

The 'Migratory Birds' newspaper was produced by the Network for Children's Rights, thanks to the cooperation and support of 'Save the Children International'. The program is funded by the UN's Refugee Agency, UNHCR, and the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).



MIGRATORY BIRDS The Newspaper produced by the refugee girls of the Schisto refugee camp

Life through the eyes of a teenage refugee

This newspaper is the result of months of hard work and efforts made by fifteen Afghan girls, who have been living in the Schisto refugee camp for the last one year.



The newspaper might look interesting to some of you, sad to some of you, or just entertaining to some others, but for us, it is the most valuable thing we have now. It is full of words from our hearts, friendly complaints and our daily life in the camp. We write about our journey, our difficult days, our lonely nights, the hardships and the unsettled life of Afghans.

Our team participates in weekly meetings outside the camp. We meet every Saturday at the Network for Children's Rights. Usually approximately fifteen girls participate in the meetings.

Some of the girls stopped coming during this period. They decided to take the risk again and continue their journey towards northern Europe.

We had sweet and bitter days. The bitter days were the days that we talked about our situation and our friends who left and the sweet days were when we learned more about how to deal with our new life and we felt that we were getting stronger day by day.

At one point, when it was taking too long to print our newspaper, we lost hope but we did not give up. Then we met with the Greek journalists and we visited the Efsyn newspaper premises where we met more journalists who encouraged us, shared their knowledge and experiences with us and we got motivated again.

Last but not least, we appreciate the hard work of the Network for Children's Rights and all those who helped us to make this happen.

With the support of Save the Children, the Network for Children's Rights is responsible for the implementation of programs such as the Child

Friendly Space (CFS), the Child Protection Unit (CPU) and the Mother Baby Area (MBA) in the refugee camps of Schisto and Elliniko I & III, since April 2016.

The publication of the newspaper 'Migratory Birds' is part of the Network for Children's Rights program titled 'Contact Points', which aims to improve communication between refugees and the Greek community in order to build understanding and bridge the distance between the life inside the camps and the reality outside the camp. The program consists of a) the enhancement of dialogue inside the community of the camp and the preparation of communicating with the outside world, b) the information of the minors about the social and cultural European and Greek reality c) their socialization and their freedom of expression through their participation in meetings, talks and visits of a social, cultural, sporting and artistic nature including the participation of Greek adults and youth d) the initiation of integration processes through communication and acquaintance with their Greek peers and mutual interest groups such as sport organizations, recreational activities, language courses, newspaper publishing, etc.

As part of the "Contact Points" program, the Network's youth worker in charge of teenage activities, Aristeia Protonotariou, together with fifteen teenage girls from the Schisto camp created the newspaper "Migratory Birds", while Viola Gjoka was responsible for organizing and coordinating the various supporting events.

Why Afghans emigrate from Iran to Europe

By Mahdiah Hossaini

Many people might be questioning, why so many Afghans who lived in Iran for years, are now moving to Europe. The world considers Iran as a safe country but this is not true for Afghans. There is no war in Iran but Afghans who live there face a psychological battle through a war of ideas.

I was born and grew up in Iran, but they still call me an "Afghan". When I go to my own country (Afghanistan) they call me an "Iranian", because I do not look like an Afghan. I am an alien in both countries and I hate the fact that I am treated as if I have no identity. It is depressing if you cannot tell where you belong. I am asking myself, whose fault it is that I have no identity? Who is responsible? Is it my parents? Or are the politics in Iran? I don't know.

I feel so sorry for my mother. She was born in Afghanistan and grew up in Iran and now for the sake of her children's future she has to spend the rest of her life in Europe.

My mother has had the experience of migration. She left her homeland and moved to another country, when she was 17 years old. When the

eyes full of tears, but we couldn't understand her answers.

When we grew up, my mother gave us an advice: "accept the good words of your friends with your whole heart, try to ignore their bad words or taunts, and forgive them." As time passed, she taught us that not only we are guests in Iran, but also uninvited ones. Afghan refugees in Iran were not allowed to buy a home or a car. For Afghans it was not even possible to buy a cheap SIM card in their own name. We would need to ask an Iranian acquaintance to buy a SIM card for us and most of the times they would refuse, since they had been taught that they should not support their Afghan friends.

