

Collection of stories of unknown and invisible women



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Editor-in-chief: IRIS

Contributors: ASTED, Gifted Ireland, IRIS, Let Her In, Nikanor, Open Europe, Stitching EuNation

Design: IRIS

© JUSTHER!, 2024

Reproduction for non-commercial use is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

© EUROPEAN UNION, 2024

The European Commission support to produce this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which only reflect the views of the authors. The Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein. in the hospitality sector.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Мари Бернар



Възраст:	45
Страна на произход:	Франция
Държава на пребиваване:	България
Година на пристигане:	2019

Как започна всичко

За Мари това е неочакван ход. Тя посещава България **поради служебни ангажименти** и **открива доста интересни възможности**, тъй като мечтата ѝ е била да се занимава предимно с цифров маркетинг, но **във Франция ѝ е било трудно да намери дългосрочни договори** в тази област.

Пристига сама, защото и във Франция живее сама. В момента Мари има собствена компания за дигитален маркетинг в България, вече работи с чуждестранни компании и дори с български, защото е намерила партньор от България, който ѝ помага в комуникацията и работата. Интересно е, че много нейни приятели от Франция я посещават и тя не се чувства самотна в новата страна. Намерила е нови познати и продължава да развива бизнеса си. Твърди, че в началото ѝ е било изключително трудно, но вече е свикнала с атмосферата в страната и се адаптира към местните условия на живот.

Препятствия и подкрепа

В началото най-големият ѝ проблем е **огромната езикова бариера** и фактът, че **законодателството се различава от това във Франция**. Тя смята, че административните проблеми почти са я отказали от идеята ѝ, но се е преборила благодарение на български адвокат. **Намирането на жилище** също било предизвикателство, тъй като **пазаруването в малките местни магазини** било твърде трудно за нея, защото повечето от хората не говорили френски или английски. **За нея българите са гостоприемни** и тя не е срещнала враждебно отношение или подценяване, дори съседите ѝ помогнали в началото в адаптацията.

История за успех

За Мари **успехът не е просто да си намериш добра работа, а да правиш това, за което си мечтал**, дори да имаш време да пътуваш и да си почиваш. В началото тя знае, че ще ѝ е доста трудно, сама, в чужда държава, но решава, че трябва да опита, въпреки очакваните проблеми. За нея основата за успеха **е упоритостта, да не губи търпение и да намери точни контакти на реални хора, които дават правилната информация**. В началото има много проблеми - от неразбиране от страна на администрацията, от страна на хората, културно приспособяване, местни обичаи и др. Не е намерила подкрепа в редица неправителствени организации, но е щастлива да открие, че има доста французи, които живеят тук и имат своя общност, към която се е присъединила с течение на времето. И в момента разчита основно на френските си познати, защото те отдавна са на нейния път. Помагат си взаимно в ежедневието и в работата . тя би посъветвала всеки, който е решил да се премести в България, първо да намери начин да се свърже с френските граждани, живеещи тук, преди да предприеме сериозни стъпки, **или да поживее поне няколко месеца в страната**, за да прецени как ще се чувства. Със сигурност би подкрепила всеки със съвет и на практика, защото знае колко трудно е всичко и започва буквално от нулата.

Общуване и език

Що се отнася до езика, дори днес тя твърди, че ѝ е **изключително трудно**, разбира много неща, когато ѝ говорят, но не всичко. Тя **все още се срамува** да говори езика и е взела решение за себе си да подобри английския си, който все още е по-разпознаваем от френския в страната. През първите 2 години работи само с **частен учител**, който ѝ преподава английски, за да се чувства по-уверена, а български език учи от познати и съседни, които с удоволствие откликват на молбата ѝ. За българския език тя все още използва **програми за незабавен превод** от български на френски или английски. Твърди, че за един чужденец славянските езици отнемат невъзможно много време, а е трудно да се намерят курсове за обучение от френски на български. Повечето ресурси намира в интернет или чрез познати, които ѝ дават полезни съвети.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Жизел Мюлер



Възраст:	39
Страна на произход:	Германия
Държава на пребиваване:	България
Година на пристигане:	2018

Как започна всичко

Познава България **много преди да се премести там за постоянно**. Родителите ѝ и тя са посещавали страната през лятната си ваканция, още когато е била дете. По време на последната си ваканция тук тя се запознала с **едно момче**, но то отказало да живее в Германия и тя трябвало да вземе решение да се премести. Преди да се премести, тя трябваше да помисли за работата си в България. Сравнително бързо намерила свободна временна позиция в голяма международна аутсорсинг компания, която търсела немскоговорящи служители за проекти. Преминала успешно всички интервюта и започнала работа. Всичко минало добре, тук тя намерила нови контакти. След известно време скъсала с приятеля си и излязла сама в един апартамент. Може би именно този период в живота ѝ „ме накара да преосмисля бъдещето си“. Имаше две възможности - или да продължи сама тук, или да се върне при родителите си. Цялото семейство многократно е обсъждало тези възможности, но те са основният фактор за решението да създаде собствен бизнес в България.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Основната ѝ подкрепа **идва от семейството и близките ѝ приятели**. Работата ѝ в международна компания ѝ харесва, но иска да опита нещо ново, тъй като спортът, тренировките и обучението на хората за техните тела винаги са я привличали. След много предизвикателства тя намерила фитнес зала и започнала работа като помощник треньор по кондиционна подготовка. Научила много, наблюдавала как се работи на практика и решила да рискува - намерила подходящо помещение за кондиционни тренировки и с помощта на партньор от България започнала да работи там.

Най-голямото ѝ предизвикателство днес е **езиковата бариера**, която продължава да е много трудна за нея, което прави присъствието на партньора ѝ жизненоважно за бизнеса. Тя знае, че ако беше сама, нямаше да може да се справи, тъй като клиентите обикновено не искат да бъдат обучавани от човек, който не говори местния език. Намирането на съмишленик от България, регистрирането на фирмата и привличането на клиенти са били най-сериозните ѝ трудности.

История за успех

Чувства, че все още не е достигнала максималния си потенциал. Все още има върху какво да работи, да се усъвършенства и да учи. Въпреки това тя се гордее със себе си, като знае колко усилия е положила, за да достигне до този момент. Всеки ден вижда доволни клиенти, **които препоръчват бизнеса ѝ на приятелите си**, а броят на клиентите е нараснал в сравнение с миналата година, което подхранва надеждите ѝ, че тази положителна тенденция ще продължи.

Въпреки тези успехи, тя намира за доста трудно да управлява административните аспекти, с които се занимава предимно неин колега. Тя би посъветвала всяка жена, която обмисля да се премести в България, че това е една много различна страна - **пълна с възможности, но и с много препятствия**. Въпреки че хората като цяло са мили, те може да не са особено полезни. Тя признава, че не би се опитала сама да управлява бизнес тук и все още разчита много на колегата си от България, който е по-подходящ за справяне със сложните задачи благодарение на местния си опит.

Като съвет тя препоръчва **да се осигури стабилна работа и доходи, преди да се преследват бизнес идеи**. Един положителен аспект е, че много компании в България търсят служители с различни езикови умения, което е предимство за чужденци като нея.

Общуване и език

Тя не разбира особено хумора на България и все още се адаптира към езика, въпреки че уменията ѝ за говорене постепенно се подобряват. Българските граждани около нея ѝ помагат с говоримия език, **но писането остава голямо предизвикателство**. Въпреки усърдната си работа тя чувства, че не напредва толкова, колкото би искала. Една от трудностите е, че в България всички официални документи са единствено на български език, което прави невъзможно за нея да се ориентира самостоятелно в бюрократичните процеси. По подобен начин основните знаци в градовете също са само на Български и **без основни познания по езика е лесно да се почувства изгубена**.

За щастие, тя намира пенсионирана детска учителка по немски език, която идва три пъти месечно, за да ѝ помогне да научи Български. Тази учителка ѝ оказва голяма помощ, като често превежда трудни документи вместо нея. Освен това тя използва **онлайн приложение за превод** и е инсталирала няколко приложения на телефона си, за да се справи по-лесно с езиковата бариера.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Милица Георгиевски



Възраст:	39
Страна на произход:	Република Северна Македония
Държава на пребиваване:	България
Година на пристигане:	2005

Как започна всичко

Първоначално пристига в България, за да учи в български университет, без да има намерение да остане, тъй като семейството ѝ остава в Република Северна Македония. Нищо от пътуването ѝ не е планирано. По време на следването си тя преминава задължителни стажове и дори започва да търгува с козметика и биологични продукти като студентка. Подобно на много свои съученици, тя работи, докато учи, и има щастието да срещне добри приятели през това време.

Разбира се, тя се сблъсква с много предизвикателства, като например намирането на жилище и необходимостта да работи, за да продължи образованието си. В един момент тя дори работи на нощни смени на втора работа. Езикът представлява първоначална трудност, но благодарение на решителността и усилията си тя успява да я преодолее. Въпреки че не би казала, че говори перфектно български, тя смята, че вече е достигнала комфортно ниво на владение на езика.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Първите пет години от престоя ѝ в България са доста трудни, главно поради лични причини. Сестра ѝ избира да не се присъедини към нея в България, а семейството ѝ я насърчава да се върне у дома. На 26 години тя среща съпруга си и решава да остане в страната с него. Въпреки че често пътува, за да посещава семейството си, тя създава свой собствен бизнес с биологични продукти в България и не иска да го изостави и да започне отначало.

Най-голяма **помощ е получила от колегите и приятелите си от България**, а след като се запознала със съпруга си, той се превърнал в постоянен източник на подкрепа, докато заедно работили за изграждането на бизнеса си.

История за успех

Когато започва бизнеса си в България, **първоначално е разочарована**, тъй като нещата не се развиват така, както се е надявала. Въпреки че вярвала силно в идеята си, тя не предполагала колко време ще отнеме да успее на този пазар. Изминала почти една година без никакви приходи, а разходите продължили да се трупат. За нея **упоритостта и способността за адаптиране към променящите се условия са били от съществено значение за успеха.**

Тя кандидатствала по няколко проекта за подпомагане на малкия бизнес, но се сблъскала с множество откази. Поради финансови ограничения тя напуснала магазина, който била наела, и преминала към продажба на **продуктите си изключително онлайн.** Това решение изглеждало правилен път, тъй като продуктите ѝ започнали да се продават с помощта на реклама и препоръки и всичко най-накрая започнало да се случва. **Да се научи да се рекламира онлайн било предизвикателство**, тъй като не била запозната с основите на онлайн маркетинга и рекламата, но упоритостта ѝ била за добро и сега се чувства по-уверена.

Общуване и език

Що се отнася до езика, тя има няколко съвета за всички, **които идват в България: не се страхувайте да говорите, дори и да допускате грешки.** Ако нещо не е ясно, не се колебайте да кажете, че не разбирате. **Има свободни достъпни ресурси**, които помагат за изучаването на езика, така че се възползвайте от тях и не спирайте да се упражнявате.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Тамара Коваленко



Възраст:	44
Страна на произход:	Украйна
Държава на пребиваване:	България
Година на пристигане:	2018

Как започна всичко

Винаги е харесвала България, но след развода се оказва сама с детето си и с ограничени перспективи. Тя убедила бившия си съпруг да ѝ позволи да се премести в България заедно с детето им, за да търси нови възможности. Това решение не било лесно, понеже имала минимален официален професионален опит, тъй като през по-голямата част от живота си била домакиня и при възможност работела като гримьорка на свободна практика.

Много близка приятелка, която живее в България от 20 години и има семейство там, обещава да ѝ помогне. Първоначално тя и детето ѝ **живели при нея за около пет месеца**, докато си осигури първата работа и може да си позволи наем. **Приятелката ѝ помогнала да си намери и тази работа** - камериерка в голям хотел. В почивните си дни тя почиствала салони за красота и именно в един от тези салони пътят ѝ се обърнал щастливо. Персоналът на салона открил уменията ѝ в областта на грима и ѝ предложил да работи като асистент-гримьор. Това е началото на новата ѝ кариера.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Тя дължи всичко на приятелката си Валентина. Ако не беше тя, никога нямаше да предприеме тази стъпка. Валентина ѝ осигурява дом, работа и най-важното - увереност и надежда. В началото тя никога не си е представяла, че може да има собствен бизнес в Украйна, камо ли в друга държава. Но след като се доказва като гримьор, тя записва курсове и в крайна сметка поема услугите за маникюр в салона, в който започва. Малко по малко тя печели както доволни клиенти, така и **безценен опит**.

История за успех

Собственичката на салона обаче променя плановете си и по време на кризата в Ковид салонът е затворен, което я оставя отново без работа. В този момент тя трябва да измисли алтернатива. Намира малка стая с много нисък наем, където започва собствен бизнес. Днес тя управлява по-голямо студио за красота, като дори наема фризьор и предлага пълен набор от козметични процедури.

Със сигурност е имало **милион несигурности** - правни, административни и финансови, но тя е поела риска, защото вече е имала лоялни клиенти, които са искали да продължат да работят с нея. Имала е моменти, в които постоянно се е питала дали това е правилното решение, дали е подходящият момент и дали не прави грешка. Това, което я карало да продължава, били мислите за детето ѝ, за неговото бъдеще и за това как може да бъде пример за него. Искала да го научи да бъде независимо, смело и да вярва в успеха, независимо от препятствията, които животът поставя пред него.

Общуване и език

По отношение на езика в началото се затруднява, но упоритостта ѝ се отплаща. Помолила приятелката си Валентина да ѝ говори предимно на български език, а също така се постарала да гледа телевизия в България и да слуша музика. Едно от предимствата била голямата украинска общност в България и с течение на времето тя се запознала с хора от тази общност, които я поканили да се присъедини към група за взаимопомощ. Там тя посещава вечерни курсове по български език.

