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#12



**MIGRATORY BIRDS** The newspaper produced by and for refugee, migrant and Greek youth

## With courage and patience for a better future

**“We came here to carry on and rebuild our lives”. Citizens of a new land, equipped with knowledge of our cultural background and a clear sense of heredity and history.**

**C**Continuing their struggle for a world free of injustice and stereotypes, the New Journalists begin the 12th issue of “Migratory Birds” with the story of Alia Al Aisa, a teenage Boccia athlete from Syria. Her message to the disabled is “Don’t isolate yourselves, go out and make friends. I made friends through the sport.”

“Collecting Memories of Migration and Uprooting”. What does it take to become an active citizen of a new land? “Knowledge of our cultural background, a clear sense of heredity and history, and being able to tell the two apart”, as pointed out to the “Migratory Birds” by Mr Nikos Papakostas, one of the organisers of the exhibition “Outcast Europe”.

“Talented Youth behind the Curtain of Shakespeare”. Read how the theatre group of the Network’s Youth Centre took Hamlet to France, and find out what effect theatre can have on young people. “Acting in

front of your friends is fun,” says Azaia Obamoyi, who plays the son of King Hamlet in the production, “but acting in front of such a large audience is tough.”

We also welcome new members to our team and we get to know them through their stories. “We risk our lives in order to make them better. There is no need to feel sorry for us. We came here to carry on and rebuild our lives. You can not imagine what we have been through,” says 17-year-old Zeinap Halifa, who has been living in the Theba refugee camp with her family for the past year.

All this and much more in the 12th issue of “Migratory Birds”

**Happy reading!**





## 'Outcast Europe': Collecting memories of migration and uprooting

By Morteza Rahimi, Umer Farooq, Zain Ali

**A**n art exhibition is the space where an art object meets an audience. There's always something attractive which will hold and catch your attention. It was the 24th of October when a group of the 'Young Journalists' team visited the exhibition 'Outcast Europe'. From personal diaries, clothes and jewelry, to a sewing machine and a small television, what was exhibited there had little to do with art. It was rather an exhibition about memories of displacement and movement from the Balkans and beyond since the 1920s.

However, the most interesting and special part of the exhibition was its setting: the 124-year-old Hotel 'Bageion' in Omonia square in Athens, designed by Ernst Ziller. Renovated from outside, but abandoned inside, the organizers of the exhibition chose it because it is one of the oldest hotels in Athens, which still stands there resisting time, just like the memories behind the objects of 'Outcast Europe'.

Every object here has a long story. The journey starts in the 1920's - when a diverse population from Asia Minor was violently dragged into Greece as refugees while struggling to recover from the same war responsible for its displacement - and continues until today with the war in the Middle East and the influx of asylum seekers into Europe.

After a tour of the gallery, we discussed about the exhibition with **Mr. Nikos Papakostas**. He is one of the co-founders of 'Inter Alia', the organization behind 'Outcast Europe'.

### How did you come up with the idea of this exhibition?

We came up with idea about 20 months ago, when we tried to brainstorm and think of something to do on the subject of migration and remembrance of European people, about their own history. In addition to remembrance, another issue that we started talking about was democracy, what you need to have before you start participating actively as a citizen. Well, what you need is knowledge of our cultural background, a clear sense of heredity and history, and being able to tell the two apart.

### How much time did it take to gather all the objects and organize the exhibition?

Each partner organization of Outcast Europe had a period of about 5 months to collect the items and set up the exhibition in each one of the countries that participated, namely the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia. The exhibition took place locally in those countries with specific items. Each one of them focused on a particular period in the country's history, when people en masse left it or moved there as migrants or refugees. Then, we brought

everything together here, in this international and final exhibition. For us, it took 6 to 8 months to collect the items and finalize the exhibition. We traveled to each one of the other countries and asked the public for items that reflect the experience of displacement and migration. Those are exhibited along with objects belonging to present-day refugees, people who have come to Europe in the past few years. In order to collect the items, we made open requests on the radio, newspapers, and social media. Also, we collaborated with dozens of organizations that work with refugees in Greece, as well as with groups and clubs which are connected to the experience of Greeks as refugees in the 1920's.

### In one of the rooms, there's a rather new but turned off smartphone. Why did you decide to exhibit it here?

Normally, it shows the picture of a young boy. Many people played with it and the battery died very quickly.. What you were supposed to see was Hussein, a young boy from Shiraz in Iran. His grandmother, Miriam, came to Greece last year as a refugee. She told us that she had nothing, because the smugglers took her money, took her belongings, everything that she had. She was left empty handed and had nothing to offer to the exhibition, but she keeps all her memories of home through this picture of her grandson. The phone is not relevant, but the picture and the story are.

