R: Okay, so we will start the discussion, but if I say anything too fast or you would like me to say anything again, just let me know. So, the main think I wanted to talk about today is what you think impacts your sense of belonging in school or college. So, I do have a few prompts to help us, but was there anything that comes to mind to start with?
IVAN: Should I go first?
R: Alright.

IVAN: Well, I feel like everyone is, uh, they are friendly to me and I don't, I don't, I haven't seen any racism in either college or the university. But of course, there are, well, in every place there are good and bad people. So, you know it happens, things can go wrong as well. But in a college I, I am treated fairly actually, and the teachers are really friendly and helpful, so they don't discriminate between me or the others. And, uh, I think they, they give us a lot of opportunity to, you know get beyond what we study, either. Yeah, like that.

R: Yeah, okay. So, it's a bit about the, the relationships with the teachers and also the other people that are attending college or university.

IVAN: Yeah, yeah.

R: Lovely, thank you. And was there anything that sort of came to mind for anyone else?

ADA: So you ask - umm can you repeat please?

R: Yes, of course. So it's what impacts your sense of belonging in school? So, what makes you feel like you fit in in school?

ADA: So, what I like in college?

R: Yeah, things that you like and that make you feel included.
ADA: I like my teacher, \*\*\*, yes, he is, I feel really welcome in the college and it's very helpful for socialize. And, um, so, yeah.

R: Thank you. So, it's really good to hear both of you say that they're relationships with your teachers is good and that that is helpful for feeling as though you belong. Let’s talk about before you came to England, when you were in school, was there anything that you really liked?
IVAN: Uh, I have. Well, didn't have anything in my mind because, you know, everything was confusing for me. But then now, here I can sort of see my way, but it's still not clear. So, it's all weird kind of a situation for me.

R: Yeah, I can understand that. Thank you for sharing.
ADA: When you study it in Chechnya, in the college and school. In school, I like learning. I like, I don't know, learn new things.
R: That's nice to hear, thank you. So, it would be useful to think about some examples of how you feel like you can be yourself when you're at college here or at university in the UK. Does anybody have anything that they would like to share?
IVAN: So maybe if we feel like we're comfortable in the UK?

R: Yeah, being yourself means feeling like you're able to just be you, do what you like to do, and other people accept that.
IVAN: Well, at university? Because the, the course was, uh, well, big group and we have to we are to discuss a lot of stuff. We have to talk and, uh, it was really fun for me.

R: Yeah.

IVAN: Although I I'm not a social person, but still I enjoy talking big, well, deep discussions. So, that was really fun because we did have a lot of things to talk about. And I enjoyed that because I could be open. Otherwise, I'm, I'm just really quiet.

R: Okay. So, it gave you the opportunity to be a bit more open and join in discussions?

IVAN: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
R: Thank you. Does anybody else find anything in college at the moment that makes you feel more comfortable and able to be yourself?
ADA: Yes, but my course is too easy for me. It's just easy and we learn alphabet, and yeah.
R: Thank you. So, you said too easy and that you already know a lot of it before. And what's the impact of that for you, on your sense of belonging?
ADA: I need to change my level to like the entry three.

R: Okay, so you would like to move up to something a little bit more difficult?

ADA: Yeah. Uh, other people in the class move up quicker, so I little bit frustrated.

R: And do they tell you why you're in the group you're in, or is there a process you have to go through?
ADA: I don’t know.

R: Okay, that sounds really difficult for you, not knowing when you might be able to move to a new class. So while we’re talking about college here, do you feel like there's lots of opportunities to express yourself your own cultural identity in college?
ADA: Yes.
IVAN: Yeah, yeah. Well, uh, there is no one to talk to with my own language. But if I will call someone, there are obviously, I can. But the, the other things like, you know, celebrations, because there are not so many people from my country there and they are mostly well from England and we, we don't, we don't do any celebrations there, which is why, I mean, I don't expect it to happen.
R: Yeah. So, they don't, they don't do any of the celebrations that they you potentially would have celebrated before coming to UK.
IVAN: They do not as far as I can tell.

R: Okay, and you do you think that impacts how welcome you feel at this at college?

IVAN: Not, not for me. No, I don't. I don't feel like, you know, something bad because I don't expect it to happen. And I can celebrate outside [of university] if I want to, of course.

R: Okay, that’s good to hear. So, I guess let’s think a little about how you feel that differences between students are viewed at college or university. This could be positive or negative views.

IVAN: You wanna go first?

ADA: No, I listening first.
IVAN: Yeah. I think that I, I cannot, I cannot actually. Well, do you mean like, for example, what can I say that is positive for me being there? Or did I, did I say anything positive regarding helping me to study even more?

R: It could be either. Just your experiences of feeling different and how other people view the differences.

IVAN: Yeah. Well, I think that in the in the class. There are some people, British people, who already really friendly and, you know, we made good friends, but there are some who well, you know, are not.

R: Okay.

IVAN: Yeah, it’s a fact, you cannot change that. But the teachers they were, they were, they were all helpful to me and they all really, uh, helping. If I have a problem, for example in Maths or anything, I will ask them and they will be like, ‘of course we can help you’. And the, the managers, they are all fine, they help you with everything if you want to go for a higher course, you can do this. But you have to ask him.

R: Okay, so they are helpful if you go to them and ask?

IVAN: Well sometimes, if they see that you are not able to go for higher course then they say no. So yeah, they are pretty, pretty straightforward. Yeah.

R: Okay. I guess it can be nice to have it clear and sort of laid out so you know what they're thinking. And you know how to ask for help if you need it.

IVAN: Yeah. Yeah.

R: Lovely. And for anyone else? Was there anything about how differences are viewed in college?
ADA: Umm so, so, so first time I didn't know how to, how to go to the college and what to do and my friends and teacher can help me with some forms. And secondly, I think it would be better if the, if the college, uh, provides information, uh, important information such as travelling, finding there, and because many people didn't know how, I don't know how, were not able to find some information and, uh, they don't, cannot ask, not able ask the teachers, 'cause they have barrier language.

