



# MIGRATORY BIRDS

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

## Editorial

# Our team is continuously growing!

It's true to say that you are unlikely to find the sort of article that you are about to read here in any other newspaper. Children who have experienced hardship since adolescence reveal their talent in these eight pages. They write, take pictures, design and create their own unique newspaper. Whenever our group met over the past month to discuss the subject of the present issue, there was such a variety of topics to choose from, that we found the task even harder than usual.

Some authors have "spread their wings" and flown towards northern Europe. However, being abroad has not prevented them from writing for the

"Migratory Birds" newspaper.

In the previous issue, we had the pleasure of welcoming the first boys into our team. In the present one, we welcome the first young Syrians who will voice their thoughts through this newspaper. It is a paper that aims to evolve and expand continually while creating points of contact between children of varying characteristics, cultural or otherwise.

With a heart full of dreams and love for what it does, the workforce of "Migratory Birds" writes about issues that will stimulate you and embark you on a journey.





# What is the meaning of school today:

it is where you fight injustice with a pen.

By **Fatima Hossaini** and **Nazila Ghafouri**

**B**efore modern schools were founded, education in Afghanistan took place in mosques, and teachers were religious people who taught children to read the Koran and to write. Even today, these schools are considered to be the traditional places of learning for children. The first modern school came into existence in the era of Amir Habibullah Khan and was called Habibie. Habibie was the only modern school in Afghanistan.

There are two official languages in Afghanistan: Pashto and Dari. All schoolbooks, however, used to be published in Pashto and this created some problems in the Farsi-speaking regions, so the official language of the school changed to Farsi, with Pashto as the second language. Schools start in the month of March and end in September.

In Afghan schools, students have had to wear uniforms! Nowadays the girls' uniform has changed from black to blue or grey. The elementary school uniform is blue and the high school one is grey. Schools in Afghanistan are not advanced and are not properly equipped. Most do not even have air-cooling or heating systems. In some regions, students study in tents, while in others they sit outdoors in an open space. This means that children are not protected from external elements such as rain and sun. This is the situation even in Kabul, which is the capital city.

Teachers in Afghanistan are paid very low wages. In Afghanistan, boys and girls go to separate schools. Teachers have a very bad attitude towards students, they beat and punish them and cause psychological damage. In most regions, girls do not go to school because of the presence of the Taliban. What is more, the Taliban have burned down existing schools on many occasions.



for students with particular problems (family, finances, etc.). Schools start a mid-term review after six months and hold end-of-year exams three months later, just before the end of the year.

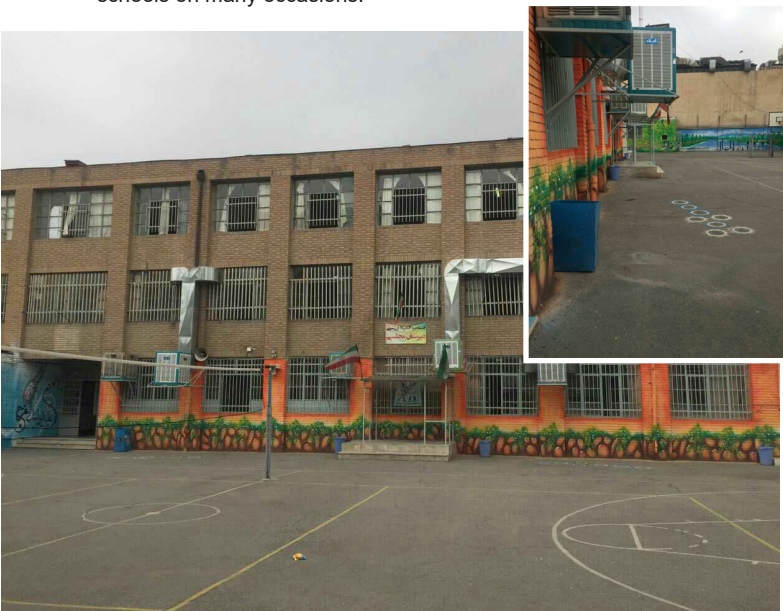
Students in Iranian schools wear uniforms at all levels of education. Children from elementary to high school must wear the same type of uniform so as to hide any economic or class difference between them. Students are not allowed to wear clothing other than their school uniform. It is also forbidden to use mobile phones in schools. In Iran, there are many schools in each area, so students do not have to make long trips. These services are only for Iranians, while people behave in an inappropriate and racist manner towards Afghan students. In one school, a professor punished a student who had not done his homework by forcing him to put his hand in the toilet bowl!

