

**Recently, we ran a five-day Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination course in Madrid. Sati Bekyan attended and gave her impressions:**



*"When the opportunity to attend the Religious Diversity and Anti-discrimination (RDAD) course in Madrid arose, I jumped at the chance and am very glad I did so. The course started on a Sunday afternoon and ran for five days. To be honest, at first I felt a little uneasy as I don't consider myself a person who is at ease talking openly about beliefs, faith, let alone that I don't consider myself a religious person. Later I found out that I was not the only person with such pre-training considerations.*

*It was in Madrid that I fully discovered the depth of Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination course. The first thing to note is that the course doesn't simply teach definitions of religious diversity, nor does it repeat the same anti-discrimination rhetoric that is heard everywhere. The approach is more innovative: through interactive activities and role playing exercises, participants are placed in situations that reveal and challenge the stereotypes and prejudices that are deeply rooted in each of us. In this way, a space is created for open discussion and debate around these issues. In fact, the RDAD course goes beyond religiosity to encompass broader ideas around belief and spirituality in a powerful way.*

*Already on the second day I found myself sharing openly, with people I'd never met before, the life experiences that had shaped me. I particularly enjoyed the "rites of passage" activity. The discovery that there are so many things uniting religious and non-religious people with different walks of life was empowering. Witnessing people changing their self perception and self-esteem over a five day training course was inspiring.*

*The group's diversity was remarkable. There was a huge flow of experience and learning from our interactions each day – and not only during the official hours of the course. Most of the participants were trainers themselves experienced in working with civil society. When putting on their trainers' hats they exchanged their experience and knowledge, which was very helpful, both for themselves as well as for younger, less experienced participants just beginning their careers as educators. Despite our diverse backgrounds, the group worked well together. Even during "Confronting issues" activity, which was aimed at constructive confrontations, the interactions were shaping and enriching.*

*Overall, it has been a great personal and professional development opportunity and I believe a good motivation tool for new staff. I feel proud to be a part of it".*