R: Language barriers made it difficult?

ADA: Yeah.
R: Okay. That's really helpful, thank you. So, some of the practical things like how to get to college and how to find different rooms could be better?

ADA: Yeah, I think so.

R: Thank you.

IVAN: I do agree with that because in the in the college or anywhere in England, the, the numbers of the rooms are kinda by the zigzag, or they go straight, or it's really confusing. There is not one system.

R: Okay, yeah. I ca see how that must make it difficult. And was there anything that was helpful or made it easier?

IVAN: I will go first, I, I first saw that they are not well organised, yeah, but after, after a while it's you get used to the, the system and the situation the, the programs work or the, the lessons work. You get used to it after a while because you, you find your way out. And if you ask people, they will, they will, they will guide you to go to it. Which is fine.

R: Okay. So, it’s coming back to the people in college that are really good. But some of the sort of practical things that, maybe, they haven't thought about can be a little bit difficult?
IVAN: Yeah, some of the plannings, but uh, it's much better than in my country. OK, I have to say that.
R: Thank you. And was there anything either of you wanted to share [P10 and p11]? Anything that was either helpful or not very helpful in college? Or things that help you feel like you can be yourself in school

JULIUS: I understand, they make a good point, yeah.

R: Okay, and is there any times that you felt really like you have been able to be yourself in college?

JULIUS: Yeah, I would say, yes.
R: That's good to know. Is there anything makes it harder at all, for any of you?
JULIUS: Umm, talk to people, like, over telephone.

R: Okay, so having the opportunities to speak to people face to face is better?

JULIUS: Yes, is really nice.

R: Thank you. And was there anything that comes to mind for you at all [P10]?
EKON: Yeah, sometimes got, like, sometimes find, like, feel like you are sad, you go your room or whatever to the same like them. Sometime. So, not always like to be happy or not always to be like it's gonna be perfect. So, I mean, sometimes gonna be good.

R: Yeah.
EKON: Sometimes to meet new people, to talk to them. And sometime even if you in, like, a bad situation or whatever.

R: Yeah, of course, thank you.
R: Okay, so everybody has mentioned the relationships in school a little bit. So, it might be good to discuss these relationships a little bit and think about how they might impact how well you feel like you fit in in school. Does anyone have anything they want to share?
EKON: Yeah, I've actually got, like, because, yeah, like anyone for this anyone sitting there, so if you wanna share with them, you can go exchange with them, or to share your ideas, to give your opportunity or to have some ideas and then to share yourself. And the other thing just to me, sometimes if you want friend, or whatever, or your friend I guess opportunity the friend of your friend to meet and then to talk with them on that.

R: Yeah, okay. So having people that introduce you to new people and building friendships that way?

EKON: Yeah exactly.

R: Lovely. That’s really helpful, thank you. Is it the other young people, like your friends in college, that introduce you to new people? Or the adults?

EKON: Young people. Yeah. Yeah, it's very useful.

R: Thank you. And anyone else have anything sort of to build on that at all?

JULIUS: This is tricky one, because, in terms of culture in, for example, like friendship, Sudan and here is totally different so. Here you have like school friend and then outside of friend, so someone might be really good with you at the school and say hi to you and speak to you, but when you see, when you see them outside and you say hi, no maybe he not answering to you this is really strange. So in Sudan we don't have, like if you have friends, they friends inside the school and outside school, even teachers. I remember when I've met one of my teachers in \*\*\* [UK city], and ohh, I said. ‘Hi!’, she's, she just looked at me and I guess like ‘What, who is this?’. And then, and then the day after when we came back to college she said, ‘Oh, don't take it personally’. So, it's quite complicated honestly.

R: Yeah. And what's that like? That difference when you experience the difference between Sudan and the UK? How does that feel?

JULIUS: Hmm, frustrating. But after a while, we have to understand this, here in England, so, people they meant to have, like school friends, out of school friends and yeah, have the different.

R: So you have had to get used to somethings that are quite different.

JULIUS: Mmm, different dynamics. So when you make friendship with someone so you have to make sure he's outside friend not at the school so, yeah.

R: Thank you for sharing that. And did either if you have anything to add about relationships? Anything that been helpful or unhelpful?
IVAN: About relationships?

R: Yeah. So, with friendships or with teachers?

IVAN: Well, uh, I am a friend with one of the managers there at my college and we already actually good together. So, we do talk about almost everything and he's been a huge, huge help to me. So, he introduced me to another course, a higher one– actually double higher one.

R: Oh wow.

IVAN: So that was great and he, he’s actually amazing person because, you know, he helps everyone and goes beyond his, his work, which is really inspiring for me. And I sort of look up to it. And it just work for me.

R: Yeah, yeah.

IVAN: But any but, but relationships I haven't seen anything until now and I hope that I won't see any.

R: Okay, thank you. How about you, P8?

ADA: No, I don't have friend in the college. But I have met with many people, with teachers and many Ukrainian people. Because language little, yeah, and I'm going to college just two months and yeah.

R: Thank you. And the people that you are friends with outside of college, where did you meet them?

ADA: Oh, umm, some, some trends in from church and yeah, and some from college.
R: Nice. Okay, so are these people that you spend time with when you are not in college?
ADA: I go to a, we have a drop in church and I see them here.

R: OK. Yeah. It sounds like you have people that you speak to outside of college as well.

EKON: Mhm, yes. I do too.

R: Lovely. So that leads into one of the prompts I wanted to discuss which is about what you like to do in your free time. So, when you're not at college or not at work and when you've got time to yourself, what kind of things do you enjoy doing?
IVAN: Umm, sleeping.
JULIUS: Play computer game.

R: Computer games, yeah, yeah.
EKON: And play football with JULIUS

R: Very nice. Are you good at football then?

EKON: Yeah [laughs]
R: Nice. And are those things you do with other people as well?

JULIUS: Yeah, definitely. We have a team.

R: Lovely. And P8, what kind of things do you do outside of college?

