

ERASMUS+ KA2

MIGRATION
AND
REFUGEE
CRISIS



FROM THE
STUDENTS'
POINT
OF VIEW

2017-2019

2017-1-SK01-KA219-035407

Co-funded by the
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Acknowledgment

Many thanks to everybody who actively contributed to the project development and its aims fulfillment.

A special thanks go to all the people, who left their home countries to start a new life abroad, to those who opened their hearts and let us write about their life stories.

SONG OF THE NEW EMIGRANTS - written by Pasqualino Bongiovanni

Don` t ask anything more!

translated by Giuseppe Villella

We have locked away

dedicated to Franco Costabile

our tears

with picklocks

of anger,

with nothing.

We have closed

with shame

all the vowels

wide and wild.

We have learned to fold life

in a suitcase,

to shelve tidely

the soul in a box.

We have

titles of hope

closed in the folder.

We sing

music by heart

We beat in time

and answer to the rhythm

of any claim.

We turn

at every name

written on the map,

we get off

at the stops on request.

We pay the right,

take the change,

and that` s it.

Vincenza, 9 September 2002

INTRODUCTION

People have always been migrating and trying to find better conditions for life. Each human being has the right to live in peace and happiness. Migration is just as old as humankind itself. It has always been here. However, nowadays it means a big challenge for Europe. As many countries face different social, economical and political difficulties that have resulted in unrest, violence and in some cases even wars, people are forced to leave their homes to survive. In some cases they are motivated by the vision of something better that they don't have in their home countries. On the one hand there is EU policy and rules related to migrants, but on the other hand EU citizens are not well prepared to accept this big challenge of migration. Many people have negative attitudes to the migrants and they are afraid that their presence will have negative consequences on their lives. This is due to the hoax that we can see in mass media. In general we can say that people are afraid of something that they are not familiar with and that they don't know. They have prejudices because they are not informed well enough or they don't select information critically. Whether people accept migrants in their communities or not, the truth is that we cannot stop this situation about migration to Europe. We can only learn how to react on it and we have to find the ways how to live in peace and mutual understanding.

The project had been developed as the reflection of present situation in the world. However we aimed to depict this issue from different point of view. We have been studying and analyzing the situation in the home countries of migrants. We perceived the migrants as human beings – with their fears, worries and dreams which made us to interview them in order to write their life stories.

[#project coordinators#](#)

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**Liceum Ogólnokształcące im.
Powstańców Wielkopolskich w Środzie
Wielkopolskiej**

Spojená škola Kollárova 17, Sečovce

IES Johan Carballeira

**SOLSKI CENTER
SLOVENJ GRADEC**



Licei Statali Francesco Angeloni

Colegiul Tehnic "Toma N. Socolescu"



Licei Statali Francesco Angeloni

www.liceiangeloniterni.gov.it

contact person: Tiziana Milanese, tizianamilanese@gmail.com



LICEI STATALI F. ANGELONI



Our school is situated in Terni, a city of small dimension with a long historical past. The urban area occupies the southern part of Umbria and, during the industrial revolution represented a national pole of the great iron and chemistry industry. Nowadays it is trying to find a new dimension.

Our school has always had a historical and cultural importance in Terni. It was built in 1932, and it was called Istituto Magistrale, that is a kind of school meant to educate and train would-be primary school teachers. The school has always been highly regarded and many young people attended its courses. Though, in 1999/2000 new courses were added and it was turned into the school that nowadays everyone knows, modern and open to international experiences and relationships.

One thousand and thirty-five students are currently attending the four different courses and over the latest years it has needed more spaces to accommodate a constantly raising number of pupils. So it is now composed of two premises located in different parts of the town. The four courses the school provides are the following: Foreign Languages, Music, Social Studies & Economics, Human Sciences:

- **The Foreign Languages Course** offers the study of five languages: English, French, Spanish, German, and even Chinese. It is also possible to attend an **EsaBac Course** which, thanks to a Franco-Italian high-school program, allows students to get a double diploma.

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Who we are



- **The Music Course** is recommended to all students with a special passion for music. In addition to mainstream second-cycle programmes, this course provides such subjects as performance and interpretation, music technology, theory, analysis and composition.
- In **the Human Sciences Course**, studies are focused on the most important fields of investigation such as human behaviour, pedagogical research, psychology and historical-social issues.

This lyceum gives the opportunity to enter all kinds of university (like nursing, speech therapy, social studies) and in particular the educational field.

- **The Social Studies & Economics Course** is the only one present in our town. This course gives the chance to do juridical, economic, social, historical and linguistic studies.

Over the years, our school has been equipped with various modern laboratories and furniture to enhance interactive classes. Since 2001 with Comenius Projects, it has also been providing the students with many different European Erasmus exchanges, mobility and experiences in order to make them real European citizens.



Our school also offers many extra activities such as a study week in London, a theatre workshop, writing talent competitions, High School Band, UNO meetings simulation and much more...

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Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Powstańców Wielkopolskich w Środzie Wielkopolskiej

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Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Powstańców Wielkopolskich is a high school with its great history.

The school is in Środa Wielkopolska, a small town in Greater Poland. It was founded in 1922 as a middle school where students could learn all subject in Polish. It was a very important fact for our local Polish community that at last we were allowed to teach and learn the language of our fathers after 123 years of slavery.

The school is beautifully located in the town centre surrounded by green areas. The building is a landmark of our home town.



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The motto of our school is to give roots and wings'. It means we want to encourage our students to be open-minded and willing to face new challenges but on the other hand we try to teach them not to forget their origin.

To meet requirements of today's market our school offers four profiles. Future doctors and pharmacists learn in a science class where biology and chemistry are taught on an extended level. The next profile – Business Studies is for would-be businessmen. Students can learn how to be creative and active on a labour market. The third profile offered by the school is European Studies where students can learn how



to conscious European Union citizens. The last profile – Information Technology is for students who want to be computer programmers, mathematicians and physicists.

Our students are involved in many international projects and school exchanges. They have visited most countries in Europe. They also support our local charities and organize various events. They achieve good school-leaving exam results and most of them continue their further education in Poland and Europe



Colegiul Tehnic "Toma N. Socolescu"

www.tnsoc.ro

contact person: Marian Dragomir, dragomirmarian1412@yahoo.com



“Toma Socolescu” Technical Highschool from Ploiesti is a school institution with a tradition in the training of future specialists in the field of "Constructions and public works". It was founded in 1958 under the name of "Professional School of Construction". Taking into account the local and regional development trends, the school proposed

areas of interest to the community, predominantly those of public works and construction.

“Toma Socolescu” Technical Highschool Ploiesti operates in accordance with the clear strategy formulated in the projective documents where the mission, values and objectives that tend towards a model of a culture of excellence. The most frequent qualifications offered for level 4 training (relevant for the "Toma Socolescu" Technical Highschool) are the following: Technological (Drawing technician for construction; Furniture designer and interior designer; Finished woodworking technician and Environmental technician and environmental protection) and Theoretical (Mathematical Informatics; Natural Sciences and Social Sciences).

In the context of Romania's integration in the European Union, “Toma Socolescu” Technical Highschool wants to become a guarantor of the quality of education, following the correct application of education policies developed by the Ministry of Education, the continuing education of teachers and creating a stimulating work environment to facilitate individual

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Who we are



development of each young beneficiary of the education system so as to give sense of confidence and aspirations, both personally and professionally.

Promoting quality education, modern and flexible creativity abandoning rigid and old methods in the context of Romania's integration in the European Union, "Toma N. Socolescu" Technical High-school wants to become a guarantor of the quality of education, following the correct application of education policies developed by the Ministry of Education, the continuing education of teachers and creating a stimulating work environment to facilitate individual development of each young beneficiary of the education system so as to give sense of confidence and aspirations, both personally and professionally.

Promoting quality and flexible rigid and student teacher teamwork, collaborative leverages in the intellectual knowledge in ensure a good strategy will



education, modern creativity abandoning undemocratic style relationships, developing relationships that students' experience and aesthetic teaching respect and communication provide a model of

inter educational progress, generating active and productive citizens, able to integrate successfully into the community.

A fundamental idea underlying the development and provision of VET is partnership. It has been estimated that a percentage of style student teacher relationships, teamwork, developing collaborative relationships that leverages students' experience in the intellectual and aesthetic knowledge in teaching respect and ensure a good communication strategy will provide a model of inter educational progress, generating active and productive citizens, able to integrate successfully into the community.

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Spojená škola Kollárova 17, Sečovce

<https://gdusecovce.edupage.org/>

contact person: Lucia Mikulová, lmikulova@gmail.com



Spojená škola Kollárova 17, Sečovce is located in the eastern part of Slovakia. It is a united school that consists of two parts – Secondary Grammar School and Secondary Vocational School. Secondary Grammar school provides general education for four years and education focused on information technologies and coding for eight years. Secondary

Vocational School provides education in four study fields – computer network mechanic, machine and device mechanic, cook and waiter/waitress. The very new study field – protection of people and property was introduced in 2017. After finishing Secondary education, students can continue in their education in the study field of social and law activities and economic informatics. The school has about 600 students who live in our town or commute to school from neighboring villages and towns. The school management puts an emphasize on students' involvement in different kinds of competitions and after school activities. Our students are given an opportunity to develop and improve their skills and abilities after school, when they can join various study groups from sports and foreign languages up to practical ones. The school area with all its sports facilities is open for our students even in the afternoon and at the weekend.

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Who we are



We are very aware of the necessity to be open for cooperation and sharing experiences about formal and non-formal education. The school has a very positive attitude to international projects and we always like to be involved in project activities. Our school has been involved in international projects since 2004, not only in the former Lifelong learning programme but we have also attended the simulation of UNESCO in Buenos Aires. By developing the project activities our students can learn about different countries and meet the people from different cultural and social environment. As our school is located in a disadvantaged area (high unemployment rate and low economic status), participation in the project is a unique opportunity for many of our students to experience life in different European countries.



The school philosophy promotes individual attitude to each student with the aim to find their strengths and encourage them to work hard and develop their skills and abilities. Erasmus+ programme has been a very useful tool which helped us to introduce the European dimension of education in our organisation, to learn good practices and give the students the occasion to develop a European sensitivity and improve their foreign linguistic competence. We would like to give the students an opportunity to develop their personality in European context, to improve their social and communication skills with the emphasize on English as a foreign language. We want them to become skillful and well-prepared workers for European labour market.

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Solski center Slovenj Gradec

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ŠOSG

Šolski center Slovenj Gradec

Srednja šola Slovenj Gradec in Muta



We are a vocational school from the northern part of Slovenia in two locations: Slovenj gradec and Muta. The school was established in 1967. We educate (students aged 14 – 19) in the following programmes: tourism, economy, shop assistant, kinder garten teacher, environmental technician, catering, and woodworking. We offer three year vocational programmes with a two year upgrade as well as technical education programmes. There are about 500 students and 65 teachers.

After passing the Matura exam our students are qualified to go to university or directly to the labour market. Our students take part in different competitions winning the highest awards (in the fields of cooking, serving, tourism, economy, environmental protection, woodworking etc.) We've been also taking part in various projects related to our programmes.

We have taken part in several Comenius school partnership projects so our students are well aware of their European citizenship as well as the importance of cooperating with the students from foreign countries. Almost every year we visit the European parliament in Brussels/Strasbourg where we also take part in the discussion with the representatives of other countries.

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Who we are



At our school there are many students from the families who came to live in Slovenia from other countries: FYR Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, Albania, thus our teachers have gained a lot of precious experience dealing with the problems that may arise in such situations: i.e. differences in culture, religion, language etc.



The teachers (English teacher, social worker, gym teacher, geography and history teacher) have participated in various international projects (i.e. Comenius partnerships, Comenius individual mobilities, Erasmus+ and others), one of them is a mentor of the student's school community. The social worker has been dealing (on a daily basis) with the problems foreign students at our school experience. She is constantly contacting, consulting and working with social and other institutions.



IES Johan Carballeira

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Johan Carballeira IES is a state secondary school with 600 students and 70 teachers which depends on Consellería de Cultura, Educación e Ordenación Universitaria de Galicia (Education Regional Council of Galicia). Our school offers the following education levels: Secondary Education, Bachillerato (advanced secondary education) and Vocational Training.

Our secondary school was created in 1990. We have compulsory secondary education, high school, secondary and high school education for adults and vocational training for 4 different families: Administration, Mechanical Manufacturing, Personal Image and Maritime-Fishing.

The Johan Carballeira is situated in Bueu, a municipality in Galicia, Spain, in the province of Pontevedra. Bueu belongs to the local region of Morrazo together with Cangas do Morrazo, Moaña and Marín. It is located on the northern edge of the Morrazo peninsula. Its area is about 31 km² and a population of around 13,000 inhabitants. The economy of Bueu has always been related to the sea. The activities of the primary sector complement industrial and services industries, which are also based on the maritime activities. The primary sector (mainly fishing) contains 24.4% of the working population (2006 data). 39% of the working population work within the secondary sector. This sector's main activities are building, shipyard activities and the canning of seafood. The services sector has 37% of the working population with shopping and tourism being the main activities.