Afghans used to do the hardest jobs in Iran but all the media were blaming Afghans for the high rate of unemployment in the country. They were blaming Afghan refugees for every single social and financial problem of their country. You needed a deaf ear not to listen to these blames and taunts, you needed a voiceless mouth and blind eyes not to see all the discriminations.

As an Afghan refugee in Iran you had to pay by yourself for all your expenses if you would get sick. If you needed to go to the hospital, you had to pay first and then they would reimburse you and if you didn't have enough money, you would prefer to die.

Even if you had lived in Iran for many years, you would have to renew your documents every year by paying a lot of money and once you could not pay, you would run the risk of being deported to Afghanistan, no matter how long you had been living there. All these issues wiped the peace out of our lives.

I had the misfortune of being a refugee all my life, in Iran. I had the misfortune of being regarded as a person without identity. I had the misfortune of being treated as an alien all the time. I don't know for how long we will be refugees. We have gone through the painful experience of living as refugees for many years. It looks like a heritage, coming from my grand-



former Soviet Union army attacked Afghanistan in 1980, my mother followed her family which took shelter in Iran. She has nothing to remind her of her childhood and she has been away from her homeland, her friends, her school and her parents for many years. She spent most of her life in Iran, but she never got a document proving that Iran would be her home for ever. She constantly lived with the fear of being deported to Afghanistan.

We had a comfortable life in Iran, but not a peaceful one. We cohabited with fear and anxiety. It was so hard for Afghan children to get accepted to school in Iran. Every year we had to go through a long process at the Ministry of Education of Iran. I remember that it was the hardest time of the year for my father, because he had to go to the Ministry many times and queue up for hours, as the officials used to say: "We are not allowed to register Afghan children for this year yet, so you'll have to be patient once more", and the same thing would happen every year. We didn't know if this year we would go to school or not. Imagine how hard it is for a schoolchild to be in a state of uncertainty about going to school or not for about one month every year. Also, it costs a lot of money for Afghan children to go to school. Many children didn't have the possibility to go to school because of financial difficulties. Moreover, just because we were Afghans we couldn't continue our education after high school. Nor were we allowed to participate in educational and athletic Olympiads. If we wanted to travel inside Iran, we needed a special permission with only 10 days validity, and certain cities were forbidden for Afghans. Patience was the most useful lesson that an Afghan mother could teach her children.

Sometimes we had an argument with our Iranian schoolmates who were telling us: 'You are Afghan, why don't you go back to your country?'. We would cry, run to our mother's hug and ask her, "Why are we here? Don't we have a homeland to go?". And my mother would respond, with her

father to my father and from my father to me and I don't know how many more generations will undergo this ordeal. Living as a refugee feels like destroying a building and building it up again, and some refugees are repeating this process many times.

Nevertheless, I didn't leave Iran with empty hands. I carried along many things. I brought my mother's grey hair, my father's weak eyes and my brother's broken pride. And now that I'm in Europe after going through all sorts of terrible ordeals, I am facing another kind of segregation. My country has been burning in the fire of war, discrimination, discord and sedition for the last forty years. The children of my country have been buried alive. The mothers of my country are mourning for their dead children. The fathers of my country fought the enemy and they are dead too. The young people of my country moved away with their mothers and their little brothers and sisters to save their lives. Our mothers left their homes which were full of memories. They dreamt to go to a land where people would respect the human rights, where there would be no discrimination, but they didn't know that even here in Greece, Afghans are not supported as a part of the human community. In the eyes of the European authorities, only the Syrian refugees are first rate humans. Syrians left their country as we did because of the war, so I wonder whether war has a different meaning in different countries. I believe war is war everywhere. We have gone through many dangers and we have risked our lives to arrive to a country where we were expected to be treated with humanity both by the government as well as the society. We have heard a lot regarding the recognition of the human rights. But we are facing a different picture. We realized that even in front of the European eyes we are second rate humans. And also since we are not part of the European Union we cannot assert our rights.

I don't have the strength to name all these and write more...

About me

I am Mahdiah. I was born, raised and went to school in Iran, but I am from Afghanistan. I started writing small stories when I was a teenager. I came to Greece as a refugee a year ago. I did not know that I could follow my dreams at the refugee camp of Schisto here in Greece. Despite all the problems I have faced until now I am happy that I have the opportunity to live in Greece. One of the most important lessons I learnt is that when you want to go on and leave the past behind, nothing can stop you. I study Media at the Panteion University, as an observer, for the moment.



