

# “They hear me”

I came from Iraq. I'm with a refugee background. I live now in Germany, and since the last five years, I start to work in Tübingen, to make music with the musicians and now I'm continuing my higher education, I make my master in world music.

To be honest England was a dream. Since the childhood and since I was baby, we hear a lot of England and London. Big Ben and stuff, Sherlock Holmes and stories, you know? Because of the politics situations, Iraq situations, wars and stuff we are not allowed to travel. Everybody knows about

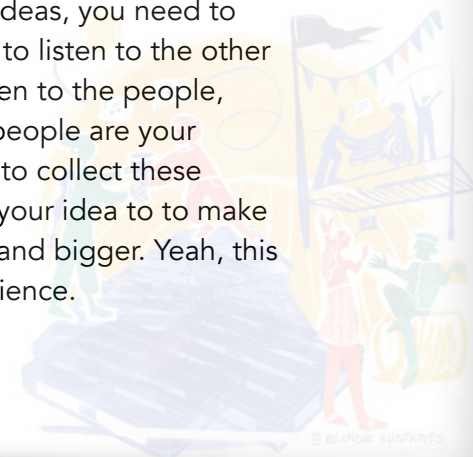
the situation in the Middle East. They are frequently blocked from everywhere in the world. So it was like a dream to reach this city, this country.

The first challenge starts at the embassy. When I decided to go and I get the invitation the team, they helped me a lot. They really work hard, they make really big effort to provide me everything I need: paper, invitations, stamps, official stamps and stuff and a little bit description about Ethno England, what we will do, what's fun activity.

I thought in the beginning we went to the England - the first will be in the big hotel with stage, blinky blinky stuff, everything set up or down, everything done. And I went farm! People like these cells working together. Teamwork. Oh, I love this, I love teamworks. We will get something to enjoy ourselves. Then after hours, we get some activities we need to do, like we transport the stuff from this point to this point, I help the guys to build up the shower area and the toilettes we make the whole. We build the tents. We went to the camping area. It was really nice adventure.

This is all the story on one side and what we got emotionally from the group, from one to another one, all the contact, direct contact with the people. I met new people, I met Everybody was nice. When I remember the stuff what happened in Ethno England. I really feel proud of myself to be part of this activity. So that was really nice. Then we start the music activity and it's nice. How the time very fast going the time very fast. Quick, quick, quick... gone! Yes. I really enjoyed it, really enjoyed it. I learn a lot. So plus the music, the new music, new culture is new stuff. I learned how to accept others.

Sometimes you have idea in your brain and you thought that you are right and there is no chance to together discuss this because you sure you are right. But I learned that, OK, there's always time to discussion, always time to accept the critic. You get critic you need to discuss it. There is time to analyse the stuff. You need to. If you have ideas, you need to develop it, you need to listen to the other side. You need to listen to the people, especially when the people are your friends. So you need to collect these ideas, need to put it your idea to to make it bigger and bigger and bigger. Yeah, this is my rules, my experience.



The first impression. Even Ethno England don't have a lot of support. I mean, support of money, not manpower, manpower, you will find. Maybe you don't find people they know what you want exactly, but you can teach them, you can show them how they will do the stuff. But when I arrived to the farm and after two or three days, this farm was a big stage and hold all this big number of people. Camping area was full. People everywhere, musician everywhere. Activities everywhere. Children, activities, family activities, uh, food. And it was nothing before. Three days was nothing here. No, not really big support, you don't you don't find that big companies came on. The manpower, the front, the love, the friend, the share, the team work. Everyone had a little position. Everyone has position and everybody allowed to say his opinion.

This is what make it easier what make it nicer. When I have an idea, I'm allowed to go to Maya, or to Nico - "listen guys, my opinion, it's so and so and so". It's like that - they didn't ignoring me. But they give me ear to hear. They hear me. OK, this is a good idea. We'll take it. It's nice.

My father was a soccer player and I came from a sport family. My father told me one thing, he told me: the sport. And the music. They bring people together. You don't need to know the language. You don't need to know the

background of the person or the people. You don't need to know about their beliefs. Their religions, their colours, their roots. They play music, you like it, you join them, you learn from them, you transfer it, you put your spice, you want to share. If you don't want to share it like copy paste, you are allowed to develop it, you put your salt on it, your emotion on it, and you sell it for the other.

So sports and music, it's so important, I believe, in this because I was using this before I came here when I attend to the Ethno and the folk community and connections, it really work. It's very important, so what really we need to work on this, to develop it, to focus on it, to give the chance to the people to have it, please come and have it for free and just try it.



Okay, you are Classical. You learn the music, your parents, they send you to the high class school to learn the classical. You play Bach and Mozart and other stuff. You are fire on fire when you play. But you have never been connected to the folk itself. To the people, they bring their stories. They bring songs with the stories. They bring songs with the suffering, they bring songs with the proud stories. You are connected to the notes, sheets, but you didn't connect to the people, to the heart, to the soul. So please come try it! Then you will decide you like it or you don't like it. It's nice for you or not nice to you, but the first time to try it. I am so thankful. I'm so proud that I got the chance.

**As told to: Maya**

**“To be honest, England was a dream”**