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The relationship who covers all the economic sectors is the sea, it means also that for many years there were many people who should emigrate because of the low incomes.

Social movements were relevant in Morrazo in the first half of the 20th century where the presence of the CNT (National Confederation of Labour, anarchist) was significant. In fact, there was a lot of people that was the head trade union during the Second Spanish Republic, who must exiliate to another countries. Nowaday, in Morrazo there live people who was refugee.

Although Galicien people have been migrate or refugees combating political and economics problems of the country , there are still afraid receiving migrants.



Projects of the centre:

- Activities of theater.
- Literature and science fair.
- Work in coexistence and integration.
- Exchanges with Germany and France.
- Erasmus projects for students and teachers.

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What we have been doing



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Sharing experiences

The Erasmus Plus project is based on sharing experiences and culture interchanges among EU countries, such as Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Poland, Slovakia and Romania who took part in the activity. Overall, we liked the experience and loved being with our hosts and their families which were warm and welcoming trying to make us feel at home. We particularly became friends with the Poland and Spanish guys whom we are still in contact with through Whatsapp.

CHIARA



LICEI STATALI F. ANGELONI

I took part in two blended mobilities: in Italy and in Poland. We did a lot of activities together, at school and out of school.

Nowadays we are still in touch with our correspondents and we have a whatsapp group all together!

In conclusion, I can say that I will always remember this experience for ever and I strongly suggest everyone trying it at least once in a lifetime.

ANDREA



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Opportunity



Going back to the project, I think it was well organized, furthermore the school that hosted us was big and accessorized with modern furniture and technologies.

We had a meeting at the immigration centre with people who work there, who told us the story of Romanian immigration. During the other days, we went to some villages like Brasov or Sinaia, where we visited awesome castles and we had some meetings with local people. The activity that I liked the most was held in the afternoon of the second day when the project coordinator divided us into five groups and every group had to answer some questions related to the history of Europe created by the opponents. I really enjoyed it first of all because I love quizzes, then I learned things that I didn't know and finally because my group won the game!

Generally speaking, this experience helped me to enlarge my knowledge about Europe and mainly immigration in Europe, but also to discover a new country and to meet new friends from all over the continent, whom I still talk and chat with. I hope that in my life I'll have the opportunity to do a similar experience again, because I really liked it.

LUCA

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Freedom

It was a wonderful experience to me. I saw how people my age spend their free time in a foreign country, how schools look like and how everyday life goes there. I liked it very much.

I feel I learned a lot. I took part in an interesting lecture about refugees in Ljubljana and I realised that all these procedures of applying for asylum were more complicated and harder than I could ever imagine. I'm also happy I was able to watch presentations and videos about the places where the participants were from. I was surprised how much freedom and trust we got from the teachers and organisers.

Thanks to this I could get to know more about the life of my Slovenian peers. I highly recommend Erasmus projects especially to all the languages lovers, foreign cultures enthusiasts and curious travellers! But I'm sure everybody can find something special about these meetings for themselves

ZOFIA



What we have been doing



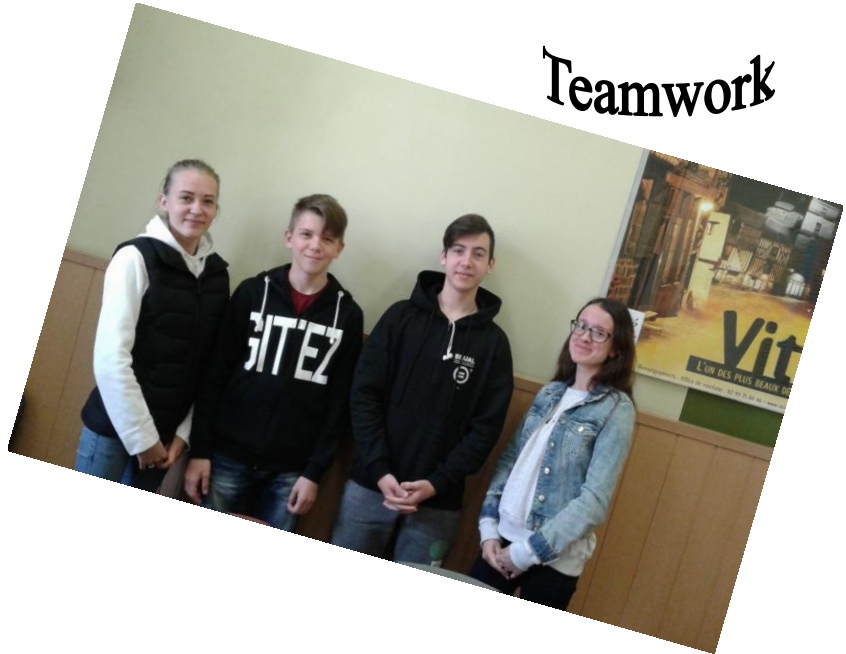
Teamwork

Migration Erasmus Project was one of the most important experiences in my life.

I have learnt a lot of new things. First of all, my languages skills are much better. The next thing is teamwork. I learnt how to work with other people and how to cooperate with them.

I can honestly recommend teenagers taking part in Erasmus projects. It's a big chance to visit other countries, make foreign friends and improve your language skills.

JULIA



I'm so thankful that I could be a part of this project. I got know more about migration. To be honest, I've never been interested in this subject. Because of the project I was pleased to meet Yana and Denis (students from Kazakhstan) who were my interviewees and it was my best-loved activity before a meeting in Spain. Then, I absolutely felt in love with Spain and Spanish people. My host family was really lovely and I miss them a lot. I won't forget those stunning views. The only one thing I didn't like about Spain was traditional food, because I'm not actually a fan of seafood. I loved most activities in school, especially an interview with guy from Morocco. I keep my fingers crossed for him.

All in all, I made some wonderful friends and I stay in touch with my group. It's great to have foreign friends. I could also practise my English skills which was an important issue for me. I'd recommend this adventure to everybody!

DOMINIKA



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I n t e r v i e w s



The interviews were taken at the The General Inspectorate for Immigration in 2017 by the pupils Ionita Daniel and Colt Gabriel and Bozdemir Ionut and teacher, Dragomir Marian.



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Immigration

The The General Inspectorate for Immigration of Romania is organized and functions as a specialized structure of the central public administration, a public institution with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Administration and Interior on the basis of Law no. 118/2012 regarding the approval of Government Emergency Ordinance no.18 / 2012 for amending Government Emergency Ordinance no.30 / 2007 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Administration and Interior, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no.461 of 9 July 2012. It was established by the reorganization of the Romanian Immigration Office, the General Inspectorate for Immigration exercises the powers given to it by law to implement Romania's policies in the fields of migration, asylum and the integration of foreigners, as well as the relevant legislation in these areas.

MARIAN

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What we have been doing



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Confidence



SPOJENÁ ŠKOLA
Kollárova 17 SEČOVCE

Beautiful memories

Erasmus projects gave me a lot of useful experiences such as being independent and being able to communicate in foreign languages and always improving. It gave me opportunity to travel and see different cultures, make new friends and beautiful memories that I will never forget. I enjoy doing activities on exchanges. I gained more confidence with speaking in English. I also noticed that I am more creative and opened to people and new things.

IVANA

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What we have been doing



Courage



Firstly the Erasmus project gave me a courage to speak in English language with people I don't know. It gave me a lot of experience in travel, communication, and handling critical situations. Thanks to Erasmus I can explore different cultures, make new friends and it gave me amazing and beautiful memories that I will never forget. I'm looking forward to new Erasmus project because I'm interested in it.

EMA

Communicate



Explore

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What we have been doing



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Š@SG

Šolski center Slovenj Gradec
.....
Srednja šola Slovenj Gradec in Muta

Valuable

In today's society if you are different it is poorly accepted, therefore it seems to me important that students are educated about this. The project topic was accepting difference and, in my opinion, quite a few students, who took part in it, changed their view. If someone is different from you, that does not mean they are less valuable!

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During the project I've changed my opinion about many things in life. I see people in a different way than I used to and I think I am now a different, better person, which I am proud of.

Proud



My experience participating in this project was very nice. I met a lot of new awesome people, that we keep staying in touch. I learned about different cultures, countries and about migrants.

Awesome

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Learn



Erasmus was an incomparable experience for me. It allowed me to meet new people, to live new experiences and to learn about migration.

LARA

I had a great time.
The experience was incredible.

SABELA



It was an incomparable experience and I met incredible people.

LAURA

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Really nice, it was very cool, I met lots of people and I had a great time and learnt a lot.

MANUEL

It was an amazing experience that allowed us to know another part of the world and we met a lot of very interesting and nice new people.

NOA

Amazing

From this experience I take very good friends, unforgettable moments and knowledge about other cultures.

CARLA

World

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Migrants around us



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Everybody is a migrant

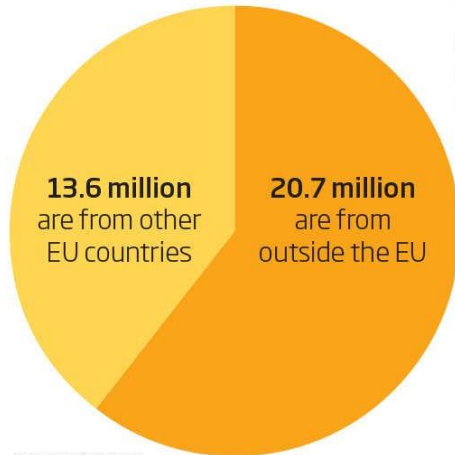
war

work study friends family hope

peace love adventure coincidence

34.3 million

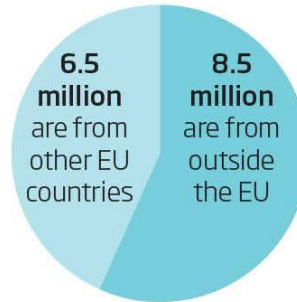
people in the EU are citizens of a country other than the one where they live



SOURCE: EUROSTAT

15 million

workers in the EU are citizens of a country other than the one where they live



freedom

right of asylum

Better life challenge travel

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Migrants around us



LICEI STATALI F. ANGELONI

“The first dish I had was pasta”. These are the words Abdoul Wali, a 23-year-old boy who decided to leave his family his native land and his everyday life told us on our first meeting. On TV or in the newspapers we always listen to and read about lots of speeches,



statistics and politicians who try uselessly to solve this crisis but what about the real subjects of this crisis? Refugees are not objects or numbers, they are people, just like we are: we, the ones who are deciding for their future, the ones who call them a problem just because they are trying to survive. Each refugee has a name, an age, a favourite food, a story. One of the thousands names is his, Abdoul Wali. At first sight he looks like a normal boy but in reality, behind his strong character he hides a troubled story. He was born in Mali, a country in West Africa, where he studied languages, focusing on French and African literature. He had friends, he liked studying. He was safe and comfortable. At the age of seventeen he decided to escape from Mali because

the dictator Moussa Taorè wanted to practice the Sharia in the country and so there was a civil war. He moved to Libya without saying anything to his parents and to his friends. He faced a long and difficult journey: he departed from Mali with a pick-up and after several days he arrived in Libya where he stopped for one year and three months to pick up potatoes and tomatoes.

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Migrants around us



Then he decided to come to Italy and so he climbed on a double- floor boat with 300-350 people where two migrants, among those who were in the inferior floor, died of asphyxia. Abdoul arrived in Italy safe and sound and he says: “When I arrived here I was very excited”. He arrived in Catania and, on landing on the Italian shores, the Malian boy’s first reaction was to cry and pray: “Realising that the journey is finished and you are still alive is an indescribable feeling”, Abdoul says. He was accompanied to a refugee centre where he remained for some time. Now Abdoul Wali lives in Narni and he works as a cultural mediator and regrets not finishing his studies. He can speak seven languages: Italian, French, English, Arabic, and three African dialects. In Italy he has done some civil service working with children. “He is very good at dealing with children, he is patient and never raises his voice” one of his colleagues says admiringly. He has also attended a course to become a pizza-maker (pizzaiolo) and his friends say he is very good at cooking pizza, but when he is praised for his skills he replies modestly “Yeah, I’m quite good”.

A letter from Italy

Dear friend,

You won’t believe it but I’m writing you from Italy.

I finally got here. It was a very long journey and I wasn't able to write you during it because of my conditions but it was worth it. I’m not sure about the duration of the journey, maybe one year and a half, I don’t remember. The bad news is that I arrived here alone because my parents couldn’t make it... I cried for days and my only company was the memory of you, in the midst of all those people who were on the boat for my own reasons.

