



JOINING HANDS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

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DIGITAL DIARY

A Day in the Life of a Today's Migrant

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Potenza, Italy



November 27th, 1989, La Louvière, Belgique

The gloomy Belgian winter is back again. I can't believe that, after all these years, I still haven't got used to the weather. Lucia and Gerardo will be back home in roughly an hour. Thank God they go to school! While they are away from home in the morning, I have no one to buzz around or annoy me and I can properly get work done. All these cloths, rugs and curtains have no one, but me to take care of them. In the afternoon my scoundrels will probably be begging for help with their homework.

While it may seem like a burden for a working mother, it has actually helped me hone my French skills. In fact, I have to thank my children's books for teaching me basic grammar and spelling. It just seems to me that every French-speaking person is so happy to skip letters and make such weird noises with their nose when pronouncing words. Italian was so much simpler back in elementary school! My teacher once even told me I had a way with words and that I should continue studying...



Too bad I barely finished middle school, because, being the eldest, my parents readily forced me to do house chores and watch over my younger siblings. I would have loved to go on studying literature, like my teacher had recommended, but unfortunately life set aside something very different for me. When I had just turned 18, I got married.

From the very first moment Gino told me he liked me, I made it very clear to him that if he had wanted to be together, he would have had to leave Anzi. I'd had enough of the incessant chatter, the hypocrisy and the narrow-mindedness of my family. I wanted to get away so badly. Gino had an aunt who had moved to Belgium several years earlier, so he visited her in Belgium and told her he was looking for a steady job, hoping to move there permanently after his marriage. I was the one who talked him into looking for a job there! I take all the credit for that! It was surely not an elopement, we both have been through hell, but, again, it was worth it!

Gino works almost nine hours a day and when he comes home, he can't help but drink to feel better. When I first came here, I wanted to find my way, too, but I soon realized that the only thing I could do was knitting and crocheting, so I found a job at an atelier in Brussels as a seamstress. After six years, I had saved enough money to open my own small atelier, which I decided to call "L'Aiguille en Or" and it has been a suc...

November 18th, 2018, Bath, UK

I just can't believe my mother was keeping a secret diary. We were bound to lead the exact same lifestyles, except when I moved to the UK, I already had financial support and a good grasp of the English language. My mother was almost forced to migrate, I, instead, chose to study abroad to pursue my passion. When she came here, she had no secondary education and could not even write in French, I, instead, am attending one of the most exclusive schools in the UK and was properly trained to face even academic language. My poor mother had to make do with the first job she was offered, I, in comparison, could choose among the wide arrays of jobs I was given where I could take advantage of the skills I developed in my area of interest.

I could never imagine she had to face such difficulties, because she always appeared to me and my siblings as an incredibly cheerful motivating person. When I see myself compared to her, I cannot help but acknowledge that her countless efforts did turn out to be very fruitful for her children. My success is the most blatant result of her many years of working, struggling and fighting.

My mother made me reflect about the scope behind our trips and migrations and I really have to say that my decision to study abroad is, in comparison to her decision to leave Italy, a mere caprice.

As a Westerner, I now live in a world where most of us get to choose where to live, what to study and how to follow our innermost inclinations, but sometimes we all forget what it cost our ancestors to provide such favourable context and how valuable it was and still is for them to have such incredible freedom.

I was on the phone with my mother earlier today. She sounded so off-colour. I guess she misses me just as much as I miss her, though she does not have the audacity to admit that she would have loved to have me around, because she really understands how much this is all worth.

June 17th 2016

Dear diary,

As you know I'm a normal seventeen-year-old girl from Zimbabwe. I go to school, I have friends and a lovely family. I have one big dream, too: becoming a stylist.

My family and I are not rich, but we never complain, all we need is health and faith. Fortunately both my parents work, so they can buy food and clothes. I could never be happier.



Shamila

January 6th 2017

Dear diary,

Things are changing...

My dad has been fired and forced to leave Zimbabwe.

The reason? Having asked a day off to bring my youngest sister to the hospital, because she had had a fever for 10 days. He is still working, but what he sends to us is not enough. My mum is desperate and cries everyday, that's why I left school and started to help my mum.

Life is getting harder day by day, but we can't give up. Not now.

Shamila

July 26th 2017

Dear diary,

We are not able to handle this situation anymore.

My mum lost her forces, my three sisters are too young to provide for our family and my dad sends less and less money.

Yesterday I received a proposal: leaving the country.

Actually, before this opportunity, one of my dad's friends came home. He said that my dad had given him his consent. The consent of letting his son marry me. As I heard those words I turned white and I went crazy. I perfectly knew that if I had accepted, I wouldn't have been able to see my family again...once that you're married all your life is concentrated on your husband. I prefer dying than leaving my family, especially in this situation. My mum, totally calm, didn't say a single word: she just nodded and stared at him. I refused while my tears dropped off my face. After a little bit of insistence the man left our house screaming that I was excommunicated. Well, I am excommunicated for everybody who lives here..a shame! A shame because I chose to be free. I don't care. I'll leave, even though I don't know where I'll go. Maybe to Italy, maybe to Germany, maybe to Sweden. But I'll go.

Shamila

December 20th 2017

Dear diary,

It's been three months since I left...

I still feel empty and the only thing I want to do is screaming out all my pain. No, I can't...I have to be strong for my family. I do.

I left Zimbabwe three months ago at 4 a.m. and arrived in Algeria by truck. The truck was packed and smelled like dirty socks. I couldn't travel alone (I'm a girl) so I asked a family if they could pretend that I was one of their children. God blessed me, because they accepted. In Algeria I worked in the fields for a month to earn enough money to continue my "journey". I arrived in Libya thank to another family. That's where I am at the moment. Here I work during the day and hide at night: life's too dangerous here. There's too much cruelty: I've seen men shooting without even thinking about it and soldiers raping girls. Fortunately (God blessed me again) I haven't been one of them. Tomorrow I'll leave this awful place. I'm looking forward to being on that boat to reach Europe. Finger crossed.

Shamila

January 8th 2018

Dear diary,

I'm alive!

I arrived in Italy safe and sound. I was rescued by the "Croce Rossa" volunteers. They transferred me to a homeless shelter. There I made a lot of friends and I learnt (and I'm still learning) a little bit of Italian. I can say words like "Ciao", "Bella Italia" and, of course, "Pizza". In my freetime I draw dresses and sew as my mum taught me. My family, thank God, is okay. My dad has been released and he is back home. He works again and with his salary my mum can buy food and clothes again.

My sisters go to school, an English school. I am very happy. I feel so blessed. I'm going to stay here in Italy hoping that my future will amaze me, but I also hope one day I'll be able to go back to my native country. I keep having faith in God. I know He has a big heart.



Shamila

Dear diary,

Today is the third day I've been in Italy, everything is very strange to me. I cannot understand what people say. I feel uncomfortable.

I've met two guys who come from Mali like me, one called Abdul and the other called Jussuf. They also have some communication problems with other people.

Today we have met Marika, a girl who works in an association but I haven't understood what she does. She explained to us that she can help us find a job and learn the Italian language.

But everything is still very confusing because they are sending us to various migrants' centres. Today we are still staying all together here, in the city where we landed but whose name is still unknown to me.

I hope I'll get to know more people, up to now the Italians seem very nice.

I am writing to you tomorrow, diary

Moses



Dear diary,

It's so strange to find myself still here, in this land, a place that seemed to be so away from me, both physically and culturally.

I couldn't ever imagine, one year ago, to be able to integrate, to fit in in this new world. Actually, I couldn't even imagine what my new house would have looked or been like; I also refused to accept the constriction of leaving my country, my very first home. It's like being adopted by another mum, someone you have never met yet: you don't care if you are going to live better; you don't care if you are going to receive all the love that your new mum can give you:



you'll always search for your natural one, the one that gave you life and that would give you hers for you. So you find yourself obliged to leave your place without even wanting it, you are just stretched apart from your world and certainties and just have to face your journey. And there I was, facing the Mediterranean, on that boat leading to Portugal, a place completely unknown and so mysterious, just one year ago.