## And now my experience from school here in Greece:

The first time we went to school, we set off at 5:30 am because the journey was long, but because we love studying, we didn't mind. Along the way, we kept wondering what schools were like in Europe, how different they would be from the schools we had known so far and how everyone would behave towards us.

Our school has a large yard surrounded by trees. The children wear a variety of clothes, making it clear that there is no specific uniform for schools. There are also students from a variety of nationalities, religions, and cultures with no difference between them and that is what gives me a sense of calm. Schools open in September and close in July. Boys and girls go to school together and there are 22-25 students in each class. We have both male and female teachers and there are also computer classes. Here students live in a safe country and have no problems to distract them, in contrast to Afghanistan where students have no security and support to continue their studies.

I hope that students throughout the world can carry on learning in conditions that will allow them to flourish.



## School in Iran:

"Dar ul-Funun" was the first university in Iran, founded by Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir. The Iranian school year runs from September to March and the school day starts at 7am and finishes at noon. At all levels of education in Iran, there are separate schools for girls and boys! Schools are also divided into two categories: public and private. Middle and lower class students tend to go to public schools, where education is free for Iranian citizens, while Afghan students have to pay substantial fees or go to private schools. The best students go to private schools, which use modern teaching methods and technology. Students have a tablet instead of books and pencils, and there is always a psychologist available



# What an Afghan woman wants to say to an Afghan man.

By **Mahdiah Hossaini**

I am writing this for you, of whom I have always been afraid. I respected you but was never respected by you in return. I want to write everything that I have not been able to say. I will write on this lifeless paper, which I hope will have the endurance of an Afghan woman.

I want to start by complaining about our childhood, when you had the biggest portion of food because you were a man and needed more strength, when you had to go to school and I was just the little girl that stayed home. Yes, I stayed home because some men could not control their eyes or their behavior. They could see the successful women of our country and they admired them, but they never wished the same for their own women. You have even spoken about culture and freedom in front of a modern woman, but you do not consider this appropriate for your own sister!

Every time I become a target for your wild and violent mood, and when your hands become fists to hit my body, I wish you knew where my mind is travelling and what I am thinking. It is unfair that I must be modest in order for you not to make mistakes, and even more unfair that I have to talk and laugh quietly so that I am not heard, whereas you shout your vicious and vulgar words loudly. The more you are heard, the prouder you feel about your manhood.

own mother: "if only you were a son".

An Afghan woman has a lot to say but has not learned to speak. They have always told her that women must remain silent. She must never cry, even while withstanding torture, and she must be patient. Only men are allowed to shout, hit and be impatient.

A woman in my country is not free; she does not decide how to dress or whom to marry. It is forbidden to write her name on the marriage invitation. Even sadder is the fact that even after she dies, no one refers to her by her own name. In the funeral announcement, she is referred to by the title of her husband or her son.

I write for those who consider a woman to be the shame of society and a man the superior sex. I loathe your glances because they mean I am forbidden to appear anywhere. Why are you depriving me of this right instead of controlling the way you look at me? Aren't all these things evidence of your selfishness? Don't you think you need to take a second look at the way you behave? Don't you think it's time to break down all those barriers that have restricted my life?

It is very difficult to be a woman, to be one more illiterate mother who cannot help her children and listen to their grievances. I would have managed to study if the fanatical ideas that you inherited from the previous generation had not deprived me of this right.

You told me I must always be afraid. You never told me not to be afraid, to try and overcome my fears, not to accept injustice, not to lower my head, you never ever said any of those things.

An Afghan woman is alone; she never looks for someone to help overcome her loneliness, because she does not trust anyone. She is tired but doesn't look for support. An Afghan woman has not chosen her life but is doomed to live it. I am ashamed that my country is famous for its injustice and violence against its women. I'm famous because of Farkhunda who was burnt alive and Rukhsana who was stoned to death because of her smile. I hate this reputation. I don't know what the future holds for my generation.



I want to talk to you about the slaps on my face that I have received from you; those that feel painful even in my memory. Slaps you gave me because I wanted to continue my studies. I am a woman, a sensitive creature that needs love and care, not violence.

I am a woman, I must be a worthy daughter for my father, the mediator for paradise for my mother, I must help my brother find his future wife, I must be my sister's confidante and my husband's religious supporter. I am proud to be all this, but it is difficult to hear unfair comments from my

As a woman of my country, I ask you to change your perspective. I hope that someday you will change, and I say this because I can read your mind and your gaze. That is my strength and you cannot take it from me.

And you, women of my homeland, I hope that the strength of your mind will allow you to free yourselves from this torment and to hold your head up high.