### Why did you choose this building for the exhibition?

Bageion Hotel has been very generously provided to us. It is a space that adds value to our exhibition. Personally, I see three reasons for that. The first reason is its location, which is very favorable for doing an event like this. That's because Omonia square has always been a meeting place, not only for Athenians but mainly for non-local people. In the 1950's and 1960's there were huge waves of migrants coming from other parts of Greece to Athens, Omonia being the meeting place. The same stands for migrant populations today. On the other hand, this building is in a struggle, it is in a struggle with time, in a struggle with decay. At the same time, though, it tries to resist time. In terms of semantics it has a very interesting meaning that we would also like to convey through this exhibition. I mean that the exhibition is trying to show the struggle of Europe between its past, its present and its future. The building ties in with this idea very well. The third reason is that it used to be hotel. A hotel is by definition a place of temporary stay. It shows, in a way, that we are all migrants, we come and go. Nothing is stable, nothing is permanent, nothing is eternal. The building chose us as well.

What we have seen in 'Outcast Europe' are memories of people and displacement. Don't judge something you know nothing about, because every object in the exhibition has a story, and every story has a moment that we can all relate to.





# If You Have the Will...

## [part 2]

By **Morteza Rahimi, Omer Farooq, Zain Ali, Al Fadli, Abdul Rahman Madala.**

**A**lia Al Aisa is the youngest and the only female athlete we met during our journey with the Paralympic refugee athletes, which we started in the 11th issue of Migratory Birds. She was born 17 years ago in Greece to Syrian parents, and grins when she talks about her sport, Boccia.

### **Can you tell us about Boccia?**

It makes me happy, I love encouraging the children and myself.

### **Would you like to make the Paralympic Games?**

I would like to take part in competitions abroad.

### **Why did you chose Boccia?**

I also cycle, but I concentrate more on Boccia.

### **What message do you want to send to people with a disability?**

I would like to encourage them to play well. Not to isolate themselves but to go out and make friends. I made friends through the sport. I would advise them to take up Boccia, or any other sport.

### **Alia, what have you managed to achieve through Boccia?**

It means I come here, I have a good time and I learn. To begin with, I didn't play very well, but I play better now.

### **What does Boccia offer you?**

It offers me the possibility of playing and winning prizes. However, all these athletes need someone behind them who will support them, so that all those dreams can one day stop being just dreams and turn into a tangible reality.

**Vasilis Kalivas** works at the Greek Paralympics Committee as a sports manager and is responsible for training programmes, which include the programme for Paralympic refugee athletes.

### **How did the idea for a Paralympic team of refugees come about?**

The Paralympic Committee gives great emphasis on education and we use the Paralympic sports and the Paralympic games as means of teaching society about equality, respect for diversity and respect for differences between people. The whole thing is therefore already part of our mindset, so that when the huge refugee crisis hit Greece, the idea came to me and I managed to accomplish it with the help of the Agitos Foundation.

### **Which sports do refugee athletes take part in?**

I think there are six of them. The majority have now taken up sports, so our aim is to get them to try out as many as possible, although most have taken up athletics, swimming, wheelchair fencing and Boccia. During the first year of the programme we also had athletes doing weight-lifting.



**How many refugee athletes are there in Greece at the moment?**

We have had 20 athletes overall since the start of the programme. In the last year, we had no more than 13 because many of them have moved on to other countries. Some have gone to other European countries, while some have gone back home. At the moment we have 6 athletes. However, we are continually looking for new ones, so that number is constantly fluctuating.

**What countries do they come from?**

90% are from Syria and Iraq. We have had some from Somalia and Pakistan in the past.

**What sports do they do and how did you manage to discover them?**

We worked with UNHCR because they have all the information relating to the refugees and where they live. So as soon as we had the names and phone numbers of the NGOs who deal with refugees, we got in touch and arranged meetings. They gave us their names and helped us by supplying social workers and interpreters. Whenever we meet we talk about Paralympic sports, we show the pictures and videos, we tell them what it is all about, and if they show interest we bring them to the playing field for a bit of training.

**What does the Paralympic Committee offer the athletes? For example, do they receive food and shelter from you?**

We offer them everything to do with sports. We don't give them food or shelter because that is the job of the NGOs and some other services. We support them in whatever has to do with sports. For example, we make sure they have access to playing fields, we provide our staff, trainers and all equipment. We also give them the opportunity to take part in sporting events. We can offer anything that has to do with sports.

