

Case Studies

Erjona

Erjona is a 34 year old Muslim woman from Albania. She fled her Mother country last year with her two sons aged 12 and 8 years, bringing them overland in the back of a lorry to seek asylum in Britain. She is still too traumatised by the events that led her to leave Albania to talk about them but is receiving help and support from her caseworker who works for City Heart in Manchester. Having arrived in Britain on 30th March 2017, Erjona and her sons were originally sent to Liverpool when they were granted refugee status but were transferred to Ashton on 20th May 2017. An interview with the Home Office on 16th August 2017 granted her temporary leave to remain in Britain but Erjona awaits the decision of the Home Office regarding her leave to remain here permanently. Until then, she describes herself as being, “Alive but not alive. I may have a smiley face but I feel so bad inside.” Erjona is a single parent having divorced her husband in Albania and because of her divorce is now estranged from her family back in Albania.

Erjona speaks of a longing to be educated in her Mother country, as she was so eager to learn but because she was a girl she was not allowed to go to school. She says that from an early age she was taught that her role as a Muslim girl was “to learn how to cook and clean and grow babies.” She also speaks of not knowing very much about Islam because of her lack of education. She says that she is Muslim in name but knows nothing of the Quran. The Muslim community she lived in in Albania was not very religious and eg would celebrate Eid but would not have fasted much during Ramadan. This has given her some understanding of what is cultural and what is religious as far as Islam is concerned.

Having arrived in Ashton, Erjona was in the park one day with her two sons and was addressed in Arabic by a woman who thought she was Syrian. Erjona replied in broken English that she did not understand and a conversation – of sorts – ensued with Erjona asking where she could go to learn English. The other woman told Erjona about Holy Trinity Community Centre and so it was that she started to come to the Centre in September. She immediately joined the ESOL class and the workers describe her as “hungry” to learn. She is like a sponge wanting to absorb as much information as possible and in no time at all has become fairly fluent in English. She has progressed to the Creative English class and actually finds writing English easier than speaking it! And she has also joined the computer class and although having no previous experience of computers is now one of the best in the class. She is doing the “Life in the UK” course and during her interview to inform this case study wanted to discuss the wives of Henry V111 and the difference between the White Rose and the Red Rose.



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Erjona feels welcome in the Community Centre and safe. This is enabling her to put her past behind her because she feels free to be herself. She feels that everyone needs to collaborate in peace and although we all have our own lives to lead we must respect each other's differences and give each other opportunities. Because of the help she has received to date from the Centre, Erjona is keen to become a volunteer on the ESOL course and would like to attend the Safeguarding course when it is next on offer.

Above all else, Erjona wishes to provide the best possible life for her two sons. Currently they are helping each other to learn English but she is hoping that ultimately they will be given leave to remain in the UK when she can then get a job and not be dependent on the UK to support her and her family. Having discovered the joy of learning, she would very much like to be a teacher.



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