Въпреки че не може да се каже, че говори свободно Български език, тя го разбира го разбира и говори умерено добре. Въпреки това езиковата бариера не е попречила на работата ѝ. Поглеждайки назад, тя смята, че ако е имала възможност, е щяла да започне да изучава български език **преди да дойде в страната**, за да бъде по-добре подготвена.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Анина



Възраст:	35
Страна на произход:	Унгария
Държава на пребиваване:	България
Година на пристигане:	2021

Как започна всичко

Тя пристига в България по **лични причини, свързани със здравето ѝ**, и първоначално планира да остане малко повече от месец. Въпреки това, поради продължаващите здравословни проблеми и лечение, престоят ѝ се оказал много по-дълъг от очакваното. Основната причина за пристигането ѝ **са цените на здравните услуги** в България в сравнение с тези в Унгария. Освен това, след дълго проучване в интернет, тя разбира, че в България освен традиционната медицина има и **редица алтернативни начини** на лечение - билки, различни енергийни терапии и т.н., които не са толкова популярни и приложими в Унгария. Първоначално тя пристига само с майка си, тъй като баща ѝ е починал внезапно през 2015 г. Тя не искала да пътува сама в чужда държава и нямала представа какво да очаква. Първите няколко месеца били изключително трудни. Трудно се ориентирали в системата на здравеопазването, не знаели как да стигнат до центровете за лечение, а лекарите не разбирали напълно нуждите им или не желали да се съобразят с тях по различни причини. За щастие, въпреки тези предизвикателства, те успяват да преодолеят почти всички административни пречки и в крайна сметка остават в България.

Препятствия и подкрепа

По пътя си се сблъскват с много препятствия - **липса на съпричастност, разбиране и помощ**. По време на лечението ѝ един стажант в болницата ѝ оказва голяма подкрепа. Той им помагал с езиковата бариера, дори им помагал с пазаруването, тъй като трудно се справяли дори в малките магазини. Благодарение на него престоят им в България стана по-приятен. След няколко неуспешни опита те решили да удължат престоя си, защото въпреки всичко лечението имало положителен резултат. Върнали се за кратко в Унгария, за да опаковат още вещи, и намерили онлайн агенция за недвижими имоти в България, която им помогнала да си осигурят временно жилище. Хубавото било, че не се налагало да започне работа веднага; имала по-належащи задачи, върху които да се съсредоточи. След повече от две години в България тя започнала да намира нови приятели и да излиза повече. По това време ѝ хрумва идеята да създаде уебсайт за картини по поръчка. Винаги е обичала да рисува още от дете, но сега, с наличното време, най-накрая може да се съсредоточи върху хобито си. **Майка ѝ и приятелите ѝ** в Унгария напълно подкрепили тази „луда“ идея.

История за успех

В началото тя просто рисува и излага творбите си в една градина в квартала. През пролетта и лятото хората оценяват творбите ѝ и купуват някои от тях. Тя не определяла цени, дори обмисляла да ги раздава като подаръци, но всички настоявали да ѝ платят нещо в замяна. Постепенно осъзнала, че може да продължи да прави това и през есента и зимата, но за целта ѝ трябвало място, където да изложи творбите си. Обърнала се към няколко творци на свободна практика и се оказало, че един от тях е учил в Унгария, така че бързо се свързали. Уебсайтът стартира и тя започна да го споделя с всички - както с познатите си в България, така и с тези в Унгария. **Те го препращат към своите мрежи, пишат за него в социалните мрежи и т.н.** Стъпка по стъпка тя започнала да получава много обаждания. Скоро обаче осъзнала колко е трудно да се общува, без да се говори местният език. Въпреки че говори средно добре английски, клиентите ѝ от България не я разбирали много добре. Сега тя моли клиентите да пишат имейли, за да може да използва **онлайн преводач**, за да разбере исканията им. Въпреки тези предизвикателства, тя все още е в самото начало на бизнеса си и искрено се надява, че в крайна сметка нещата ще се получат.

Общуване и език

Тя не е сигурна какъв съвет да даде на другите в нейното положение, тъй като самата тя все още не е намерила решение за езиковата бариера. Това е много трудно и тя работи усилено в тази насока, като разчита на **много онлайн видеоклипове и уроци**. Не може да каже със сигурност дали постига напредък, още повече че майка ѝ също се бори, тъй като дори не знае английски. Въпреки това тя вярва, че с времето езиковите ѝ умения ще се подобрят. Тя планира да остане в България през следващите две години и признава, че няма да е лесно без основни познания по български език.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Lidia Dimitrova



Възраст:	57
Страна на произход:	България
Държава на пребиваване:	Нидерландия
Година на пристигане:	2002

Как започна всичко

Тя последва партньора си, който искаше да направи международна кариера, и пристигна в Нидерландия със съпруга си. Първоначално тя не е убедена, че преместването е добра идея, но все пак трябва да поддържа съпруга си. Страхувала се от промяната, особено от това дали ще се справи добре на новото място, как ще организира живота си там и дали промяната е за добро.

Препятствия и подкрепа

В началото тя се бори с **липсата на общност, приятели и близки хора**, както и с **различните начини за прекарване на свободното време**. По-късно, когато открива бизнеса си, тя се сблъсква с предизвикателството **да няма подходящи контакти**. Присъединяването към общностите на емигрантите обаче се оказало от голяма полза. Подобно на нея, всички членове на тези общности са оставили семействата и приятелите си в родните си страни и са били изправени пред подобни предизвикателства. Тя се справя с проблемите си, като остава последователна, актуализира знанията и уменията си и проявява постоянство.

История за успех

Нейната компания предлага уеб-базирано обучение за възрастни и младежи в различни дисциплини. Освен това разработва образователни уеб платформи, софтуерни инструменти за електронно обучение и мобилни приложения и участва в проекти, финансирани от ЕС, предимно в технологичния сектор. В началото тя се чувства без корени, но с течение на времето успява да изгради новия си живот, парче по парче. Думата „видима“ не отразява напълно начина, по който се чувства сега; думата, която я описва най-добре, е „заземена“.

Тъй като отглежда сама две малки деца, за нея е важно да започне бизнес, който да е гъвкав - такъв, който да ѝ позволява да работи по всяко време и от всяко място. След три месеца проучване на успешни световни истории, които отговарят на нейните нужди, тя решава да се съсредоточи върху предлагането на цифрови продукти, като например онлайн курсове, софтуерни инструменти и платформи.

Нейният съвет към другите жени е: **Бъдете уверени, последователни и винаги се стремете да вършите работата си на най-високо ниво.**

Общуване и език

Тя научава езика, като **посещава курсове един след друг**. Първите години били доста трудни, защото не разбирала напълно какво говорят хората, а административните процедури също били предизвикателство, главно поради езиковата бариера. Веднага след като пристигнала, тя осъзнала, че без езика би било невъзможно да се справи, затова направила всичко възможно, за да подобри уменията си за говорене и писане.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Гергана Богданова



Възраст:	26
Страна на произход:	България
Държава на пребиваване:	Нидерландия
Година на пристигане:	2017

Как започна всичко

Тя се премества, за да учи и да търси по-добро бъдеще, но идва сама. Още преди да вземе решението да учи в чужда държава, тя внимателно обмисля дали ще може да се справи с това предизвикателство. Решението не е спонтанно, а добре обмислено и обсъдено със семейството и приятелите ѝ. Сега тя работи като бизнес партньор по човешки ресурси в международна медийна корпорация.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Първоначално тя се сблъсква с езиковата бариера и промяната в начина на мислене, свързана с начина на живот в новата страна, както и с предизвикателството да намери мястото си в обществото и да почувства, че наистина принадлежи към него. **Приятелите ѝ** помагат да се интегрира, а училищната асоциация за обучение (**обществена организация**) също играе ключова роля. Първите няколко месеца бяха много интересни, тъй като тя откриваше много нови неща.

Сега тя се чувства много по-видима. Смята, че ключът към разрешаването на проблемите ѝ е бил упоритостта, тъй като е продължила да задава въпроси. За нея единственото решение е било постоянството - непрекъснато да търси отговори и да бъде решителна.

История за успех

She studied International Business Management and was always surrounded by entrepreneurs in her family. The COVID pandemic brought challenges, and with no work available, she was forced to **think outside the box**. This period made her feel completely ready to set up her own business.

Her advice to others is to think about how they would like to implement themselves in society and **become part of it**. It's not just about the kind of work you want to do, but also about how you can integrate into the **lifestyle of the place you're living**.

Общуване и език

She had a fairly good level of English before she left, which gave her additional confidence that she would manage once she got there. However, she later realized that English was not enough. To adapt and truly be part of society in the way she wanted and envisioned, she needed to have a good command of the local language and not rely solely on her English. She learned the language at **university**. Her advice to others is: Learn the language, as it will help you a lot.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Анја Тјалета



Възраст:	52
Страна на произход:	Russia
Държава на пребиваване:	The Netherlands
Година на пристигане:	2006

Как започна всичко

She arrived alone to get married. Her story and departure were prompted by her love; it was not something planned or dreamed of but rather how circumstances unfolded. However, this did not hinder her personal growth—quite the opposite. Through perseverance and effort, she has now works as a translator and interpreter.

Препятствия и подкрепа

She can't even describe how she felt during the first few months, but rather than **feeling lost**, she would say she felt uprooted, with no connection to anything at that time. Her husband's family was very supportive and helped her learn Dutch as quickly as possible. She also enrolled in new studies, where she made friends who helped her understand the **culture** better. Among these studies, she became a Communication Trainer and joined the Young Trainers Network, where fellow members played a key role in helping her integrate. Her three biggest challenges were:

1. Learning the language,
2. Understanding the culture,
3. Finding meaningful work.

История за успех

It all started because she has always had a strong desire to learn. She was active in discovering the country's mentality, and through her studies, she was able to succeed. When facing current challenges, she mostly talked to her husband and searched for information online. Whenever she had questions, she would look them up on the internet. She has always been eager to study more.

Her advice to others is: Learn Dutch as quickly as possible! Speaking the language will help you be taken more seriously. If you don't speak Dutch well, people may look down on you. She also emphasizes the importance of attending school, where you'll find peers who can support you and whom you can support in return.

Общуване и език

She immediately found a **language school** and dedicated one year solely to learning Dutch. The course was **intensive**, requiring 24 hours of study per week. According to her, no language is easy to learn; persistence is essential to achieve results. She believes that Dutch is a difficult language, but that has not made her give up for a moment. Instead, she puts in effort every day to improve her communication with the world around her.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Elizabeth Nentcheva



Възраст:	21
Страна на произход:	България
Държава на пребиваване:	The Netherlands
Година на пристигане:	2022

Как започна всичко

She arrived alone to study. Like many other young people, she knew what she wanted to study and, most importantly, felt that staying in her home country would not offer a viable path for her future. The decision to leave was not easy, considering the many uncertainties—whether she would manage in an unfamiliar country, where she would live, if she would adapt, handle the coursework, and, most of all, whether she would feel at ease knowing she would be alone the entire time. Currently, she is making handmade items and running her small start-up business.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The three biggest challenges she faced were: figuring out **municipality details**, adapting to the **new culture**, and dealing with lack of **social life**. Local community organizations, support groups, friends, and neighbours played a crucial role in her adaptation process. She herself admits that as a young person she thought that adaptation would be easy and she would quickly get used to the new way of life. Now she realizes how hard it was in the beginning especially without her family by her side.

История за успех

She has been doing her **craft work** for a while now and feels that she is doing well. Many of her friends support and promote her products. Currently, she is enrolled in sales skills courses to raise her skills in that area. She solves her problems by relying on and trusting people around her. Her advice to others is not to give up, as the Netherlands is a very safe country with many opportunities.

Общуване и език

She learned mainly from real-life situations. Perhaps because of her age, she adapts easily and doesn't worry if she doesn't do well with the language. She understands that it's a complicated process, so she continues to improve her **language skills every day**. She often uses **online learning apps** to help with her progress.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Анна



Възраст:	55
Страна на произход:	Russia
Държава на пребиваване:	The Netherlands
Година на пристигане:	2006

Как започна всичко

She decided to move from her country of origin for **work reasons**, coming alone. Now, she works as a university lecturer and adult educator. The three biggest challenges she faced were: **not having a network of peers and colleagues, dealing with stereotyping, and facing discrimination**. She started her own business, because she was **not recognized at her workplace**.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Her friends and migrant organizations provided her with tremendous support. While she was accepted by her colleagues, she still faced **stereotypes from locals, including neighbours, municipality staff, bank clerks, and medical service workers**. To overcome these challenges, she worked 10 times harder than the locals, sought out opportunities, and created her own partnerships among migrants and minorities.

История за успех

Her advice to others is: Don't think it's a paradise. Work hard and don't give up. Manage your expectations. Your kids will be considered "second-generation migrants," and your grandchildren will be "third-generation migrants." If you've decided to change your life, you're a survivor, and that's your biggest advantage over the locals. Remember, they grew up in a greenhouse. Use your courage and resilience to fight for a better life.