**Who do the athletes represent? Their own countries?**

After discussing the matter with the International Paralympic Committee, it was agreed to form a team of Independent Paralympic Athletes. This means that any refugee athletes who wish to take part and compete in international events, represent that particular group. They don't play for their own country, or for Greece, but for the team of Independent Paralympic Athletes, whose flag is that of the International Paralympic Committee. In fact, if one of those athletes wins a gold medal, the anthem of the International Paralympic Committee will be played.

**How do you get the refugees to show interest in Paralympic sports?**

For some reason, they all responded positively to our invitation. Almost all of them wanted to find out more. Either because they see this as a new beginning, or because their daily life is so full of misery that they want to do something more optimistic, either way it wasn't difficult for us to get them involved. Also, we were very friendly towards them and we offered them the same services that we offer our own athletes. We gave them access to our best playing fields, our best trainers, our best equipment and we gave them the opportunity to take part in our national competitions. I think that was what motivated them most, knowing that we don't see them any differently to other athletes, to our own athletes. As I explained earlier, that is how the Paralympic athletes represent their teams. By taking part in events they teach us an important lesson: that even those of us without disabilities should do our best to make our lives better and that we should encourage all those taking part in the Paralympics. We should be proud of all those who do not allow disability to become an obstacle in their lives and who do their best to show us we can all be better than we are.





# The Power of Friendship

By Mohamad Alrifai

**D**o you remember being alone and feeling that time has stopped? Do you remember how you felt when you played with your friends and time passed far too quickly? I have felt both and it made me curious.

So I started to explore what was behind these feelings. As part of my research, I consulted Eleonora Gousiari, a psychologist, who answered my questions.

As far as she is concerned, human beings are social animals who desire to belong to a group, because this is what makes them feel safe. No one wants to feel excluded, which is why you feel that time stands still when you are alone. And when you are with friends, you either feel that time passes quickly, or you don't think of time at all.

When you are having fun or doing things you enjoy with your friends, your brain releases a hormone called dopamine, one of many hormones produced in the brain. Dopamine is responsible for the feeling of pleasure and also for the feeling that time passes quickly. As I said, the brain manufactures other hormones, some of which help you forget sadness or any difficult situations that you have experienced in the past.

Friends are very important, maybe one of the most important things in life. Of course, we have to be careful whom we chose as friends. We need to find friends whom we love and with whom we can share our joys; friends who we consider fair and sincere. It doesn't matter if they are few in number because it is the quality rather than the quantity that counts. You really don't need to go along with the majority and agree on everything. You should chose people who are honest and just, and you should use both your heart and mind when you decide.

There have been many people in this world that I have considered great, even though they belonged to a minority, because they didn't care what the majority thought. They listened to the voice of their conscience, which urged them to do what they considered to be right. One such example is Mohammed Ali, who refused to fight in Vietnam, even though the American nation compelled him to.

Then there is Charlie Chaplin, who was against racism, injustice and capitalism. He took a stand against the German dictator Hitler, even though at the time America and Germany were not enemies. Not only was Chaplin too, but he made a comic film that made fun of him.

Don't keep company with people who want you to forget your dreams. They ask this because they have no dreams of their own. They want you to smoke, take drugs, or mock others, because they are failures. They want to ruin your life because their own has been ruined. Keep company with people who will help you and support you in the realisation of your dreams, people who want to soar to great heights with you at their side.



# Talented Youth behind the Curtain of Shakespeare

By Morteza Rahimi

**W**hat do you think theater means to young people? Just a boring live stage performance, with background music and colorful costumes? Then you don't know that you are missing out on a truly powerful, engaging and heart touching experience.

"Around the world artists are creating a new type of theater for young people that combines the elegance of dance and acting." This was written on the leaflet of the Network for Children's Rights theatrical play and it drew my attention.

Nowadays young people have more and more mature theatrical visions and we can see that in the youth theater group of the Network that performed Hamlet.

Everything started at the Youth Center of the Network. As for the play it was based on Shakespeare's "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark". But how can theater affect young people?

"Not to sound overly grand, but so much of the toxicity in this world comes from a collective lack of empathy. We don't understand each other and we don't want to, but theater invites us - no, forces us to empathize. Theater is like a gym for empathy, it's where we go to build up the muscles of compassion, to practice listening, understanding and engaging with people that are not just like ourselves," stated the teenage boy who had the leading role in the play.

I became so engaged with them, that I decided to write about the 'Hamlet' group after they invited me to watch their play on the 21st of October at Topos Allou theater in Athens. After the play I interviewed the directors, actors and actresses.

