**Debate Immigration - Gloria’s Story – Part 1 “Arriving” and “Why can’t I go home?”**

1. Arriving

**What was it like coming to this country?**

**Gloria**:It was like something new. I didn't feel like I was happy, even though I knew we were safe. Because we were leaving everything, everyone I knew.

**Who were the first people you met?**

**Gloria**:In the airport, the immigration officers. It was scary. They just interviewed my Mum. Most of the questions were based at my Mum. It felt like when we came here we were doing something wrong , almost like being back in my country. My Mum was stressed, she hadn't eaten for a week because she was so worried .

**Who did you meet?**

**Gloria**:I met Rosa-Lee - we were lost! When they called all our names out we were the only ones left in the hall. We thought we were going to be sent home. Then I met Amanda , Ayesha and Deepa. I met nice people, I had nice new friends. Even the teachers were nice.

**When did you start at Little Ilford School?**

**Gloria**:I started at Little Ilford School in 2015 – two months after I came to this country.

**How did you get to school?**

**Gloria**:I took the bus. My Mum took me, the first day After that I managed on my own. I kind of knew we were safe but at the same time it was confusing, lonely. It felt like I didn’t fit in anywhere.

**What was your first day like?**

**Gloria**:The first day was quite nice. It was the first day for all of us, when we all started at Little Ilford. I was a bit scared when we got to the hall but when I got to my form room it was better. I was staying in a hotel with my Mum, it felt like I couldn't do anything there and at school, it felt like I could do something.

**Was there anyone else who spoke your language?**

**Gloria**:No

**How did that feel?**

**Gloria**:It made me feel lonely and a bit scared because I didn’t know how to communicate with people. It would be nice to find someone who could relate to me or speak my language, Swahili. I didn’t know English. I only knew how to say hello. I could read English really nicely because my mother taught me, but I couldn’t speak it.

**What were the teachers like?**

**Gloria**:I had a lot of help from my teachers. Everyone was always ready to help. It made me feel comfortable. The way people treated me, the way they made me fit in. The way we connected – Amanda and the others, it was like we had no secrets. Our form class was close from the beginning. If someone has a problem, we stick up for each other. And we had a really nice form teachers. What helped me was the people I met. That’s what I needed the most. I didn’t look for facilities.

2. **Why I can’t go home?**

**Did you tell anyone what happened to make you come here?**

No. I didn’t tell anyone. I tried to block it, hoping that everything would be OK. I didn't want to think about it. Coming to school made me forget a bit. I just used to stay in the hotel where we were living , and try to learn English. I only used to speak to my sisters or my Mum .

**Why did you leave your home?**

Because my Dad used to campaign for the opposition , that was against the President. At that time I didn't really understand what was going on. Sometimes my Dad would go missing for two or three weeks. There would be these men, they used to come, kick the door in and ask for my Dad. They would ask my Mum where he was. She didn't know where he was so she couldn't tell them. They would start beating my Mum up. You know , when you went to sleep , you felt scared , you never wanted to go to sleep because you never knew what would happen. We had to sell everything to come here. It was just my Mum and my two sisters. One of them is 12, the other one is 13. I don't know where my Dad is.

**Is it possible for you to go back?**

If now we were to go back I don 't think there would be a future for us. The men who used to come would punish my Mum as a way of punishing my Dad. There’s nowhere for us to go when we get there, nowhere for us to stay because we don't know where my family is.