A Muslim woman in Europe

By Mahdiah Hossaini

Unclear voices, murmuring, intense stares. I cannot understand them. You keep your distance from me and I wonder why. How do you feel about me? What comes to your mind when you see my clothes, my hijab?

Every time I observe people closely, I discover new things. People look at me in a weird way. Differently. I don't understand your language, but I can look deep in your eyes. The language of the eyes and the face is the same everywhere. I can see compassion and sympathy in some eyes and hatred in others. When you try to keep away from me, I feel as if I have a contagious disease. It is painful to be treated as a sick person when you are not sick.

Some of you hold your handbags tightly when you see me and I wonder if you think that I'm a thief because of how I am dressed. When I see this, I am scared to get on the bus or on the subway. When I'm on the bus, I try to show my hands to you. I keep my hands busy, to reassure you that I'm not a thief but a simple human being wearing hijab. When I get off the bus, I take a deep breath and walk away with tired hands and a broken heart. Sometimes you look at me with curiosity just because of my scarf and clothing.

I'm sure you like your clothes and you feel good in them. I feel the same with my robe and hijab, so you should accept the way I am and respect my choice of clothing. You should appreciate people and their choice of

attire without asking them to look like you. Some of you smile when you see me and this smile changes everything for me. It goes deep into my soul and takes all the negative thoughts away. Sometimes your little girl in the stroller looks at me and you stand in front of her to block her view of me. Perhaps you think that she will have nightmares because of my appearance.

I remember once a big, tall man who looked very angry. He was screaming and shouting on a small group of Muslim refugee women wearing a hijab. I don't know what he was saying but I guess he was cursing at them, using every insult he knew. I was shocked. I didn't know what to do, I was trying to think what I should do if he was to attack us. I froze and didn't even dare to move. I felt scared because he looked deranged. You read the fear in my eyes, you ran to me and stood in front of me like a shield and you saved me. I am thankful for your help.

The only free seat in the bus is beside me. Your three-year-old son is looking at me. He also feels that I look different. You put him beside me, he starts crying immediately and squeezes himself towards you. You take him in your arms and you calm him, you lift him up and you seat beside me with a beautiful smile. Your child feels safe seating beside me on your knees and I feel relieved and at peace because I have been treated like one of you.

Some of you treat us so nicely and I admire you for that. Once, I was shopping in a supermarket. I took a piece of pork meat by mistake and I put it in my basket. You came to me with a friendly smile and you pointed out to me that it was pork. It makes me so happy that you know about my religion, that you are aware I must abstain from certain kinds of food because of my beliefs, and that you care about me. I appreciate your behavior and I hope some people who think we are not human beings like you, will read this piece and change their minds and views towards us, Muslim women.



PHOTO: DREAMTIME

Our dreams

By Najmiah Hossaini

What is your dream?

We asked this question to ten refugees in Greece. To men and women that risked their lives in order to build a new future. The answers to this question were given with silence and grief most of the times.

I also had many dreams. When my family decided to move to Europe, I was thinking that my dreams would come true. My dream was to live in peace and security, to be able to continue my education and have an identity. I wanted to live without fear like people who live in peaceful countries. But it seems that the European policy doesn't perceive Afghans the same way as refugees from other war zone countries. Some EU countries even start to deport Afghan refugees back to Afghanistan. This is something that makes us to lose hope about our futures and our dreams. We don't know what is going to happen to us. We live in uncertainty every day. Life is difficult and we are exhausted. We are deeply concerned about our future.

When I see my parents getting older and more grey hair show up on their heads, I feel broken and defeated. It looks like world doesn't understand us.

But I still have a dream. My dream is a peaceful world without borders.

What is my dream? It is very difficult to answer this question at the moment. We had dreams and specific plans in our lives. We left our homeland and migrated to Europe to 'meet our wishes'. We hoped to live a life in peace, to find security, get an education, and have our identity. We dreamt, we set goals, and we moved away from our country to build our future. But I want to tell you about our wishes that turned into an illusion, about our ambitions that turned into suffering. I want to write about endless, painful days that pass one after another as we are getting far from our dreams day by day. Our heart broke, life is difficult, the past is troubling us. The future is unclear. We are tired of pretending that everything is OK. Nobody understands our hopelessness, our broken heart and emotions, our loneliness and our deprivation.

I make wishes for my oppressed countrymen and all refugees in the world and I have asked several people here at the Schisto camp, what are their wishes?

