

P: Now, you might think of a library as a dusty old place full of books that nobody uses anymore. But in a 'living library' the books are real people. People who can share a significant personal experience, or a particular [redacted] on life. Today we've got two people here to tell us about their 'living book' experiences. Alex Fuller, who was a book at his living library event in Sheffield, and Saba Chataranda, who was a reader at an event in Norwich. First of all Alex, hi ...

A: Hello.

P: Alex, can you tell us a little bit about the experience? What kind of book were you? And what was it like?

A: Er, yeah ... well, the event was organised by the university and was meant to tackle prejudices. I arrived in a bit of a hurry, and ... er ... quickly checked through the catalogue to see what kind of 'books' were available, and to, er, sign myself in as 'a student'.

P: A student. OK. And what sort of [redacted] were you expecting?

A: Yeah, well, er, I wasn't sure what to expect really, but when you read the catalogue,

against each 'book' there are a few of the typical prejudices and [redacted] that people might associate with your 'title'. So, next to 'student' people had written things like 'lazy', 'politically apathetic', 'do useless degrees'. And also 'waste tax payers' money', 'can't cook' and 'spends all his money on beer'. Well, thinking back to the previous night, I wasn't sure how I was going to tackle any of those accusations.

P: I see. So what did you do?

A: Well, first we just had to go and sit in the waiting room. And I was beginning to have [redacted] to be honest. I was quite uneasy about it all. But anyway, then the public started coming in, it was like sitting on a shelf, waiting and hoping that someone would choose you, and hoping that you would be able to find something to say when they did.

P: Er, right. And presumably someone did choose you.

A: Yeah ... an older man, with grey hair and a suit, came to collect me. And as we were walking over to our corner, I was planning my responses to the expected accusations. But, in fact, as we started talking over coffee, we compared our experiences – you know, student life in the 1960s, with its riots and protests, wild music, and all the ambitions they had of changing the world. And student life now.

P: OK ... and what did you discover? Anything interesting?

A: Actually, we found that we shared a lot of the same ideologies, and that many things haven't really changed.

P: Ahh ... that's interesting. So, do you think there was any point in the session? Did it change your opinions at all?

A: I think the directness of the experience was eye-[redacted] really. It forces you to have a very candid discussion, so people have to [redacted] mind about things, and that has to be good.