R: There are some post it notes here, so if there is anything that you want to make sure we cover, or anything that you think of while we are talking, you can write it down and we will make sure we talk about it. So like I said, at any point, if you would like a pause or want to stop, that's fine, just let me know, we'll stop and you can go on your way and enjoy the rest of your Saturday. And obviously, just to remind you that everything that we talk about is confidential, which means that we won’t talk about it with anyone after the discussion. I will use the things that you, you say today in my research and I might look for things that you've said that are similar to things that other people say, but nothing with your name, your college, or any information that can be linked to you will be in the, in the research.  
R: So, today we are going to discuss some of your experiences at school and things that you feel impact your sense of belonging in school. Sense of belonging can mean how included and respected you feel, or how well you feel you fit in. Is there anything that immediately comes to mind?

ABDUL: Umm, I’m not sure.

RAHIM: No.

R: That’s okay. So, I suppose, yeah, would it be helpful to start off looking at some of my prompts together?

ABDUL: Yeah, I think, yes.

R: Okay. The first thing that might be useful to think about is the things that when you were younger, were, you really enjoyed about learning? So, if you were at school when you were younger. So, this might be even to start with might be even before you came into the UK, was there anything that was really nice or helpful?  
ABDUL: Like at the school, or?

R: Yeah. It could be anywhere, but particularly thinking about school.

ABDUL: I don't know, it's hard.

RAHIM: For example, myself like and I'm gonna sound like I haven't been like, to school, a lot. Like when I was a child.

R: OK. And so when you came to the UK, was that sort of the first time that you were in regular in school?

RAHIM: Yeah, because there was, there wasn't the opportunity to go to school, yeah.

R: Yeah, and what was it like when you first started school, when you came to the UK?  
RAHIM: The UK? Uh, I think I was unlucky because of the Covid-19 started.

R: Mhm.

RAHIM: I was one year in lockdown, and after that for college. I went to school actually for two weeks, in \*\*\* school. And, yeah, after that uh it was lockdown I think, yeah, for 3 or 4 months. Then I apply for college, yeah.

R: Yeah, that must have been difficult coming in, sort of, and then suddenly being in isolation in COVID and not being able to see lots of people.

RAHIM: Mhm.

R: I guess it might be useful to think about then some of the relationships, maybe the adults or the other young people. I mean, either in those two weeks in \*\*\* school, or maybe at college, was there anything that was really helpful that the adults or the other students did?  
RAHIM: Do you mean at school, yeah?

R: Yeah.

[pause]

R: But also out of school is important, so of course school is really important, but sometimes friends outside of school can be equally as important.

RAHIM: Yeah. OK, it’s gonna be helpful if the students are like, to be like friendly. You know, like meeting people, yeah. When we’re going to school like the first time.

R: Yeah.  
RAHIM: They need to help them and yeah, like understanding.

R: Yeah, okay. Could you tell me what you mean by understand?

RAHIM: Having people that are like, understanding of, of me and some of the differences.  
R: Yeah, yeah. Is that something that you found as well?  
ABDUL: Um, mine is different, and I've I study school in my, my country as well, yeah. And it was like not for long time but like seven/six years, yeah. I study umm, and when I came here I started college directly.

R: Okay.

ABDUL: But, but the different I saw there is little, umm restrictions. There is a lot of restrictions there and, and here is not here. Here is is like friendly here.

R: Yeah.

ABDUL: And yeah, this is a lot of things, but I just found this is, like, the main thing. Yeah, between here and there. Umm, yeah.

R: Okay, so just to check, would you say that before it was quite, quite strict? And then when you came here it was, there was a little bit more bit more freedom?

ABDUL: Free. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Friendly. Yeah. Yeah, which is nice, uh, it give me comfort and I can do a lot of things. Yeah.

R: Yeah

ABDUL: Yeah

R: That's nice. And was that friendly from the adults or the other, other young people?

ABDUL: Mixed, yeah.

