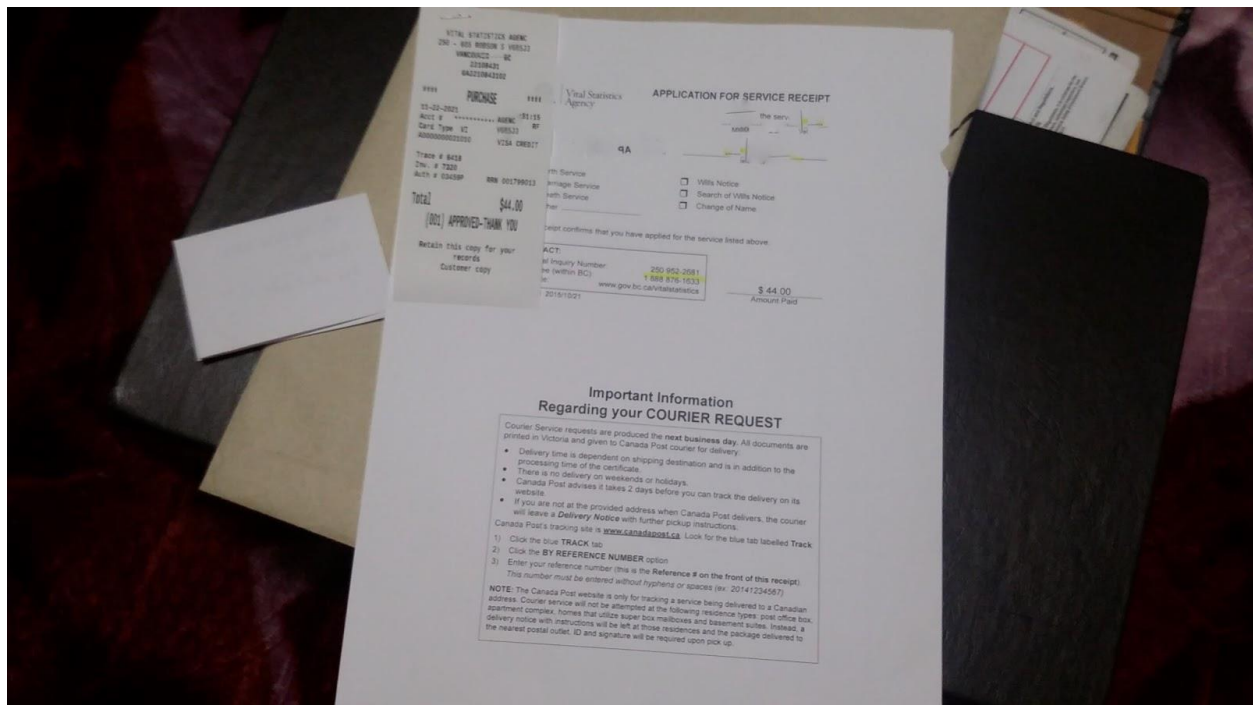
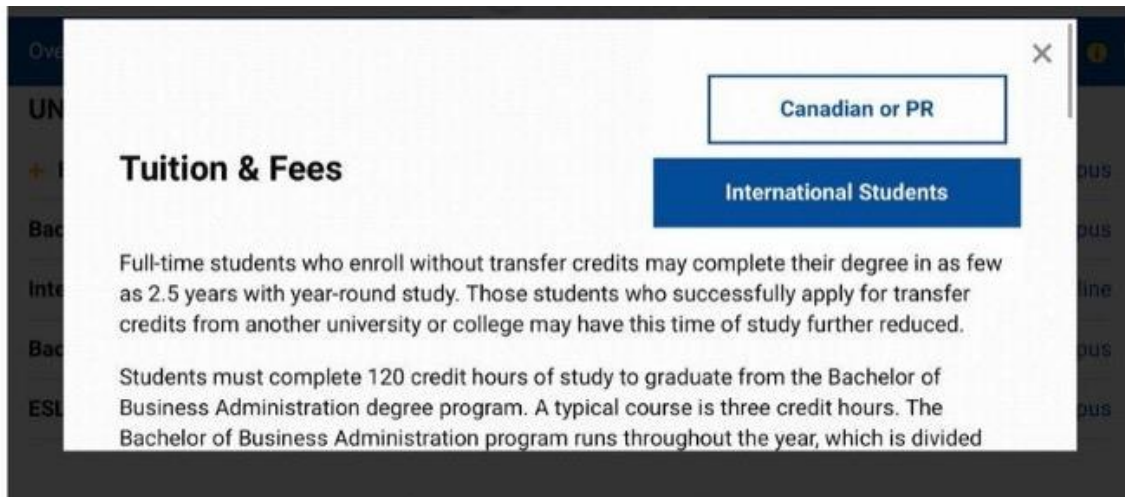