I am so sorry I didn’t manage to say good bye to you before leaving Iraq. I tried to phone but the line was always busy. I left Baghdad on the 25th of April with my parents by my dad’s car; he drove up to the border with Syria where we picked a half-broken minibus full of families, men and women with their little children crying because they didn’t want to leave home.



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We stayed on that minibus for almost ten days without eating at all and some of the children died in their mothers' arms. It was terrible! When I had to go to the bathroom, I crouched down on a corner of this minibus and I had to do it in front of everybody, I was so ashamed of myself. It was so embarrassing!

When we got to Lebanon, I couldn't be happier; I thought we were all finally free and that we were going to take a boat to get to Europe. But when we got off the minibus, some men dragged us to a detention centre where they forced us to stay stored into very tiny cells: kids by their own and the adults into different cells. When we were released, I couldn't find my parents. Those bad people told me that they had left me there and had gone to the U.S. without me but I didn't believe them. The truth came out soon afterwards: they had killed my entire family and left me alone in this world full of horrible and mean people who only care about money and their own business. I can't explain how desperate I was! By the way, I couldn't afford the trip to Europe and so I had to do some jobs that I'm not proud of... however, after about seven months, I had earned a decent amount of money to afford the journey. I boarded a boat at the beginning of December, it was very cold and the sea was so rough that the it almost overturned. I had never been so close to death!. I don't really know how much it lasted but when I got to shore, I was welcomed by lots of volunteers who helped me and the people who had afforded the journey with me. We were subjected to health checks, fed and then we all had the opportunity to take a rest on very comfortable beds. Even though I didn't have my parents anymore, I was happy- I had made it!

Nowadays, thanks to these volunteers, I'm working in a restaurant where I earn enough money to pay for my studies as a refugee. I want to help whoever is going through the same problems I had gone through myself and I want to guarantee them a future. I'm sending you my new address so that you can write to me and tell me everything about you and all the friends I left there.

I hope you haven't forgotten me! Write soon!

Yours truly, Alia.



“I’d like to become a famous person”.



This is Kolapo’s dream, a Senegalese boy that after 3 years living in a barge arrived in Italy.

Before arriving in Terni he stayed in Calabria and he visited Sicily for a project in which he understood what is the ‘mafia’.

Kolapo escaped from his country because even if in Senegal there isn’t a dictatorship, democracy is very complicated, in fact when he thinks about the Senegal political situation he says “we are black people into a white box” because there is a lot of corruption and Senegal is under the French control.

For this reason in all Senegalese schools, French is one of the most important subjects

Kolapo studied in an islamic school where the Koran represented the main subject. He had to study it by heart and only after this he had the possibility to choose which studies he wanted to follow.

Now he speaks 4 languages (wolof, fula, french and italian) and is very interested in politics but in his country to become a politician means to be ready to carry out the French government directions.

In fact he would like to make a career here in Italy and... why not? Maybe one day to become the mayor of Terni but he won’t be like our politicians because he’s not a slave to time and his idea to live a beautiful life is: “I live my life without the tyranny of time”

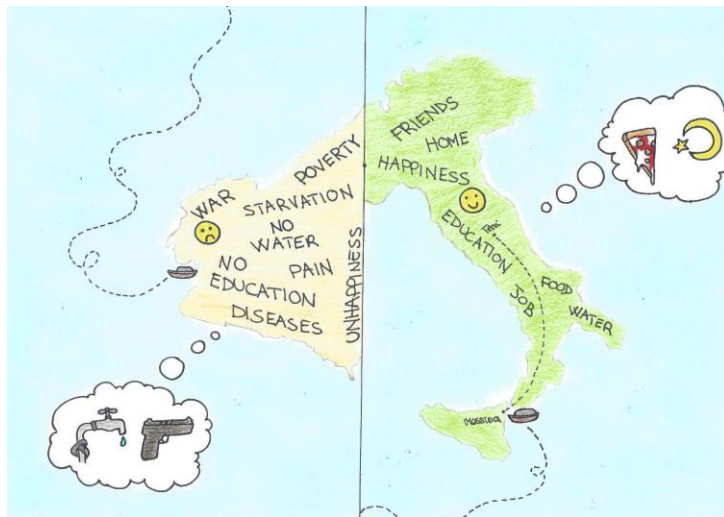


Migrants around us



“I would love to return back to Cameroon”

Iyasu is a 24 years old boy who was born in Cameroon and has been living in Italy for 3 years. He decided to leave his country because like many countries in Africa, Cameroon is continuing to struggle with its economic situation. While the rest of the world is seeing its poverty rate drop every year, most of Africa sees small to little changes. Poverty continues to hold an iron grip around the country, and issues such as extreme starvation, lack of suitable water supplies, a



lack of education and disease continue to hold down Cameroon. Iyasu wanted instead a better condition of life so he started his journey; he's the only one who knows how difficult and painful his travel was. He moved to Italy by sea without telling his family; he was alone and his journey took more or less 2 long years. Iyasu is a very religious person: he respectfully celebrates the holy

month of Ramadan which is one of the five pillars of his religion and it consists in a month spent fasting during the daylight hours (from sunrise to sunset), he also prays five times a day and even if he is busy doing something else, he has to interrupt the activity to pray. The prayer is preceded by the “ablution”, a ritual wash for the purpose of sacramental cleansing and they wash their feet, their hands and their face. Iyasu was shocked and impressed when he found out that Italian teenagers are not that respectful towards their religion. He first arrived in Italy in 2014 in Messina, and then he moved to Narni, near Terni. Now he still lives in Terni and he is working in a pizzeria. He has got lots of Italian and foreign friends, some of whom are immigrants too. He often calls his family who he has not seen from 2012, when he started his journey. He is very happy to live in Italy but, if one day the situation in his country changed, he would love to return back to Cameroon.

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“12,000 Km from Home”

My name is Andrea Millucci, and I'm a 17-year-old Italian boy. I think that I'm a very lucky person for many reasons, but one of the characteristics that I prefer and that makes me different from a lot of my friends or classmates is the fact that I'm half Argentinian! It's pretty cool to know that my ancestors' story started halfway around the world, because it's as if my story too started there, I guess. Obviously, I love my Italian relatives too, but I'm not that intrigued by them because I know that their lives are similar to mine and because I know that if I want to know something about their story I can easily meet them and ask my questions (which is impossible to do with my overseas relatives). I would like to know everything about them, because I'm sure that their culture and their habits are very different from ours, and as I said before the fact that it's not easy for me to talk to them makes me even more curious. Now it's as if I consider my mother 100% Italian (and I think that she does it too) because she has been living for more years in Italy than in Argentina (an example could be that during the football world cup she roots for the Italian team!) and after all this time she is an integral part of this country, but sometimes I remember that she came from far away and that she faced a lot of difficulties. It'd be a pity not to tell her story because this kind of witnesses enrich our wealth of experience. I could write everything I know about her, but then I thought that the only person who can know exactly what it feels like to change radically your own life was herself, so I asked her to tell everything about her life as an immigrant and

this is what she said:

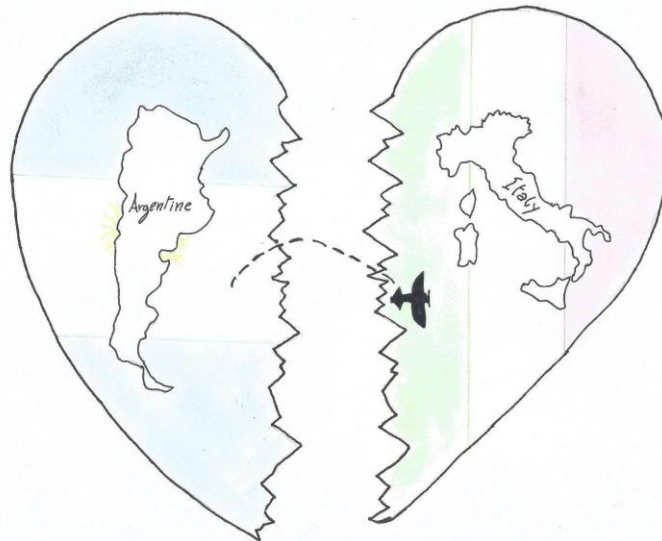
"First of all I'll introduce myself; I'm Sandra Beatriz Gomez and I'm from Argentina. If someone asked me why I decided to live in Italy I would answer that it was fate because I wasn't supposed to move permanently, but it happened and that's ok! I arrived in Italy in 1990, more precisely on the 16th June. I will never forget this date because it was the first time that I had set foot in a foreign country, and it was a very special one because I was sort of 12.000 km far from home; I was just with some friends and we were very young, I was only 22! Though, I wasn't that scared because I was supposed to stay here just for a few weeks. I was on holiday, and I was very excited especially because it was my first trip as an adult, without my parents. We had a lot of fun! We visited the city (we were in Ravenna) and we went to parties. One night I met the man who would become my husband, and this is the main reason why I talk about "fate". Of course I wasn't forced to stay and probably I was a little reckless because I left my country, my



Migrants around us



family, and the university, and maybe no one else would have done it, but I think that I've made the right choice because that day I literally built my entire life; a life that in Argentina would have been completely different and maybe more difficult. Moreover, all the friends that were with me, for one reason or another decided the same, and it helped me a lot, because we were risking all together.



Obviously, it wasn't all that easy, in fact just imagine that I was living in a country of which I didn't know the language, and it was a big obstacle because in the first period I couldn't talk to anyone and even going shopping was a challenge for me, but I had to learn Italian and I couldn't give up! Then I started missing home. I was fine here, it was my new life and I was ok with it, but when you start realizing that you cannot go back home every time you want, you understand that it's difficult. I realized that when my grandparents passed away. Then my mom, and the list goes on and on... This is the scariest part, because I can't know what will happen in Argentina, where I have all my relatives, and I might not be able to go back there when I need it, and this is very, very painful and makes me feel weak.

All in all, I'm satisfied of my choice and of its consequences. I've been lucky and I'm so grateful for everything. My sons are Italian, my friends are Italian, and now my heart too is Italian. I'm lucky because I had the possibility to know two beautiful countries and I love them both. "



FRENCH PERSONALITY, MULTIETHNIC WOMAN

Born in Marseille. Spanish father and French mother. Grown up in France. Dominique Odile Anton told us her story as a migrant.

She arrived in Italy in 1982 for a university Exchange in Perugia, Umbria, where she could not imagine to come back. Here she attended a class to teach other students at “Facoltà per stranieri”, where she met people from all over the world. Lots and lots of languages, but they all spoke Italian. It was an incredible year: she was sent to Viareggio, Tuscany, with the Spanish Maria Teresa and the English Nigel, and they became flatmates. Teresa was from Valencia as Dominique’s father, so that year was characterised by a sort of “war for the best Empanadillas in Valencia”. Empanadillas are typical Spanish salt cakes which Dominique is fond of and she would eat as many as possible. Later she started teaching in an ITC. Working in an Italian school surprised her: there was more freedom, the timetable was shorter and, above all, students had a relationship with their teachers. She remembered that in France teachers gave serious punishments as gluing exercise books on their backs and sending them to the school male section, or other kinds of humiliation.



She came back to France and she dreamt of moving to New Zealand, but in the meantime she was called by Pisa University, where she met her future husband and she started working at “Facoltà delle scienze politiche”. After seven years she had to make a difficult decision: family or career. She decided for her family. Her husband wanted to come back to his hometown, so they

went to Terni. She had kids and started teaching French in high schools.

She had never been devoted to her birthplace, but she wishes to return to Marseille when she is older. She misses its multiethnic culture or going for a walk at the seaside.

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From Ukraine to Poland



My name is Dmitrij Malinowski. I am 16 years old. I come from Donetsk in Ukraine. My mother is Jana. She works at the municipal office. She likes taking photos. Our way to Poland was very long. Let's start from the beginning. I was born in Donetsk, Ukraine. I attended two schools there. I spent my mornings and early afternoons in normal school and then the afternoon and evenings in music school.



I played many musical instruments (the piano, the guitar, the drums and xylophone. Donieck used to be the most beautiful city. It was pretty in every season. People called

Donieck 'The city of Roses' because you could see and admire those flowers everywhere. Donieck was famous for many cultural and art places: Donetsk Academical Theatre of Opera and Ballet, Circus, Fountain, Donetsk Botanical garden. Sport was also an important part of our life. Unfortunately war broke out. Suddenly Russian solders appeared and my life has changed. People's houses and flats were bombed. A lot of schools were destroyed. And what is the saddest things innocent people were killed.

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We didn't go to school for many days and weeks. We were too scared to go out because we didn't want to be killed. Thanks to my Polish roots my mother and me were offered the opportunity to escape. In January 2015, 200 people and me left the territory of military action. We could take only 30 kilos with us.

We were located in Rybaki in Poland where we learned Polish. This place was very peaceful and quiet. At last we were safe. After a while some Polish cities and towns invited us to settle down there.



