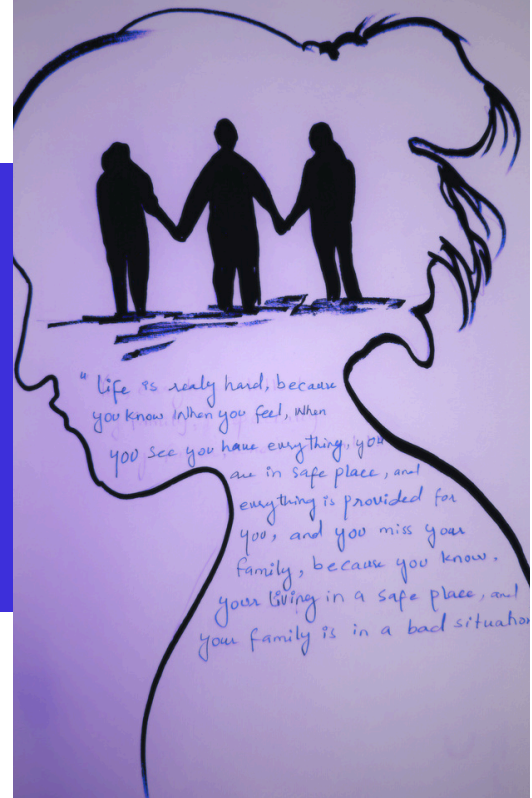




FARZANA

“ It's not just a university. It's like a family. It's like a big family.

Sawt: An Oral History of Resettlement Campuses was funded by an Emerson Collective Fellowship.



ARRIVAL

When I left my country, I was really shocked for more than one year. . . I was in shock. . . dream[ing] [that] I'm in Afghanistan [and] the Taliban came . . . it was really stressful for me.

SUPPORT ON CAMPUS

I like the campus view. It's very beautiful. . . When I walk around the campus, I really enjoy walking because it's green and. . . busy. . . [with] many people around the campus [in the fall and spring]. In [the] summer also I like it because we sometimes need to live in a quiet place, to stay in a quiet place, and I like both, but now it's summer, and everyone has gone.

I spend my time with my friends. . . I have [2] Afghan friends and. . . Mexican friends, American friends. Usually on weekends, we get together and play games, and spend our time together, or going for dinner or lunch.

There's a beautiful space in front of my apartment, close to my apartment, and. . . there is for children. . . a small park. . . sometimes I go there when it's a nice day. Here is a lake, a small lake. But it's beautiful! You feel so comfortable when you sit in front of the lake and just mak[e] yourself relax. Relax.



Hosted by:

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY



Interviewed in English by:

ZAKIA ANWAR

With the informed consent of participants, interview transcripts have been adapted here in narrative form for clarity and efficiency with a commitment to retaining the intended meaning.

everycampusarefuge.org

International students – each semester, we spend our time [together]. We coordinated Friday's excursion for students. . . and we take them to beautiful places like museum[s] or some events [o]n the campus. I just remember [o]n campus they had many events like multicultural night, cultural night. . . our department provided - [the] ECAR Chapter – this semester.

My friends. . . they always encouraged me, supported me [i]n my studying. . . there's many other friends, they always help me with everything when I need something or I have problems. But especially, I appreciate . . . these people [who] supported me during my studying.

When I arrived in Stillwater, after a few days. . . in the Global Studies, there was a hooding ceremony, and [Miss Sue Bennett] invited me [to] this ceremony, and it was my first time I joined this kind of event, and she said that, “I know you can do it. . . I know you will achieve [this]. . . I believe [that] one day you will be here on this stage and receiving your degree.” I still remember those words. . . that really encouraged me to do this [pursue my education].

*OSU has a big library here. They have many resources online and physical [resources].
When I needed resources, I will go.*

We learned many things from the ECAR chapter . . . [they] advise you how we [can] achieve our goals [based on] the past experiences, challenges.