Общуване и език

She learned the language through a combination of free courses, paid courses, and self-education. Her opinion is that different methods for learning a language should be tried and combined because every language is complex in its own way. Learning cannot happen without personal ambition and the drive to be better each day than the day before.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Tetiana Bulana



Възраст:	40
Страна на произход:	Ukraine
Държава на пребиваване:	Poland
Година на пристигане:	2014

Как започна всичко

Tetiana's first removal took place in 2014 after the Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. She lived with her family in Dnipropetrovsk but they moved to Lviv. As the removal was successful and went smoothly, she and her husband decided to change the country of residence. They chose Poland, i.e. due to plenty of similarities related to the language or cultural aspects. The removal was not dictated by financial considerations, they were just interested in living in another country. She has a husband and two children (a son and a daughter). They didn't move to Poland for anyone and for any special reasons. It was their independent decision. Earlier her husband happened to work in Poland occasionally.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The first obstacle Tetiana encountered was the **language barrier** and **insufficient knowledge of Polish education system**, which hugely varies from the Ukrainian one. In fact, she has two kids attending school so she came across lots of unexpected issues. Tetiana claims her family was warmly welcomed by the Polish community. All people were engaged and gave her lots of support. She didn't receive any support from the government, NGOs, or other migrant women when she arrived in Poland. As a matter of fact, she even didn't claim for this kind of help, upholding it was not necessary for her family. Tetiana attended the Polish language course for free in the library. She also enrolled as a student in the postsecondary school (Accounting Faculty) for free. She admits the above opportunities constituted huge help for her.

During her settlement process she had temporary problems with finding a flat (to rent) for her family as the flat owners didn't want to accept a pet and small children.

She overcame initial obstacles when she took up the Polish course and made progress very fast. Initially, she didn't work so she devoted lots of time to language learning, integration with local communities, trips/ expeditions, visits to museums. Tetiana thinks that **support is crucial for quick adaptation to a new environment**. She was supported by Fundacja Wydarzeń Masowych which organised a lot of integrational and cultural activities for Ukrainians. Then she didn't feel much alienated. The participation in these events maintained her cultural identity. ✨

История за успех

Tetiana learned about the education system in Poland on her own. And now she instructs others e.g. by **conducting informative meetings about the education system in Poland for Ukrainians**. She **gives interviews and writes articles about the education system in Poland for a Ukrainian e-portal**. She **works as an intercultural assistant in a Polish school**, although she designed furniture in one of the companies at the outset of her stay in Poland. She leads social groups. (approx. 2000 participants from Krakow), informs, helps and supports. Tetiana also **gathers other assistants who aspire to work in schools, and conducts meetings, supervisions or interventions for them**. She **advocates extensively at the Polish Parliament, works with officials, addresses problems of Ukrainian children and families in Poland** i.a. at the Department of Education, at meetings with councillors, the Education Board members, and Minister for Equality Katarzyna Kotula. She is a **certified self-defence and assertiveness trainer for women in the wendo method**.

Tetiana is a very self-confident and ambitious woman. She realises people around recognise and appreciate her help. It is like a driving force to her. She desires to expand her self-advocacy activity and wants to be heard, knowing that UKR parents and pupils struggle with many problems, including discrimination. For a deeper insight into her activity here is the link: <https://www.bing.com/search?q=facebook&form=ANNT1&ref=cf14b44f6ae46e29f8195923400d9ad&pc=U531&pq=f&pqlth=1&assgl=8&sgcn=facebook&q=HS&smvpcn=0&swbcn=10&sc=10-1&sp=1&ghc=0&cvid=cf14b44f6ae46e29f8195923400d9ad&clkatsg=1&hsmssg=0>

Tetiana got disappointed when she observed some acts of discrimination towards Ukrainians at her children's school. Her kids were offended and eliminated from important class functions/ responsibilities. The woman reveals that these situations changed her perception of Polish society, whose attitude to Ukrainians has altered unexpectedly, but very visibly and audibly.

Общуване и език

Tetiana had **communication problems while talking to teachers at school, running some errands at various offices, or at the doctor's**. However, she received lots of support and was not under time pressure, especially at offices where she could hold a one-to-one conversation. The costless language course in the library was very intensive. She didn't use any programmes or extra resources. She tried to **think logically and elicit the meaning of different words or sentences from the context**. She didn't look up the words in online dictionaries. She forced herself to think in a language of the country of her residence. Tetiana participated in any integrational activities/ events. To improve her Polish she also read many romantic stories in Polish, obviously their simplified versions. Her tip for future migrants is just to get familiarised with the culture of a new country and the language, if the removal is planned. She recommends Poland since there are lots of institutions and organisations supporting Ukrainian families.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Diana Sopilko



Възраст:	19
Страна на произход:	Ukraine
Държава на пребиваване:	Poland
Година на пристигане:	2022

Как започна всичко

Diana moved to Poland immediately after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. At that time her parents were abroad and for safety reasons they decided she should move to Poland. Thus, she turned up in Poland alone, without any relatives. It was a very quick and spontaneous decision. Despite abrupt changes in the life of such a young woman, quite the opposite, she became more open to people. Here, in Poland, she started her studies.

Препятствия и подкрепа

At the outset Diana **experienced a cultural shock**. Many things and behaviours were far different from those she was used to in Ukraine. She visited Poland earlier for a while, but she wasn't able to observe cultural differences. **What gave her incredible support was Polish youth community** she was in constant touch with, conversed on a daily basis and who vastly helped her assimilate a new language. Diana never felt alienated. She was warmly welcomed by the local community, especially at university. Sometimes she is asked about her origin due to her foreign-sounding accent, but it doesn't disturb her and doesn't cause her to feel worse. Diana never used any financial or psycho-emotional support. She doesn't know institutions or organisations that integrate Ukrainians into the society, although she is aware of their existence.

История за успех

For Diana success has a personal dimension. She is **apt to learn languages**. She knows Ukrainian, English, German, Russian and Polish. Thanks to her intrinsic motivation and ambition she **became independent and self-sufficient** as a very young person. Diana didn't share any story or experience that significantly impacted her perception of Poland or her personal success. For the time being she doesn't know if she will stay in Poland permanently, but her dream is to successfully complete studies, further self-development and self-fulfillment in various aspects, not only in languages.

Diana is aware of cultural differences between Poland and Ukraine, but her attitude towards Polish people was positive. Regarding women considering migrating to Poland she suggests being ready for self-sufficiency and huge responsibility for oneself.

Общуване и език

Diana encountered **communication barriers at different offices or during the doctor's appointments**, where she was not able to pertinently describe the symptoms of an illness. She is a typical introvert, so when she is not able to express her thoughts in Polish, she gets silent. **The best remedy for her language barrier was continuous presence amongst Polish youth, listening to them and small talks**. Diana also read a lot - mainly articles and Polish press. It vastly helped her. She **learned grammar rules on her own**. She had also had some **private tutitions before she started studies at university**. However, a real breakthrough in her Polish language improvement and fluency was when she commenced education at university.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Yuliia Pugolovko



Възраст:	26
Страна на произход:	Ukraine
Държава на пребиваване:	Poland
Година на пристигане:	2017

Как започна всичко

Yuliia is from Odessa in Ukraine. When she graduated from school, she decided to go to Warsaw to continue her education as Odessa is a very russified city. She started studies at the Faculty of Journalism: Media image of people and institutions. Yuliia was alone in Warsaw, with no relatives. She had to cope with a new situation on her own.

Препятствия и подкрепа

According to the Ukrainian education system young Ukrainians start studies at a very young age, which causes them to feel isolated or excluded at university, especially when the groups are mixed and any age difference and emotional maturity (e.g. Polish students) are very conspicuous. It was Yuliia's one of the biggest challenges - **discrepancy in experiences, no integrational dimension during classes, no separate groups consisting of Ukrainians only**. Despite the above inconvenience, she was greatly welcomed by Polish students and local community. She didn't feel inferior as a foreigner.

Yuliia received lots of support from the company which organised her travel and stay in Poland and completed all formalities, including a student visa. Thanks to this assistance, she didn't have to go to offices and run many ongoing errands, at the same time struggling with the language. Initially, she co-lived with other Ukrainian girls, which helped her maintain her cultural identity. All girls learned Polish collaboratively.

История за успех

Yuliia didn't claim any help from external institutions. She gained her experience and knowledge on her own. Now she is **a volunteer and helps others**. When she has completed studies, she returned to Ukraine for a while, where she interned in the Ministry of Health. She ran social media over there. Since her hometown is a business partner of Cracow, she was **offered to work as an interpreter during Real Estate Fair organised in Cracow**. And that is how her adventure with this old Polish city started. When the war in Ukraine broke out, Yuliia **declared to be a volunteer and started to help her compatriots to seek accommodation. She also sent thousands of people abroad. She largely cooperated with the Municipality of Cracow**.

Yuliia also has some experience that significantly impacted her perception of Polish people. She hears lots of hostile voices towards Ukrainians now. Therefore, she sometimes feels rejected or banished.

What would she suggest other women planning to migrate? **To have sort of a road map in their minds. To explore the places where it is easier to work, live, or where they can meet up a bigger group of compatriots**. If possible, she **doesn't recommend going alone**. Whoever is going to migrate, they should **learn the language beforehand**. She thinks everybody should **take part in intercultural meetings and trainings, talk to people, share experiences**, just be open. Each woman planning to move to Poland ought to familiarise with the Polish culture and accept the common rules.

Yuliia would like to complete the second studies and work as a business psychologist. She would also like to expand her activity in favour of her compatriots, e.g. set up Ukrainian House in Cracow, with no political influence.

Общуване и език

Yuliia co-owned a flat with other Ukrainian girls, which helped her a lot with integrating into the new society, as she was not alone with her concerns. The girls picked up the language collectively, and thus they helped one another. At the outset, Yuliia had **some communication problems at work, but the work environment, where she was forced to use a new language, led her to language fluency**. Apart from self-studies, she also **learned Polish at university** because she could be enrolled in the course for free. She openly admits that daily studies forced her to constant listening to Polish sounds. What's more, she used a TVN24 app to listen to the news every day. Nevertheless, **typical immersion through meaningful context and co-presence with Poles, made her way to language fluency**.

Collection of stories: Oleksandra Tokar



Възраст:	20
Страна на произход:	Ukraine
Държава на пребиваване:	Poland
Година на пристигане:	2021

Как започна всичко

Oleksandra came to Poland, to Krakow, to study. She first dreamed about it in 2019, when she visited Krakow with her family as a tourist, to do some sightseeing and "see Europe". She was 15 years old at the time and had a romantic soul. She liked the city very much, including, for example, the buildings of the Jagiellonian University, where she later studied. As she says, "I left my soul and heart in Krakow, so I wanted to come back to pick them up". She was the first to come to Poland among her family or friends, and until the invasion of Ukraine began, no one joined her.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The biggest challenge at the beginning was **the feeling of alienation and loneliness**. When she arrived, she was only 17 and had to cope on her own. She suffered from identity crises, wondering whether she was not too young to study. It was difficult for her to start a conversation with older colleagues (in Poland, people start their studies at the age of 19). However, she was lucky to meet a Polish person in her student group, who helped her a lot. What's more, due to the field (European studies), her group was international, which also gave a greater sense of belonging.

Another **challenge was the formalities**. She did not know where to turn for help, how to deal with the issues related to her studies. The first few days were very difficult. She had **problems with registration, accommodation and refunding money**. Everything was eventually resolved, although it was stressful.

The **Polish language was not a challenge for her**, because she already knew it, **but sometimes the distinct accent interfered**, which caused her interlocutors to change their attitude. Oleksandra emphasizes that it largely depends on the person you are dealing with, but she was often asked where she came from. Although she had no problems in offices because she knew the language at B2 level, which gave her a lot of opportunities, sometimes self-doubt came into play.

She only **found out about organizations for foreigners when she started working**, so they did not have a big impact on her adaptation process. She also did not receive any support from the government or NGOs until 2022. When the invasion of Ukraine began, she was in Ukraine on a semester break. She returned with her mother and younger sister, and took advantage of the support offered by the government.

История за успех

For Oleksandra, **success means a peaceful life, achieving goals, fulfilling dreams, doing things that were once considered impossible**. It is about personal success – self-fulfilment, emotional balance, as well as professional success – recognition in the sector or social success – good relationships with other people, lasting friendships. This interview is a certain achievement and ennoblement for her, as she has done many interviews by herself.

Oleksandra **finished her bachelor's degree and is now in the first year of master's studies at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies**. At the same time, almost from the beginning, she **has been volunteering at her faculty and in 2022**, due to her good language level, she was selected for other activities. She **currently works as a translator/interpreter, edits and analyzes various texts and documents, conducts interviews and events, and is involved in the SKILL Association**. She recently took part in the Campus Polska Przyszłości event, where she talked about NGOs as a speaker. She is happy where she is, she is developing personally and professionally, but she does not yet feel like a successful person.

She considers good knowledge of Polish and English, willingness to meet, talk and listen to people, their support and presence, and **determination and motivation** that it provides to stay motivated **are the main factors of her success**. It is also important to work on the migrant issues, which are close to her heart, and improve the image of Ukraine, which she has not visited for 2 years.

She advises other women considering migrating to Poland to **learn the language, get to know the culture, and not stick to people from their own country**. **Understanding the laws and formal procedures** is also very important. The importance of building relationships, conversations and interactions with people should not be overlooked because when we understand others, they understand us.

Oleksandra believes that the government and NGOs should have a better defined mission and purpose of assistance, know which groups they help and what they need. NGO teams should undergo various trainings and courses on basic Ukrainian. **A strong presence in social media, building teams and engagement, as well as organizing integration events to build bonds with local people with similar interests or needs** are important, too.

Общуване и език

Oleksandra started learning Polish at the age of 15 and two years later, in 2021, she had already obtained a B2 level. While learning, she used:

- the help of a Polish language tutor, meeting with her 3 times a week via Skype,
- Polish YouTube, where she watched or listened to her favorite channels and creators every day, even while doing other things, e.g. doing math,
- the organization "Study in Poland", which organized humanities classes on the history of Polish art, which she could join online,
- books, bloggers and other materials for self-study.