The first month was a real tragedy: I didn't know the language at all, therefore communicating turned to be almost impossible; as I didn't know the language, I had lots of difficulties in approaching the locals and I remember feeling so uncomfortable and isolated. There were times when I just sat in my room and cried, and cried. Oh, I wished I could be on another boat and sail back to my family again...but there was no way. I had to stay here, to start working in order to save



money and send it to my family in Senegal. I continuously felt lonely, abandoned and with no future.

Time after time, I started feeling stronger and tried to be more positive and to react; I had no choice, after all. A couple of months later I could already understand and speak a little bit of Portuguese and I learnt well different places and familiarised with

the local traditions; besides, I began being more confident and tried to create a connection with other people, not to be afraid and speak. I was so afraid of being judged and victim of prejudices because of my origins, my skin, my religion, that I easily misunderstood other people's thoughts and actions. At the end of the day, I just ended up being the one creating castles of sand: when I started opening myself more, I found I was surrounded by wonderful people. This is what the Portuguese are: friendly, kind, open-minded. In addition, I also tried to give Portugal another chance and to get to know the territory as much as I could, visiting the nearest places, doing some

research on its history, being familiar with its traditions. That was the moment when I opened up my eyes and I found the beauty in my new life in Europe: the wonderful landscapes, the mountains, the crystal-clear rivers, the peace, the music, freshness and joy in the air, the several monuments and museums, the typical food , like the “pastel de nada” and funny idiomatic expressions.



And finally today, after a long year, I can say I have found hope again and maybe a country to love and that will always have a place in my heart, as a new home. It's true, I often think about my family and about my country and I think I'll always do, because I don't want to stop it: those are my origins which have characterized who I am and if I ever lose their memory, it'll only mean I'll have lost my own identity. Now I am a stronger woman and still full of dreams and hopes.

I'm ready to face new adventures and I know that now it's only up to me to write my future.

Always yours,

Sahafa

10 November 2018 THE DEPARTURE

Dear diary,

I really want to tell my experience to someone and knowing that you are ready to listen to me makes me happy.

I am Fadi, a boy of seventeen and I come from Syria. I've recently arrived here, in Italy, I do not know the language very well yet so I have few, even very few friends.

I am writing to you because I want to free myself from all thoughts, from all the anguish and anger that I've kept in myself since we left.

I was born on May 13, 2001, in Syria, my life, before coming here, was quite quiet until the arrival of that damn day. In Syria, precisely in Homs, I had many friends and lived in a magnificent three-storey house; I grew up in a family that loved me and I was happy, even with little.

One bad day, in 2007, a war broke out that at first seemed light, but then, as the days passed, the weeks, the months it became increasingly violent. I would like so much to forget and eliminate from my mind that war context in which I found myself, but unfortunately seeing women mistreated, taken by the hair, dragged and killed is not so simple. It had become a devastating thing. Finally, my father decided that it was time to leave, to leave that "murderous land", so he considered it, and to leave for Italy where we would have found peace.

Then we went to the port. There was a bad smell of fish and a lot of people waiting. And soon after, here is the ferry. Old and shabby, of a metal that seemed to have to give way at any moment.

I did not understand how mum and dad wanted me to sail on that hut. Despite those conditions, we sailed for days in the company of women, men and young children like my sister Lateefa, just three years old.

The sea at the start was very rough, but luckily when the destination was close the sea calmed down, allowing us to arrive in this land so far new to our eyes: Italy.

12 November 2018 THE ARRIVAL

When I woke up, I could not find Mum anymore, but then they told me unfortunately she had died on the way due to lack of water. I wish she were still here, I miss her so much! I heard a voice say, 'Here we are! Here, Italy!' Then I realized that that long and infinite voyage was over. We were tired, scared, cold and hungry but happy to have arrived. Very kind coast -guardsmen took us to the shore, gave us blankets and food.

We spent a few months in a centre. Meanwhile, Dad started working in a transport agency, because he knows three languages including Italian. He earned 15 euros a day but he was happy.

After saving the necessary money, we moved to a very dirty flat on the top floor of a building. In the first months we were treated more like animals than like people.

At school they teased me and a teacher constantly scolded me; once he told me a sentence that I will never forget, a distressing sentence: "If you were Italian, you wouldn't always be so bad, you're just a stupid boy arrived in Italy in a barge!". It was a sentence that marked me, and occasionally I still think about it today.

I will never forget it.



Dear Diary,

I'm Malik, I'm six years old and today is a special day. Mom told me that we are finally reaching dad! We have collected all our things, it seems that our house is now on sale, my sister told me that with the money of the house we can buy the tickets.



At the thought of making my first trip I was so excited, but as soon as I got on the boat, I changed my mind. I learned that we must stay five days on a boat, not one of the beautiful ones, a boat with more than 200 people on it, we are sitting in half a meter of space surrounded by people who cry and pray.

The boy opposite me has just woken up and is saying desperately that he is thirsty, I am also thirsty, hungry, sleepy and my back hurts. Instead, the man on the other side has closed his eyes and does not open them anymore, I asked my mother why and she told me that he was so sleepy.

Now I hear the screams of desperate people that are thrown into the sea, I asked my mom why and she told me that they only wanted to swim, but it doesn't seem to me... maybe I just do not understand them.

The situation gets worse, now even mom has closed her eyes, maybe she was sleepy, too. She told me to be strong and to be a good boy, but she cried and tried to smile.



Now I'm scared, it's night and to keep me company there isn't even the moon, so I follow the chorus of my traveling companions and start crying and shouting to avoid being thrown into the sea or falling asleep.

19th June 2018

My journey began this way.

I got into the barge and only in that moment I became aware that I was leaving my land, my life.

It was the sunniest day I'd ever seen, there was an oppressive calm in the air but my mind was in a storm.

Why am I saying that? The answer is in my story.

I left with my friend Koublak, our dream had always been to escape from our reality and to reach the so-called "Europe".

It seems strange but I was so excited to feel myself so close to my fellow travellers, to share the same space and the same feelings, because this experience should have been a new start.

The date of departure was the 16th of June and we were supposed to arrive on the 20th but the third day something nasty happened: my friend Koublak would never

again see the mainland.

Then I thought: what's the point of this journey? Why leave our land to reach another one and die in the sea?

Why suffer to achieve quiet?

Why leave together and arrive alone?

I haven't got an answer yet but I know that I have to fight not only for myself but mostly for the ones who have no longer a chance.



Dear diary,

My name is *Samba*, I come from Ghana and I am 19 years old.

I landed in Italy in April. I said: "Thanks God because I'm ok, arrived alive and safe".

We were welcomed by operators of the Italian Red Cross with a nice "Welcome to Italy" that reassured me and made me feel good after so many months.

After my long long voyage I disembarked in Sicily and I was sent, for two or three months, to a reception center in a village near Lecce.

I set off alone. During the two days of travel I made friends from the most different nations: Chad, Somalia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso.



I became friend of some of them. We shared the dream to arrive here in Italy. Then I left again for a bigger center in the same region, where I was welcomed with human warmth by professionals.

I established a good relation with all the operators and I keep hearing from them today.

I want to work here in Italy, to request the humanitarian protection, I don't want to return where war and desperation are.

My story is a tragic story, of a father lost too early, of a very poor family: I started with a lump in my throat and a dream. From Ghana to Togo on a bus. Then, after crossing Benin, I approached Agadez (Niger), after a week of travel on board of a bus.

In Agadez I stayed for a week in the bus station because I did not have any other shelter where to sleep. Here criminal gangs robbed me, beat me and led me to Libya.

I crossed the Algerian desert, packed in a car with other peers and so we arrived in Libya, forced into prison, without food and without water ...

In Libya I was in prison for about two months until in April together with other boys I managed to escape and reach Sabratha, the city from which I left.

We spent terrible days crossing the sea; the Libyan traffickers stopped and tampered with the engine of the boat in the open sea, voluntarily putting at risk the life of all of us. We were saved only thanks to the sighting by a helicopter and the subsequent arrival of the Italian Coast Guard.

Dear diary,

I arrived in Italy one year ago and, to be honest, I don't miss my family at all.

I decided to leave Aleppo not only because of the war, but also for my family. They made me feel trapped. I couldn't go out without my father, or my brother, or especially without wearing a hijab. If I did, they would beat me. I was not free.

When I was a little kid, I used to hide in my grandfather's office to read his books; I learnt it myself. As you already know, I was not allowed to go to school. I asked my parents for a tutor, so I wouldn't have to leave the house, but they were totally against it.

