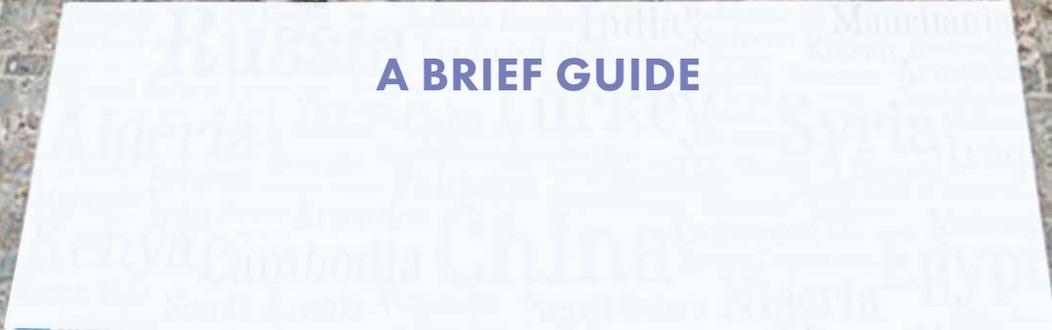




A BRIEF GUIDE



MISSION STATEMENT

BMSD's mission is to combat anti-Muslim sentiment, fundamentalist obscurantism, by bringing together progressive Muslim voices to promote secular democracy, social justice and civic engagement.

AIMS

- ◆ Shaping Discourse
- ◆ Informing Debate
- ◆ Influencing Public Policy
- ◆ Education and Young People
- ◆ Civic Engagement & Democracy

BACKGROUND

In 2006, Nasreen Rehman and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown set up BMSD. At the time the British public sphere was dominated by obscurantist male Muslim voices. Progressive views were occluded and women's voices were seldom heard.

Today, BMSD is an inclusive platform that brings together the rich cultural, ethnic and doctrinal diversity of British Muslims. It stands at the cutting edge of the discourse on what it means to be a Muslim.

OUR WORK

BMSD is a small organisation. Nevertheless, with the commitment of its two part-time staff and Trustees it has made a big difference.

1. Shaping Discourse

BMSD actively shapes debates on democracy, human rights and social justice from a Muslim perspective. Our staff and Trustees have made countless interventions through TV, radio, newspapers columns, blogs, social media and academic journals. BMSD's Facebook group has over 7,000 members. Tehmina Kazi, Director of Outreach and Lobbying, has received several awards, while Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, a founding Trustee is an internationally renowned columnist.





2. Informing Debate

In addition to its very active media engagement, BMSD public debate by hosting a series of public lectures. Recent speakers include writers and public intellectuals such as Innes Bowen, author of the informative book *Medina in Birmingham Najaf in Brent: Inside British Islam*; Prof. Ziauddin Sardar and Najam Sethi, a well-known anchor on Pakistani TV and editor-in-chief of the Friday Times.

BMSD published, *“Think global, act local”* (2010): A small case study outlining the political choices of British Muslim students.

Our Trustees include, Andy Gregg, Chief Executive of Race on the Agenda (ROTA) and Dr. Ghayasuddin Siddiqui, former Director and co-founder of the Muslim Institute, and Chair of the Halal Food Authority.



3. Influencing Public Policy

BMSD seeks to extend the debate and dialogue about what it means to be a local British Muslim in a global context.

BMSD is linked in various ways to critical debates on public policy in the UK. Dr. Nasreen Rehman, our Chair is a member of the Equality and Diversity Forum. She, along with two other Trustees, Mona Sheaves, Dr. Ghayasuddin Siddiqui are Commissioners of the National Commission on Forced Marriage. BMSD’s Director of Outreach & Lobbying, Tehmina Kazi is an active participant in relevant debates across the UK and Europe. We seek to build partnerships across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the rest of Europe.



To this end, BMSD has worked with the European Network Against Racism; British Council (USA); Muslims for Progressive Values; the Danish School of Media; and The Jinnah Institute in Pakistan.



4. Education and Young People

At BMSD we are committed to the idea that education is critical in promoting civic engagement and bridging the democratic deficit. We are revising and updating our Guidance for Schools (February 2010), particularly in light of events surrounding the 'Trojan Horse' in Birmingham. It was published in response to both parental and schools' concerns. It is an invaluable tool for parents, teachers and schools, to use to combat extremist narratives, and to promote the idea that Islam is compatible with democracy.

5. Civic Engagement & Democracy

BMSD is committed to raising the civic engagement of British Muslims through Democracy Workshops, with a focus on empowerment through active citizenship. In the past we have worked with groups in Tower Hamlets. Our current focus is on the relative absence of Muslim women in public life and the workplace. The next Democracy Workshop project seeks to empower Muslim women from disadvantaged communities. The aim is to encourage independence and resilience and to take advantage of the full range of opportunities society has to offer.

BMSD wishes to thank its funders:



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THE FUTURE

After a decade of consolidation, BMSD is poised for steady growth as an organisation. In the next five years it seeks to develop local and global partnerships and funding, to break new ground.

TRUSTEES:

Dr. Nasreen Rehman (Chair)
Mona Sheaves (Vice Chair)
Yasmin Alibhai-Brown
Andy Gregg
Dr. Shaaz Mahbub
Dr. Ghayasuddin Siddiqui

STAFF:

Hanif Abdulmuhit, Director of Operations
Tehmina Kazi, Director of Media, Outreach & Lobbying

CONTACT:

Chair: Dr Nasreen Rehman
chair@bmsd.org.uk
Director of Operations:
Hanif Abdulmuhit
director.ops@bmsd.org.uk
Director of Media, Outreach & Lobbying: Tehmina Kazi
director.media@bmsd.org.uk

Join us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/BMSDOfficial/

WWW.BMSD.ORG.UK
INFO@BMSD.ORG.UK
OFFICE: 020 7183 4806