# A month in Germany away from my family

By Samira Karimi

Samira was one of the first contributors to the paper and is now writing from Germany

**F**amily separation...Just the sound of the word was like a terrifying nightmare. Yet the terrifying nightmare has now become a very bitter reality. Never in my life had it occurred to me that I might be separated from my family, because there was never a reason for that. But it was destined to be. No adult or child can ever be happy if they are obliged to live far away from their family or loved ones. Yet the problems and hardship of life have forced this on us. It was the prospect of a better and more tranquil life that led me to this.

It was a desire that led me to abandon the soil of my homeland. For me, the first bitter experience in my life was the separation from my friends, from my loved ones and from everything that bound me to Iran. While I was with my family, I still hoped. But cruel fate tore me away from my loved ones. Now I am forced to carry all the weight on my own shoulders. There are times that I feel so alone and so weak that I think I won't be able to carry on living. But when I remember why I came here, I tell myself that I must have the strength to overcome all obstacles in my way. And I must hope that one day I will see my family again and live with them in peace.

Therefore, all those of us who live far away from our families, must have the courage to continue following our dreams and ambitions. I do hope that there will come a day when there will be no refugees in the world.

## Souvlaki for the first time

By Fateme Sedaqat

**O**ne of the best known and typical Greek dishes is souvlaki. Being a refugee, I had no idea about this delicious, tasty dish when I arrived in Greece, but even if I had, I would not have had the courage to try it.

As things begin to improve, one's appetite returns. Yet I still hadn't come across souvlaki and I had no idea how it was made.

Being a Muslim, there are certain restrictions on what I can eat or drink. However I really wanted to try one and so looked up its ingredients and found out how it is made.

One day we went for a stroll around Athens, and after walking for a few hours I started feeling hungry and suggested to my family that we go to a restaurant. They agreed. With the information that I had gathered, I proposed having a souvlaki. The best option for us was a chicken souvlaki because we Muslims don't eat pork. We ordered, and when the souvlaki came, we all looked at the way it was wrapped and how it was put together.

Finally the moment of tasting had arrived! It was a very interesting experience because we had never eaten anything like it before. At the same time it was a bit difficult to eat because of its size and all the sauce inside. It was very tasty and I really liked it.





# My birthday

By Natzmiah Hossaini

**What is birth? We could define it as the first day in the creation and the life of every creature on earth, as in the birth of a star, a flower or a butterfly, and the birth of hope in a world full of despair. The birth of a child in a foreign land...**

I am a girl who was born in a foreign land, an immigrant. I am therefore a foreigner. It takes a lot of courage to be born in a foreign land. It takes a lot of courage to pretend you don't hear or see a lot of things, to deny or never find out others. And it is tough being alone. Every time all those things that you never said or saw overcome you, and every time those bitter days deny you any tranquility, you become unhappy remembering stories from the past. Then you ask yourself why did I have to be born?

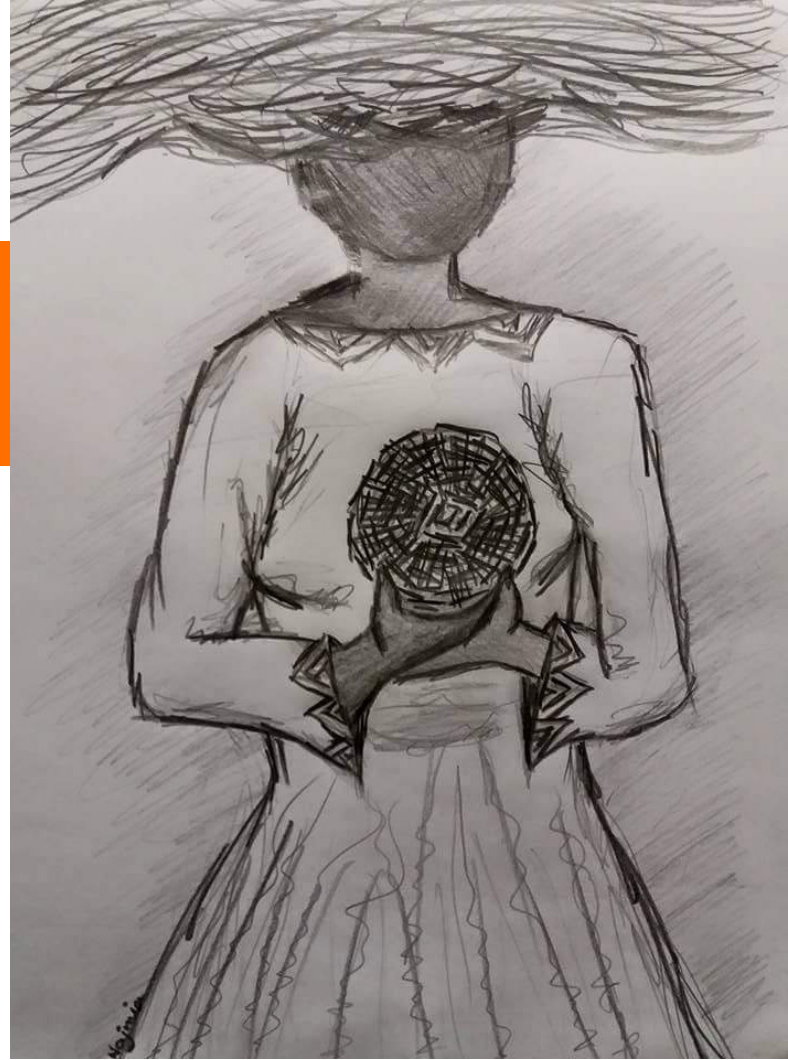
My birth is a question mark in my life, an unknown feeling. My birthday should be a day of joy for me. I ought to be able to forget this niggling loneliness. The truth is that I am totally alone, but I actually want to be alone. In the last couple of years, I have spent my birthday in loneliness and silence with all these difficulties.