My mother and I were invited to Środa Wielkopolska. I started my junior high school here where I had the opportunity to become familiar with European projects, too. I hope to lead a peaceful life and reach my goals

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Let`s meet our friends Yana and Denis from Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is a transcontinental country located in Asia, the most western parts are in Europe. Kazakhstan shares borders with Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and also adjoins a large part of the Caspian Sea.



Yana Rosinkaya is one of our friends who came to Poland from Kazakhstan with her family. She is 17 and she`s interested in music. She is a returnee and she`s been living in The Centre for Returnees in Sroda Wielkopolska since February 2019.

What were her reasons for immigration?

In 1936 Yana`s great-grandparents were deported to Northern Kazakhstan by Soviets. Living conditions appeared cruel and hard to deal with. They dreamed of return to native country but the Soviet Union took away required papers and didn`t agree anyone to leave. The whole life, Yana`s great-grandparents missed Poland. They couldn`t forget harsh conditions, building pithouses and hunger. Yana`s family lived in village called Kellerowka with population of around 3 thousand people.

After so many years finally appeared an opportunity for Yana, her parents and her siblings to come back to Poland. They decided to take advantage of an opportunity.

Denis is also our friend from Kazakhstan. He`s 15 and his biggest passion is football. He is a returnee and he`s been living in The Centre for Returnees in Sroda Wielkopolska since February 2019 as Yana. Denis lived with his family – mum Valentina, dad Anatol and sisters: Alona and Julia in a little village called Podlesnoe in Northern Kazakhstan.



What were his reasons for immigration?



His story is quite similar to Yana's. Denis' great-grandparents were deported to Northern Kazakhstan in the 1930s due to their nationality. It was hard to live in Kazakhstan embraced economic crisis. Denis' parents weren't getting paid very often so they decided to take advantage of an opportunity and come back to Poland because of their origins.

What are their expectations?

Actually they both haven't thought about it yet. Their hearts partly are still in Kazakhstan and they live here in Poland shortly. They like everything about living here so far, but still miss the rest of their families and friends. For sure, they believe in better future, safety and convenience.

What are problems they have been facing in Poland?

Their main problem is the language barrier. It's hard for them to learn Polish, but they're doing their best. Yana and Denis attend language lessons in our high school and in The Centre for Returnees. Also their parents learn Polish language in „Euronauka“– adult training centre in Sroda Wielkopolska. Yana's younger siblings learn language quicker so we can conclude that babies adapt to new place better and without much trouble.

What surprised them the most in Poland?

Yana: prettier houses, good condition of roads, nice school

Denis: people and their attitude, roads, warmer climate, pretty girls



Migrants around us



JOHANN WALTER SCHAEDLER from Liechtenstein

Johann Walter Schaedler is a citizen of Liechtenstein. He was born there and spent most of his life there. He is a person who has many passions and interests. However, skiing is his biggest passion. In this sports field he has achieved many spectacular successes. He took part in the Winter Olympic Games in Innsbruck in 1964 and Grenoble in 1968. He was three times the champion of the junior and five times the champion of Liechtenstein. His biggest success is the fifth place in the World Cup in Sierra Nevada. Thanks to his wife, Ewa, who is Polish who came to our country and started getting to know our culture

What were the reasons for emigration?

After I got married with Ewa and our children were born we decided to live in Poland. It wasn't actually a real decision it just happened after we bought our house here. So I would say it was more like our destiny.



Future plans, hopes and expectations.

Currently I don't have any plans. In September our daughter is going to start university and maybe she will go abroad. I just hope the best for us, for our family and that my children will find their paths in their lives and happiness.

Contacts with family and friends in their home country - are you still in touch?

The children from my first marriage live in Liechtenstein and also Sarah started living there 2 years ago, she is studying there. I also have my grandchildren there, so I keep in touch with them.

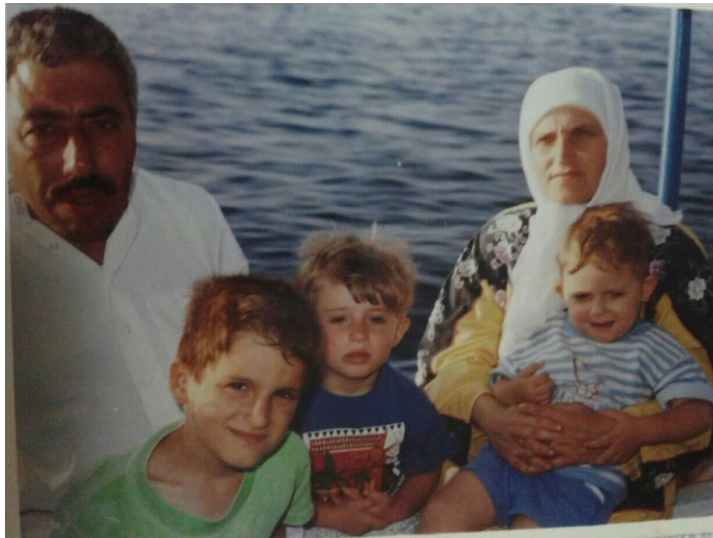
What problems have you encountered? What problems are you facing?

I have been living in Poland already 20 years now, but I still can't speak Polish. It's a very difficult language. I can understand what people talk about and I am able to answer a question but I'm not fluent in the language.

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“Man does not attain All his heart's desires, so winds do not blow as the vessels wish”.

This is a verse from Arabic poem, tells that a person may not achieve all of his dreams, due to difficulties and obstacles in life. Just like in my story;



I was born on 01/05/1995 and grew up in a family of 5 children and I was the youngest, my parents named me Nazem Anadani. I lived in a popular neighborhood in Aleppo downtown, and we were considered as a middle income family, my father was employed in a factory but he also had a second job which was independent. My mother, the housewife, was the one who took care of us.

Days passed by, I started my school and I was one of the best students. Frankly speaking, I did not like the school, so I used to copy my homework answers from my older brother's notebooks which he kept. In my childhood there was no modern technology as we have these days, so I was spending the most time playing outside with friends. I like playing football and I played for one and half a year in a team called "Al-Huriye". I also like swimming and watching movies.

When I was in a junior high school, I helped my father in his second job, and since that time I always worked on summer vacations; once in a bookstore, once in small restaurant. It made me realize the meaning of responsibility, and that nothing in life comes easy.

When I started my high school, I began seriously thinking about my future. I have always

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ERASMUS+ KA2

MIGRATION
AND
REFUGEE
CRISIS



2017-2019

Migrants around us



Co-funded by the
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wanted to become an Arabic literature teacher because I've always been fascinated by Arabic poetry, but our plans don't always go as we want. I couldn't complete high school because mercenaries had sneaked into many neighborhoods and started making troubles, then things got worse. The army had to interfere and asked the civilians to evacuate from some areas among which there was my neighborhood. Then we stayed at my aunt's house because their area was a bit safer. After a few months there, my mother got a phone call from the Polish embassy. They asked her if we would like to go to Poland, because they were evacuating Polish people from Syria. But unfortunately, my father couldn't leave with us because his passport was invalid. With all of this trouble happening around the city it was so difficult to get a new one in a short time, so after two years he had the chance to leave the country and join us in our new life.



On our way to the airport, I saw how terrifying the destruction was, I could barely recognize some places which I really knew well. On the plane, when it was about to take off, I realized that the path of my life began to change and that all my dreams in my country had to stay there and did not leave with me.

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Migrants around us



We landed in Warsaw after a long travel, my aunt and her sons were there waiting for us, then I met them for the first time. At the beginning we stayed at my aunt's house in a small village called Teresa. Actually, this place was cut off the world, there were no shops and no public transport there.

The first challenge awaiting for us was the new language, without it we couldn't get involved in the new life. My mother hadn't taught us Polish before, because we had never thought that we would leave our home. Then we began to recognize new habits, which were completely different from ours. After settling down we contacted the high school in Środa Wielkopolska, I provided the required documents to complete my education. When I attended the school, I found that the education system here is also different from my country. I had to study some subjects (mathematics) for example, which are optional in secondary schools in Syria. Everyone I met there was so kind and helpful whether he was a teacher or a student. Although I felt very comfortable there, but I could not find a close friend with whom I could share my time and moments of life, and this was the most difficult obstacle I faced.



In conclusion, life is full of surprises, but everyone has to adapt to the circumstances in which they live. In my opinion, there must be a day when the sun shines and the roses bloom again and their perfume will overcome the smell of gunpowder; and everyone who was forced to leave his home he will always

seek eagerly the opportunity to go back where his memories and nostalgia have been left.

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NIKITA YARUSHINSKIY from Kazakhstan



My name is Nikita. I am a normal teenager who has the same dreams and desires as every teenager, wherever he comes from and where he lives. My life story began in Kazakhstan, where I was born and spent 17 years of my life. Sport and athletics have always been the passion of my life. I trained and train a lot and persistently. My sports successes in Kazakhstan were interesting to sports managers in Poland. Thanks to my Polish origin, I was invited by one sports club in Środa Wielkopolska, where I can develop my sport skills..

What were the reasons for emigration?

In Poland I have bigger opportunities to develop my education and, what is the most important for me, sport. Besides, I have Polish ancestry, my grandparents are Poles and they live in Poland too.

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Future plans, hopes and expectations.

I train hard every day to every kind of competitions, Championships of Poland are in it. I hope that in future I will succeed in Poland.



Contacts with family and friends in their home country - are you still in touch?

My parents, as well as grandparents, live in Poland, we are still in touch. I contact my friends from Kazakhstan on social media all the time! Actually, longing isn't so hard right now, because I met lots of really funny people in here.

What problems have you encountered? What problems are you facing?

At the beginning I had problem with speaking Polish because I didn't know a lot of words but I think it is getting better from one day to another. In summer I'm going to have a really fast course in learning Polish. Besides language barrier, I have troubles with understanding complicated phrases from Biology or Physics.

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Opportunities and challenges on my way to be integrated in EU society via moving to Poland

by Aleksander Kuczyński

About me and my family



My 7-year-old sister was born in Moscow, lived in Moscow and in Astana and now she is enjoying the 2nd class of Primary School in Środa Wielkopolska

My mother finished High School in Economics and proactively uses gained skills in managing our family budget.

My father has got his degree in IT Engineering. His 1st job placed in Poland is for Thompson Reuters Company (Global Center placed in Gdynia).

I am 16 years old. I was born in Kazakhstan. I lived in Kazakhstan, Russia and now I live in Poland. In September 2018 I started High School in Środa.

How we moved to Poland

My great-grandparents and grandparents are Polish origin (they were relocated to Kazakhstan in 1936 by the Soviet Union). So, having Polish origin my family had a chance to apply for relocation back to Poland under National Repatriation Program.

Most important benefits of National Repatriation Program are:

- Adaptation center supports a program where repatriates can stay for 3+3 months and get initial courses of Polish language;

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- Partial coverage of transportation / relocation costs;
- Support with formalities and local authorities to get required documents.

My family applied for Poland National Repatriation Program in August, 2017, received a decision from Government Authority in February, 2018 and invitation from the adaptation center in July, 2018.

So, in July, 2018 we completed all our paper work and having Poland National Visa we took our car and went to Poland.

We arrived in Środa Wielkopolska at the adaptation center in the morning on 1st of August, 2018 and after 1st breakfast in Poland I got my 1st lesson of Polish language

Challenges

Language barrier and Cost of living

Polish is a West Slavic language and it has much in common with my native Russian language.

I got A2 Level Certificate of Polish. Cost of living in Poland is higher than in Russia and in Kazakhstan (accordingly to <http://www.mylifeelsewhere.com>: Poland is 34%-35% more expensive than Kazakhstan and Russia).

Opportunities and expectations

Integration in EU Society and EU Environment Poland has been an EU member country since 1st of May, 2004 and share common goals of 28 Member States in the European Union: They want all EU countries to prosper and improve living conditions. The EU already boasts the world's largest economic area.

- They want peace and security in Europe and in the world. Instead of fighting each other with weapons, they would rather sit around a table and talk things through.

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- They want all EU citizens to enjoy the same fundamental rights and liberties, to live without discrimination and to enjoy equal opportunities.
- EU citizens may travel without border controls, may study and work in other EU countries, and buy goods and services all over the EU.



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Poland is a country
with an incredible
and rich education
history. The
Jagiellonian
University in Cracow

is one of the oldest universities in the world, dating back to 1364. Studying in Poland gives a high quality European degree, recognizable all around the World and chance to pursue future career in EU

Erasmus+ provides great opportunities for young people to spend time abroad and widen their horizons, to learn the local language and improve existing knowledge.

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"Hussain is a 28 year old from Aleppo, Syria who chose to leave his country in search of a better life"

He arrived in Romania at the end of 2016, after first travelling through Lebanon and then Turkey. For a young man like him, the decision to leave his home, family and friends was made after the war started taking away any sense of certainty and stability.

