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Interviewer: Clara Aguilar Falguera
Respondent: Mohith Lakhanpal

So today is the 5 September 2014. This is Clara Aguilar interviewing Mohith Lakhanpal in West of Scotland Region Equality Council for the Project Stepping into Diversity. Erm, could you spell your name please?

M-O-H-I-T-H – it's spelt wrong but that's just another matter and my surname Lakhanpal – L-A-K-H-A-N-P-A-L.

Oh thank you. Where were you born?

Err I was born in Alexandria in West Dunbartonshire.

And when were you born?

I was born 21 October 1992.

Alright, thank you. So you were born during the 90's?

Yes.

How would you describe your decade?

It had good music. Erm I can't – it was good. When I grew up it was very – there were a lot of kids so kind of it was good. It was quite a safe area where I used to live and it was good. My family used to run their own business so that was good seeing that and it was right next to my primary school so I would always see my family kind of everyday and that was good as well. And I could just go to the shop and take sweets and stuff and take them into school so I was quite popular in primary school as well. It was probably about it. Yeah, that's it.

And would you say it was a great time to grow up as a child?

Erm yes, I think it was because there was – the 90's and probably the early 2000's there was such a big boom in technology and society at the time. There was a lot of change and it was good been in that kind of change as well and seeing it all happening. And well in the 90's – well, when I was growing up there wasn't really a lot of diversity and like in the school but probably until the late kind 90's early 2000's there were some more people coming into my area from many different walks of life.

And where do your parents come from?

Err my family originate from India. My mum was born in India, my dad was born here.



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And how – how do you feel about that? I mean how do you feel about your mum's origins and your dad's origins?

Err, I dunno. Err it's kind of good obviously my dad was born here so that's kind of good as well so he's obviously second generation so I've got a lot of kind of – I've kind of got a lot of ties and obviously in Scotland and I've also got a lot of ties in India as well and because my mum's from India as well our cooking is probably one of the best as well so like kind of people are always on about the kind of – not – well, they are always like "Oh, when your mum making a curry?" I'm like "My mum makes a curry pretty much kind of most days" and they are like "Oh, bring us some" and like "I'll try" so that's good in that respect. Erm obviously mum – because my mums from India her kind of – her values are very different to maybe towards my dad values and they are a wee bit different but it's good obviously having a very diverse kind of – kind of different viewpoints I'd say and it's kind of – it's kind of made me value who I am and stuff and it's – and it's also – Indians they are quite a – they are two different things and it's quite good. It's quite good kind of seeing kind of different viewpoints from both kind of countries as well I'd say.

Uhm hmm. You mentioned that your mum and your dad maybe erm had some different values that they gave you but could you think of an example that reflects that like ...?

Err I'd probably say probably relationships. My dad's a wee bit more open than that than my mums. My mums a bit more probably kind of – she's more kind of marriage kind of that kind of thing where my dad's kind of more open about it because obviously we kind of grew up here so he knows what it's like being my age where obviously my mum kind of got married roundabout my age so she probably didn't experience being my age and being young. I think that's probably it.

Erm when did she – when did your mum come here in – in Glasgow?

Err she came in 1990. August 1990.

So she grew up in an absolutely different environment, different culture, different country erm did you erm feel when you were a child or now in your erm day to day the differences that she mentioned like "when I used to be like you I used to do this and you are doing and a completely different thing". Could you think about an example that reflects that?

Erm I don't know. I think my mums because mum kind of got – mum also got married a wee bit – well, kind of young I think she kind of wants me to maybe experience a lot of things and you know, go travelling and stuff and do things that she didn't do when she was younger. Erm, that's probably it. And erm, I don't know. I really – I don't know it's – I never really ask these questions to both my parents.

You don't usually talk about your parents at childhood or ...?

Err yeah, well my mum's childhood was probably – I'd say it was quite – it was quite innocent. Probably ay, mums and – yeah, my mums kind of grown up she was quite innocent and stuff and erm obviously she kind of grew up with kind of a big family and also coming here it's probably – it probably took her a while to kind of get used to obviously living quite far away from her parents and stuff and obviously she probably started – she obviously does miss em and stuff but was – she was obviously call them and Skype them but that's different – that's not the same



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thing but I think my mum misses the whole erm – I know her family's here as well but I think she kind of misses the whole you know, seeing her mum and dad, hugging her mum and dad, that kind of thing.

How often do you erm or your mum or your family go to India?

Err last time my mum went in 2011 I think was the last time. We – I booked – me and my sister booked tickets for her to go in March but that never happened because my sister feel ill but we try and – me and my sister will always try and get my mum to go maybe at least every two or three years. And obviously her parents – obviously my granny and grandpa are getting old now so it's probably good if she goes quite regularly and sees them.

So how many languages do you speak?

Obviously I speak English. I can speak a wee bit of Hindi and Punjabi as well.

Uhm hmm. So do you use Indian and – which language do you use to communicate with your mum?

Err probably English but I do – we do speak a wee bit of Punjabi with each other.

Uhm hmm.

But it is mainly English.

Erm, you describe your Dad – because Ben told me as a second generation Indian can you please explain that?