I grew one year older without realising it. I grew older, I learnt to be patient and now I am able to wait without complaining and to live in a world without any dreams, in a world full of nostalgia.

My birthday is my special day! I always loved it. Every year I would blow out one extra candle and make a wish. But this year I didn't feel like blowing out any candles, quite the opposite, I wanted to light several candles for all those wishes that never came true. So many candles have been blown out, but there is no trace of any wish, as if I have been lost in a whirlpool. With no goals, no dreams, uneasy, desperate.

The year that just passed was not a good one. On the contrary, it was painful and peculiar, but everything that happened is now over. I do not blame anyone for my lonely birthday. I want to begin at the beginning, to make a new start for my lonely days and myself. My birthday ought to be a good day for me. I must forget my loneliness, my nostalgia and I must laugh wholeheartedly, and I must smile at all those people who came into my life by chance, and then became my friends and fellow travelers...

I have made many new friends over the past years. Some of them taught me to be good and to remain good. There were others who shared sor-



rows with me. Yet I am sure that the images of the past will never fade from my memory, a past full of experiences, laughter, tears, fear and worry.

In any case, the past is over, for better or for worse. I may be afraid of the days still to come but I know that they will be full of surprises. Right now the candles in front of me are lit. I turn off the lights. I don't want the wind to extinguish the light of my wishes. I must concentrate before blowing out my candles. And now, just as I am about to blow, I am overcome by sorrow... I miss you, the memory of you, your smile and your tears... I miss you, o beloved. Wish me "happy birthday" one more time.

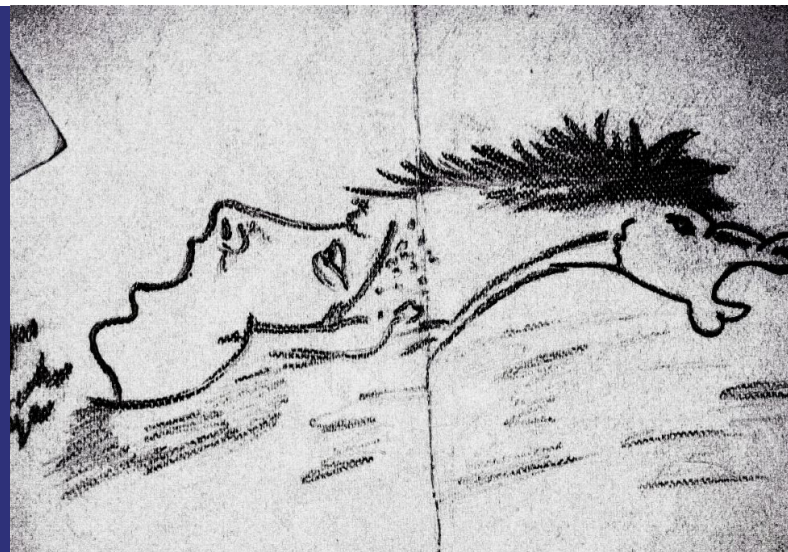
## Art

By Mirna Aslan

I am going to talk about a gift, at least that's what people call it, although for me it is simply a way of expressing what I feel, be it joy, sorrow or a dream.

Art is considered to be the product of man's creativity, as expressed by artists. It is what you can't keep inside you. Something usually prevents people from talking about their opinions or feelings, be it embarrassment, lack of audacity or fear. In countries with political upheaval or war, expressing one's opinion or feelings becomes secondary.

