



The report prepared to show the activities went down on `Words Matter` Conference which took place on 18.11.2016 at City College Coventry with the attendance of over 100 youngsters from Coventry.

[Hazal Ozaktan](#)

# WORDS MATTER REPORT

## Information about `The Words Matter` Conference

`The Words Matter` conference was organized by Together in Action with the initiation of Deepak Naik. The goal of the conference was to build awareness on Hate Speech among the youngsters of Coventry.

The need of such conference arose as a result of several incidents around the world.

One of the incidents that triggered the need of `Words Matter` conference is; the Syrian Refugee Crisis. Syrian Civil War has produced the last decades' most populous migration.

Hate Speech reached its peak as the refugees arrived into European shores. Anti-refugee comments started to take place in many countries as well as social media.

For example, Katie Hopkins, a British newspaper columnist's choice of words to describe refugees were found offensive. She used `cockroaches` term in order to describe asylum seekers<sup>1</sup>.

The UK's, referendum to leave European Union has added more tension to the migration problem and discrimination related issues. The referendum came to known as Brexit.

Politicians, such as Nigel Farage whom was a lead supporter of the Leave Campaign, have been condemned for their attitude on migration related issues<sup>2</sup>.

After the success of the Brexit campaign, there has been an increase in Hate Speech and crimes within the UK<sup>3</sup>. Figures suggests that, hate related crimes has increased by %60 after Brexit<sup>4</sup>.

Another incident that inspired the `Words Matter` conference, was the USA presidential election campaign. Donald Trump, a real estate tycoon from New York run against US Secretary Hillary Clinton. During his presidential campaign, Trump has angered many groups. Especially his remarks on Latino community has created a lot of speculations. Donald Trump has blamed Latinos for bringing crime to USA and made a generalization on their race by saying the migrants who came to USA are rapist and drug addicts<sup>5</sup>.

Trump also promised to build a wall between Mexico and US. Donald Trump has won the election.

These incidents are the proof of discrimination, xenophobia, anti-refugee propaganda and extremism are on the rise. As a result, more people are receiving offensive comments, being subjected to abuse and become a victim of a hate crime.

`Words Matter` conference tried to inform young people of Coventry about Hate Speech and Crime. The younger people know about the importance of words, the more people they will inform about the cause. The conference delivered with the financial aid from United Religions Initiative (Europe),

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/19/katie-hopkins-migrants-vermin-darkest-history-drownings>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/brexit-david-cameron-nigel-farage-council-of-europe-report-racist-violence-intolerance-hate-speech-a7345166.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/sep/28/hate-crime-horrible-spike-brexit-vote-metropolitan-police>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-37278903>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/9-outrageous-things-donald-trump-has-said-about-latinos\\_us\\_55e483a1e4b0c818f618904b](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/9-outrageous-things-donald-trump-has-said-about-latinos_us_55e483a1e4b0c818f618904b)

The Big Lottery and generously in-kind support by City College Coventry. Volunteers from Coventry Action, Eden Girls School and Coventry University has helped to ensure the financial viability of the conference.

Council of Europe, Ministry of Justice, the Interfaith Network of United Kingdom, Media Diversity, All Faith Network and Euro-Mediterranean Resources Network, West Midlands Police and Coventry City Council has supported the conference.

## Hate Speech

Anything that is meant to humiliate, degrade or offend anyone because of their Religion, Beliefs, Sexual orientation, Gender, Disability, Racial and Ethnic background are considered as Hate Speech.

## Hate Crime

Any crime that takes places because of the victim`s Religion, Beliefs, Sexual orientation, Gender, Disability, Racial and Ethnic background<sup>6</sup>.

## Guest List

Lord Mayor of Coventry  
Nabihah Islam  
Ali Alsaraf  
Surindar Nagra  
Hazal Ozaktan  
Alex Albans  
Mike Ainsworth

Rui Gomes  
Harriet Crabtree  
Zubair Khalifa  
Ilaria Esposito  
Simon Batten  
Raheed Salam  
Steve Stewart

Deepak Naik  
Dorrit Booji  
Pravin Patel  
Vicky Hobbs  
Umit Ozturk

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<sup>6</sup> [http://report-it.org.uk/what\\_is\\_hate\\_crime](http://report-it.org.uk/what_is_hate_crime)