"The first theatrical workshop took place in Athens in July 2017 and lasted one week. It was proposed and organised by the French theatre group 'Je Pars A Zart', made up of seven teenagers and two adults. We did the workshop together and it was a great success. As a result of this good collaboration, the French group submitted an application to the European programme Erasmus Plus for more shared workshops, and this was accepted. The project was named City Zen Ship and the 2017-18 scheme involved the Greek group travelling to France to put on a performance there. In October 2017, we began two-hour meetings every Thursday with eight participants and 2 coordinators. Some of the teenagers didn't have any theatrical experience so we spent the first three months playing theatrical games. Eventually the group was given a text, specifically Shakespeare's Hamlet, chosen by the director Ismini Proiou. In November 2017, two coordinators from the French group came to Athens and held a puppet theatre workshop with puppets and puppeteers. Slowly and steadily, the group began to work on the text and to watch films of Hamlet. On June 21st 2018, we travelled to Montpellier where we stayed for ten days. We spent the first four in tents inside the camp of Festizat, the festival organised by Je Pars a Zart. The festival was open to all and the programme included theatrical performances, concerts and events for all ages. To begin with, the teenagers found it rather difficult because they were in a foreign country, far away from their parents, but they got used to it quite quickly. On June 24th, we performed Hamlet in Greece in front of a very big audience. On the 25th, we moved into accommodation in town. Our schedule there included daily workshops, city touring and time with the



French teenagers in order to learn more about their way of life. Greeks and French had a great time together. On our final day, June 29<sup>th</sup>, we put on a play together. We returned to Greece on June 30<sup>th</sup> with new experiences and many memories. This July, the French teenagers will come to Greece," **Vasiliki Papageorgiou**, the director of the programme, told us. I also had the chance to speak with some of the talented teenagers who performed in the play.

"I have no previous experience, it was my first time in theater and I was so shy and nervous, because I had to face a huge audience," said **Elena Miah** when asked about her experience.

As for the casting process **Sofia S** mentioned that, "I had some experience in theatre before this, so the casting director, cast me as the father of Ophelia. I wanted to be Ophelia but I couldn't."

Asked about his part in the play, **Anas Miah** told us, "I played the army sentinel Marcellus and one of the two gravediggers. King Hamlet got murdered by his own brother so that he could take his throne. The son of King Hamlet also had the same name as his father. He didn't know that his own uncle had poisoned his father. After murdering his brother, King Hamlet, the uncle took the throne and married his brother's wife. When King Hamlet's son found out that his uncle had murdered his father, he began acting as if deranged so that he could take revenge."

Talking with **Isaiah Obamwonyi**, the teenager who played King Hamlet's son, we find out about his feelings during the performance, "Acting in front of your friends is fun but acting in front of such a large audience is tough.. As for the difficulties we faced many in the beginning but we got used to it. The audience were so friendly."

Talking with the theatre Group of Hamlet was a good experience. I saw the play which was in Greek, but my friend translated everything for me. If you take a child to the theater not only will they practice empathy, but they might also laugh uproariously, or come home singing about history and poetry or, learn how to handle conflict, or even start becoming future patrons of theater and the arts. My experience with them made me join their theatrical group.



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# The social networking platform XENIUSnet

By Maria Angelika-Nikita\*

**T**raditionally, Greeks considered hospitality to be a holy relationship of welcome and friendship and thought of guests as something sacred and revered, protected by “Zeus Xenios”. As hosts, they would welcome their guests into their homes with good will and look after their needs and entertainment. Similarly, the social networking platform XENIUSnet extends a welcoming hand to young refugees and immigrants. It aims to create a student community that will support any formal or informal education received by newly arrived refugees in Greece, and also speed up and improve their socialisation process. The platform provides a collaborative environment in which refugees and immigrants register as “mentees” and can submit questions relating to any one of four categories: language, mathematics, natural sciences, history/Greek civilisation. Greek student volunteers take on the role of “mentor” and are the ones responsible for replying to the questions and/or suggesting appropriate educational material. In order to ensure that high standards are maintained throughout the process, XENIUSnet also uses volunteer teachers as “moderators” who provide academic guidance and check all exchanges between mentor and mentee for accuracy and correctness. In addition, XENIUSnet enables the accumulation of educational content in the form of a general library available

to all users, as well as a personal library created by each user in his or her own digital work place.

The aim of the platform is to offer personalised educational support to young immigrants and refugees, while simultaneously giving Greek students and teachers the opportunity to volunteer without the need to be physically present somewhere.

There is no limit to how many students can collaborate on XENIUSnet. Its team of founders gives particular emphasis on creating a solid base of cooperation, building and maintaining ties, and developing a sense of community. Even though the idea was conceived in Greece, the platform can be used to support the creation of communities of students helping each other around the world, and to assist in the social integration of newly arrived refugees in any given country.

