

CASE STUDY LIFE MAP: MY PERSONAL JOURNEY - B

Determinants Of Social Capital And Differential Success: Building A Better Life

Panel 1: Syria
 I lived in Syria, my life was great! I was a confident 24-year-old working in my career of choice. I was proud of my success. I had a healthy family and good friends.
 My friends and I were planning for an exciting summer. I was having lots of fun.

Panel 2: Family Tragedy
 All that changed when my dad became ill. He fell into a coma. After three months of being hospitalized he died. It was a big shock to our family.

Panel 3: Car Accident
 We were missing our dad, the head of our household, when we endured another tragedy. I was travelling behind a truck when it lost its load and steel rods came flying through my car window entering my stomach. I asked God "how can I survive this?"

Panel 4: Hospitalization
 I fell into a coma. When I woke up, I realized I could not walk, my stomach was severely damaged and I could not eat. My life as I knew it had ended. It took three months of treatment in hospital and three months rehabilitation at home to recover. My family sustained me through these trying times.

Panel 5: Recovery and Protests
 During my recovery, I was aware that there were protests occurring and I heard about fighting in the streets in cities nearby. I thought this was temporary. When bombs started going off in our neighbourhood we often ran to the basement for safety. I felt I was in a bad dream from which I would soon wake up.

Panel 6: Bombing
 The day our building was bombed the instinct to survive kicked in. My mother decided we'd had enough.

Panel 7: Flight to Lebanon
 We ran to a safe place and fled by taxi, with only the clothes on our backs, to Lebanon.

Panel 8: Registration in Canada
 I went to register for my ID, healthcare card and registered for school.

Panel 9: First Day in Canada
 I looked out the window on my first day in Canada at the winter scene. I wondered if I would get lost in this new city I felt nervous. I was thinking about what to do next. I had lots of energy and wanted to begin my new life.

Panel 10: Faith Community
 From the airport we went to a party with our faith community. It was New Year's Eve. I felt like my old self again. I felt like my life had been put on pause for a while and had just restarted.

Panel 11: Airport Arrival
 When we entered Canada, we got the red carpet treatment. I truly felt human again. People were smiling at us police officers were joking with us, and treating us with respect. We felt welcomed.

Panel 12: Christmas Eve
 I prayed for a miracle and on Christmas Eve we got the good news that we could come to Canada. The only sad part was one of my brothers would not be travelling with us.

Panel 13: Refugee Camp
 During this period in the camp I felt dead inside. I felt miserable. I had to find something to do to survive. I started teaching children and youth. This gave me a purpose in every day. I found happiness in the children's faces.

Panel 14: Refugee Camp
 We were taken to a refugee camp in south Lebanon. We were assigned a tent which our family used for sleeping and eating. It contained our belongings.

Panel 15: Border Crossing
 When we arrived at the border we had trouble. We had fled without our identification. My mom had some papers in her purse and we were finally allowed into the country.

Panel 16: Settlement Agency
 On my second day in Canada, I was visited by a worker from a settlement agency. I told her I wanted to volunteer. I wanted to give back to this community. She set me up at the emergency relief centre with a part-time volunteer job.

Panel 17: Bakery
 Learning to take the bus and get around the city was stressful. However, I knew it was essential to my success. I started working at a bakery three hours a day as well as attending English language classes.

Panel 18: Bus
 I met a good friend at an agency. She helped me get to know the city. Bus tickets provided by the agency allowed me to do some exploring and get to work and school.

Panel 19: Courses
 I took lots of courses related to human services. I found I had a lot of experience to share and I learned a lot as well.

Panel 20: Citizenship
 I am happy to have this chance to become a Canadian citizen. I also enjoy celebrating the culture I came from and sharing it with Canadians. My sister and I danced at Heritage Days.

Panel 21: Part-time Job
 I got a part-time job working with seniors who are newcomers to the city.

Panel 22: Family and Friends
 I enjoy my work, my family, and my relationships with new friends and colleagues.

Panel 23: Reunited Family
 Recently my brother was able to join us in Canada and we are now reunited as a family.

Panel 24: Settled Life
 In Canada I am building a better life. I feel settled. I have meaningful work. I have some plans for further study. I no longer have nightmares. I have dreams!

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