ADA: Outside, after college, I'm go to home, look after my children. Yeah.

R: Very nice. So, you like to spend time with your family?

ADA: Yeah.

R: That’s really nice. It sounds like you all spend time with other people outside of college which is lovely.
IVAN: I don’t really, I just sleep a lot.

R: That’s okay though, some time to relax can be very useful. Let’ think a little now about the, the learning in college. So, I know, P8, you said that the learning is too easy at the moment.

ADA: Yeah, the school, it's too easy. Yeah. But maths, maths is good but some words is difficult for me, yeah.
R: Okay, thank you. How does that impact you? When you find a difficult word what can you do that makes it easier?
ADA: Umm, I translate with phone. But sometimes when we doing some tests we don't, uh, we cannot have to translator and I do it.

R: That must be difficult when you can't have the translation. And is there anyone in college who can help you?
ADA: Yes, my teachers. They trying, uh, translate me. Yeah. Yeah.

R: I’m glad that there is somebody to come and help you, but you said that's still something that can be quite difficult sometimes.

ADA: Yeah. Sometimes.

IVAN: There is a functional skills in the college, format, and they, they teach you all the, all the words for English if you want to do that. You can learn a lot of words in English for the maths and you will do some maths as well.

ADA: Yeah.

IVAN: It's nice if you want to do that. Yeah.

EKON: First thing, yes. Yeah, I do go maths at the moment. But the maths is sometimes different, uh, difficult I mean. The teachers they are give you some examples. If you get that, if you didn't, if you didn't get it, maybe they give you some more examples and then they will see you if you understand that, and make sure you understand that and then the 4th time maybe you understand that, OK. But if you don't understand that, then maybe they can give you opportunity to use your phone in your language to make sure to understand the next time when it came back again. It's good.

R: So they can give you, give you some support.

EKON: Some support and then and some. In our class someone understand nothing in English. When they speak their language to speak, their teacher don't understand them. The teacher then to give him like, OK, just use your phone, your Google Translate, and then to look at in your language, maybe it's gonna helpful.

R: Yeah. And is that helpful?

EKON: Yeah. Sometimes.

R: Okay, and is there anything else that college do that is helpful?
EKON: Uh, they gonna give you like, if you wanna like text different to learn something. So let them know and then they will choose one day to give you, like, extra lesson to learn about that. Yeah.
R: Yeah, thank you. Is that the same for you?

JULIUS: It's my second year of College in terms for functional scale, both English and Maths I think there's not best very accurately for level this kind of mix of level. And the resources are also very randomly, there's no very, for example for entry 1 there's no like a book or something very specific content to see what you should achieve by the end of the year. So, the teachers, they just normally came to us on pick whatever topic like vocabulary or reading or listening. That's it. At, umm, beginning of December, no, end of December, they have like this exam. If you pass this exam, you, you, you are qualified to move to the next level, but you still you have to come to college until June, so you come for nothing. I remember last year I passed entry 3 both reading, writing, speaking, and listening at end of December and then I have to attend college until June 4. Even I have just to come and sit in the class. So, I would say and also as I mentioned earlier, the level is really, really mixed. For example, if, if you picked a student from entry 1, entry 2, entry 3 they are all the same, all three, level 3, level 1, level 2, all the same.

R: So, some people are at a higher level but might not be more advanced in English ability?

JULIUS: Yeah. But exam are not really actually, honestly. For example, if you have level 1, someone might be entry 3 maybe better than you, so. I, I don't really understand.

R: Yeah, it seems very confusing.

JULIUS: Really, really confusing.

EKON: I think, yes, quite a little bit. I, I understand that like sometimes depending in your age, sometimes when your age, you know, even if you should higher place they didn't give you chance to move you somewhere. And sometimes they are looking for ‘when they came?’ ‘How, how many years he be here in England?’. You can see that in some kind. When they saw you like; you are staying a long time and your English is much better or improve your English, and they're gonna put you higher level and for nothing. When you came to the direct activities, some people they are making, uh, really want actives or something like that.

R: Do you mean activities within the lessons?

EKON: Activities in the lesson, yeah, so, just like that. And, and sometime they just gonna get mixed like that and they you are friendly with them or something that they are like ‘Okay, he is lovely’ they are gonna put your high, higher level.

R: Yes, it's sounds difficult. So, it sometimes feels like it's not based on how well you do, it's based on the people that you're friends with or how you how teachers see you?
JULIUS: Honestly, I, I knew many of people from different countries, Sudanese and different nation, they are less, less motivated to move to the high level, not because they're not want to study, but because of the years [it takes]. For example, if you are new, probably start with entry level one, entry one, and then you need entry 2/3, and then level 1 and level 2. This is about five years. Five years and then you, you still haven't got your GCSEs. So they say ‘Ohh, come on, I'm not gonna spend like, five years at college to, to move to level 2’. And then if I want to go to university, I still have to do GCSE Math and English, and then you need your A levels. So, when they think like that, ‘Ohh no, I should just do something else instead of college’.

R: Okay, and do you feel like there are there many other options?

JULIUS: For me on a personal I don't agree with this system. I think for example, if someone he doesn't know how to read or write at all. They, they, they should be like in year, for, for the for the full qualification. If you're pass, for example, in January when you really, really good, maybe they give you a chance to try another year. So, it might be really helpful for, for many people. Yeah. To have a, a system that's more better.