RAHIM: It is a little, yeah, mixed. Yeah.

R: Yeah? Lovely. And can you tell me anything about school or college that helps you feel like you can, sort of, be yourself? So, some examples could be how other people acted, or you're sort of ability to speak your home language in school, or how you think your culture might be valued?  
ABDUL: Yeah, here in the UK, yeah?

R: Yeah, yeah.

ABDUL: It just like it was difficult in the starting to, to catch up with them. And it was OK. And when we a little bit, eh, after the time, then it was, OK. Yeah, but in the start of the year, of course it was difficult to catch up with them and understand, like, how to do friendship and this kind of thing.

R: Yeah.

ABDUL: Yeah. But, well, with the time it was improve, and then we learned as well and they understand as well. Yeah. Yeah.

R: Yeah. Nice, and how did the language barrier impact your learning?  
ABDUL: Yeah, we learning English as well as learning for school. Learning is, wasn't easy in the start and I remember I, I, couldn't read anything, but I with the time I, I, I learn a lot of things. It's become easy when you when you find the friends and speak with them and study as well.

R: I see.

ABDUL: It is more, eh, easy to, to learn the language here. Yeah

R: Yes, that’s really interesting, thank you. So you've got to learn at the same level as everybody else in college, but also you've got some of that language to catch up?

ABDUL: Yeah, yeah.

R: And do you think that learning the language had impacted your building friendships at school and college as well?

ABDUL: Yeah, I think, yeah, it's helpful. Yeah. And when you study [English] together, make a friendship as well, yeah. So yeah, it is like, yeah.

R: And what was your experience?

RAHIM: At first here, like, I just study English like ah, in \*\*\* [charity] I don't know if you know \*\*\*?

R: Yeah.

RAHIM: Yeah. I went there like, there was class like every Tuesday, in the morning.

R: Okay.

RAHIM: After that. Yeah. At college I studied just English, yeah. And for one year after that, I applied for engineering, and there was [students] from different countries. English people and foreign, yeah.  
R: Yeah. And how was that? How did you find the difference between the two?  
RAHIM: Between, uh, the ESOL [language course] was like, ah, it was just for language. Yeah, it's for - you’re learning, uh, just English

R: Just English, okay.

RAHIM: But the course, like, when I applied for the engineering like you learned a lot of other things. Yeah.

R: And do you think that having that language course first was helpful?

RAHIM: Yeah, of course. Yeah.

R: Do you think there was anything about your sort of friendships and your relationships with adults, in the English learning course or the engineering course that helped you feel like you belonged or fit in?  
RAHIM: Umm like, it, helped a lot, you know, with my studying with the engineering. The other subject [English language] it helped me a lot. Yeah.

R: Okay, do you mean that it helps you build friendships?

RAHIM: Build the friendships, yeah. With the other people, yeah.

R: Thank you. It's really it's really interesting, isn't it? Different experiences that you both had. But some of the same things coming through that sort of that when the language develops is when the sort of friendships began to develop. Thinking about school, was there anything that helped you to feel more sort of understood or misunderstood?

ABDUL: Like, catch up?

R: Maybe, but also thinking about how you felt accepted when you came to school?  
RAHIM: Uh, especially when I start my engineering course, they were, like, respectful and, yeah, they will ask me about where I'm from and, you know, about the culture. They knew everything, I think that they studied in the school about the culture and everything. That's especially good, yeah. I think it's good, yeah, that they are teaching the younger children it.

R: So, they were quite welcoming when you came in?

RAHIM: Yeah, it was good.

R: It was that similar experience for you?

ABDUL: Yeah. It was though, though, like, I was thinking they were on a surprise. I was thinking they will, like, saying something like ‘you are like this’ and like this. But, but they were very friendly and, and, like, welcoming there they for them it was doesn't matter who is there. Yeah. So, it was very nice.

