

ARE REFUGEES WELCOME

EXPERIENCES OF
BECOMING AND BEING
A REFUGEE IN THE WORLD
TODAY



WE-HOPE 2022 - A RESOURCE FOR LEARNING

**ARE REFUGEES
WELCOME?**

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**EXPERIENCES OF BECOMING AND BEING
A REFUGEE IN THE WORLD TODAY**

WE-HOPE PROJECT 2022 - A RESOURCE FOR LEARNING



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INTRODUCTION

The question of refugees in Europe causes a lot of divided feelings. *Are Refugees Welcome?* aims to promote understanding, by presenting the experiences of refugees in their own words and examining some of the challenges of promoting inclusivity. It does more than that, too: it celebrates the power of creativity to support the EU's values of inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination. These values are an integral part of our European way of life. (<https://ec.europa.eu/component-library/eu/about/eu-values/>)

Are Refugees Welcome? is part of a three-year project funded by Creative Europe. The project is called 'Out of War Experiences, Hope for the Future' – or WE-Hope. It focuses on the experiences of those who had to flee their homes because of war and persecution. Very often, other people claim to speak for refugees. We wanted refugees to be able to speak for themselves.

We started our project in October 2019, and a few months later, everything changed with lockdown. So we have had our own project challenges to overcome! We are six partners spread across five European countries:

- University of Lincoln in the UK
- National Technical University of Athens in Greece
- Michael Culture Association in Belgium and France
- Banca della Memoria (Bank of Memories) in Italy
- Elleniki Trapeza Anamniseon (Greek Bank of Memories) in Greece
- Threshold Studios in the UK
- WE-Hope also includes two Associate Partners, Lapsus and Di+, both based in Italy.

We committed to completing three resources: a digital bank of refugee stories; a creative performance based on these stories; a learning resource.

The WE-Hope Digital Memory Bank contains a wide range of testimony that refugees have volunteered. It also includes the experiences of those who support refugees to settle into their new host societies. The stories are in different languages, mostly English and Italian. You can browse the Digital Memory Bank here, via the project website: www.we-hope.eu

We also commissioned a creative performance inspired by the refugee testimonies. We chose to revive an artform that is still practiced in many countries around the world, but has been disappearing in Europe: the story-song, or cantastoria. This is our tribute to the cantastoria as a popular art form that incorporates commentary on events in our lives and which is accessible to all.

Finally, we produced the resource that you are reading now. It brings everything in the project together. Here you can access the stories, listen to cantastoria and create your own versions. You can find out more about our project and the partners by using the links in the Further Resources guide on page 77.

We wish you well as you start out on your own journey of discovery, to understand one of the most important issues in our lives: how to make our societies better for all who live in them. We look forward to seeing and hearing your cantastoria too!

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE: A GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS AND PARTICIPANTS

WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

Are Refugees Welcome? is aimed at participants and learners in the 12-18 age range. We imagine that participation will be a group activity (or at least with more than one learner participant) and that there will be an adult facilitator to assist participants to work through the material. The facilitator may be a parent, a teacher, or a youth worker.

There may be learners or staff in the group who are refugees themselves. They may wish to contribute their experiences – but it is also the case that these experiences have often been traumatic and they may have fears about telling their stories. Their wellbeing should be protected at all times and we should respect their choice regarding the nature of their participation.

THE ORGANISATION OF *ARE REFUGEES WELCOME?*

Are Refugees Welcome? is divided into six sections. The first one introduces you to the story-song genre of cantastoria. After that, you go on a journey that recalls a refugee journey:

- Why do people flee their homes? (Section 2)
- What is it like being uprooted? (Section 3)
- What happens when refugees arrive somewhere? (Section 4)
- Who are the people who support refugees to overcome their challenges at the destination? (Section 5)

The format is the same for sections 2 to 5. First, there is a brief general introduction that provides some background. After that, there are extracts from refugee testimonies for you to consider. Finally, Section 6 is all about completing your own journey to create a new cantastoria.

REFUGEE TESTIMONIES

There are between six and ten testimonies in Sections 2 to 5. You can work through all of them, or choose a selection. Each one is taken from a longer, spoken testimony. The link at

the end of each testimony will take you to the original version if you would like to listen to it. Some are audio, some are video and some videos have subtitles. You can also browse the entire WE-Hope Digital Memory Bank at this address: www.we-hope.eu

In the extracts of the refugee stories, whenever you see three dots ... that means some words have been left out to make the story flow better on the page. The spoken versions contain all the words.

ACTIVITIES

In all sections, there are suggested activities for participants. The activities serve two purposes: to learn more about the lives and experiences of refugees and to be inspired by their stories to create a new cantastoria. The facilitator can adapt the activities to suit the participants or design different ones – provided that the outcome is deeper knowledge and a new cantastoria.