However, I've always been fond of music. Aisha, one of my mother's friends, taught me how to play the violin. She's the person who helped me to flee Syria.

I'm happy now. I have my own life in Turin and I can finally say I am an independent woman. Currently I'm taking Italian classes, which are free lessons for foreigners, and I work as a violinist in a restaurant every night. Italian is a very difficult language, but the teacher is brilliant. I share the apartment with a French girl, but she doesn't know I'm Muslim, I am afraid that this could change our relationship: I need a friend. My parents never looked for me, I guess Aisha told them what happened and they probably hate me now; all I know is that I will never go back home. Money has never been a problem for me, Aisha took good care of me and she even contacted an Italian friend of hers to make sure I have a safe place here. I hope she is doing fine, too.



Yasmineen

21st October 2018



I'm tired.

I'm finally on the train to my new "host country", but I can't be happy. I've seen too many terrible things during this evil voyage, I guess I will never be able to feel happiness again.

It all started when my brother, 21 years old, asked me to go away: "We don't belong here, we don't belong to this world full of war and blood and screaming children. We must go away, we can't live here anymore." And of course I said yes, what could I have done? When you're 17, you figure everything is possible, you feel powerful, as if you could do anything. But you're actually only a child: a bloody child, you're not able to do anything, anything.

Unfortunately I realised it too late.

We set off on 15th September, there were 600 of us on a boat meant for 200 people: the number of the survivors is though closer to 200 than to 600. And my brother has also gone away. He wanted to go away, but he meant it another way. He left me alone. Or did I leave him alone? There are days I think I should have gone with him. Although I would not be in paradise, everything would be better than my life now, which has turned into a living hell.

I don't even know why I am writing now. Is it supposed to make me feel better? I don't think so. I don't think there's something now, in this world, that can make me feel better. I guess I only want to stop the mess I have in my head by writing everything that happened. But I'm not ready yet. Maybe I'll be able to do it in a month, in a year, but not now. Now I can feel only pain.

I'm tired.

I'm finally on the train to my new "host country", but I can't be happy. I will surely find people willing to help me, and I will never ever live again the terrible experiences I lived during this evil voyage.

Why can't I be happy?

BABU'S STORY



I'm Babu Samassékam and I'm from Mali, a landlocked nation in West Africa, located southwest of Algeria. The desert covers about 65% of Mali's total area, so life conditions are very difficult.

I studied there for 5 years at the university of Timbuctù, to achieve a degree in Science and Maths. Now I live in Potenza, a town in the south of Italy, with my beautiful daughter Maya, she's 2 years old and she's my reason to live.

My wife Sasha and I were forced to leave Mali, to provide a future for our baby.

But during the awful voyage in the Mediterranean Sea I lost my wife forever. Now I feel so lonely without her, anyway I think I have to carry on for my kid who needs a father who takes care of her, this is my strength.

My favourite hobby is reading and I'm interested in biology books. My dream is to work as a science teacher to help students improve their knowledge, even if I still have to learn a lot.

I'm not happy with my current job because, here in Potenza, nobody wants to judge me for my skills and knowledge, they always notice the color of my skin and nothing else. This makes me feel so sad (and sometimes useless for society), but when I look at my daughter sleeping next to me, then I realise that I have to be strong for her, to give her a better life in this unknown but beautiful hopeful land.

I would love to give her an education, and I will do anything to make it possible because, even if this world is racist and it judges you only for the way you look like and not for what you really are, I'm optimistic and I want to see the pretty view in everything.

I hope that all goes for the best for me and for my sunshine, to begin a new life together!

Love you, Maya, more than everything!



10th September 2018



*I will never forget the day I came here and today is the anniversary. I remember how I felt and what I was thinking about. I remember that I still had that headache of the day before and then I was feeling worse. I felt seasick and the journey had been lasting too much. I couldn't bear it anymore. I must consider myself lucky because I was alone and I had no family to take care. And I am still alone. I often looked at the father of that family from Tripoli that was on the raft and I could see the desperation, the uncertainty, the hope but I could also see his efforts to soothe and support his family. I did have the same feelings but, I had to thank Allah for this, I had no family, no children to take care. My mom had decided to stay in Libya in our village and my father died because of a hidden mine. My two older brothers both migrated to Europe and I wanted to reach them. The older one, Mahmoud, has been living in Sweden for 5 years. He arrived there first passing from Italy and Germany. The middle one, Aziz, wanted to go to France but the French- Italian border is closed to immigrants, so he reached Mahmoud and then moved to another city in Sweden, Uppsala. I didn't have any idea of where to stay and I envied their luck. I miss them with all of my heart and I've always wanted to be like them, strong, determined. That's why I left lastly, I wasn't sure enough. I didn't know what to do, I was the coward of our family. But I was sure that I would have passed from Italy and then I would have decided my future. I had heard that Italy was the most welcoming country in Europe but then many people had told me that they were starting to be tougher in the incomings. They say that they were afraid of us because we brought violence and they are probably right today. Not all are good, honest, desperate people who want to live in freedom, working honestly and properly, people like me or the family from Tripoli. But it's wrong to close every frontier like France, Spain or Austria. We were risking our lives for a piece of freedom and if there are criminals trying to enter the country, **they** should be sent back, not everyone. I hoped that there could be some glimmer of kindness, of humanity in Europe, the dream of most modern migrants, a land that is so close to us and yet moving away from us, gradually. And what can I say? I'm still in Italy after one year and my dreams of going to my brothers are drifting away. I can't enter France because they closed the border and we must get the asylum in the first country of arrival. I'm panicking, I don't know what to do. I'm figuring out a way to get to Sweden because I have no intention of staying in Italy. It's true, this land is moving away from us, most people are afraid of us. But how can we explain to them that we're not all dangerous? We live in harsh times and the chances for peace are so far. Conflict is infecting the whole world like a plague more than ever before and I fear to live in a place like this. But after one year I unexpectedly found something different: my courage. And it will help me henceforth for all my life.*

Yehmael

***I'm walking in the rain** and trying to think that today will be the right day, that today someone will recognize my engagement and my talent, that I will have the opportunity of defining my future and fulfilling my dreams. I don't know if I'm asking too much, but I can't figure out why people who have always lived here can afford to dream, while I can't; honestly, I can't see any difference. I've always thought that all dreams are made of the same substance, no matter whose they are, dreams have no limits, every human being has the right to believe in them. But, probably, not everyone agrees, so I'm forced to play the cello in the streets, because every school music where I asked for lessons doesn't accept me... "you don't have enough money to pay" is one of the most common alibis, without knowing I'm working everyday on a farm to pay for my lessons, one day; but also "There's no place for you", "It would be difficult to teach and work with you, because of your difficulty with Italian", without knowing I attend Italian classes every evening, and I'm able to understand almost everything, after one year of stay here. If I ask for more reasons, it's even worse, because I realize that they don't trust me just because I'm a migrant, that they are not able to maintain their alibis, they contradict, and they can also think I'm persistent, as all migrants are.*

This is the reason why I play in the rain, either when it's boiling or when it's freezing, but I can say that, although little disadvantages, this makes me really proud of who I am. Some people also give me money, but I don't want it, I'm grateful for their help, but I only demand to be recognized as a musician. I live in a reception centre with other people, who are not only migrants, but Friends, even if we come from different parts of the world. I'm grateful for the roof and the food at my disposal, this support gives me the strength to have ambitions, something which is inconceivable for people who struggle in Senegal, they only experience violence and poverty. Even if some people don't want to deal with me because of my origin, they can't help listening to me while playing, even just for 20 seconds and this is why I keep playing, music links people even implicitly, and this gives kind of idea of freedom, music is the means by which prejudices vaporize and I can talk without saying anything.

Friendship is the best strength ever, my Italian friends are working for me more than I would ask for; they help me with my Italian classes, they involve me in amazing events, in small concerts, they simply trust me and trust my skills: that's heartwarming.



