



Photographer: Malgorzata Madera

Photography helped me communicate with my daughter



Photographer Malgorzata Madera spoke all about her new business idea that she has developed with MiFriendly Cities. Opened up with Angela Crocker all about her struggles to communicate with her daughter.

Malgorzata Madera is a young Polish woman living in Coventry with her ten-year-old daughter. They started their journey in Poland and tried their luck in Dublin where she studied art and then came to England to see what the country had to offer them.

MiFriendly Cities is a programme set up to help those who have previous qualifications in other countries that may not apply in England. This is a huge problem to immigrants when in England they struggle to get good jobs. The programme is run by Coventry University and tackles the social aspects of running a business. Malgorzata decided that she would sign up for this project in hopes of making her dream of owning her very own business a reality. "It's easier when you live in the place where you grew up," she said. "But when you come on your own, you start working wherever because you want any job just to stay in the country and sometimes the skills you learn in your country you're not using them."

In October 2017, over £4million was awarded to the EU'S Urban innovative action fund in Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton in hopes to help those who need the help the most. Learning new skill sets, like starting up a business. According to the MiFriendly cities Interim Evaluation Report "62% of people in the West Midlands agree that migrants enrich the region's

cultural life" and "57% of people agree that public services in the UK could not survive without migrant workers."

Malgorzata has several ideas for her business but her main focus is to help deaf children be able to communicate through the art of photography and drawing. She started with this idea because of her deaf daughter, she found it hard to originally communicate with her because of the language barrier with teaching English sign language and not being fluent in the language herself. "Me and my daughter when we had a problem, we had another language to communicate. I was like I need to talk to her, sometimes she will run away with her thoughts and I didn't know what she was thinking about. What's going on in her head. Sad or happy?" She continued to say "Because I studied Art in Dublin and she observed me I was making so many pictures then she was also drawing. She slowly became better at drawing. I told her to draw me sequence of pictures like a comic strip, what did you do, what happened and what do you think might happen next. She was drawing those pictures like what she wanted and how she felt. That's how I could communicate" She found this to be the perfect way to speak to her daughter.

When asked about how she found out about the MiFriendly cities "It was from my friend and he heard from another friend. I thought maybe this is something for me and I

should try it. It's not that I had an idea to help people, I just wanted to help." She continued to talk all about the project and mentioned before she came to her final idea on her business plan that she had other ideas. She continued "I want to show a positive image of Coventry from the side of beauty but then I especially someone who worked there. She helped me a lot"

Her daughter was a true inspiration for idea, she wants to branch out to help Autistic children in the future. "When you're talking to a deaf child it's really hard to express yourself with words" she continued to say that she hasn't officially started her business yet but hopes to start after February. As in January she registers as a self-employer. She's already planned how her photography business and future prospects with helping children that struggle with communications.

The programme offers a lot support in many areas each week they do one lesson that takes over a full day. They covered how to do a socially involved business which is important to teach any new self-employer. She noted that they even teach them how to get ready to pitch their ideas. "After the course, we have meetings 1-to-1 because in the group we will be talking all together about different types of businesses. But, in 1-to-1s I'll be just talking about my business and what I want to do".

She talked about her mentor Hel-

en, whom she had six classes with and them being two hours each time. She went on to talk about how Helen help her build business skills "The papers, my budget she wants to make me ready and have my business last" They help you know what is most vital to buy at the start and perhaps come back to get more later. "Because my business is not just helping children, that's an extra thing I want to do photography for events, weddings everything. But she told me at the start I should focus on one thing. My ideas are on pictures of families, children and how to make them seem more natural."

"I think the project is a really good way to help those who are struggling because when you're coming from outside, you're actually more scared to do it sometimes. You don't know where to go, who you should ask"

She also spoke about the people she met on the programme, and that not only was it an advantage to learn how to start your own business, but you also had future businesses that could help each other in future. This experience has taught her not only is she able to now communicate with her daughter better, but she wants to be able to teach other parents and deaf children that they can do the same.