Oleksandra emphasizes that **in order to achieve such quick results, you have to really want it**. It is important **to do more than you are assigned, e.g. during the course, to constantly repeat, listen a lot and try to speak with an accent**. She personally recommends channels such as Kryminatorium (www.youtube.com/@Kryminatorium), Imponderabilia (www.youtube.com/@ImponderabiliaTV) or 7 Meters Underground (www.youtube.com/c/7metrowpodziemia).

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Daryna Onyshko



Възраст:	27
Страна на произход:	Ukraine
Държава на пребиваване:	Poland
Година на пристигане:	2014

Как започна всичко

Daryna comes from Lutsk in the Volyn region, where, due to the history of the region, many people speak Polish and talk about Poland. When Daryna was 10, she started learning Polish thanks to her mother. From the beginning, her mother had a vision of the possibility of studying and later working in the EU. It was almost always natural for her to come to Poland to study. Especially since Kiev was further away than Poland. The period when the Revolution of Dignity was taking place in Ukraine in 2014 coincided with the moment when she had to decide on the direction of her studies. She decided to study international relations at the university in Wrocław. Daryna was 17 at that time and was the only person among her family and friends who came to Poland.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The **Polish language was not a problem for Daryna**, even though she was not yet fluent. In addition, there were a lot of foreigners in Wrocław, so she found her way around well. The challenge she encountered was the **excessive and sometimes incomprehensible bureaucracy**. When she tried again for a residence card, she received a refusal, which was a big surprise for her. It was necessary to contact a lawyer, who helped to resolve the situation. When she started working, the issue of taxation and transferring tax identity to Poland became a problem, as there was no relevant information anywhere. The instructions were not easily available, and people in the offices were not supportive. At the beginning of her stay in Poland, she did not receive any special help from the government or NGOs, but she also did not know that there were places where she could find it. The problem was the lack of information, as it was only after 2-3 years of her stay and activity in the honorary consulate of Ukraine, but she came across the Foundation Ukraine, run by Ukrainians and helping newcomers. Currently, the situation is better. Many Q&A meetings are held, where migrants can get the necessary information. Despite the difficulties, Daryna **felt comfortable in Poland from the beginning**. She had very good relations both in her student group and in the dormitory, where she lived. It also helped that **she did not stick only to other people from Ukraine, so she didn't feel isolated**. There were only 4 foreigners in her student group, which also helped her with integration.

История за успех

For Daryna, **success is the opportunity to fulfill oneself, to use one's potential through work and commitment, to have a sense of mission, to influence the world for the better.** She **works in the area of democracy and human rights in the Community of Democracies.** It is an intergovernmental organization working with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs from 30 countries. Its activities focus on the international level. Her first success was receiving **a master's scholarship from the National Agency for Academic Exchange** (a Polish government program).

Her second success was being accepted to work in the field she studied. In 2017, she started in the Community of Democracies as an intern and after a short break, she started a permanent job. At first, she was an assistant, then an associate, coordinator, **currently she has been promoted to project manager on youth participation in democracy.**

Her biggest barrier, but also motivation, was her age, and specifically how she was perceived by others through the prism of her young age. To be appreciated, she had to do more than others. The fact that she is a woman did not help either. She knows that not everyone's path was as difficult and intensive. Daryna studied full-time and worked full-time. In addition to her studies, she **expanded her knowledge at the European Academy of Diplomacy** and the second one related to security, she was on Erasmus in Norway. She believes the most important factor of success to be the desire to build relationships with other people and the belief that people are good and want to help her, because you never know what opportunities a given acquaintance may open up. Daryna also encourages to get involved in academic circles, additional activities, sports and volunteering, where you can meet people at your own age and with similar interests.

Общуване и език

Academic Polish was not easy, but despite this, Daryna felt good linguistically, because she **had been learning Polish since she was a child.** Wrocław is a student city, full of young people who are easy to get in touch with. In her opinion, Ukrainians and Poles are also mentally and visually similar, which also makes communication easier, if one doesn't want to spend all their time with "their own people", i.e. other Ukrainians.

Daryna's great-great-grandfather was Polish, but this was not sufficiently documented and therefore she did not have the Polish Card. As a child, however, she was **enrolled in the Association of Poles in Lutsk.** She **could participate in group Polish language classes** there. They took place after school, twice a week. What's more, the Association organized youth holiday trips to Poland. In high school, Daryna had a language tutor 3 times a week. Additionally, she attended the Roman Catholic Church in Lutsk, where she could listen to Polish and participate in trips to Poland. She also travelled to Poland with her mother, which generally helped her get used to the country.

Daryna didn't need to take Polish classes after she arrived, but she knows that such help is available at the Ukrainian House in Warsaw, where she currently lives. She also recommends a platform for learning Polish for Ukrainian youth, created by a friend of hers – Language Supp (<https://www.languagesupp.org/>).

Collection of stories: The story of Emel Shamma



Възраст:	35
Страна на произход:	Syria
Държава на пребиваване:	Türkiye
Година на пристигане:	2017

Как започна всичко

After being forced to leave her home country due to the civil war in 2017, Emel Shamma, who had been living in Aleppo, Syria, became Turkey's first female industrialist with temporary protection status, following a challenging three-year journey. Shamma initially worked in vocational training and at a Turkish delight factory, with documentation provided by the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry. Later, with grant support from the United Nations, she established her own Turkish delight factory within the Women Entrepreneur Support Center.

Emel Shamma, who produces special Turkish delights by adding Syrian spices to Turkish delight, aims to take its brand to a global level. She stated that she had experienced great difficulties in this success story and says that she prefers to fight instead of sitting back and being resentful of life.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Despite obstacles such as language barriers and the trauma of war, Shamma persevered, now, as a recognized industrialist, she not only sells her Turkish delight within Turkey but also exports it to Russia, Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Dubai.

Shamma recounted that she initially left Aleppo due to the civil war and relocated to Idlib, where she endured extremely difficult conditions. For four months, she found herself trapped amid explosions, gunfire, and clashes. This forced migration brought trauma, causing her to lose both family members and property.

She also faced various challenges in Türkiye, including access to better housing conditions, employment opportunities, banking difficulties, and issues with work permits. But instead of withdrawing, she resolved to persevere and became successful.

История за успех

She said, "After moving to Türkiye, I realized that I had to get a job and make a living because I was a housewife. I saw the advertisements for vocational courses of the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry on social media. I registered for the courses. I received food packaging and processing training there for 3.5 months. After the training, I had the opportunity to work in a Turkish delight factory".

This experience revealed her talent in the field. With her new skills, Shamma aspired to start her own business. She learned about grant support offered by the United Nations (UN) and the Women Entrepreneur Support Center, a joint initiative by the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry, the Metropolitan Municipality, and the İpekyolu Development Agency. After submitting a detailed proposal outlining her ideas, goals, skills, and training, the UN agreed to support her, enabling her to purchase essential machinery and equipment for production.

With this support, Shamma launched her own business, creating unique Turkish delights that incorporated spices from her own culture. Recognizing a significant business opportunity, she established her company with the collaborative efforts of many Syrian and Turkish women.

Shamma said "I became an example for the Turkish and Syrian women around me, which made me incredibly happy and proud.". She currently produces her own special Turkish delight products with unique formulas. She has built a client base in Antalya, Konya, Istanbul, and Izmir, and the products have been well received. They've even exported to Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Dubai. Now, she aims to enter the U.S. market. She recently participated in the World Food Fair in Istanbul, and their goal is to make Tat Global an international brand."

Общуване и език

Learning Turkish was initially a challenge, as it limited her ability to connect with Turkish women and navigate the legal requirements of establishing a business. However, in addition to Turkish, she also studied English, which she practiced during her vocational training. She highlighted that many refugees face issues such as health, employment, education, social adaptation, and exclusion. Shamma encourages refugee women to focus on improving their language and communication skills and work to contribute to their family's finances to overcome socio-economic barriers.

Reflecting on her achievements, Shamma notes that the success she has earned makes her proud, and she's grateful to see her efforts pay off. She has fostered connections with Turkish and Syrian women, encouraging mutual support. She emphasized "I believe that if we stand together and support each other, we can overcome any difficulties,".

Collection of stories: The story of Assoum Badavi



Възраст:	29
Страна на произход:	Syria
Държава на пребиваване:	Türkiye
Година на пристигане:	2014

Как започна всичко

Assoum Badavi's journey to Turkey began in 2013 when a bomb hit her family's home in Syria, forcing them to flee with nothing but the clothes on their backs. They embarked on a perilous journey through neighborhoods devastated by bombings in Aleppo, witnessing the aftermath of violence and destruction. Arriving in Turkey marked a new chapter, where they faced the reality of leaving behind everything familiar and starting anew in a foreign environment.

Assoum and her family decided to migrate together for mutual support and safety, driven by the urgent need to escape the escalating violence in Syria. Moving as a unit provided essential emotional and practical support as they navigated their new lives in Turkey. They were not the first in the family to make this journey; they followed a cousin who had already settled in Adana, a connection that offered them a critical point of contact and initial support. Having family nearby eased their transition and helped them establish a foundation more quickly.

Препятствия и подкрепа

In adapting to life in Turkey, Assoum faced several challenges:

- **Language Barrier:** Not speaking Turkish made it difficult to communicate and access essential services.
- **Cultural Differences:** Adjusting to new cultural norms and practices proved challenging.
- **Emotional Strain:** Leaving her home and dealing with the trauma of displacement created additional stress.

When Assoum first arrived, she felt a mix of relief and overwhelming uncertainty. The community's initial reception was generally kind, with many people offering support. However, adjusting to the new environment and feeling fully accepted took time. Fortunately, the government and various NGOs supported Assoum and migrant women through language and vocational training programs tailored to their needs.

История за успех

In 2015, she began studying Business Administration in English at Çukurova University. Concurrently, she volunteered at a temporary education center, teaching Syrian and refugee children. This project, which later received funding and evolved into (Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into the Turkish Education System), became a significant part of her life. She worked as a coordinator assistant and engaged actively in social events related to Syrians in Adana.

Recognizing the importance of integrating into Turkish society, she enrolled in a Turkish language course at Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University in 2016, graduating with honors. Her academic journey continued, and she graduated from Çukurova University with a degree in Business Administration in 2019. During this time, she also developed her passion for languages, learning French and German on her own. Today, she speaks three languages fluently and knows five languages in total.

In 2018, she worked at the Chamber of Industry in Adana with the International Labour Organization (ILO) employment office as an employment consultant. In this role, she focused on connecting Syrian migrants seeking jobs with Turkish entities looking for employees across various industry fields.

In 2019, she became involved in a project at Teknokent, run by Çukurova University, supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs. This was a natural progression of her growing interest in entrepreneurship, further solidified by several courses and workshops she attended in international trade and business.

Now, she continues dreaming about improving herself and achieving more. She aspires to be an example and motivator to other women who dream of a better life but don't know where or how to start. She dreams of pursuing a doctoral degree abroad and eventually giving speeches to inspire women to work, learn, and be active and effective in all fields of life, no matter the obstacles they face.

Reflecting on her journey from the upheaval of war to building a new life in Turkey, she sees a story of resilience, adaptation, and contribution. Her experiences have shaped her commitment to supporting others facing similar challenges and continue to drive her to make a positive impact on both local and broader scales.

Общуване и език

When she first arrived, she felt a mix of relief and overwhelming uncertainty. The initial reception from the community was generally kind, but she also faced exclusion and racism. While many people offered support, adjusting to the new environment and feeling fully accepted took time.

She learned the language through a combination of formal education and immersion:

- **Language Courses:** Enrolling in Turkish language courses at Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University was crucial in building her language skills.
- **Practice and Immersion:** Engaging in daily conversations with native speakers and practicing Turkish in everyday situations accelerated her learning.
- **Media and Resources:** Watching Turkish TV shows, listening to Turkish music, and using language learning apps helped reinforce her skills and improve comprehension.

Collection of stories: The story of Farah



Възраст:	30
Страна на произход:	Iran
Държава на пребиваване:	Türkiye
Година на пристигане:	2008

Как започна всичко

She came to Türkiye 16 years ago from Iran and started working on social responsibility projects while she was a student. She always dreamed about becoming a part of a humanitarian worker. Now, as she completes her second year with the Counselling Line, she feels very happy about shaping her career like she always wanted.

Her days are quite busy. She receives up to 60 calls each day and attends training almost every month to learn more about how to handle special cases and to receive updates on the legal system. She says that the operators must stay informed to be able to take care of every call on a case-by-case basis and adds: She says "We are the frontline, and we are dealing with the most vulnerable people. We try our best to provide a service unique for each caller" she says.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Farah began her role during the pandemic, a time when all Counselling Line operators were working remotely, so she initially never had the opportunity to meet her colleagues in person. Then, however, the team reunited in their new office, and she's enjoyed adapting to this new environment, feeling the support of her colleagues, and building new friendships.

Farah recalls the challenges she faced when she first arrived in Turkey. Not knowing Turkish, she reached out for help. Some people encouraged her to attend courses at a local adult education center, which offered a range of subjects. Following their advice, Farah enrolled in Turkish courses at the Public Education Centre. Through these classes, she not only improved her Turkish but also made new friends.

