

# BREAKING FREE: KAMAL'S STORY



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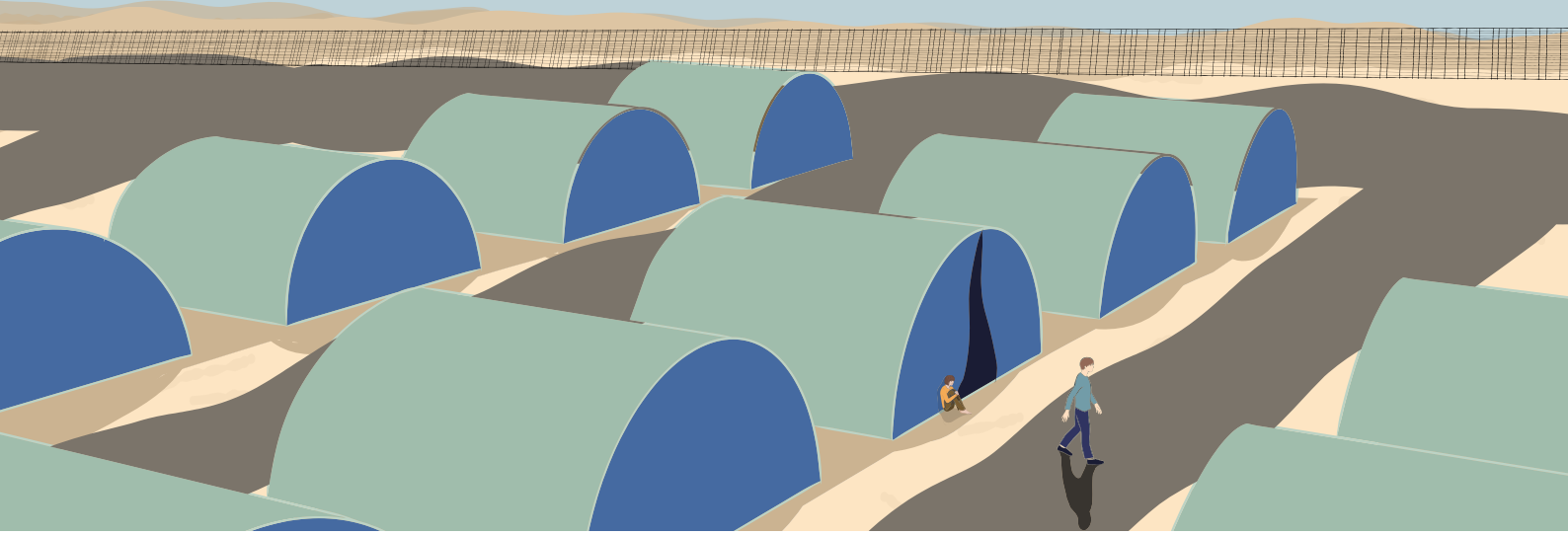
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The background is a solid dark blue color. In the top right corner, there are stylized botanical illustrations in a lighter blue shade, including a branch with small oval leaves and a cluster of larger, pointed leaves. In the bottom right corner, there are more stylized botanical elements, including a branch with small oval leaves and a cluster of larger, pointed leaves, similar to the top right corner.

BREAKING FREE:  
KAMAL'S STORY


*Kamal, a 14-year-old boy, lives in a camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. His father was killed many years ago in conflict, and his mother struggles to care for his three younger siblings.*





*Kamal is the only source of income in his home.  
Unlike other children, he cannot attend school.*






