

We shape Birmingham - Ranjit Sondhi transcript

Title: [Ranjit Sondhi \(http://youtu.be/oLo77r1EmMs\)](http://youtu.be/oLo77r1EmMs)

Duration: 3.19 mins

MUSIC INTRO

My name is Ranjit Sondhi and I'm Chairman of the Heart of Birmingham Primary Care Trust. I also chair a South Asian arts organisation which is based in the Midlands Art Centre and another Birmingham based Trust that I sit on called the Bryant Trust makes small grants to voluntary sector organisations.

The University of Birmingham gave me two very important things. Firstly it instilled in me the spirit of intellectual enquiry but secondly it also gave me freedom of thought and expression. I wasn't just simply confined to my subject and to my department, so although I got a good degree in Theoretical Physics, I also dabbled in other subjects and in particular, issues that were concerning us at the time which were issues of social justice and the challenge of cultural diversity.

While Birmingham, the university, gave me food for thought, Birmingham the City provide the arena where we could put those thoughts into action. When it came to graduation I joined a group of university students who were setting up community action projects in the heart of the inner city. We are talking here about the late 60s and the early 70s when students thought they could change the world. The areas where we worked also happened to be the place where migrant settlers made their home and in the early part of their lives really struggled against discrimination and disadvantage. So I was moved to set up and run an Asian Resource Centre, probably the first of its kind in the country, in 1975 which gave valuable and vital advice and information and support to people who were amongst the most vulnerable groups in our society. That led to Birmingham becoming my home, gradually and un-self-consciously I slipped into life in Birmingham and I have never left it.

MUSIC

SAMPAD is a South Asian arts organisation that provides programmes in drama and music and dance. It is housed in the Midlands Arts Centre and it is in a creative partnership with it and leading the way in creating inter-cultural dialogue through its performances.

MUSIC

Birmingham needs a lot of intelligent, passionate and committed young men and women to come and work in the city, to live in one of the most diverse environments in Europe and to get engaged with social issues as well as their careers. Birmingham offers an immense variety of occupations and I believe that by engaging with the life of the city we can make a huge difference to it.

MUSIC OUTRO

END OF RECORDING