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#11



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

From a Dream to History

"And so we decided to become journalists ourselves and give a voice to the refugee population."

It's time for our end of year review. The lessons of the past will help us plan our future. Twenty months ago, in April 2017, when we took the decision to become the voice of refugees, we could not have imagined how far we would come. We started under the shade of a tree in the Schisto refugee camp, high up above the wire enclosure, where rainbows appear. How many storms have we survived? How many tears?

How many hours have we spent every other Saturday in the National Library? How many lessons in journalism? How many "Make sure you arrive in Klafthmonos Square on time"? How many container doors have we knocked on, in Schisto, Malakasa and Thiva camps, in order to persuade more teenagers to join our group? "Good morning, we are the Migratory Birds!" How much clapping each time we held the new issue in our hands? How much applause from you, when we presented our work in schools, universities, refugee camps, seminars, celebrations and exhibitions, both in Greece and beyond. Thank you. How much pride?

How many smiles?

Noora was right: "What is of value in a person's life is the sum of all the beautiful moments he has experienced in this motion picture, once he has edited out all the bad memories and retained only the good times."

How many good times in the life of this newspaper? A truly epic film. In the pages that follow, we share stories of starvation and uprooting with you. We write about the difficult road of social integration through education. We meet refugee athletes from the Paralympics and we learn about the challenges they have had to face. So much fortitude. We have brought back in our suitcases writings of children who took part in the "Eurochild" conference in Croatia. Finally, we publish a letter from the Finnish students who visited us in October in Athens.

And on it goes. When it comes to injustice, we remain intractable.



If you have the will... [Part I]

By Morteza Rahimi, Umer Farooq,
Zain Ali, Noora Al Fadli, Abdul Rahman Madala

Very often, the achievements of ordinary athletes go unnoticed, but there are certain athletes in the world who are very special. Instead of becoming discouraged, they have learnt to live with determination and courage. Many of them are involved in a variety of sports. These were the athletes we had in mind when we decided to attend an event organised by the Paralympics Committee and spoke to refugee athletes who live in Greece; we gave them encouragement and we asked them what motivates them. In the first part of our story, we present you **Ibrahim Al Hussein** and **Ouisam Sami**.

Ibrahim is from Syria. He has been living in Greece for the past few years and does swimming and wheelchair basketball. When we spoke to him, we learnt a lot of interesting things about what he has been through up till now and how far he wants to go.

What sort of difficulties did you have to face, Ibrahim?

There were many. I can talk about some, but not about others. I try to forget the ones that have to do with the tragic events of the past. I was first involved with athletics as a child. I faced many problems, the worst being when I lost both legs, my right foot and the joint of my left. I came to Greece in 2014 and some Greeks helped with my therapy, so in 2016 I took up sports again and entered a few competitions.

How did sports help you overcome your injuries?

Because of the sports I do, I don't think of myself as handicapped. I don't consider physical handicap to be a condition, there is no such thing as physical handicap only psychological handicap.

How do you manage to combine swimming and basketball? Isn't it hard for you to do both?

It's hard, but if you have the will, you can walk through any wall that you see in front of you. Training isn't that hard, what is hard is going home after your training and having to clean and tidy up your house.

What are your future aims?

I've been thinking that what I would like to do is send a message to everyone saying that even if we are refugees with disabilities and other issues, we can still make our dreams come true. My aim is to win a medal at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics. But, as I told you, my other aim is to send a message to other disabled people and tell them that nothing is impossible in this life; if you really want to do something, you can.

What is the greatest honour you have experienced up to now?

It was when I carried the Olympic torch. I set off from the Elaionas refugee camp in 2016, and I was the first to carry it. Also, in 2016, when the US Sports Academy gave me the prize for the most courageous all-round athlete in the world.

That's truly amazing. How did the Greek Paralympic Committee discover you? Or did you find them?

I got to know that Committee after carrying the Olympic torch from the Elaionas camp. I was the first disabled refugee in Greece to take part in Paralympic sports.





Ouisam Sami is from Mosul in Iraq, which he left in 2014. He spent two years in Turkey and is now in Greece where he does wheelchair fencing.

Ouisam, could you tell us about your achievements and your participation in competitions.

I can't tell you about my achievements because I do not have any so far, but I can talk to you about participation. I have been unable to take part in competitions because I have been waiting for my asylum application to be accepted and for my official papers. I have, however, taken part in local events in Athens and this has motivated me to take part in more competitions in the future.