XENIUSnet was one of the 22 finalists – out of 500 submissions from all UN countries - for the World Summit Awards (WSA) 2017. This is an international competition of innovation and social entrepreneurship for anyone under 30 years of age who has developed a digital application in support of the UN’s sustainable development goals.



# You Can Do It

By Ihtisham Khan\*

Yes you can do it  
Because losing is not acceptable, oh human being  
Yes it's true you can do it  
Understand life because that's what you know  
Of course you can do it  
Inside every human being is a man and you also are a man  
Yes man you can do it  
Leave the disappointment and sadness, human being  
That's it, you can do it  
Come out from your few small dreams and take a look  
Everything is available, you can do it  
Hold patience in your hands tightly and try hard  
Yes listen clearly, you can do it  
With effort and patience you can get to God  
Like this you can get to God, yes you can do it

From learning you can have everything except for yourself  
Yes everything is for you because you can do it  
Don't take life easily, oh human being  
Because with this effort you can do it  
Don't be tense or selfish, do everything with your heart  
Because with good luck you can do it  
Come back from your broken heart and from your painful heart, oh human being  
Come again to life because from now on you can do it too  
With actions, effort and understanding everything is possible  
That's it, from now on you can do it  
Put your hand on your heart and feel the relaxation, oh human being  
Khan, see this beautiful world because you have understood that you can do it.

*\*Ihtisham wrote this article in English*





# We turned up the Volume in Eurochild 2018 [Part 2]

By Alexandra Taragoulia Papakonstantinou, Dimitra Elisavet Kaisidi, Zahra Habibi\*

**W**e started our journey to the Eurochild Conference in Opatija, Croatia in the 11th issue of Migratory Birds with stories from Hungary, Germany, and Ireland. In the letters that follow, written by young participants of the Conference, we read about education, religion and horses, and we continue our struggle for a world free of injustice and stereotypes.

**Name:** Jessika Lima

**Age:** 13

**Country:** Ireland

**Topic:** Horse Riding

**Title:** Horses

Who do you want to read your article: Greek people

I think that it is something that everyone should at least try because horses are very calm, gentle and cute, very good with people. This is a

good sport to do if you have special needs or if your child has special needs. There are so many different ways to work with horses. I do it myself and have been doing it for three years. I tried to do it when I was about 5 but it didn't turn out to be my sport but then I went and tried again and I love it. I share a horse and we work so well together. I hope to be successful in the future. Thanks.

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**Name:** Hana, Dominic, Matea, Rafael

**Age:** 13-15

**Country:** Croatia

**Topic:** Religion

**Title:** Religion Nowadays

Who do you want to read your article: Everyone

These days we have been seeing a lot of arguments online related to religion and people's beliefs, mostly about the LGBT community, and also a lot of people being hated and bullied because of their religion. With think that in the case of LGBT religion should not be the reason for hatred. Opinions, such as God saying homosexuality is a sin and forbidden were imposed by the church. The church became somewhat hateful over the years and it isn't what it used to be. In God's words everyone is accepted no matter how different they are.

The second thing is people being hated and their rights violated because of their religious beliefs. Like I said before, religion shouldn't be someone's reason to hate. Just because someone is Jewish and another is Muslim, it doesn't mean they should hate each other. Religion is one person's free choice and it is their right to choose their religion. As for

terrorists, just because some are Muslims, it doesn't mean all Muslims are terrorists.

**Name:** Dylan, Sharon

**Age:** 16, 14

**Country:** Ireland, Malta

**Topic:** The education system

**Title:** The education System: Does it really work?

Who do you want to read your article: People in power who can reform the system

What is education for at its core-and why does it matter?

Ultimately, education is the means through which children are taught to navigate the modern world; to find their passions, careers, friends and happiness.

On the surface, education seems to be working- children go through school, graduate and find their way into jobs- however under closer focus one finds that we can do much better.

Think of any government service, like for example, transport. Think of how far it has come over the years, evolving in due course to accommodate the modern world. But, education? The system is exactly the same as it was a century ago and this definitely shows.

Let's look back at what we said earlier. Children go through school yes, but often after enduring years of stress from having to sit exams. They graduate, sure, but usually without any real plan for the future. They just about find their way into a job, but usually not one they are truly passionate about.

So, what can we do to improve things? This will not be easy, but it is necessary if we want the best for our children, and it is important to include children in the process of change and implementation. We need to lessen our focus on repetition and memorization and instead, teach children more practical and varied life skills. Instead of single tests that judge who you are with a grade, we need to assess the holistic development of the child whilst guiding them towards their ideal career. And, above all, we need to create an environment that facilitates real learning and development, not a machine that churns out good grades; an environment in which children learn for the love of learning, not because they are forced to.

