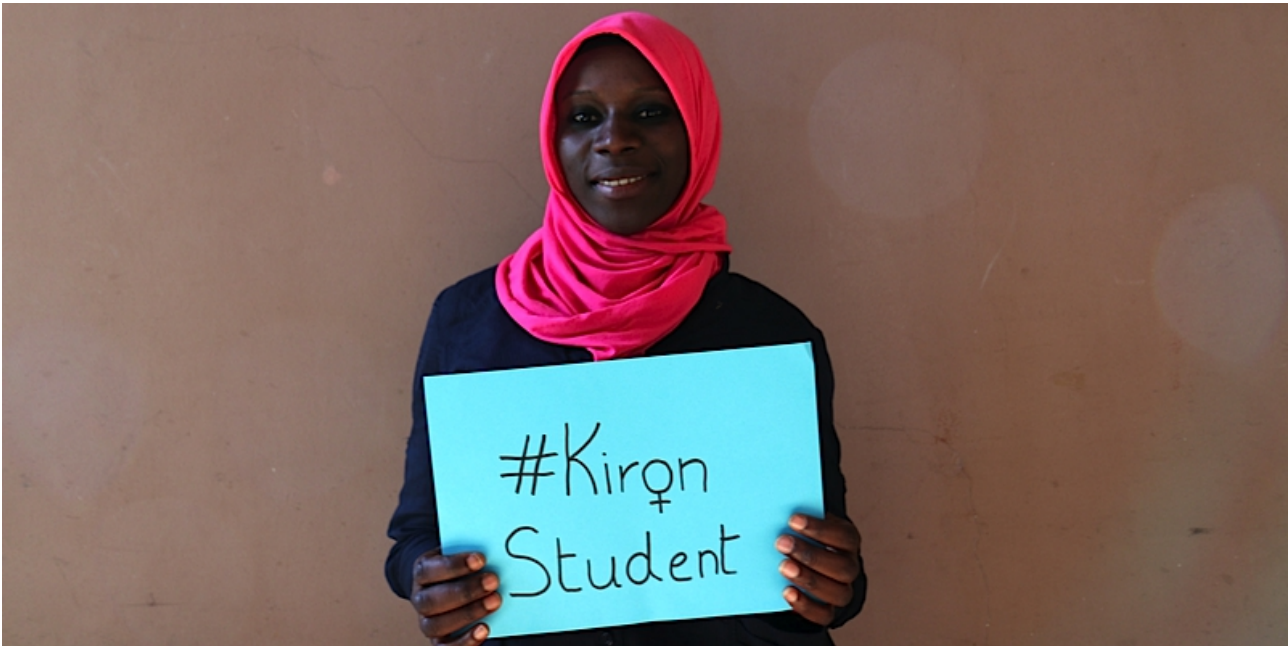


Nyima's Story

by [Flora Roenneberg](#)



"Kiron is a dream come true! It helps me to follow my studies and become a successful journalist!"

Nyima is a journalist from Gambia, who studies Political Science with Kiron. She was forced to leave her country because she was speaking out for women. After a long and difficult journey, she has not given up on her dream of telling the truth. Today, she lives in Lörrach, works for a refugee journalism project called "LISTEN" and helps make refugee voices heard.

My name is Nyima, I am a black refugee woman wearing a headscarf. I feel the same as everyone else, but people often do not see me as being equal to them. I feel that they look at me differently. Maybe it is the label I am wearing without even noticing, the label of being a refugee, a black woman, a Muslima. I do not like this label, I want people to see just me. This is why I write and want to tell my story. I want people to listen and I want the media to change their labels and their ideas about refugees and Muslims. That's why I dream of becoming a successful journalist. One that tells our story through our eyes, with no blurred vision of labels and stereotypes. I want to speak out, as a refugee woman, as a Muslima. I have always advocated my independence and I don't want people to tell me what to do, I decide and think for myself as a free woman.

But this path I chose is a very difficult one, a path that took many turns and ultimately led me to leave my home country and my family. It was never my intention to leave my home, but I had to leave Gambia, because I wrote about the truth. However, back in Gambia, that was not possible. I was writing a story about human trafficking from Gambia, about the women from my city who leave to Lebanon with the dream of a new life, then waking up in a foreign country with a nightmare, crushed hopes and realizing that everything was based on a lie – a trick – a trap. This is the truth, but nobody wanted to hear or publish it – so I

had to leave. Today, I find myself in Germany, living in Lörrach, studying Political Science with Kiron and doing the preparation program for university at Studium Duale Hochschule Baden Württemberg. Kiron is a dream come true and I believe that with the help of Kiron I can strive to become a successful journalist.

I feel more independent and courageous today. Germany has given me another life, even though I never thought of living without my family and friends, without my home. It is a different world with many advantages and disadvantages. But here, I feel that I can be myself and can be the person I want to be! Back home, things are very different. I come from an old tribe called Mandinka, one of the richest cultures in West Africa. We have values and traditions that are hard to grasp from a European perspective. Our language sounds like music, very fast and loud and not like German at all. We like dancing and dressing up. For a traditional wedding the bride wears beads all over her head, Calama they are called and they are normally used for cooking rice. It is a different world, one where females are still circumcised. Even though the country has tried to ban female genital mutilation, the female circumcision prevalence rates among the Mandikas are still very high. I had to fight for my cousin not to live through this experience. It is a different world, a world in which marriage, religion and tradition play another role. A world where I had to fall in love secretly. But also, a very colorful, bright and magical world.

German culture is very different, people here seem to be in hurry all the time. They are always running and always have to be on time. They eat a lot of potatoes and they are very friendly. I am part of this culture now, I am learning German, I love riding my bicycle and enjoy eating Spätzle. Sometimes, I just walk the streets of Lörrach and window shop. I have met many great people here in Germany and feel welcome. Nonetheless, I have also faced some difficulties, especially being a Muslima wearing a headscarf. I have been denied a work placement just for wearing it, and especially in summer, German people ask funny questions, like 'why are you choosing to cover up your hair?'. For me, it is normal, I do not talk about religion, I pray and I carry it in my heart. I think that we are all the same, no matter where we come from, or what we believe in, or what color or gender we have.

I am living with two other refugee women from Eritrea, east Africa and their children now. Even though we do not share the same language, we share the same experiences and often sit together and talk about what it is like being a female refugee in Germany, and how difficult it is being away from home and our families, how hard it is to integrate and the struggle with so many things, especially bureaucracy. I believe it is important to speak out for the women. I have always done so. Back in Gambia, I had my own column reporting about women issues. We should speak out, and make sure that we are heard and should not hide. That is why I work for the journalism program "Listen", a radio project with five different refugee voices, languages and cultures telling their stories. One reason, why I wanted to be part of this project is, because there are so many negative things reported about refugees and Muslims. I want to change that and give refugee women a voice!

Source: <https://kiron.ngo/2017/07/07/nyimas-story/>

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