MAKING AND SHARING THE CANTASTORIA

How many cantastorie to make? This depends on the size of the group and the preferences of participants. Ideally this should be a collective activity. Participants may work in pairs/ small groups or make one cantastoria for the whole group. The important point is that this decision should be made in discussion time in Session 1.

There are no fixed ways to respond to the testimonies in order to create the cantastoria. Some suggestions are included in each section, but participants may wish to do something completely different. That is fine! The main point is that it is about a journey of learning and creation, step by step.

The final outcome of your cantastoria-making will be a one-minute video. Levels of digital literacy will vary and it is important that everyone is able to participate, whatever their abilities.

On the next page there is a table providing guidance on the possible composition of the cantastoria.

SKILL LEVEL	CREATIVE MEDIUM	PLATFORM	COMPILATION
Easy	<p>'Paper' (hard copy) artwork – any number of items</p> <p>Audio/sound that is composed throughout the sessions; will be performed live for the final recording</p>	Video app on phone or TikTok	At the end of the learning programme (Section 6), arrange the artwork, including a title at the beginning and credits at the end*, and take a video of all elements, while performing the audio/sound component as part of the recording
Digital editing skills required	<p>Can be 'paper' artwork – turned into photos or video clips, or born-digital art</p> <p>Audio/sound that is saved as mp3 sound file/s (reused or pre-recorded)</p>	Canva or Powerpoint or Adobe editing suite	Import visuals (still images, video clips), add a title at the beginning and credits at the end,* import sound file/s, edit together into one video

*Credits: it is important to observe data protection requirements. So, for example, a list of credits can include the first names of participants but NOT family or surnames.

For protection and safeguarding reasons, participants MUST NOT video themselves in the making of their cantastoria, only their artwork. For similar reasons, they can record their voices if they wish, but NOT their full names or other personal details.

The maximum length of the final cantastoria video is ONE MINUTE. We invite participants to share their completed cantastoria for upload to the WE-Hope Youtube channel. Details are in Section 6.

Sessions will work best if there are suitable materials available for the chosen creative media. Hard copy artwork can be based on paper, pens and paint or can be more ambitious – 3D creations using clay, for example. Digital art will require phones/tablets/laptops. Please see p. 75 for guidance on where to find sources for digital art.

If participants have difficulties with a digital creative production we are able to offer guidance and support. Please contact us at we-hope@lincoln.ac.uk.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Resources specially relevant to each section are listed at the end of the section. There is a list of more general resources at the end of the volume, starting on p. 77.

DELIVERING SESSIONS

There is much flexibility about how the sections can be delivered. Each section is imagined to last about two hours, but can be shorter or longer, and can be delivered separately or combined with another section or sections. The most important thing is to work through the sections in sequence, and to give enough time to consider the stories and to create your cantastoria.

FEEDBACK

This is the first edition of *Are Refugees Welcome?* It is published in two languages, Italian and English. We will produce editions in Greek and French as well. We would very much welcome feedback on your experience of using *Are Refugees Welcome?*, as we will update it later in 2022. Please email us at we-hope@lincoln.ac.uk.

SYMBOLS

The following symbols are used in the text to guide you:



Source is an audio interview



Source is a video interview



Question for discussion



Activity to try

When you see a QR Code, scan it to see
the original source!



IN THIS SECTION WE WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- the meaning of cantastoria
- cantastoria in European history
- the WE-Hope cantastoria
- what your own cantastoria can be like

1 ● TELLING THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES

WHAT IS CANTASTORIA?

Cantastoria (plural *cantastorie*) is an Italian word meaning ‘story-singer’. Through these learning sessions, you will become a story-singer!

In many parts of the world, the tradition of cantastoria is alive and enjoyed by all who hear it performed. The performers have different names in different places. In West Africa, the story-singer is called a griot or djeli and in parts of South Asia chitrakar. Story-singers are street artists, performing in public places like village squares.

Story-singers often have live music to accompany them. In some cultures, they also use painted scenery to bring the story alive for their audience. That means people can watch pictures while they listen to the song. Performances combine ancient traditions with matters that are important to people now, and singers are not afraid to criticise authority. As one griot says, ‘Whatever the people need to say, it is the griot who says it’. They incorporate audience responses into their stories, so that each performance is different. The performances of story-singers become part of the collective cultural memory of their communities.



What do you think

about how the painting helps listeners to understand the song, in this cantastoria from Bangladesh? <https://bit.ly/3zYxOFW>



CANTASTORIA IN EUROPEAN HISTORY

Cantastoria has a long history in Europe, stretching back hundreds of years to Greek rhapsodes, Celtic bards, French troubadours and Opera dei Pupi in Sicily.