## Event Flow

09.30 Registration and Refreshments

10.00 Welcome by Chair, Steve Steward OBE

City College, Assistant Principal

Lord Mayor of Coventry- Councillor Lindsey Harvard

10.15 ` Words Matter ` by Hazal Ozaktan – Coventry University MA Graduate

10.30 Thank You cards

10.40 No Hate Speech Movement Campaign – Rui Gomes Head of Education and Training,  
Youth Department- Council of Europe

11.00 Hate Crime- Mike Ainsworth, Chair of the Government Hate Crime Independent Advisory  
Group

11.20 Refreshments Break

11.40 Chaired by Hazal Ozaktan

11.45 Big Questions/Table Discussions – Zubair Khalifa, Faith and Values Coordinator

12.30 Harriet Crabtree OBE, the Inter-Faith Network, Executive Director

12.45 Reflections from 3 students

13.00 Thank You & Close

## Speeches

### Hazal Ozaktan



As a Master of Arts graduate from Coventry University and Human Rights activist, Hazal Ozaktan prepared a presentation about the importance of the words. The presentation consisted of 4 main topics. These were; The Freedom of Speech, Hate Speech, Hate Crime and Bullying.

Ms. Ozaktan stated that the Freedom of Speech should not be mistaken as a right to perform Hate Speech and continued by explaining the outcomes of hate speech. Hate Speech wounds its victims on so many levels by creating self-esteem problems to social exclusion. Also it is promoting violence towards the victim. Therefore, hate crimes are born.



### Rui Gomes

Rui Gomes, Head of Education and Training, Youth Department from Council of Europe, explained meaning of the Freedom of Speech and its importance on Human Rights context. Nevertheless, the Freedom of Speech does not mean we do not have limits on performing offensive comments towards a person's race, religion, language or sexual orientation. Mr. Gomez also touched upon the explanation of Hate Speech and the objectives of No Hate Speech Movement.

### Mike Ainsworth

Chair of the Government Hate Crime Independent Advisory Group, provided information about Hate Crime and its numbers in the UK and what the government has been doing in order to cope with this problem.

Mr. Ainsworth also stated that the UK takes the lead in Europe to keep track of hate crimes and therefore it has a high level of success when it comes to fight against hate crime.

## Harriet Crabtree

Ms. Crabtree attended the event as the event was part of the Inter-Faith week. She contributed the event as an inter-faith Network Executive Director. Ms. Crabtree mentioned the necessity of reporting Hate Crimes in order to tackle Hate Crime. In addition, she mentioned the help of True Vision's assistance on reporting Hate Crimes.

## Key Outcomes

Over 130 young people aged from 14 to 25, from diverse backgrounds, educational ability and learning setting, attended the Words Matter conference. These young people meaningfully engaged with the subject of Hate Speech/Crime through discussing the value of choosing words wisely. The participants were informed how the words can impact themselves and others. In addition, how words are their currency to a successful and happy life for themselves, their family and the community.

Initial findings from the evaluation survey forms suggest participants valued the contribution of the speakers, methodology of formal and none formal learning and discussion sessions, refreshments and their hope to practise what they had learnt.

The journey to organise Words Matter, had involved 12 Champions ( young people trained, supported and resourced to help plan, manage and deliver Words Matter and complete follow up activities). They were presented with certificates, additional resources to help cascade the message of `Words Matter-choose them carefully`.

The Champions, City College and Eden Girls School plan to disseminate the message of Words Matter and Stop Hate with activities such as discussion groups, exhibitions, during assembly and PHSE lessons.

With support from other bodies, Together in Action plan to prepare a resource pack with templates of lesson plans, other student and teacher resources to promote young people appreciate the power of their words and the positive change that can be generated.

Together in action would especially like to thank City Collage, Coventry and United Religions Initiative (Europe) without their support this event could not have taken place.

## The Big Questions

- 1) `` Hate Crimes committed against young people are under reported by victims to the police. Why are some young people who are victims of Hate Crime not willing to report the matter to the police? What can the Police do about it? Are third party reporting organisations such as Tell MAMA the solution? ``
  - Crimes are not reported because victims may believe it is `normal`

- They are uneducated or ... Human Rights
- Not being taken seriously
- Not being comfortable with the police
- The Police might be the last resort since there are community organisations
- Truevision.com is preferable.
- Talk to a teacher.

2) The New Prime Minister Teresa May stated that Social Mobility is one of her priorities. What advice would you give to the Prime Minister? What actions can the government take to improve young people chances to go to University?