This morning, like every morning I will be playing some cello Sonatas, people who always stop to listen to me and their clapping will remind me of my family, of all the sacrifices they made to allow me to play, of all the money they lent me for violin lessons, their moved eyes... and when I play I can feel them, I can imagine their broken hearts after my

leaving, although they knew it was inevitable because of the war, I remember my journey, the water that kept entering the boat, people screaming at the driver to get back to navigate although he was

exhausted, and above all my stay in Libya, where I realized at what point human being can be influenced by money, by hate, by indifference towards who stands in an unfavourable position for reasons of force majeure. There I experienced violence, some situations always forced me to walk necessarily with a weapon out of sight, I used to work but they didn't pay me and, as a reward, they beat me with a cane, because this is their way of thinking: the more they suffer, the better they work. When I arrived in Italy, I didn't know anything about residence permits and several documents, but I felt free, because I was further from the war, further from people who catch you without any reasons and eat in front of you, proud, while depriving you of food, water, air. During this journey I lost everything, but not my dreams' luggage, which is full, more than ever.

Today, fortunately, instead of holding a gun, I hold the cello I've bought thanks to the assistants of the reception centre, who have helped me to find some temporary jobs. I love the Italian language, I already knew it thanks to classical music and especially to opera, now my passions perfectly coincide with my studies, I'm glad to be here because of deep culture and I want to learn more and more, I always do my homework and look into the topics; I want to show I am exactly like the others, and learning is the best way to demonstrate it.

I will never stop playing, I hope, one day, I'll have the possibility of going back to my home country and play for my family, I haven't heard from them since I arrived here, I don't know if they have escaped, if they are dead, if they can't answer... and I hope to see my friends again, and play the Kreutzer Sonata Op. 47 we were studying before we decided to leave and go our separate ways.



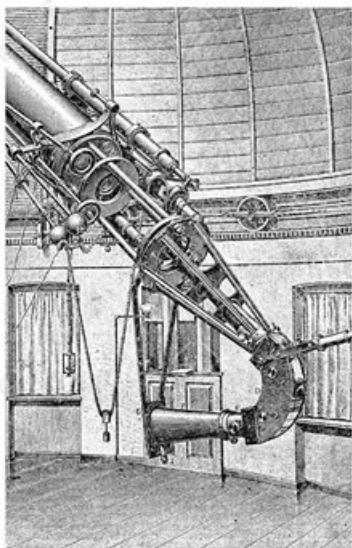
***Lycée Blaise Pascal,
Segré, France***



Monday, 1st October

Dear diary,

Today was awesome. The German school is cool. The teacher gives me my school timetable. We just have school in the morning! It's very different from Norway. Today I spoke a lot with my classmates. They are really nice but I realized that my German isn't very good. I met a new friend: Berthe! She's really kind with me and she showed me the city. The city is very big and I'm a little lost. It's very different from my little town in Norway!



I just called my family. My mom is worried about me but everything is okay. My sister is quite jealous! I miss Norway a little but I really think I can have fun in Germany... I just have to practise a lot!

I live in Werder. It's a little town near Postdam. Postdam is the town that I have visited today. My school is here. I live with Julia who is very nice. I don't see them from the whole week because I sleep at school (except on weekends). It's just an old woman who welcomes me in her home in exchange of my

help. I do some cleaning, shopping... She traveled a lot and knows a lot of things about life. She visited France, Italy, Mongolia, Russia...

German life is pretty expensive than in Norway. I miss the mountains of Sørpågen. Germany hasn't any mountains. But I'm really exciting because tomorrow I'm going to visit Berlin. I want to see the Holocaust-Mahnmal.

I am going to leave you dear diary for tonight because I want to update my blog. This is for my friend because they want to see pictures of my trip. See you soon! ☺♥

6th January 2015

My dear diary, I need to write down my journey from Sudan to France.

Today, I'm smiling and I'm proud of who I have become.

I left my lovely country, Sudan. It became too dangerous to stay over there because of the war. I traveled by boat then on bus to go to France. I was with other migrants but none spoke Sudanese or English. I felt alone and isolated. French people from an association came to visit us to help getting to a migrants' center where we were accommodated. I get on well with a couple; they took me under their wings. They decided to welcome me in their house (because the center welcomes more people than it can actually host) while my papers were being done.

At that moment, I felt better and it motivated me even more to find a job. It was not easy but four months later I found a job. I learnt French at the same time. I earned money so I decided to be independent and I rented an apartment.

Then as time went by, I began to speak good French, I made friends and became well integrated into the society. I always visit the couple who welcomed me, I shall remain grateful to them for ever.

I traveled on boat like this one and this is a picture of me in my apartment.



France Inter

14th November 2018

It was D-Day. I woke up at 2:00 AM because we had to be there at 3:00 am. When I arrived with Elias, my son, it was dark and cold. I heard some kids crying. We couldn't see anything, only the captain's lights. They were screaming at us and asking us to stand in a queue. We had to be quiet. We let our life in Lebanon to reach Spain. We thought we were saved. Some people sang their native songs. The new continent was at the end of the journey. We were worried about taking small boats but the captains said that there weren't any risks; so, we didn't reply. After waiting 25 minutes, we got onboard. We started to get away from the shore. After some hours, we were at sea. Alone, facing a rough sea. My son, the other migrants and I began to be hungry.



The babies were crying. Everyone slept on each other.

In the morning, I had aches because I stayed in the same position for many hours. We still have some weeks of travel, the journey is very long. I hope for a best future for my son, he will have a big house and a great job; he will have a big and sweet family.

Dear diary, I will write you back in some days, hoping my son and I will still be here.

Have a good night.

Yara



Rohinga is a Burmese boy who speaks of his story. In Burma, there is war. His family and he had to flee to Bangladesh. It was dangerous to stay in their house.

The 12 June 2016

In my house, I heard women screaming and children crying. I was condemned to leave. The only option was to pass the river to be a refugee in Bangladesh. I had to leave my country to become a foreigner. It's not fair.... I will live in fear, in darkness.

Today, I have to fight for my Life. It's a nightmare for me.

I'm still in a camp, in Bangladesh. I don't have job. I can't cope with it anymore, anymore. I would like to return to Burma, but it's impossible. What shall I do?....

Friday, August 13, 2018

My name is Ryad Mahrez, I am Iranian and I decided to leave my country of origin where it is not good to live because of the war and its bombs which are dropped every day in our whole country so I decided to leave my country for a simple and good reason : remain safe, me and my relatives.

We have decided internally to join a country where we can be safe and completely at ease, a place where we can find work quite easily. While I am writing,, we are in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, or we have left the Greek coast for almost 2 days, so we are between Greece and Italy.

We are a lot on an inflatable boat, I would say between 100 and 200 people in the same case that me and my loved ones, have crowded for days in a small boat usually containing not enough space for everyone onboard. The temperatures here are constant and vary the day from 25 degrees to at least 35 degrees which is hard to bear because we are grouped and have a lot of heat. At night, the temperatures drop quite steeply descending to at least 10 degrees, a change of temperature difficult to bear: some are victims of big refreshment of the body because in the middle of the ocean, the temperature is low and causes a lot of deaths.

Apart from the temperatures, conditions are difficult today because no boats have been sighted and we have little food and little hydration during the day which caused the death of a few people suffering from lack of sugar, vitamins and especially water to cool off.

Here, the conditions are horrible because it is a risk and permanent danger that we have taken to be alone in the middle of the sea on an inflatable boat whose capacity is way insufficient to welcome all the passengers... On top of that, we are left without any help, food and water.

But we will reach our goal, touch the ground of serenity ...

RYAN

November 2018

Dear friend,

I am awoken by the sunrays which go through my windows. Since a year, I have been living in this room thanks to the association SOS migrants. I don't complain: I have a bed and a bathroom. It's much better than all my brothers who live in camps or on the road.

Today like all the other days since September, I will work on a farm called "Biocorp". I am taken in August, I picked up grapes and now, at present time, I am harvesting apples. I like this job because it reminds me of my work in my native country. Thanks to the job, I can earn a living for you. In the afternoon I will go to the library to learn French. When I know French, I will find another job which will enable me to leave my room and have a home only for me. This evening, I am going to work at McDonalds to serve French fries. I must have two jobs so that I can live with dignity. Thanks to this job, I can send money to my family who has stayed in my native country. Because we must never forget our parents and the place where we were all born.

Love...

