

Behind the Door

Hussein is an Iraqi. He goes to my school. He is struggling to stay in his class and pay attention to the teacher; he is struggling in Year 11, at the age of almost 20. He has been struggling like that for almost 2 years, breathing in an unbearable atmosphere. He has left his country, his brothers and rest of his relatives in Iraq to start a new life in Australia. Maybe, if he is lucky, one day he can fly back to Iraq to visit his family and friends who are still suffering in the civil conflict.

Hussein has hardly adapted to the school life in such a small Victorian town. This is a concern, especially when he is living in a small country town, where immigrants, especially Iraqis live. Their physical appearance, dress and religion are strongly different from those of the majority in the town, and seen as the erosion of the integrity of local culture by the locals. But the most concern is the vulnerability of these groups of migrants' children and the xenophobia of terrorism which led them become a particular vulnerable group in the school community.

Have I told you that Hussein is living in a very difficult situation, where all the "you-are-a-terrorist" gossips fly around him? Have I told you that Hussein got assaulted, because he is a Muslim? But then 'everything' got solved behind Gina (the ESL Teacher)'s door. But the one who suffered the harsh treatment, hatred and the intolerance is Hussein. Does he deserve all this treatment? I wonder. What does the school do to help behind the door? I wonder. Where are the migrant's rights? I wonder. I wonder when the dissemination of racist and xenophobic propaganda against migrants will stop. Australia is a country of multi-colours, and racism is a phenomenon that affects and implicates all regions in Australia. The Cronulla Riots, the Islamophobic upsurge, and so on have been shocking us but it was not surprising, since there has been fighting since early days of the early colony. As the number of these special groups of people grow, a well-organised education programme and good communication are necessary.

Hussein is 21 -years-old next year. But he's still struggling to fit into Australian society.