

**Kentish Town Community Organisation**  
*Leveraging Diversity For a Stronger Community*

**ISLAMICXPERIENCE**

**Come and meet your neighbours**

## Background

There has been much focus on Islam and Muslims in the media due to the recent tragic events in London. The public are inundated with headline stories, full-page articles and prime time programs all dedicated to informing them on the relationship between Islam, Muslims, extremism and terrorism.

Although some of the coverage has been honest and beneficial to the current situation, the vast majority of the information portrayed has been extremely biased, ill-informed and highly subjective. This continuous negative and often Islamophobic coverage has painted the rich, vibrant and diverse British Muslim community with a dark and broad brush as a result of the actions of a few individuals.

This has helped to alienate and demonise the Muslim community, harming community relations and has created an inaccurate perception of Islam and Muslims in the minds of many.

As a direct result, we see growing sentiments of hatred and hostility towards Muslims in the UK, a sharp increase in physical attacks on Muslims across London (including our borough of Camden) and a confusion amongst neighbours, work colleagues and even friends as to what Islam says and what British Muslims believe. The very loyalty to Britain of the British Muslim community seems to have come to the fore. Islamophobic statements asking British Muslims whether they are Muslim first or British first is now a common media theme. Despite our insistence that both are like parents, 'which of the two can we love more?', and that no one seems to question the Catholic communities ties to the Vatican or the Jewish community's attachment with Israel, the negative 'fifth column' label seems to be a recurring theme endorsed by extremist elements in the media and within our communities looking at opportunities to cause harm and further their own racist agendas.

The purpose of the *IslamicXperience* project is to help prevent this tension within our communities from escalating further by giving the local population a chance to come and meet their Muslim neighbours, experience true Islam and discover what being a Muslim means.

We aim to do this in an informal setting that is suitable for all. It is this dialogue and bridge building that is necessary at times like this. The event is not only designed to educate about Islam but to allow for frank dialogue with our neighbours without sidelining any of the topical issues and concerns any one may have.

## Objectives

Through the *IslamicXperience* program we hope to:

- Give local people an opportunity to see what Islam is really about and what it means to be a Muslim
- Provide an opportunity for the local community to ask questions on Islam and Muslims and clarify current understanding
- Direct people towards the right individuals and sources of information for future needs
- Initiate dialogue between people of different faiths and backgrounds to understand and respect the views of one another
- Assist the ongoing efforts of the local council to create unity and harmony within the diverse communities living in Camden
- Offer an interesting and enjoyable day out for the whole family

## Description

The *IslamicXperience* program will combine an exhibition with a six-stop guided tour that will include a trip to the local mosque and an opportunity to taste a variety of food from across the world.

The exhibition will feature an array of information, content and interactive displays covering the basic teachings of Islam, the relationship between Islam and science, Islamic history, calligraphy and the history and contributions of Muslims in Britain over the last 100 years.

The guided tour will complement the exhibition by giving visitors the opportunity to view the content in small groups with a tour guide who will provide key insights to the materials on display.

The tour will include a visit to the local Mosque in Queens Crescent where visitors will have the unique opportunity to see what happens inside a small mosque and learn how local Muslims benefit from the mosque in Kentish Town. Also as part of the tour, visitors will have a chance to taste gourmet treats from all corners of the world. The food will be cooked and provided by Muslims living in the local area.

Finally, the program will end with an open question and answer session where visitors will have the opportunity to get their questions answered and provide comments and feedback on the event.

The program will cater for both the young and old. There will be a range of activities for children so parents or guardians will be able to enjoy the program without distraction.

## Organisers

The *IslamicXperience* program will be organised and operated solely by local volunteers from the London borough of Camden in association with a number of voluntary and community organisations and sponsors.

The key organisations that will be involved in making the program happen will include the Kentish Town Community Organisation (KTCO) and the Queens Crescent Community Association (QCCA). We have asked the Baitul Aman Mosque in Kentish Town to assist us in this project by opening up their small centre and they have agreed. The program is also expected to be fully supported by Camden Council and the Local police authorities, with sponsorship from local shops and businesses.

## Who Is KTCO

The Kentish Town Community Organisation was formed in by volunteers who wanted to primarily help the youth in the Kentish Town area get off the streets and away from a rampant drugs and truancy driven culture in our inner cities. The directors of KTCO are professionals who come from backgrounds in Finance, Information Technology, Marketing, Consulting and Entrepreneurship.

In 2000 KTCO started with two youngsters who some of the directors asked what activities they thought might help get the youth off the street. Today KTCO caters for over 120 youth from the ages of 8 to 22. Amongst the activities it provides are:

- ❖ Football at Talacre Sports Centre every Friday evening for over 14 year olds and football for 8-14 year olds at Maitland Park gym every Thursday evening. Annual Football tournaments and the KTCO football teams actively take part in competitions against other teams in Camden and further afield.
- ❖ Youth counselling.
- ❖ Topical youth discussion sessions every Saturday evening.
- ❖ GCSE & A level tuition help before exams.
- ❖ Recreational trips that include hiking and camping tours.
- ❖ Further education guidance and counselling.

KTCO has been funded through voluntary donations with some programs getting partial assistance from local council funds such as the 'Neighbourhood Renewal Fund'. All of the people that help with its activities are volunteers who share a sense of deep caring for the youth of today and see the activities as a viable channel to give back to the community.

## Summary

- **Title:** **IslamicXperience come and meet your neighbours**
- **Dates:** **Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd October 2005**
- **Times:** **11am to 6pm on both days**
- **Venue:** **The Queens Crescent Community Centre,  
45 Ashdown Crescent, London NW5 4QE  
Telephone: 020 7267 6635**
- **Admission:** **Free to all**

## Further Information

For additional information on the *IslamicXperience* program, please contact any of the following people who will be please to answer your questions.

- **Mohammed Absar**      **07985 280 142**
- **Kazi Abu-Zafar**      **07956 449 111**
- **Foyezur Miah**      **07931 155 744**
- **Abu Boker**      **07956 587 189**

Alternatively, please email your enquiries to the address below and we will respond to all queries within 24 hours.

- **[islamicexperience@gmail.com](mailto:islamicexperience@gmail.com)**