



LEARN

Norway - Case Study 1

**Eining for innvandring og integrering
– Aud Lisbeth Lillebostad**



**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.





Leila – an extraordinary woman with courage

LEILA - learn about her incredible journey from arriving in Norway as an illiterate refugee to mastering the Norwegian language on a high level and being independent with a good job and a large network of friends and acquaintances.

Introduction

Leila is a Kurdish woman from Syria. She got married at the age of 19, and she had never worked outside the home when she came to Norway. She had been to school for 4 years only and could not read or write in her own language.

Leila came to Norway as a UN refugee in 2017 together with her husband and her 3 sons, the youngest one a newborn baby. She grew up in Aleppo, a big city, and the transition from a big city to a small island in Norway was overwhelming. She felt lonely and missed her family in Syria a lot. She cried a lot, got depressed and wanted to move to a bigger place in Norway as soon as possible. However, Leila managed, with a lot of help from her advisor, to work through the first difficult period and started to set goals for her own future.

Leila's Story

Leila's husband started in the qualification programme for new immigrants. Leila had to stay home with the baby, but she didn't have the patience to wait for her turn to start school. She borrowed her husband's books and started to learn the Norwegian language in the evenings, all by herself. When Leila started the introduction programme 6 months later, she could already master a decent level of the Norwegian language. Leila is a very open minded and social woman, and one of her biggest wishes was to get new friends. In a relatively short period of time, she managed to build a large network of friends.

Main Challenges

- The new way of living
- Loneliness
- No network

Main Opportunities

- Education
- Self-realization
- Freedom



Leila

Leila is a Kurdish woman from Syria. She got married at the age of 19, and she had never worked outside the home when she came to Norway. She had been to school for 4 years only and could not read or write in her own language.



They taught her how to drive a car, helped her practice the new language or just supported her in her daily life. This was life changing for Leila. She worked even harder with her education, and at the same time she participated in organized activities in various organizations. Her cooking skills made her sought after, and Leila contributed happily with food from her own country. She soon got her driving license and was able to get around. When she started primary school for adults, she had the highest level in all subjects in her class.

Conclusions

Leila's story is a sunshine story. Everything ended well for her. She has now got a permanent job where she can use her cooking skills, working in a canteen in a large company on the island. Her husband also has a permanent job, and her sons are well integrated. And - Leila says she will never move away from the island. It's her favorite place in the world.

When an immigrant has the same courage as Leila, a lot of the job is done. It takes a lot from a new immigrant to be outgoing and take responsibility of building their own network. The lack of friends and network is probably the biggest challenge for most immigrants in our society. Leila got married at the age of 19, and she had never worked outside the home.

With the right help and advice, a difficult situation can be turned into something good, as long as you have the right people in your network. That's why it is so important that every refugee has their own contact person the first period in a new country, so they can get the help and advice they need in their new situation in a new country. Having a network and being able to get individual support and facilitation, will help immigrants reach their goals. When people are given opportunities they have not had before, the results will most likely be a positive surprise.