Suman Watts

Speaking Hindi, Suman Watts, former Assistant Director at South and City College Birmingham, recounts the various stages of her career, including her time with Birmingham Industrial Language Training Services in the early1980s. Part of the "Multilingual Memories: Recollecting Birmingham ILT" project.

English translation:Namaste, Sat Sri Akaal, Assalaam Alaikum. My name is Suman, Suman Watts. I know Hindi and a little Urdu too. But my mother tongue is Punjabi. I started working at Birmingham ILT in 1985. At that time, I used to present a program called Geetmala on BRMB Radio.

I stayed at Birmingham ILT for just a short time because my post there was temporary. After four or five months, I was sent to Coventry, i.e. Coventry ILT.

While working at ILT, I got the opportunity to work with many wonderful people. I also gained a lot of experience. My skills in radio production and technical matters at ILT were very useful in preparing Hindi-Urdu spoken materials, and using these, I started teaching Hindi and Urdu to those college students who were learning child care and who were interested in learning Hindi and Urdu, and started seeing the benefits of it.

The issues and principles we focused on while working at ILT formed the basis of my later career - anti-racism practices, equal opportunities, inclusiveness and so on.

For a while I worked in youth training, then at Garretts Green College.

At Garretts Green College new progress was made - the realisation that alongside teaching English, professionally relevant language was also needed for English learners. This was called Linked Skills.

I then worked at South and City College, where I taught for a long time, and then became Assistant Director.