История за успех

When Farah came to Türkiye in 2008, she did not speak Turkish, didn't have any friends or relatives to get help. Staff of Directorate of Migration Management encouraged her to learn Turkish and enrol Turkish courses supplied by the government for free. She listened to them and learned Turkish by attending the courses. It was not difficult for her to integrate into social and economic life in Türkiye. She is a call centre operator working in Türkiye Counselling Line. Along with her 50 colleagues, she receives various daily inquiries from refugees and asylum-seekers across the country and answers a wide range of questions, including requests for information on available services, legal cases, enrolling in education, and third-country resettlement.

While everyone on the Counselling Line team has a different story, one thing they have in common is the desire to support people in need of assistance, and Farah is no different. Farah is also one of the few operators who answer Gender Based Violence (GBV) -related calls, in addition to general inquiries. Answering that many calls can be challenging. Farah says, she used to feel overwhelmed every day, especially at the times when she was not able to help someone, but it became easier once she realized how much a conversation means to refugees: "When refugees reach out, even a short conversation, having someone listen to their problems, or being provided with counseling, can make a big difference in their mood. She says "Even though we listen to many heart-breaking stories each day, being able to help someone makes me feel very satisfied with my job."

Общуване и език

Farah attended Turkish course at the Public Education Centre, which was a pivotal part of her journey. Not only did she improve her language skills, but she also formed friendships that helped her feel more connected in her new environment.

Since becoming operational in July 2019, in Türkiye at Counselling Line, she has received around 80,000 calls each month. The line has 50 operators who respond in 15 languages, primarily Arabic, Farsi, English, Turkish, French, and Somali, as well as additional languages upon request, including Pashto, Urdu, and Russian.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Fatima



Възраст:	34
Страна на произход:	Syria
Държава на пребиваване:	Türkiye
Година на пристигане:	2012

Как започна всичко

On March 10, 2012, as conflict erupted in Aleppo, Syria, Fatima was forced to flee her home with her husband. Initially, she stayed in a refugee camp in Hatay for six months before moving to live with relatives in Mersin. During this time, Fatima worked in the orange fields and began learning Turkish and the Latin alphabet at the Public Education Center. She received a temporary residency document, and after two years, they resettled in Manavgat, Antalya, in 2014. There, she attended a hairdressing course at the Public Education Center, earning her certificate in hairdressing.

With financial support from her husband and relatives, she opened her own hairdressing business. Today, she continues her profession with the help of five employees, providing for her family and giving back to her community.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Fatima received significant support from both the Turkish government and various NGOs. Volunteers often visited refugee camps, providing food, water, and other essentials. The Red Crescent Social Assistance Association also provided valuable support, supplying items such as clothing, blankets, and shelter. Financial assistance from some European countries relieved Fatima and the refugees living in tent cities.

Public education centers made a substantial impact on Fatima's life, offering language and vocational courses that provided her with essential skills and certificates. The courses were crucial for her to overcome obstacles and build a foundation for her new life in Turkey.

История за успех

Fatima says "I was forced to leave my country, due to the civil war in Syria and came to Türkiye. It was very difficult for me to leave Syria, the environment I was in. When I first arrived, it was good to leave the war environment and get away from the sounds of airplanes and bombs at night, but being separated from the family, friends, and environment I lived in was bad for my siblings and my father. It was very painful for me to leave my father behind as he was ill".

Determined to contribute to her family's income, Fatima enrolled in a vocational hairdressing course offered by the Public Education Center in Manavgat. She credits this training with empowering Syrian women like herself to become self-sufficient. She had training in hair cutting, colouring, styling, and other haircare procedures. After she was certified, she was able to start her own business.

Fatima's business has not only helped her earn an income but has also allowed her to assist other refugees. Starting a business helped her to overcome the psychological challenges of being a refugee. She says, "Now I contribute to my family's budget and am able to integrate into social life with my friends."

The training program was intensive, running four days a week from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with a total of 35 women attending. Fatima is proud to be part of a community of women who have become economically independent thanks to this support.

Общуване и език

Encouraged by friends, she enrolled in a professional Turkish course at the Public Education Center. She said "I decided to join the course without hesitation, as I knew it would improve my pronunciation and intonation and help me communicate more effectively." Through these courses, she not only improved her Turkish but also formed new friendships that supported her along the way.

The language and vocational courses at public education centers accelerated Fatima's adaptation process and were invaluable in helping her solve everyday challenges. At first, she didn't know any Turkish and struggled to communicate," Fatima said. "I wanted to improve my language skills not only to communicate better but also to connect with my customers."

Collection of stories: The story of Huda Osman



Възраст:	25
Страна на произход:	Syria
Държава на пребиваване:	Türkiye
Година на пристигане:	2013

Как започна всичко

Huda Osman's journey to Turkey began in 2013, when the war in Syria forced her and her family to seek safety and new opportunities. She said, "There was no safety for us in Syria, and we couldn't continue our education. So, we decided to move on to a place where we could have a safer and better quality of life and the chance to continue our studies."

She moved to the province of Şanlıurfa initially together with her family, where she completed high school. Then, she moved to Malatya, where she spent a year studying Turkish in preparation for university. After becoming proficient in Turkish, she enrolled in the Business Administration program at Fırat University. In 2018, she graduated as the top student in her faculty, marking a significant achievement in her new home.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Reflecting on her early experiences in Turkey, Huda says, "When I first arrived, I faced many stress, including adapting to a new culture, dealing with loneliness, overcoming language barriers, and adjusting to social differences. My parents were unemployed for a while, and without income, we struggled to meet basic needs until the government stepped in to help."

Adapting to a new culture without speaking the language was challenging. Her family faced economic difficulties, health concerns, and the psychological stress that come from a lack of stability. Huda's siblings couldn't attend school initially, and some family members encountered health and social security issues. Fortunately, the Turkish government provided them with counselling and interpreter services, allowing them to access health insurance and other essential services.

История за успех

Despite the challenges, Huda's determination to build a successful life in Turkey has led her to many achievements. She began working as a human resources assistant at a packaging company, where she worked for two years while pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree at Gaziantep University.

Following this, Huda accepted a role as a customer service representative at a carpet company, where she continues to work. She is constantly looking for ways to expand her experience and skills, aiming to be a positive influence—first for herself, then for her family and the broader community. She shares her belief that “Nothing is impossible for any woman to achieve, as long as we strive for it.” She credits her accomplishments to hard work and self-confidence.

Общуване и език

Huda's journey has been shaped by overcoming language and cultural barriers. “At first, she faced economic problems and cultural exclusion,” she says. “We struggled to access social services because we didn't know anything about Turkey. We couldn't communicate with local people or with public service staff, which was a major barrier.”

At first, she did not know any of Turkish, her family had trouble understanding basic public services, including healthcare, education, and municipal resources. They had little knowledge of their rights or how to obtain work and residency permits.

Huda emphasizes that the biggest challenges they encountered in daily life stemmed from not knowing the language. The ‘language barrier’ between communities prevented positive communication and understanding.

Thanks to her persistence and hard work, Huda's Turkish is now good enough for effective communication. She learned Turkish at school and university, and she continues to improve her skills by watching Turkish TV shows and series. Today, she helps her relatives and friends with their own language needs, often accompanying them to government offices to interpret for them.

Huda is grateful for the life she's built in Turkey—a fulfilling job, a supportive community, and the opportunity to assist other refugees. Her journey from uncertainty to success has become a testament to resilience and thanks to the impact of education and community support.

Collection of stories: The story of Nur



Възраст:	45
Страна на произход:	Syria
Държава на пребиваване:	Türkiye
Година на пристигане:	2014

Как започна всичко

In the bustling city of Gaziantep, Türkiye, Nur, a skilled hairdresser, has become a beacon of empowerment for many women. Nur's journey to Türkiye began in 2014 when she and her family had to flee from Syria. Leaving behind her life and thriving business in Aleppo, Nur arrived in Türkiye with her husband and six children, facing an uncertain future.

Препятствия и подкрепа

When she moved to Türkiye, she did not know Turkish at all, which was a very big obstacle. Despite the challenges, Nur was determined to rebuild her life in the new country. She soon discovered an NGO partner of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Türkiye, which played a crucial role in supporting her to build a new life and encouraged her to language and vocational skills. She attended Turkish language courses, participated in various meetings and trainings that ensured her to her to get into employment integrate into community.

Nur also received psychological support from various public bodies in Türkiye, which helped her regain her strength and focus. "The psychological counselling, I received here helped me regain my grip on life," Nur shares, highlighting the significance of this assistance.

История за успех

After moving to Türkiye in 2014, she took steps to further her personal and professional development. She participated in a cooperative focused on tailoring, textiles, and cooking. She also completed skin-care and computer courses, receiving certificates that were invaluable in enhancing her skills. These courses have not only contributed to her professional growth but also empowered her personally, providing her with the confidence and capabilities to navigate her new environment.

Now, she dreams of teaching her craft as a hairdresser to young women, helping them gain skills and independence. She says; "Training programs organized for women are vital. They learn new things, improve their skills, capacities and can find work to earn money". Training programs empower individuals like Nur to find jobs and contribute to the communities. Nur's story as a successful hairdresser is a testament to the transformative power of support and education, illustrating how refugees can overcome challenges and make meaningful contributions to their new homes.

Общуване и език

She attended Turkish language courses, progressing from A1 to C1 levels, and participated in various meetings and trainings. At the moment, she can speak Turkish well, she does her job without any communication problems and has been integrated into the community. While attending Turkish classes, Nur heard about the committee meetings. The guidance and support provided by NGOs profoundly impacted and motivated her to join women's committee. Nur's empowerment in Turkish language led her to join a women's committee focused on addressing gender-based violence. She gradually met the members, participated into their activities and contributed to solve problems of migrant women.

"Now we have good communication with women from Türkiye and other countries and continue to touch the lives of other women," says Nur. Having participated in numerous courses and training sessions, Nur brings valuable insights and ideas to the table. She actively engages in efforts to prevent early marriage and supports women facing gender-based violence, providing them with critical information, and directing them to protection mechanisms.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Maria



Възраст:	52
Страна на произход:	Brazil
Държава на пребиваване:	Dublin Ireland
Година на пристигане:	2004

Как започна всичко

Maria was 32 when she heard about Ireland's growing economy and made the difficult decision to move away from her family and friends in search for better career opportunities. She was a civil servant in a teaching hospital that was struggling for funding and on the brink of closing. She struggled to find a new job, so after months of research and soul searching she decided to take the plunge and head to Ireland for a new life.

"I knew it would be difficult and challenging, but I believed that Ireland could offer me opportunities that weren't available in Brazil at that time."

Препятствия и подкрепа

"I was surprised to find that my skills and achievements seemed to be overlooked. It was as if my capabilities were erased when I came to Europe"

Although Maria found a home easily the **transition into a new job wasn't the same**. Her experience and qualifications were not recognised in Ireland. Something she later found out was a reoccurring issue for migrants.

Despite having studied English for much of her adult life they still seemed to be a barrier with communication.

There was also a challenge due to cultural differences and stereotypes.

"I found myself working in low-paid care jobs, despite my qualifications. It seemed that society had a preconceived notion of where migrant women should be placed in the workforce"

Maria Joined a **support group** for Migrant women which helped build her confidence and allowed her to push herself to network in her field.

История за успех

Maria persevered and although she had an urge to return to Brazil she refused. She worked on her language and communication skills, she completed training in other areas allowing her to be more flexible in her job search and more importantly kept a positive attitude.

After a year or so, Maria secured a job that aligned with her career in Brazil. She has since progressed through departments and **now manages 6 staff** (2 of which are migrants).

She now **volunteers** in a community organisation that supports other migrant women, where she shares her experiences and encourages them to settle. Recently she has started working to help change people's views around migrants and in particular migrant women.

"My advice to other migrant women: **Be persistent in pursuing your goals.** Invest in language skills and build a strong network. Stay open to new experiences while knowing your rights. Seek recognition for your qualifications, share your story, and embrace your unique perspective. Never stop learning, and always **prioritize your well-being** as you navigate life in a new country."

Общуване и език

Maria's major communication barrier was Ireland's very strong accent, she sometimes struggled to understand what was being said, and was often frowned on by constantly asking people to repeat what they said.

A lot of signs/flyers/information notices were also split between English and Irish so understanding them could cause problems.

However, joining the migrant support group, she became used to the accent and hers even softened allowing for **more conversation**.

The group also helped her feel more at home as she had people to **socialise** with, as her confidence grew so her isolation lessened, she felt more comfortable going to local stores and getting to know her neighbours.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Ана



Възраст:	33
Страна на произход:	Ukraine
Държава на пребиваване:	Ireland
Година на пристигане:	2022

Как започна всичко

Ana a 35-year-old architect from Kyiv, fled to Ireland with her young daughter and elderly mother under the **EU Temporary Protection Directive** after the conflict escalated in Ukraine. Leaving her home and her husband, who chose to stay and defend their country, was a heart-wrenching decision but necessary as fears for her families safety grew. In Ukraine, Ana had built a career, designing housing and working closely with local development teams. But with the dangers increasing daily, she prioritised her family's safety and took the difficult journey to Ireland.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Ana suffered **extreme anxiety** when she arrived. She faced several obstacles that contributed to this. Although her temporary protection status allowed her to remain legally in Ireland, she struggled with affordable housing shortages and language was another challenge, especially for her mother, who only spoke Ukrainian and Russian. Ana also faced barriers re-entering her profession, as her Ukrainian qualifications and experience were not recognised by Irish architectural standards. Additionally, managing childcare and supporting her mother, who had health issues exacerbated by the **stress of displacement**, left Ana with little time to focus on resuming her career.

She received support from the **Irish Refugee Council** and the Crosscare Migrants Project providing her with legal and practical advice on obtaining medical cards and employment options through the **EPIC programme** helping her back to work, and housing. A local women's charity offered English classes and free childcare during language sessions, which helped both her and her daughter adapt.