EKON: And to get, yeah, to learn that in summer. And then to get the harder to get another place, you know, to see how the next one like. Last year, when I did that, [unintelligible], and you know I stop working there because I passed the exam, all of them like English GCSE and Maths, all of my classes. And they even say to me when I come to college I move, and then they barred me again. They, they just said at the moment no you can't [move up a level], who has give you that place?’ and then I say to them, ‘Alright, very well’, they ask for them and that was good and I was in the right one, so I can't stay here like entry two or whatever and waste my time and they said, ‘Okay, cool. Maybe I'll see if you can entry 3.’ And then when we did the exam, the first mock exam that I failed, the next one, I did that and I passed and when I passed they said ‘OK, you passed. You speak, read and listen words so you might be stay here until you get you someone place and then to get you there’. I stayed. I say there still and then, I get my certificate from my last school there and showed them about that and they accept that. They said OK, they said to me, they look at my age and they look at when, how many years I have in this country and they look at that, they say ‘nah there's no way for you’ or ‘You're almost, you have like one year in this country so you not allowed to go like level one or level up’, like that, so. So, they saying do your EASL and then after that when you finish that and then we'll see. So, I have passed all of them, so, before I was study hard when they, when they talk to me later about what they say, I say ‘Okay, so why I'm gonna waste my time to do that’. And then, so there's not anything helpful about them. No. It's.

R: So, every time you sort of did one thing that you needed to do that was more that you needed to do.
EKON: And another, yeah. And then someone comes to them and talk to them about this and he was arguing with them and he say ; I’m Just gonna give up one to do something else soon’.
R: Is there anything we think that could be changed about the learning in school that would make you feel more supported and included? I know you mentioned about changing the system–

JULIUS: Changing the system and also we really need like someone who has an experience of teaching EASL because they, they are totally different. Most, many of our teachers, they have like experience of teaching GCSEs rather than EASL and they both say bit different. Yeah, so.

R: Okay, so having somebody that was there that is specifically experienced in teaching people who English is their second language.
JULIUS: Yes, mhm.

R: Okay, is there anything else that might be useful?

IVAN: I do actually like the, uh, we have an app that we study and, you know, it is online, it is online learning. So when you go home, you can study on this, uh app, which is called \*\*\*\*. I really like it because, you know, you can do everything online, you don't have to write it down, and there are all the assessments that you can do, uh, which is really helpful both for English and math, physics, everything that you want to do with. Uh, there was from entry one until GCSE, so it's really good. I quite like that. But, then there's some sometimes, you know, it changes, like for example you do something, I don't know, but the answer is not accurate, but it's rarely happens, so not that often.

R: Yeah. So sometimes that the system doesn’t work as well as it is supposed to?
IVAN: Yeah, for example, the answer that you give the system, it doesn't accept it. Well, it's correct, but it doesn't accept it.

R: OK, so does that make it difficult to show that you actually are doing the right thing?

IVAN: Yeah, yeah, because it won't let you put it in unless you tell the teacher and they can see it. This is really good because they can see your progress whether or not you did well or did your best.

R: Okay, thank you. So maybe there is a need for something that's a bit more stable and accurate so that you can use it to show your understanding?

IVAN: Yeah, it’s a bit difficult to use it first, when you, when you want to learn it, because you know it's your, it’s an AI system if I am right. It’s really, uh, complicated. But then if you get to know the, the system, you can you can, well, get your way around this. It's really, really good in my opinion. But for some people it's not useful, they don't like it, especially the- I heard it from the well, the English younger adults or teenagers who are doing the GCSEs. They don't like it, I don't know why.
R: Okay, so that's a system that's used by everybody across the college?

IVAN: Yeah, that is for everybody.

R: So maybe they need some alternative options for people that find it more difficult. And what about in the actual sort of the content of what you're learning itself, is there anything that school could do to help with making that better for you?

EKON: The whole content?

R: Yeah. So what you are learning in the lessons at college.
JULIUS: I think, yeah. I don't know the correct thing is, but this way I'm not doing EASL now, for the last year now. I don't think they have like very accurate content, they just randomly just sometime teaching, sometime go home, sometime you have to watch video on YouTube or programme.

R: Yeah, okay, so, it's not consistent.

JULIUS: I don't think, no.
EKON: Sometimes it's good. It's good to develop this skill. So sometimes we have that they used to like, we got ‘life in the UK’ aspect. So, when you do that, you get a little bit sometimes they like to take us into the computer and to show you how to use the computer and give you some ideas how to understand this technology, very useful. But the one things, yeah, I guess when they, they move me into the one class for the mistake or for the wrong way, I don't know, and I move that there was only, yeah, the students that was born here, I mean, the citizens. And I learnt with them and I found, yeah, I don't know why they put them into the higher level and I cannot understand because inside them, there is nothing. Cause when the teacher asked the question on something that no one can answer, I answer them and then and after that the teacher made me finish in the final year. And then yeah, in the final class, she asked me about ‘what level do you want in reading at the moment?’, and she say, ‘why they put you only in the EASL?’, and I say, ‘I don't know’. So that I found something when I, when I finish that class I was told, I thinking like, ‘Maybe they are, they yeah, they must have language. That's why they put them in the higher level and for nothing’. And so, so why we are here learning how that we do something and why if you can put into whole class higher level.
R: Do you feel like you possibly should be in a higher level than you've been in?
EKON: When they class is and I found that out is, you know, there is just nothing for me.
R: That sounds like it can be quite difficult.

ADA: The topics in college for me, yeah, it's difficult for because we didn't know nothing about vegetarian, we, we all eat meat, and so the topic was not relevant to the culture. We know nothing about vegetarianism and not interesting to us.
R: So, you mean like some of the things that you learn about, maybe you just aren't really relevant to you?

ADA: Yeah.

JULIUS: Yeah, and for me, yeah.

R: Was there any choice over what you could write about?

ADA: No.

R: So, you had to write an essay on something that you didn’t already understand, didn't know very well and weren’t interested in? I can see how that could lead you to feel quite excluded.
JULIUS: In our class there is option they're gonna give if you want. So, when we learn like life in the UK they're gonna say OK if you, if you don't wanna do about here, the weather here for example, then you can write about your, about your country. And then they're gonna see that and they don't think you not work, yeah.
EKON: Yeah, there is option.

JULIUS: Yeah, that is in our class. Maybe not in other class.

R: That sounds like that's a bit more positive because you get the choice.

JULIUS: Yeah, we get the choice.

R: And do you think that is helpful for you?

