

## Telling our Stories, Finding our Roots, Exeter's Multi-Coloured History Interview Summary

Name of interviewee: **Ilana PIRES**  
 Name of interviewers: Ravi Nathwani & Myra Fonceca  
 Date of interview: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2013  
 Location of interview: Ilana's home  
 Transcribed by: Rosie Clewlow

### Topics covered

Time	Topic
00 (From first recording)	Ilana went to India on holiday and met an English man. She says that her English 'was very basic'.
0:00:53	Family in Brazil: She has two brothers and her parents were both lecturers at a university. Ilana says that she is from a middle class family.
0:01:37	Education: Ilana, and her brothers, were sent to a private school
0:01:49	Ilana says that her extended family- uncles, cousin etc- were part of her "everyday life".
0:01:57	University- Ilana trained to be a primary school teacher and then she studied history at university which enabled her to teach at secondary school level.
0:02:42	Work: Ilana worked while studying at university. She worked as a teacher for ten years in Brazil.
0:03:13	India: Ilana describes how she loved India- "I felt at home when I get there". She went to a meditation centre in Pune, near Mumbai, and stayed for 5 months. It was the first time she experienced an eclectic mix of people from many countries.
0:05:05	Ashram experience: went to parties with friends to meet Enlightened people, however due to her English language barrier she struggled to understand people there.
0:06:38	Husband: Ilana met her husband at the Ashram. Some of his family were living in Pune at the time so Ilana got to meet them.
0:07:09	Ilana travelled back to Brazil and her husband went to England. She discovers she is pregnant.
0:07:27	Ilana's husband decided he must move to Brazil in 1996/7. It was in Brazil that her second child was born and they lived there for two and a half years.
0:08:10	Trip to England: Ilana is invited to England by her husband's family. She wanted to go in January, when she has a long holiday from work; however they insist that they come in July despite Ilana only having two weeks off then.
0:08:36	First experiences of England: Traveled straight to Exeter, Devon in 1998 with her husband and son. Ilana tried Tomato soup with croutons and thought it was "so amazing". General impressions were good. "I remember it was lovely and beautiful and the first time I was here you know? A lot of different things to take in"
0:10:18	Learning English: Ilana never had lessons in English but learnt "by ear".
0:10:31	Decided to move to England permanently: decided after visit and because Ilana's husband's dad passed away.
0:11:00	Difficulties in England: Ilana thought life would be the same as in Brazil, however she had difficulties with her language. She couldn't afford to work because of childcare cost.
0:11:46	Work: Took Ilana many years to work. Now works in schools with Cultural Champions.

0:12:07	Talks with children: goes into schools three times a year. It is rewarding as it is what she "loves to do" and prefers it to her work in a shop.
0:13:12	Insecurities with her language skills held her back from teaching in schools.
0:13:55	Aims for the next five years: Ilana would like to split her time between Brazil and England. Children are keeping her based in the UK. Mentions getting depression while living here. The weather affects her.
0:15:10	Community in Brazil and England: closest Brazilian friends have gone back to Brazil. Main problem is isolation.
0:16:19	Discrimination: A little bit in the past as parents at school wouldn't talk to her. Has now learnt to expect less from people.
0:17:31	Has two close English friends
0:18:08	Husbands Family: had arranged a home for them to live in and for lodgers to live in their house. One sister very bossy. Ilana felt that they took control of her family and life.
0:20:56	Portuguese: Grandmother didn't like Ilana speaking in Portuguese with the children so Ilana stopped and now her children can not speak Portuguese. "My daughter will say 'why didn't you speak to me when I was young because now its so hard" [sighs] but there was a lot of pressure, they (her husbands family) wanted to understand"
0:21:29	Cultural differences: Washing habits. Negative comments from husband and his family.
0:22:21	There have been more negative comments since Ilana has separated with Husband. She felt like they thought that she was inferior.
0:22:57	Differences between England and Brazil: England is not better, however Brazil has its problems too. Liked security and safety of England. Emotional quality of life in England is poor.
0:24:12	Club and Pub culture vs. Brazilian social life. In Brazil the focus is on meeting people. You wouldn't go out without making an effort. Brazil is more social.
0:26:04	Festivities in Brazil: Carnival is the biggest party of the year. Special holiday dates for well known things e.g. children's day where children receive presents. Teachers day- schools close.
0:28:12	What Ilana wanted to include in the interview: experience was rich but made her realize her own culture. "When you are in it, you can't see it". Made her raise questions about Brazilian culture.
0:29:36	Question asked again about where she would like to be in 5 years time: answers by saying she would like to split half of her time in England and half of her time in Brazil, She doesn't believe she can live in only one country again- and this is the problem of living in another country for so long. Ilana questions her nationality.
0:31:13	Children's reaction to having mixed culture: Her first child who has two Brazilian parents is "most English"- he lives in London and loves the lifestyle. Her second child wanted to be English when he was younger but now thinks that it is cool to have a dual nationality. Her third child would lie in school and say that she was born in Brazil as she wanted to be Brazilian and live there.
0:33:17	End of interview

**Quotes:**

- When talking about her time in India Ilana says: "I felt at home when I get there"
- First impressions of England: "I remember it was lovely and beautiful and the first time I was here you know? A lot of different things to take in"
- "My daughter will say 'why didn't you speak to me when I was young because now its so hard' [sighs] but there was a lot of pressure, they (her husbands family) wanted to understand".
- Comments from the family: "Oh you know, you Brazilians are all dirty, don't you take bath? Don't you have a shower? And things like that"
- When commenting on ones cultural heritage: "When you are in it, you can't see it"
- "I am not English, I will never be, and somehow I am not only Brazilian anymore, you know, you in-between"
- "Philippe is 100% Brazilian but is the most English one of them" "When Derek moved and started to go to school, he just wanted to be English boy... He didn't want me to say he was Brazilian.... But now he is 15 and now it became cool, now its cool and acceptable to be a Brazilian boy so now he is both" "And my daughter was err born in this country and she used to lie in the school that she was born in Brazil, so they all had a different taking and she very often say 'why didn't you stay in Brazil, why wasn't I born in Brazil, errm, and even physically she has, umm, because she's she's not, she's very she's bigger than me and umm sometimes she does ask 'do I look like a Brazilian girl' and I say, I have to be honest, no you don't you look very English, um so she has different take you know"