

THE SUDANESE LOCKSMITH

WHO WANTED FINANCIAL FREEDOM



IN HIS HOME COUNTRY, MUBARAK WAS A SKILLED LOCKSMITH. BUT WHEN HE CAME TO THE UK AS A REFUGEE, HE COULDN'T AFFORD THE COST OF RETRAINING. THAT'S WHEN NZF STEPPED IN AND PAID FOR HIS COURSE, SO HE COULD RESTART HIS CAREER AND SUPPORT HIMSELF PERMANENTLY.

People think the hardest thing about being a refugee is having to leave your entire life and family behind.

But they're wrong.

The hardest part is being human one day, and a faceless 'refugee' the next. You're stripped of your dignity and humanity so you're no longer a person. You're just a name on a form that floats through offices around the country, until someone who doesn't know you decides whether you're worthy of being treated like a human again.

When you're a refugee, you have no control over what happens to you. You have to rely on everyone else, because there's no way you can help yourself.

'I'd lost hope that things would ever get better'

After years of living in limbo in the UK, I was finally granted indefinite leave to remain. It felt like the weight of the world had been lifted off my shoulders. Immediately, I threw myself into looking for a job so I could support myself without needing help from the government.

I was so hopeful to begin with, but after months of searching I still hadn't made any progress because I didn't have the right skills or qualifications.

When I was at my lowest point, thinking I'd never find a way to stop living from week to week, someone told me about NZF: an organisation that helps Muslims in need. By the time I went to ask them for help, I'd lost hope that things would ever get better.

'NZF treated me like an equal'

From the moment I met my caseworker, I knew NZF was different from all the other organisations I'd come across. I was treated like an equal. When I told my caseworker about my trouble finding work, she asked me questions I'd never been asked before: 'What do you like doing?' 'What are your skills?' Everyone else had assumed I didn't have any.

Back in Sudan, I'd been a successful locksmith. But in the UK, my qualifications weren't accepted so I couldn't do that here. One shop owner had told me he'd give me a job

as a locksmith if I could pass the training course, but since I couldn't afford the fees I'd put it to the back of my mind thinking it was a lost cause.

My caseworker explained that NZF wanted to help me find a long-term solution to my financial issues. They wanted to help me stand on my own two feet, so I could take care of myself permanently.

I mentioned the five-day locksmith course required for the job I wanted. Not long after, NZF told me they'd pay the £300 for my training. When I couldn't afford the living costs that came with it, they also paid for my accommodation and food. They invested nearly £2,700 in my education and career.

'NZF showed me that God's promise is true'

In many ways, the grant gave me a new life. It boosted my self-esteem and made me feel like I was worthy of being given a chance. It motivated me to work hard, because I knew there were people who believed in me.

The emotional and mental burden of not knowing what the future held or whether I'd find a way to support myself was extremely difficult to live with. Without the grant, I think eventually I would've become mentally ill with the constant anxiety. NZF made me feel hopeful when I'd lost all hope, and they showed me that God's promise is true. He will always provide for us and give us a way out of our difficulties.

Now, I can come off Jobseeker's Allowance and pay for my own food, clothes, and travel. NZF helped me so I could help myself, and for that I'll be eternally grateful.

The National Zakat Foundation uses Zakat to support individuals in a transformative way, so they can be self-sufficient. Stay up-to-date with all our latest insights, stories, research and news - subscribe here for our monthly newsletter.

National Zakat Hotline: 03333 123 123 (Monday - Friday, 10am - 6pm, local rates) or apply online apply.nzf.org.uk

This post is based on a real and recent case study.