История за успех

Ana has been able to access housing and medical treatment for her mother, their English is improving daily and she has been able to face time her husband through access to internet and devices at the women's charity. She is working although she is in a low paid job within the Health and Social care sector, but she is hoping to transfer her experience and qualifications across soon to access work in the architectural sector, she is completing additional training and once she receives a job in the sector wants to focus on designing homes in socially deprived areas with the goal of eventually being a partner or owner of social enterprise housing business, however she is very aware this is long term goal if its even possible.

Ana is hoping her sister will follow and move to Ireland in the next year and she is hoping one day to return to the Ukraine to join her husband or for him to join her if her business dreams become a reality.

Общуване и език

Ana had very limited English, she travelled with her mother and child who had no English.

Ana has shared that the only way to learn is through classes and **total immersion in the native language**. She said her daughter is better than her now and she attributes this to the fact her child attends the local school and this total immersion into the language has helped as her daughter gets to practice more than her and her mother. They are developing their English skills and are thriving within the local community.

Communication has been one of the major barriers to Ana accessing work in Ireland but she is hopeful with continued help and lessons they will all soon be fluent.

She is so grateful to have found and been welcomed into the local women's centre which changed everything.

*Сборник с разкази: Историята на Bernadette **



Възраст:	77
Страна на произход:	Northern Ireland
Държава на пребиваване:	Ireland
Година на пристигане:	Unkown

Как започна всичко

Bernadette rose to fame after being elected to parliament as the youngest women in the 1960s. In the 90s she started focusing on the rights of migrants, as part of her commitment to social justice.

She saw similarities between catholic civil rights and those of migrants.

She co-founded the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP) in 1997, which provides support services to migrants and other marginalized groups. Bernadette became a vocal critic of Ireland's asylum and immigration policies, particularly the Direct Provision system.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Bernadette faced challenges from both Irish and Northern Irish governments. Political conflicts and religious beliefs mad a big impact on migrant issues.

At one stage Bernadette and her family's **home came under attack** by an assassination attempt that wounded her and her husband.

Her views on migrants had both protestant and catholic politicians disagree and challenge her. She challenged government about poor support and resources for refugees and worked hard to change publics perceptions.

Bernadette still fights for migrants rights and in 2023 spoke at "Ireland for All" rally, She has also built up a strong network of politicians and supporters over the years.

История за успех

Bernadette has had lots of success during her migrant work, mainly.

- Co Founded STEP in 1997 - South Tyrone Empowerment Programme, which campaigns various areas including housing which benefits immigrant families.
- Challenged far right attacks on immigrants during her "Ireland for all" speech which gathered up to 50,000 people.

She is still a key voice and **key note speaker about Migrants rights.**

*Online sources

*Сборник с разкази: Историята на Amira**



Възраст:	40
Страна на произход:	Syria
Държава на пребиваване:	Ireland
Година на пристигане:	2016

Как започна всичко

Due to the war in Syria Amira, her mother and younger sister decided to leave Aleppo. Aleppo became a focal point of intense fighting, and her family's neighborhood was heavily bombarded. The school where Amira taught was destroyed, so faced with the increasing danger and a deteriorating situation, Amira and her family made the decision to leave Syria in search of safety.

They had a difficult journey travelling through Turkey and Greece, living in refugee camps before joining the refugee programme in Ireland.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Although the family was together they were still homesick and the travel was arduous and difficult, they settled in Dublin and although grateful for the safety, the **language barrier was a significant challenge**. There were big cultural differences including dress, food and religion, and they were met with hostility from **anti immigration groups** within the city.

Amira was carrying trauma from the war - especially as she had seen a friend be killed - and experienced regular flashbacks. Her younger sister struggled to settle due to so many moves in a short period of time. Everyday tasks felt overwhelming, and Amira was deeply aware of her family's dependence on government support, something that weighed heavily on her **pride and sense of self-reliance**.

Amira visited a doctor and was referred for counselling. Her sister started a local school which was very understanding of the circumstances. The family started attending a local community centre and became involved with the Irish refugee council who offered support.

История за успех

Amira started her **own catering business** three years after arriving in Ireland. Her background and culture and the increased diversity in Ireland allowed her to introduce the food from her country to local businesses and then events, promoting her Syrian heritage.

Sadly Amira lost her mother last year but that encouraged her and her sister to push for success in Ireland and both work with local migrants to help them overcome their challenges and settle in Ireland. She even offers jobs where possible to other migrant women.

"Don't be afraid to ask for help. Learn the language, understand the culture, but also stay true to your roots. Believe in yourself and your abilities - if I could do it, so can you."

The key advice she offers is to **remain resilient** and take any support offered.

Общуване и език

The family knew various degrees of English, Amira had studied English at school but due to accents and even colloquialisms she didn't feel confident to speak to people. At first the family stuck to themselves, then used simple signs - pointing etc - where needed.

They knew this was alienating them so started watching English TV and reading before the community centre invited them to take part in English classes.

This made such a difference and allowed the family to socialise and become more involved with other migrants and the community wider.

This was also the start of Amiras business (unknown at the time) as she used to provide food for any get togethers and neighbours would her her for recipes.

*Name changed by Request

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Амина



Възраст:	34
Страна на произход:	Pakistan
Държава на пребиваване:	Ireland
Година на пристигане:	2022

Как започна всичко

Amina left Pakistan with two children to escape an abusive marriage.

"I left Pakistan to escape my husband's violence. The abuse had escalated, and I feared for my life and the safety of my two children."

Her children were seven and five at the time and she had to leave everyone and everything behind and basically leave on a whim. She knew if her husband or any of his family found out she would be in danger.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The Obstacles were many but Amina discussed her immigration status, she was allowed to live in Ireland **temporarily due to the abuse** she had faced and her genuine fear for her and her children's life, for a long time she didn't know her future.

Amina and her children also had a lot of **trauma** from the abuse and were scared to leave the house or engage with others especially males.

The Immigration Service Delivery (ISD) helped Amina and children with her status. Through them the family were offered support from the Irish Refugee Council including legal advice to seek a divorce and even support services.

The main support Amina received was through **women's aid**. their helpline helped Amina engage as she didn't have to leave her home or face anyone. She also felt less pressured due to language barriers. They helped her grow and feel more confident. In time she sought counselling for her and the children.

История за успех

Amina feels her success isn't relevant as it's mostly personal, however in two short years she has received **independent immigration status** under the guidelines of domestic abuse.

She completed an English as a second language course amongst other wellbeing courses. The children are enrolled in primary school and happy and settled, and the family are living in a safe house in a nice area with people from all over the world.

Amina **volunteers** for a community group where she helps women who are or have suffered from domestic violence, she signs posts them to support organisations and will be a listening ear.

She has applied to complete her Maths and English qualification so she can become a qualified counsellor, once she is qualified she wants to work with women's aid or similar to counsel migrants and women suffering domestic violence.

Общуване и език

The language barrier was scary for Amina and the children. As her husband had been very controlling she was never allowed to learn English and the children were young and only knew a few phrases from school.

She started using **google translate** before enrolling in English class

"At first, I struggled to express myself and understand official documents," Amina says.

"But with language classes and patient support workers, I'm improving every day. Don't let language barriers stop you from seeking help."

Having the determination to build a new life is what pushed Amina to succeed.

Collection of stories: The story of Isabel



Въз	41
Страна на	Colombia
Произход	Spain
Престигане:	2005
пристигане:	

Как започна всичко

She left her country because she received death threats. In recent years, there had been a very high level of violence from illegal groups who displaced her and her community from their property for economic gain.

She arrived alone, as she didn't have the resources to bring her entire family. **Her decision was driven by the need to protect their lives.** She applied for international protection, which was later approved in Spain for both herself and her family. She was the first to arrive, and it was an incredibly difficult experience, as she had to leave her daughters and her mother behind, knowing they were still in danger, even though they were relocating to another town. Each passing day was a challenge, especially as she struggled with complex procedures and the difficulty of securing appointments at the immigration office for the international protection process.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The three main challenges she faced were the **uncertainty of whether international protection would be granted**, her **lack of knowledge about the process**, and **raising the funds** needed for her family's travel to Spain.

From the immigration offices in Madrid, a social worker referred her to an NGO that provided her and her family with the warmest welcome she could have imagined. Eventually, she managed to bring two of her daughters to Spain.

The **Red Cross helped her** navigate the paperwork, provided training with other participants to help her adapt to the country's culture, facilitated travel to meet new people and explore new places, and encouraged her to understand that they were beginning a new life.

In short, the Red Cross was incredibly supportive, assisting with housing, training, food, and covering certain expenses.

История за успех

Reuniting her entire family in Spain feels like a personal achievement. Ensuring her loved ones' well-being and giving them access to opportunities for growth and dignity has been her greatest reward. **She never gave up, despite the enormous challenges and uncertainty of whether things would work out.** Her love for her family and commitment to their safety were the driving forces that helped her overcome every obstacle.

She realized that success was not only about securing safety but also about rebuilding their lives together. The support she received from the Red Cross in adapting to the country, learning the culture, and meeting new people made her feel that Spain could truly become a place where they could thrive.

Her advice to others facing migration is that, although the process is hard and often full of uncertainty, **perseverance is essential.** Seek support from organizations that help migrants, such as the Red Cross, and be prepared to face challenges and embrace growth opportunities. Migration is a sacrifice, but with determination, success and a new life are possible.

Общуване и език

Although she understood Spanish well, **she could not find a way to understand how the administrative and legal system in Spain worked,** which made it more difficult to find help and to find her way around processes such as immigration. Also, **the lack of understanding of some social customs and norms** made her integration difficult, which made her feel isolated at first. It made her gain confidence and interaction in everyday situations.

Some of the advice she would give to someone coming here who doesn't know the language is that it is normal to make mistakes. In the end, daily practice is essential to improving. Learn the new language in organizations that offer free courses. Participate in local activities to meet other people and learn the language faster.

Although she already knew the language, the Red Cross has a language program that offers Spanish classes adapted to immigrants.

Collection of stories: The story of Halyna



Въз	48
Страна на	Ukraine
Произход	Spain
Година на пристигане:	2022
пристигане:	

Как започна всичко

On February 24, 2022, **Russia began a large-scale military invasion of Ukraine**. The war developed quickly. There was much chaos, and she realized that she could not live under conditions of occupation or constant bombings. That's why she decided to leave.

She came alone with her cat, although she would have liked to bring her mother with her. Her mother cannot walk very well due to a joint disease and decided to stay in her home. Her brother helps her mother as much as he can. She took the cat with her because her mother wouldn't be able to take care of it.

She arrived in Spain thanks to a non-profit organization. Without their help, the move would have been much more complicated and dramatic. She travelled at a time when the exodus of women was massive. All her friends, except for two, have left Ukraine or moved to the western regions of Ukraine. Currently, the situation there remains the same.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The **loss of usual support, social isolation**, and the **inability to access medical care** were her greatest challenges.

Her survival (she is not exaggerating) would not have been possible without the help and support of the people who took her in. Her food, the payment for treatments, help with documentation, and other important things were provided by these people.

Thanks to the government, she quickly obtained the documents to reside legally and the possibility of working. **Thanks to the NGO, through its free language courses**, creative meetings, and informational assistance, her adaptation to the new realities is becoming more feasible.

История за успех

Success has made her stronger. Now, under immigration conditions and with the continuation of the war between Russia and Ukraine, her success is maintaining her mental health and having a high capacity for adapting to living conditions with unfamiliar rules that can change drastically at any moment.

She has addressed her challenges by going to therapy and seeking support from people in the community. **She likes to think that she must continue building her future, no matter what.**

Общуване и език.

Communication barriers still exist even now. For example, she does not feel safe in conflictual or stressful situations because her language skills are not at a sufficient level.

She cannot say that she knows the language. She is still studying Catalan and Spanish. She received her first lessons at the NGO, and there are also many public schools in Catalonia where you can learn the language for free.

Probably **the first piece of advice is to stop criticizing oneself and not to expect rapid mastery of the language.** Due to prolonged acute stress (war and emigration), many people have experienced a decline in cognitive functions and memory. It is important to give oneself time and work on the recovery of cognitive functions.

Secondly, **to learn a language, there must be a concrete and measurable goal.** Learning the language to live in Spain is not a clear goal. Therefore, it is essential to find that goal. For example, learning a specific volume of words to be able to conduct interviews in the language of the country where you live and find a job.

Collection of stories: The story of Iryna



Въз	43
Страна на	Ukraine
Проживяване:	Spain
пристигане:	2006

Как започна всичко

The **economic situation in her country was very bad**, and she decided to try to make a living abroad, like many of her fellow countrymen.

She came alone, but **her parents had already arrived in Spain**. She guesses that the fact her parents were already settled, without putting her at risk, made her want to try to make a living in another country or at least learn a new language. She had nothing to lose.

Her mother was the first to arrive, and it was hard for her. She came alone to an unknown country (something she couldn't have done herself). She didn't have to worry about anything, as her parents organized everything and accompanied her everywhere (finding accommodation, registering her, getting her health card, ID card, bank account, etc.).

Препятствия и подкрепа

The three biggest challenges she faced were **the language, the lack of friends, and getting to know the culture**.

When she arrived, she did feel welcome in the country. **She is a Christian, and from her first days, she started attending an evangelical church** in the city where she had arrived (Salamanca). They welcomed her warmly and helped her adapt to a new environment. She met new people, and now, whenever she goes to Salamanca, she feels at home.