5th December 2018

My name is Joaddan. I'm thirty years old. I have a daughter. Her name is Phanie. She is five years old. Today, we are leaving our country, Cameroun, to go to Spain to have a better life. I have decided to leave my country because of poverty. I decided to take this choice because I have lost my husband. He is dead because of our hard living conditions. We are going to take the plane this night at 8.00 PM. I'm very nervous because I don't know what awaits me in my future life. I hope I will find a job and people will help me and my daughter. I hope I will come back here, one day, with her because all my life is here, most importantly my family and it's very hard for me to leave them. I am really scared to take the plane because I have never taken the plane before.....



6th December 2018

We are on the plane and there are no problems. There are a few minutes left before the plane lands. Phanie has slept during this travel but I can't sleep because I'm very nervous. I'm impatient too to reach Spain. It's time to get off the plane.

We are now in Madrid. I woke up Phanie. Outside, it's very cold. It's raining.

Phanie and I think it's beautiful. It's not the same landscape than in Cameroun. We are waiting for our luggage. When we have our luggage, we'll have to take a cab. There is an association here in Spain which is going to help and assist us. The name of the association is ACCEM. We are sheltered by this association.

I am hopeful and proud to have made it but I am still worried: will we be accepted in this new country?



I still remember the feeling that went through me when I put my foot on the deck. It was cold, the sky was clear... I left because the war destroyed me, I have no more friends, no family. I'm praying for my child to be born in Europe. To get there, I paid 1500€ , I was promised a short trip, water and food. I have been staying 12 hours on this boat without eating, without drinking... We were 100 people on board. The smugglers have abandoned us, we are all going to die....

And then there was this big boat, registered under the name "SOS Méditerranée", we were asked to calm down and they were going to help us. They took us one by one and gave us food and drink... Dry clothes and care. My baby was born in the night, I am happy that he was born here; he will have better living conditions.

In the early morning we arrived in Catania. My new life begins here, but I still have a long way to go: will my request for asylum be accepted?

2 months later...

I found work, but I still live in an asylum seeker center, I will soon have my freedom....



November, 2018

Hello my diary,

I'm Neblatiti and I am from Somalia.

In my country, life is hard, famines are common and my family is unfortunately not spared.

My twelve brothers and sisters often lack food because my parents do not earn enough money to feed them all.

Two months ago, I realized that my family was in danger and that I needed to help them.

At the moment, I am on the boat that is supposed to take me to Italy.

I left the Libyan coast two days ago just after paying a small fortune to a smuggler for the crossing of the Mediterranean.

I'm cold on this inflatable boat. We have no place and, for the most part, no lifejacket.

It is impossible to sleep on this boat. The roar of the waves and the cries of the young children kept me awake. And it is with open eyes that my future is emerging in my mind. I imagine myself at the Italian border where, with my comrades, we would be welcomed and then taken to migrant camps. My dream is to join France. For this, I intend to send a request for asylum to the government in the hope of being accepted and thus be able to find a job in order to recover money for my family. A big wave hit and shake the boat violently and made me immediately return to reality: for this to happen, I must already survive this crossing....



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'f' followed by a horizontal line.

AE João de Araújo Correia,

Peso da Régua, Portugal



Diary from 14th November 2018

Dear diary,

Today I wrote a letter to my parents where I talked about how amazing this whole experience has been so far!

And talking about this experience, today something quite funny, for the others not for me, happened at work and I could not talk about this historical moment.

So, today a completely new case appeared in the emergency room. A lady that got involved in a car accident needed an hip operation. When the orthopedic doctor started performing the operation I wasn't ready and my feet got soaked in this lady's blood... Summing up, everyone was laughing at my face, another normal day in my life.

I think that this is it for today. I hope that tomorrow will be a better day, without tons of blood, and with some new cases that will make me learn more!

Ana.



Seattle, 14th November 2018

Dear parents,

How are you? How is Portugal since I last left? I hope it's fine and everything looks the same.

Seattle is so different from our little town and little country. It feels like every single day I'm in a completely new city and, even, world, every day I see new people, new faces and it feels so weird.

Working here has been pretty amazing, everyone is lovely to me and are always trying to cheer me up when I get homesick. The hospitals have amazing conditions, with specialized health care for every patient in their own bedrooms. The technology is the top one and they are always creating new ways to solve the patient's problems. When I think about all of this I get pretty honored to be able to work in such a spectacular system and wiith the best of the best specialists!

Even though this year in this new environment is being more than what I could ever imagine it is also being pretty challenging... Missing home, being constantly working, having barely any friends and not knowing everything as good as I knew in Portugal, all of this at the same time is something that, sometimes, puts me in such a sad mood. But I guess it's all part of this experience. It's almost like being in University but with the difference that I'm in a new country, with a different language and culture and without anything familiar.

I can't wait to hear anything from you! And I can't wait even more to be back home, for a visit of course, because, even though I love my home country, this city and country are becoming, every day, a new home to me, a fresh start to my life.

Love you and miss you with all my heart!

Your beloved daughter,

Ana.

Tuesday, 1st August, 2017

Today is the day I'm leaving my family and friends to go to another country. On my way to the airport I thought about when my mother told me that we were going to France, it was one month ago, I cried a lot but now I'm accepting it better or at least I try because I know that it's better for me and for my mom. We are leaving our



country because my mom doesn't have a good job here and the one that she is going to have in France it's much better paid. My mom only starts working in the next month but we decided to go now to get used to the country.

In the airport all of my family was crying and I understand why but I prefer to believe that in Christmas we are going to be all together again.

Monday, 4th September, 2017

My school starts today, I'm so nervous. I don't speak French so that's gonna be a challenge for me but I will try to communicate with other people as much as I can because I really want to make new friends, I'm facing this in a good way because If I don't, I know that is going to be much harder for me. My mom started working some days ago, she is really happy in her new job but sometimes I know that she feels sad when she thinks about the people that we left in our country.

Wednesday, 20th December, 2017

I'm in a plane going to my country to visit my friends and family. The past months have been difficult, more difficult that what I thought that will be. I'm having some troubles with the language and with the making of new friends. It's been difficult to talk with my old friends because most of the time when I can talk, they can't, and talking using a computer it's not the same as talking face to face and now I realize that more than ever. I'm really surprised with my mom, she really likes her job here. Besides that she is able to send some money to our family and that money really makes the difference in the economic resources of my family.

London, 18th of March 2017

My dear family,

I hope this letter reaches you in good health and happiness. I wanted to know if everything is fine there in Portugal, since we don't share letters much often.

I still do not regret my decision of moving to England, especially because there was the possibility of not working in what I wanted, if not working at all. I want to be independent and, as mother says: "Never submit yourself to others just because you are a woman, feel proud of yourself and work twice as hard to achieve what you want". Two years have passed, and now I am a very successful doctor. The female community helped me a lot, too. Not much is happening here, since we are still trying to recover from the war, but I think we are doing pretty well, if you ask me.

Everyone is very gentle and kind to me. They help me when I need and are always trying to learn our language when they have the time, which is quite funny. I also got married to an Australian lawyer and we are living a good life. Not perfect, but good. He is an honest and good man, so please don't worry about me.

I have been thinking it's time to visit you with my husband, so you can meet him. Not now or the next week, but I promise we will come, so be attentive!

As soon as you receive this letter please write back. I want to know all the news from there. You have to tell me!

With love,

Daniela

P.S.: By the way, how is our neighbour? Does she still think that God is going to send another plague of "who knows what" to the world?

Germany, 15th January, 2017

A few years ago I got unemployed, I worked as a designer in a architecture company. I got fired because the company wasn't making enough money and couldn't pay me anymore. Several employees were fired too. That happen in the begin of the Portugal crisis and things were about to get even worst. At that time my wife was already unemployed, the university analysis lab had some budget cuts too. We were both unemployed and raising our 2 year old daughter. There was no jobs, we looked everywhere in our town.

The lack of money made us change town, we changed to my wife's city, there was old house were we could stay without expenses (belonged to my wife's family). In this town we still didn't find any job but at least our expenses were cut by half. With all our families trying to find us a job, after 2 years my mother found a year job for my wife in my hometown. She moved to my mother's house and me and my daughter stayed at our current town.

After that 1 year job my wife got unemployed again and our search for jobs continued. One day my mother proposed emigration, if my aunt accepted we would move to her house in a little town near Dortmund, restarting our life there. We then proceeded to talk with my aunt and fortunately she understood our situation and accepted our propose. Then came the difficult part, decide to leave the country or not. After a long deliberation time we decided to move to Germany to once again look for a job. We also decided to leave our daughter with my parents until we had jobs and a home in Germany.