How does your injury affect your everyday life?

I don't have any problems. I am a photographer by profession, which doesn't require much physical effort and in general my disability is very minor. It does not prevent me from walking or moving freely. It's something that could be cured in the future and it has not affected me socially or practically in any fundamental way.

What is your particular sport and how did you start?

I do wheelchair fencing. Solidarity Now, the organisation that took on my case, suggested that I try various Paralympic sports. In the end, about a year ago, I chose wheelchair fencing.

What is your aim?

Like every human being who hopes for success, I would like to reach a good level, to take part in more events and to win a medal which will lift my country's name up high and make me extremely happy.

What message would you like to send to refugees with disabilities who find themselves in Greece?

My message to all refugees who have willpower – I don't want to say disability – is to set themselves free and not to let any obstacle stand in their way. It is the obstacles that are trying to close the doors in your life. You are able to do anything you want, so you must take advantage of any opportunity and not be influenced by negative thoughts. The best example of all this is the athlete Ibrahim Al Hussein who has achieved so much and has taken part in international competitions. Ibrahim came here as a refugee. Make the most of the opportunity and take part in Paralympic sports. You must break the bonds that influence you in a negative way, because people with disabilities are considered undesirable by some individuals who believe that they have nothing positive to offer to society. That's why I advise them not to stop at the obstacle called disability, which I don't recognise anyway, because I only recognise willpower.

How have Paralympic sports influence you?

It was an escape, something I used to get away from my daily routine as a refugee. Paralympic sports help with inclusion and integration, and they also allow you to meet new people through participation in sports events. It was the point at which everything changed. From zero to eternity.

As we 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.

Refugee Education in Malakasa

By **Mohammad Nasim Haidari, Umer Farooq, Zain Ali**

In life, people go through many stages and situations, school being the most important journey. School is the doorway to knowledge, it is where we learn how to identify good from bad, where we take the flight to wisdom. Our ethics are being formed under the guidance of knowledge and our days become filled with positive habits.

We must support the children and teenagers who are deprived of their right to education. That's what the Ministry of Education in Greece has been doing since 2015, when people from the Middle East started coming to Europe seeking a better future. It has been helping so many migrants and refugees to continue their education and follow their dreams. That's why we decided to talk with kindergarten and high school teachers in Malakasa, a town in eastern Attica, where one of the many refugee camps of the country is located.

"Education is the most important way for somebody who is not native to get introduced to, and involved with the local community, because, regardless of the fact that you are not from Greece, you live in Greece," says Mr. **Kostas Kalemis**, the educational coordinator for refugees at the camp of Malakasa, who has been working there for two years now.

At the moment an official kindergarten for refugee children from four to six years old is being run in three different containers inside the camp, while **Solidarity Now** and **IOM** have developed non-formal education programs to aid youth and adults.

As far as elementary and secondary education are concerned, refugee children and teenagers staying in the camp have been admitted to schools in Avlonas, Kapandriti, and the EPAL of Oropos. According to Mr. Kalemis, currently there are 452 refugee students, from Kindergarten to EPAL, attending schools in the greater area of Malakasa.

All courses are taught in Greek and, trust me, learning a foreign language in a foreign country is anything but easy. The major problem here is the lack of regular interpreters in schools. In the kindergarten of Malakasa, for example, the teachers do not follow the typical Greek program because they can't really communicate with the pupils and their parents.

Mrs. **Anna Faratzi**, a kindergarten teacher at the camp of Malakasa says that "there are very few interpreters, and they are usually needed in more urgent situations and for bureaucratic issues. They don't have any time to actually help here with the children. We are doing our best, meaning that we teach them some basic Greek words so that we can communicate. We can't elaborate more on specific topics."

The language barrier stands in the way of high school refugee students

too. Mrs. **Loukia Stefou**, philologist at the 1st high school of Avlonas, follows a different method to overcome that obstacle: "Whenever I have to deal with the problem, I always make sure that there is at least one child in the class who can translate some very specific parts of the course in their mother tongue. I speak English, so I could do that, but I don't like English to be spoken too much. I want them to familiarize themselves with the sound of Greek because it's important for them. This is the second or third year in our school for some refugee children who speak Greek and fortunately they have Farsi as their common language."

