

A refugee's story



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Shafigheh's Story



Life in Afghanistan was good. We were farmers, we had land and livestock. That changed when the Taliban took over. My husband was a soldier fighting against Taliban rule. When his commander was assassinated, he feared for his life, we were all in danger, so we fled to Iran.

Life in Iran was tough but we were surviving. Then my husband passed away and I was left alone with the children. I was struggling financially, working as a cleaner to support the family. I could not afford food, clothes or school fees for my children. I wanted them to have freedom, safety and an education so I applied for asylum. I had a huge sense of relief when we were granted the refugee visa for Australia.

When I arrived in Brisbane I was met by my case worker and an interpreter who brought us to our house. They said, "This is your home. You can live here safely". I cannot describe the happiness and relief I felt. My children had a home and food, and we were safe.

The settlement support we received when we first arrived in Australia was so helpful. When it came to an end, my case worker introduced me to the local Community Hub. It has continued to give me a safe and welcoming place. Visiting the Hub helps me to get out, keep my mind busy and meet new friends. I have taken up painting and I love the English classes—my English is getting better and my life is getting easier.

All the women that I have met at the Community Hub are resilient, we have all lived through tough situations as refugees. I now have friends from all over the world. It did not take long for us to form close relationships.

I am learning more about the people around me through the volunteers and the community is learning about me. Being part of the Community Hub has helped me to feel like part of the community.

Community Hubs have made a big difference to my life. Refugees want to make a successful home here and be part of society. We bring ideas and skills that can enhance Australian culture. The Community Hubs help us to be more resilient and to reach our potential.

When I was in Iran, I felt weak, tired and had no hope for the future but in Australia I have hope. Hope for my children, that they can find their purpose and build a good life here.

Community Hubs work with migrant and refugee women and children to provide services such as skills training, English classes, sewing and breakfast clubs as well as volunteering opportunities and community events.

You can help people like Shafigheh to build a new life in Australia by volunteering at a Community Hub or providing philanthropic support.

Find out more at www.dss.gov.au/helpingrefugees