In 2012 we finally moved to Germany leaving our daughter behind. With the help of my cousin's language knowledge we started to send curriculums to several industries but I wasn't accepted because I didn't know German, my wife had already had some German classes in Portugal. So with the help of the German government we managed to find a home and they offered some money to buy furniture, because we had the intent to become german citizens. In terms of language my wife had to take a test and I had to participate in German classes. While I attended German classes my wife would do several part-time jobs in the cleaning and nursing fields. After the German course was very easy to find a job, and happily a job in my area. I now work as sign designer and my career is progressing very fast. My wife has also a permanent job as a carer in a nursing home. My daughter is attending school and has portuguese classes. The 3 of us were easily accepted in the community, even though there are some people that play with our German accent, they always try to help us in the end.



AGÊNCIA LUSA /PAÍS /26 MAI 2018 / 06:30 H

Wednesday, Sept, 28th, 2018

I left the place I love. Armed conflict destroyed my country, I 'm worried about what the future is going to be like, how I am going to leave without the people I love.

It's only the second week I've been here (Portugal) and I don't know how to speak Portuguese...

Today is the first day at school, I don't Know what to do, I don't know what the subjects that I will have, and I don't know any colleagues either.

Bye for now, I'll tell you everything that happens after school 😊

SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 2016

Today is my father's only day off. He usually goes to the library. He reads through all the Portuguese newspapers and keeps in touch with what goes on here. This is the only way he can remain sane, living there.

Every month, he arranges for money to be sent to our family. He usually goes through a friend who knows someone with a bank account in Switzerland.

Helena

Friday, July 7, 2016

We are all very happy, my father comes to spend the holidays with us.

We'll pick him up at the airport, and then we'll go home.

When we get home the whole family will be waiting for him.

My father brings gifts and chocolates for all.

Holidays will be wonderful with the whole family together.

Helena



18th of March 2017

Dear diary

Today I wrote a letter to my family, it was time for me to send them something, it has been more than one month without contacting them.

Aside from that, a very strange case happened: I got the chance to separate for the first time two Siamese twins! It was so amazing and strange at the same time, because they will be able to live normal lives without having to feel attached to one another. I am so proud of myself for being able to save these two babies' lives!

I wish I could do more to help people in need, like I did with those twins. Helping people is what makes me a better person and professional, so I want to improve more and more, to help as many people as I can.

I think this is it for today...

Lígia

18th of April 2017

Early in the morning I went to the Pediatric Hospital. I have seen and examined all my patients.

I get a call from a colleague saying that he needs help with an operation. I tell him I'll be over as soon as I'm done here.

The surgery went well, and the child is doing well. .

It's time to get back home.

Lígia



Liceo Caracense, Guadalajara, Spain





My name is Daniela Rodríguez, and I am an immigrant from Colombia. I came to Spain seven years ago when I was 9 years old.

We emigrated because our economic situation was not good and my parents needed to find a better job.

I remember that the day we took the plane to Spain I could not stop crying thinking about everything I was leaving behind: my family, my only friends, my country... I understood that we had to emigrate in order to have a better future, but at first it was hard.

My mother got a good job as a cook very early and my father has been working as a house painter since our arrival.

Now, I still miss my country but I have integrated very well in Spain. I made fantastic friends who have helped me a lot, the high school is better here, people are so kind and also there are many gorgeous places. Moreover, our house is amazing and we have a garden with a big swimming pool. I feel really happy.

Despite all this, I miss my grandparents. We only see each other at Christmas. I also miss the atmosphere of the streets, the people, my old house and going out to the beach every day. There are things that I have lost, however I have won many others.



How I feel? I feel bad, strange, disconcerted... I do not know what is happening in the society. Why people react with scorn? Why people cannot accept that some countries are being in bad times?

I think that we are very advanced, we are in 2018, our society is created for acceptance. Education at school must teach what the problems in other countries are; why some people have to go out of their own countries; but they have to say the reality, with the true dates of deaths, bombs, affected people...

I could not live in my country because it was hell, everyday a bomb detonated in the door of my house, hundreds and thousands of people die in few seconds. It is a continuous war, where there is not free days to be a little bit "relaxed". So I had to go to another country, to Spain, I had to go by an illegal form because the governments did not accept my letters. I arrived at the centre of refugees with other people in the same situation as me. When I go out, in the streets, I have to suffer different words that make me feel bad; people believe that I came here because of the money, they believe I need too much money and as here I can obtain that, I used the easy form to have money. But it is not true! In my country I had my work; I had enough money to have a good life, but I could not live inside a country where maybe tomorrow you wake up dead.

I hope that one day I can feel as if I were in my country and do not have to explain to people why I am here and what is what I need to be really good and without any suffering. I hope too, that one day the problems finish with a good solution, that people stop making bad things to other people.



Last night, I dreamed that my family and I were still in our country, Syria. I woke up when the sound of a bomb appeared in my head. I cannot forget the image of our city and our dear house completely destroyed after the bombing.

In Greece we are safe, this is what we were looking for. However, I miss my parents, my friends, the little shop we owned in the city centre... I think it will pass much time until I come to terms with life here.

Our way to this country was really hard. In addition, my son (who is only 6 years old) suffered a lot. It was very dangerous when we travelled by patera. It was full of people and we ran out of food. Miraculously, a rescue boat saw our patera and helped us. When we arrived in the country, I started to cry of relief and happiness.

After three months since the arrival, my husband obtained a job that allows us to live a decent life. It gives us the necessary money for our house, food, clothes, etc. However, I am still looking for a job in order to have a better quality of life. I hope to find one soon.

My husband and I are struggling with the language, it is really difficult for us. Despite this, our son is progressing incredibly. Moreover, he has made new friends.

Greece is a very beautiful country, we live near the beach and the landscape is amazing. People here are quite nice and they are always trying to help us.



Alonso Sancho – Oct 2018



We began our way on October 13, our intention is to reach the United States and look for a better life there. My wife and me used to live in San Pedro Sula, the second largest city in Honduras with our two children, in terrible conditions. I lost my job two months ago and I found it

impossible to get a new one.

Nowadays, San Pedro is one of the most dangerous cities in the world, there are constant fights and murders caused by the mafias and poverty.

We have traveled more than 300 km until today, most of them walking. The situation is terrible, it is so hard for me and my wife to carry on with two young children and make them walk 25 km every day. My heart breaks when I see them crying and asking us to stop and drink some water.

We left all our belongings behind and took only some money. Some days people from the UN arrive and they bring us some provisions. It is not much but at least it is something to thank God about.



It is true that every new day that passes it is more difficult to continue and even more difficult when news arrives that the President of the United States is sending the military to wait for us at the border to prevent us from entering.

It is true it is not easy, no one said it was, but we cannot lose hope and joy. If we did, it would be impossible to complete our way. I do not continue for me, but for my family, to give them the dignified life they deserve. And no matter how hard they do it to us, nothing will make me lose the illusion that one day we can all be happy together and live well somewhere.

World, please listen, I am sending you this message. President Trump, I send it to all of you who live somewhere around the planet in peace and without having to fight for a dignified life so you know that we are people just like you and that we need your help to survive, that if you do your part and make yourself heard, maybe we can prevent this from happening again.

A day in the life of a today's immigrant

Being an immigrant today is not as easy as people think. They think that we are getting some benefits for free. And that is the reason for the discrimination that some people get against immigrants. This is not like that. If you do not think so, then check my story.

I am from China as my mum, but my father is English. That's why I know how to

speak English. We lived in Beijing for several years since my birth. One day my parents decided to move to Madrid, Spain. I loved the country, so our movement was not so bad for me. However, the moment I arrived at Barajas (Madrid's airport), I changed my mind.

The first days were horrible. I did not know how to speak Spanish, so I was so lost. I started speaking it in the first year there, and it was a very basic level. Now I think I have dominated it, but suffering the feeling of being lost for three years.

In the beginning, people laughed at my appearance, and I think they were saying things back to me. Of course, I could not understand them; but I knew that they were not saying good things about me. I cried in my home for a long time because of this.

My parents started working in bad jobs because they were immigrants I think, and they were exploited. When I arrived home, I saw them very tired and different.

