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Hamrah, together on a journey— The Hamrah Oral History Project is a series of interviews with immigrants, refugees, and asylees in Arizona, people who had to leave home due to oppression, war or violence, pursuing their future elsewhere. These are personal accounts of life between places and cultures, exploring how we arrived here and why we left home. Listen to stories of joy, dream and emotional pain that comes with the relocation and separation. Recorded at KXCI Community Radio's Historic Armory Park Studios in Tucson, Arizona.

My name is S. I am 14 years old. I was born in Helmand, Afghanistan. I don't know where it's located, but it's a small city. It's also very hot and dry. Helmand, it's famous for its big sea.

Can you tell me about your childhood? What was it like growing up in your home?

My childhood was very fun. I used to play with my friends most of the time.

What did you play?

We played marble games where you stack, not actually stack, you just make a circle of the marbles and then you just throw the marbles at them so that they can go into each hole on the ground. So we really like to play that game.

What was it like growing up in your home?

Growing up in my home was very joyful and also peaceful.

What are some of your favorite memories growing up?

Some of my favorite memories growing up were spending time with my family and friends.

When did you leave?

I don't know when we left.

Do you remember how old were you?

No, I don't have a good memory.

So who did you leave with?

I left with my family.

What happened to other family members who did not leave with you?

All of my family members came with me, so there wasn't anybody left.

Do you know why you and your family left?

Yes, I know why.

What was it?

Because of better healthcare. There were many healthcare and stuff and for a good future.

Can you talk about your journey to the US? Did you stay in any other countries? If so, how long?

My journey to the US was very exciting. We stayed in Iran, Turkey, and then we came to the United States, and yes, I did stay in other countries.

What was it like when you first arrived in the US? Was it different than you expected?

It was a very sunny day when I arrived in the US and it was on an afternoon, so it was really hot. And yes, it was different than I expected because I was expecting there to be the buildings to be cool and stuff, and the weather to be good. But then when I came here, my expectations were wrong. It was really hot and the buildings weren't that good. I mean, they were just houses.

How long have you been in Tucson?

I have been in Tucson for three years.

What has been the most difficult part of adapting to life in the US?

The most difficult part of adapting to life in the US was the culture, actually. Because I mean, there were many religions in the US and my religion was also one of them. So yeah.

What has been the easiest?

There wasn't really anything easy. Most of the things, or I can say all of the things were difficult when we first started, arrived here.

What do you like about Tucson?

I mean, there isn't many things or much things we can, I mean, I can like about Tucson. There are good mountains. So the nature, I guess, the forests.

What are some of the fun things you do in Tucson?

Some of the fun things I do in Tucson is go to Hamrah Arts club and spend time with my family.

How has your life changed since coming to Tucson? In what ways has it stayed the same?

My life has changed since coming to Tucson, by the language, because they speak different language than I do. So yeah, that changed.

Do you ever dream of going back?

Yes, I do.

Do you wish that you never came here and why?

No, not really because I got to see the other side of the world instead of my home country. I mean the place where I was raised and stuff, so no.

What do you miss most about your home country and your culture?

The language, because it's very easy when you know the language and it's easy to communicate with people so it's easier and you can socialize with people and stuff. But since you can't do it here because you have to learn other languages, another language. So yeah, language has played a very strong role in my experience living in the US by interpreting for my family.

Have you found something you really like here, for example, of the food, new friends, plans, opportunities, things you didn't have before and Tucson gave it to you?

Yes, I have found something I really like here is the opportunity because I think there's more opportunities here and that I can have those opportunities.

Have you found emotional support here? Have you found someone who you can talk to, like relatives you had back home, aunts, cousins who understood you? If yes, who are they?

Yes, I have found emotional support here. They're my friends.

Have you faced any discrimination in your new home? If so, how have you dealt with it?

Yes, I did face discrimination. Actually, not discrimination, but more of people staying and looking at you, and I just dealt with it by just minding my own business and not doing anything. I mean, what can I do if they're just looking at me?

What hopes do you have for the future, both personal goals and the future of your home country?

To have a good job that I can be happy with. And a hope for the future of my home country is for my home country to be safe and peaceful.

What advice do you have for yourself when you had just arrived here?

To focus on learning English so that it will be easier for me to communicate with people, be more confident and learn English as soon as possible so that it can be easier for them to communicate in English. Yeah, that's it.

Okay, great. Thank you. Bye.

You're welcome.