EKON: Yeah.
JULIUS: To be honest, in, in real exam we don't have choice. So, we have to, if there is a topic you have to write about it. Because I, I quite ideally agree with this one, because the language could be about anything. So, we should describe everything, even if you're not interested in so. It might be hard, so for example, I personally interest in football and if there is a topic about football I can write very easily, I know a lot of words probably about it. But if it's about something else, for example, rugby, maybe. I have no idea about rugby or but, yeah, I know it's important because the language could be about anything, yeah.
R: That's really helpful to have both perspectives. So obviously having different topics to choose to write about is really useful, but like you say, also knowing that some of that language might just be needed to write about it. OK, let’s take our break now and come back together in 15 minutes.

R: Okay, so thinking back to a little earlier in our discussion, did you say that you are learning in classes with other people from the UK already? Or are there separate classes?
EKON: Separate, separate.

R: Okay, and is that the way you would prefer it?
EKON: I just want to earn, just learn. Now you can learn like perfect English. So here, here or just grammar perfect and vocabulary perfect, and that’s it.

R: Okay.
JULIUS: Because when you say like with the, yeah, the people are born here or the people here, sometimes they are using but for language the accent. And the accent is different. Like when someone came from \*\*\* [town] or \*\*\* [town] is different than here. And you confused, you know, about his accent, understand his accent, like, to understand.

R: I see. What you mean is actually, sometimes it can be useful being in the class just with other people that are also learning English. And P8, what about your experiences? Do you learn with English pupils and people from other countries together?
ADA: Just Ukrainian people.

R: Okay.

ADA: Ahh Maths uh so, Scottish people and Afghan.

EKON: Maths we are together.

R: Oh lovely, you are in the same Maths class. How is it different for your learning with other Ukrainians and learning with people from different countries?
ADA: Can you repeat?

R: Of course. Do you prefer to be with people who don't speak English? Or do you like it when there are English people and other people in class?

ADA: It's not important for me, I think.

R: So, you're happy with either.

ADA: Yeah.
R: What is important in the learning then for you?

ADA: Important?

R: Yeah, what makes you either really like a lesson or not like it.

ADA: I enjoying to learning because I need, umm–

JULIUS: To improve your English, yeah?

ADA: Yeah, and I like English language, yeah.
R: Okay, so you like it actually learning new information and getting better at maths and English.

ADA: Yeah.

R: I know we spoke a bit about free time earlier, is that but is there anything that college do that helps you make friends? So, it could be things like if they've got clubs or activities for you to go to.
EKON: Yeah, they go call up football class. So, if you want you just register your name and then they will call you when they got match to go training and to go with them and then to get to know each other.

R: Yeah.
EKON: Football and I don't have all the other teams, but yes, we got football team.
R: Okay, so some sports teams in college.

JULIUS: For me, honestly, maybe it's hard to share or, every, every activities outside of the college, I feel like I'm missing a little bit scared. This happened to like two months ago I had really- not bad experience, but something I'm not, not looking forward to it again. We had, like, I'm doing health and social care. We had an activity to meet, like an old people. It's called ‘Generation bridge’.

R: Okay.

JULIUS: They came outside from college, and they just want to sit with young people, have chat with them so. Hmm, in my class like I'm I am the only one, like, from not British, yeah. There's one she is from Macedonia, but so straight or people they notice ‘oh he is different’. And there was one lady, she start asking me straight away questions like ‘where you from?’ like it a normal question, then I say I am from Sudan. And then, ‘why you're here?’, I said, ‘to study’, now she say, ‘I mean like why did you come to the UK?’. I said to her, ‘I have war in my country’, and then she didn't stop for this one, she asked me, ‘how did he come to UK?’ I said ‘ohh, I came by for Libya. Chad, Libya, Italy, France and here’. And she said to me, ‘why didn’t you stop and stay in France instead of coming here to, to the UK?’. I was fed up and I said ‘now is enough’.

R: Yeah, completely understandable.

JULIUS: I said ‘Sorry, I cannot answer to that question. Can you change the topic, please?’ And she say ‘Oh, sorry, I just want to know, it’s not, it’s nothing like–’, so I said ‘that's okay’ and then I told my teacher. It's like, if the college run a program like this, there's there should be like a limit of question, and yeah, they should be monitored. And they, they need let us know what, what kind of question they're gonna ask for us. So, [I can decide] if I'm happy to share to, to share with, with, with them or not. Not just to, to college take me somewhere to sit with people and they gonna ask me about where am I from. So, I think that this things, college should be really careful of it, it might hurt people who might have experience different things. When I come home, I said, ‘oh, this is not the course for me, I should do something else’ then I said ‘no, no, no, no, not all people the same’ because I really, really has really good experience here as well when I came first time, you'd have very good social workers used to live in the shared house with other people as well, really good staff as well. So yeah, I received a lot of lots of help, yeah, one of my dream is I want to work for a charity for like about 3-4 years, so yeah I know not, not all people the same, but college should be really careful of these things. So, even, even if at free time in college at lunchtime, there is people work from charity I think, but I don't know what kind of charity. Also, they can talk to people if they if you met them or not, also they ask the same question, the same question, and they only talk to people who are not from here [UK].

R: That sounds like it was a really difficult experience and I’m really sorry you went through that. I will come back to that, I would really like to talk at the impact of that for you. But before we do, does anyone else have any experiences of things college offer that is helpful for building friendships?

IVAN: Well outside of the lessons, no, no. Well, I haven't seen anything. But inside when you study the teacher always says do it in person, like, for example, if she or he gives you an activity they says that do it in person, like to, you know, talk to someone else so you don't do it alone. Which is good because you know you will interact with other people and you will talk to them. So, it helps it. You share ideas, with each other. But, you know, if you do it alone, if you prefer to do it alone, then it is your choice. You know, you can do it alone as well.

R: So they give you that flexibility. And is, is there anything that you think school or college could do that would help you or other new people when they start to feel like they fit?
IVAN: Well, I was happy with the college myself, so I, I have no complaints, minors I do, it always safe. I see something, but then I always say and so far so good with me. I mean, I didn't have any problems. So it's fine, I like the system, it’s a bit slow the system, I can say that. And the, the exams, the way they go are a bit confusing at first when you do them, especially the mock exams. But then when you go and sit down on the on the will exams, they are a bit, a bit painful to understand. But other than that. I have not seen anything.