Finally, after two years, my parents found a very good job and I made a lot of friends.

Now they are the best I have. My marks in the school went up and all the people respected me without any discrimination. Since that moment, I recovered the feelings I had before arriving here. You only have to see my happiness in the photo.

Changing the country for me has been a good decision, but the first years were awful.

Then you adapt to the country and things go much better.





I am from Syria, but I am living in Spain. My life changed when my parents decided to move here because of the terrible conflict that is taking place in my country. Our life before the “big trip” was horrible. There was not enough food, but there was enough fear. Sometimes I remember this feeling, the sound of the army planes that surrounded the area and the doubts about our fragile subsistence.

Now, I have a normal life. I go to school and I have dreams and hopes. I live in a small flat near the town centre, but my parents say that we will move to a big one in the future. I liked how the things are going because I have a lot of friends and we have a lot of fun together that makes me forget the bad times. Also, I study everyday because I want to be an important doctor one day to help other people. I know it is going to be harder for me because the language and my immigrant condition do not help in some occasions, but I do not mind.



I have to confess that my real big dream is to return to my country when the war ends. Before the war, Syria was a beautiful country. There were a lot of tourists and incredible traditional parties, I was too young to remember that, but my mother is always talking about that. I hope, someday, everything returns to the good old days.

Isaac Rico – Oct 2018



Being an immigrant is considered by society one of the main problems nowadays. This is because it is very difficult to integrate in a new culture.

On the one hand, the main problem in my opinion is to socialize with other people with a different language and customs. Other important problems are discrimination and racism, because there are still some groups of people that do not accept people by how they are.

On the other hand, you are not alone, there are people in your new culture that are always there to help you whenever you need it. Other positive fact is that you discover a new culture apart from the one you already had before.

To put it in a nutshell, being an immigrant is not always bad, it's true that there are some governments that do not want more immigrants in their country, but I think that if you are positive, you can get over the prejudices of people and live a normal life with new friends.



My name is Miriam and I am an immigrant from Spain. Nowadays, I am living in England. I had to leave my country because, after getting a degree in maths at university, I could not find a job. That is to say that I did not have money to live or any opportunity to find a job. I could not continue like that and that is the main reason why I went to England.

I felt so sad because after doing all my studies in my country I could not work in my own country. In addition, I had to move away from my family, which was very hard for me. Furthermore, I had to adapt and integrate myself into society.

At present, I am working in an investment bank. Every month, I send some money to my family. The first months abroad were very difficult, but little by little I got accustomed to my new way of life.

In conclusion, I am considered to be an economic migrant because I left my home for better economic opportunities. My main disappointment was not being able to make my life in my country. I wish one day I will be able to come back.

My name is Njeri and I am from the tribe Maasai from Kenya. I am twenty-two years old and now I live in York, England. My story is very particular.

My family and I used to live with sixty other people of our tribe in a little village near a river. Living there was hard. We were very poor and we didn't have enough money for all of us. We could only ate once a day, which caused that few children died from malnutrition. If we wanted to go to school, we had to walk about two hours. It was quite tiring, so our parents decided that we were not going anymore.

One day a group of English volunteers brought us clothes, food, water and money. They were helping people like us all over the country. They lent us a van so we could go to school again and I remember being very grateful and happy.

A few years went by and I became a really good friend to a young English girl. When I turned eighteen, she helped me convince my parents to let me go to live to England with her. I was afraid, but I wanted so much to go there to study more and have a better life. With some savings that I had, I bought a flight to my new destination, England.

When I arrived to York, I started to look for a job. I needed money to study. The first month was tough. In some jobs interviews, people were rude to me. I had a negative impression of the English people. I did not expect that behaviour. Finally, I was hired to be a waitress and my perspective changed.

In the next months, I made a few friends from the job that helped me to integrate with the people. They taught me a lot of English. Because of that, I felt more confident of myself. On the one hand, I obviously missed my family, my friends, the food and the hot weather but, on the other hand, I was starting to like England and I did not want to come back to Kenya.

After years of work, I managed to gather the sufficient amount of money and now I am studying to be a teacher and I cannot be happier with my life. I love England!



THIS IS ME IN KENYA

My name is Marta, and I'm an immigrant. I was born 18 years ago in Spain. You may know about Spain, as it has been part of the news since the war began. There is a civil conflict between the government and politicians with the citizens of Spain. It all began when the current president took control of the government and declared himself the highest power in the country. He declared new laws and stated that everyone should obey him or he/she would be executed.

This was the cause why I left my origin country and I went to Africa. In Spain, everyone talked about how amazing life is here, and they were right. My parents now have a very good job and they earn enough money to pay a flat in a very nice neighbourhood and to pay my sister's and my studies, as we had to interrupt them because of the military conflict in our city.



Spain, these days

I hope one day I will return home. I love living in Africa, everything is so beautiful and the people are very nice and friendly, but I left part of my soul in Spain. My best friend is fighting in the war, and I haven't heard anything about my family and friends since I came here. And it was where I was born and where I grew up, and I miss it. But as long as the war continues, my father won't let me return to Spain.

I won't be able to thank Africans enough of what they have done for us. When we came here, we didn't have anything, and my mother was very ill. But they give us a new life, new opportunities and health assistance to my mother until she recovered. All this without asking us something in return. And they have done this with hundreds of families from different nationalities, not just with us.



Now, I'm an African girl. And I will spend the rest of my life trying to compensate these people for saving my family and me from death and for giving us a new chance.

This is Africa, my new home

Dear mom,

Sorry I have not been writing as regularly as I should, but many things are happening to me since I got to Madrid a couple of weeks ago and I don't have enough time to do everything.

The first thing that happened to me was during the day we came here, we didn't understand the supermarket cashier so a guy helped us, he spoke Romanian and Spanish. Now my little daughter, Adelina, and the guy's son are great friends at school.

The second thing that happened to us was that a strange man in the underground tried to steal our money, but fortunately the police was nearby and arrested the man, since that moment we are trying to be more careful.

Today Aabraham fell downstairs and we went to hospital, which is the place I am writing this letter from, he is improving really fast and we will likely go back home tomorrow. Something that disappointed us is that Spanish people were cared for first than immigrant people in this hospital, I hope this doesn't happen everywhere.

Right now we are feeling alright, in general we are happy with Spanish people and we hope that we can redo our lives here, I've already made new friends, I may see them again tomorrow, What about you? How is dad?

Hope to see you soon!

Alina



IN YOUR SKIN

One day, at night, I left my house without saying goodbye to anyone. I didn't want to see my family cry, much less continue to see how the situation went from bad to worse. I had nothing to feed my brother and my mother. In my country, there is no possibility of studying; at work, they give you a minimum salary to live two people, also if you get ill you can die.

The trip lasted 22 months. My friend and I walked at night sleeping hidden so that the police would not catch us. Our objective? The border of Mexico. The reality was harder than we thought, we had to work and get a lot of money to arrive in paradise.

After getting that money and crossing the border, the police put us in a shelter for 5 months because we didn't have papers. On leaving, we were allowed to live in any city for 6 months. At that time I had the opportunity to get a job as a cook, together with the papers and money to send to my family, a group of friends and stay in a small apartment. It was too difficult to adapt but at the end everything is getting to. Now I have a new and improved life.



Paula Serna – Oct 2018

Hello, my name is Amira, I'm 15 years old and I come from Syria. When I left my country, a lot of conflicts and wars were happening so my mother took my two brothers, my sister and me out of there, and we came here, to Greece.

Today we are living in a refugee camp. We have been here for two months, two long months. This camp is not very



secure, I do not feel safe here as there are a lot of fights and there are not enough police. My older brother died one month ago because of these fights and conflicts. Going to bed feeling insecure, or feeling that anybody can come into your tent, is not a nice thing.



Furthermore, here we do not have some basic needs such as high-quality food, medical assistance or hot water. There is a lack of hygiene, baths, showers and privacy, besides the presence of rats and cockroaches. But the saddest thing of all is that there are lots of people living here for a very

long time, lots of families, pregnant women, elder people and children, who do not really know what the future will hold for them.

In conclusion, this place is not safe, and my family and me are looking forward to returning home soon, or otherwise, moving from here.



My name is Juan José Rodríguez Sánchez and I am a migrant. I was born in Managua (Nicaragua) and my aim is to get to the USA, get a job and in no more than 10 years, bring my family here. It is a very ambitious plan but hopefully I can succeed.