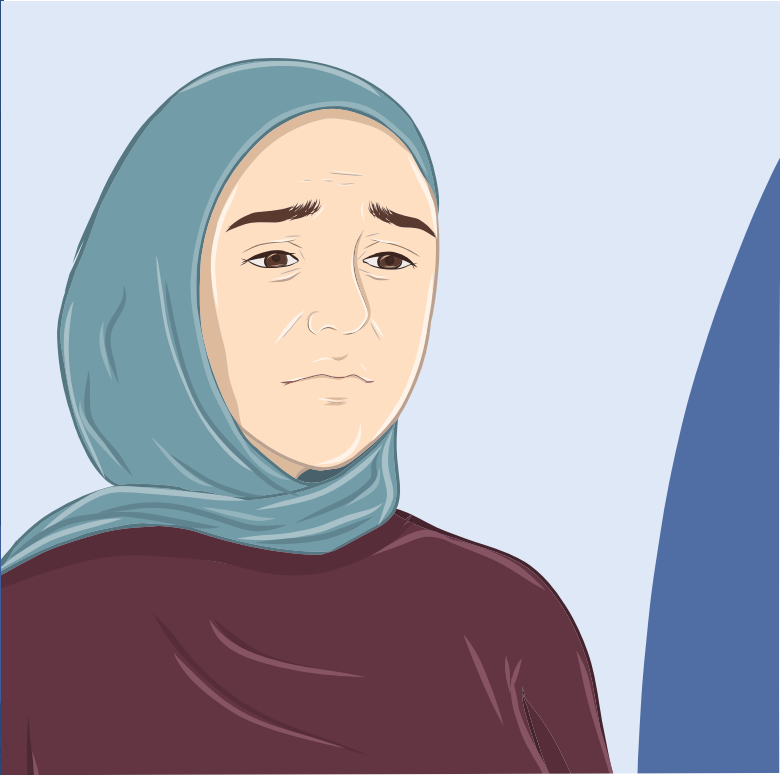
*One day, an older boy approaches Kamal, introducing himself as Ahmed. He tells Kamal that he has been working on a farm a few kilometres away. He mentions that there is food, clothes, accommodation and good money. He says that a group of boys are traveling the next day.*







*Kamal and his mother discuss the opportunity. She is hesitant to let him go but the situation is desperate for the family. So she reluctantly agrees.*



*Kamal feels good that he may be able to help his family. He meets Ahmed at sunrise and together they take the long journey to the farm on the back of a crowded pick-up.*






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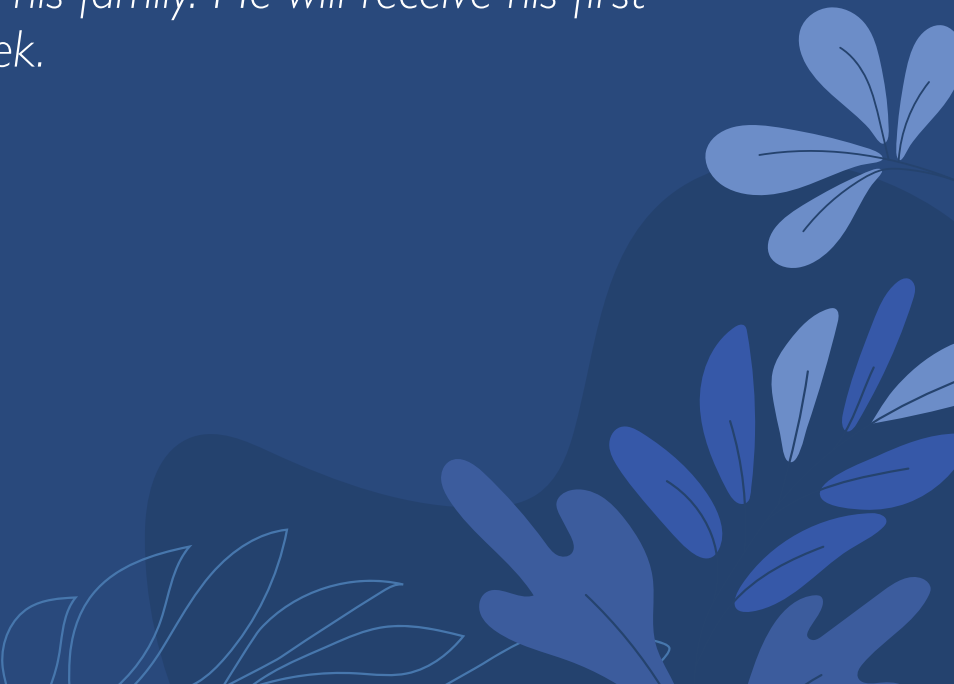
*Kamal arrives at the farm and is herded into a barn with 30 other boys around his age. He is surprised to learn that this will be his accommodation. He looks around for Ahmed, who has disappeared.*