R: Okay thank you. I’m glad to hear that you have had a positive experience so far. And P8, did you have anything to say? Do you have anything that they help you to make friends at college?

ADA: Uhh, make friends?

R: Yeah, do they have any parties, or clubs, or celebrations?

ADA: No, just go into college and then you come home, yeah.
R: Okay, so, you go in and do your learning and then you go home?

ADA: Yeah, I don't have time.

R: Yeah, I see. If they had options to meet more young people, is that something that you would like to do?

ADA: Oh, it would be lovely. Yeah, of course. But everyone is going to home because they all the people have families. But, it would be nice.

R: Thank you, P8. P11, I did want to just come back really quickly and say I'm really sorry that you had that experience that you shared with us.

JULIUS: No, that’s alright. I know not all people the same, yeah.
R: No, but it's still not a nice experience for you.

JULIUS: No, it’s not nice, yeah.

R: Did you feel like the college was supportive afterwards?

JULIUS: No, no.

R: Is it okay to ask a little more about that?

JULIUS: Yeah, I mean, they took my statement and then [said] ‘you will receive feedback’. I said OK. And then nothing, yeah.

R: That must be really difficult. I'm really sorry.

JULIUS: It's alright. Yeah.

R: Thank you for sharing your experience. It can be difficult to discuss these topics, but it’s really useful to understand how they happen, and the impact, so we can highlight ways to try to make it easier for you and for others going forwards.

JULIUS: Of course.

EKON: But still more people coming in still asking the question.

JULIUS: Yeah, those are coming in for the during lunchtime. Umm, yeah, so, they still, that one is separate one, but they people volunteer, they're coming from charity. They come when everyone is there.

EKON: Yeah, everyone is there. Sometimes, they used to invite some student if you want to engage with them is like three or four, and then to, yeah, to engage with them, to get to know each other by relationship with, umm, Asian people like Korean–

JULIUS: like Japan.

EKON: Just invite everyone. We can visit them to enjoy and then sometimes they used to take- before they turn around and he said they said to me, if I want, they gonna take, like, to borrow their car to take out of city in here to go to work, to show them farm or whatever. I mean, it's about that, yeah.
JULIUS: Yep, yeah.
EKON: That’s it, that kind of thing. And sometimes they are asking like, ask you as \*\*\* said, sometimes they are asking right question, personal question. Yeah. So that is not right. It’s not something to learn about culture now or something.

R: Yeah, so there can be personal and unnecessary questions?

EKON: Yeah, I don't know about this country culture is different, so, when you meet like someone to ask personal question in our country is not like that, okay. If your friend, even your friend, just gonna to know his name and you he know what is your name, you know. But on each other or where about you live, and no, so it's not okay to ask something personal there.
R: Yeah, I see.

JULIUS: But for me, I, I love talk to people, honestly, yeah. Even if when, when I was in Sudan when I was young, I always see my grandma and grandpa talk to them. But, for here, for example, if you don't know someone at all, for example, some of they, they lost their families, so they don't have family at all. So just came to they came to sit down and someone ask you ‘did you talk to your family?’, ‘No’, ‘Why?’. And they tell you, ‘Oh, I don't have family’, ‘Where's your family?’. So you bring that emotion, you don't know what that person have been through in his life to this point. So what I realized is they don't have, they don't know, they don't have any idea about us and how we came here, they think, like every student from Asia–

EKON: Yeah, or from Africa.

JULIUS: They think they came for apprenticeship, or they have like, million, million of pounds or dollars and they came here to study and to have fun, and then go back home. No, it's a bit different. So, if you don't know someone really, really well, you cannot ask him like, very, very specific question.

R: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I know this is a difficult question, and you don’t have to answer, but what's the impact for you when or you and your peers when some of the difficult questions are asked, how does that make you feel?
JULIUS: For, for me, when these people they come at last time like every Thursday, I feel like college sent them to ask us.

EKON: Yeah, to make show like.

JULIUS: Because they have the badge of the college and then they return like volunteer, but we don't know what kind of volunteer, what their job really is, so.

R: Oh okay, so you're not you're not sure if there are people from college from the college or people that are from elsewhere?

JULIUS: We sure they're from college, but, when you feel like why, why like only ask us, for example, like refugees, why they only talk to refugees? Why they're not talking to British people? So, you feel like ohh yeah, something might be–

EKON: Something around there. Yeah, sometime when they are asking like that and they wanna know, they want to know what do you wanna leave here? And why you're here for?

JULIUS: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

EKON: Yeah. So that's something like a little bit difficult, like someone talk and want to know something before you get there and you want to know what is your plan exactly. I can't say with him like that. I'm first of all came here, that so I at the moment, I'm here, everyone here. That is good for the everyone. So, when you come when someone came here, like, for example, college or whatever, so they just have to learn. First he want to improve his English, later he will find like qualification or work experience, and that's it to go to do work.

R: Yeah. So, am I right then it sounds like there are two things coming out there. One is that actually some of the questions that are being asked are questions that in your home culture would be completely inappropriate to ask anybody. And the second is that you feel maybe a little bit like they're singling out specific types of students, in this case refugees?

JULIUS: No, it's not about culture.

R: Okay.

JULIUS: It’s about experience about life experience. For example, for me, took me 3 years from Sudan to come here and even now I don't know where is my family. So, when someone come and sit with you and ask you about family and ask you about that. So, it's kind of bring emotion back to you. So, it's a time maybe you don't want it, so yeah.

R: Okay, absolutely. I’m really sorry that you have had these experiences. I can’t imagine how it must feel.

JULIUS: Yeah. It’s okay, thank you.

