



***“Now I can speak for  
myself and plan my  
future in English”***

Amina’s Story



When Amina arrived in the UK 15 months ago, she knew only a handful of English greetings, picked up from British people she worked with in Afghanistan. Beyond that, she couldn't really explain herself or understand what others said.

Her journey had already demanded resilience. Growing up in Afghanistan, her mother was passionate about education and made sure that Amina went to school despite the cultural challenges.

***“My brother said I shouldn't go to school and my mother she told me 'yes - school!' ...”***

As a young woman, she worked during the day, studied at university in the evenings and ran a household with two young children.

Then the Taliban took power. Amina fled to Iran and eventually to the UK. For Amina, who had worked alongside British people back home, it was particularly upsetting to arrive here and be unable to communicate. Starting a new life here was daunting.

***“I regret not learning English in Afghanistan. When I came here, I couldn't explain or understand anything.”***

She was delighted to join RRN's bespoke weekly English class for Afghan refugees. For four months, she practised practical skills, made friends, and grew in confidence. At first, she needed full interpreting support from Nadima, RRN's Afghan translator teaching assistant. By the end, she was following most conversations herself. Today, just over a year after arriving in the UK, Amina could hold the interview for this case study in English, happy and confident, proud of how hard she has worked and the progress she has made.

***"[The teacher] gave me confidence and I got better month by month".***

When asked what strengths have helped her on this journey, she said:

***"My teacher! And I work hard, I try hard. Every week I took home 3 books, and read them, changed for new ones at the next class".***

Amina described the value of RRN's teaching approach with complete beginners; ***"repeat, repeat and remember"*** through consolidating essential practical language such as different types of flour, ***"flour for bread, white flour, brown flour, flour for baking"***.

In the daunting world of a new country and culture,

***"all [RRN] people are very kind, very friendly and always smile."***

Amina has encouraged other women who hadn't had any education in their native Dari to learn to read and write in Dari. She explained that many of the men, who had had a good education in Afghanistan, have that head start in learning English.

***"The class gave me confidence, conversation is easier."***

She can now make herself understood independently and as a single woman who needs and wants to get a job here that is crucial. She feels that the RRN classes have provided a bridge to the level 1 college course she has just started 2 days a week. She is also attending English conversation support at her local library where she has met other refugees, particularly Ukrainians.

Amina is determined and has ambitious dreams and a love of learning.

***"I like study and learning, I loved university and hope to go to university in the UK in the future and continue to study law. One day I would like to be a woman judge."***

***"Some women think no, they need to work in the home so have no time. I make time."***

***In the short term, "I'm a single woman, so I need to find a job, learning English means living better here."***

RRN can help refugees like Amina with that next step too, offering bespoke employability support, and help with skills like driving. Amina's palpable drive and resilience, and RRN's sensitive support, have unlocked connection, practical skills and hope for the future.