There are many ways to bring out what is inside you and mine is painting. Painting is a form of art and something wonderful. Ideas, dreams and fantasies that go round and round in my mind, are all revealed. It's the same when you write a story or direct a film. I think the majority of painters can't express their feelings in any other way. That's why they need to paint. The painter can't become a writer and the writer can't become a painter. Everyone has his or her own way of expressing and letting others know their private thoughts.



Painting finds innovative ways to express new things by being creative. Through it, painters can express themselves, their feelings, their ideas and the situation they find themselves in. Both theirs and society's. With skillfulness and sensitivity.





# Nasrudin Nizami and his amazing story

By **Mohammad Reza Hossaini**

I met Mr Nasrudin Nizami on July 26th 2017 at Monastiraki in central Athens. He is the Public Relations Manager of Solomon, a content production organisation. I interviewed him about his life and his past.

## *Could you please describe your life briefly for us?*

I am Nasrudin Nizami from Nangahar province in Afghanistan. I finished high school in Afghanistan and I have worked with computers, software and hardware. I have also worked as a tailor, because ever since I was a child I have wanted to pay for my own studies.

## *Why did you want to travel to Europe?*

As most people in the world are aware, there are a lot of security problems in Afghanistan. When I left, there was trouble between political parties but there was also a lack of basic freedoms, both for men and women. The main reason for my journey was not financial. I was fed up with life in Afghanistan, which lacked the basics that would allow someone to live well and to study. I lived in Pakistan for a while, which was my first experience of life as an immigrant.

## *Tell us about your journey to Europe from the beginning and about the difficulties you encountered.*

In 2009, the difficult living conditions in Afghanistan led me to the decision to change my life. I asked a cousin of mine who lives in England to help me get there. The first stop on my journey was Pakistan. I then entered Iran illegally, followed by Turkey and the Greek island of Samos. The journey at sea was appalling. It took me two months to get to Greece from Afghanistan, with difficulties and dangers all the way. I spent two weeks in the Samos refugee reception centre. The Greek police took

my fingerprints and gave me a piece of paper that said I had one month to leave Greece. I stayed in Samos for a while and then arrived in Athens, the capital. At that time there weren't many organizations helping immigrants. I spent a week in guesthouses in Athens and then went to Patra hoping to cross over to Italy. Conditions there were even harder. For a whole month I had nowhere to sleep and so the roadside became my bed. I finally made it to Italy, hidden in a lorry inside a ferry for 36 hours. I bought a train ticket and arrived in France. I spent two weeks in a forest in Calais before making it to England. I requested asylum but eight months later, in June 2008 my application was rejected because of the fingerprints I had given in Greece. They sent me back to Greece. A friend helped me find work and I started to learn the language. However, one year later, I was unhappy with my living conditions so my friend and I decided to leave. This time we travelled through the Balkans, and after facing various problems such as attacks and robbery in Serbia, the theft of my money and arrest by the police, I finally arrived in Austria. Five months later, I ended up with the same problem I had faced in England and they sent me back to Greece. This time I made the decision to stay in Greece. I worked for 20 months on an island. I improved my Greek and decided to go to Athens to continue my studies. I worked as interpreter for various organizations such as IOM and GCR. I studied Greek history, civilization and language. In 2015 I set up the website "Refugee Welcome" in order to help immigrants. Through that I met Mr Fanis who is the director of the online news agency Solomon, and thanks to him I got a job at this magazine. At the magazine "Solomon", we write various articles from a variety of countries. Our volunteer workforce comes from several countries such as Afghanistan, Greece, Pakistan, China etc.

## *Finally, after all these painful challenges during those long and tiring journeys, what is your life like now?*

Well, I am now happy with life. I may not have achieved my most basic goal, but I get closer to it every day, through a lot of effort.

## *Do you have any piece of advice for today's refugees?*

The advice that I would give them is never to give up and to strive every day to achieve their goals with positive thinking. They should learn from their mistakes so as not to repeat them

***We thank our dear friend Nasrudin Nizami very much for his time and wish him all the best***

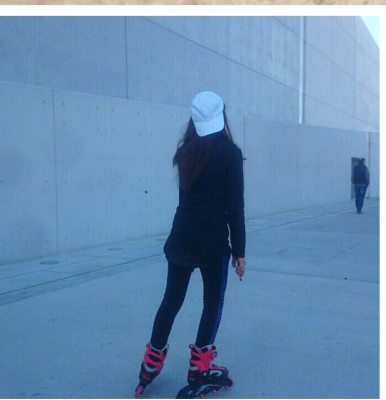


# Radio Dandelion

**T**he Internet radio station of the Network for Children's Rights' inquisitive adolescents is here! You will find an interesting topic every time, many pleasant-sounding voices and several points of view!