EKON: And you are in bad situations and you didn't know that exactly. So, you can't ask him like, like that. Sometimes he's asked you like your culture here in English you already see that you're here you stay here, and we see what is happening what is, yeah, what will happen, we see that, so. In our country, we see that it's look different, much different. Someone gonna ask me about your family and even he has family here, he they don't take care about his family or his family they don't care, they don't have care or commitment each other. So, you know, our country and our culture is not like this, if someone to ask you about your culture or your family or something else, he wanted to share with you or someone close to you and then to get to know each other. They need to build trust first.

R: Yeah.

JULIUS: Yeah, trust, that's all, that's all, yeah.

EKON: Yeah. But, but people here [at college] doesn't do that [build trust], when someone ask how old you are, and when you answer you think he get to know and then they're gonna leave me like that, like something, but then, you know, ‘what is your plan?’ And I say, that's it, maybe he will talk to someone else. They say, this, uh, this young person, his, uh, his plan like that, he will do like that, he don't do that. They share with other one, so why, why am I gonna tell you.

R: Yeah. No, I understand that. So, they are people that you don't know asking personal questions that actually they're not appropriate to ask in school.

JULIUS: Yeah, but I mean with my classmate, yes, teachers we have a lot of fun, I like them, they like me, so yeah, we got a really, really good teacher. But the problem is when people come from outside the college, they don't know much, they have absolutely have zero idea about us. My, my teachers never asked me very specific person question like that. For maybe half of two years she never asked me a question like that.

R: Just to clarify, you like the fact that your teacher is your friend but doesn't push or ask anything personal?

JULIUS: Yeah, unless if I want to share something.

R: Yeah, so it's all on your terms at school with teachers.

JULIUS: Yeah, yeah.

R: That's really useful. Thank you. And it's like I say, I'm sorry there's been some quite difficult experiences, and I'm very glad that you've got some people around you, your teachers, and your friends that are really supportive and therefore you. So before we end today, I would like to discuss what college could change that would help you or others to feel like you belong?
ADA: I would like the levels to be quicker. I don't know, we have lovely teacher, he's really nice, so yeah.
R: So just maybe having more opportunities to move up levels quicker?

ADA: Yeah.

R: And you mentioned earlier having maybe something in place where you can meet with other people after college?

ADA: Yeah.
R: Thank you. And was there anything anyone else thinks that college could do differently that would be helpful?

JULIUS: Yeah, it seems they need, they need, like, more qualified EASL teachers, I think. Yeah. And they should be like a content or for, for each level, and for, for anyone can tell, yes, this is this is this is level, and that is this level, because as I told you I sat in in September and then I passed in in yeah in December so it's not a big difference no, but then had to wait until, until June. June is the end of the year, so wait for another year.

R: And what were you doing in that time you were waiting?
JULIUS: Just come to class, have fun.

R: Okay, so it's nice to see people, but maybe actually you'd already done a lot of the learning.

JULIUS: Yeah. For me, like for, for me, it was like waiting nine months and then I moved to level one. And after that I said no, I don't want to, I don’t want to study EASL anymore, and they said to me, ‘oh, you have to’. I said ‘no, I don't have to’ and then I apply to level of health and social care, and there is no inter requirement for that course.

R: So you were able to study that one?

JULIUS: Yeah.

R: Brilliant. And so, I guess maybe there's something in there around school needing more options similar to what P8 was saying, more options to move up.

JULIUS: To move up, to give this system, for example for someone if you get 2 at GCSEs, it's better than level two or level one qualification, even if you get like one GCSE, it's still much better than someone has got level 2, level 2 EASL. So, and also it will give the EASL, EASL student a chance to mix with other student as well. Honestly at first, I felt really, really isolated, I asked myself many time, ‘Why we are just, like, foreigners in the same class?’, ‘Why we not mixing with other with other student?’ So, if you, if you study English, okay, you study grammar rules, but in real life you'll not be able to communicate with other people, you know. So ,yeah.
R: So maybe some more options early on–

JULIUS: Yeah, more options.

R: To mix with different people at the beginning.

JULIUS: Yeah. For someone who doesn't know anything, for example, how to read and write? Maybe he need more support, more lessons than normal ones on four or five days a week. Or if you get improved in terms of reading and writing, I think they, they should move him not through system like entry one, entry two, level one, no. They should move him straight to the GCSE classes. For me, as I said, if you get one mark out of nine, still GCSE is better.

R: Yeah. That's really helpful, thank you. And was there anything that you wanted to add to that at all, P10?
EKON: Hmm, last year in my school there and in the college now they are different. It's not like my other school. My other school they are , they got, like, something where you must do something, but here it is up to you. Other college they tell you what you must do and you study hard, and when you finish there and then they're gonna give you homework, and then they get it back to you sometime, maybe. And the college now, I reckon, if someone his English is not improve, he come to improve his English, just to work or to study hard and then when he improve a little bit in English and then to come here college and then you find more the [unintelligible] at college just like to give you code and then to use it if you don't use it [shrugs].

R: Okay so, you've described to sort of quite different experiences between the two colleges, was there one approach to learning that helped increase your belonging?
EKON: They were different because the way, the way I found it in the other school, if someone did, even if someone come to learn English, and you study there and then you will learn quicker. And then because it's harder. But here, you can relax or whatever just three days a week, and the other days to do whatever sometimes then can forget something relevant, and then when you get back you have to learn then again, again, again, see. I prefer \*\*\* [previous college], yeah, as you learn quicker there. Here, bored and then you gonna waste time to stay and then later, even if you pass, as I said, you gonna stay at the end of the year, and then they gonna move you. So there is not any fast.

R: So, am I right that in your first college in \*\*\*, you felt like you were making more progress? And the college now lets you go at your own pace, but it feels slower to learn?
EKON: Definitely slower, yeah. There isn't encouraging here to do something. To get support in college sometimes they are taking demands, and sometimes you can't talk. Yeah, like for all the class, I’m trying to show up and then to see [everyone] and then to go to together to play football together. [unintelligible], if they don’t want go, never mind.

R: It sounds like there is not quite as much motivation at your current college.

EKON: Yeah.