История за успех

A success story for her is starting from scratch in a new country. Feeling like everyone else, like another person, and not feeling like an immigrant. Not thinking that, at any point, she was inferior to others because of her situation. To begin her path to success, the first thing she had to do was learn a new language. She is still in the process of learning. After that, her path focused on meeting new people, interacting with native speakers, and entering a circle of friends. She doesn't feel she has achieved decisive success, but **she has reached some goals and is still on her way.**

For her, it is **essential to have good friends and acquaintances among the locals.** Sometimes, stepping out of her comfort zone and taking risks has been necessary. She considers it a mistake to only relate to compatriots, as Spanish people are generally good, open, and willing to help.

Here's her advice to women moving to a new country: there will be moments when you feel like giving up and going back. To avoid this, **stay focused on your goals and remember why you started this journey**—everything will fall into place in time. Also, don't isolate yourself. Explore new places where you can learn, meet people, and get involved.

Общувание и език

Her **biggest challenge was the language.** She had hoped her English skills would be enough, but she quickly realized there were very few native English speakers around. It took her a long time to start speaking confidently. She needed to first understand the language's structure and grammar to build sentences. She isn't the type of person who can pick up a language just by hearing it.

At the church where she went to pray, a woman who volunteered there offered to give her private lessons (she was a teacher). This woman also knew English, which was a big help since they had a common language to communicate in. The lessons were very productive, and after that, she studied for a year at an official language school.

She is still learning by doing. She believes it's essential to take learning a new language seriously and put in a lot of effort. It's always hard for everyone at the start.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Zi Hui



Въз	37
Страна на	China
Произход	Spain
Пробиване:	2009
пристигане:	

Как започна всичко

In 2009, at the age of 23, **she left China to pursue a master's degree** at Rovira i Virgili University in Tarragona, Spain. She had previously studied Spanish at Dalian University of Foreign Languages, which gave her a good foundation, but she quickly realized that **studying and living in Spain would be far more challenging** than she had anticipated.

The language barrier was still significant, especially when it came to following academic classes and communicating in everyday life. On top of that, she didn't know anyone in Spain, and adapting to the cultural differences—the way people interacted, their social norms, and even the food—proved to be much harder than she expected.

Препятствия и подкрепа

After completing her master's degree, she decided to stay in Spain because her partner was Spanish. However, finding work that matched her education was extremely difficult. **The jobs she found were poorly paid**, and on a few occasions, she wasn't paid at all. It was a very frustrating and demoralizing experience.

Thankfully, she had support from her partner and her family in China. They helped her decide to open a language school in Tarragona. The school focused on teaching Chinese, which was a popular language at the time. While there was little competition because no other Chinese schools existed in the area, Tarragona is a small city, so demand was limited.

История за успех

Running the school was rewarding, but it wasn't enough to sustain her long-term. She expanded her work to include interpreting, which gave her a new sense of purpose and stability. Eventually, she also ventured into the import business, leveraging her knowledge of both Chinese and Spanish cultures to facilitate trade between the two countries.

These efforts have allowed her to create a career that suits her abilities and offers her a sense of independence. Although **her path has been full of challenges, these experiences have made her more resilient and adaptable.**

Общуване и език

Even though she studied Spanish before coming to Spain, **it took her years to feel comfortable communicating in everyday situations**, especially in more formal or professional settings. Learning Catalan was also necessary in Tarragona, which added another layer of difficulty.

At first, she often felt insecure and frustrated when she couldn't express herself as clearly as she wanted to. But over time, **she learned to be patient with herself.** The key, she realized, was **to set specific, achievable goals.**

For instance, she focused on learning enough vocabulary to communicate in a business context. Language learning is a long process, especially when she is dealing with cultural adaptation and the pressures of building a new life in a foreign country. However, the support of language courses and the local community helped her improve her skills and feel more integrated into society.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на XiaoTian



Въз	35
Страна на	China
Проживяване:	Spain
пристигане:	2015

Как започна всичко

In 2015, **she came to Spain to help her cousin**, who had opened a Chinese language academy in Tarragona. She had studied marketing and design at Shenzhen University, where she learned to analyze markets, develop plans, and use design software. When her cousin invited her to help with her language academy, she saw it as an exciting opportunity to travel again, as she had previously lived in Japan for a while. However, she soon realized that this experience would present many more challenges than she initially expected. She didn't speak any Spanish at the time, and although **she knew some English, it wasn't enough to communicate effectively with the students**. Teaching grammar and vocabulary in a language she wasn't fluent in was especially tough, and since she had no prior experience as a language teacher, she struggled a lot in the beginning.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The **language barrier was one of the biggest obstacles**. Not knowing Spanish made it difficult for her to interact with students, and she often felt inadequate and frustrated. She spent a lot of time preparing lessons, which was exhausting because she had to adapt both to teaching and to working in a foreign environment.

Her work hours were long, and she felt overwhelmed by the responsibilities. Despite these challenges, she was determined to make the most of her situation. Unfortunately, after some time, her cousin had to close the academy, which left her at a crossroads. However, this moment led to a pivotal decision in her life: she chose to pursue further education in Spain.

История за успех

After the academy closed, she decided to move to Barcelona and enroll in a master's program. By then, her Spanish had improved significantly, and she felt ready to take on this new chapter. She studied several courses at the University of Barcelona, focusing on sustainability.

Today, **she works as a sustainability and awareness technician for a company in Barcelona, a job that aligns with her interests and values.** Although the path she followed wasn't easy, she is proud of the progress she's made. Moving to Spain was a life-changing decision, and she doesn't regret it. The challenges she faced taught her resilience and helped her build a career that she finds fulfilling.

Общуване и език

At the beginning, the language barrier was a constant source of frustration. **She had to learn Spanish from scratch,** and it was challenging to communicate effectively, especially in professional settings.

However, with time and persistence, her language skills improved. While it took time to feel confident, the effort was worth it, as **mastering the language opened up new opportunities for her.** She learned that patience and setting small, achievable goals were essential in the process of learning a new language. Today, she feels more comfortable with Spanish, and she's able to communicate fluently in both her personal and professional life.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Felicitas Kresimon



Възраст:	59
Страна на произход:	Germany
Държава на пребиваване:	Italy
Година на пристигане:	1995

Как започна всичко

She decided to move for study reasons and to participate in the experience of deinstitutionalizing mental health hospitals in Italy, an initiative promoted by Franco and Franca Basaglia. As a young student, she wanted to experience life in a country where she needed to learn a new language and discover different experiences and ways of life. She came alone. She started **as a volunteer**, and being in a working context was extremely important and helpful, both for language learning and for **establishing relationships**, entering **community organizations**, and **participating in events**.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Her challenges included learning the language to enable good human and professional communication, understanding the contextual elements like legal, financial, and bureaucratic aspects, and adapting to cultural differences, such as humor and physical contact. In the first month, she felt both excited and curious, but also **shy and afraid** of not being recognized **as a valuable person** due to her inability to express herself and share her thoughts. She had to go to the police every three months to renew her permit to stay in Italy, but she was aware of being in a privileged migration position. She solved her problems through a **strong network of friends, cooperation at her workplace**, and continued studying. To address her precarious financial situation in the early years, she took on **various small jobs**, such as giving language lessons and cleaning services.

История за успех

She works in the field of social economy, specifically with social cooperatives that focus on the inclusion of vulnerable individuals, such as those with mental health issues, disabilities, migrants, and single mothers with children. Currently, she serves as the **Vice President of the board** and is in charge of international cooperation, managing Erasmus+ projects, and overseeing the activities of the **European Network SFE CEFEC**, which supports social enterprises in work inclusion activities. She started as a volunteer, which helped her realize that this field was her calling. Afterward, she secured her first paid job in the social cooperative, where she worked to improve services, enhance experiences, grow knowledge, and expand networks.

Her advice to others is to acquire **at least basic language skills** to ease integration. It is also crucial to be aware of your professional competencies and to display them with pride. She emphasizes the importance of being proud of who you are and recognizing the richness you bring to your **new environment**. Additionally, she advises not to forget your **dreams and wishes**, as the initial period of feeling inadequate is just a temporary phase. **Continuous work and study are key to success.**

Общуване и език

She knew some basic grammatical rules but was not able to speak the language fluently at first. She learned Italian primarily through her work and thanks to her friends, most of whom were from different countries. This made Italian their common language for communication. Additionally, she began reading simple newspaper articles, annotating words she didn't understand, and later looking them up in a dictionary to expand her vocabulary.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Mirna



Възраст:	34
Страна на произход:	Germany
Държава на пребиваване:	Hungary
Година на пристигане:	2020

Как започна всичко

She really liked Hungary and had always dreamed of living there. At the age of 28, she began searching diligently for a job there, but it wasn't until she turned 30 that she was able to move permanently. She had thought long and hard about whether this decision would be the best for her, but since she is not married, she decided that now might be the right time for such a step. If she had a family and a child, she likely would not have made the decision to go through with it. She has now been living and working in Hungary for four years.

Препятствия и подкрепа

This move was a difficult and deliberate decision, not driven by emotions or personal relationships. Her family lives in Germany, and they see each other often, as the distance isn't too long. The main challenge she faced was **finding a suitable job**. Initially, she started working in an office that offered financial and accounting consulting as a junior assistant.

Her family provided her with significant support, even financially, as she struggled to manage rent, food, and transportation costs at the beginning. Instead of seeking support from external organizations, **she read reviews and experiences shared by other people living in Hungary**.

История за успех

She has been a **licensed guide** for a few months and is focused on building a career in this field. Although she works independently, various organizations hire her to guide foreign groups around the country. Her language skills are a significant advantage. **Възраст:** she speaks fluent German, English, Spanish, and fairly good Hungarian. These **language competencies** enable her to pursue her passion. She is committed to working hard to continually improve her skills and become even better at her job.

Общуване и език

She did not face major communication difficulties because she already knew the language quite well, but the challenge lay in **integrating into the new environment and work culture**. She experienced prejudice from colleagues who didn't understand her decision to live and work in Hungary. As a new employee, she faced distrust and was initially not given more responsible tasks. It took about two years for her to gain confidence and overcome feelings of being insignificant, small, and invisible. Over time, those feelings faded, and she now feels more secure in her role.

Her advice to other women is that **nothing is impossible**. There will be difficulties, obstacles, and misunderstandings, but achievements are always within reach. She is now doing what she loves and believes there is still room for further development.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Adrijana



Възраст:	49
Страна на произход:	Republika Srbija
Държава на пребиваване:	Italy
Година на пристигане:	2005

Как започна всичко

Her journey to Italy began nearly 20 years ago with a dream of studying interior design, but financial constraints prevented her from pursuing education abroad. Despite finishing her studies in her home country, she didn't give up on her dream of Italy. At the age of 23, she **enrolled in Italian language courses to prepare for her future plans**. By the time she turned 30, she made the life-changing decision to move to Italy. She had saved up enough money, bought a plane ticket, and, armed with nothing but enthusiasm, she embarked on a new chapter of her life in Italy.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Her first year in Italy was challenging, as she faced lack of support from her family, who were against her decision to move. Without any friends or a clear plan, she struggled to find her footing. To make ends meet, she took on **various odd jobs, working hourly wherever she could**. She cleaned houses, worked in a small bakery, and did whatever was necessary to survive and adapt to her new life in Italy. Despite the difficulties, she pushed forward, determined to build a better future for herself.

История за успех

After many years of struggle, she eventually found her path and established her own professional cleaning business, offering services for homes, office spaces, and yards. Although it wasn't her initial dream to work in this field, the experience of working on homes and interacting with locals gave her the confidence to manage her own business. While it hasn't been easy, she's incredibly proud of how far she's come, building her business from the ground up. Now, she has the support of her husband, and together, they continue to work toward their goals.

Общуване и език

The first few months were challenging for her, as she faced disbelief and mistrust from others due to being a foreigner. Despite knowing Italian well, she **encountered prejudice**, not just because she was an outsider, but also because she was a woman and had arrived alone. She acknowledges that without speaking the language, it would have been impossible to continue living in Italy. Reflecting on her experience, she believes that a more thoughtful approach could have made her transition easier. She would have taken the time to research potential work opportunities, arranged her accommodation, secured a part-time job, and connected with expat communities beforehand. These steps would have eased the difficult process she initially faced.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Ines



Възраст:	52
Страна на произход:	Slovenija
Държава на пребиваване:	Austria
Година на пристигане:	2015

Как започна всичко

At 43, she decided to move to Austria to help a distant relative who lived there alone. She was seeking a job and didn't have many prospects, so she agreed to give it a try after discussing it with her husband and son. Initially planning to stay for just a year, things changed as she settled in. She started working as a domestic helper and, despite not knowing the language, she quickly adapted. Her aunt's **neighbours** were a great help at the beginning, accompanying her on shopping trips and guiding her as she familiarized herself with the area and local transportation.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Her biggest challenges were the **language barrier, getting oriented in the new environment, and communicating with people**. When she first arrived, she didn't focus much on learning the language since she initially viewed her stay as temporary. However, she received a lot of help and support from her family, who visited her often, and from her neighbours, who were very supportive during her early days in Austria.

История за успех

Her stay, initially planned for one year, was extended to four years. During this time, her family came to visit often, and eventually, her husband decided to move permanently as well. He found a temporary job as a driver. Faced with the challenge of supporting themselves, a neighbour mentioned that the bakery on the corner was for sale. This caught her by surprise, as she was a great baker but had never imagined running a bakery. After speaking with the bakery's co-owner, who was supportive and gave her valuable insights about the business, she decided to take the **risk** and buy it. They invested all their savings into this new venture, not knowing what the outcome would be.