Two years ago there was a special afternoon class at the 1st high school of Avlonas which "normally" took place between 2pm and 6pm. It was a Reception Facility for Refugee Education (RFRE - DYEP in Greek). Mrs. **Nantia Tsene**, philologist and the director of the school, says "normally, if there's sufficient teaching staff. Otherwise it operates from 2pm to 4pm, depending on the available staff."

For Mrs. **Faratzi** the issue is that "they don't live here permanently. People come and go. More people might come. There are children that started coming for two weeks and then had to go. In addition, there are children that live in the camp but do not attend systematically. They might come for a day and miss three days. They do not see this as their normal school. There are only a few parents who send their children every day. This makes it even more difficult for them to learn specific things. Many parents see this as a place for their children to spend some of their time, since they have many children at home."

While many refugee children want to stay in Greece, their parents are just waiting for their papers so that they can travel to Europe. Mrs. Tsene confirms that: "Their attendance at school is not very systematic. Many of them quit, they move to other areas, we don't know how they continue, many leave the country to other destinations. In other words, the children who have been here for three years are very few."

For Mrs. **Stefou** that's normal because "parents have a vision but our goals, purposes and aspirations are different. Children have found an environment in which they live their lives within their own context. We understand both sides. In any case, what I personally see is a need on the part of the children to follow a norm, even if that norm has a deadline, even if that norm will expire at some time, and this is what they seek. They feel that their feet stand on solid ground, not the ground of their homelands but the ground of Greece."

Two or three years might not be enough time to assess the level of refugee integration into Greek society. However, if school is a miniature society, then we can already talk about refugee socialization.

Mrs. **Stefou** says you can also witness that during the break: "They hang out all together in the yard and play volleyball for example, they don't play alone. This is a first step towards socialization. I believe that they are being driven by nature, because they are now in an age when they fall in love, and I think that this could happen and be the beginning for an osmosis between the children. I hope that they will stay here, that they will be grafted, as we will, and the trees that we will make together will be very beautiful with nice fruit."

That's correct, education gives us a knowledge of the world around us and changes it into something better. It helps us develop a perspective on life. It helps us build opinions and have points of view on things in life. Education is the most important medium for everyone, so try hard and reach your goals.





Steadfast memory

By Noora Al Fadli

According to the English philosopher **Thomas Hobbes**, human life is solitary and people are by nature both competitive and vulnerable. **Jean Jacque Rousseau** held a different point of view, regarding human nature as something malleable. He believed that with the correct training, man could develop the potential given to him by nature and maintain his freedom. **Socrates** on the other hand, was one of the first to believe in the inherent goodness of man. Naturally, each one of those philosophers had his own arguments.

All those who pass through our lives leave good or bad memories. Each person is like a motion picture, which our memory edits so that we only retain the good elements. We store them in an unobstructed space, available to us in times of need.

We should not describe our friendship with someone based on one final exchange that might have ended in disagreement, nor should we rush to find a new friend. Our memory is steadfast and so maintains harmony and humanity inside us. We can quite easily dust off the old motion pictures and bring them back into our lives with a smile. That's where we keep the best moments and the best memories. It is the only tool we

have to calculate how well someone treated us. If someone was good to you for half an hour, they will give us half an hour of non-stop beautiful memories. Beyond that, you are not obliged to change your opinion or your mood. You can ignore the unpleasant past and simply retain the good times with that person.

Each one of us has something they call "The Good Times" which have nothing to do with our living conditions at the time but with the beauty of the souls we came across.

A friend once asked me why I consider the days of the siege to be one of "The Good Times". "What makes those days beautiful", I replied, "is that I met you and my other best friends."

Our souls contain an internal world that allows them to feel safe and comfortable, regardless of what is going on outside. The value of someone's life is the total of good times they have experienced in this motion picture, with the bad memories edited out and the good moments retained.

A beautiful moment with a friend is worth a lifetime of mistakes. Without a steadfast memory, you lose much beauty from your personal life. It's true that some mistakes are tragic, but one's life is made up of a chain of beautiful mistakes, which the passage of time converts into something funny that you remember and laugh about.

I remember my friends. I miss those innocent people. Nowadays I rely on my steadfast memory to assemble the best frames, so that I can direct the film of my life in the nicest possible way.