So how do we go about doing this? We need to dramatically reform the current systems and we should do this with children, for children. Most importantly, we need to start now!







## Shabana: a 23-year-old woman from Afghanistan who is fighting stereotypes

By **Morteza Rahimi\***

**A**fghan women working is not as unusual as it used to be, since most of the people here in Europe respect human rights and equality. However, women working in a men's salon is still a taboo for the majority of Afghans and it needs a lot of courage to do such a job.

As it seems Shabana has that courage to get on with her job. She is 23 years old, an Afghan girl, born and raised in Iran. She was interested in hairdressing and makeup since childhood, and at the age of 15 she started working in a beauty parlour in Iran.

She says that "It's way different working in Greece than in Iran, because the beauty salons here are for both men and women." She had never worked for men in the past and in the beginning she was really hesitant.

She has to deal with so many customers everyday. Unluckily, dealing with Afghan customers is still not an easy task. Some of them don't let her cut their hair or shave them, while some others are staring at her as if she was an alien or even making fun of her. On top of that, her Afghan colleague doesn't like her working there. Anytime a customer treats her well he gets mad and starts yelling at her on minor mistakes.

She would have left this job long time ago, but fortunately she has a family that supports and encourages her when she feels like giving up. Shabana's mother says that she wants her daughter to be bold and to learn how to stand on her own feet, not expecting anybody to help her.

Shabana comes up against a problem, while her mother also faces sarcasm everyday in the camp when other women talk about her daughter's occupation. She never gets disheartened, though, nor does she let Shabana to be. After all these problems Shabana is still so happy and satisfied of her occupation and she will carry it on.

***\*Morteza wrote this article in English***

# My Little Girl With Auburn Hair

By Mahdiah Hossaini\*



In the corner of the world where I grew up, by the time autumn was arriving, everybody was sighing, and saying, “the season has arrived in which you don't know what wear, with warm days and and the sky craving to rain occasionally, the days get shorter and the nights longer.”

Why does it get dark so early? Why does the yard of the house need to be swept constantly? Why is the pool in the middle of the yard full of leaves and needs to be cleaned?

But, I have been loving this season since I was a teen because exactly what happens during the fall is like my feelings, there is the possibility of change in me any moment. Since I was teen there has been an autumn girl with auburn hair in my imagination. When the autumn wind began to blow, her hair rippled with it; when it was raining, I imagined my little girl's hair, its auburn color darkened and soaked. During the day, the wind blew through her hair and in the evening the little girl grew tired of its tangles and she began to braid it.

I was in love with this fantasy friend (my little girl with auburn hair). I'm still in love with autumn after all these years. I love the sound of rustling leaves which sometimes sounds like my heart's voice. I love the air when it gets cold suddenly, I love the autumn rains, the smell of humidity in the streets after every rain, the smell of dry leaves

after rain. I love walking through the autumn rain with no umbrella.

During autumn sunsets I sometimes sit at the window of my room with a hot cup of tea and from behind the glass I watch the world outside of my room raining, and sometimes I read my favorite book, the book that I read in the autumn every year.

As the autumn starts, my walks in the sunsets begin and when the cold weather of autumn surprises me I go to the old café on the avenue, the café with wooden benches. A café that still has the essence of life, a café that does not want to be modernized. I drink a hot cup of tea and I turn on my mobile and scroll through social media and see all those who were sighing because of autumn have filled their social media profiles with beautiful pictures of autumn, and streets covered in a blanket orange. Half-shot photographs, half covered with autumn leaves, or orange leaves on an unknown girl's skirt.

In the land I lived in before, the beginning of the year was the spring season, in the land that I live in now, the year begins with the winter season, but in the land of my mind and my heart, every year begins with autumn. Actually a few more days are left until the end of autumn, for you to see and realize the beauty of it.

*\*How do you think of this season in your imagination?*



# Becoming A Refugee

By Zainab Khalifa\*

I think that those who have benefitted most from this experience are those that have had to show the most courage: the amount of courage required to remove the contents of one's heart, to take only a few basic necessities in a small suitcase weighing just a few kilos, to see the street and the house one used to live in one last time and to watch one's city fade away in the distance and in time.

When you travel as a refugee, your heart trembles. The journey is the biggest change in your life. I see friends and acquaintances who have lived a long time, have married, had children, worked for a quite a few years, their children have gone to school, and I see them take the decision to embark on the journey of migration. I am amazed. Not by their decision, but by their strength.