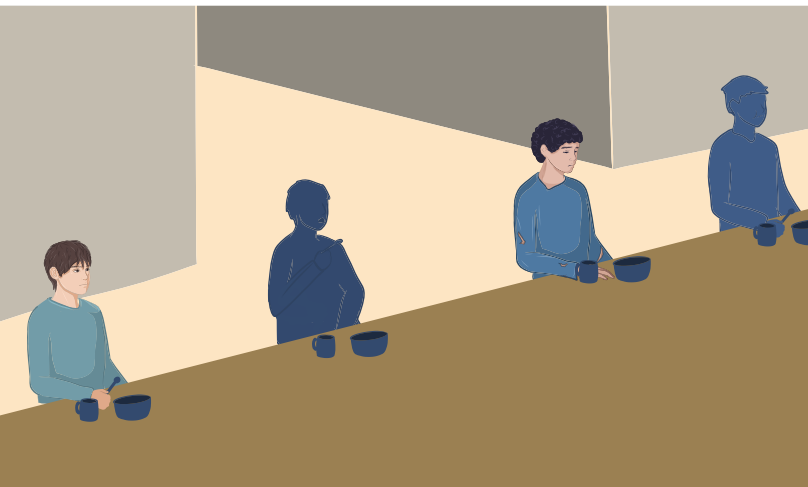


*The next day Kamal is woken at 4am. From then on he is forced to work in the fields until late at night. Lunch is a few pieces of fruit and dinner is bread and soup.*

*Kamal tells himself that these conditions will be worth it, if he can support his family. He will receive his first payment in one week.*










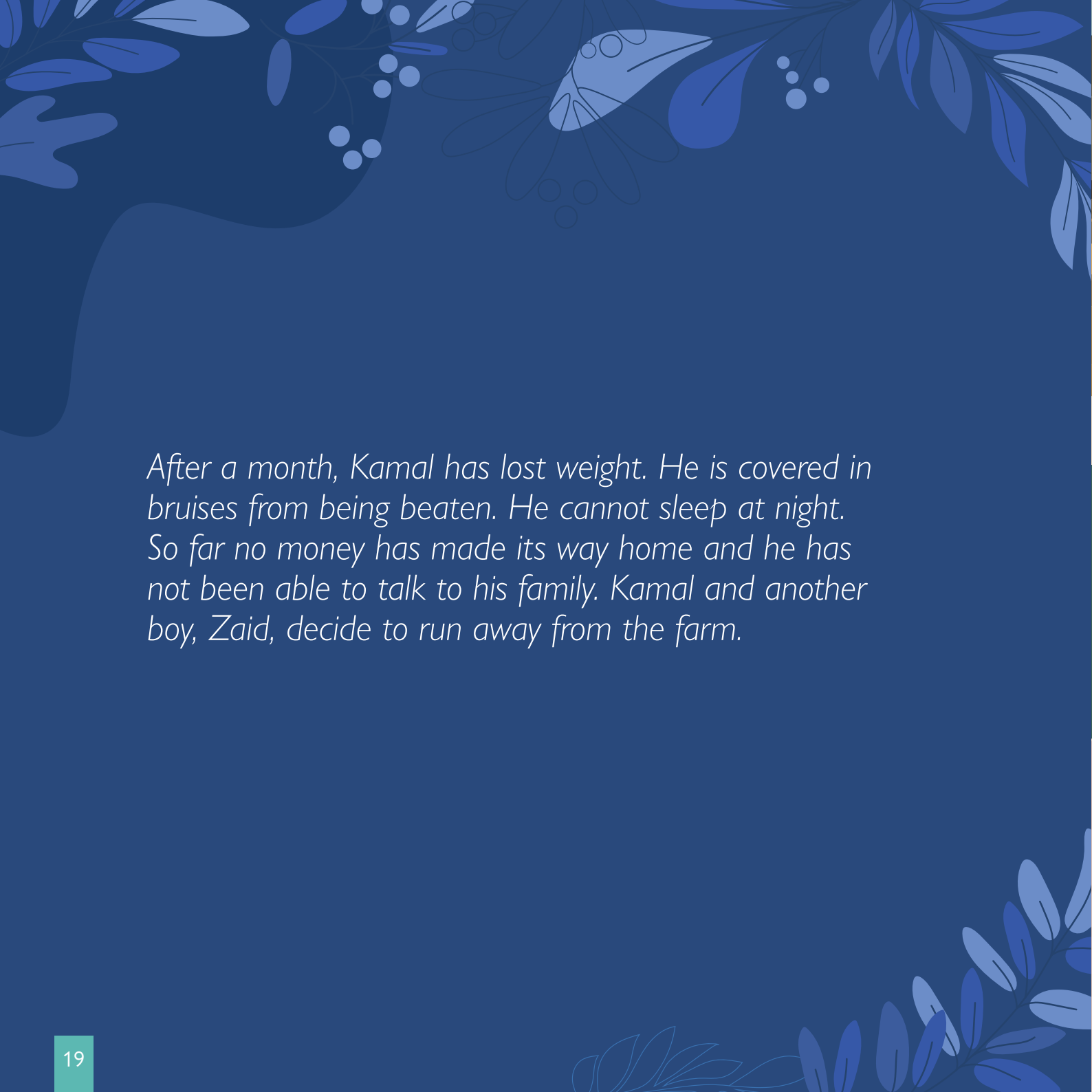
*Pay day has arrived! The farm owner comes to the barn and explains that the costs of accommodation, food, water and transport will be removed from their salary. Kamal will only make a few cents!*