Being in Canada during the pandemic is one of the most positive experiences in my life. For the first time my status did not play a role for me to be vaccinated.



First when we applied for the [birth] certificate, we just made a mistake, a little letter in the name. We just went there to correct the name. They say no, you are changing the name. They do nothing, you know. We were just waiting for three weeks, four weeks. But what happened for the baby, she didn't yet get her birth certificate.



So not only are the tuition fees [high]...even the work people take advantage of that too because [employers] know [international students] can't work more than 20 hours. And many employers will take advantage of that. People who are...already born and raised here, or they got their PR card, they already have a support system, you know? And the people who actually need [support], there's nothing for them.



I am not able to access education based on my status and because I am sponsored by my husband. If I apply for study permit, my husband and me need to start our immigration process all over again. So, our financial situation is very difficult.



This is a picture of a bus. This is the place sometimes I don't feel I belong, people don't respect you. It's not safe at all sometimes, especially in nighttime. I travel a lot in buses because I don't have a car. I know they have cameras but it's so unsafe.



This is the building in front of the bus station. Once I was waiting for the bus to go home. And there was an old man who started to harass me. [He said], “Why do you wear this [hijab] on your head? Go back to your country. You’re not supposed to be here. You do not belong to here. You guys want to ruin our country.” I was in grade 10, I was still so new here...I was scared. What should I do? What can I even answer or defend myself with the right words? I couldn’t do anything...no one’s coming to help me.



My problem is I can't do [computer work] as fast as other people. When I go to library, or at school to do work, other people do it fast, for me it's slow. [I feel] very sad, because the people did it very fast. I [can't] go to school for a career. I had a newborn two years ago. If I find a program [that runs on weekends], I'm okay because my husband is off, otherwise I can't go.



I need somebody to translate or interpret for me so that I can make connections I cannot get what I want or what I need by reading the labels. I buy the stuff which is familiar...I don't have to read it. That's why I still keep eating my traditional food.



I was a doctor back home but based on my immigration status and lack of language skills, I am not able to be a doctor in Canada. The lack of credential education recognition is a huge barrier to be certified as doctor.



This picture symbolize fear, sadness, isolation I felt very overwhelmed and alone when I arrived in Canada. There were supports available but because I did not understand anything due to the lack of English skills, I did not trust anybody.



My picture is of a snowy day. The weather has had a huge impact on me. The lack of daylight and quietness makes feel depressed and isolated. During this time, I realized how much I miss my family and my culture.



