

"My name is Alima" - Story of a woman from Ivory Coast

Curated by Beatrice Valterio

Nice to meet you! Tell me about yourself.

My name is Alima and I am 30 years old. I come from Korhogo, a city in Ivory Coast. I lived there with my mother, my brother and my 3 sisters. Then, I decided to leave and in 2017 I came to Italy. Now I live in a shared apartment in the centre of Perugia.

Tell me more about your life in Ivory Coast.

I grew up in a big family and my younger brother was the only one who had the opportunity to go to school. My sisters and I started to work when we were young to support our family. I was employed in a grocery shop and then worked as a kitchen assistant in a restaurant for many years.

I have a daughter... she has always lived with her father's family in Ivory Coast. She turned 11 last week!

Best wishes! ...and now that you are here, what is your life like?

Every day I take the bus and attend language classes in school. When I get back home, I chat with my family and improve my Italian learning skills with my flatmates. Before, I was also working in a factory but now I am looking for a new job.

What languages do you already speak and what are the difficulties of learning a new idiom?

My mother language is Bambara, but I also speak Senufo, Baoulé, French and... a little bit of Italian. I think French helps me in the learning, but since I did not attend school in Ivory Coast, I learnt here how to read and write!

Impressive! What are the things you like and dislike about Italy?

I like Italy because this is the country that welcomed me when I was coming... I met different people and with some of them I built good relationships. One thing that sometimes annoys me is that in order to do anything, migrants need to fill too many... "PAPIERS, PAPIERS... PAPIERS!" (French word for 'files') -we both laugh-

What would be your dream job?

I would love to be a baker since I was a child! I am planning to attend training courses and improve myself in cooking... but I am open to all possibilities!

According to you, what are the main difficulties of finding a job? Do you think men and women have the same opportunities?

On one hand, I find it difficult to find a job here because my Italian is not yet good. On the other hand, until I will not find a job, it will also be difficult to improve the language because the narrow time spent with native speakers is in school. Besides, I think men can find a job more easily than women because they are more... independent, freer from prejudice of others. Women might feel more vulnerable in this sense.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Uhm... I think I am a patient and determined person, but sometimes I am also a bit pessimistic.

How do you picture yourself in 10 years?

I picture myself having a job I like, my own family... and stability.

What is your biggest fear?

I think it would be ending up alone, not having achieved my goals. That is why I always try to motivate myself and improve my life.

And... what is your biggest hope?

I wish I can find a job... and bring my daughter here with me. That is my biggest hope!



Alima's drawing: herself and her daughter Marie Charlène