate individual who believes that positive change can happen through collaboration and that collectively Bradford can make a significant difference to children, young people and communities. Focus and desire to improve situations for individuals helps positive outcomes to be achieved.

Shazia is a member of an award winning community group with the aim to accomplish grassroots initiatives to empower and give women from all backgrounds a voice in the communities. She has also facilitated and organised community initiatives that impact young children's literacy and parental

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engagement in their child’s education, in partnership with community rail networks that was praised by the Lord Mayor. She is keen to promote railway careers and industry amongst young people and BAME communities. Her interests and passions are sparked by regular engagement, all of which encapsulate her passion to make positive changes through building strong links and activity with all sections of the education, communities and individuals that enhance empowering individuals, promote inclusion and integration.

Shazia is a casual radio presenter on BCB local community radio and BRI hospital radio which has enabled her to thrive in a rare secondary role as a Radio Programme Developer and is now enabling young people to build and use effective communication and confidence skills through developing radio podcasts. She feels passionate that all young children should thrive to their best abilities and that every member of the society and communities have a lot to offer in terms of intervening early and providing good role models for children. She works in a very tough secondary school in Thornton, Bradford and believes that the children would benefit from inspiring and empowering visitors into the school and with the help of this role is prepared to mentor young people and give advice on life, employability and education skills etc. to enable them to feel ambitious, positive about their future and themselves; ready for the wider world.

She loves to travel and all things outdoors. She plays Inspiring Women’s Charity Cricket, in Bradford, founded by an empowering first Asian newspaper founder of Bradford who wanted to see greater effort to get women/girls involved in the sport and transform the way it engages with South Asian communities and draw more players, fans and volunteers into every level of the game; sharing friendships and reduce isolation.

Reflecting, Shazia could never have imagined how lucky life has turned out to be for her and is very grateful for this, for which she grabbed every opportunity to be where she is. It would bring her great pleasure if she was able to use any part of her story to be able to inspire young people and encourage them to reach out for your dreams and for that you need a get a good education behind it, so that they can become more resilient and see the challenges they are facing in their lives as learning curves that will help them become stronger, more confident individuals, like it did to her. She remains very passionate about her goals, and in making a difference from all the knowledge and experience she has gained, giving back to communities, helping build relationships and bringing cultures from all backgrounds together.

Sectors worked in and routes taken:	
Education	As above
Community	As above

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What I would like to get involved in: (please tick)			
Inspirational Talk	Visits to my place of work	Mentoring / Coaching young people	Other (please state)
✓	✓	✓	