

Case study: Lorraine

Lorraine is a local participant and cooking enthusiast who joined Linguacuisine to learn new skills. Although Lorraine has a background in community work, and she had previously worked with migrant and local communities, Linguacuisine has been a completely new and life changing experience for her.

Having English as a first language, Lorraine is also proud to be able to support other participants to develop their language skills and to feel more integrated. In her interview, she emphasises how Linguacuisine represented one of the few opportunities for migrants to be engaged in community learning: *'I will miss seeing the people because I don't do the- there's nothing... out from the WEA this side of the water now'.*

Lorraine also values how the project changed the lives of other project participants and particularly of migrants who often face language barriers: *'I've watched some of them... grow in their vocabulary and their English and their confidence. So it's, I am quite proud of a lot them actually!'*

Futhermore, Lorraine observes how the project had a positive impact on her as a person as it gave her new skills, confidence a more open attitude to diversity. She credits Linguacuisine for helping her to change her attitudes to other countries, cultures, languages and food. She is now *'more interested... Cuz I'm more eager to try different things. [...] Some of the recipes that they [other participants] have done. I am more interested to try where normally I wouldn't have bothered doing some of the cultures'.*

The use and development of language skills played a key role in Lorraine's experience of Linguacuisine. Lorraine had some previous interest in foreign language learning and studied French at school although she never had the opportunity to progress it.

Meeting participants from different parts of the world at Linguacuisine, inspired Lorraine to try and learn their languages both for her own benefit and to make others feel welcome: *'So it was- it was thinking you know they can speak three languages and I can only speak English so I thought well I'll- I'll have a go'.*

Through her work in the communities, Lorraine engages with migrants who often face isolation and language barriers. Her experience with Linguacuisine will help her to better cater for the needs of migrant groups. Talking about a Portuguese woman that she knows, Lorraine explains: *'she's learning English and she's really struggling. [So I started to learn Portuguese] Just so I could just say hello cause I wanted to make her feel welcome in the women's group'.*

Linguacuisine inspired Lorraine to challenge herself as she worked to improve her foreign language skills: *'I don't think I would ever I have thought about learning another language unless I started doing this course so I think it has helped me come ahead in ways that I never thought I would'.* She continues: *'I did learn languages I've started Duolingo [...] I tried Greek. I'm doing French, Spanish and Portuguese. I'm still only one percent fluent in them but... it's enhancing us and also my stories. I've been learning a bit Russian'.*

Confidence and the interest to engage with new people including foreigners were other achievements she gained: *'But again, it's simply because the confidence. And the learning new languages and listening to languages being spoken in their home tongue. [...] Person to person which is you might not get any in your you know day to day life'.*

At the same time, she gained a sense of pride in being able to use her native Geordie dialect to create recipes for the app *'I found it quite fun to write the recipe in Geordie for the raspberry jam but I actually found it very hard considering that I am a Geordie'.*

Through Linguacuisine, Lorraine also discovered a passion for coding and programming and she learnt new technical skills such as video editing, formatting, managing videos and using the author tool. She has been working on the writers' portal to improve the project app and the interface with users. Lorraine is very proud to have created three new digital books that she recently released online: *'It's actually alright it's actually better than the other ones so I'm quite proud of myself!'*

As soon as her new work went online, she received her first fan mail: *'She said she loved my story and could I open an Instagram'*. As a result, Lorraine *'opened an Instagram account just for my writing. And I've gotta post all these pictures of screenshots of the book to get people to read them. And my first book has had two hundred and sixty three readers, my second has had what was that around... the second had about forty-seven'*.

As Linguacuisine came to an end, Lorraine will miss the friends she met and the opportunities for peer-learning: *'I've made some real good friends and I'm hoping that we'll keep in contact after the classes are over and I do believe that it's gonna be a great thing'*. However, she is determined to make use of all the skills she gained, to travel more, and maybe to create her own version of the app with a focus on healthy eating and weight management: *'I've- and I'm hoping to get better and learn more. And I'm hoping to be more digitally minded'*.