

Case study: Charden

Charden has been part of the Linguacuisine since the beginning. He explains how through the project: *'I got to meet new people but, more importantly I have learnt so much'*. He defines Linguacuisine as *'an adventure where I am learning so much'*.

Charden joined the project without particular expectations *'I was thinking that it was just easy job'*. However, as he became more involved with the weekly sessions he realised the benefits of the project as *'it turned out to be a bit more than what I thought about the project in itself.'* He credits Linguacuisine for pushing him beyond his comfort zone as he learnt *'how to shoot a movie, you know all the camera angles, how to get things, the script, and how you like it to be done on the camera'*.

Charden arrived in the UK as an asylum seeker and he currently volunteers for a number of local projects. He particularly enjoyed the social aspect of the project, working with teachers and making new friends and *'meeting new people and local people'*. At the same time, Linguacuisine has been a unique opportunity for him. In his words: *'I meet many people anyway as I do a lot of volunteering but this was special because you meet people and you learn languages and how to be more confident'*.

Linguacuisine also gave Charden the chance to learn new digital skills, including video shooting editing. He now feels confident in using the computer and in developing apps: *'we learnt about the media pallets, we learnt about loads of things but it was so much fun'*.

Charden defines 'refreshing' the atmosphere the project sessions: *'We had a lot of fun at the same time we are learning so much but it was just special, the atmosphere was great, it was brilliant'*. He values how the variety of the participants' backgrounds and the mix of cultures *'was just amazing'*.

Through Linguacuisine, Charden developed a number of friendships with people from different parts of the world: *'It's just kind of mind-blowing the way that people come together and, just how fun you know, and you don't even speak English well but each one understands each other. There is so much going on in terms of what you are learning. It's beyond belief really'*.

As a native French-speaker, Charden also values how engaging with local British participants helped him to improve his English language skills and particularly how he *'developed hearing skills and got used to the local accent'*. He also had the opportunity to *'learn some new languages with other people'*, for example, a number of words in Chinese.

Above all, Charden enjoyed working in a team to create the app and to *'collaborate with people that come from different background'*. Half-way through the project, he commented: *'I am loving this, seeing people from all the places and all coming together and starting things together'*.

At present, Charden hopes that his personal situation will change and that he will be granted asylum in the UK. He is an experienced legal advisor and he hopes to rebuild his career: *'My experience with Linguacuisine will be useful to re-enter my career, as I am now confident to use the computer. I am more aware about data protection, privacy, and confidentiality'*.

If given the opportunity, Charden would be happy to join a follow-up project: *'I would join the project again at a different level. It was a pleasure to see people on the last session to be able to follow my recipe. [...] From where I started, I made enormous progress. I improved a lot in terms of skills and I improved myself as a person'*.