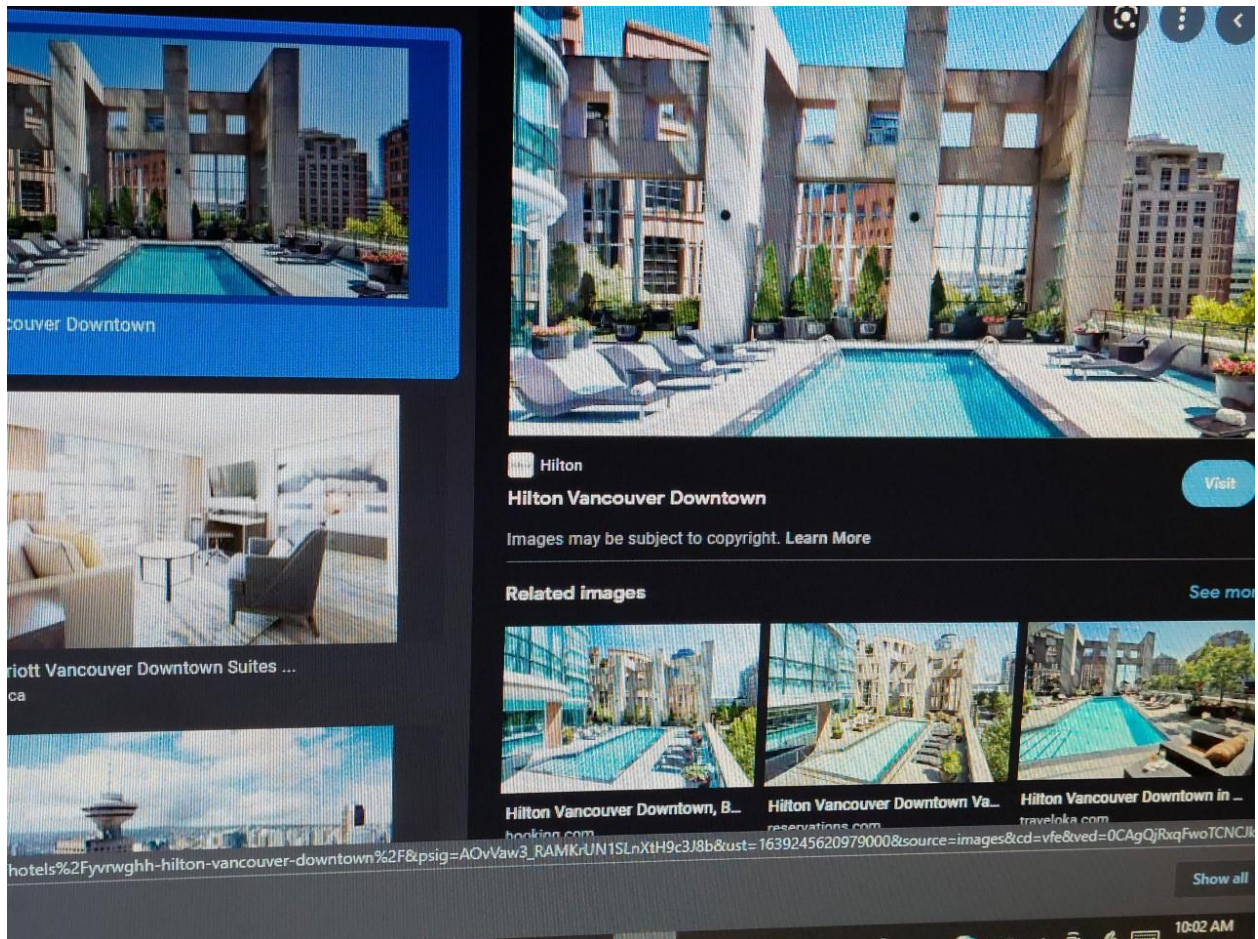
The pandemic created isolation. Sometimes I think I kept my 5-year-old daughter in a cage like a little bird deprived of its freedom. This was very hard and sad for everybody in my family during the pandemic.