If you want to learn the news of Radio Dandelion all you need do is follow us either on the website of the "Network" [www.ddp.gr](http://www.ddp.gr) or on our Facebook page.

The Internet radio 'Dandelion' was produced by the Network for Children's rights, thanks to the cooperation and support of UNICEF. It was funded by the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and the Foreign Federal Office of Germany.



## Roller skates! My favourite pastime

By Hajar Azizi

**A**s far as I am concerned, the best and most entertaining hobby is roller-skating. It has made me very curious and I would like to learn more about it. At first, before I got the hang of it, I was often out of control. But I practiced and improved quickly. On non-working days, I go to the park near our house, I roller-skate and have a great time. When I was in Afghanistan I dreamed of having my own skates, but the situation there did not allow it. When I came here, I asked my mother to buy me some so that I could learn and practice how to skate. I found it easy and was a quick learner. Sometimes, when I go to the park with my friends, they look interested and want to learn too, but they find it difficult, in fact next to impossible. I think it is a very interesting hobby. It gives pleasure and stirs up emotions. It strengthens muscles and when done by listening to music, is energizing and exciting. That is why I adore skating so much. I always listen to music when roller-skating and I feel great. I never get tired or bored. On the contrary, I feel really well. For those starting from scratch, helmets etc. are a must. Roller-skating requires balance and courage. To start with, everyone was afraid I might fall and hurt myself badly, but I gradually learnt with my brother's help. I had to learn how to control myself. My advice to anyone who has never roller-skated, is to try it at least once. You are bound to like it.



# A morning at Athens University

By The team

**O**n Friday 26th May 2017, the newspaper team of "Migratory Birds" visited the Department of Early Childhood Education of the University of Athens, in order to present our efforts at publishing, to speak with students and exchange views. This was part of the course entitled "Educational interventions in open settings: An analysis of activities for child refugees and vulnerable social groups", taught by Mrs Alexandra Androussou.

Coming into contact with students of a Greek university, entering their classrooms and joining their lessons was a novel experience for us. The experience must have been equally novel for the university students. They wrote to us straight after our meeting and said the following:

"When we first came face to face with the girls we felt awkward (...) We thought they would only talk about the newspaper and that they wouldn't share their emotionally-charged personal experiences with us. Their descriptions of what they went through and what they are still going through moved us, as did the way they were given the opportunity to be "heard" through the newspaper. We felt ungrateful because we are always complaining about insignificant matters, while there are so many major things that can happen in someone's life, as happened to the girls. (...) We would like more people to hear about the efforts of the "Network" and about the experiences and opinions of these girls, so that they can see reality through their eyes"

"We really enjoyed having the opportunity to be photographed together and to come into close contact with them. We liked the fact that they asked us for our views on the subject of refugees and we would very much like to have the opportunity to meet again".

"Those few moments spent talking with you brought us closer to you; we could feel the pain caused by what you are going through. To be more precise, we actually saw it in front of us: the moment you became tearful as you spoke about your experiences and your dreams. What impressed us was the fact that although you have been through some terrible, tough times, not in keeping with your age, which is the age of hope and dreams, you are still striving for a better future and you do not hesitate to express your feelings and your dreams by writing and publishing this newspaper".

"In this newspaper, which we really did read after our meeting, you speak of your situation and your life in a very realistic and deeply moving way. You should know that it is in no way inferior to any other newspaper. It is easy to read and everything you write is interesting. We feel for you, it's as if we are listening to the pain of friends and we can now see the refugee situation from the other side, from the point of view of the people who are living through it. There are certain things and certain circumstances that we can no longer doubt. Your daily life unfolds before our eyes, raw, tough, just as it is."

"Thank you for meeting with us. It was a lovely experience. If only we had met under other circumstances, able to talk about happy things and about our dreams. If only your tears that day had been tears of joy and not of sorrow. Please don't ever lose your hope, never stop dreaming, because those things are what will give you the strength to carry on".

At the end of our meeting, just before we left the university building, one of the students called Sempel, shared the following sentence with us:

"When I was born I was taught two words... Win-lose!  
I chose the first  
Life gave me the second  
I thank God for teaching me a third: aspire!"

*We would like to thank the following students for writing about their impressions: Nikoletta Athanasopoulou, Stelios Karayiannis, Simbel Memet, Eleni Stamatakou, Marouso Fournistaki, Despina Ayianozoglou, Kalliopi Anastsiou, Theologia Amatidi, Panayiota Kremmida, Eleni Mariolea-Bourolia.*





# Return to Palestine

By Mohammed Selim

**M**y name is Mohammed Selim. I am a Syrian from Palestine, from the Yarmouk camp in Damascus where I was in charge of children's activities and of the pioneering dance troupe. I was a member of the Palestinian Centre for Culture and Arts and a volunteer at the Palestinian Aid Foundation. I used to work at the "Yasmin Al-Sham" dance theatre. Our life was very pleasant until the violent war began and anthropomorphic beasts entered the camp, killing and destroying everything of beauty. We spent days in the streets of Damascus, then ended up in Lebanon where things were even more difficult. We eventually decided to return to Syria, which has been in the grip of war for years. If you decide to live there you have only two choices: kill or be killed.