Общуване и език

She was initially afraid of the language, as she hadn't planned on staying in Austria long-term. However, over time, she managed to handle daily conversations. Her son found a translation program to help her, and she enrolled in an **evening course** to improve her language skills. This gradual effort helped her become **more confident and integrate into her new environment**.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Valeria



Възраст:	38
Страна на произход:	Moldova
Държава на пребиваване:	France
Година на пристигане:	2016

Как започна всичко

She moved to France primarily for **job opportunities**, having heard from a friend who lived there that there was a demand for workers with various qualifications. Before making the move, she took two years of **intensive French courses** to prepare for her new life. She had arranged to temporarily live with her friend and share the rent as part of her plan to settle in France.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The biggest stress she faced was adjusting to the **multicultural environment** and the bustling city life, with heavy traffic, crowds, and the added concern of being **a single woman in an unfamiliar place**. The language barrier was another challenge—despite two years of studying, her confidence in her language skills diminished as soon as she arrived. In the first days, she felt **scared, disoriented, and uncertain** about whether she had made the right decision. Her support came from her old friend, with whom she lived, as well as her relatives and friends who remained optimistic and encouraging throughout her adjustment period.

История за успех

As a kinesiologist with extensive experience in acupressure, therapeutic massages, and osteopathy, she spent her first four years in France working in various massage studios, **gaining experience** in customer relations and different working methods. However, despite her hard work, she didn't manage to save much money during this time. Starting her own business as a foreigner in France proved to be very challenging due to **complicated administrative procedures** and her **lack of understanding of the requirements**. It took a significant amount of time and effort to take the first steps. One of her regular clients, who she confided in about her struggles, offered to partner with her, and together they launched their business in late 2023. Despite the difficulties, she is proud of how far she's come. Her advice to other migrant women is to **carefully research and understand the administrative procedures** in their new country, as navigating these processes can be a significant obstacle.

Общуване и език

Her advice for anyone moving to France is clear: **everything starts and ends with the language**. Without a good command of French, it's incredibly difficult to integrate. While many languages are spoken in France and different accents are heard, the key to truly becoming part of the society is learning and speaking French. She emphasizes that while language courses provide a good foundation, it's the daily communication that truly helps one learn the living language and adapt to the culture.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Rocio



Възраст:	45
Страна на произход:	Spain
Държава на пребиваване:	Wales
Година на пристигане:	2005

Как започна всичко

Rocio had been a drama student at University in Madrid, studying drama with hopes of a promising future on stage. Yet, as graduation neared, a harsh reality set in—a severe lack of job opportunities made it nearly impossible to find work in her chosen field. She made the difficult decision to leave Spain. Wales seemed like a temporary destination, a place where she could stay with family, save some money, and ultimately make her way to London to pursue her dreams in a city alive with theatrical possibilities. Arriving in Wales Rocio found work in a local bar, and it was here she met her partner. Slowly, her plans to leave for London drifted further from reach. What was meant to be a brief stay in Wales stretched into years and today, Rocio remains in Wales, where she lives with her two young daughters.

Препятствия и подкрепа

While Rocio might have had a good knowledge of English, communicating fluently in a new country was challenging, particularly in casual conversation and workplace situations. Conversational slang, accents, sayings unique to the Welsh made it even harder. Adjusting to the Welsh/English language, and social interaction presented a challenging learning curve.

Rocio struggled to find relevant work in the performing arts, especially in the smaller market like Wales in the 2000s. The Welsh arts scene was growing but still had limited openings, and newcomers without a network found it even harder to get roles. Like many immigrants, due to her Spanish heritage she was passed over in favour of UK native actors so she had to settle for jobs unrelated to her field, as she did by working in a bar. **She felt frustration and a sense of loss in not using her skills and passion for drama in a productive way.** She had support from friends from her time travelling to the UK and her colleagues at the bar. Her partner also provided a good source of support.

История за успех

Rocio joined a local drama society and made a new network of friends which led to her working in a local secondary school as a classroom support assistant. **She now teaches Spanish and Spanish culture both in the school and independently.**

She regularly hosts culture nights that her colleagues encouraged her to start to feel more at home. She shares her culture and recipes with students, parents and other staff. She encourages other migrants to do the same ensuring an inclusive practice at her school.

She has fully settled in Wales and sometimes guest lectures in adult education centres focusing on teaching Spanish people English.

She wants to start an **Exchange programme** to allow people to have the experiences she had with travel and show both Spanish and Welsh students there are so many opportunities in the world.

Общуване и език

Rocio was very lucky that she had a high level of the English language but there was an added complication that many signs and instructions are also in Welsh, over time she was able to differentiate between the two languages and she has recently started a new class learning the Welsh language and she hopes this will allow her to help other immigrants.

Obviously the Welsh accent is quite strong and can be fast paced and although Rocio understood English well she sometimes struggled to fully understand a conversation. she has overcome this by asking people to slow down and repeat where necessary until she understood.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Emilia



Възраст:	32
Страна на произход:	Poland
Държава на пребиваване:	England
Година на пристигане:	2012

Как започна всичко

Emilia, at 19, decided to leave her hometown in Poland to seek new opportunities in the UK. Back home, she had been working part-time in a shop while finishing her studies in business administration, dreaming of a life beyond her hometown. Emilia followed friends to Manchester hoping to explore a new culture and find a job that would help her gain more independence using her business administration qualification. Ireland, with its growing economy and a support network of a growing Polish community, seemed like the perfect choice. When she arrived in England, she was both nervous and excited. Emilia quickly found a job as a waitress in a café, where she worked to improve her English and adapt to her new environment. Despite initial challenges she now works for an accounting software company training others.

Препятствия и подкрепа

On arrival in England Emilia found the language barrier to be quite challenging, she had a basic grasp of English but the different accents and speed with which people spoke was very difficult. She found gaining employment hard as in addition to the language barrier the terms and conditions she was expected to work under were not equitable to her UK colleagues. She was employed on zero hours contracts and expected to work long hours for lower wages than others. She was not using her **business qualification as it was not recognised in the UK**. Emilia found support through immigrant support groups that offered tailored classes to help newcomers quickly improve their language skills. She sought help from Migrant Rights Centre and was able to join a bridging course to bring her qualification into line with UK recognised qualifications.

История за успех

As a result of this support Emilia secured a position at a prominent accounting software company. Her **role as a client support specialist** allows her to use both her business knowledge and newly acquired technical skills. Emilia now assists clients in navigating the software, troubleshooting issues, and providing valuable insights into financial management. Her fluency in Polish and English has made her a key asset for the company's growing Central European client base. **She has married an UK national** and now has two children and a wide circle of Polish and British friends whilst regularly returning to her hometown to enjoy time with her family and ensure her children are immersed in their Polish culture.

Общуване и език

Emilia initially struggled with the English language, she recounts that although she was good at English at school this did not prepare her for moving to, living and working in a foreign country, she says it helped to attend classes within the Polish community where they worked on conversational English and culture, whilst still celebrating and enjoying Polish culture. She felt living in a **big city helped as there was quite a diverse culture** there, she recounts that friends in smaller towns struggled with communication and language as there was less opportunity to learn English.

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Mary



Възраст:	42
Страна на произход:	Kenya
Държава на пребиваване:	UK
Година на пристигане:	2015

Как започна всичко

Mary was a member of the minority Maasai community.

She was 1 of 12 children, highly educated studying women's health and community studies.

She began her career in Kenya, and became a **strong advocate for gender rights** and campaigned against arranged marriage and female genital mutilation. This advocacy lead to death threats and serious security risks, so she escaped to Northern Ireland seeking refuge, opportunities and a better future.

She left alone frightened and seeking safety and security in another country.

She has been settled in Northern Ireland for 13 years.

Препятствия и подкрепа

Mary was an asylum seeker and had to deal with immigration issues such as limited access to basic services like healthcare, housing, and social support coupled with the **fear** of deportation and dealing with new cultures, discrimination and prejudices.

Mary became involved with North West Migrants forum and sought support from then.

История за успех

Mary went on to campaign for all women and is **now working for a migrant support organisation** helping new migrants to the country to navigate the complicated asylum seekers process, she uses her experience to advocate for those new to the country.

She has connected with women across various backgrounds and her work has taken big steps towards cultural diversity in Northern Ireland

Her main factor of success as seen by Mary and anyone who knows her personally and professionally is her ability to work and engage with anyone regardless of race, gender religion. **She is still totally dedicated to her community service.**

She encourages other migrant women to acknowledge and reach their full potential and become involved with their communities.

Общуване и език

Due to Mary's education she says she didn't have a lot of language barriers, but understands the pressures migrants may face not speaking English or feeling confident especially with the strong accents in Northern Ireland.

She recommends newcomers engage with migrant forums with many offering language classes and opportunities to improve conversational competency.

She always suggests people **don't worry about making mistakes** while learning the language, and even push themselves to immerse themselves in the culture.

*Сборник с разкази: Историята на Sarah**



Възраст:	35
Страна на произход:	Syria
Държава на пребиваване:	UK
Година на пристигане:	2022

Как започна всичко

Sarah left Damascus where she was a successful software engineer due to ongoing conflict. She choose Northern Ireland as it has a growing tech industry and she wanted to build her career away from violence and instability.

She left her family behind with the idea to encourage them to move once she had settled. although she was very close to them and worried about travelling alone, she didn't want to uproot her family until she knew she had a safe place to bring them.

When she arrived she was placed in a hotel in a small town through the UK immigration/migrant programme.

Препятствия и подкрепа

On arrival, it became clear, **migrants/refugees were not welcome** by a small but vocal section of the local community. The hotel where she was living was regularly vandalised, there were protests against migrants, social media posts threatening violence.

Sarah said as a strong person she tried to rise above it, she formed friendships with a small group of migrants in the hotel, they ventured out together and visited small community groups and took part in art classes and attended cultural events that were happening.

As an asylum seeker she had limited access to services and she was unable to use her qualifications and experience to find work.

История за успех

Sarah, only recently found out her application for **asylum was successful**.

This means she is now looking for a job and is on a waiting list for a home, she wants to stay in the area as she has made a support network within her community and the community group where she still attends classes.

She volunteers at events now and this has enabled her to become involved with different people and to learn about other cultures and showcase her own rich heritage. She is using these opportunities to change the negative mindset against migrants. Although there is still protests and on going issues around migrants, Sarah helps women in her community overcome their fears and push for what they want.

She is working on her employability and hopes to be able to access a similar job to the one she had in Syria, she is currently working on a statement of comparability to get credentials recognition and she hopes to bring her family over in the next few years.

Общуване и език

Language was a big issue on arriving in N.I

Sarah had very little ability in the English language, the accent is very strong and the limited ability she had was of little help. The the political issues meant a hostile environment hindered her ability to practice and truly immerse herself in the language and local culture.

She started practicing with her small group of friends and they learn from each other but this escalated when she joined the community women's group, The women welcomed Sarah and had a lot of patience with her language and teaching her English in a safe welcoming environment.

*Name changed by request

Сборник с разкази: Историята на Mei L



Възраст:	32
Страна на произход:	China
Държава на пребиваване:	Northern Ireland
Година на пристигане:	2023

Как започна всичко

Mei Lin was a marketing executive in Shanghai where she lived with her husband and 2 children, she was extremely happy and didn't expect her life to change so drastically. Her husband received a prestigious job opportunity in Northern Ireland and societal expectation and her husband's higher earning potential meant she was expected to follow him to Ireland. As an only child herself she helped her parents care for her grandparents so there was a lot of familial responsibility to leave behind.

Mei Lin was extremely upset to leave her job, her family and friends, and her young children didn't want to leave either.

Препятствия и подкрепа

The move put a tremendous **strain on the family**. Her husband moved a few weeks before to set up the new family home. So on arrival her husband was working long days to get to grips with the new job, Mei Lin had to spend all her time unpacking, settling in, sad children suffering from jet lag and trying to find nurseries and school. She started to feel very depressed, the pressure of a new unfamiliar country, language barriers for her children and the difficulty in making new friends as a result of this. In addition to these issues her husband didn't understand he was extremely happy with his new life.

After a few weeks the children settled into school, and Mei Lin sought support from her new GP. He diagnosed depression, and whilst treating her for this, he also encouraged her to join a local community group to integrate, and told her of the large Chinese community in the local area. She reached out to the local **Chinese Welfare Association** where she indulged in her own culture alleviating her homesickness and they helped her navigate her new life in Ireland.

История за успех

Mei Lin has now been in Belfast for almost two years, and although it took time, she says she is very happy and content there.

Her children are settled in school, her relationship is now stronger than ever as the couple had to overcome their problems and find a new way forward.

She now has become completely involved in the local Chinese community. She organises and promotes events, and even takes her culture to local schools sharing it with children via food, arts and language. She works hard to **promote culture in Ireland** and is thinking of starting her own **online business** to promote events all over the country and maybe sell items from around the world.

Общуване и език

Mei Lin and her husband spoke English well, the children didn't.

She was very concerned and worried for them attending nursery and school. She was concerned a **lack of the native language would hinder their social development** and make it hard for them to establish friendships. These worries added to her anxieties and contributed to her depression.

However, the school has other Chinese children and paired them up for mentoring opportunities, children picked up the language quickly and within a few months they were almost fluent.

The family also played games in English and used technology such as the app Duolingo to all master the language and make it fun for the children.

Mei Lin recommends things like Radio, TV, and apps to help newcomers pick up the language and accents but just keep practising.

Партньори





www.justherproject.eu
[@justherproject](https://www.instagram.com/justherproject)

© EUROPEAN UNION, 2024



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