R: Ohh, nice. Okay, thank you. And was there anything that was really helpful or, or really not helpful that adults in school did?  
RAHIM: Uh, the teachers, yeah?  
R: Yeah

RAHIM: They were helpful, and yeah, they were great,  
ABDUL: Yeah, the teachers okay. It was very helpful. Especially that they know who needs the help, especially the language at school was difficult for us, so they were more trying to help us to understand, yeah, I noticed this thing there.

R: And can you tell me about anything else they did that was particularly helpful?

[pause]  
ABDUL: Like so, anything different for us [than other students]?  
R: Yeah, it could be.  
ABDUL: Yeah, like he was teaching something and we didn't understand. Then he, he tried to explain more to us, to, to understand this thing, yeah. Yeah, this kind of thing, yeah. It was.

R: Just to check, do you mean that the teacher gave you some additional explanations?

ABDUL: Yeah.

R: Thank you. And how about for you?

RAHIM: Same, yeah. They make it clear. Yeah.

R: Thank you. Was there anything they did that wasn't helpful, anything that made it more difficult?  
ABDUL: Yes, some teacher is like, you know, they don't realize that we understood or not the, the thing that it was [the learning]. But a lot of them they understand, they know that we need more explanation for understanding. Yeah. But some is not that much, but it's better if, if the teacher knows that what we need to understand things here.

R: Yeah. And I guess, how they know that is by getting to know you and by sort of building that relationship.  
ABDUL: Yeah.

R: Let’s talk about your experiences of learning. So, what you were taught in your lessons. Do you feel like there was anything that made you feel more or less like you belonged?  
ABDUL: Yeah, umm, about what did you say  
RAHIM: It might be.  
R: I mean when it came to the actual learning. So, I know you said the teachers were really helpful because they, sort of, adjusted it. But I wanted to know whether there was anything, sort of, about the content of what you learnt?

RAHIM: At first. Like, you took a test, like speaking and yeah. Then after that, umm, they find out which level we are and they put the in different classes that level. So different sort of level, yeah.

R: OK. That's useful to know. Thank you. And what about for you?

ABDUL: Yeah, same for me. There, there had the test. Especially, I remember when I came it was January and there was starting after the holidays so they already had some classes, but they said ‘we're gonna see in where, where you can fit you’. Yeah. So they took a test from me and then they, they put me with other class, yeah.

RAHIM: School is different. You know when you go to school, like you're gonna start like in year 10 or 11. Yeah, you have to study about the other people like studying.

R: Okay.

RAHIM: Yeah. So you go into all of the lessons. Yeah. It was hard. Yeah. I didn't know anything like. Yeah.

R: That sounds really tricky. And you mentioned you were only there a couple of weeks before the COVID-19 lockdown happened?

RAHIM: Yeah, not long to make friends or [make my] language better.

R: Okay. In COVID, where you having any education?  
RAHIM: Yeah, we had like a online education.

R: OK. How was that?

RAHIM: Of course, yes, my school is pretty uh helpful and that also it was all on computer.

ABDUL: Yeah, computer. But for me was boring, but it was better than nothing. Just I was thinking that. But online is I, I don't think it's that much helpful. But, but if you think if you're doing nothing then that's [online learning] better, yeah.

R: Yeah. What about the online learning made it feel unhelpful?  
ABDUL: Umm. You know online, well, there's many guys and you, you want to understand The thing is, is not easy online. Everyone is like making confusion. So, then this is a thing is difficult and it's not able to learn a lot of things from online thing.

R: Yeah.

ABDUL: Specially you have the whole class, yeah. There's just one teacher, so it's there's not easy. Yeah

R: Okay, so was it difficult because they weren't able to, sort of, give extra explanations or break it down to help you?

ABDUL: Yeah, yeah, that's, that's the thing. Yeah.

R: And was that similar to your experience online?  
RAHIM: No, I liked. See, I've got my teacher was just strict like everyone was quiet, you know? Yeah, yeah, it was good. Yeah.

