

## **I – by Sagal Abdi, aged 15**

I'm a Muslim girl with multiple identities; I'm British, Somali, Kenyan and French. My name is Sagal Abdi. I sometimes find it difficult as a Muslim girl because there are expectations to behave in a particular way, one being not to listen to some forms of music, some thing that most young people really couldn't live without. Sometimes there are expectations on girls to wear a headscarf, my mother encourages me in many ways but I generally find it difficult because I know that I'm not going to be fully committed to such a thing. The majority of my relatives wear headscarves from young to old and to be honest that is considered a shame towards me. Sometimes people compare me with my younger sister who is very religious and only 11, as a Muslim girl you are for some reason not allowed to hang up certain types of posters in your room, people say that the angels would not be there to guard you throughout the night and that your room will be full of bad spirits.

I'm not suggesting that this is a bad thing and I know it is just my family asking me to be a good Muslim, and who knows maybe when I'm ready I will? Deep down, I know that I'm a good person and a good Muslim, but at the end of the day I'm also a young person who likes to socialise, listen to music and enjoy life without too many ground rules because I still have a lot of experience from the world waiting for me. I'm not saying that I do not wear a headscarf because when it comes to religious or family events, those are the actual times I have to wear a headscarf. Loads of families will be at the event who know my mum so if I approached there with my hair in a tight ponytail, sleek and with a load of gel in it, it will obviously be an embarrassment to my family because unfortunately as with most cultures there are is a small element that gossip a lot.

The society I live in today is very different to the society I grew up in Djibouti in Africa and France and many Muslims treat each other differently because when I was lower down in the school I have experienced a lot of bullying and racism coming from the same culture and religion, this does not agree with the principle that, Muslims should treat each other like we are brothers and sisters. Why can't we treat each other in terms of personality instead of background whether you are rich, poor, black or white?