During the war, the chances of finding a good job and following your dreams seem utterly impossible for most, setting aside the fact that lives are in danger. Hussain chose to come to Romania to reunite with his uncle that had already been living there for more than 20 years.

"When I first arrived here I was a little scared, arriving in a new country seemed overwhelming, even if I had someone I knew here," Hussain explained. "I had no idea what to do when I came to Romania, or how to find my way around. Fortunately, everyone I met was really welcoming. The people working at IOM Romania helped me a lot and changed my [original] impressions. I miss my family and my friends in Syria the most, a lot of them stayed back in Aleppo. If I think about home, the image and feel of the soft sand comes into my mind. Living in Romania has not been without challenges so far, but meeting people with a nice attitude has helped a lot. "

Settling in Romania is part of Hussain's plan; he wants to open a business that will connect the two countries. His biggest challenge for the moment is learning the Romanian language, but he follows his friends' advice to listen to the radio and to Romanian music every day. He often thinks about the people back home, and hopes that they find ways to stay united and agree with each other.

Nevertheless, he is adjusting to his new reality away from his beloved country. "Home will always be in Syria for me, but Romania is my adoptive country,"



"When things are up and down, I have to stand by the people"

"I came to Bucharest in 2012. For three years, I was worked as a housekeeper in different homes. When you go to a country which is not yours, sometimes you will face challenges. But that will not make you hate the people, no matter what the situation is in the country. Like here in Romania, when some of us wear African dress, others will turn to stereotypes and abuse us or call us names. Not even that will make me hate the people, because God brought me here, and God owns all the nationals. I'm a hair stylist now. What I'm doing here and the way I would work in Nigeria are not the same. The work here is better. It's very hard in Nigeria. The economic situation and the government are not good. You can't depend on the government, because they will not put food on your table. You have to fight for yourself, so that's why I'm here - to fight for myself.

The first two years in Romania were fantastic because back then, when you worked, you would get your money at the end of the month. Back then, I regarded this country so highly, like America, because this is my America. But as time went on, it could take three or four months to get your money. In 2016, I opened my own beauty salon. The work situation before was better, now everyone is complaining 'no money, no money,' referring to the economic situation in Romania. What makes me most excited about the salon is my customers. When they come, they relate to me as friend, especially some Romania women. The way they treat me makes me feel good. I like fashion. God created women to look beautiful, so I love to make women beautiful to their husbands. Even those who are not married yet should look good so that their future husbands can see them.

I gave birth to my two children here, but when things got bad, I sent them back to Nigeria. I miss my children even if their grandparents are taking care of them. I'm afraid that they will not feel their mother's love. There is no mother's love there. No matter how life is with their grandparents, there is no father's love. So, I feel bad somehow that we are not there with them and I can't bring them back here to Romania. Generally, I will tell people who work in Romania to have a holy life. To do only good things and love the people. That will be the advice I will give to them"

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"We decided to return to our home, but in due time"

"My name is Azad Shirwan Mohamed and I have a little daughter called Pelin. She is three years old. We arrived in Romania with my wife Helen, 5 months ago. We left our hometown, Erbil in Iraq, looking for a better job and a higher income. Back home, we were running a small family business, a mini market, but from the moment we could not afford supporting our little store, we shut it down. Meanwhile, my wife got pregnant and things got more complicated. Our journey to Europe was not easy. We were travelling for months and we arrived in Romania by Greece and through Turkey. We applied for asylum, but it proved to be a time-consuming procedure for us; my wife was already seven months pregnant. We realized that giving birth away from our hometown and our family was not a wise decision. So we decided to return to our home, but this time in a safe and organized way.

We found out about an NGO that deals with such causes voluntary return programs from a friend. So, we visited the NGO's premises in Bucharest and upon referral we were provided a reintegration counseling session discussing about our options. Since we had a experience in running our small business, we agreed with the reintegration counselor to restart our new business back home. Thanks to reintegration programme, we are now able to open a new mini – market and pay part of our rent. Our first expenses will be covered by this NGO. I have realized that returning to Iraq won't be a piece of cake. But through this Ngo's assistance we are looking forward to opening our new small business; we are looking forward to starting our new life and welcoming our baby. Furthermore, my wife who is giving birth in a few weeks will have the sincere support of our families who are waiting for us back home."

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Hope to end in Romania and see my son

“It’s been 11 years since the last time I saw my son. I can’t wait to hold him in my arms again!”

Hamide is taking out her phone and proudly shows photos of her son who lives in Finland, where she and her husband, Fawzi, will soon relocate. Her face lights up as she talks about her son and Fawzi shares her joy and pride: “Our boy left Syria to work in Europe when he was just 17 years old. He lives in Finland for 6 years now, where he works as an interpreter and he’s engaged with a Finnish girl”. “It was the first thing I told during the first interview of the relocation procedure! I need to go to Finland!” says Hamide.

“I have three daughters, too. One of them is with her family on the island of Chios. The other two are still in Afrin, our hometown in Syria. I hope they will be able to make it safely to Europe...” she adds with a tone of sadness in her voice.

Fawzi recounts the couple’s journey from Syria: “we arrived in Romania on February 20, 2016. From Chios we went to Athens and then straight to Idomeni, but we arrived too late, the borders had already closed. We have seen bad things happening at the camp there... after about a month we got back to Athens and started the relocation procedure. At first, we stayed in a squat in central Athens and then we moved to a wonderful hotel in Nea Makri. It was so nice there, so cozy. After that, with the EU program of relocation we went to Bucharest, Romania, a nice town but the conditions are not as good as in Greece. But you know, Romanian have been really supportive and helpful. They understand. I have worked very hard all my life, I’ve worked in hospitals, in cafes, you name it, I’ve done everything to bring my children up, and Hamide, too. Even now, we have crossed the sea and fields and mountains, we have endured so many hardships just to see our boy again.

” Hamide nods approvingly: “I wish that my girls, too, will eventually join us in Romania so that we can be all together again.

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"I really wanted to go there"

Yamman and Fatma are a young couple from Syria. Together with their childrens, Abdalrahman and Omar, they are among the first group of refugees to relocate to Romania. "I'm so happy to relocate to Romania; I really wanted to go there. It is a good country, a safe place for our children and for us. Also, my brother is there for a number of years, so I will meet him again. Before the war, I was studying computer technology at the university in Syria.

I wanted to continue with my studies, to do something more but the war broke and I had to stop. It was very difficult. Men were forcibly recruited to the government's army and if I stayed, I'd have to kill people, but I don't want to hurt anybody. I left Syria 5 years ago, alone. At first, I stayed in Turkey for 4 months and then I went to Egypt. I spent there about ten months and then I moved back to Turkey, where I stayed for 2.5 years. At that time, my then fiancé, Fatma joined me there. Our first child was born in Turkey and by the time Fatma was pregnant on our second, we left for Greece. Like so many others, we crossed the sea on a rubber boat and it was a terrifying adventure. About 30 minutes into the journey, the boat stopped, it was about 4 am in the night. We drifted for hours. We called the emergency number and the Greek coast-guard came with a boat and took only the women and children. They told us that they'd take our families to Greece and that they'd come back for us, the men. So they left, but it was the Turkish coastguard that arrived instead, 30 minutes later.

Maybe we had drifted towards Turkey, I don't know. They told us that they had to take us back to Turkey. I got very angry. I speak Turkish, I explained to them that our families were already taken to Greece. But they insisted and they took us back and since they were really angry, we didn't resist. In Turkey, they checked our papers and they let us go. However, I had all of the family's passports and our only mobile phone. Fatma, terrified, ended up all alone with



our child on a tiny Greek island. Fortunately, I was able to take another boat the next day and joined my family on the island of Kastelorizo

Then, the coast-guard moved us to the island of Rhodes where we got registered. Another boat journey took us to Athens. We decided to continue to the border, which was still open. It took us five days to get to the makeshift camp of Idomeni. We crossed Greece sleeping rough, one night at a basketball court, another night at a restaurant. We spent three weeks at Idomeni, waiting to cross, to no avail. We were given the number 136 and the last number allowed to cross was 65. So, we came back to Athens and went directly to the Asylum service and applied for the relocation programme.

We were given an apartment in the centre and waited for the news. In the meantime, our time here was well-spent. Greece is the most beautiful country I've ever seen. Three weeks after we got the news that we're going to Romania. I would like to continue with my studies in Bucharest and look for a job. I don't want to sit around doing nothing. I need to update my training on computer technology, it's been 5 years that I graduated and I really have to learn again, to follow the new developments. And Fatima, too, wishes to continue with her studies as well, she actually wants to be a nurse. "I hope we will be able as parents to provide a safe, beautiful life to our children in our new home in Romania".

The man from the country of pyramids and Pharaohs



The man called Asam was born in Cairo, in the country of 110 pyramids. Who would have thought that this chef would be cooking Egyptian specialties even in Slovakia in a few years later?

The reason for his migration was a beautiful Slovakian woman that he met in the cafeteria in Hurghada. While communicating in English, they found out that they

had something in common, and as the time went by they realized that it wasn't just the crush, but a true love.

Asam's father was not very happy about the situation, but he let his son decide following his heart. He let him with the words: „ *Do what you want to do*”.

The wedding took place in Cairo in the summer, and in October 2007 they were already living together in Slovakia. "People here are good, they have good hearts. There is beautiful nature and Slovakia is a good place to live. However not for business. "

Asam even did a Slovakian language course to make his life easier here, however, it wasn't

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very helpful. He has improved and is still improving thanks to his wife and friends. He finally got a Slovakian citizenship after 10 years.

He visits his family and friends in Egypt regularly, every summer for 4-6 months. He manages his own restaurant and the shop with animal feed, there.



If he has children, he will teach them Arabic as well as Slovakian language. He likes the Slovakian customs and traditions, music, in particular Kandráčovci folk group, and the dance called „čardáš-czardas“, he cannot resist the Slovakian typical meals „lokše-potato pancakes“, „halušky- dumplings“ and

„pirohy- pies“, even though there is an Egyptian cuisine more dominant in their household.

And what about Asam and his opinion on migration?

„Everybody knows what they do and what they have to do“.

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The boy from the country which does not know peace

Rayeiz was born in the capital city of Afghanistan and since his childhood he didn't know neither a peaceful sleep, nor a peaceful day. All the time he was terrified to lose his own life. The army was everywhere. Even at school where he used to like going so much. You could never know if you come back from school or if you see your family for the last time. People try to live a normal life there. However, how is it possible if you live in a fear and peace is thousands of kilometres far away?



In 2013, together with his mother, sister and two brothers, left Afghanistan. Unfortunately without their father who was already watching them only from above. Their trip to peace lasted for two months. Slovakia hadn't been the final destination, however, they decided to stay here.

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ERASMUS+ KA2

MIGRATION
AND
REFUGEE
CRISIS



2017-2019

Migrants around us



Co-funded by the
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Nowadays, Ray lives a happy life in Slovakia, together with his family. He is studying at university and he would like to work even though some people think that migrants don't work or study. Many times, people have prejudices and still they don't know what migrants had been coming through. People don't know the fear to cross the street and they don't understand what the war is like if they live in peace. We don't value peace, not enough. And peace is so valuable. If you have peace, you have everything.



Rayeiz often remembers about the people in Kabul. In comparison with Slovaks they are more open and friendly. He likes Slovakia. He likes our nature, enjoys traditional meals even though at home mostly Muslim meals are cooked. He likes playing football because in Afghanistan he didn't have a chance to do it.

He would definitely stay here. He was told that many things are not possible to do. However, he says that everything is possible if we want to and if we think positively. And what is more important is to study – to study for ourselves not for our parents. We must do everything for ourselves.

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Oleksandra from Ukraine



Mrs. Oleksandra came from Ukraine to Slovakia when she was 65. She comes from Luhansk where the war is now. She couldn't live in fear of war anymore. With a feeling that you never know what will come tomorrow or if you wake up tomorrow. She has decided to leave her home and come to Slovakia for a better life. Marginal, the civil association in Slovakia, has helped her.

At first she came alone and 5 months later her husband followed her too. Her son with his family is living in Kyjev where the situation is more peaceful and safer. They visit each other regularly.

At the moment she is living in Košice and enjoys life again here in Slovakia. She is happy again because she has felt hope since she came here. Life is easier and more peaceful here she claims. The people are very generous and open. She has access to everything that she needs. She has health issues with her heart but she is not worried that much because she has a proper health treatment and medicine and she didn't have that in her country. Mrs. Oleksandra hasn't problems with communication because our languages are a little bit similar. Speaking is slightly worse but she understands everything. She is happy here, she has a job and new friends that are helping her.



Migrants around us



Even though Oleksandra has a great life in Slovakia she will always have her heart in Ukraine. It's breaking her heart what is happening in her home country now. She knows she can't go back anymore because the war has destroyed her house. But deep inside she is hoping that the war will finally end and she would return home.