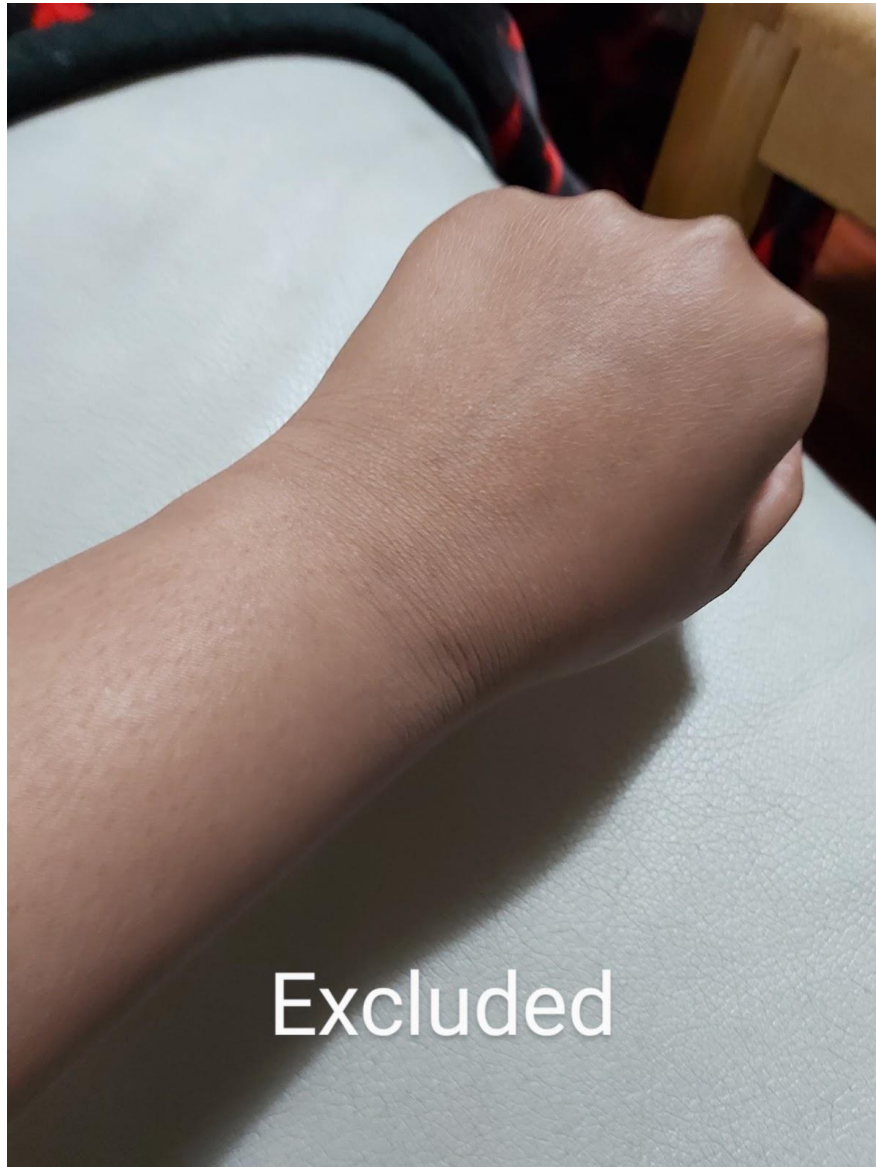
After moving from a basement to an apartment with a hope of knowing more people, there wasn't any luck to connect with people. I don't know anyone here! Sometimes if anyone passed in the hallway or elevator or stairs, they were just saying "hi". Someone is very kind to just answer your "hi", but there is always someone who even doesn't like if I say "hi". I don't really know who lives beside me. We don't live in this hallway, but I feel like we are excluded and very lonely here.



I grew up in small places. So, whenever I go out and I see this [big space], that's a huge place for me. If I'm alone, I think I'll be crying. Because I will know it's too big. I feel like I'm the only person in that place and I have no one. I don't belong to big spaces. I belong more in the small places.