*One of the older boys stands up to complain. "This is not what we were promised!", he says. The owner begins to beat him. Ahmed and the other guards drag him out of the barn. The boys look on horrified.*





*After a month, Kamal has lost weight. He is covered in bruises from being beaten. He cannot sleep at night. So far no money has made its way home and he has not been able to talk to his family. Kamal and another boy, Zaid, decide to run away from the farm.*







*The next night, they sneak past the sleeping guards. Reaching the fields, another guard spots them and gives chase. Kamal looks back to see that Zaid has been captured. He keeps running.*






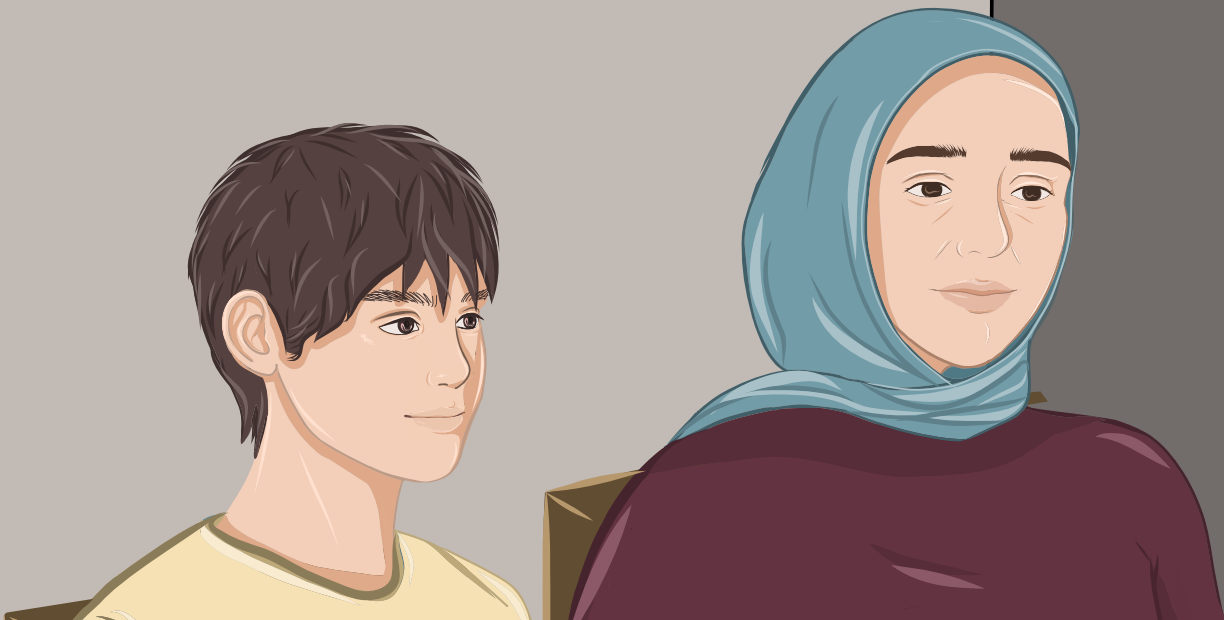



*Kamal reaches the road. He uses all his earnings to go home, where he collapses outside his tent.*






