



Lecturer and Researcher



Z.Z. is a lecturer and researcher from Algeria who came to the UK in 2003. She recently completed a PhD in Maths at Brunel University and volunteers for Cymru Refugee and Asylum Seekers Academic Council (CRAC), Women Connect First (WCF).

Tell us about what you do

While I was studying for my PhD I did some voluntary work at a high school, supporting children with Maths, French and Arabic. I also volunteered for Women Connect First, an organisation that empowers women from ethnic minorities. I currently volunteer for Cymru Refugees and Asylum Seekers Academic Council (CRAC) as a secretary and website designer. On International Women's Day I gave a talk at Swansea University.

What is your current situation?

I was granted refugee status in 2005 but I am still waiting for my papers and cannot move on without them. As I am accommodated by NASS, I am not allowed to take any paid job at the moment.

What are your plans for the future?

I am trying to get a job as a volunteer at a university or college as I have over fifteen years experience of teaching in Algeria. I know it doesn't make sense to have a PhD and be willing to do voluntary work but mine is a special case: By volunteering I will gain experience of working in a British university and give support to those who need it.

What do you think about the media portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK?

The media are always looking for bad examples of asylum seekers or refugees to give a negative image of the community as a whole. Refugees and asylum seekers are humans. In refugee and asylum seeker communities there are very good people who came to this country to be safe and are willing to contribute to British society, if they are given the opportunity.

Is there anything you would like to change?

My son's case is a good example: with the little English he could speak when we came to Britain, he participated in the UK Senior Mathematical Challenge and received a silver certificate, then a gold certificate the following year. Now he is at Bristol University, living on £10 a week: I am not working and the Local Education Authority (LEA) refused his application for a loan or to pay for his fees even though we have been granted leave to remain.

Links

[Cymru Refugees and Asylum Seekers Academic Council](#)
