

# Tanya's story

My journey began in 2014 when I was forced to leave my hometown of Luhansk (Donbass) due to the war. I had already completed my postgraduate degree in Accounting in Ukraine and had worked in the accounting field there for 16 years. Although my first degree was in Mechanical Engineering, I never worked as an engineer. I was always passionate about numbers and dreamed of becoming an accountant.

Life is an unpredictable journey—had we known what lay ahead, we might have been better prepared for the challenges. But as the war escalated, I made the difficult decision to migrate to New Zealand, even though I didn't speak English at the time.

Once in New Zealand, I found my first job as a nail technician, thanks to Nicola Quinn and her beauty spa. I'm incredibly grateful to Nicola for giving me that first opportunity. I worked there for two years, using the time to improve my English through daily conversations with clients, while also studying English at Ara.

After reaching Level 4 in English, I was able to begin studying Accounting again. I applied for many roles in the accounting field, but it was tough—understandably, not many people are eager to trust someone with their finances when they lack local experience and fluent English.

Then, a turning point: ViaStrada gave me a chance to work as a part-time Accounts Administrator, despite my limited English and lack of New Zealand experience. I will be forever grateful to them for believing in me. That's where my accounting journey in New Zealand truly began.

In 2021, I completed my Graduate Diploma in Applied Management at Ara and secured a full-time role in Accounts Receivable. I remained with ViaStrada as well—they've always felt like family, and I never wanted to leave them.

But I didn't stop there. I kept working toward my dream of becoming a Chartered Accountant. It took three years of study, and I'll admit, I thought about giving up more than once. Balancing two jobs and family life made it incredibly hard. But thanks to the unwavering support of ViaStrada and my family, I kept going.

Today, I'm proud to say I'm a Chartered Accountant, working as a Senior Accountant in public practice. I've also opened my own tax agency and continue working with ViaStrada as their Accountant.

I truly feel like the happiest woman in the world. All my dreams have come true. My message to others is this: **never give up. Keep following your dreams, no matter the challenges life throws your way.**