**Woman F story**

When F was five, she was told that the war in Iraq was going to begin. One day, 30 girls from her road were taken to Kuwait. F’s mother decided to send F and her siblings to Holland so they would be safe. Her mother knew the children would have to go alone; she had to stay to care for their disabled cousin. Sometime after they’d left, a soldier came to their house and realised they had gone. F’s mother told the soldier that the children had died; they are still officially listed as dead in Iraq.

At age five, F was the eldest; her brother was four and her sister three. They were brought to a refugee camp as political asylum seekers. From Kirkuk in Kurdistan, they travelled to Duhok, then to Turkey by bus. In Turkey they met with an uncle who tried to get them passports. This took months because they didn’t have their birth certificates with them.

Eventually, F and her siblings were granted political asylum in Europe and were able to go to Holland. This was a difficult time; Holland was much colder and they were without their parents or even an interpreter to explain what was happening to them. The only Dutch word F knew was the word for bread. The three of them were sent to a refugee camp, and told they would have to stay there for a year before they would be allowed to live with their uncle in Holland.

F’s mother had told her not to accept food from strangers, so she refused the food offered to her and her siblings. It was two weeks before she met with an interpreter, who told her that her weight was now dangerously low. F explained that her mother said to only take food from her uncle, but the interpreter explained that the people in the camp were trying to help them. F was later admitted to hospital because she wasn't eating.

For a year they stayed in the refugee camp and people were kind to then. The lady who gave them Dutch lessons often tried to reassure F, but it took her a long time to believe them; she was still only a child and too scared to trust anyone. They were looked after well, and despite not having their parents it is a time that F often misses.

After a year F’s case was accepted and they were told they could stay in Holland indefinitely, and given Dutch passports so they could travel abroad. F grew up in Holland and went on to became a nurse. To this day, she is thankful to God for the people in Holland for opening their doors to them. She says she will never forget it.