And so, we decided to pack our bags and emigrate to Europe. The first part of the journey took us from Damascus to Turkey. We then reached Greece with great difficulty and it is from here that I am recounting my story and hoping to begin leading a peaceful life again.

I will never forget Palestine, or the fact that I have the right to return. That is what I dream of as a young Palestinian refugee. Our land was invaded 70 years ago and we were forced to move away. I am bound to my homeland and I believe that one day I will have the right to go back. Which is why I decided I had to do something to help keep my country's heritage alive in the memory of both the old and the young: I worked as a volunteer in a Palestinian educational centre for children.

## Al-Zahraa, Damascus 2013!

This is where the dream of reviving our Palestinian heritage began. Oh my heart, we will never forget you and you will always be like a knife at the throat of our occupiers. And so, we learned to live and continue fighting for our ultimate return.

That is why the Palestinian cultural centre was set up in 2013, in order to teach children as much as possible about the heritage of their homeland. For example, the 'Dapka' dance, which is well known in many countries. Everyone holds hands, symbolising unity and solidarity between people. The dancers stamp their feet on the ground, symbolising strength. All this, done in combination with music and songs, demonstrates the respect and sincerity of the people towards Palestine.

More and more children kept joining and so the dance troupe 'Dapka' was founded, named after the national dance of Palestine. We were soon giving performances in several centres and universities in Syria, as well as in educational centres, all with great success.

We started off in an old building in the centre with a small group of children. Despite the difficulties, we painted it, fixed it and decorated it all together. The insistence and the patience of the children, as well as their desire to learn about their Palestinian heritage helped us overcome the various problems we encountered.

There was also a Youth Centre in Yarmouk camp. I worked as a volunteer there with a group of Palestinians whose aim was to showcase the "cultural side" of Palestine.

It was the first independent centre in the camp to take part in activities which came under the title "Heritage never dies". We worked together with the UNRWA.

The success of the group filled me with joy because I was contributing to the preservation of my country's culture.

It was however, a drop in the ocean compared to what could have been done to help people retain traditions that risk dying out because we live away from our homeland, the land of Palestine, land of martyrs.







## Summer

By Zahra Habibi

**S**ummer – warmth, searing sun, beautiful sunflowers, juicy fruit, refreshing ice-cream and sea that relieves us from the fatigue caused by the heat of the day. Holidays and summer journeys allow us to forget our hardships for a while and announce the joyous news of the start of summer. Summer comes after spring and before autumn. It is the season characterized by the greatest variety of fruit, with long days and short nights. Beautiful trees in blossom produce a huge assortment of delicious, nutritious fruits of varying colors.

The heat of long summer days is exhausting. The end of summer heralds the start of the school year.

I hope you had a good summer, wherever you are in the world.

## Don't judge

By Madine Zafari

**L**et's not make unfair judgments. I am always thinking that we are in such a hurry to judge people and their actions. Why do we allow ourselves to judge someone we don't know and have never had contact with, based purely on their appearance, resulting in the wrong impression being implanted in our minds? The more I think about this, the more I get confused. I was born in a society where the vast majority of people expresses their opinion about the rest and passes unfair judgement. Whenever these people see someone sloppily dressed in the street or around town, their first thought is that this person is dirty and undisciplined, or that they come from a family that lacks respect. It doesn't occur to them that they might not have had time to get ready or that they had no other choice. If they see someone with a tattoo, they start talking about them. They are judgmental and refuse to accept that people have different tastes that we must all respect, and they think that a tattoo implies a bad person.

Despite his tattooed body, that person might be the angel that would save someone's life. When some people see an over-made up, scantily dressed woman, they stare at her in such a severe way that she becomes flustered. That is why when someone in our society wants to do something, he is worried about what others might think. Naturally, this sort of judgement is not exclusive to outward appearance but encompasses people's private lives. It doesn't occur to them that their unfair judgement might harm someone's reputation to the extent that it may end up destroying that person's life. Before travelling abroad, while I still lived in my community at home, I used to think that only my fellow countrymen were so judgmental and gave so much importance to outward appearance. However, when I travelled to European countries I reached the conclusion that it wasn't just my society at home that was full of those sorts of people, but that one can find them everywhere.