R: And did you find that this sort of support that you got online and in person has been different

RAHIM: Of course, person is different. Face to face is a lot different from online. Yeah.

R: Okay, but you still find the learning was okay and the teacher quite helpful?

RAHIM: Yeah. Yeah.

R: Was there any impact on building friendships [of online learning]?

ABDUL: Yeah.  
RAHIM: Yeah, yeah, I think so, yeah. When you're listening to the teacher you don’t talk with friends if there's no, like, break time outside.

R: Yeah. And I suppose, it might useful now to discuss things outside of school that have helped you feel included and feel like you belong. So was there anything outside of school that's impacted that?  
RAHIM: \*\*\* [charity] yeah. Yeah, like. Yeah. I used to go like, until like one years ago here.

R: Okay, you said that was useful for the language. Was that also helpful for anything else?

RAHIM: Like building friendship yeah. Talking to other people actually nice.

R: Could you tell me a little bit more about that?

RAHIM: I don’t know, I think, it wasn't helpful you not to speak in English when you see someone as from your country. Yeah, you need to speak in your own language, yeah, but it was hard speaking English, so yeah, yes.

R: And what about your experiences outside of school?

ABDUL: Yeah, that issue, and I I study as with the for the extra time [free time] and we had English as well and we had the cooking classes as well. Yeah, I I like cooking. So, I had to cooking class as well there. And the other thing they have some, uh, they making the activities, yeah, activities to take the guys to somewhere nice. So, we had the this as well, yeah, and many new guys I met there and some of them are still I know them. Yeah.

R: They are still your friends now?

ABDUL: Still friends now, yeah. So it was, \*\*\* [charity] is very helpful as well, yeah.

R: Yeah, it sounds like it was helpful for their language and helpful for sort of meeting people?

ABDUL: Meeting people yeah.  
RAHIM: Also, when I came at first like the they showed me the route, like how to get the bus and yeah, they we helpful with that as well.

R: Thank you for sharing that. We don't necessarily think about it when you've been here a long time, but at the beginning it must be quite scary having lots of things and not knowing how it works.

ABDUL: Yeah, it is really helpful when someone guide you about the city, especially we, we didn't know anything at the start. Yeah. And it was very helpful. Yeah. And there's a youth club as well, I've been there many time. Youth club. Yeah. I don't know if it's belong to the \*\*\* [charity] or something, I don't know. But I used to go there and when the college come then we start online. So we had the quiz competitions, yeah. So, it was very nice. Games and things, yeah. So, yeah, I remember that it was very helpful. Yeah.

R: That sounds lovely, thank you. Was there anything else about your free time, or time at home, that you would like to share?  
ABDUL: At home?

R: Time when you are not at school, for example things you do in the evenings.  
ABDUL: Yeah, it was like. I used to live with the boys and we play sometime together in the garden and we was doing some stuff and watching TV. Uh, Yeah. If you had a friend, friend, uh, good friend with you. So it’s, it's helpful, yeah. Especially when you come to home and you had the friend.

R: That's nice. So seeing friends outside of school is important to you?

ABDUL: Yeah, and the other thing for the language was uh, I used to live with my foster care and she was very helpful for me. Like when I didn't know something I will, I was asking her, and she was helping for that. Yeah. So yeah, if you have someone like this it is really helpful.

R: Okay, helpful for learning English language, do you mean?

ABDUL: Yeah, the language, yeah.

R: Thank you. Okay, let’s think about lunchtime or breaks between lessons at college. Let’s discuss what sort of things you do that, sort of, impact how included at school you feel. Is there anything that comes to mind?  
ABDUL: At the Cornish.

R: Yeah, so when you have lunchtime or a free lesson.  
RAHIM: Lunchtime. I’m just going to eat, that’s it, like.

R: Yeah, that’s okay. Do you eat on your own or in the canteen?

RAHIM: You're not allowed to eat in the classroom, so yeah I’m going out to eat, yeah, to the canteen, sometimes with friends is better. Yeah, it's fun, you know? Good to have time with our friends, yeah.