Here is an example from more recent times. Alfonsino 'Angiolino' Filiputti was born around one hundred years ago in north-eastern Italy. He was an artist and painted in cantastoria style. Here are some of his paintings from the Second World War. They depict the experiences of aerial bombing for people on the ground. There are still people alive who remember being bombed during that war.



What do you think

about how civilians reacted to these experiences of aerial bombing in Italy?

about how previous generations of your family were affected by the Second World War? Can you find out?

Images, from the top to bottom: Bombing of Latisana Bridge, Bombing of Udine, Bombing of Pieris d'Isonzo, Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

PIER GIACOMO SOLA REMEMBERS

Pier Giacomo is a participant of WE-Hope. Here he recalls story-singers from the northern Italy of his childhood:

Marino Piazza was a cantastorie working in the provinces of Bologna and Modena, in Northern Italy. My father used to talk to me about him, describing him as the ‘peasant poet’ Piazza Marino. Poor, illiterate people in Italy at that time used that order, the surname then the first name:



*Piazza Marino
Poeta contadino
È lui l'autore
Ed è anche il suonatore*

*Piazza Marino
Peasant poet
He is the author
And he is also the player*

Piazza Marino began his career as storyteller in 1927, accompanied on the accordion by his brother Piero, while he played the ocarina and the clarinet. He was also active after the Second World War. Through his songs he narrated countless episodes from the news, such as the attempted assassination of Togliatti, the tragedy of Superga, where the football team of Torino died, and the tragedy of the Marcinelle mine. His contrasts are famous: between Russia and America, between boss and farmer, between Communist wife and Christian Democrat husband. By the 1970s, however, his art form was no longer popular, so Piazza had to change his business to a street vendor in order to survive. However, from his market stall in Bologna, he continued to attract passersby with improvised rhymes and ‘zirudelle’. Most of the modern Italian cantastorie came from Sicily. Ciccio Busacca and Franco Trincale were famous performers. Busacca worked with Dario Fo, who won the Nobel prize for literature, and appeared in radio and television programmes.

Trincale’s songs were often inspired by news events, such as the disappearance of a young boy in Viareggio. In his performances, he also mocked the former Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi.

Here is Busacca performing: <https://bit.ly/3JArQys>



THE WE-HOPE CANTASTORIA

In our WE-Hope project, we are bringing new life to the cantastoria, by combining human and digital performance. We believe that art is a powerful and positive force for telling stories and for connecting audiences to stories.

We chose the artform of cantastoria to highlight the testimonies of refugees fleeing from their own countries and seeking safety in our countries. We have been lucky to work with an artist called Zach Walker and a composer and conductor called Juliet Russell.

Juliet: 'I composed a musical journey so that listeners could walk in the refugees' shoes'.

Zach: 'I hope my art brings a human face to refugees, so that when we look into their eyes, we recognise them as humans and not some kind of other'.

The WE-Hope cantastoria is about connecting to refugees as humans who are just like us. Can you hear the words 'We hope' in the song? In some parts of the song there are no words, so that listeners can relate to the music, no matter what language they speak.



Live (Lincoln, UK, 28 Oct. 2021)

<https://bit.ly/3DQW9yb>



Studio

<https://bit.ly/3DQW9yb>



The audiences for our WE-Hope cantastoria are on the internet, a digital gathering place. These will be the audiences for your cantastoria, too!

Through the following sections, we invite you to learn about refugees and to immerse yourselves in the art of the cantastoria. This is a chance to explore the experiences of ordinary people who never intended to be refugees, but whose lives have been turned upside down by violence and danger. It is also your chance, step by step, to create your own new cantastoria.

Words and feelings



How does the WE-Hope cantastoria make you feel? Choose the words that best describe your feelings, as many or as few as you need. Share them in the group.

traditions	memory	imagination	fear
longing	pain	laughter	travelling
excitement	confusion	faith	scars
noise	struggle	unknown	loneliness
sharing	hope	rejection	desire
disillusion	belonging	frontier	exhaustion
trust	recovery	ties	dilemma



What do you think

about what kind of cantastoria you can make together? This is a good time to discuss your ideas for what your cantastoria can be.

Keep a note of what you decide. You may have stories in your own families or community that you can include, as well as the stories of the refugees in other sections of this publication. You can look at other examples, too. There are links in the further resources list below. There is also an important note below about using online images for your own cantastoria.

Using sound and images from the internet

For your own cantastoria, you may want to create your own images and sound from scratch. However, you may also want to reuse material already available online. If you do this, it is very important to act in a legal manner and to respect the original creators of images and sounds.

ONLY USE material that is Creative Commons – that is, it is free to use, provided you acknowledge the source. This is material that is not restricted by existing copyright.

