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Debbie Kramer-Roy

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Corresponding author: Debbie Kramer-Roy

Author contact: debbie.kramerroy2018@gmail.com

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'From 'why me' to 'try me': a Muslim mother reflects on her journey of raising a child with additional needs''.

Debbie Kramer-Roy

Amsterdam University of Applied Science, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The story *My Daughter - My Inspiration* was written by Madiha Sajid, a Pakistani mother of a child with a physical impairment, who participated in a Participatory Action Research project that brought six Pakistani families with disabled children together to explore their support needs in the UK context (Kramer-Roy, 2012). During the study, the individual families initially explored their experiences of welcoming the child into their family. After that three Action Research groups were formed for the fathers, mothers and non-disabled siblings of the families respectively, each of which chose a shared issue to explore through creative activities (Kramer-Roy, 2015) and action research cycles (Kemmis et al, 2004).

The mothers found their initial meetings very helpful, using drawings of metaphors representing their relationship with their disabled child to share stories with each other, and discovering common themes. For example, they all recognised that in their families and community, they had initially met with very negative perceptions about disability, including the view that their child's condition was God's punishment for the parents' sins. While this made their initial years of parenting the child particularly challenging, they also all spoke of how their love for their child caused them to question these perceptions, and to deepen their faith and sense of identity as a Muslim mother through their prayers for their child. Each in their own way, they spoke of how they gradually realised that their child was not a punishment, but rather a blessing from God.

Based on this positive experience of mutual understanding and support, the mothers' "action" within the research cycles focused on trying to set up a local group to invite other Pakistani

mothers to. This involved designing leaflets and visiting local community centres, shops and special schools to ask to display the leaflets and to speak to other mothers. In their evaluation of the project the participating mothers spoke of how empowering it had been to take the initiative to reach out to other mothers and to speak to community members about the need to increase support for families with disabled children. This illustrates the emancipatory nature and intent of Participatory Action Research (Herr and Anderson, 2005).

Maryam's story is a moving and powerful account of transformation and resilience, describing her journey from the moment her daughter Sophia was born, through the valleys and mountaintops of fulfilling Sophia's needs, while negotiating and managing the expectations of family, community members and society. Read and be inspired!

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