

## Let's meet ... Mimoza

My name is Mimoza. I was born and brought up in Muhovc, a small town in Kosova. There was plenty of room – the houses were all detached with land around them. I was one of 7 children. Besim, my 47 year old brother, was the oldest – and then there were 6 of us girls. Poor Besim!

My Dad worked very hard, studying agriculture at university, and so even though we were a big family, we had a good life there. My memories of growing up are very happy.



I was most interested in sports – I would do anything the school could offer. Volleyball was my favourite – I was captain of the school team. I've always loved literature. I was in charge of the school library, and I really loved Shakespeare and Victor Hugo.

When I left school I trained as a teacher of Albanian language and literature. I studied part-time at the university for 4 years to get my qualifications. I studied at home and had practical experience in schools, then every six weeks we had exams. I taught children aged 11-14. My first class were a wonderful class – they had been well instructed by their previous teacher and loved to learn. They were 11 and 12 years old when I taught them, and they did very well. (In Kosova children start school at age 6. In the primary school you have classes 1-4, and in secondary school, classes 5-9.)

I met Basri, my husband, at the school. He was also a teacher of literature there. When he

proposed to me he bought me a beautiful necklace, and said "I love you" in English. I didn't answer straight away, so he asked my Dad if he could marry me. I am very lucky – he is very kind. I don't have my family here – so he is my family, my best friend and my husband.

We arrived here on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2000, with Eri, our son, who was nearly 4 years old. First we were sent to Middlesbrough, then to Derby. I studied English at school, but it felt very strange to be here – the culture is very different. Straight away I went to college to improve my English, and I did some computer courses. I didn't do too much at the beginning, because I wasn't sure if we would be able to stay. We were only given our Indefinite Leave to Remain\* in 2004.

There isn't much call for teachers of Albanian literature in England, so my husband trained to become a CORGI gas engineer, and I'm training to be a Teaching Assistant, while also studying Interior Design. I'd really love to work in interior design, but will start working in schools as that is what I have experience in. My course finished in June, and I'm keen to start work. Eri is doing well in school, and very happy. He is in Year 5 now.

It was hard at first, but we are very happy here now. We became British Citizens on 7<sup>th</sup> December last year, and we were able to go back home for Christmas. We saw our family for the first time in 6 years! We are lucky – there weren't too many changes. But what a thrill for my little daughter Elora, who's 3, to meet her grandparents and family for the first time!!

\* Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) is permission to stay in the UK without conditions attached to your stay. Until 30.8.05 this was automatically granted to recognised refugees. See P4

**We believe** that refugee children and adults have much to teach our community, and bring with them talents and strengths that, if appreciated and encouraged, enrich our society.

## Our volunteers

At Salusbury WORLD we are very dependent on our happy band of volunteers to provide the level of service that we do.

We asked some of them why they do it ...

Getting to know the children and spending creative and productive time with them. It's the highlight of my week!  
*Dominique - reading and After School club volunteer*

I learn lots of things about the system. I feel useful.  
*Fatema -refugee Trustee and volunteer interpreter*

I get a lot of experience, improve my English and meet new people. I love the kids!  
*Yousouff - refugee and After School Club volunteer*



That dimension of chaos that being with children brings – it stretches the imagination and develops patience. *Johanna - reading volunteer*

If you feel you have any time, skills or enthusiasm to offer and are interested in joining in the fun, please contact any of the team. The address is on the back page, and there are more details on our website.

## Did you know?

Africa and Asia between them host over 70% of the world's refugees while Europe looks after just 22%.