Letter from a city

By Astrid Holmström and Linnéa Lang

To all countries on Earth,

I am Athens, the mother of democracy and freedom of speech. The cradle of culture, science and knowledge. Ideas that were created here thousands of years ago, still remain today and have spread around the world. Everyone has always been able to express their opinion here by standing on the speaker's platform in the Agora, and it's my turn now.

I have functioned as a crossroads during the course of history, where different cultures and values have met. The different continents around me have equally exchanged ideas and the flow of people has been in balance for thousands of years. Now the balance has been disturbed. Since 2015, more than a million refugees have sought protection in me and my country. That's where the cooperation ends. While people are pouring in from the east, Europe is standing with crossed arms and refusing to let them in.

The refugee crisis is neither a political nor an economical issue. It is a humanitarian crisis that requires humanitarian aid. Within my city people have got together and are doing everything in their power to help the ones in need. When the government isn't willing to use resources, rationalize processes and help adequately, the organisations and volunteers save the situation. They provide the refugees with necessities, education and support. Only about a third of the refugee children in Greece go to school. I actually do understand this, however. To become educated in a foreign language in a foreign country is all but easy. That's where integration centres come into play.

Through an adequate integration process, the lost can find their place and peace. Thanks to the united powers of Athenians the border between us and them has been diminished. Even though there are different opinions on the political spectrum, the flow of refugees has become so large that we do not have a choice. We cannot turn our back on these people in the same way as you do in other countries. We cannot say no because we do not have enough resources. We have to help. And so do you.

Athens has been a role model to other countries during the course of history. Copies of the Parthenon can be seen all over the world and democracy is the most established form of government. Still, many of you look the other way now and pretend it isn't your problem. Let me be a role model again. Follow the example set by the Athenians as you did thousands of years ago and give these people a chance.

Our memories

Umer Farooq

My name is Oomer Farouk and I come from Pakistan. I remember members of the newspaper team coming to the guesthouse where we were living, asking if we wanted to join them. I was very confused at the beginning and I couldn't find anything to write about. I did try and I believed in myself, so I wrote about life at school. When I submitted my article, the editorial team was very encouraging and that really motivated me. They showed me how to use the newspaper to make my voice heard by other people. That's how I realised the value of the "Migratory Birds" in our lives and I learnt to raise my voice in order to be heard. I hope people find what we write interesting. The opportunity to write for the newspaper changed my life. I always had things that I wanted to tell people about, and now I can do that through the newspaper. I am sure readers will find it useful and interesting.

Noora Alfadli

One day I was sitting in the camp, when some of the editorial team of the "Migratory Birds" came to talk to us about their newspaper and invited us to their meetings. I liked the idea, and I really enjoyed my first meeting. I told them I would like to be a part of the newspaper production and I was accepted. I am now an active member of the Young Journalists, writing

articles and doing interviews. What a wonderful, unforgettable memory.

Mohammad Sarif Rahmani

When I first joined the "Migratory Birds" team of journalists, I realised that if we were united we could move forward towards our goal stronger than before, and that we could use the newspaper to inform refugees and immigrants of their rights. Also, I learnt a lot through our group meetings, and I reflected on people's rights and gender equality. I think that was the most important think I gained from my involvement with the newspaper.

Mohammad Nasim Haidari

When I was first introduced to the newspaper I was not very brave and had little self-confidence. My involvement in the team increased my self-confidence; it made me realise the pain and difficulties faced by immigrants and refugees, and allowed me to become their voice and make sure it reached people's ears.

I remember how two months after my first involvement with the newspaper, I managed to speak in a seminar about the difficult living conditions faced by refugees in Greece. There were many visitors from foreign countries, such as France, England, Canada and Switzerland at that seminar. And so I managed to explain the problems and difficulties of refugees to more than 500 people.

Mohammad Alrifai

After all that I have been through and suffered in my life, when I arrived in Greece my goal was for my voice to resonate far and wide. However, I



was afraid that I would remain marginalised and that I would have neither a voice nor a place of my own. I was afraid that my voice wouldn't have an echo and that I would be the only one able to hear it. Joining the newspaper team made me feel that I wouldn't always be the only one listening to my voice, and that there were others who would like to hear me.

