

# File: Baroness Hussein-Ece5

## Key

[time e.g. 5:22] = inaudible word at this time

[5:22 1A] = inaudible section at this time

Word 5:22 = best guess at word

Well, I'm aware that I'm part of a minority. My parents were Turkish Cypriot migrants, my father was, all the time I was growing up he was very good at helping people with interpretation and translation so I grew up with that sense of helping others, that community sense. I got involved with setting up after school clubs for children, I helped to set up the very first Turkish and Kurdish women's organisation, very first project for supporting women from those communities facing domestic violence, which was a real ... [0:33] even 25 years ago, which was a struggle because there was a lot of resistance within the community then. A lot of the men felt very threatened.

I was a school governor for the kids in Grasmere School where my kids went to school. They wanted somebody particularly from my background 'cause it was such a large Turkish community in Hackney and they didn't have anybody. I stood for election in '94 in Hackney Council. There'd been no one else from my community, from my background, who'd ever stood, so I did stand. When I stood it created a bit of a chain reaction 'cause it did encourage more people from the community to come forward and stand. I'm quite proud of that. You need people from all backgrounds to get involved in local politics. I became a councillor in Hackney and I got kind of sucked in. I got very much involved with women, the whole women's agenda, became Chair of the Women's Equality Committee, and then within a few years I was deputy leader of the council, which was kind of astonishing. But it was so, seemed so extraordinary for me, and I had so many people saying to me, 'Oh, have you got children?' I said, 'Yeah, I've got three.' The youngest was two or three, and it was all, 'Well who's going to look after your children?' And 'What's your husband going to say?' And, 'Don't you think it would be better if your husband ...' I actually had women say to me, 'Wouldn't it be better if your husband did it instead of you?' And I thought ... they thought that was perfectly natural to say that. They didn't think that was insulting in any way.

In later years I was involved in a BME Women Councillors' Task Force. We went round the country trying to encourage more women from BME backgrounds to stand for public office.

By the time I've arrived here in the House of Lords I think I've pretty much ... you know ... <laughs> I've overcome a lot worse than this, so ... it puts you in good stead, you know.

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