*Kamal's mother is overjoyed. She takes him to the IOM centre in the camp, where he shares his story. The IOM staff refers him to a primary health clinic to receive medical attention.*





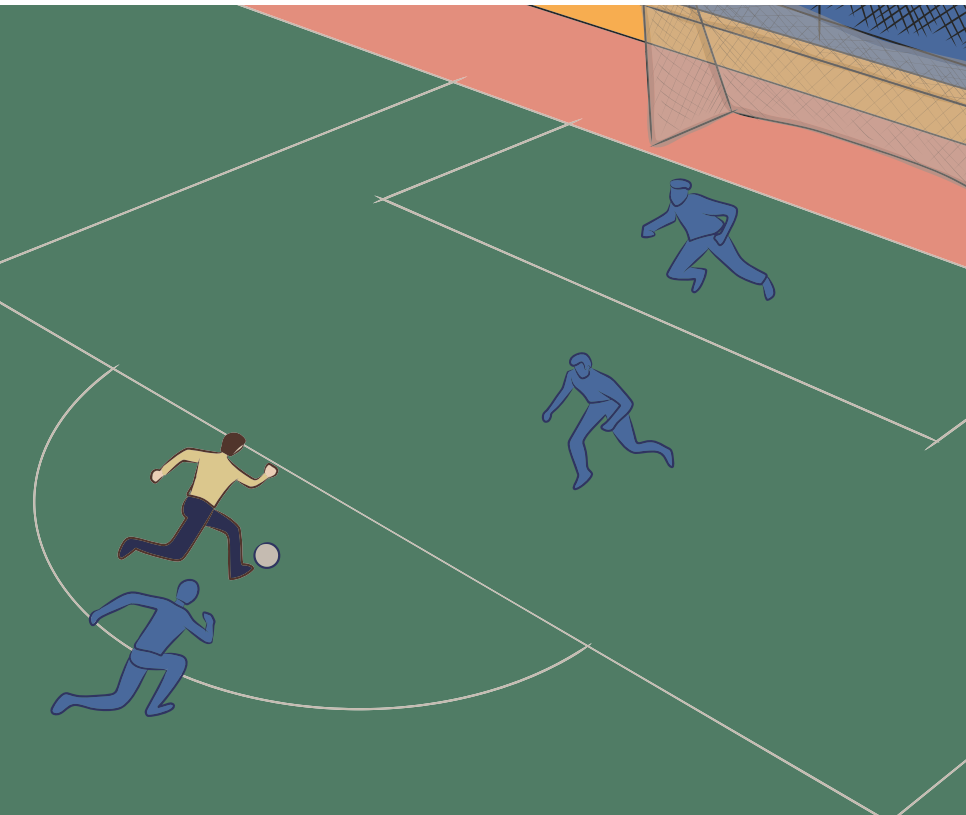
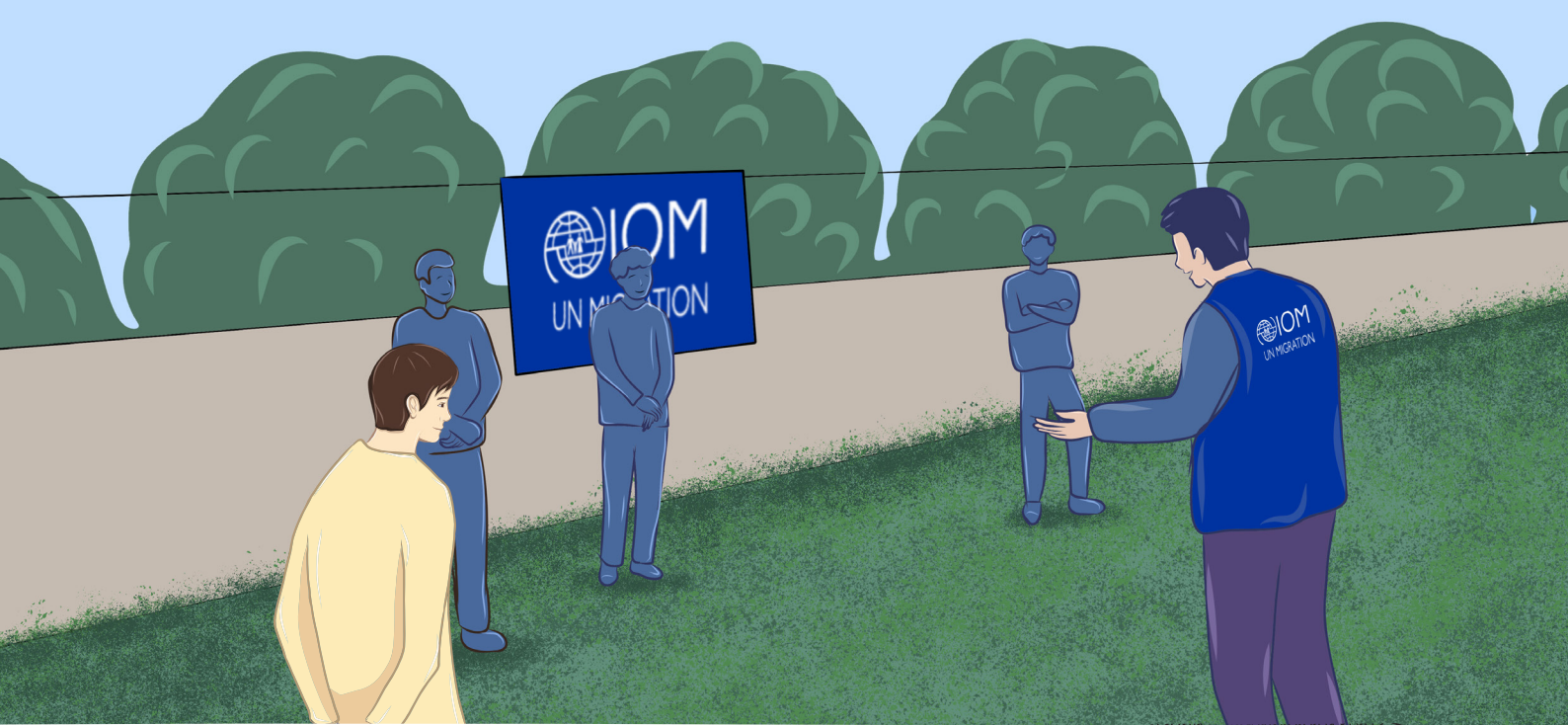
*Kamal still struggles to sleep at night. Sometimes he has nightmares about the farm. He imagines that he is still there. He wonders what happened to Zaid and only imagines the worst.*






