

ON ME

<https://youtu.be/y7RZjoYLlxQ>

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DURATION

11m

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:05]

Petr: Good morning, Lenka.

[00:00:07]

Lenka: Good morning.

[00:00:09]

Petr: Thank you for your time and for giving us this interview, which aims to motivate and inspire young Roma, not only in the UK but also in other countries.

[00:00:22]

Lenka: Thank you for confusing me. Nothing happens.

[00:00:26]

Petr: So let's start with the first question, and that is, could you say something a little about yourself, where you come from, what your childhood was and things like that.

[00:00:38]

Lenka: So I'm from Vsetin from the Czech Republic. We came to England when I was 9, actually emigrated then, we lived here for about a year and then we returned home again. Otherwise about myself, so I'm 30 years old, I'm a mother, I have twins and then another six years old, so three girls, which is quite demanding, but I take it day after day. She works as a dental assistant and I'm getting ready too, or I've already sent an application to university, so I'm waiting for luck to smile, so maybe I'll start in September. And I would like to be a dental therapist or hygienist.

[00:01:25]

Petr: So you grew up in Vsetin and how old were you when you moved to England.

[00:01:35]

Lenka: Until I was 9, we were here for about a year and a half, then we came back, I lived at home until I was fifteen or until I was sixteen, until I was sixteen, so I lived at home for a long time in terms of the Czech Republic, so I probably had it same as every year. It was quite challenging, it was not always easy. As for integration, I don't know how to describe it. We know that living at home is quite a challenge, I would say English. People just watch, you know how. I don't think you feel there, that you are completely welcome there or as a Czech, which should not be the case, we are Czechs. we were born there, we speak Czech, we live in the Czech Republic, but actually, when I came here, everything changed. England is so different, people don't look at you here, what color your skin is or where you're from, those opportunities, I don't know how to say it in Czech, like the chances in life,

[00:03:13]

Petr: Of course we see from the background that you work here in a dental office. What led you to this job?

[00:03:21]

Lenka: In truth, I worked for 5 years as a Health Care assistant, which will be like a medical assistant in a normal office, I liked it there, but the job was quite demanding. The salary wasn't that good, so I thought I'd try something new, so I actually started working for a dentist, first as a receptionist. Even though it was like an opportunity, I could always go to the dental assistant, so I wanted to wait a while or my little, youngest one didn't go to school yet, so I told my manager that I would wait, and from Nininka she would be 4 years old, she would go to school and then I would like to start, because like me, I worked and studied at the same time, so the course lasts 2.5 years normally, it is not the easiest, but it is not the hardest. I have three children at home, I had to work, I had to study somehow

combine, so Nininka, when the last one actually went to school, so I started. I'm here now, so I work, I'm already qualified. I also did post-graduations, which is something like that, so I can actually go to college, so I actually had the last exam today, so I'll find out in February if I passed and if so, then maybe I have everything to go to college in September.

[00:04:49]

Petr: Of course I keep your fingers crossed for Lenka. You have my full support. It's great, I've talked about it before, the choice of work in the dental field and in the medical field in general, is in fact in our country in the Roma community, quite unique. Personally, I don't know many people who would work in this field, especially in the UK, so it's a great way to show young people, because often those people or young people can't imagine that they could work in healthcare.

[00:05:23]

Lenka: To tell you the truth, I didn't really want to do it from the very beginning, when I imagined that I would be looking into someone's mouth all day, so it's not the most beautiful thing, but over time you will get used to it. It's just teeth. Everyone has teeth, everyone has a mouth, so it's nothing like it would be wrong, so if you don't have a problem with blood and injections, then it's perfectly fine. As for the youth or the Roma community, I don't think so. As I said in Britain, we have a very big chance. Our children have been going to school here since we were little. I know many girls from Vsetin or Pilsen who have been here since about 5 years, so they have already finished school. So it's more up to them if they decide to go on and study, which they should. At sixteen or I take it apart myself. I started working at seventeen here in England as a waitress, so I had a lot of work and everything I earned was enough for me. She had a boyfriend, we both worked, we had such a small house, you didn't miss anything, but then when the children were born, I actually found out that just the minimum wage, which is not so small here in Britain, is not enough to make a living, so if you have children, you would definitely want to earn more so that you can't just make a living. Although most people dress nicely here and have everything at home. I think a lot of us want more from the future, me or a lot of people. Giving those kids more than we had, so finding a career or something to enjoy or secure your future is definitely good and it's never too late. I started studying for a dental assistant, now I'm 30, almost 27. If you take it, so you know, I was single mum, I have like three children, 27 years old. Those odds are not just for Roma, but for women in general, I would say. So it wouldn't be easy for any single mother, but everything just goes if she wants to.

[00:07:53]

Petr: One hundred percent, I fully agree with you. Lenka said it very nicely, so in order for the young people and the children to be able to do it, to fulfill their dreams in life, what do you think there would be three things that she would recommend to them to do and to be there? they got?

[00:08:12]

Lenka: I think that parents should definitely navigate their children so that they want to be independent of them. They told them that being educated was terribly important. It doesn't matter what the education is. You just want to be a mechanic at seventeen, and you can be a teacher at twenty-five. So I don't know what it is, but just education as education. As for the individual, I think we have to set such goals ourselves or I do. I always have a plan like this for 5 years and maybe in those 5 years I would like to do this, this, this and most of the time I always succeed and I won't say no, but it's not easy, but if you go for that goal, every day or something you do it to get there, so I think everyone can have what they want in life. We have no limits, it's just up to us.

[00:09:12]

Petr: You said that nicely. One such last topic. You said you were of Roma origin, so what does it mean to be a Romani woman?

[00:09:25]

Lenka: Romani woman? I don't know, so I'm definitely proud of the Roma woman, I'll tell you. I am proud of my background. Romani women or we never have it easy, I would say. We are taught to be born, to clean, to cook, then to get married, then to give birth to children, which is not bad, because a lot of women have it that way. I know a lot, I myself have a lot of cousins in the family, so what do they live like and are happy with, but it's more of a stereotype. I don't think the new generation wants to live like this or think that that's the way of life, because that's the way it goes, and those girls are just in that position. I think that the apartment is Roma, we are cordial, we love family, we help each other. Especially girls need to realize that they can always have men and children. If you move it, I don't know, 5 years on, nothing will happen. It's not true at all that you're just 30 years old

[00:10:37]

Petr: Thank you again for your time. I am very glad that we had the opportunity to talk and I look forward to a personal meeting again.

[00:10:45]

Lenka: Thank you for being able to participate and keep my fingers crossed for everyone and everywhere. Girls go for it, just don't limit yourself and go for yours.



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