

LAÏLA EL-MÉTOUI

b. December 10, 1967

LGBTQ+ EDUCATOR

“I hope to encourage people to be the change they want to see.”

Laïla El-Métoui is an acclaimed UK-based LGBTQ+ equity and well-being educator, motivational speaker, and activist, working to increase equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in schools and workplaces worldwide. She has founded several organizations, including Pride in Education and SWANA Queers (previously UK Queer Arabs).

She is an acclaimed global LGBTQ+ equity and well-being educator, based in the UK.

El-Métoui was the firstborn child of Muslim parents in Paris, France. She grew up practicing Islam and learning to speak English, French, and Arabic. She frequently cared for her younger siblings and translated for her parents, which fostered her love of teaching.

Although same-sex relationships are condemned by traditional Islamic law, El-Métoui's family was supportive when she came out as a lesbian. Otherwise, her experiences as a queer Arab Muslim were largely negative. Because of this, and the racism she faced in France, she immigrated to the United Kingdom in 1989 and converted to Buddhism around the same time.

El-Métoui began a career in education in 1992 and earned a certificate in teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) from the University of London in 1994. She gave her first presentation as an ESOL lecturer at City & Islington College in 2000. That same year, in response to cuts to anti-LGBTQ+ bullying programs in UK schools, she founded Pride in Education. The organization focuses on inclusion in academic and professional learning. She later founded LelmEducation to expand her work into public and corporate environments.

The National Association for Teaching English and Other Community Languages to Adults named El-Métoui chair in 2008. She subsequently served for two years as curriculum manager for tutorial and enrichment at Hackney Community College (now New City College). In 2015, she became project coordinator for the City of London Corporation.

In 2018, El-Métoui became the co-chair of the LGBT+ Staff Forum and the founder and chair of Proud London Councils. In 2021, she founded UK Queer Arabs, now known more inclusively as SWANA (South West Asian and North African) Queers.

Among many other achievements and honors, El-Métoui has been named to the Love Queer Top 100 Trailblazer list, the Diva Power List, the National Diversity Power List Top 50, and the Top 20 Lesbian Trailblazers list. UK Stonewall named her Stonewall Lesbian Role Model of the Year.

In mid-life, El-Métoui developed a hidden disability. She lives in London and continues to teach, present, and consult globally.



© LAÏLA EL-MÉTOUI

lgbt[™]
HISTORY
MONTH

www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com

Copyright © 2026 – A Project of Equality Forum