Ihtisham Khan

I have a lot of interesting memories of our newspaper but it is hard for me to find the words to describe them. Firstly, I joined the newspaper on December 16th 2017. As a new member I wanted to write something but I started just by listening. Then, very gradually, I published my first poem. It was a life-changing moment. Since then, I try to make sure that my voice reaches both ordinary and powerful people in Greece.

Abdul Rahman Madala

One day, I was returning with a friend of mine from a meeting of the newspaper. We were late and we were hoping to catch the train to Malakasa, but first we had to take the metro. We rushed through the open barriers without a ticket but came face to face with inspectors and police. They asked to see our tickets and we had to tell them that we didn't have any. As soon as we showed them our journalists' identity cards they were impressed because they saw that we were volunteers at the newspaper. They gave us one fine instead of two.

Abdul Rashed Mohammadi

From the moment I joined the "Migratory Birds", every meeting has been a pleasant memory. I have met a lot of people and my experience with the team has shown me that we are all equal, regardless of gender, nationality or religion. Whenever I see anyone reading our newspaper and encouraging us, I feel proud to be a member of the team.

Mahdiah Hossaini

Believe me

We want to tell you about these memories of ours that have changed our lives for the better over the past two years. They have influenced the way we think, how we see society as well as other people.

One day, I went to the camp I used to live in in order to visit a friend. At

first, I was overwhelmed by my memories of the past and of my life in the camp. My mind was confused and I was struggling with it. Meanwhile, I was searching for my friend who works as a translator for an organisation that supports women, but who was very busy at that moment. She finally invited me to go to a meeting with her, where there were many women and girls.

On walking into the place where the meeting was due to take place, I saw quite a few women reading the "Migratory Birds", and specifically the article I had written entitled "What and Afghan woman wants to say to and Afghan man".

As soon as they had finished reading it, the women were asked for their opinion, not knowing who had written the article. The surprise shown by one of the women really shocked me. "There is no way that article was written by an Afghan woman". I asked her what made her think that, and why did she think the author couldn't possibly be from Afghanistan. "That article has been written by a strong, courageous woman," she replied, "and such women do not exist in Afghanistan". I asked her why she regards women in this way, and she answered that that was how she was brought up.

I wondered how we can possibly support our men, when Afghan women don't even believe in themselves. Even though her words upset me, they gave me the strength to carry on writing more articles about the women in my country. They may not believe in themselves and in their capabilities, even in the 21st century, but I believe in them.

Another woman at the meeting said: "We are proud that there exists an Afghan woman who is able to express herself and make known the feelings of all Afghan women."

That day I felt two conflicting emotions at the same time. At the end of the meeting I introduced myself and they hugged me. They also thanked all the members of the "Migratory Birds" team.

Now we would like to invite you to share your own experiences and memories from the "Migratory Birds".



Young Journalists

Please share your opinion

Network for Children's rights requests your participation in the survey you may find in the link below regarding the 'Migratory Birds' newspaper. Your opinion will benefit the teenage refugees, migrants and Greeks, that are the authors of the newspaper.

You may find the survey in our website www.ddp.gr or in the link <https://goo.gl/forms/FoFCEQvRPzyxZxOf1>

The survey takes less than 5 minutes. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Thank you for your participation.



Without Fear

By Mahdiah Hossaini

We had arranged to meet **Tania Palaiologou** in the cafeteria of the Theatre at Kefallinia Street. She is the actress who plays the role of the investigative journalist and activist **Anna Politkovskaya** in the play **"Intractable Woman"**.

Anna Politkovskaya symbolises the struggle for freedom of speech and is well known for the heavy criticism of the Kremlin during the Chechen war. She was also an expert in matters of corruption and the infringement of human rights. She dedicated her entire life to journalism. Nothing was more important to her than reporting events to her readers. "Events as they happen, as they really are."

Tania arrived at the theatre one hour before the performance. We introduced ourselves and she asked us to follow her to her dressing-room where she puts on her make up and gets ready. It was a small room but full of emotions. A room that has been home to hundreds of different characters.

We sat in front of the mirror that lined one of the walls and **Tania** introduced us to the director – and fellow lead actor – of the play **Michalis Koulakos**.

The interview began with some information about the production. **Tania** told us about the playwright **Stefano Massini**. The play is about **Anna**, a journalist born in New York of Russian parents working as diplomats at the UN. It was written in 2007, exactly one year after the assassination of **Anna** who was working as a correspondent and negotiator in the Chechen war. On board a flight to Beslan in 2004, she fell victim to a

poisoning attempt. She suspected that someone was trying to stop her playing a part in the negotiations.