That is what I said to a reporter making a documentary about immigration in the USA. Now I am working in a Walmart here in LA and all my family is living here happily, but this was not easy to achieve.

At first, I had to go walking from Managua to Veracruz (Mexico). 1050 miles with only the equivalent to 100 dollars. Here in Veracruz “La Bestia” was waiting for me. It is a cargo train that goes from this city to the USA. My aim was to get to Ciudad Juarez (Mexico) there I got off the train before it crossed the border and then walked like 6 hours to get out of the city due to the amount of guards that are there. After the six hours I prepared to jump the fence in which I succeeded easily.

Now I was in the state of New Mexico, and I went to a small city called Columbus where I could find shelter and a family of Mexican people who helped me a lot. They had a business that consisted in repairing all kind of stuff: water pipes, leaks, painted houses... They hired me, the wage was not high, but for me it was okay. I lived there for four years and when I got my green card, I applied to Walmart. They offered me to work in LA because I knew Spanish and English so obviously I got there and three years later, before Trump became the president, I brought my wife and two daughters here.

My quality of life has increased a lot, all this journey has been totally worth it. But I miss my family, one day I will go back to Managua.



My name is Sara. I'm a Spanish twenty-year-old girl who has to fly abroad to look for a job. Yes, I'm an immigrant. My generation is known as "the nomads", because if we want to survive, we have to be travelling from place to place. Somehow it is great, because this way you are able to discover new cultures or different habits, but I may recognize that sometimes it is hard for

me to deal with it, because I do miss a lot of things.

When I first had to travel to get a job, I realized that I was part of the new immigrant concept. I had to leave my family during summer and I went to a village that was an hour far from home to work as a waitress. I know it is not a well-paid job. But I could not complain because, even though there was a big crisis in Spain, I was so lucky to have a job. I was too young, and I remember that I missed a lot my parents and friends.

A few months later, it was time for me to go to university. I was so excited to go there and study what I wanted: journalism. I had to do the practices in a city that was far away from my origin city, but I was very enthusiastic though.

Nowadays, I have already finished university, but this career has no work opportunities in Spain, so I decided to leave the country. Last three months I stayed in France. I couldn't find a journalist job there. They said I had a strong accent, so I couldn't appear on TV or on the radio; that's why I started working again as a waitress, but I had the hope to get away from there to find a place where I could practice my profession and earn a good salary for it.

My next stop was Ireland (where I am nowadays). Here I found a job. I work on the radio, during mornings and sometimes evenings. I'm so happy because finally I've managed it. I'm fulfilling my dream of being a radio announcer, and people here like me. Anyways, I miss my parents, my sister, my friends... Life here is different and although I'm almost all the time distracted because of work, most of times I feel like I might come back to Spain.



Today we've got the opportunity to communicate with our relatives by Internet, but it is still hard to be an immigrant in XXI century.

Sofía Tejeda – Oct 2018

Hi, I am Sofía and I'm going to tell you how is a day in my life living in Spain as an immigrant. But first I'm going to explain to you how and why I came to Spain.

Well I came to Spain three years ago looking for a better life because for me coming to Spain was synonymous with freedom and opportunities.

In Morocco (my country of origin) there is a lot of corruption and in addition for being a woman there, our laws are very limited and we must resign ourselves to the desires of our husbands, something that fortunately does not happen in Europe.

I wanted a better life for me and my children and I found that in here.

My first year was very difficult because I could not have papers, not work , not house, not school for my children... but everybody helps me, and finally I am living in Madrid and I am working in a coffee shop, and with the money I earn I can pay a little flat here, clothes and school supplies for my children and some other caprices.

I feel so good at the moment and I am proud to have emigrated here. I want to tell everybody who doesn't feel good in their country of origin to emigrate, because you will find your place, your family and everything you need there.

That's me working in the coffee shop.



It is difficult arriving in a new country. It is difficult to adapt to the new way of living, the new culture, the new people... But, much more difficult is leaving everything you had behind you. I have been here for 2 months already, and I keep thinking about my family everyday since I left. I wish my family could have come with me, but the situation was not good at all, even if it's hard to believe, it was safer staying in Syria than coming to Germany. None can imagine how hard, grim and tough was that travel until you experience it. I thought I could stand it, but, seeing how your partners become ill, how they die, and remembering that you still have a long journey in front of you is extremely painful.



Nevertheless, in my opinion, positivity is the main characteristic of immigrants. We always try to see the nice part of a tragedy, and even if many of us died in the attempt to reach happiness, the ones that survived should live that happiness in honour of them.

Today, I feel happy and settled in Germany, I kind of feel I am German. I am working as a waiter in a luxury restaurant in the centre of Frankfurt, so I have a good income which makes me possible to send a big amount of money to my family in Syria. With that money, my 3 brothers are able to go to school and my parents have remodelled our house.

As I said before, "It is difficult arriving in a new country". It took me nearly a year to make some friends; people here are a little bit close-minded and some of them are not in agreement about letting immigrants enter their country, although I feel things are changing and many other people see immigration not as "someone wanting to enter my country" but as something positive for the country. So, even if I felt a bit disappointed about the way Germans interact with immigrants, I have made really good friends, so I am happy about it.



Migrating to Germany is one of the best decisions I have ever made, and I am proud of myself. I think everyone should migrate at some point in their life; it doesn't have to be because the situation in your own country is not good, just for the enrichment for yourself.

Today I have woken up at half past seven like every day. I have gone to my office to do some work and when I finished it; I went back to my home, I had dinner, I read a book and I went to sleep.

This routine feels normal to me now, but there was a time when I did not live here in Europe, that I lived among bombs falling from the sky and cries of horror.

Every day I woke up with the fear that it was the last. There came a point that the situation got even worse and I had no choice but to escape: with my heart beating strongly I left behind my city and my whole life.

The trip to Europe was not easy: I had to deal with borders and with a lot of rejection from people who did not want me in their countries, but there were also people and governments with measures of reception and integration who supported me.

Now I have a normal job and I am an integrated citizen who contributes to the country like anyone else.

Less borders and more bridges, that is what we need.



Irene Cañadas Carracedo

Oct 2018

What is this feeling running down my back? How did I end up being here? I am not really saying I dislike this situation, but the opposite. I have always said I love travelling, and I like to think this is it, another journey full of experiences that I will love to talk about later. Although that is not what it is, it is a bit more complicated. It is quite difficult to see what is ahead of you when you can't stop thinking about what you left. All your friends and family are waiting for you to go back home, but you are not really sure you want to. This is my new adventure, in another country, with another language and a totally new and rearranged present. And although I am scared, I will go for it.

I just want to stop and wonder, to take a breath and think about the positive things, the reasons why I came here and all the great people I am meeting and loving, somehow. I will just go ahead, be selfish and think about myself. Think about what I want and about every aspect of my new life. I am here for a reason, and for a better future. My future. I won't let my insecurities and the obstacles I keep finding everyday define my happiness.

This is it, it is my experience and my opportunity. Keep going and make my dreams come true, because I have had a rough time, but now I should seize my time. I am here for a reason, so I will just go and chase my goals and dreams before it is too late. I am living my life how I want to, not noticing where I am, the people that surround me or the language spoken here.

I am an immigrant in this town, in this country, but an emigrant from where I come from. But I am also just a person trying to define herself, and that is what I will do, live my life. As Paul McCartney said: live and let die.



When I first came to Spain I thought it wouldn't be so hard to integrate in the country, but it didn't take long until I discovered that being an immigrant is a hard job.



I was born in Morocco and I came to Spain just to look for a decent job and to avoid all my country's problems. Spain has always seemed to be a happy country without prejudices, but unfortunately that is not the real situation. Even though not everyone is the same, since I came here I have had to deal with all kinds of insults and disrespectful situations. When you don't look like a Spaniard, some people tend to put a cross on you no reason why. It is also really hard to find a job, because Spanish people usually have priority for this kind of things.

On the other hand, this country has given me some of the most beautiful opportunities I have ever had. After some long time of insults and prejudices I aimed to find a job in a small pharmacy in a neighborhood situated in the outskirts of Madrid.

Even though things are never easy for an immigrant, if you work and persevere, things will magically go better.