Najmeh: I wish to have a new identity, an identity that will give me the possibility to move on in my life and reach my dreams. I wish to live in a world without war and blood, I wish to see a world without refugees and barbed wires. I wish for a free world without borders.

Khatereh, 30 years old: I wish that nothing bad happens to my family

and my children as we will be moving toward Serbia.

Nasimeh, 47 years old: I wish to see my children find their own destination, to see their life in prosperity and success.

Romina, 27 years old: I wish we could reach Germany as soon as possible and start building our new life there.

Sediqeh: I wish to see my husband soon.

Zari, 30 years old: I wish to have a peaceful life and get out of the present situation soon.

Fateme, 29 years old: I wish to see my separated family together once again.

Samira, 16 years old: I wish to have a peaceful life and a happy family always.

Faranghis, 16 years old: I wish to be rich enough not to need nobody's help.

Nasimeh, 25 years old: I wish my sick daughter could get well soon and I could see her healthy and happy again.

Yaganeh, 11 years old: I wish that borders would open again for all refugees.

Rohullah, 14 years old: I wish to see my family reunited again.

Hamed, 21 years old: I wish to be a famous volleyball player.

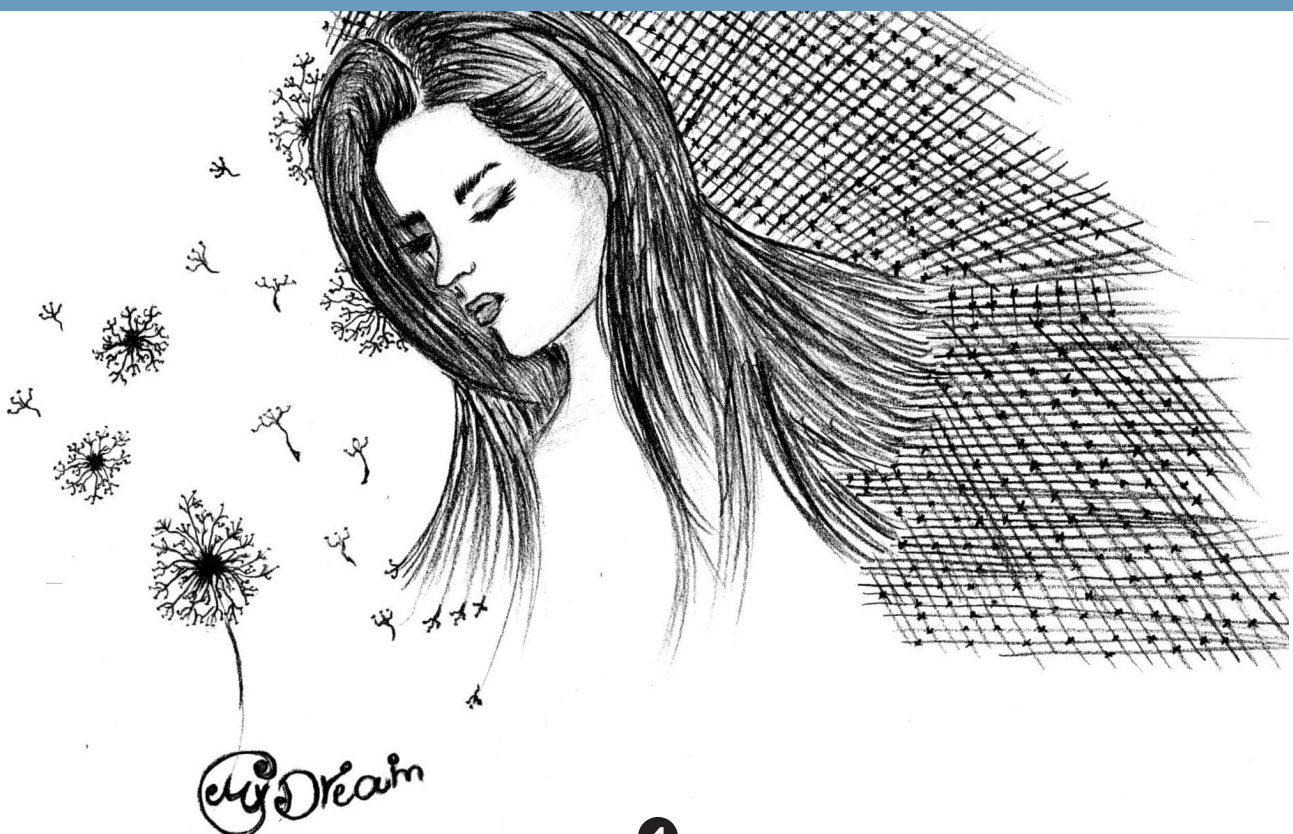
Mohammad: I wish that peace and security would return in my country and that one day we could go back there.