In September 2004, **Tania** became drawn to all these events as an actress. She began to track **Anna's** work, because she found it fascinating that one woman should choose to take part in researching a brutal and vicious war between big interests. Two years later, in 2016, Anna Politkovskaya was assassinated on the day of Putin's birthday. From then on Tania intensified her research and continues to do so in order to play her role better on stage.

What is interesting is that Tania spent seven years gathering information with the aim of giving it to an author to write a stage play. As soon as she had enough material she got in touch with the author who told her that he had just come across a play about **Anna**, written by an Italian playwright and translated into French.

It immediately occurred to me that, even after they are dead, some people's worthy and significant deeds can bring individuals together from different parts of the globe. Following rehearsals and exercises, the play premiered in September 2014 at the TV Control Centre in Kipseli. It ran till March 2015, when Tania was four months pregnant.

I asked her whether she had discovered anything negative about Anna's life during her research. She smiled, and answered that she had tried hard to but that **Anna** "was a very upright person. Despite the threats she received, she was very stubborn and never stopped her investigation. This proved to be fatal and certainly affected all those around her."

It is obvious that when you look into someone's life, what you find might influence you and make you change your own private life and your behaviour. I can feel the warmth in Tania's voice as she repeated: "If only it had. I would really like to be like her. I would love to have even a tiny

fraction of her strength, her courage and the feeling of responsibility that she had for her own children, while fighting for basic human rights." This is what **Tania** would like to guide her in her own life: **Anna's** idea that defending human rights is non-negotiable.

We finally arrived at the question that I had been thinking about before I met her "If we were talking about the life of a man, rather than **Anna's**, would you have been just as affected?" **Tania** replied that her choice had nothing to do with gender. Her answer led me to put my question in a different way. I asked her if she chose the script because **Anna** was a woman. "It certainly has to do with the fact that she was a woman," she replied, "and I was certainly able to relate to her. I couldn't see how she could fit into that cruel and violent setting, which is much more of a man's world."

I also looked for parallels in the lives of the two women. "During my research, and knowing myself very well, I saw characteristics that I would really have liked to have had. Although I am interested in politics and in human rights, I have not been able to reach her level of education", she replied.

I asked about **Anna's** aims, what was it that she wanted to achieve by revealing the events of the war. "In the first instance, she wanted to give a face to the statistics, to convert the statistics into human stories. She also tried to show that mistakes were made on both sides, that this war was an unjust one that had to stop, because the only ones paying for it were the people."

On reading the script I came across a section where the words "blood"

and "snow" are repeated. I wanted to learn more about that scene before seeing the production. **Tania** told me that this was one of the toughest scenes in the play, but also one of the most poetic. It shows **Anna** witnessing an explosion in the centre of Grozny, a true event. In that moment that world turns upside down, **Anna's** brain stops and logic is overturned.

Finally, I asked her in which scene of the play does she identify most with **Anna**. "It is a moment towards the end, when I feel that all fears and inhibitions have left me, even my desire to be **Anna**. I become me, **Tania**, and I feel that the words I am speaking are my own. This has certainly to do with my own personal experiences, but at that moment I really feel that I am going through what **Anna** went through. She was a woman who was worn out by fighting for things she felt were obvious."

As I mentioned at the start, I interviewed **Tania** and learnt about **Anna** before seeing the play, but it was by watching her on stage that I really understood how the actress had worked with the journalist. I could sense **Tania's** tiredness alongside **Anna's** during the war scene. I felt **Anna's** exhaustion through **Tania's** eyes, something that was also conveyed to the audience.

For my final question, I asked her what was the most important lesson she learnt from **Anna's** life. "Be yourself and a fearless defender of men", was the reply.

We would like to thank **Tania Palaologou** for the interview and for her superb acting, as well as **Michalis Koilakos**, director and actor who played a variety of parts in the play.



From the islands to Malakasa: Five refugees describe their living conditions and the long journey.

By Mohammad Sharif Rahmani

Every man has the right to a peaceful life without worries. Those that manage this have a duty to help those that have fled war and danger. Yet, refugees that find themselves on the Greek islands are denied basic human rights. We would therefore like to ask the refugees themselves, who have recently arrived in Athens from Lesbos and Samos about the living conditions on those islands.