Good Creative Commons sites include:

- Wikimedia images: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Images>
- Wikimedia videos: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Videos>
- Wikimedia photographs: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Photographs>
- Wikimedia art: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Art>
- Creative Commons audio sounds: <https://freesound.org/>

1. FURTHER RESOURCES



Here are some other examples of cantastoria:

This Wikipedia entry provides wide coverage of the history of cantastoria:

<https://bit.ly/3PPRHV9>



Here is an example from Mali in West Africa: <https://bit.ly/3cWEtaN>



The Museum of Everyday Life in the US presents six examples of cantastoria in the link <https://bit.ly/3ScRRaS>. The last one ('Brief Sung History') is a history of cantastoria, with the artist's clothing forming the pictures!

Here are links to Angiolino Filiputti's artworks: <https://bit.ly/3zLRahF>

You can download these images, too:

Bombing of Latisana Bridge: <https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/163>

Bombing of Udine: <https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/173>

Bombing of Pieris d'Isonzo Bridge: <https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/167>

Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: <https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/209>



Here is digital artist Zach Walker's website:

<https://bit.ly/3zn6LCC>

Here is composer Juliet Russell's website:

<https://bit.ly/3olLxdO>



2

'THEY STARTED TO THREATEN OUR FAMILY': WHY PEOPLE FLEE THEIR HOMES

IN THIS SECTION WE WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- what it means to be a refugee
- what causes people to become refugees
- how to incorporate stories of becoming refugees into your cantastoria

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A REFUGEE?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee their home and to cross into another country because of conflict or persecution. People do not want to leave their homes, their families, friends and possessions. A home is where we should feel safe, it is a place we are strongly attached to. So people often try to stay as long as possible, even though they can feel the danger increasing around them.

The most important organisation in the world looking after the interests of refugees is the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, or UNHCR. According to them, there are approximately 26.4 million refugees in the world today. They are of all ages, from babies to the very elderly. Around half of all refugees are children under the age of 18. For the children alone, that number is roughly equivalent to the entire population of the city of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil or Los Angeles in the USA.

The biggest reason causing people to flee their homes and countries is war. Aerial bombing and street-to-street fighting mean that people's homes suddenly become the frontline of conflict. In recent times, we have seen this situation develop in countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Yemen, Ukraine, Myanmar and Palestine.

It is within the living memory of many families that warfare like this in Europe caused people to be displaced within their own countries, or to become refugees in other countries, during the Second World War and the regional conflicts that followed in some parts of Europe. Like refugees today, they were just ordinary people trying to escape the terror of war.

Apart from war, other reasons that force people from their homes and countries include their political or religious beliefs, their gender orientation, their ethnic identity, their language, or belonging to a particular social or community group. They are subjected to such serious threats that their lives are in danger if they stay. Increasingly, the climate emergency is intensifying these kinds of conflicts, and therefore also contributes to the growing number of refugees.

It is a fundamental principle of the UNHCR's Refugee Convention that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom.

World Refugee Day is 20 June: it is remembered across the world, including in all European countries.



What do you think

you could do at home and at school to mark World Refugee Day?

REFUGEES TELL WHY THEY FLED

Here is a selection of testimonies from refugees themselves for you to read, listen to and discuss together. You do not have to use them all. Read them together and discuss them as you go along. Think about what part of their stories made the biggest impact on you.

Some of the refugees who told us their stories wished to remain anonymous. We have given them fictional names but their stories are real. There is a link at the end of each story if you would like to listen to a complete version of the testimony in the WE-Hope Digital Memory Bank.

LANCINE



Lancine, who now lives in Italy, was originally from Guinea in West Africa. He was forced to flee his country in 2016. He explains that politics in Guinea had become sharply divided along ethnic lines, and he and his family were on the losing side in the 2015 elections:

Alpha Condé won and my father was on the other side. Then it happened ... a bit of a mess. So many people have died. I actually found myself on this journey, I had never decided to be a migrant, as everyone says, I never thought so. In Guinea I lived well, I had my girlfriend, I had my shop, I studied at school. I had an electronics store, to do cell phone repairs. When all this mess happened there in Guinea, some of my relatives thought about pushing me away, because I was involved a lot.



The original interview is in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3Q5dHLq>



KAREEM

Kareem is Syrian and arrived in Greece as a refugee in 2016. He is a member of the Syrian Greek Youth Forum, a platform for the expression of active citizenship in Athens:

I worked with my dad in the family business, working with generators and diesel engines, servicing hospitals and large companies. As children we felt a lot of nice things for Damascus ...

The dictatorship, the mafia called 'the government', broke the most beautiful thing in the Syrian community, its diversity ...

In 2011, I was 21, I was among those who believed in the revolution, I supported the decisions taken by the communities at street-level, asking for freedom, loudly, and there they'd kill you.