*Kamal took a courageous step forward by confiding in the IOM protection team about his struggles. Upon learning about his distress and with the consent of Kamal and his mother, he was connected with IOM MHPSS services. Over time, Kamal found some relief through the supportive sessions provided.*





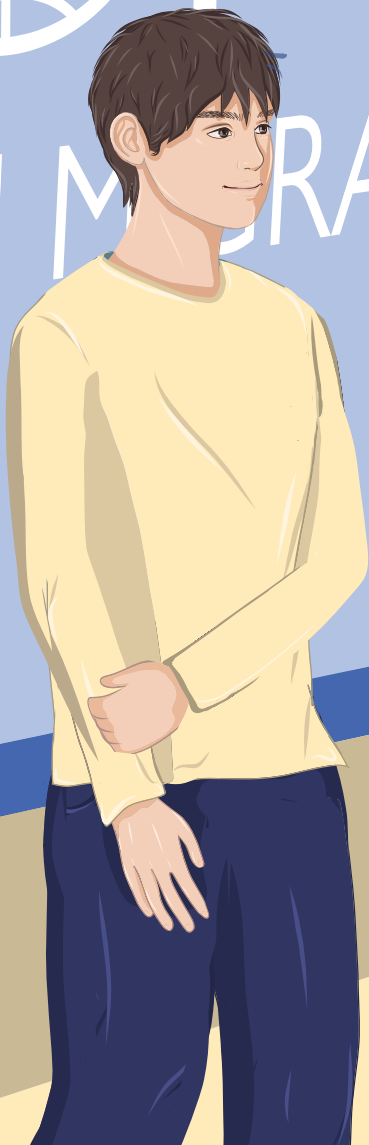


*Gradually, Kamal's nightmares began to subside, and he started to experience improvement in his overall well-being. Engaging in recreational activities at the IOM center further contributed to his recovery journey.*



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