Ziaodin Feizi from Samos

When I was in Samos, the refugees were living in small tents that were

unable to keep out the rain and snow. Every month, each family would receive an allowance of 90 euros for every adult and 50 euros for every child. This wasn't even enough to buy clothes.

Akram Ali Ahmadi from Lesbos

There are nine of us in the family, yet our allowance was only 300 euros. If I wanted to buy clothes for just three of the children, there would be nothing left. The food in the camp was inedible, and because we were living in a tent, the cold of Moria camp made my children ill.

Zohre from Lesbos

We were not safe in Moria. Girls and women lived in a state of fear. We had to queue for hours in order to get food. There were some serious sanitation problems. Some young men would harass young women and small children.

Royayie Karimi from Lesbos

I spent nine months in Moria camp. My son and I had psychological issues. It was the men's job to stand in the food queue. There were so many people queuing that as soon as we got round to getting our breakfast, it was time to start queueing again for lunch. The same thing happened with dinner and and so on.

Nour Aya from Lesbos

Moria was a camp for 2000 people but there were around 8000 people living there. There were daily arguments and we felt unsafe. This had a bad effect on families, especially children. The police would not get involved in the disagreements.

Those are some of the problems faced by people in the various camps on the Greek islands. We would ask the noble Greek people to join us in demanding human rights for the refugees, who have fled their county because of war or out of necessity. It is not fair that they should find themselves in a similar situation here.





A quiet and pleasant place

By Mursal Mousavi

There are a lot of organisations that help refugees and other vulnerable groups. Today I want to write about one that does remarkable things for refugees.

After much effort, I managed to have a conversation with the ladies who run the Day Centre for Women and Children of the NGO “Faros”, in order to give you as much information as possible about what they do.

The day centre has been supported by UNICEF since 2016, the year of the great influx of refugees into Europe. At that time, refugees didn't have a space of their own, either for their basic needs or to maintain basic levels of hygiene (they lived as homeless in Victoria Square), so the Day Centre at Faros offered somewhere to take a bath and meet other refugees. At the beginning, Faros focused on unaccompanied minors and vulnerable families, offering them the basics such as shelter, clothes, shoes, children's clothes, milk and food.

As soon as the recipients of these services were moved to apartments and camps, Faros changed strategy and set up the Integration Centre for families. Nowadays, families have to be registered in order to take part in activities provided by the organisation, which include, English, Greek and computer lessons. The centre also runs other programmes for mothers and teenagers such as knitting, painting and sewing. It also provides a place where they can congregate in their spare time and discuss any issues they may be facing.

The centre also provides educational materials needed by children attending school. As well as all of the above, there are also Parenting Skill Sessions for pregnant women, nursing mothers and mothers with small children. Legal advice is offered once a week. There are monthly educational excursions for families, which help people forget their problems, even temporarily.

A team of social workers helps with registration at schools and with access to the national health system. They are also able to refer people to other services that may be required.

Organisations such as these can help improve the lives of families who have gone through hardships that many cannot begin to imagine.

I wish there were no wars in the world. I hope that there will be no more refugees. Even if that happens, organisations such as Faros are essential in every town and every country because they help the poor and homeless.

We turned up the Volume in Eurochild 2018 [Part 1]

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

Our team flew to Opatija, Croatia to attend the Eurochild Conference. During the conference we took part in talks and speeches, we met with young people and children from all over Europe, we heard stories that touched us and we were inspired by people's interest in children and their rights. We were able to envision a Europe and a world where our rights will be secured, where our voice can be heard in all decision-making centres, so that we can ultimately influence the decisions that affect us. We Young Journalists and our fellow correspondents from Ireland, Germany, Croatia, Hungary and Malta are ready and through the pages of Migratory Birds we will continue to express our views on all matters affecting our lives.

Name: Koppany, Botond, Oliver
Age: Youth
Country: Hungary
Topic: Education in Hungary
Title: Opinion on Hungarian education
Who do you want to read your article: Members of Eurochild

The Hungarian education system uses totally different methods than highly developed countries. Public schooling relies on a hierarchy between teacher and student and lacks interactive methods and teamwork.