Mohammad Reza, 18 years old: I wish to be a famous football player and see my family reunited once again.

All refugees gathered here, have a mutual ambition, no matter their sex and age. They wish to see these difficult days come to an end, and they hope they could start a new life in a safe and peaceful country.

About me

My name is Najmiah Hossaini. I come from Afghanistan. I was born in Iran and I have graduated from high school. I am studying art at the Panteion University in Greece and I want to become a designer or a TV presenter.



Memories

By **Mahdiah Hossaini**

Wandering around this city
I'm thinking to leave
Where? I don't know
Is there anyone to show me the way?
To understand me? To find me? Is there anyone?
I am lost in my thoughts... wet and dusty thoughts...
it is annoying...
Take me out from the crowd of my thoughts
Lights are flashing far away
The way of my thoughts is long
I want to pass it quickly...
They all attacked me, I want to ignore them and just pass
But? Is it possible? Some hold my hand, some hold my legs, one hugs me
Some are chasing me all the time I cannot delete my memories
Help! Help!



Rain with sorrow

By **Madinah Zafari**

Lovers fall in love under the rain. Most people enjoy the smell of the rain and its freshness. Many people like to walk under the rain and some like to watch it behind their windows. Before coming here, I used to love the rain as well. I used to like walking in the rain. It gave me a sense of peace like a sweet melodic tune, but in the current days the rain is annoying, it's sound is so strident and doesn't calm me anymore. Few months ago, we had tents at the refugee camp of Schisto. My tent was my only shelter in this world and I needed it in order to survive. I was praying for less rain so my tent would not be destroyed. When the rain starts, it hits my tent and the wind shakes it so strongly that I think it will be wiped out. When the rain hits the tent it makes a horrible sound which scares me to death. When the rain gets stronger, I crumple up and press my knees to my arms and it keeps raining and raining. So much water flows on the ground



that it starts entering the tent from every corner. People try to protect themselves, but there is no way to do so.

The tent was so cold and the only blanket that could save me from cold was wet. At this time there was nothing we could do. We were just waiting with tears and sorrow for all this to stop.

I remember these days so clearly. When the rain stops, everybody is looking for a way to get rid of all this, chaos prevails. Outside and all around the tent, there is only water and mud. It's hard even to walk on it, but everybody is in a hurry to fix their tents again. Some people are standing with hopeless faces, their eyes are full of distress, without knowing what to do, because the storm has destroyed their tent.

We have the same problem every time the rain starts and stops. The humanitarian organizations and the camp's officials are trying to help and do something but everything is useless, and sometimes they make it even worse. They have given us plastic covers to put all over our tent but they haven't noticed that the water flows on the ground and finds its way inside the tents.

These days, my family, the people in the camp and myself feel alarmed and anxious every time it starts raining and you can see the panic in each other's faces. After that, the rain brings sorrow and pain to our hearts.

Recipe for Kabuli palaw

By **Fatima Hossaini**

Kabuli palaw is a traditional dish in Afghanistan and one of most favorite ones among Afghans. Our people use to cook it wherever they are, even when they are far away from their country. We hope that you can also prepare it and enjoy it.

Ingredients

200 vegetable oil
1 chopped onion
800gr lamb leg or shoulder (with the bone), chopped into 6 cm pieces
1 tbsp crushed garlic
2 tbsp salt
2 litres (8 cups) of water
75 gr (½ cup) white sugar
2 tsp garam masala (made from ground cloves, bay leaves, cardamom and cinnamon)
1½ tsp freshly ground cardamom
1 kg sella basmati rice, soaked in cold water for 4 hours or overnight
250 gr carrots, peeled and cut into batons
75 gr sultanas
75 gr mixed slivered almonds and pistachios, to garnish

Instructions

You'll need to begin this recipe 4 hours ahead, or overnight if time permits.