R: Okay. We are quite near the end of our time now, is there anything anybody wanted to share that I we haven’t discussed yet?
EKON: I think. Do you know what, yeah, the people who was born here because they are already are grouped together and they don't mix with other people, if I'm gonna ask somebody for, like, cigarette or whatever you want, see if you go like ask them maybe they're gonna share with you together. But the others here, they don't have community with other people. So, others got the country like Ukraine, for example, lots here, also, there is lots of Korean, but they stay that called anyone like group. If you don't have like someone from other countries or like that, you just gonna stay on your own, no-one gonna talk to you. But yeah, like Ukrainian came here and Ukrainian stay with Ukraine or East Europe, they know each other’s language and so. So Arab with Arabic, Asian with Asian, English with English.

R: So, it sounds like the language you speak seems to define you into a certain group of friends.

EKON: Even if you got like friend, friend yeah, he has born here, so maybe he will follow you, maybe you are gonna follow him. And then when you stay with his group, always his friend not talking, so just to take your phone and to have them what they are saying or what they will be if he follow you, he's not gonna ask you like to share ideas with your friend or something. So.
R: So, it sounds like it sometimes feels like you can't mix with everybody because they've all got their own group of friends already.

EKON: Yeah, so yeah. If, if I go there today, if I don't have my friends, so I'm just gonna stand alone or go home, or do whatever, or get out, get out the college. You can’t meet like someone English, or Ukrainian, or Kurdish, or Korean, or something.
R: Is there anything you think would help people feel like more able to mix?
EKON: For me, I think maybe the teacher they are working like even the teacher, they go team not mix. Yeah, teachers, they're gonna tell all to be friendly with anyone here at the college, to be friendly to anyone. Anyone in the class to talk to him to do something to get to know each other. And even someone came from other countries to find him his [unintelligible]when you are getting to him and to get to know each other and then to know about his country or something and sometime maybe when you gonna come back to go holidays in his country maybe, whatever, so he will invite you into his home to stay with him rather than to go at the hotel or to pay someone to take you into the, uh, tourist places or something. If he from, for example, if he from Korea or China or whatever, so we, you know, we met here together and then we get to know each other, so later we'll go his house direct and then he will talk us to show the tourists he country and then next, next year we will so plan like we're gonna go our country. So then there, so, I mean that came my turn.

R: Yeah, I love that. So, it would be really nice from people from different country to mix with each other and to have opportunities to share your, your home and your culture. That's really lovely.

EKON: Yeah, to share. But now you're not gonna get that, like, yeah.

ADA: Yeah, to be friendly.
EKON: Would be good, because when the money you have to pay to the hotel or to pay for someone tourist to take you someplace, you can share to be his house. To invite your stay with each other and then to go to came back into his house to build up.

R: Yeah. It sounds like it would be great for just building relationships. But like you say for travelling for other things.
EKON: Even, even later, like if one of you had a business or something to go each other to help, for like, just when you get together and then you can do this and then, yeah, you're gonna build up like teamwork.
R: Lovely. Thank you. But it sounds brilliant. Was there anything else anybody wanted to talk about?

ADA: Just about provide, uh, how I say? It would be better if they provide some information and input information to Gmail or text message. Because many people don't speak English, or like me have a little, so I have barrier.
R: Yeah. So maybe if they could give it to you before you start college. and you've got time to look at it yourself and understand what's gonna happen before you get to college?

ADA: Yeah, that would be nice.

R: I think that would be really helpful.

ADA: And maths words.

R: Okay, so maybe if a list of key words that you might not understand could be emailed whenever they start a new topic. You can look at them and translate them to your home language and understand them a bit more. I think that'll be really useful.

ADA: Yeah.
R: So we are right at the end of our time together, any final comments or experiences to share before we end?

JULIUS: Did we talk about food?

R: We haven’t. Would you like to share quickly?
JULIUS: Umm, I think college should make survey like every year. They should ask student what they want to, to eat it in college and what, what food they like to see in the in the canteen.

R: Ohh, that would be interesting. Yeah. So, tell me a little bit more. I will have to stop us in five minutes though because that will be the end of our 90 minutes.

JULIUS: Okay. See, for example, for me, it's like everything with single day lunchtime go to the canteen, pick chips, which is not really nice because now they do have like in everyday different cuisine, one day Indian, one day Bengali, and then Italian but the, the meat is not Halal meat, so I, I have to eat chips everyday with them, yeah. There not enough option, no. There should be a survey like food to ask people like what do they want to eat.

R: Okay, I could see how that could be a great idea.

EKON: Yes, like for example, they our team, as they team and they're gonna pull out one from Eastern Europe, one from here, one from Asia, one from Africa, and they [canteen workers] don't know, they don't know each other how to cook, and they, they don't approach you or, or religion too, so Muslim, Muslim, Christian, Christian, so Muslim food is Halal, and there is no halal, so just, then really need them to buy, rather than to go, every day we used to go McDonald's.
JULIUS: Yes. Yeah, we have half of one hour break, for example, and it’s on the other side of town, for example.

R: Yeah. So, it's too far to go in your break. What do you think the impact is of going into the canteen and feeling like there's, there's no food for you?

JULIUS: There is nothing you you, yeah. Yeah, hmm. We very hungry or, yeah, not able to focus more in class.

R: Yeah, absolutely.

JULIUS: Yeah. But some, some people that they, they managed to, to get their own lunch from home, but for me no.

R: But if that's not an option for you having that limit I guess that impacts what you can eat where you can what you can do at lunchtime, and how well you can concentrate on your lessons and to feel like you've been included in the school.

JULIUS: They've put an option for us, chips. But, but if you're having to have chips every day, it's no ideal. No ideal.
R: Absolutely, thank you for sharing that. I’m so sorry, but we have just reached our 90 minutes. Are you all happy for me to end our discussion here?
ADA: Yes.

EKON: Yeah, that's it.

R: Lovely. Thank you so much for coming and giving up your Friday, and for sharing some of your experiences with me.