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Creating Stable Futures: Human Trafficking, Participation and Outcomes for Children

Lived Experience quotes (Police)

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‘Since 16 my social workers they [have] put me with an adult, they have like 54 and 45 [years] and **everyday they used to bring friends**, like 20 friends in the house. ... I used to go every single day to the social worker’s office and talking with the guy, with what do you call it, the **manager of the social workers but that’s what he told me, “Why don’t you just go back to your country?” that’s what he say.** So, at that time I decided what I have to do ... so I **went straight to the police station** and speak to them. And it didn’t change anything.’

‘So on my personal experience, I had, when I first came, I had an interview with one of the ladies and I think she was from police – yeah, she was from police – but she was very, very like “make you feel scared” even though you didn’t do anything. So angry, so not nice or kind or anything. She’ll just be like, “There’s the camera, here’s the mic and the then you talk now and you must answer every single question that I tell you otherwise you have to come here again.”

And I was like, “No, I’ll answer everything because I don’t want to come here again.” ... And the way she said to me and the question she asked me made me feel like I don’t answer or something and she said, “Oh, then we have to come and take you for another interview again if you don’t answer,” or even if you don’t feel comfortable to talk about personal things or whatever. You must answer to her.

And you, **she makes you feel like you must answer because your right is to even not answer because you didn’t do anything wrong** and just asking for another thing that is not actually related exactly to you.’

Cont....

‘And if I had a lawyer or something at the time, it would be like, “No, she doesn’t need to, must answer. She’ll give as much information as she has and that’s it.” Or you’re allowed even to say “no comment” as far as I know now. **But back then I was just 17, didn’t know anything, didn’t know what was going on and then the way they dealt with my situation it was absolutely horrible and since then I just feel so bad to even go to a police or something.** Even if I have a problem, I cannot think twice to call them because I’ll be like, “I’m bothering them,” or something even though that’s their job. **And even if I wasn’t a young person in here, even if I was born here or something, I think would be the same situation.**’

‘So the good thing is when I first came here, this, I had an interview with the police. And they was really, really nice and very patient and I have a great interpreter and he is good listener and good like translator and, so that made me feel comfortable and safe.’

‘And see, I liked something that he said about the police. **My dad was a policeman all his life back in my country and in my country the police is corrupt**, so if you have money you can do anything basically and if you have people in government you can change anything, you can even change your birth certificate [laughs], like literally everything. **And the most dangerous criminals, they’re all free and they’re all connected to the main government. ...**

So when I first came here I didn’t like the police and I didn’t want to see the police. And when I first went to the Home Office and there was a lady wearing, **looking like a police officer**. And then I was like, “Oh, my God, why did I come? Like I don’t have money with me or anything, like what am I going to do?”. Because if you have money there then you can solve all your problems. So money is one of, another protection that you don’t have when you first come here and you would need it.’

‘Yeah, because most of us, when we came from our own countries, like we fear the police there a lot because the police are so brutal to us, you know? So if we don’t have this mentoring about how the police here and back home are quite different because we will still have the fear again until ... if we have any other problems that we are facing. So like it’s good for us to have the mentoring to how to protect ourself more, so ...’

‘All the things, just deals with trust, you know, because from the question 1 to the last one, it’s all about trust. An example, if you can have your family, if you don’t trust to them and you can open up to them. So like it’s all based on trust, so you can trust your ... **So most people don’t trust the police** as well, so you have to earn your trust. If you haven’t earned your trust to whosoever, yeah, you trust them, everything will be smooth.’

‘So the first one [suggestions] would be safety and the support would be **well-trained police for certain people. Not just the normal police that deal with criminals.** It wouldn’t be the same for a person who just came in this country. He’d feel safe and yet he has to go through the process and maybe needs an interview with police as well.’

I'm going to come in on something he said, it's actually right because we have an incident like that and **we went to the police, the first thing that they are gonna tell you, is "are you in this country legally?", if you are not legal so, "you have to be legal before we can do something". ... "Is your passport still ready?", "yes", "so there's nothing we can do". They just literally left so yeah ...'**

‘So then the police [officer], he said, **“Why you came to the police, you already have your fingerprints done, so why you came to us?**

You shouldn’t have come to us.” So he explained that two days he was [kicked] out [of his foster placement], **the police didn’t believe him.** He said that when he went back, they **didn’t believe him,** the police and **then they got him an interpreter but the interpreter from the Social Services said, “No, he’s not telling the truth”** so he changed what he was saying and then he had to go back and take all the, to the place where he was sleeping and show the people where he was. He said, **“this is not how to treat someone and make them feel safe for someone who’s 14 years old.”.**’

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Thank you!

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