Heat 50 ml of the oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat and cook the onion for 6–8 minutes or until golden. Add the lamb, garlic and 1 tbsp of the salt and cook for 8–10 minutes, or until lamb is well browned on all sides. Add the water, reduce heat to low and cook, skimming surface occasionally, for 1½ hours, or until lamb is tender. Remove lamb from pan and set aside. Reserve the stock.

Place half of the sugar in a hot, dry saucepan over medium heat. Cook, shaking pan, for 5–6 minutes or until sugar has caramelised. Carefully add 250 ml (1 cup) of reserved stock, the remaining salt, 1 tsp of garam masala and a pinch of cardamom. Bring to the boil, then remove from heat and set aside.

Drain the soaked rice. Cook in a large saucepan of boiling water for 5 minutes, or until almost cooked. Drain and return to pan. Pour over the caramelised sugar mixture, add a pinch of garam masala and cardamom, and stir until rice is evenly coated.

Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the carrot and remaining sugar and stir for 5 minutes, or until lightly caramelised and glossy. Add the sultanas and cook for another 1 minute. Remove from the heat and stir in another pinch of cardamom. Set aside.

Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan until smoking. Pour oil over the rice. Using the end of a large spoon, make holes all over rice to allow it to steam evenly. Top with spiced carrot and reserved lamb. Cover and seal pan with a tea towel, then a lid. Place over high heat and cook for 5 minutes or until you hear a ticking sound. Reduce the heat to low and cook for another 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and leave covered for 10 minutes.

Remove lamb and spiced carrots, and mix rice well. To serve, cover base of a platter with a little rice, spoon over the lamb and then cover with remaining rice. Top with spiced carrot, then scatter with almonds and pistachios.



Organizations and Activities at the Schisto Refugee Camp

By Madinah Zafari & Samira Karimi

Many organizations are active at the Schisto refugee camp. Some of them are related to children and teenagers, some others are dealing with adults and there is another one responsible for organizing and managing the camp.

Those who are trying to help, to train and make every day programs for children and teenagers, are the organizations "**Network for Children's Rights**" and "**Save the children**". These two, brought a container for pregnant women, infants and mothers who need to feed their babies.



There, they teach young mothers, how to take care of a baby and they provide a warm female environment for them to breastfeed their kids. Also, they brought another container which is addressed to young children. There they can learn the basics of the Greek language through games, and they do painting, singing or other activities every day. The team teaches the children songs and how to make crafts. For the children who live at the camp, this container is the only place in the world where they can play, learn things and feel safe. They regard it as the biggest and best school in the world.

The organization "**Save the children**" provides a daily Greek and English language program as well, for boys and girls. In cooperation with the "**Network for Children's Rights**" they also offer other activities such as sports, i.e. football and volleyball during the daily programs. Teenagers love these activities very much. They also provide photography lessons for teenagers who have become very enthusiastic about them. But after a while they had to stop these lessons because the camp's officials were against the project. Now we are going to start it again! On the contrary, there is a weekly outdoor program which the officials accept, according to which the people from the organization accompany the children out of the camp for a couple of hours. Thus, the children are



given the chance to broaden their horizons.

There are times when some children face intellectual and psychological difficulties. In that case there are some social workers or psychologists who come to support them. However, in my opinion, these people instead of helping the children at the camp, they remind them all of their pain and sorrow they have in their lives. The parents are watching their children facing depression every day. These children have lost contact with the outside world and have forgotten their childhood dreams.

The organization "**Action aid**" is working with women. They support and help women in different ways. They have developed many activities for them, like hairdressing, weaving etc. But recently they stopped and I don't know why. "**Action aid**" also offers psychological support and consultancy to women, so that they can talk about their problems. Nevertheless, their problems are too big to be solved with just advises.

The "**SOS Children's Villages**" organization are also active in Schisto. They have started with a Greek language course for people in the camp. Before them, only volunteer soldiers used to teach Greek. The "**SOS Children's Villages**" organization have also built a gym for men, where they can exercise and have fun.

There is a special organization, the **IRC**, which takes care of the health and cleaning issues inside the camp. They provide hygienic staff for families who live in the camp. They also make sure that toilets and showers are clean and work properly.

Unfortunately, few months ago they didn't have any solution for the biggest problem that every family faces: rats. There were a lot of big and scary rats around our habitations and we didn't know how to deal with them. The same **IRC** has recently started to provide cash cards for families who have been in big need.