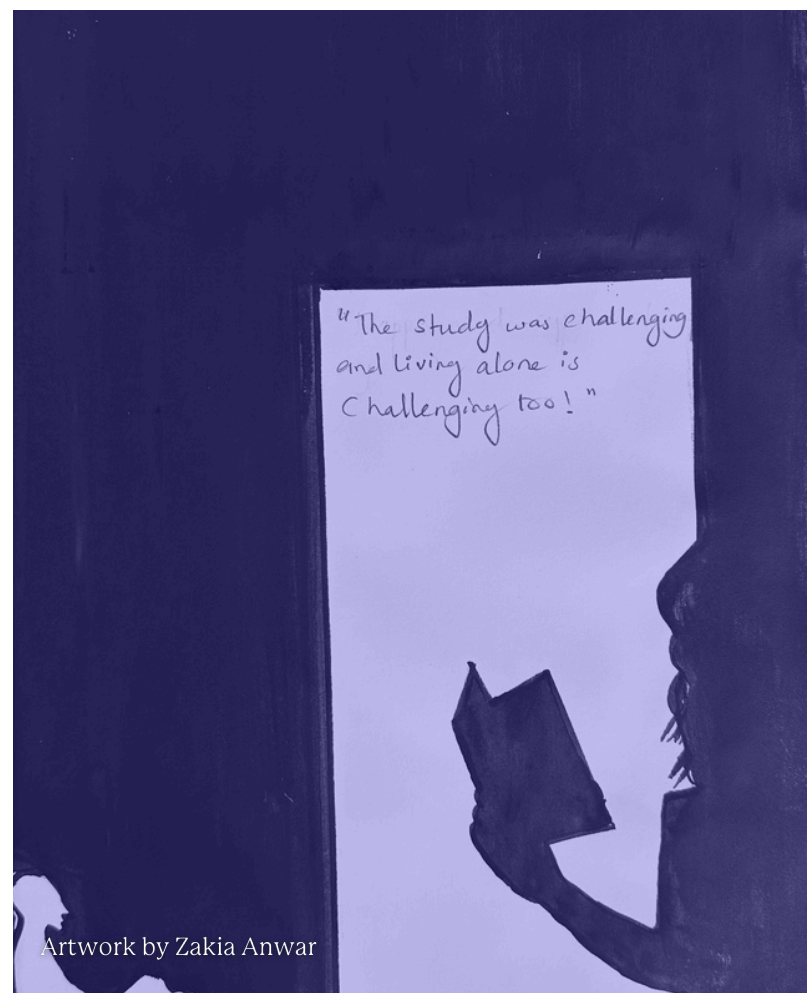
NOT WITHOUT ITS CHALLENGES

Life is really hard, because, you know when you feel, when you see you have everything, you are in a safe place, and everything is provided for you, and you miss your family, because, you know you're living in a safe place, [at the same time] as your family is in a bad situation.

*The English Language and Intercultural Center (ELIC) is a program under the Oklahoma State University Global Department.

The study was challenging and living alone is challenging sometimes when you miss your family, when you miss your country, your people.

Because the building[s]. . . are the same color. . . the first day when I came to the ELIC,* I came with one of my friend[s]. She was my neighbor. Her name is Gabby. She was my neighbor, and now she is like my sister; her parents [are] like my family. She and her husband [are] like my brother and sister, and they are still with me. They moved now from this [place] – 5 or 10 min walking. But [back then] I'm living upstairs and she was living downstairs, and I came with her [to] the ILC. And when I wanted to go back home, I got the direction[s], but the direction was not showing the location. . . the location didn't show me the exact address. Then I went left. . . I was confused. No, I didn't come this way. And then I went to [the] right, and I was confused. No, it's not the same way I came. And finally I found it because. . . in front of my apartment [is] my friend's car [which] is orange. And the one thing [made me] realize that this is my apartment [was] because her car was in front of our apartment. It was so difficult to find the locations.



Artwork by Zakia Anwar

CREATING A LASTING COMMUNITY

Oklahoma State University is like my home now. The people here are very nice, so friendly. The professors, the coworkers. It's a very safe place, I think. Yes, a safe place.

I made friends here whenever I need anything. . . Friday, it was my graduation day. All my friends, I never imagined. . . they come here, and like my family, they didn't allow me [to be] alone on my graduation day, and not only [on] my graduation day. Always. [T]he most important thing that I really loved. . . I'm really proud of was on my graduation day on Friday. [My favorite experience is] celebrating my graduation party because it was big, huge, and unforgettable. . . On that day, I [was] really proud [of] myself. I was really happy . . . it was my biggest, the biggest dream that happened.

It's not just a university. It's like a family. It's like a big family.

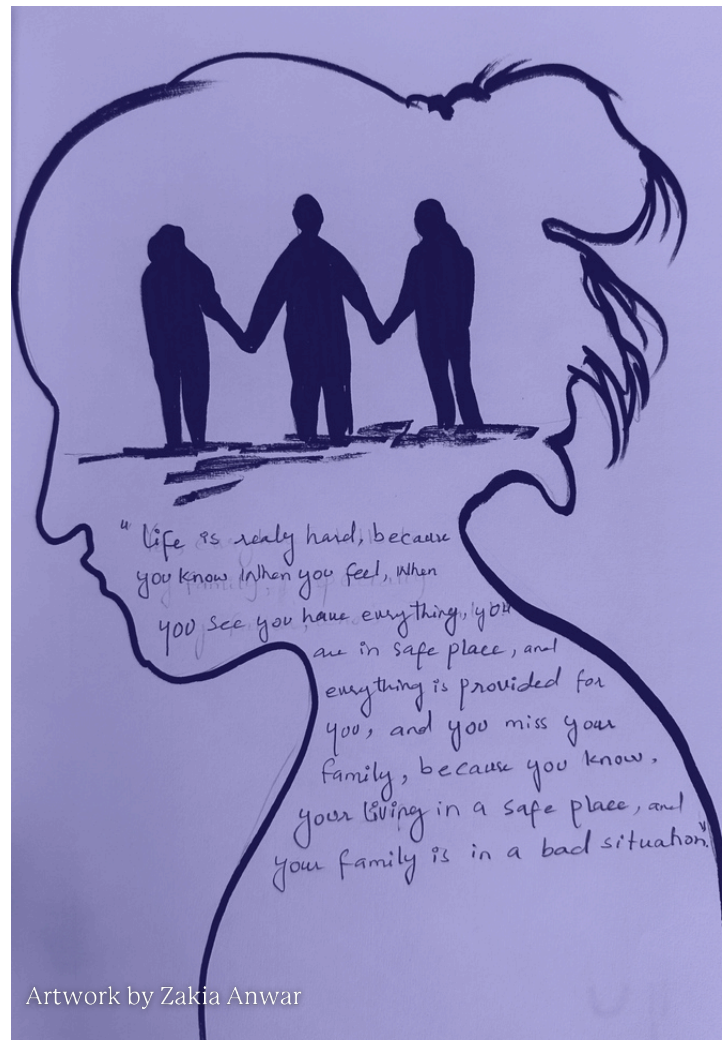


Image of Zakia Anwar with Farzana and her friends at Oklahoma State University.