The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3ORzvcI>



ABDULLAH

Abdullah [not his real name] left Sudan at the age of 18 to avoid compulsory conscription:

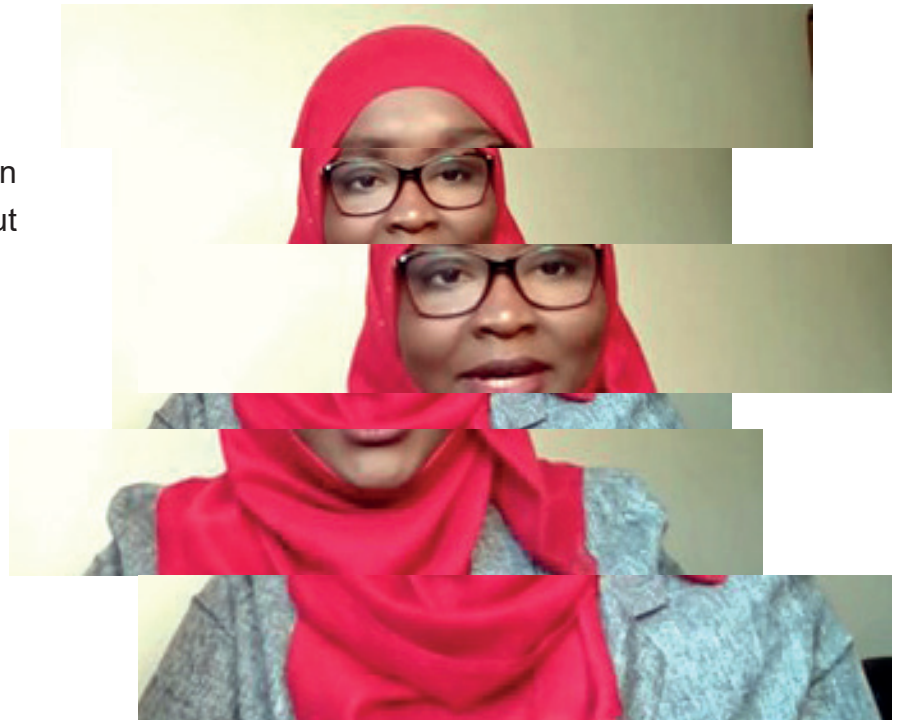
Basically, In Sudan after you finish the high school you're supposed to join the army, so you would do the army service. It's supposed to be for six months but the problem is that at the time I did my high school diploma, at the border of Sudan with Chad and Mali, they were fighting with Boko Haram. They would say that you'd go just for six months' military service, but if you don't have anyone [you know] in charge in the army, then they would take you to fight against Boko Haram. And nobody can ask about you. That happened to my younger brother. And my mum said that I didn't need to go too. That's why I stopped. But if you stop, they come and look for you in your house. That meant I wasn't safe. I tried to go to another city, far from the place I was leaving, but it was still the same. So I had no choice and I decided to leave, and my mum helped me with the few money she had and I left Sudan.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3S8wabT>



GAIDA

Gaida's life was suddenly in danger when war broke out in Libya in 2011:



I remember that was February 17 2011, everything in my world started to change. That's when the war started ... I lost my freedom, lost all that was good in the country. Everybody wasn't trustable because everyone was afraid of one another. We just stayed at home, we didn't believe what was going on, we didn't know what was going on because the situation before that was so peaceful ... We were so peaceful living our lives, achieving our goals with my mum, brothers and sisters, everyone going to study, going to school, starting careers we were so happy at that time and suddenly without warning everything started to change around me ... I didn't know what was going on with my colleagues in school, I didn't know what was going on with my neighbours, everyone started a new fear and that was terrifying ... By 18th March, that's when the bombing started ... that was the first time in my life time living that situation ... it wasn't safe anywhere, kidnapping start, start turning you to the police, turning you to militia which at that time was often.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3zJIPuE>



MUSTAFA

Mustafa [not his real name] was 13 and living with his mum, brothers and sisters when the war in Syria began:

It was the beginning of wintertime, August - September time, it was the first time for us to wake up to the sound of explosions. You know the missiles? Basically they started to hit us with these. We didn't know what it was at first, but then we knew it was a missile. We used to go down to the shelters and just stay there, like twenty kids, because we had a whole building, so the same family, so all of us used to go to the ground floor, like twenty kids, twenty adults, and we didn't know what it was, we used to play and laugh. Whenever there was an explosion, we just started laughing. We stayed there for almost a month before we started to move. We moved in the night time because they used to launch these missiles from 6 in the morning till 7 in the evening, and it was too much, the missiles used to hit each other in the sky.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3A97lig>



LUWAN

Luwan left Eritrea in the Horn of Africa, because she did not feel safe and felt there was no future for him there:

My dad, he was a soldier, I feel like my dad was a guest in the house, I would see him a few times a year. I know the life, it's not something that I wanted. And then my family would pressure me a lot as well, oh maybe you need to get married, because we don't want you to join the army. Obviously I don't want to join the army but I don't want to get married too, so I had to leave Eritrea. There is no future, there is no safety. Like even if I finish my studies to year 11, in year 12 I know I have to leave... I don't see anything that I can be in the future.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3JdlO6x>



HAMAD

Hamad [not his real name] is of Iranian origin. He fought in the Iran-Iraq war from 1980 to 1988, during which he suffered a chemical weapon attack that had lasting impacts on his health. When the Iranian government stopped paying for his medical treatment, he protested and that resulted in him being forced to flee:



Almost 34 to 35 years ago I was a front-line soldier in the war between Iran and Iraq, which lasted for eight years. I was poisoned by chemical gas. Despite my previous problem, which was shell shock, the only thing that I got out of that war I lost my sense of smell for almost one year. I was in hospital for one month, and had many problems. After I was discharged from the hospital, the only thing I was offered, after 20 years, by the Iranian government, was free health insurance, for my health problems and for the poisoning. But it wasn't really free. While I was in hospital, I was being supported by the government, with some medications. I was getting older and older, and my health problems were emerging with time. The health insurance I was given, after a while, they stopped it. We protested, I went with a group of people and asked them: 'Why have you stopped the insurance?' Unfortunately, they didn't treat us well and didn't give any reason. So this led to a fight. They arrested some of us, and we spent some time in prison. Then, we were released, thanks to someone guaranteeing for us. Without us being informed, our case was sent to court, and we were sentenced to five years in jail and fined with one billion and two hundred thousand toman, for our protest. Honestly, before the police came to arrest us, we fled Iran.

The original interview is in Persian: <https://bit.ly/3OEKrtP>



EBRAHIM

Ebrahim [not his real name] was seven years old when the war in Syria began:

The neighbourhood we were living in started to threaten our family, they gave us a choice: 'you leave tomorrow, or we kill everyone in your family'. The night before we left, they shot our house with a gun. I have never seen my parents so scared like that moment. We left as soon as we could, which was the next day.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3OEkrtP>



GEORGE

George Left Sierra Leone because of his gender identity. Defending the rights of LGBTQ+ people in Sierra Leone endangered his life:

Because of all this activism and things that I did, this is what put my life at risk, and in 2013, a newspaper actually published my story, which is called *Exclusive Newspaper* in Sierra Leone, which is one of the main newspapers, they copied my story from the MTV website ... and that was the first time to have a story of a gay person being posted. So that created a lot of backlash, my house was vandalised, my car was actually burned down to ashes, and also when I went to the police station to file a complaint, I was actually arrested and detained, simply because of my sexual orientation.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3OM9JX9>



ABDI

Abdi is a Somali journalist, writer, poet, peace and human rights activist. He fled an increasingly violent conflict in Somalia:

My young daughter who was three years old at the time, now she is 17, and she had a doll in the house but when we were leaving, the rockets were falling close just to our house so we escaped the house and all the family just ran away and we did not pack much, we did not take enough from our stock or our furniture, even basic things we did not take and one of the things we left behind was her doll. When we came to the bushes she started crying because she wanted her doll. She said, 'I want to play now, I want my doll' and I told her that the doll we left behind, we left behind the doll so we can't get it back so that was really painful time.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3QW6vla>





What do you think

about the conditions forcing people to leave their familiar lives and to flee? What do they have in common?

about the age of refugees? Many of the stories are told by young people your age. What emotions would you have if it was you, rather than them, in the story?

if you were forced to flee at short notice, what special, favourite object would you take with you? You are only allowed one object and you have to be able to carry it yourself. Make an image of your chosen object (drawing, painting, digital art, or maybe edit an existing image). When everyone has finished, share your image and explain why you chose this object. Save all this work on paper, your phones or tablets – you can use it for your cantastoria!

about the sounds associated with fleeing from one's home? What will they be like? Together, consider the sounds to use for your cantastoria – maybe spoken or sung words, music, or other sounds? Share your ideas. You may want to start creating sound now, or leave this until later.

about continuity in your cantastoria: there will be more to add as you continue your journey, so it's important to discuss now how all your artwork and sound will fit together to make a fantastic whole!

2. FURTHER RESOURCES



Here is the website of the UNHCR, which is a non-profit global agency with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. It aims to aid and protect refugees. The website contains many resources to explore:

<https://bit.ly/3Br2bG7>



The UNHCR sponsors World Refugee Day. The official site is at:

<https://bit.ly/3PJnOWy>



If you would like to learn more about refugees and other kinds of migrants, there are some explanations here: <https://bit.ly/3bl1J1G>



IN THIS SECTION WE WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- what happens next, after people flee their homes and countries
- how to incorporate stories of being uprooted into your cantastoria

3 ● 'I HAD DIFFICULTY ON THE ROAD': WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE UPROOTED

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ORDINARY PEOPLE ARE FORCED TO FLEE THEIR HOMES?