UNHCR is another organization dealing with asylum issues for refugees. They are prepared to answer questions about the asylum process and family reunification programs.

All these organizations are trying to help people and make the situation better for the refugees. Their help is important for our daily life and they probably make the refugees happy for a few moments. But all the activities that they conduct cannot heal the deep pain and the problems that the refugees face. Psychologists and social workers listen to us and give us some advices, but they are not able to understand us.

I hope that one day there will be no refugees anymore and no need for any charitable organization.





Living in a camp day by day

By Zohreh Ghasemi & Fateme Sedagat

Sometimes I feel that there is no end for our pain and sorrows. I can't breathe well and I feel a huge heaviness in my heart. I don't know where to start from and how to explain our daily life here in the Schisto refugee camp. Sometimes the days go by very slowly and look endless.

Our first problem here is food. Food is unhealthy and tastes less. There is no variety on food and everybody looks malnourished and weak. We protested a few times and every time they promised us to bring some change in the food but nothing has happened until now.

We are refugees and we know it, but we are also humans. We had our lives organized, but because of war, bleeding and violence we forced to leave our homes. We escaped from discrimination and insecurity. Nowadays, we live in tents, that we call them home. We don't feel peace and safety in our new homes. It is so cold in winter and so hot in summer. We passed summer with hardships and difficulties. We used to run away and find shelter under the trees around the camp. It was not comfortable though. It was so dusty and mosquitos were biting us, day and night.

I don't know if you have ever been in a tent, under the +42 degrees or not but if you want to understand us better, you should try it once.

What should I say about the rats. The rats are so annoying and frustrating. We have to chase them all the time. We cannot store anything inside our tent because of them.

When the winter gets closer, we get scared. We are afraid of raining the whole day, we are afraid of something we used to enjoy. Like rain, wind, and thunderbolts. We are afraid of rain because we know that when it rains, the water flows into our tent, all of our things get wet and we will have to sleep in a wet ground and the next day everybody will feel pain in their

legs, back, and generally in their whole body. There is no medicine available for these pains. Whenever someone complains that is in pain, the doctors' advice is "drink more water", regardless the pain.

If somebody gets really sick and needs to get to the hospital, he would need to tolerate his pain for a couple of hours, since the hospital is far away from here and the ambulances are busy all the time.

We have no amusement over here. No TV, no radio and no books to read. There is Wi-Fi internet at the camp but you have to be in a specific place at the middle of the camp to be able to use it. Also, you have to stay in an open area to use Wi-Fi, no matter if it is cold or hot or if it's raining.

We have to go to bed very early, because there is no electricity and when the dark falls, we cannot do anything except laying down and thinking about all our miseries. Many questions come to my mind when I go to bed, early at night. When we would get released from this unknown darkness? How would our future be? When we would go back to a normal life? And many other questions that seem unanswered.

Another major problem we face is communication. Nobody among refugees speak English or Greek. We don't have permanent language courses here. If we had language course continually in the last 9 months, everyone would speak English or Greek by now.

I feel so sorry for the children in the camp. Most of them look sad, stressful and sick. They have been away from a real home and school for a long time. They don't know about their tomorrow and their future.

I don't feel like a human being these days. Sometimes I feel that I need to be alone, only by myself, to think about my life, my unclear future, to cry for all that have happened to our lives, but there is no such space for me. Let's talk about the suffering of separation and being far from your family members. Separation between parents and children, brothers and sisters. I can see children longing for their mothers, mothers crying for their kids and everyone dreaming of a day that they would reunite again. We are disappointed and sad; sorrows and hopelessness have surrounded us. Life looks worthless and empty for us. Other countries cannot or don't want to understand us. I wish there was a peaceful land where we could go freely and escape from all wars, discrimination and violence forever.

I wish that one day these horror days will come to an end and that we will finally find what we were looking for when we left our homes.

About us

My name is **Fateme Sedagat**. I am 13 years old and I come from Afghanistan. Last year, we came with my family to Greece as refugees. Since then, we have been living at the Refugee Camp of Schisto. I am going to school learning English and Greek.

My name is **Zohreh Ghasemi**. I am 17 years old and I come from Afghanistan, but I was born and grew up in Iran. I came to Greece as a refugee a year ago and I have been living at the Schisto refugee camp since then. I like learning foreign languages and at the moment I am learning Greek, English and Dutch.