- It is not fair and equal now
- Speakers for both schools
- Money should not affect your future
- Equality
- More funding available
- Mixing with one another
- The limit of free things stops at 18
- People have things handed to them when others must work for it
- ``someone who can't afford education could know the cure for an illness``

3) How can the Police build and maintain positive relationships with young people in Coventry?

4) Misuse of words can lead to hatred which can lead to violence. What are the conditions in society for misuse of words that may lead to hatred and violence- to stop hatred and promote good relations in society, what is the role of young people? What actions they can take?

- Use social media because it reaches young people
- Facebook, Blogger, Twitter and Instagram
- Be a role model
- Volunteer work
- Creating events, performances, gigs and raise awareness
- Unify people from different backgrounds
- Stopping segregation of young people to feel comfort
- Religious education reinstated
- Human phenomenon of religion.

5) Our City- Coventry is internationally recognised to be the City of Peace and Reconciliation, as a young person, living in Coventry, what does Peace and Reconciliation mean to you? What can young people do to promote good relations between people of different religions?

- What is Peace?

- Unity, understanding, empathy, love interacting, caring, equality, prosperity, respect, not just absence of war. Living with difference, bringing together.
- -What is Reconciliation?
- Bringing people together, frank dialogue, able to work together with different backgrounds, understanding what others believe, change your beliefs.
- Action:
- Learn about other religions
- Combat ignorance
- Multi-faith form
- Educating ourselves- put in the effort to learn
- Looking outward
- Sharing our festivals etc.
- Find common ground
- Welcoming refugees (community service)
- Actions speak louder than words
- You are a representative of your religion
- -Which is more important, Peace or Reconciliation?
- Reconciliation
- Understanding leads to peace
- Peace is only possible through forgiveness
- Understanding of the other side
- No peace without reconciliation

#### 6) What are the issues that concern young people today?

-More negative people. Can't change the internet. Ageism. Young people are more ignorant today and negative views. Less communication between adults & younger people do not understand current issues. Works for people who are open minded.

Negative reinforcement through the internet. People who are closed minded view things to reinforce it. Technology can be a source of division. Technology can isolate people, kids do not play out as much. Stress at college. Pressure to balance work and social life, don't have time to themselves. Overall expectation, not just parents, teachers, need to be involved with friends. Worried about the pressure quite daunting. Don't know how to speak for other people, If I go there can be more risky, only so much only one person can do.

Voting should be 16 and young people don't get a say. Wages £3.85 young people get paid less for doing the same job. Payment based on job done.

Campaigns spread peace not hate. Worried in terms of racist people have been legitimised. University competition, lot of competition for courses that they want to do.

Donald Trump will trigger more hate crime. For 3<sup>rd</sup> year running struggling to find good teachers, quality of teaching and the impact on their future. Changes of teacher can be really disruptive. Teacher disappears, cover teacher did not know the subject. Available worksheet was not sufficient.



Need to be more cautious worry more about crime as you get older. Issue with verbal abuse from a car in banner. Brook Park ran into shop walking home at night on their own feel nervous.

7) What can be implemented to tackle online religious hate speech in a public domain? Especially with the rise of Islamophobia and ongoing Anti-Semitism.

- Track buzz words online to record hate speech
- Take screenshots to record evidence
- Defend yourself
- Block the user
- Report it
- Notify the police
- Tell someone
- The government should introduce campaigns to promote inclusiveness
- Adverts for raising awareness
- Social media should take a firmer approach on discriminative behaviour
- Implement an easier way for young people to report hate speech + hate crime

8) What people think/feel about hate crime and hate speech after Brexit and the US election?

- Brexit:
- 100% up
- Vote leave: did not know what the reason to leave was.
- Good versus Bad. Media are quite naughty.

9) How can we create a more inclusive global community using campaigns such as the no hate speech movement?

- Discussions in schools.
- Racism
- LGBT
- Other religions
- Equality. Difference without superiority.
- Youth groups
- Community organisations
- Public places- Libraries
- Performance
- Online campaigns
- Media campaigns. News + performance.

10) What are the issues that concern young people today?