I came across them in various places. I heard their comments, saw the



way they stared and asked myself for the hundredth time why do we gossip about others and judge them? Of course, in European societies, this happens far less than it does in my country. This is one of the reasons for progress in these countries. Every person instinctively believes that he is better than the rest. Even criminals and crooks try to justify their mistakes instead of acknowledging them. If only people would accept that they are not perfect and far from flawless, they would never judge the mistakes of others. Let's try not to interfere in other people's business, so that we can improve our own life, the life of others, as well as our society's culture. Let's not pass unfair judgement on people before getting to know them.



# The Future of the Past

## Report from the Exhibition on Feminism at the Hellenic Parliament Foundation

By **Parastou Hossaini**

On Tuesday 18th of July 2017, the teenage group “Migratory Birds” visited the Hellenic Parliament Foundation and saw the exhibition entitled “Feminism and Transition to Democracy, 1974-1990: Ideas, Collectives, Claims”. Anna Enepekidou, who is responsible for the exhibition, gave us all the necessary information.

Women are delicate but not weak. The slightest emotional blow may wound them, but they are able to stand up to the terrible storms of life. Ignore the weakness in their voice or body. If they want to take on big responsibilities, they are more than able to see them through.

Violence against women is the most shameful violation of human rights. This includes physical and corporal violence, violence against wives, psychological and verbal abuse, such as humiliating one's wife, lack of respect, ignoring what women want as individuals and not considering their physical needs. There is also social abuse, such as forbidding women to work or study, not paying them any attention, taking advantage of their patience as they suffer stoically and in silence. And there is financial abuse, for example, when a man refuses to pay a woman's expenses. Finally, there is immoral harassment.

One hundred years ago in Greece, girls didn't have the right to go to university, but they were active in their homes. Apart from sewing and knitting, they wrote magazine articles. We are talking about girls from wealthy families who were tutored at home. Of course, it wasn't forbidden to write articles. Nevertheless, difficulties did exist. Sixty years after the first universities opened in Greece, no woman had the right to study in them. It wasn't till 1890 that the first woman was accepted at university. In those days, only women from wealthy families wrote articles and went to university. Women from lower classes did housework and could only go to Sunday school. The presence of women in universities and the successful completion of their studies were followed by demands in the workplace. Women were not entitled to vote before World War I, so they organized themselves into groups to fight for voting rights. It wasn't till 1956 that women finally obtained the right to be heard. For the past 70 years, Greek women have been free to take part in every kind of activity. Naturally, the majority of men were against the presence of women at the ballot box, but women fought for that right.

Between 1967 and 1974, during the dictatorship in Greece, all activities were frozen, including the circulation of newspapers. The dictatorship came to an end in 1974. Women had petitioned for the right to go to school for over a hundred years, but as time went on, they began to demand further rights. One of the rights granted in 1975, was the law on gender equality. The first rights they petitioned for had to do with the family. Previously it was quite common for women to be beaten, so women insisted that men be denied this right. With the fall of the dictatorship and the transition to democracy, women were obliged to join the labor market. Even so, there were women who did not agree with this freedom. Finally, however, women acquired the right to go to university, to become ministers and MPs, while their rights were gradually enshrined into law. Naturally, in order for them to acquire all those rights, women had to take part in protests without fear. They entered parliament and acquired equal rights.

At the end of our meeting, each member of the “Migratory Birds” team wrote their views on the rights of women on small pieces of paper that were placed on the walls of the exhibition.

The message to all women is:

I ask all women of the world to fight for their rights and never submit to oppression.





# Points of Contact:

The publication of the newspaper is part of the parallel action programme of the Network for Children's Rights entitled "Points of Contact", which aims to bring refugees into contact with the real Greece and with groups of caring citizens, in order to foster social contact and understanding, and to bridge the gap between life within camps and the reality outside.

The program consists of

**a)** Strengthening the dialogue within the camp community and preparing for contact with the outside world.

**b)** Informing minors about the social and cultural European and Greek reality

**c)** Promoting their socialisation and freedom of expression through participation in social, cultural, athletic and artistic meetings and discussions together with Greek people

**d)** Beginning the integration process by bringing them into contact with their Greek peers and groups with similar interests at sports and recreational events, language lessons, newspaper publishing, etc

In this context, we accept invitations and welcome ideas and new proposals.

Please contact the teenage teams of the newspaper "*Migratory Birds*" and the "*Dandelion*" web radio of the **Network for Children's Rights** by sending an email to [migratorybirds.ddp@gmail.com](mailto:migratorybirds.ddp@gmail.com) or by calling **00 30 210 88 46 590**.



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