Mrs. Oleksandra wants to tell us that we should always be thankful and cherish what we have. That we have a peaceful life without war even if we are not satisfied with our

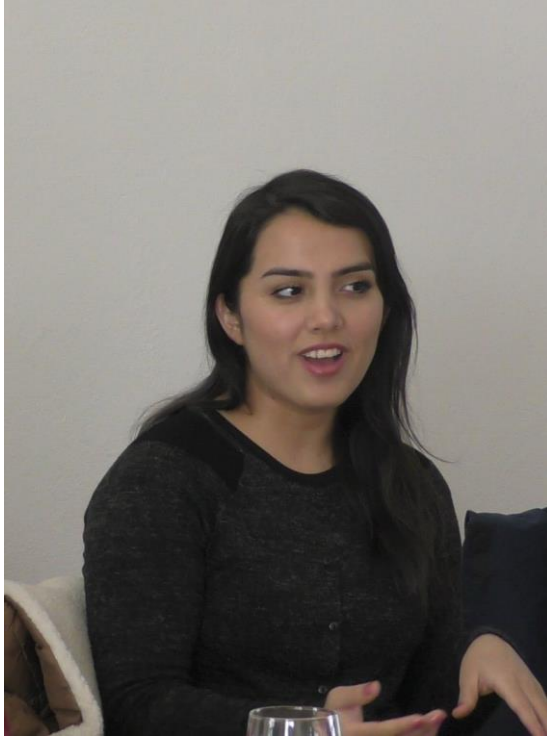
country. And especially we should cherish that we have a loving family and place to live and health.



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The story of Sameera



Sameera is a young woman from Afghanistan who has always wanted to study at university. However, it was impossible in her homeland because of the complicated situation.

She came to Slovakia thanks to the civil association Marginal, which focuses on the intergration of the migrants into the society. Her goal is to study and have a better life. And she made it. Sameera is studying medicine at university in Košice now. She lives in a dorm with Slovakian and other foreign students. She speaks Ennglish and a little bit Slovakian too. In the beginning she was struggling with the language but she has been visitting language courses to learn Slovakian better and

better. She was listening ordinary people in the streets talking, listening to the radio or watching TV to understand it more. She has never been alone cause her friends are helping her in any way and she is very grateful to them.

Sameera likes Slovakia so much. She loves our culture, traditional folk music, dance and clothes. She claims that our cuisine is very delicious because she loves our traditional meals. She wants to live and work here. She has a lot of new friends. In fact, she is planning to visit some other countries in Europe but she wants to stay here. She is used to the lifestyle and the people here are always nice and understanding.

Of course she misses her home, family and friends so much. They haven't seen each other since she left. It's very complicated considering where she is from.

Sameera has a message for all young people. Education is important and if you have a chance then take it. And always help each other because you never know who you can help or make a better life. And the main message is to always say „I can“.

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Linda from the Czech Republic



My name is Linda Vinklerová and I live in Slovakia, in a little town, in the eastern part of Slovakia which is called Vranov nad Topľou. However, originally I'm not from Slovakia. I was born in the Czech Republic. My father is Czech and my mother is Slovakian.

My Mum was studying at pharmaceutical university in Bratislava (our capital city). She had a classmate from the Czech Republic. And she was the one who took my Mum for a trip to the Czech Republic – to the city of Zlín. And there was where my parents met. My father comes from that city. My parents fell in love and a few years later they got married. Mum moved there and ten years later I was born. I was living there for 5 years.

Slovakia and the Czech Republic are very similar countries. They used to be one country – Czechoslovakia. However, in 1993 they were separated and nowadays they are two independent countries.

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Migrants around us



We used to live in Zlín. It is situated in the east of the country, in the part called Morava. Zlín is a bigger city than Vranov nad Topľou, with the population about 75 thousand people. Vranov nad Topľou has about 23 thousand inhabitants.

We moved from the Czech Republic mostly because of the economic reasons. My Mum was an employee in the pharmacy, however she wasn't very happy about her work. My father was employed in the company which was building swimming builds. He was working week shifts. It wasn't easy and he was rarely at home.



My Mum's parents gave her an advice. They suggested her to move back to Slovakia and open her own pharmacy. My parents decided to do that, however, it took some time as they had to save some money.

I got used to Slovakia immediately. I was very little so it wasn't difficult. I started to go to the nursery school. Childrend were making fun of me because I wasn't able to speak Slovakian properly. And I was ashamed. Fortunately, the things were getting better. Mum opened her own pharmacy where she works together with Dad. He works as an accountant. And my Slovakian? It is not a problem anymore. I've been studying Slovakian language for 11 years and I really love it.

I am very happy to live in Slovakia. We live in a small town but I think that we've made a good decision.

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From the country which struggled with drugs and violence



Even our ancestors knew about migration. They left their houses and homes because of bad conditions, never-ending wars, hunger or because of their beliefs and religions which were the reason of their persecution. And many times they left their home countries to get a better job. Migration is a frequently discussed topic nowadays. Are there real difficulties which force people to leave their homes and start a new life in a foreign country? Or why do people migrate?

Andres Sanches, originally from Bogota- the capital city of Colombia living in Slovakia nowadays, told us his story.

He is very nice and talkative. As a child he used to spend holidays always at a different place. From Argentina, through El Salvador up to Colombia. Before turning 25, he decided to move from Colombia to get a good education. His first plan was to travel to France because of the French language. However, even he himself doesn't know how it happened, he appeared in the city of London. When he claimed that he would study economy in England, his family and friends were shocked by the news. Definitely it was a good choice because there he met his wife with whom he has two children now. And this was the main reason why he moved to Slovakia after two years spent in London. And what does he think now? Does he ever regret his decisions?

„I have never regretted leaving Colombia. Although I miss my family and friends, here I have my own family and a few friends.”

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Andres is working in an American IT company. Everything has its ups and downs. Even though he was very kind and open, people used to have prejudices towards him and were rather cold. In spite of this he has managed to make some friends. And today he is practicing his Slovakian with them. He likes our nature a lot, he loves festival „Východná“, enjoys Slovakian traditional meals. And also prefers Slovakian Christmas. In Colombia it is winter at that time so all the people go to the parties.

Of course he remembers his family in Bogota and visits them regularly. He doesn't know what the future brings. Everybody has a chance. A chance to travel to some other country if we are brave enough. A chance to study. A chance to change something. The only point is that we must want to do it.

„We need to see migration from a better side. We have the opportunity to get to know new people, culture, language.“

Andres told us.



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Abood and Mohamad, brothers from Syria

When the only thing you know about the country is that once it played a football match against your country then you know you know nothing about it. Me and my brother moved from Syria because of the war and the many other problems that were going on there. And when we ran away from our country, we did not know what was going to happen or what problems we were going to face, but we decided to keep on looking for our better future and leave the past behind. It is never easy to leave your home behind. Because it is your home, it is the place where you grew up as well as the place where you felt connected to the community and accepted.



We were trying to move to Germany because it is a safe country and a lot of Syrians have moved to it. We also wanted to go there because it is a very open-minded country. We were thinking that refugees are more accepted in that country because the people there are used to them since there are many

there. In Slovenia it is a little different because the locals are not so used to refugees and because of that prejudices are more common. But now that we are starting to learn Slovenian language and getting more involved in the community the situation is getting better.

But we also had a lot of problems in school because in Syria we have different writing than here in Slovenia so communication was very hard, but we manage somehow. The information related to our studies that we were taught in Syria is very out of date here so we had to learn everything from the beginning. I think a lot of going home if the problems get fixed. But if you try to build a new life here you don't want to leave your home again, because a lot of effort has been put into doing it, so I do not know if I want to go back home. I quite like Slovenia and I want to stay here a little longer.

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“25 days to get to Slovenia from Iran”

Zaher Amini, 26, came to Slovenia from Iran. He has two sisters and one brother. His parents are from Afghanistan, but they had moved to Iran, before he was born, because of the war.



Zaher decided to look for a better future in Europe and went on a journey with millions of people. He travelled by bus, boat, but walked most of the time. He says that the journey was one of the best things that has happened to him in his life, because he met so many people with same goals and everyone felt so connected to each other. It took him 25 days to get to Slovenia from Iran.

Initially he wanted to go to Germany but was stopped at the Austrian border and thus he had to stay in Slovenia. He applied for an asylum in Slovenia 3 years ago and got rejected, because he didn't have any documents. He was told he wasn't allowed to leave Slovenia, but later he was told he could return to Afghanistan. The problem is that he has never been to Afghanistan.

So now he lives in an asylum centre in Ljubljana and he says that it is almost like a prison, because he is allowed to go out for only 48 hours, and if he doesn't return on time, they can throw him out. He goes to school and learns Slovenian language and basically all the stuff we learn in primary school, although he had already attended school in Iran. He also works in a supermarket and he is happy that he can earn some money.

In his free time, he likes hanging out with his friends and playing football. Although he has many problems and doesn't even know where he will live and how long he will be allowed to live in Slovenia, he is very good-humoured, optimistic and brave. We really admire him because of that.

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Migrants around us



“he came to Slovenia to study but he didn't plan to stay here”



Max Zimani now lives in Slovenia. He works as a manager of Skuhna, a small restaurant in Ljubljana, where each day of the week they offer cuisine from a different country of the global South. They serve food from India, Tunisia, Philippines, Argentina, Bangladesh, Morocco, Kenya, Algeria, and Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is also a home country

of Max Zimani, who came to Slovenia in 1982 to study. He's an immigrant who now lives here a happy life with four children and his wife. When he was studying he started to involve in institutions which bring people together and one of those projects was Skuhna. It started in 2012 to empower immigrants of the Global South. This project was supposed to last for three years but they decided to keep it running. As mentioned he came to Slovenia to study but he didn't plan to stay here. Time passed by, he met people and as he said: "Life just happened." One of the problems he's been facing since living in Slovenia is that he's far away from his family and friends in Africa. But he visits them once a while, when he can.

He also thinks that here in Slovenia there is no proper African community. He feels like there is no progress in immigration. Besides all the problems he's been facing here, he loves his wonderful family, and the fact that here in Slovenia everything is moving faster. He also enjoys the nature in our country. Many people have problems with adjusting to a new environment, but for Max it wasn't hard getting used to a new life in a different country. He tried to remember how it was years ago when he came here, from the start he didn't like the traditional Slovene food, but now he enjoys it. Something "happened" along the way, that he now likes things, he didn't before. You might think that he had problems with travelling to Slovenia, but he actually did not. He hopped on the plane, flew for 24 hours and voila Yugoslavia (Slovenia was a part of Yugoslavia at the time he arrived) I'm here. When you travel from any African country to Europe you have the impression of promised land. We asked him if something funny happened along the way and he told us that a prostitute offered her service to him. And a friend pulled a prank on him. When it started snowing in winter time and Max first saw snow his friend said to him that he had to have a special umbrella to go outside and he didn't go out that day because he believed him. But later his friend told him he was only joking. Music has a lot of influence in his life, he plays an African instrument (drums), he sings in an African choir and he used to be a Dj.

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From Nigeria to Poland and finally to Slovenia



A few years ago she was studying economy in Poland where she met her future husband, a Slovenian. When she finished her master's degree she moved to Slovenia with him. She didn't expect much when she came to Slovenia, but the first impression was it was colder than Africa. At the beginning she faced a problem with translating her master's

degree when she took it to the ministry of education. They told her that she needed to wait for one week, but she got no response and after a year she called to check what the problem was, and they said they couldn't adjust it to the Slovenian school system, because she had an American certificate. However, they finally manage to do it. She also faced a problem when she was pregnant, and wanted to apply for a permanent residence, and they requested her to bring a certificate of no previous convictions from Nigeria, but she couldn't because she was not allowed to go on a plane since she was pregnant. Her reason for moving to Slovenia was love. Before that she didn't even know where Slovenia was, but she likes it now because it's small and everything is within reach, even though she still prefers her home country, Nigeria.

She's working in Skuhna (a restaurant in Ljubljana, where migrants prepare traditional dishes from their countries). She told us a lot of people from Nigeria move to America and Europe in search of opportunities and some move because they have other family members there.

As for her she goes back to Nigeria often but because her son is only 3 years old she hasn't been back for a while because she wants her son to be old enough to know differences between the countries and the culture. She has 2 brothers and 3 sisters, and her hobbies are singing, dancing, reading and travelling. When she was studying in Poland she was in a gospel choir and now she sings in a group. She got married in both Slovenia and Nigeria and she's a cheerful and happy person.