Erm well my granny and grandpa – well my dad's mum and dad's dad came and well – came and I think – I dunno – I think he came in the 40's or 50's, I can't remember but he came and then obviously my dad was born here and I think in the 60's my dad was born here and he grew up in Glasgow and then he moved here – he moved to where I stay now when he was seven years old. And erm yeah, but obviously his – I think his childhood was totally different to my childhood, there were so many kind of different things and obviously he grew up in a bigger family. He had five brothers and sisters and I only have one. Erm and obviously I – having that kind of – I don't know how my dad coped with all them brothers and sisters – I can barely cope with one.

Erm the last question about your family erm which erm regarding to your parents education, err the way your parents – what would you like to highlight? I mean values erm culture or a point of view that you have of them?

Erm I – my mum and dad are probably not well I would say they are not that religious but we – well, they do tell me to respect every culture in society. As long as we respect you and you have love for them then that's the main thing and I always go off that and I don't care if your – I don't care what colour your skin colour is as long as you are a decent person that's the main thing and that's what I've always been – that's what I was always growing like. My dad always told me that – obviously when my grandpa first came here, they used to share a house with people who were from – who were from the Sikh faith, the Muslim faith and stuff so that kind of thing so – so – it's just – I don't know, we are just helping each out – that's what – that's what I've always done. If my friends needs help, I'll help them and that's what me and my parents or my parents bought me up to believe and I think it's true. Respect one another and they'll respect you back.



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So how would you describe yourself in terms of religion?

Err I don't – I would say I'm not that religious but I – no I'm not – I wouldn't be – I'm not a hard-core religious person but I do take some values from my religion and many other religions as well. I just think – I dunno – it's your choice whether you want to be religious or not and my parents don't force that on me as well so that's good. As long – they always tell me as long as I'm a decent person, that's the main thing and I think I – I try to be.

And would you consider yourself a Glaswegian?

Err, yes.

What does it mean for you?

What does that mean, oh? Well, I do live outside Glasgow but I do – I spent most of my time there. I think that's what kind of makes me Glaswegian. Erm also kind of the values of kind of Glasgow as well, the whole kind of – kind of friendliness, always up for a laugh, all that kind of stuff. Yeah, I don't know. I don't know why – I'm just kind of proud to where I come from. And I kind of try and portray the city in a kind of good way when I do talk to people who are maybe not from this place and I always try and get people to come here because I do think it's a great place and I – I do think it's a great place. Well, it's my home to be honest. Home is home, I think.

And how would you describe yourself but in terms of nationality?

Oh, I'd probably say I'm Scottish. And probably I'd say more Scottish than I am Indian because I spend most of my time here and I probably have – I think I have probably more Scottish values than Indian but I do have some. I do have both but I do think I'm more Scottish.

Erm could you tell me if you think that Glasgow and Glaswegians or the people who live in Glasgow are respectful in terms of immigration?

Err I think maybe more so now than when I was growing up. I think because obviously erm I think more people maybe in the last five, ten years have come into this country like for instance. I never though this when I was a kid probably when I was about five or six or maybe when I was in primary school and early high school I did not think I would be going on holiday with people from Africa, from Asia like we went on to lad's holiday a couple of like two weeks ago and err it was five – four of them were from the African continent, one was from Iran and then also myself so I was the only person who was born in Scotland and I did not think that would be the case and I think yeah, we are more open in society I think. Also we still ... there is still some people about yeah they are probably a bit racist but that's part and parcel in any society. But I think it's a minority and that's – when I go – when I went to University I was quite shocked to how diverse Glasgow was because where I came from it was maybe – maybe three or four families who were not your stereotypical white kind of family who have moved from, I don't know, they were maybe Scottish and Asian or half kind of what not but erm I think more so now yeah probably but back in primary school and at high school I did get racially abused but less so now probably.



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Okay so erm if you talk about your environment – your erm people around you, friends, family, erm do you think you – you have people from very different cultures around you?

Err yes. Err yes erm the group of people I do hang about with are obviously quite mixed. Also when I went on holiday there was a few people who were from the African continent and from different African countries who are from – who are from where I'm from so that's kind of – and then obviously I've got someone from – one of my friends is from South India. I've got two people who I am friends with and they're from Iran and they all live in my area. Within ten years ago, that probably wouldn't be the case but now, and my – there's a lot of diversity and I think people are kind of okay about it and also I think they – everyone in my group is just kind of friendly and up for a laugh. There is a few people who are probably a bit racist but that just happens, you just get used to it probably.

Erm how would you describe – what do you think in your life would be in the next ten years?

Oh, it's early days – erm obviously I'm still studying so hopefully after that maybe travel around Europe try and get a job, maybe a broad just experience new things and hopefully come back – hopefully come back to this country one day. But I's kind of do – right now I kind of want to move out and learn new things and experience new things. So I don't know – and there's probably time to do it, I think.

Uhm hmm. And what does the word community mean to you?

Erm well community I think is erm – ooh, that's erm – coming together and helping one another and yeah basically coming together and helping one another. So that could be – I don't know – there's so many kind of different communities out there. I'm probably part of so many communities as well and so I think just coming together and working together for the common good I think from the way I see it.

So Mohith, thank you so much. It has been a pleasure. Anything you could – want to say or, that's fine?

Nope, that's perfect.

Transcript ends 0:15:22.4