Being forced from one's home and country is a very difficult experience. Refugees may have had to cope with threats, attacks, assault, separation from elders and other family members, as well as from friends and community – all very suddenly. They may therefore be traumatised, as well as uprooted. Then they face the challenges of trying to escape to somewhere safer. Sometimes they have to pay smugglers to get out because there is no other way.

Researchers at the Universities of California Berkeley and Stanford in the USA described the experience of Syrians escaping the civil war like this:

Refugees' escape has been described as a journey of horror. They experienced heavy shelling, freezing weather, hardships in attempting to avoid capture by the Syrian regime, and witnessed the death of their own children or relatives. Some were forced to escape through the mountains while others undertook diverse routes through the desert. The majority experienced internal displacement before reaching the borders. During this escape journey, Syrian women and girls were trafficked, sexually abused, raped, or traded for sex slavery.

People in Europe often think that most refugees in the world try to reach the continent of Europe. In fact, most refugees try to stay as close as they can to their home countries, in the hope that one day they can go home. According to the UNHCR, three quarters of all refugees flee to neighbouring countries. For example, people fleeing war in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq mostly travelled to countries like Turkey, Pakistan and Jordan. Turkey hosts nearly four million refugees. Zaatari in Jordan did not exist ten years ago. Now, as a refugee camp, it is the country's fifth largest 'city'.

Some European countries have built new land borders to prevent refugees from crossing into their territory. That has just forced refugees onto more dangerous sea crossings, for example across the Aegean Sea. As a result, there have been many drownings.



What do you think

about why refugees wish to stay as close as they can to their home country?

about why so many European countries try to keep refugees out?

REFUGEES TELL OF THEIR EXPERIENCES OF BEING UPROOTED

Here is a selection of testimonies from refugees themselves for you to read, listen to and discuss together. You do not have to use them all. Read them together and discuss them as you go along. Think about what part of their stories made the biggest impact on you.

Some of the refugees who told us their stories wished to remain anonymous.

We have given them fictional names but their stories are real. There is a link at the end of each story if you would like to listen to a more complete version of the testimony in the WE-Hope Digital Memory Bank

MOUHAMAD

Mouhamad is from Senegal. He is a member of St. Ambroeus Football Club, a team that refugees and activists established to promote inclusion through the game of football:

From Senegal to Italy it was a very long journey. I did a year on the road and I had a bit of difficulty, of prison, of aggression, of suffering but I always believed in what I want, because life is like that, you have to always believe. Since I entered Libya I have had some difficulties because I have done two months in prison; then after that there was a gentleman who helped me and gave me the chance to cross the Mediterranean. Then there I had an accident, because we did a week on the water. We were a total of 130 people, 104 dead and 26 alive. I am one of them, one of those who have been saved. Then since I arrived here, I made the decision to forget all the suffering and to move forward. But it is difficult because when you go through some difficulty, sometimes it is normal that thoughts come to you, especially when you are alone and you have no one next to you, so it is complicated. It seems to me that it is a difficult thing to forget.

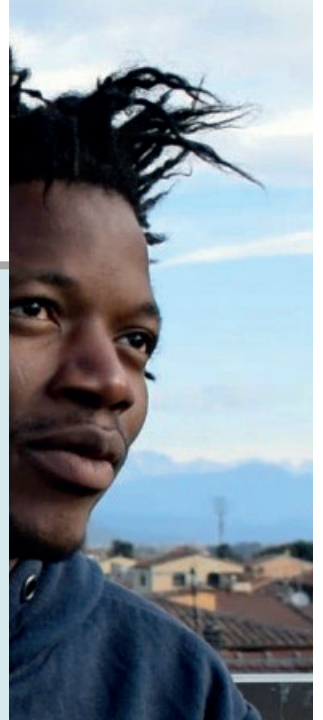
The original interview is in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3vuEtoR>



LANCINE

We already met Lancine, from Guinea. Here he tells of his journey:

I went to one of my friends, sold my moped and took some money, took a bus and came to the Ivory Coast. Then from there I went to Burkina Faso and then to Nigeria ... When I arrived in Niger, I took the bus to Libya and there I found myself in the desert, in the middle of nowhere. They put 35 people in a small van like that. We were sitting holding the rail. Pretty much when you get to those points there you have two choices: go ahead or die. There are some of the people who fell into the desert and died ... One day we were in line, so one guard pushed us. I was ahead and I pushed that Arab who was there. He wanted to kill me, but I did not know about the weapon he had in his hand. I put myself like this [bent down], to pick up something that had fallen from my hand and the bullet missed me. It hit another guy who was behind. Immediately he died. The journey to go to Libya ... was two months and twelve days, which I did. But it changed my life. I changed to another person.



