Building Confidence, Independence and New Opportunities

Before joining Go-Woman! Alliance CIC, Shahida described herself as someone who had lost confidence after many years as a housewife. Although she had friends and family around her, she did not feel like she had anyone she could truly speak to about her feelings. Simple everyday tasks felt overwhelming and she often doubted her own abilities.

Her journey with Go-Woman! Alliance began when her granddaughter started nursery. Shahida's daughter-in-law came across the English classes and encouraged her to attend. At first, Shahida found it extremely difficult. She remembers not even knowing how to spell "post office" and feeling nervous every time she entered a class, describing each session as feeling "*like an exam.*" Despite these fears, she kept attending and still keeps her old English book as a reminder of how far she has come.

Shahida shared that throughout her life, many people had put her down and made her feel she could not achieve anything. Joining the English classes gave her insight to skills she can achieve, the classes became her opportunity to prove to herself that she was capable. With encouragement and support from Yasmin and the Go-Woman! team, Shahida slowly began to grow in confidence. Shahida describes a particular moment as being a turning point for her, when she was chosen to speak during a session. Although she was initially frightened, afterwards she realised she wanted to speak up and be heard. She used her voice in many ways, one being supporting her peers in her learning classes.

As her confidence developed, Shahida began volunteering and continued improving her English. Over time, these opportunities opened new doors for her. Today, Shahida volunteers with Dosti and now works as a safety guide supporting young children, something she never imagined would have been possible before joining the sessions.

For Shahida, the impact of Go-Woman! Alliance goes far beyond learning English. She describes the interventions as "not a group, it's a family." The sessions gave her a sense of belonging, guidance, support and a strong network of friendships. She knows she has people she can turn to and somewhere she feels welcomed and valued.

Project in collaboration with:

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Shahida now actively encourages other women to attend community groups and seek support, reminding them that believing in yourself can change your future. She often tells others:

"*Trust in yourself and believe in yourself and you can do anything.*"

The confidence Shahida gained through the sessions has transformed many areas of her life. Despite being told by others that she would never succeed because of her English, she went on to pass both her theory test and her driving test. She now feels able to make her own choices, look towards the future positively, and continue developing herself further. Shahida hopes to return to English classes again in the future to keep improving and learning.

Today, Shahida says she feels happier, stronger and more motivated than ever before, not only for herself, but also because she enjoys seeing other people succeed alongside her.