



### **Interview one: #E.F**

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### **Abstract:**

*"I initially chose to come to Tunisia for work. It was undeniably challenging; I grappled with language barriers, and being a woman in this new world posed a significant challenge. However, as I persevered, I learned from my Tunisian colleagues, overcame countless challenges, and, in the end, discovered that it was the best and most empowering experience of my life."*

### **Story:**

In 2019 at the age of 28, a young Italian woman set out on a journey to Tunisia, a country significantly different from her own. What is her mission? Working and making a name for oneself in the field of international cooperation and development. She was resolved to make a constructive contribution to her host country, armed with a bachelor's degree in diplomatic science and a master's degree in human rights and multilevel governance.

She travelled to Tunisia, a nation with strange languages and cultures, as an enthusiastic reader and yoga lover. Her digital abilities ranged from low to medium-low, demonstrating the difficulties she encountered in a society where information delivery to migrants was limited, and the local population was generally oblivious to the migrants' requirements.

She emphasised the necessity of giving migrants a platform to express themselves in their own words and present an accurate picture of themselves. Her primary integration techniques included becoming more sociable, open-minded, and willing to appreciate other mentalities. But the path wasn't without hurdles. Communication with the local community was initially arduous due to language barriers. She, like many other migrants, grappled with being a woman in a culture different from her own. This led to instances of sexual harassment and bullying, as she navigated the unfamiliar terrain of dress codes and social norms.

Professionally, the challenges were equally demanding. She arrived in Tunisia with zero experience and had to adapt to Tunisian colleagues, their work methods, and the country's complex legal landscape.

Reflecting on her experience, she resoundingly stated, "My experience was amazing from any point of view, for my personal and professional growth; it was the most important experience of my life." Her words carried a message of empowerment and personal development, a testament to her journey of resilience and learning. Her involvement in various projects empowered social organizations, NGOs, and local authorities. Through her



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dedication, she spread awareness and common values, contributing to the betterment of her host society. She even expressed her wish for her brother to embark on a similar path.

However, she recognized that not everyone would find the same journey suitable. Tunisia's chaotic transportation and less-than-ideal living conditions might not appeal to all, particularly those who aren't as young or energetic.

When asked about her hopes for Tunisia, she emphasized the need for social cohesion. She believed that strengthening communication between Tunisian communities and migrant and refugee communities was crucial to understanding their struggles and fostering tolerance. She referenced the events of July 2023 in Sfax, which exposed moments of racism and intolerance. To combat these issues, she highlighted the significance of migrants having their own platform, a channel to express their perspectives, which would mitigate the risk of media manipulation and increase awareness of the challenges they face.



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