- Stereotypical views. Ex: religious.
- Looks
- Immediate judgements

- Appearance instead of personality
- Social media. Ex: Facebook, Twitter

No	Questionnaire No1 Tabulated Data	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA
1	I think words matter and everyone should consider what words to use carefully	66	2				
2	I would advise people to think carefully before using face-book, twitter?	42	24	2			
3	Learning to use words better can improve my life	47	20	1			
4	I know of people who have received messages that have made them happy	41	21	5	1		
5	I think - one kind word can change someone's entire day	51	16	1			
6	I would advise a friend not to write anything hurtful on the internet	58	8	1			1
7	I have received messages that has made me sad	17	28	11	10	2	
8	I know of people who have received messages that have been hurtful	30	26	8	2		2
9	I have sent a message, that I later regretted	8	23	12	16	9	
10	Before speaking I think carefully about what I want to say	23	32	11	1	1	
Total Questionnaires Number		68					

- Judgemental people. Ex: Race, family, gender, education
- Segregation. Ex: Not allowed to do things based on personal qualities. What you can or cannot do.

## Questionnaire 1:

*Table 1: Questionnaire No1 Data*

The questionnaire is composed of 2 sections. The first section, which will be referred as questionnaire No1, consists of 10 questions. The second section is questionnaire No.2 and it has 6 questions. The total number of the questionnaires gathered from the conference are 68.

Total 6 columns are used in the table, in order to characterize the answers given. The NA column refers to Not Answered. Although there was no such section, some people chose not to answer some questions or left it blank without noticing. Therefore I created a NA column in order to avoid confusion.

The data tabulated in Table1 is collected from the answers given to the Questionnaire No.1. Figure 1 represents a pie chart of the table's 1 data.

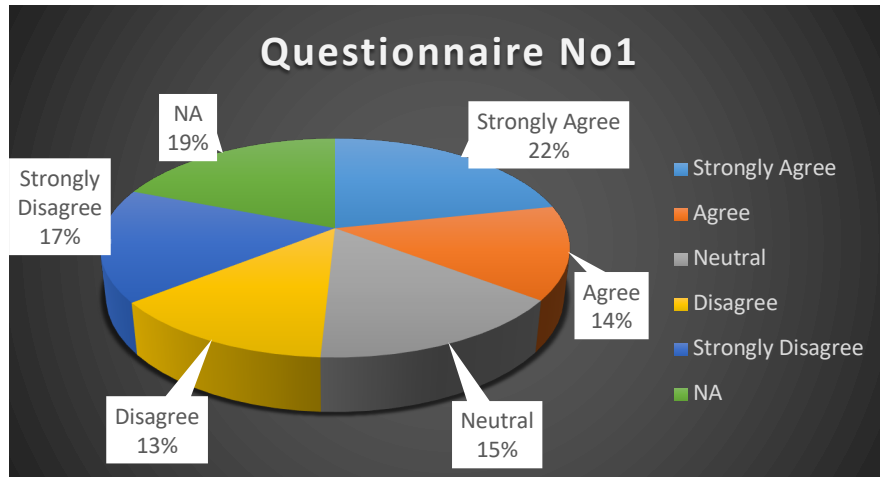


Figure 1: Pie chart of table's 1 data.

As it can be seen from figure 1, the biggest percentage of 22% belongs to Strongly Agree column. Where the rest are equally scattered.