How can they take all those risks and turn their lives upside down? How can they enter a different reality, start from scratch, learn anew the things they already know? How can they accept to talk the way little children talk, deal with a new alphabet and relearn how to read and write? How are they able to form relationships with people who are so different from them? How can they look for new jobs in order to start earning money? Before all this, money was never a great

These people have grown up. How can they forget their worries or explain them in another language? How can they spend Sunday afternoons in a container or a small apartment, having sold their old home with its many windows?

Leaving requires great willpower. How strong do you need to be to cross a wooden bridge? How strange is it to leave everything and to leave forever? "Forever". Such a heavy word. So heavy that it falls on you and the sheer weight of it leaves you gasping. It's really odd. People suddenly find enough strength to leave everything behind.

Many people utter the simple word "Refugees", but they don't understand what they have left behind and what road they have travelled on. Some refugees lose a loved one on their journey, perhaps a brother or sister. When we decide to leave our homeland, not only do we leave everything behind, but we hold our lives in our hands. We risk our lives in order to improve them. You don't need to pity us. We came here so that life can go on, so that we can rebuild our lives. You have no idea what we have been through.

But let's not dwell on what we carry inside us, or on the reasons for leaving. Let's benefit from the courage that being a refugee requires and let's be ready for everything. Let's be warriors and let our



# A home for those who wait.

By Mohammad Nasim Haidari & Mohammad Sharif Rahmani\*

**O**nce again, many of us have spent the year as residents of one of the refugee reception centres around Greece. These offer a temporary home to those of us who live in them, waiting to be another country. Many people are looking for both legal and illegal ways of getting to Western Europe, but meanwhile **what is daily life in the camp like? What is it like to live in Greece, waiting for a better tomorrow?**

You need a lot of patience to live in a camp. We can't settle in Greece because there is no refugee programme, so we have to move on to some other country. We feel unsure about our future. In this article, refugees describe the patience they have to endure, in their own words.

## Mr Sarifi 44 years old

I used to live in the camp at Malakasa with my family, but for a while now I am living there alone, waiting to be reunited with them in Germany. I am waiting for whatever way I can find to join them. It isn't easy to be patient in the Malakasa camp. There is no security here, none, not even at the gate. Anyone can just walk in without permission. All the trouble and tension just make matters worse. If you ask me, the unification with my family is long overdue. I have recently shown a lot of patience and I have been trying to improve relations between people in the camp so that they do not argue. I am known as

"white beard", the wise man of the camp. Z 17 years old I have been living in Thiva camp for the past two years. I come from Afghanistan. I am waiting here patiently, my future unknown. I originally wanted to be reunited with my brother, but our request was turned down. We were obliged to stay in Greece and request asylum. We are still waiting to be issued with passports and it seems that we will have to wait for months if not years. I try to keep busy with school, exercise, football and painting, until this wait is over. Being patient is not easy, mainly because there are single unaccompanied boys living side by side with the families in the camp at Thiva, and this creates tensions. The police ignore us. It is even harder for women and girls to be patient. My message to those living in the camps is to do things that are good for them, like going to school and concentrating on their lessons. They shouldn't waste their time on petty matters and they should live with the hope that they will end up where they want to, and that they won't need to be patient for much longer.

## Jafar Ali

I live in Schisto camp, which is close to Piraeus and Athens. I came to Greece a year and a half ago and now I am living in this camp. Not just the unaccompanied minors like myself, but all refugees are waiting to leave Greece and go to another European country. Everyone believes that the camp is a temporary home for those who wait and that one day they will be able to leave it. Life in the camp is difficult for everyone and I can tell you for certain that we all have psychological issues because of the situation. I go to English and Greek classes and I hope to improve both. I originally went to a Greek school, but I didn't know the language, so I decided to learn it first then attend a proper school. My message to all refugees is to be patient and keep on trying. I hope whoever reads this article will understand the psychological problems and all the other issues we face. They should be brave, to continue their studies, learn as much as possible and make progress. I hope they have understood.







# What is the real cost of our clothes?

By Stavrianna Delipetrou and Haris Papachristou

**C**hildren shall be protected from all forms of neglect, maltreatment and exploitation. Children shall not become objects of a transaction. Children shall not be employed until they have reached the appropriate legal minimum age. On no account shall children be forced or permitted to have a job appropriate legal minimum age. On no account shall children appropriate legal minimum age. On no account shall children be forced or permitted to have a job or to work in a profession that is harmful to their health or education, or that hinders their physical, spiritual or moral development.” This is not just a wish; these statements are to be found in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Countries that have ratified the convention are obliged to respect the rights mentioned in it and to take any necessary means to protect children.

It was the United Nations’ fight against the exploitation of children that led to the publication of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. According to the Convention, signatory states must protect children from all types of employment. However, for many children throughout the world, things are not much better than they used to be. The truth is that in developing countries nothing has changed. The problem is still there and in fact, it is getting worse.