Governmental influence is very strong as all financial support comes from the government itself. It tends to change the educational system all the time with the national curriculum designed to suit its own preferences. The government pretends to care about public opinion and has nominally asked students and teachers for their observations on the newest edition (September 2018) of the curriculum but actually we weren't able to read it because of its length and the unfamiliar, child unfriendly language.

We, students wanted to express our disagreement by demonstrating, but our voice was ignored by the authorities. The supporters of the government reacted to the demonstrations, saying that children should not be involved in public decision-making, mainly because of their age.

Although we believe that the current situation is unacceptable, we hope for a brighter future.



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe



Name: Amelie, Britta, Rania
Age: 12, 31, 23
Country: Germany, Greece
Topic: Ball Rights
Title: Ball Rights Count
Who do you want to read your article: Everybody, All Kinds of Balls (That's very important)

It's important that everyone has rights, even a ball has rights. Every ball has the right to jump, to bounce, to sleep, to wait in a bag. The right to be free to play with children, to meet other balls, to learn about ball rights, to protest for them, to go to a ball school, play games to feel safe, to be different, to be protected by their players.

How do all the different kinds of balls get their rights?
They can demonstrate (protest).
They can campaign.
They can talk to politicians.
They can make a petition on Instagram (social media).
They can make their voices heard.
They can form a ball council.
They can go on social media.
Why is it important?
It is important because a ball is always neglected. That is not fair. If we can hear a ball, why can't we hear a child?



Name: Brian
Age: 16
Country: Ireland
Topic: Family abuse towards children
Title: How young children cope with abuse
Who do you want to read your article: Whoever has been abused by their parents

I have been abused by my parents my whole life but there was a day when I said enough is enough and I left. A few days after leaving my house I stayed at my best friend's house. Then we went to Garda station (police) when I was ready.

After going to the station I was assigned to a social worker and put in a foster home. But I have two other brothers and I sometimes get very depressed. I ask myself if I made the right decision leaving them alone, even though I know I have, I can't stop feeling bad. So, the trouble I am having is now is how to cope with this problem.





Stories of Starvation: From Sudan in 1993 to Mosul in 2016

By Abdul Rahman Madala

A short while ago I was in one of the journalism classes that we attend as “**Migratory Birds**”, and the topic was what effect photographs have on public opinion. We looked at and analysed some of the 100 most influential photographs of the past decades. They included the one taken by Kevin Carter entitled “The vulture and the little girl”.

Carter was a photographer from South Africa and while on a visit to a remote village in the Sudan, he heard a small girl crying. When he reached her, he saw that she was dying of malnutrition and that there was a vulture nearby looking at her, waiting for her to die so that he could eat her. Carter won a Pulitzer Prize for that photograph in 1993, but was heavily criticised for choosing to take it rather than helping the girl. He later committed suicide.

I was very moved and almost reduced to tears because I had lived through a similar state of hunger when we were besieged inside Mosul, my hometown. The besieging forces had denied us food and water for 6 months. Meanwhile, inside the city, Isis was only giving food to its

members. They refused to give us any, even though we offered to pay for it. There were so many innocent people in the city, but no one was giving them anything.

We had foreseen the siege, so we had stocked up a few days before it began. As soon as it started we rationed our food consumption considerably so that it would last as long as possible. We had very little left apart from a few ingredients. Like many others, we had some plain uncooked wheat left, because they had even refused us water. In order to get water, we had to go to the well but the whole process was very difficult because we only had buckets. We would lower them into the well and fill them with water for drinking, washing and cleaning the house. We consumed as little as possible in case we were unable to leave the house because of the bombings. We had actually been bombed while drawing water, but we carried on despite the danger, because our need was so great.

On the final day of the siege our neighbour came with his son and said that they hadn't eaten for two days and that the boy couldn't take it any more, he needed to eat something right away. When we saw him in that terrible state, ready to faint from hunger and thirst, my elder brother brought in what was left from our food. There was a little rice and some tomato sauce and he gave half to our neighbour saying “Half for you and half for us”.

Our neighbour was so touched that he almost cried from joy and wished us well. We told him that sharing food was an obligation because it is God that has provided it. Neighbours should help one another in times of need.

Following those good intentions of ours, Mosul was liberated by the security forces the following day. The meal we shared was the final one of the siege. We were then able to find food to eat and water to drink. We were happy again, because we no longer had the fear that accompanied us during the occupation of Mosul by Isis, and because we left behind the hunger that almost killed our city.

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