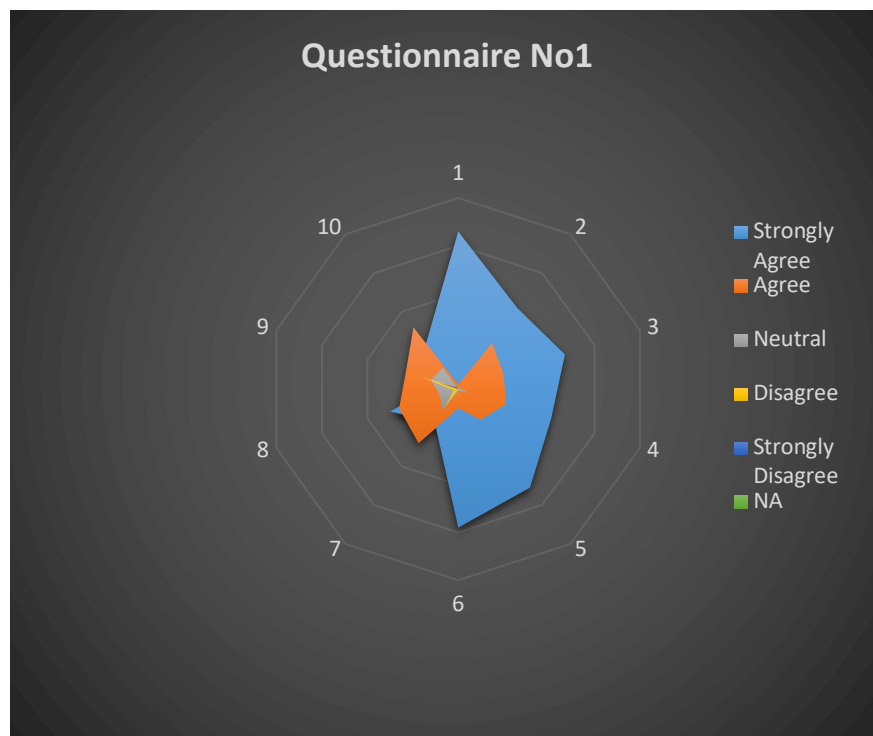


Figure 2: Filled radar of table's 1 data.

Figure 2 can help the reader understand the data better. A Filled Radar was used in figure 2 in order to gain more information about the people's answers. The circular pattern from 1 to 10 represents the questions given in the table [1]. From question 1 up to 6 most people answered Strongly Agree. Whereas from question 7 up to 10 most used answer is Agree with an exception of question 8 where there is a distinct rise on Strongly Agree.

## Questionnaire 2:

Table 2: Questionnaire No2 data

No	Questionnaire No2 Tabulated Data	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA
1	By attending the Words Matter conference my understanding of the value of words has changed positively	47	19	2			
2	I think young people's attending the Words Matter greatly	46	18	1			3
3	I will advise my friends not to write messages that people	39	16	5		1	7
4	I enjoyed listening to the guest speakers	36	25	6			1
5	I will send messages	27	22	12	1	1	5
6	I would like to attend other conference like Words Matter	29	26	13			
Total Questionnaires Number		68					

The data shown on the Table 2 is collected from questionnaire section 2. There are total 6 questions in this section and the total questionnaire sheet number is 68.

Below in Figure 3 a pie chart is presented with the data of table 2.

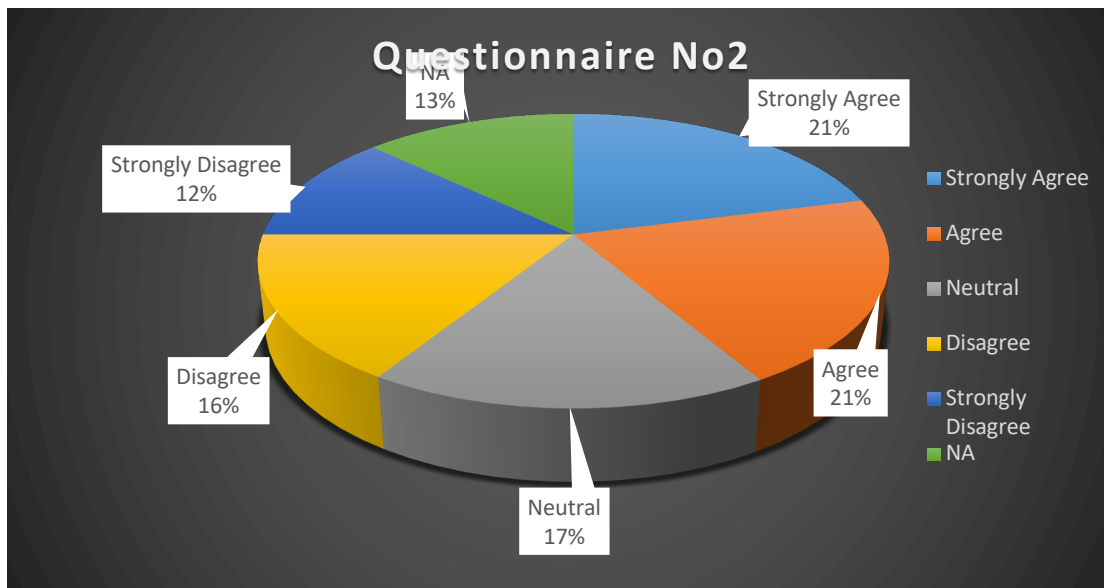


Figure 3: Pie chart of table's 2 data.

It can be seen that there is no distinct answer coming through from this section. The most distinct characteristic of this pie chart is that Strongly Agree and Agree are sharing the same percentage of 21%. Neutral and Disagree columns are more or less the same with only 1% difference. Then follows Strongly Disagree answer with 12% and NA answers with 13%.

