

1.- IMMIGRANT STUDENT

Hi! I'm Mamia. I'm studying the 4th year of ESO. I arrived in Spain six years ago. I come from the Saharan refugee camps in Tindouf.

I remember my first school day (*pause*)...it was very tiring: I was very nervous, I couldn't understand anything, I didn't know what was going on.

I went to the porter's office. I gave the porter a piece of paper I had been given previously, and then I went to administration, where they gave me some papers that my parents had to fill in: the enrolment forms.

Then I was introduced to the Head of Studies, who showed me around. It was so big compared to the school I had been in, and I was surprised to see so many things, so many big rooms. In a classroom, here, there are twenty-three people, whereas in my country there are thirty-something.

He showed me the playground, the library, the toilets, the classrooms, and, finally, he gave me a timetable from Monday to Friday from 8.30 to 14.30. I truly felt weird.

At first I did not want to come to Spain, but I had to because my parents were coming. However, now I'm here, I really don't regret it because I'm having a great time.

What fundamentally helped me to establish a relationship with my classmates was the Spanish class, which was essential, firstly, to understand what I was being told during the classes, and secondly, to make friends.

Also the extracurricular activities in the afternoons were important. I attended Spanish help lessons – I needed to go less and less, but they were a necessity. Also watching TV, talking to people... helps you to understand Spanish. Don't worry if you don't speak it correctly – the people you are with will correct you: Do not be ashamed of being corrected: that's life! You won't get better unless somebody corrects you!

And don't worry. Let's see...Listening to music, talking to people, wandering in the streets, listening to people talking to each other. I don't know...In the end you end up understanding, in more or less of time but you understand.

Once I had been here for a while, new foreign students came to start school. Then, I try to make their lives easier, I help them: if they speak my own language, I translate for them until they feel confident. I introduce them to my classmates and later they choose their own group of friends once they can speak and know more or less what they want to do.