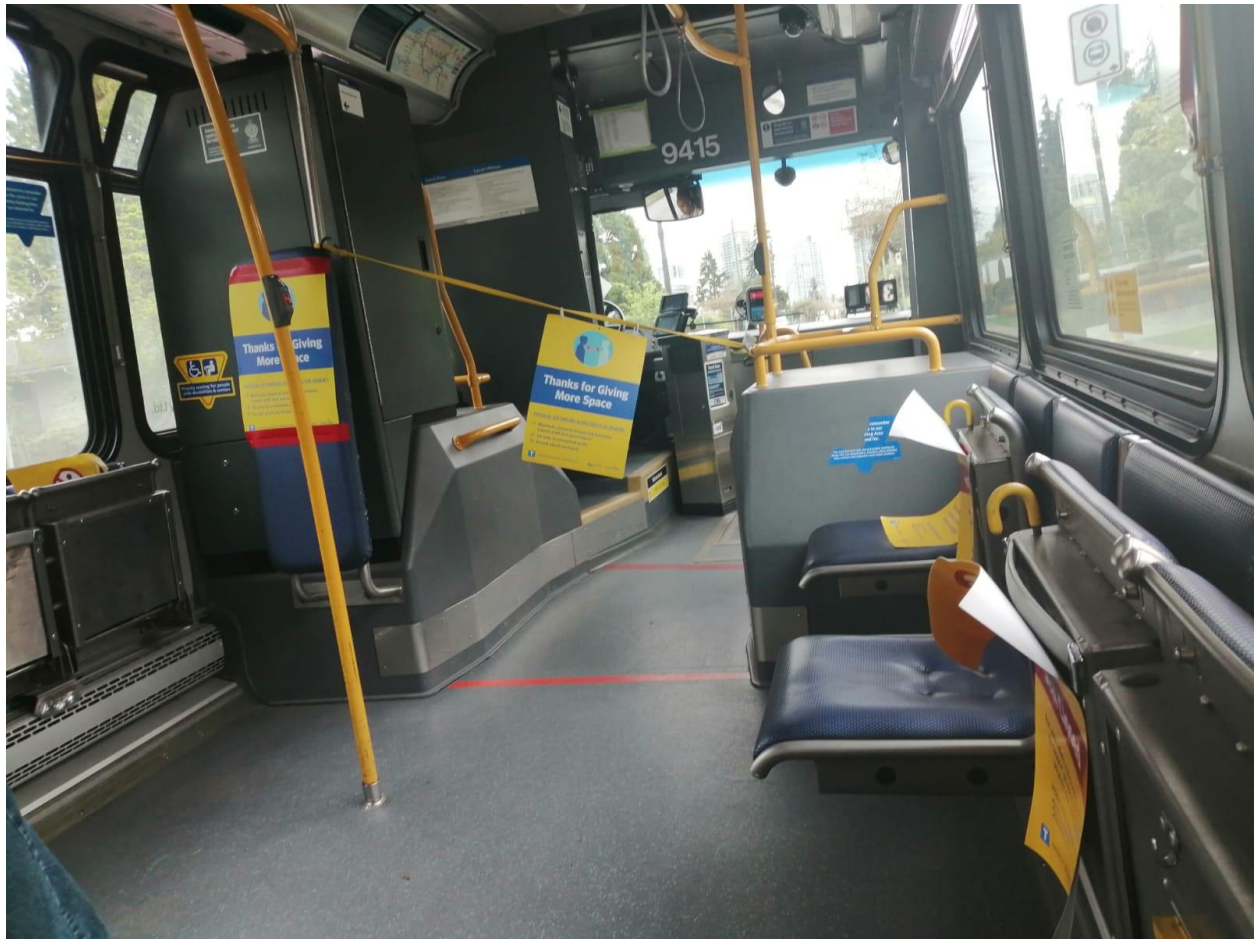
We feel different because in Canada, women, they wear swimsuit or bikinis, where me and my family, we have to wear long sleeves with a hijab. We look like someone's taking a shower with their clothes. [People] don't understand that, they don't know our culture. The way they look at us is racial profiling. We have to go very early on weekdays, not weekends so we can swim there comfortably.



When I go outside, and when seeing the other people, I feel excluded. Because of my colour, because of my language, because of my hijab. When I go outside, I feel I'm not part of it. Everyone sees my hijab, black colour, Muslim, African...I feel different. I feel not welcome [when I see] their face.



My daughters are in school and [they tell me their friends] are going to the party. I cannot accept this because my culture is different from others. I cannot accept certain things that are acceptable in other cultures. I feel I am not fulfilling my kids' needs. My culture is coming first.



This represents an experience I had in public transit. My 5-year-old daughter was singing in the train and a white woman shushed her. This situation was very intimidating and made feel that I do not belong to this place. I felt that some people in Canada do not like to see children happy. This is a clear difference of culture.



When I try to use services in Canada, the [processes] are pretty excessive. I must admit that. I don't know. Sometimes I just don't know about those things.



I have no idea what [other people] are talking about whenever they just talk about the very old American movie or series. I have no idea what they are talking about and they talk so fast when they have a discussion. I need more time to follow them, but they don't wait for me. I feel like I am alone. I'm a little bit burned, emotionally maybe burned. And I just feel like I am just a broken piece of wood.



My job is in a warehouse and wearing this gives me a sense of exclusion because my job is just financially helping me with my family. But there are other meaningful jobs for me that I have passions for. I came to Canada and started my life again from zero. I have to help my family with the financial burden and bring some money in. But this job doesn't give me a sense of belonging. Hopefully after my maternity leave, I am able to find my dream job working with NGO's and humanitarian organizations to help refugees and immigrants.