



## **Introduction to Working with Young People**

*Working with a Youth Service*

**Now 20 and at college, Akkas was one of the founding members of The Factory project.**

### **Akkas**

The Factory Project got started by, basically, two strangers on the street. They actually approached us, actually introduced themselves to us, saying who they are, what they did, what their purpose was. So, we, at that age, we were quite young and we got interested in what they said, like, they run activities, such as that bowling and Laserquest, going to camping trips, as well. So, we got really interested and we thought, yeah, we'd go ahead with it, as well. So, it was a small group to start off with but eventually we got more of our mates to get together and, you know, told them about it, what's happening. So, they got interested, as well. So, I think it started from there, really.

**Eventually, Akkas was invited to get more involved by becoming a volunteer.**

I used to, like, be a regular member, go to activities, go to meetings. And then Andrew told me, it would be really good for my CV, for my portfolio and everything, if I become a volunteer to help out with The Factory group. So, I thought, yeah, it would be really good, for my future career and that. So, I thought, yeah, I'll become a volunteer.

**He's building up valuable evidence of his achievements.**

Andrew set up a portfolio, so, there's, like, loads of modules in the portfolio. So, every time I complete a module, he gives us a certificate for it, which I thought is really good, because if I do get a job, I could show the certificates and say I did this and say I did that.

**When a part-time post came up with the project, Akkas was perfect for the position.**

Being a member, I knew what I was wanting from the youth workers. And now I'm a youth worker I could, like, relate to my past and see what they want from us and, in that, I can actually ask them, as well, what they want, as well, because time do go by and then time do change, in what they want.

What's wrong with your job?

[inaudible]

**Akkas is very familiar with the issues faced by young Bengali men.**

### **Akkas**

One of the main issues is employment. A lot of people in that area from traditional families, very poor families, as well, their parents tend to send their older kids to start to work, probably be about 16, 17, and then they send them out to work, but they don't have much experience or qualification to go to a really good job and work, so they tend to go to, like, a factory job, where you don't need much experience and, from there, they get income to give to their families. That's one of the reasons that's stopping them to go to higher education, to uni's, to study further to get a better job. Other issues can be, like, relationship with the family, with self, they might have problems, like domestic violence or something like that. Other issues, like sexual relationship.

**Being a member of the Bengali community means Akkas can play a role that Andrew sometimes can't.**

For example, if they have some kind of family issue. Me, as a Bengali, who understands the language, will probably make a home visit to the house, and actually speak to their parents.

We'll probably get someone who's older than us, as well, so I'll be able to interpretate what they're saying through me to them, so, who's more experienced and who know what they're saying, as well.

We're on the streets. We're going to dish out the consent forms for the **Eid celebration**.

**How he relates to project members depends a lot on their age.**

Some of the members are younger than us, and they see us as youth workers, then that helps them to come to us and raise issues with us. And some are, like, the same age, our friends and that, they tend to come up to us and raise issues, but they don't really raise in-depth issues like family issues and that, because they see us as friends, so they want to go to someone who's older, more experienced in that.

**It's different again with the over twenties.**

Obviously, they're older than us and they don't really see us as youth workers, they see us as, like, younger brothers.

**Trips and nights out bring additional factors that can affect relationships between members and workers.**

Sometimes it can be really difficult because we're not on the streets so we have more restrictions, for example, in the minibus, we have to, like, tell them to wear their seat belts, going to places like Laserquest, they have to, like, follow the rules. So, we have to force them to follow the rules, because it's not their area, it's not their territory no more, so we have to be strict with them, like, not shouting or running around or chucking litter or anything like that. So, sometimes it can be really difficult because they want to go all hyped up and that.

**Andrew**

You can put in that you've left the programme space for dialogue and discussion. Have you written all that down then, or what?

**Akkass**

No, I'll just have to – we need to go one by one.

Whatever we plan to do, we do it, and after we've done it, we actually evaluate it at the end to see what went well, what went bad, to see what the outcome was. Sometimes not everything does go to plan so we do make some mistakes. From that mistake we actually learn what mistake we made and then we try to do it better next time round.