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“Svetlana described her arrival to Slovenia as very emotional”



This story is about a nineteen-year-old Svetlana Pogorelova who moved to Slovenia eleven years ago. Before she moved to Slovenia she had lived in independent state Prednistrovie, more precisely in the city of Grigoriopolj. First her mother came to Slovenia to find a job. After a while she decided to bring her daughters Svetlana and her younger sister Tamara. Svetlana described her arrival to Slovenia as very emotional, because she missed her family that stayed in Prednistrovie. She attended her first year of primary school in Prednistrovie and when she came to Slovenia she did not go to 2nd grade right away because of her problems with Slovene language. She went to primary school in a small village named Trbonje and later she moved to primary school in Dravograd. She is now in 2nd year of environmental protection high school.

When speaking of her home country she says that she wishes to move back, but the circumstances there are discouraging her from doing that. But she and her sister go to Prednistrovie every summer for 1 month on holidays. The life is different there, if you compare it to the life in Slovenia, she says, because the quality of life is better here. The only thing that disturbs her is how the Slovenians accept foreigners.

She did not forget her language, she knows it as much as Slovene language. She reads a lot of books in Russian, and that is how she is taking care of not forgetting her maternal language. She also told us that hers is not the only family from Prednistrovie in this area. These families are connected, spend a lot of their time together and occasionally drink Kvint whiskey that is typical for them. Svetlana says that she does not regret coming to Slovenia and is excited about her further life here.

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Interview with Maja Kastratovik

Pianist Maja Kastratovik graduated the lower music school at the GBŠC Ilija Nikolovski-Luj in Skopje - Macedonia. She continued her education in Moscow, studying at the Moscow Conservatory P. I. Tchaikovsky. She received her master's degree at the FMU in Skopje. From 1996 to 2001, she was employed as a piano professor at the GBCC Ilija Nikolovski-Luj in Macedonia. Since August 2001 she has been living and teaching in Slovenj Gradec. In 2011 she received Berneker's citation for special achievements in the field of culture.

Q: What were the reasons that lead you to the decision, to move to Slovenia?



It was all by chance... I never really had a plan to move from Macedonia, because at that time I was studying in Moscow for nearly 9 years – 4 of that being high school, and then another 5 years studying in a conservatory. After that I had a full time job in Macedonia as a piano teacher and

things weren't really indicating that I would ever move. That was until the political climate in Macedonia became unstable. It just so happened that one day I got a phone call from my former professor that taught me in Moscow, that I had kept in touch through the years. He had moved to Slovenia – more precisely Nova Gorica and was teaching in Ljubljana at that time. He was wondering how I was, because he heard the news about Macedonia. In that certain time, we really didn't know how the things would unravel... we didn't know if there was going to be a war.

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It was all very sudden when he told me that if I ever needed to go somewhere because I could no longer stay in Macedonia there was always an open spot for a piano teacher and a pianist in Slovenia if I wanted it. I didn't take it very seriously I just decided to see where the job was and if I liked it. It was truly very sudden and unplanned when I decided to take it and my life completely changed before my eyes. I guess I always saw it as some sort of a destiny, fate... something that was bound to happen even though I had never expected to happen, not even in my wildest dreams.

Q: How long have you been in Slovenia now?

Since 2001, so it's going to be 18 years soon.

Q: How do you feel here? What are the good sides as well as the bad sides that you have experienced since you moved to Slovenia?

I truly feel great here. I still ask myself sometimes, what kind of life »jackpot« I won to have the privilege of moving here. The culture here is on a very high standard, the overall healthcare is amazing and there are so many natural treasures Slovenia has to offer. As a mother I also had the privilege to witness how many opportunities the Slovenian school program is offering to our younger generations, which many other countries could only dream of.

Q: As you've mentioned, you are a mother. I was wondering if you raise your daughter maintaining your cultural background – meaning, do you raise her with keeping her connected with Macedonian traditions, its lifestyle and the language.

I try to. When Amadeja (my daughter) was younger we visited Macedonia more often, one of the main reasons for that was that I was still finishing my Master's degree – as I said earlier, my decision to move away was not planned so I still had some things I didn't quite finish when I left. Now that Amadeja is older it's even harder to visit Macedonia as many times as we once had – she has school obligations and I have things to do myself; but despite our busy schedule, we always find the time to go there whenever we have a chance. Amadeja's mother tongue is Macedonian and at home we still speak it. I personally think it's very important to keep in touch with the culture you were raised in, and I try my best to pass that on to my daughter. I do notice that she is very proud to be a Slovenian thought. She highlights that she is a 'pure-blooded' Slovenian. I do understand her completely. She was born here, in Slovenia, and as a child she does feel more connected to the Slovenian culture, since she was raised surrounded by it and



thus didn't feel a pure connection to the Macedonian. I feel that she will appreciate her multicultural background more when she is older, and understand that it's truly a blessing to be raised with more than just one culture in mind.

Q: Do you keep in touch with your friend and your family from Macedonia?

I see myself as a very communicative, so I have many friends all around the world, from all the places I've visited and lived in. All the way from Macedonia to Moscow, Serbia, Australia, even some from Singapore. I don't have many problems associated with the overall communication with all those people. In the present time, you can talk to someone just by simply grabbing your phone and writing a simple text or calling them, no matter how far apart you truly are. The biggest problem I see thought, is that sometimes there do come moments, whether they are bad or good, when I miss the proximity of those who I am especially close to – my mother, sister and my good friends. In such moments I miss being able to be close to them. I find it difficult to not being able to comfort them, wanting to hug them and not having the possibility to share the news with looking into their eyes and seeing their reaction.

Q: Did you experience any bad sides of Slovenia?

I do think it depends on the eye of the observer. I personally see Slovenia for all of its beauty and try to be focus on that particular part and not the things that could maybe be better. I think the only problem I faced with my time being here is that Slovenian people tend to criticize themselves and their country, and always look for the tinniest things that aren't perfect. I mean ... I have many friends that are well known pianist that would like to move here. People from Moscow that are exquisite and known in their field, that call me almost every day and check if there are any open spots for a proper job here in Slovenia. I truly want people here to know that people from all over the world do see Slovenia as an equal to many developed countries with a long cultural background, and want to live here.



A Moroccan waiter in Bueu

My name is Said and I'm Moroccan. I came Bueu in the year 2004. I am a waiter.

First I was working in Madrid for 3 or 4 months. But my work contract was for a year in Castille and Leon, so I went there. Then I moved to the southern área of Spain to work there since I had relatives and friends there. I spent about two years there. I also was in Zaragoza, Burgos and the Basque Country. In Andalusia, in the south of Spain, I felt uncomfortable because there were problems between locals and migrants and I was not used to that, so I had to leave and move north.



I came to visit a friend that was living in A Coruña. I was unemployed for two months in Galicia and during that time I got used to living here, the places, the food. Then one day I came to the beach in Bueu. Then I came back again because I liked Bueu so much, I met my partner and I stayed.

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I found a girlfriend. At the beginning I had to leave to go to work, then I came back, and again and again until we decided to stay definitely and live here together. And this how my story in Bueu started.

The people in my country are so nice. Cultures are different. In Morocco, for instance, you meet someone, you have a coffee, and the next minute you are already invited to lunch at their home. It's absolutely different to Spanish or European culture. Here people go to their own homes or meet for lunch at a restaurant. In my country people will invite you to tea at home and meet their families. Food is also completely different due to the spices that they use. Food is much spicier, totally different.

I did not have a single problem, because I had a family, the only problem was that I found it difficult to find a job, to have the chance to start a new life. I didn't have any family problems because I had a real family that accepted me and made me belong here, as if I were in my own home.

The worst was the difficulty to find a job, not the customs. I was already so used to living here, to the culture when I came here, and I didn't have a single problem to integrate, because people here are so nice and kind. Believe me, it's one of the best areas throughout Spain in that sense.

I'm so happy here, although it could be easier to find a job. There are not enough jobs here. Most people must work outside Bueu. The town is really beautiful: you have sea, beaches, mountains, rivers, you can enjoy your free time, have fun, relax, the people are so kind... It's a wonderful place.

I never think of returning definitely, since I have my family here, my children, my wife, I belong here. I would go on holiday, spend a few days, and then I'd come back, I'm so happy here.

INTERVIEW WITH BAKARY

Introduction

MARÍA: I met Bakary when I was nine because I went on a summer camp to Allariz, the village where he was working. One day we went to visit O Rexo, the place where he used to work taking care of the sheep. So it was there where I met him. I liked him because he showed us the place and let us pet the sheep, play with the dogs ... And since then, since that moment, until nowadays, we've had a friendship.

I chose Bakary because I consider that his story is very interesting. I think that it is a story of overcoming and effort to improve his life, something that might seem impossible for him and his beloved ones.

BAKARY: I migrated in the year 2006. I was 19 years old by then. I migrated from the Gambia, my homeland, to Spain; first to the Canary Islands and then to Granada, basically for economical reasons.

The interview

MARÍA: You were alone in the trip, I think.

BAKARY: Yes, I was alone, at family level. But we were 122 people in the boat.

M: And how was the trip?, I mean how much it cost, how much time you were on board, ...

B: The trip cost me around €400, and the duration was 9 days.

M: Now we are going to talk about the arrival. How was the arrival?

B: The arrival was better, thanks to Spanish Salvamento Marítimo (Marine Safety) that was responsible of rescuing people from the sea, went to pick us up from the sea, before the Red Cross was in charge of us. They took care of us, they gave us food, clothes, ...

M: The arrival was how you expected?

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B: The arrival was expected to be better, but unfortunately, as there were too many people at that time, specially where we were held by the police, so we were not living in good condition. But I don't really regret it, no. I don't regret it.

M: And learning a new language? How was that?

B: When I came in 2006 I couldn't say anything in Spanish. I could only speak English and my mother language, which is Mandinka. So I started reading some books, translated from Spanish to English... After then I was definitely very lucky to meet awesome Spanish people who were my colleagues, friends in the street who were able to teach me Spanish, so I started speaking Spanish at my five months here in Spain. I was lucky in that case. I would be very happy and proud if someday you, María, could come to Gambia. I would like to teach you Mandinka!

M: I would like to! It would be great, I guess. If you invite me, I go. No problem.

B: Of course you are invited!

M: And... when you came here you learnt to speak Galician.

B: Yes, yes, of course! When I left Andalusia and got to Galicia, I just arrived to a new society here in Spain which also had their own local language, so I was so interested in the Galician local language called Galego, and I also speak it.

M: And where did you live?

B: At the moment I live here in Almería, but before Almería, my adventure was a long time ago, back in 2009, when I was living in Granada. I left Granada to go and live in Allariz, in the Galician village of Allariz, which I love so much. I was living and working there eight years. Right now I came back to Almería for job purposes.

M: Let's talk about your work. How did you get work when you arrived to Spain?

B: My first job here in Spain was to be a shepherd in that Galician village called Allariz. I saw a job offer in the newspaper, then I called the responsables. They called me for an interview, I went and I was selected.



M: Were you the inspiration for other people, I mean, family or friends, to come here?

B: Yes, I became an inspiration for some young men in the Gambia to come

to Spain. Due to all my achievements during these years, and I demonstrate it also, because I do help my people back at home, you know.

M: And what are your future plans?

B: My future plans are to settle or to have my own business here in Spain and to be able to bring along with me my family: wife and children.

M: Thank you, Bakary!

B: You know, María, it's always a pleasure for me to talk with you, because you are one of my best friends that I have in Spain. I know you since you were 9 years old. You were a little girl at that time, and you always loved me, so I thank you also for that. I'm always at your disposal for any other interview or anything you may like from me in the future.



About José

Introduction:

During the 60s and 70s Galicia, Spain, was facing a really important crisis, which forced lots of men to move to different countries in order to earn the money their families needed.

This situation was really common during these years and forced men to stay away from their beloved ones to be able to fight for them and women to be the head of the family and raise their children on their own.

Lots of families split apart because of the distance or kept in touch just by mail.

Today I have had the pleasure to interview José, one of those brave men.

Here is his story:



Dani: Hello, I'm Dani Otero and I am here with José. How old are you?

José: I'm 70.

Dani: He's from Bueu too and he is a friend of my grandfather's. When did you emigrate?

José: in 1971.

Dani: How old were you?

José: I was 21.

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Dani: And where did you go?

José: I went to Antwerpen to get a German boat which went to Australia. I used to be a fisherman here in Spain .

Dani: And why did you emigrate?

José: Well, because I used to earn 20.000 pesetas (120 €) here and I earned 80.000pts (480 €) there.

Dani: Then, why did you decide to emigrate there and not to another place?

José: Well, I could have gone to Germany, Netherlands or Switzerland, but I chose Germany and spent the rest of my life there. I spent 45 years between the time I lived in Germany and Switzerland.

Dani: and did you go on your own or with someone else?

José: No, I went on my own.

Dani: How was the voyage? How long was it and how much was it?

José: You are asking me hard questions. I sat on wooden branches in the train. I can't remember if it was 2.000 pts (12 €) or something like that.

Dani: It doesn't matter if you can't remember.

José: It was a long voyage.

Dani: How long was it, more or less?