Today, over 12 million children over the age of seven in Syria, Bangladesh and other developing countries, have become slaves to the large chains of massproduced clothes manufacturers. These companies sacrifice children on the altar of profit and commercialisation and force them to work – obviously illegally and without health insurance – in factories,

crumbling buildings and ships that float in international waters for the sake of tax evasion. The children work between 12 and 16 hours per day in truly appalling conditions. Pressure and abusive behaviour are daily occurrences. The risk of illness from the filth and from exposure to harmful chemicals is continuously present. Physical health is not the only thing affected by child labour. According to numerous studies carried out by various medical centres and organisations concerned with child protection, this practice has a severe effect on both the mental state and the future of those children. By having to work, they are unable to go to school, meaning that they are condemned to live the whole of their lives in misery.

You may be wondering why we are so interested in this issue. The exploitation of children is without doubt something truly awful. At the same time, it is something distant, and surely not something that interests the “developed” West. Correct?

Wrong. On two counts. Firstly, because children’s rights are first and foremost human rights. Which means that whenever they are violated we are all affected, in the sense that we become further removed from a just world that offers equal opportunities to all and respects human life. Secondly, because we ourselves encourage that type of child labour. A T-shirt might cost as little as five euros, but costs much more in terms of the health, dignity and future of a child. The decision is ours: do we over-consume and make thoughtless purchases, or do we offer someone protection?

In order to ensure that you are not supporting the violation of human rights, search the Internet for companies that conform to labour standards by typing “ethical clothing”.

(BBC, The refugees who make our clothes /Netflix, The true cost/UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/> Le Monde, [https://mobile.lemonde.fr/big-browser/article/2016/10/marks-and-spencer-asos-zara-mango-des-refugies-syriens-exploites-dans-leurs-ateliers-turcs\\_5020045\\_4832693.html?](https://mobile.lemonde.fr/big-browser/article/2016/10/marks-and-spencer-asos-zara-mango-des-refugies-syriens-exploites-dans-leurs-ateliers-turcs_5020045_4832693.html?))

Haris Papachristou

Photograph by Michalis Karatzis

Students at Senior High School.



# GOAL IN LIFE

By Fatima Sedaqat

One of the important days in everybody's life is setting a goal, for a person to succeed in life he/she needs a variety of things, One of them is having a goal in life.

The demand that a person considers for his future and moves toward it to make a fate for itself that comes with happiness and prosperity, this is a goal.

Not having a goal in life causes feelings of emptiness and confusion and even, in my opinion, life without purpose is like moving ships that have not set a destination for themselves.

Sometimes simple and accessible goals do not help you have a life full of happiness and prosperity, Because a person learns many lessons on the path to reach the goal, If the goal is accessible then no effort is needed to achieve it, So you can not learn a lot of lessons on this path. So, it's a good idea to write down your goals and write directions to them, and with the slightest tolerance and thinking, we can choose the best way.

The goals we choose for our lives, It's better to be in our ability and the facilities we have, and we need to consider that we may fail on the way to reaching the goal. So from the moment, we set the goals we need to have the potential energy and put it at the forefront of our lives that every successful person has sometimes fallen. He/she has experienced many disappointments and

has been resisting the problems he/she faced and lives happily and proudly today. From my point of view, there are two types of goals in the life of every person. goals of humans can be permanent or temporary. The purpose of the temporary goals is the time when we were the children, For example, one of our goals was to taste all the ice cream in the world, We thought that if we could do this one day, we would have reached that goal and thousands of other goals seemed like we spent our childhood thinking of them. But none of those goals has been sustained, And now that we are passing through the years of adolescence, we can think right and determine the goals and capabilities of ourselves. We can determine how we can be a useful person for ourselves, our family and society in the future. Perhaps during our teenage years we will have a lot of goals for our future but the more we grow up, we may sometimes have to eliminate some of the goals by classifying their importance. And also permanent goals are goals that do not change. Even over time, you increase your efforts to achieve that goal, such as the goal for your life or your future career. For example, one of my goals in life is studying psychology at one of the best universities, and I certainly do my best to achieve this goal.

At the end of my article, I would like to say some words of successful people that we can make them a model and guide. Great goals create great motives (Antoni Rabins)

We have to build our goal based on realities. (Ralf Waldo Emerson)

I do not let any situation despair me. Three things to achieve a worthwhile goal are work, endurance, and common sense. (Thomas Edison)

So, we conclude that the goal becomes valuable when it becomes an action, rather than a thought in the corners of the human mind.





# Migratory Birds

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