R: Is there anything that the college could change that would help you feel more like you belong, or just be helpful for you?

[pause]

R: Or thinking about when you first started at college. If there's anything they could have done differently, or that might help more new people when they first start?  
ABDUL: Yeah. I think we say there's a lot of things. And if we, if we are someone ask us. Yeah. To do for the guy like, you know, in the back [in my home] country we when I was studying, I remember, eh, they making like eh, matches for, for the like cricket matches and football message which I, I didn't see here. Yeah. So I think if you have something like this it would very helpful. Yeah, it's very, very good. Yeah.

R: Okay, so having, like, teams at the college?  
ABDUL: Teams at the college, yeah, and doing some sports stuff here, yeah.

R: Yeah, and what would that be helpful for? Having things that you enjoy.

ABDUL: For happy, yeah. Which is that I didn’t see. Yeah. I started in \*\*\* College and then I it's been two year in \*\*\* college, and I didn't see any enough activity. So yeah, I really like this kind of activity, yeah, would be nice if they had that.

R: Okay, could that impact your friendships as well?

ABDUL: Yeah, with everything is, I think this is very helpful. Make you fresh every time you are studying and then if you have something exciting things then make you like fresh and yeah.

R: Some excitement and motivation?

ABDUL: Yeah, yeah.

R: I understand that. And how about for you? Is there anything you think college could change that could be helpful for new starters?

RAHIM: There was football, but not like other sport this, you know like no more option.  
R: And anything other than sort of sports teams that you think could be helpful to make people feel like they fit in?  
ABDUL: I don't understand what was it?

R: Yeah, So, like the sports teams, is there anything else that would be helpful for new people starting?  
ABDUL: Um, I found that well like in the \*\*\* college, where was doing the and the different class was like the coming together with each other. They're talking to each other. So, I think this is also helpful- to meet the other classes as well and you, you can talk with them and learn from them, and then they ask you something like, you know, new things is good to learn.

R: Yeah

ABDUL: I think it's a good idea.

R: We’re they other classes within the college?

ABDUL: Yeah, in the college. Yeah. Yeah. In the college. Even if you sometime if you had a two or from the other college or something like this and meet the new people I think it's very helpful. Like we, I'm playing cricket so you going to another cities and meeting with the new people. And it's very good, yeah, so, you learn a lot of thing. Like we, we learn about the tickets. So many kind of place and [unintelligible- maybe bowlers?]. But I think this kind of things is also helpful.

R: Lovely, thank you. And is there anything at all that's been unhelpful in college?  
ABDUL: Unhelpful?  
R: Yeah, is there anything that's made it harder for you in school? You already mentioned about the language, but is there anything else?

ABDUL: No

RAHIM: Umm, no I don’t think so.

I mean, that's good. It's nice to hear that you have had a good experience. I just wanted us to have the opportunity for us to discuss it if there is anything.  
ABDUL: I didn't really notice there's anything.

R: Okay. Could we talk a little bit more about your friendships?

RAHIM: Uh, I make friends a mix across countries, yeah, from Europe, Eritrea, yeah.

R: Okay. It's nice to be able to make friends from different areas.  
RAHIM: Uh, when I change my course, like to \*\*\* college like there's like a lot of English people as well, yeah. But when I used to study the just the English language, there was like from different countries there wasn't any English people.

R: It's nice to have that exposure to different people. We have covered a lot today and it is really helpful, thank you. Is there anything else, thinking about school and college, if there's anything else that you wanted to talk about that we haven’t discussed yet?

RAHIM: Yeah we covered it.  
ABDUL: I don't have no.

R: I mean, we have talked about so much useful information, which is really helpful. I just don’t want to have missed anything that you thought sort of, if there's anything we haven't talked about.

ABDUL: No, that's okay, yeah.

RAHIM: Yeah, no.

R: Okay, brilliant, thank you so much for your time today, I will stop the recording now.