Save the Children & Network for Children's Rights

By **Fatima Hossaini & Nazila Ghafouri**

At the beginning, God created the world. He created man as the noblest of all His creations. He offered to the humans the entire world as well as its beauty in order to work on them, use them and be grateful for the offer. He never leaves humans alone even in the most difficult moments of their lives. He always sends the right people at the right time and to the right place to stay beside the needy ones. There are people who supported and saved thousands of children who came through a horrific, dangerous and deadly route to Europe. There are people who cried with our tears and laughed with our smiles. There are people who showed us and proved us that we are not alone in this world. There are people who understand the meaning of human behavior and treat everyone like a family member of their own. Yes, "Save the children" and "Network for Children's Rights" are two organizations that all children in this camp will remember forever, for their great love and honesty. They will keep this memory in their hearts and will follow their example in their own lives. Their great team taught us peaceful coexistence, loving each other, hon-

esty and forgiveness.

They forged our personality and helped us to discover our talents, find our hidden abilities, live in these difficult times with a positive spirit. This team supports children under the age of 18. Their main activities include legal aid for children, information regarding their rights, information about their opportunities and responsibilities as children and teenagers. They cooperate with other organizations related to children. They help unaccompanied minors to find a safe shelter and take care of them. They also organize training activities for the children's daily life. Both organizations have also a special care team for children who are physically or mentally sick.

The team starts its activities at 10:00 am and finishes at 18:00 pm. Indicatively, some of them are Greek language lessons through games, singing groups, various games that sharpen the minds, as well as sport activities such as football, volleyball, basketball, handball.

This team helps children to tolerate life's hardships and keeps hope in their minds and hearts. We want to thank "Save the children" & "Network for Children's Rights" and everybody else who stands beside us in the hard present times.

And since today's children are tomorrow's adults, we will never forget the love they have offered to us.

About us

My name is **Nazila Ghafouri**. I am 17 years old and I come from Kabul, Afghanistan. I was born and went to school in Iran for 10 years. Last year, we came with my family to Greece as refugees. I am going to school here in Athens and I want to become a doctor.

My name is **Fatima Hossaini**, I come from Afghanistan and I was born in Iran. I have been living in Greece for a year now. I am going to Elliniko High School. I really like reading. I want to go to Germany. I want to become an ophthalmologist.





Nights inside the Camp

By **Parastou Hossaini**

I always loved the night. I loved the stars shining in the blue sky, during the dark nights. But since I have become a refugee and a resident of a refugee camp, I have realized that not all nights are beautiful. The beauty of the days and nights depends on each one's situation. I used to love the night, when I was at home feeling secured and being at peace and when I could lie down on my warm bed and watch the sky through a small window. But now, I'm looking at the sky through a net covering a small window, with the fear and the anxiety, the horror that overtakes me when it gets dark. I don't find any beauty in the nights anymore. The stars are not shining and they don't twinkle to me. They look sad and quiet.

When the night falls, I feel deeply alone like someone lost in an endless desert. I'm calling for help and nobody hears my voice. Last summer my nights were the longest, warmest and hardest I have ever experienced, and now I am experiencing the coldest and the most fearful winter ones. As it gets darker, a thick silence covers the camp and scares me to death. The hoot of the owls adds more fear to my heart. In our culture the owl is a portend. Then the wind blows and I feel it's going to take our last shelter away. Everything is so dark during the nights. The nights in the camp are like a graveyard full of graves. I feel as if I was buried alive in a place so small that I cannot even breathe.

I used to like the rainy nights., I also used to like walking under the rain, but I don't like it anymore. I knew that after walking under the rain in a cold night, there would be a warm home, a glass of tasty tea waiting for me. Now my nights pass with nothing but the hope of the next morning. I hope I can enjoy the beautiful summer nights again, I hope that one day I will have a roof to protect me, a roof made of stone and not of cloth that is shaking all the time and scares me. I hope that someday I will be looking to the flames of our fireplace, and I will remember all these dreadful nights, and I will wipe off the bitterness of these memories with a portion of sweet hot tea.

About me

I am **Parastu**. I am 22 years old. I originate from Afghanistan and I came to Greece from Iran. I have a degree in sciences. I have been living in Greece for a year now. I am going to a Greek school here in Athens and I want to become a Biologist and a Photographer. I want to learn many foreign languages. Today, I am able to talk some English and Greek and I am learning German.

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