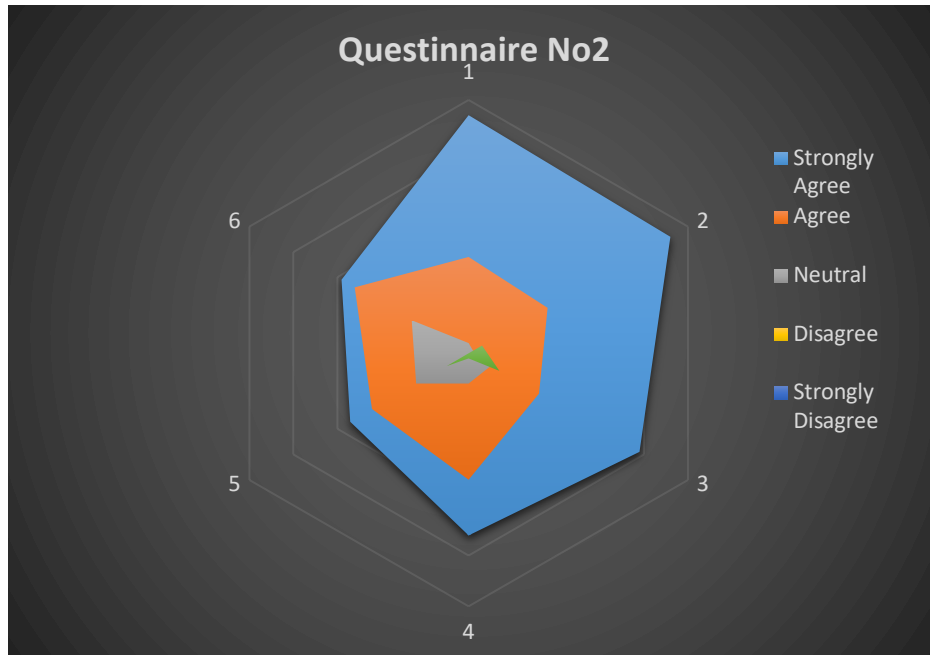


Figure 4: Filled radar chart of Table's 2 data.

Figure 4 is a Filled Radar Chart which presents data from the Table 2. As it can be observed from the Figure 4, Strongly Agree is the most selected answer among all six questions. Although Strongly Agree is the most used answer, it makes its peak from 1 to 4. The answers 4 to 6 seem to equally share the Agree answer. NA column makes appearance in question 3 even though it originally did not exist on the questionnaire.

## Comments made by the participants

At the end of the questionnaires, we requested comments related to the conference. 33 participants have agreed to share their ideas and written down their comments. These comments can be found below.

- I think that everyone who spoke, talked about relevant issues in society today and addressed them.
- The guest speakers talked a bit too long bur overall very informative and made us open our eyes to the hate around the world.
- I think the speakers and the whole arrangement was good. I feel I have positively benefited from this. Appreciate this being put together. Good work.
- Stop Hate Crime.
- It was a great conference, very informative and enjoyed it because the matters discussed concerned me. Great job!
- Integration is when different religious people coming together.
- We should have more practical activities.

- More activities should be included.
- I found this very useful.
- Inform schools about their social rights.
- Try and be more informative.
- It was just so inspirational.
- Make it more interesting.
- I really enjoyed it.
- Maybe interact more with who you are talking to and include people more in the discussions.
- Everything was perfect.
- Get people around, more involved, do activities.
- More activities, getting us involved. Was good!
- More activities to get us more involved.
- Thank you for helping me reflect and opening my understanding and helping me to enhance my mindfulness as well as practice it.
- Thank you for the experience! Stick to the time given, Thank you!
- Thank you for this experience.
- Very grateful for opportunity.
- I have no criticism. The session today was brilliant and very informative.
- Thank you for arranging this event. It was good to see young people centre stage. I hope a short report of the event will be prepared.
- I think the day was great, thanks.
- It was a great event that delivered to young and old.
- More interactive activities.
- This has given me the confidence to stand up against hate speech, even if I am scared. Thank you for the powerful message.
- It would be great if there were somewhere to pull all of this information together - a website, Facebook page etc. Could this be an annual event? Could school workshops be run?
- Would be useful to repeat with all schools and colleges. Also a Coventry perspective would be useful.
- I enjoyed listening a lot of information said.
- Integration of groups – mix groups – people from different organizations.