

Everyone is talking about refugees.

What happened? Why are we here? How did we get here?

My name is Khaled Aljawad. I'm from Syria. In 2018 I was brought to the UK as a part of the United Nations resettlement scheme with my mum and my brother.

Now, it is my turn to talk.

I was lucky enough to make it out of Syria. I did a lot of my growing up in a refugee camp in Jordan called Zataari camp. Life at Zataari camp was tough. We would queue at 5am every morning for bread. We had to walk a long way to collect water every day, but there was a lot of opportunity there too. I went to the school and the college there, and it was a centre for art and sport and computer training. I found my love for creativity there. I joined a drama group, and I trained to become a photographer. I filmed as much of my life as I could.

When we were told that we were being placed in the UK I felt a lot of things. Happy to be getting a home. Happy that things would get better. I was so sad to leave the friends I had made and not all my family were given places to come with me. That was really hard and still is. I was a bit scared because I didn't speak English and I didn't really know much about the UK. I didn't really know what to expect. I felt relief.

Now, I feel so lucky to be in the UK. I live in Sheffield and I am a proud Northerner!

It isn't easy to be in a new place where you don't speak the language. It takes time to learn and sometimes I wish I could just wake up and I was fluent, but I work very hard to learn. If I could tell you one thing you could do to help a refugee, it would be to be patient with us. English is hard, but we will get there!

I've joined as many groups as I can find to make new friends and stay creative. I worked with Stand and Be Counted Theatre to make a computer game about my life, called Have Your Passport Ready, that was so much fun. I've recreated my house for an exhibition with Maison Foo. I take part in a lot of events to raise awareness of the important work done by charities like the Refugee Council. I am proud of who I am, and what I have overcome. I want to help more people like me feel safe and settled.

I want everybody to keep talking about refugees.

Please keep talking **with** us.