José: I spent a day and a half until I arrived in Antwerpen, with a stop in Paris. Then, I had to wait for another train, it was such a misfortune!

Dani: How was the arrival?



José: Well, the arrival was pretty good, we were three Spanish people, four with me, and all the others were Eastern Germans. I was the only Spanish sailor. The officer was in front of the portal wearing a sweater this thick because it was winter, and I asked him if he was the guardian, but he replied that he was the Prime Officer. I thought that, if he was the Prime Officer, how would the others be. So he chose me and told me: "You are going to be the boatswain". And I was the boatswain for three months.

Dani: How was the contact with the language?

José: Pretty good, I'm good at languages.

Dani: Where did you spend the first night?

José: In the harbour, I spent twelve hours waiting for the boat.

Dani: Did you get your own house later?

José: No, I always lived in a ship, I went on holidays and stayed a couple of hours on land. I had to sleep in a hotel when I was on land if it was the case, but if not, no. I went home from the ship and from home to the ship. I never had a house on land.

Dani: And did you form a family together there or not?

José: No.

Dani: How long was the working day?

José: In the merchant ship, it was eight hours.

Dani: How much time did you spend far from home, more or less?

José: It depended, nine or six months, I mean, nine months in a row without coming home.

Dani: How much time did you spend at home?



José: Well, it depended, If the same company called you, you may have stayed at home for fifteen or twenty days because maybe they called you to work in another ship.

Dani: And how did your family feel when you came back?

José: Really well. My daughter used to call me “uncle”

Dani: uncle?

José: Yes.

Dani: And did you like your work there?

José: Yes, I did. I even spent 3 years at school.

Dani: And did you manage to be promoted from your first job position?

José: Yes, I got promoted lots of times.

Dani: Really? What was your last position?

José: I worked in a ship and I’ve recently been the captain of a 3,000-ton-ship.

Dani: Did you feel welcome when you arrived or was there any rejection from your workmates?

José: No, not in Germany. Germany welcomed me properly. I even have some friends in Germany.

Dani: Then, did you finally feel like part of the group?

José: Yes, well, they sometimes called me an “ausländisch” (foreigner), but they didn’t mess with me.

Dani: Did you take part in an immigrant community?

José: No, I didn’t have enough time for those kind of things.



Dani: Did you act as a claim for other people to emigrate to Germany?

José: Yes, some others came after me.

Dani: How many people, more or less?

José: 3 people.

Dani: And how do you remember the experience today?

José: Well, if I had to leave today, I would have to think about it, maybe I would do it or maybe not. I didn't have a bad time, but maybe I wouldn't.

Dani: When did you come back to Galicia?

José: More or less, 5 years ago, in 2013.

Dani: How did your family feel when you came back?

José: I think fine.

Dani: Thank you very much for the interview. It has been a pleasure.

José: Yes, it has been a pleasure for me, too.

Dani: Likewise.



“escape the injustices”

A little nervous I was about to do the interview to my contact, this is an emigrant from the many that there are, they seek a place to rebuild their lives and escape the injustices of this planet.

On the way to his house was thinking of things that could have happened. On the other hand my concern was much larger than my nerves. I worried that I was uncomfortable or that I not embraced as I simply wanted to, but it wasn't what happened.

When I arrived I was received with open arms by all the family. They made me feel one more of them all. Although the interviewee was going to be only one, the whole family was present.

As I supposed, my interviewee was a little nervous and excited because of what we were going to remember during the interview. More than an interview I would say it was a very emotional conversation. We started introducing ourselves, because there were many people, children, women, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren of my beloved questioned. When I had become accustomed to this new environment, I began to question him with simple questions. If I remember correctly, the first ones I told him were the years he had, where he was born and the year in which he migrated. He proudly answered that he was 64 years old, but that he felt like a 20 years old. He was born in Brazil and emigrated in 1976 to Spain, specifically to Beluso a small coastal town of Galicia. Speaking about the studies, he told me that he wasn't a good student, that's why he only has primary studies, but he was very intelligent and he was great at learning languages. He can write and speak perfectly Galician, Portuguese and Spanish. Between laughs he told me that he would like to learn more languages despite his age.

Now comes the most emotional part of the interview, in which he told me with watery eyes that he left his country with a lot of pain, as if something was pressing his heart with a supernatural force. He traveled in a shared car that fit five people badly with only one hundred pesetas in his pocket. His very simple purpose, a job and a better life. On the other hand, his transfer wasn't easy, the exit was made with a few friends, despite that he doesn't forget that he left behind many relatives, acquaintances and memories that still linger weakly in his memory.



In Spain he was waiting for a job as a baker, he got it thanks to being a hardworking and responsible person who learned languages quickly. It was a great change because in his native country he was a postman, although he liked the baker's job more, it was more fun. During his first days he stayed with other emigrants from France, Argentina and above all from Brazil. When he and his friends arrived at their destination there a family member was waiting for them, who lent them their house for a while to be able to stay.



Finally he couldn't contain his tears one more minute and I clearly neither. For him the emigration was a great change in his life and he thinks of it as a great opportunity for other people who are having a bad time, who flee from wars and their lives are in

danger. His words were "migration is a way out of the many injustices of this world. It is the key that opens us a new life".

Looking at it on the good side, it takes many anecdotes and stories to tell its people. For me the funniest was that on the way to their destination they stopped to put gasoline in the car and he decided to buy chocolates and accidentally bought chewing gum thinking it was chocolate. In conclusion he took all the gum suddenly causing a terrible pain in his belly.

With this interview I learned many things about my interviewee, especially to value what we have. There may be many people who don't feel the same that he felt and other people currently feel, a tremendous pain to abandon what you want with all your soul. On the other hand we have to see something good to this interview or life, even if it costs. By this I mean that everything has a solution but you have to bother looking for it.

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“from Spain to Germany”

Why have you emigrated and where?

- I emigrated to Germany in 1964 when I was 28 years old and I stayed there for 5 years. I emigrated because in Spain I hadn't got a job and my husband was already there. I went alone, my trip lasted four days in a boat called “Yapeyú” and it cost me 4000 pesetas.

How was your arrival at Hamburg?

- Too bad, because my husband wasn't waiting for me. - Two boys helped me, they saw me crying in the dock and they asked me what was wrong. I heard them speak Galician and I approached them. They knew my husband's address. I asked them if they could take me to the residence where he lived, but once there, I wasn't allowed to enter because I was a woman and it was a residence for men. But luckily, my husband was on his way to meet me.

How did you learn German?

- At the beginning really bad, but then, I learnt. I didn't have another choice.

German was a barrier for you?

- Yes, especially with the money.

Where did you stay?

- In a house that my husband had rented.

Did you get your own house ever?

- No.

Why?

- Because I wanted to buy a house in Spain and stay there.



But in Germany, have you created a family?

- Yes, I had a daughter.

Referred to the workplace. Did you have a job when you arrived?

- No, but a month later my arrival I found one.

How did you think Germany will be?

- I knew, more or less, how Germany was, because my husband was already there before I arrived.

Was the reality as you expected?

- Yes, yes. In Germany I had a good time.

Was your salary fair?

- Yes, I won more in one month in Germany than in a year here.

How many hours did you work per day?

- I worked 8 hours on shifts.

Were you happy?

- Yes, yes, yes, I was very happy. I made very good friends.

Did you ascend in your job?

- No, I always worked at the same place.

Why didn't you manage to get promoted?

- I don't know, but I always worked at the same place. They really loved me, because I was a good worker.

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When you arrived there, you felt welcome or rejected by the society?

- I felt welcome. There was an old lady (the owner of our house) that she was like a mother to me.

How did you think they were going to be with you there? Did you think that they were going to treat you well?

- No, I didn't have a good concept of Germany, but however, they were very kind to me.



Did you feel part of those society?

- Yes, yes, I had a lot of friends.

Did you participate in a community of migrants?

- No, no, no.

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And now, how do you rate that experience?

- Very good, if I were younger, I would emigrate, but I am too old.

Would you repeat the experience?

-Yes, if I was younger, but I am too old.

If your economic situation were unfavorable... would you emigrate again?

- No, not today because I am too old and nobody would give me a job.

But if you were younger?

- Yes, if I was younger, I would do it again. For me Germany is the most beautiful country I've ever been.

And at last, this is a topic subject... what do you think about refugees?

- I have a very good opinion about them. Because I emigrated, too, and people were very good with me. And we should be good with them, because they come here looking for what they don't have in their country.

From Morocco to Spain

-What country are you from?

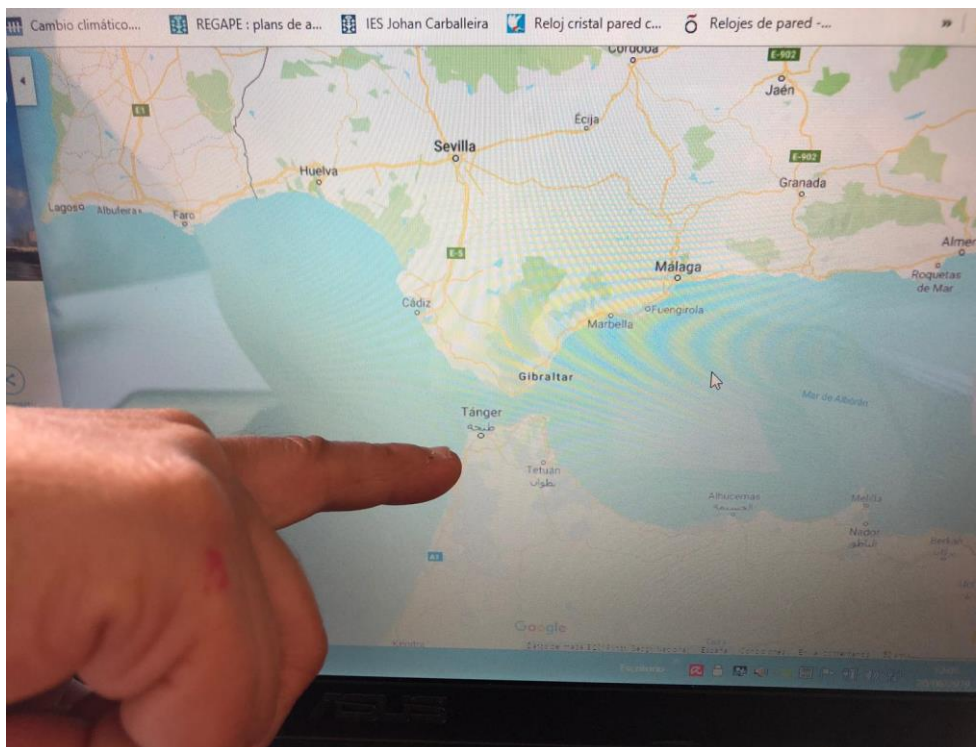
Morocco

-Why did you decide to leave Morocco?

Because there is no real future there.

-How did you get to Spain?

I left with my brother, who works in Tanger and I stayed with him for a month, then I was able to get under a lorry, between the wheels. The lorry went by ferry to Algeciras



-How long did it take you to arrive in Spain?

I spent a whole night between the wheels, but I had to try it several times because there were guards. It took me a month.

-Where did you live in Spain? Where are you living now?

At first I was in La Línea, near Gibraltar, it was a very conflictive centre (there were lots of fights) and I left for Málaga. There I slept on the streets during two days. I didn't have a mobile phone, I didn't know anyone, my family didn't know where I was. I begged on the streets.

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I left to Madrid by bus. There I stayed with some friends (not at a centre but in the streets). They were people I knew from Morocco, from my village and they helped me to get to Bilbao.

There I entered a refugee centre where there were 200 people. I decided to go to Coruña, where the police caught me and sent me to a centre in Vigo. Three days later I went to the “Príncipe Felipe” centre in Pontevedra. All this happened within two months. Now I've been in Spain for less than a year.

-What's a day like in the place where you live?

At 6:30 am I get up, get dressed and have breakfast;

At 7:10 am I take the bus to the bus station;

At 7:30 am I take the bus from Pontevedra to Bueu;

At 8:50 am I start school until 2:25 pm;

At 2:45 pm I take the bus from Bueu to Pontevedra;

At 3:30 pm I take the bus from the bus station to Príncipe Felipe;

At 4:00 pm we have lunch;

At 4:30 I study until 6:00 pm;

Then I have free time to relax, have a shower, have dinner and go to bed.

-What are you studying?

Basic vocational training in hairdressing.

-What are your expectations?

I would like to have a job at a hairdresser's and finish my studies. I want to help my family in Morocco.

-What worries you?

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Migrants around us



I am worried about my papers, or that they tell me that I cannot stay in Spain.

-Is Spain as you imagined?

Yes, it is

-What is different between Spain and Morocco?

In Morocco people work a lot and have very low salaries. I miss my family.

-Do you like living here? What things do you like here?

Yes, I do. If you study you will have a future.



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