

We got to sit down with Stanmore Jafferys first ever female recipient of the outstanding contribution award, Saida Nasser for a quick chat as we uncovered her journey in taking Stanmore Jafferys to new heights.

Here's a brief summary of our discussion.

1. **The inaugural outstanding contribution to SJ award suggests inspiration on your part to both our membership and the executive committee. What or who are your inspirations?**

Stanmore Jaffery Ladies was born and inspired by the ayah of the Quran that says 'Allāh will not change the condition of society until they change themselves'.

For years I grew up watching my brothers go to play football, witnessed sleepovers at mosque and I sat and did what was easy and complained. Why was it not available for the girls?

The Ladies Setup is now 10 years old and I still remember the opportunity coming to me, asking me to head and form the foundations of the ladies.

My instinct was I had no time but then I thought that if I want there to be a change, I had to be the ripple in the ocean to see the wave in change.

The change I wanted to see, was the breaking of socialising with the people in the hall that you sat in. The mosque to be a place for the girls to come and chill. SJL to be a go to place throughout the year.

My inspiration has to be the fact that Islam was born on the shoulders of both women and men serving equal parts of the wheels of making history – Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Bibi Khadeja (AS), Imam Ali (AS) and Bibi Fatima (AS) as great examples of this. These great personalities in Islam were in a position to empower the rest of us - empowerment starts from the grass roots.

We looked at creating a natural cycle, so those who attended our first sleepovers were then the ones running and scheduling the next event.

Likewise with sport, those who played, are now trained to coach.

I was cognizant that one size certainly could not fit all. So it was about finding events that appealed to different learning styles. This enabled us to attract those who would otherwise not be frequent attendees at the mosque.

2. **My own recollections of community volunteering is the ever-present, almost omniscient procedural awareness present in certain individuals. What are your recollections of notable volunteers? Any anecdotes you'd care to share?**

I would have to name Mariam Dato, her dedication to our sports has been second to none! She initially came on board as the head of sports and helped to structure and institutionalise sports. She noticed that there was a huge hole in female coaches and having played league football herself, she went to train and is currently certified as a FA level 2 coach and trains our girls.

The journey has been amazing, you get the opportunity to work with people you

would never have pictured, which then develops into lifelong friendships.

3. As an organisation, we are on this continuous quest to improve our volunteering efforts/set-up/support mechanisms. What advice would you give SJ in terms of supporting our 100+ volunteers? What could we do to make the volunteering experience better?

At the top of the structure, I would hold my hands up if I didn't know, or made a mistake. We join SJ because we want to serve our community. In this, there are lessons for ourselves to grow from, and there are plenty of moments to sit back and reflect, heed them. Plus as Imam Ali (AS) says, "lead with the quality of justice."

Also training for volunteers - remuneration is not about being paid a salary but giving volunteers something they can use going forward so for example, training courses, personal / professional development.

All of us at Stanmore Jafferys would like to offer our heartiest congratulations to Saida. Thank you for your outstanding contributions and may you continue to inspire others at SJ Ladies and beyond.