

Story from Sudan as part of Refugee Week

Name: Hoayda Abdelsawi

This story was collected by the Kirklees Cohesion Team, if you would like to share your story, please contact cohesion@kirklees.gov.uk

What was it like growing up in Sudan?

I remember growing up with my mum, dad, aunts, uncles and grandparents in a big house that we all lived in together in Khartoum in Sudan. Families from different generations live together in Sudan and support each other. I have very good memories of waking up and having morning tea together and sharing food with neighbours as this one of our habits in Sudan.

As a child, I was very quiet and very close to my mum and was with her most of the time, however, I did enjoy reading, writing and going outside, looking at nature and doing paintings of local trees and other things. My father worked in Railways and I use to travel a lot with dad, as I enjoy travelling by train.

Growing up in Sudan the weather was rainy and warm as we used to get 4 months of rainfall as well as very warm weather. And this is a great way to get out into the play parks where I used to live. Within the park, we also have a memorial in remembrance of those who lost their lives in Sudan.

What was your Journey like to the United Kingdom and how did you find Kirklees (UK)?

My journey to a long one and was full of expectations, and UK is And when I arrived I found the culture in the (UK) very different to Sudan. The weather was very cold and eventually I did find friends from Sudan here in Kirklees. Attending college has allowed me to meet new friends from many different countries and I have felt this has allowed me to meet new people and integrate more within the community. I feel my English has also improved that has given me more confidence.

What do you like about Kirklees and enjoy?

Kirklees is a very nice place. When I came here the people were very kind to me and I really liked Huddersfield Town Centre with all its shops and local businesses. I like the cafes in Huddersfield and the nice views of the River Colne that I can see from my home. Kirklees is a place where I can also have peace and quiet that I really like and this was something different for me.

My favourite food is Okra which is a green vegetable.

Future aspirations

I am a volunteer at Sanctuary Kirklees with the Sudanese Women's Group, but I am also a qualified accountant from my time living in Sudan. I would like to be able to use my qualification here in the (UK) with further training so I can do accountancy.

What can we learn from each other?

What I have learnt is that the United Kingdom has a very good education system and have the right to free speech and have a voice. This is not the same in Sudan. So I would like to see good education system in Sudan and more freedom of speech.

The Photo is of a vegetable called Okra that is Hoayda's favourite food from Sudan that is a green vegetable.