The original interview is in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3Q5dHLq>



ABDI

We also met Abdi, from Somalia, in Section 2:

I moved in April from Somalia and then moved through the bush, village to village with no food ... we did not take anything from our house. Clothes were in shortage and everything was in severe shortage so we moved from village to village from bush to bush until we came to Galkayo, a central town of Somalia and then moved to Bossaso and then moved to Hargeisa and then moved to Ethiopia and from there I proceeded to Sweden ... During the time I was on my way to Europe, in fact I did not know my destination, even if it was Europe, or America, or inside Somalia, we knew only that we were running away from war and we knew that we wanted to get peace but where we would end up it was not in our domain, of options, in our capacity to decide where to go and which place we choose, we did not have any choice at all and life is very, it is in worst situation when a person has no choice but has only to run away or escape so that was the condition. One of the most painful moments I have encountered is that I am running and I did not know where I will end up in fact.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3QW6vla>



HARRISON

Harrison was born in Nigeria in 1998. He fled in 2016 and arrived in Italy a year later:



We were supposed to get to Sabha, a Libyan city, but there were stops ... Ben Walid was the most important one, because there they beat us, that is, there were guards who did all these things ... I would say that at this point I began to understand how the journey ends, that is, it was a thing between life and death. When I arrived in Sabha I realised this, that seriously I am doing a dangerous thing.

...

I could not keep quiet, especially when there was injustice ... There was this guy who was very sick, we slept together. When this guy got up because he was very sick, he was walking slowly and this guard started beating him and I got up and said, 'But why are you beating that guy? Don't you see that he's sick?' He came in, gave me a slap and started beating me and said, 'Look, I'll let you stay here and you're not going anywhere anymore'.

The original interview is in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3zEr6Vx>



SYED

Syed talks about the difficulties and dangers on his journey and the times he lost hope:

I was stuck in Dimitri [Turkey] so it was like detention because you couldn't get out and you couldn't go out to buy food, so there were people smugglers that they take food for you etc ... I didn't know what happened, when I will leave, and I will continue my journey so that was one place that for me it was difficult to be hopeful that finally you will get out this detention of this small apartment with more than 100 people living in a very bad condition and there were neighbours that if they understood that there were illegal migrants, refugees, they may call the police ... I really, at a certain point, lost my hope. I was in a boat between Turkey and Greece ... we were inside in the downstairs of the boat...we were more than 100 people inside and the smugglers, they didn't want us to get out to maybe somehow get a little bit of fresh air ... we felt sick, ill ...there was not any place to go for a toilet so everywhere the people they were vomiting, they were urinating and there was a very bad smell ... and at a certain moment the engine was broken ... water was coming inside ... also the smugglers they were coming downstairs and starting to use violence ... Some people were unconscious, they lost their senses ... There was no one to repair the engine ... you didn't see any other boat, any other ship, any island that you may see any hope for survival

Syed continues the story from when he arrived in Greece:

Every day I was trying to, in the port, hide myself in a truck. One day we were watching a person, he was trying to go under the truck but he didn't manage because he was bigger than me. The smuggler said that if you tried to conceal and hide yourself in that part of the truck that is close to the engine and you will manage to arrive in Italy. So I tried to hide myself near the engine by entering under the truck ... When I arrived in Brindisi [Italy] I thought that maybe somehow I will get out of that place because it was dangerous and unfortunately, the truck instead of stopping and parking in the port, continued the journey on the motorway.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3zjbR2Q> | <https://bit.ly/3Q3CYGx>



AHMED

Ahmed [not his real name] was forced to flee with his family when the Syrian war began. Eventually, after the experiences he recounts here, the family were resettled in the UK:

We were living in a city that was surrounded by the Syrian army, because of that we couldn't stay in the city because our lives were in danger. So we had to escape to a neighbouring country. So when we escaped we lived in the neighbouring country, which was Jordan, for seven years. We used to work for 14 hours per day just to pay the rent. My brothers had to give up school to help with paying the rent and we as a family had to stick together until our situation got better. So it was just like a nightmare in Jordan. Also we tried to come back to school after two or three years but it was very hard for us, because everybody over there resisted and didn't accept the Syrian people to be in their schools. So we had a difficult life in Jordan. Even when we used to work, we had to hide at the same time. The government started to search for Syrian people who were working because if they found us working they would send us back to Syria.

The interview was not recorded to protect the informant's anonymity. This content is based on interviewee's notes.

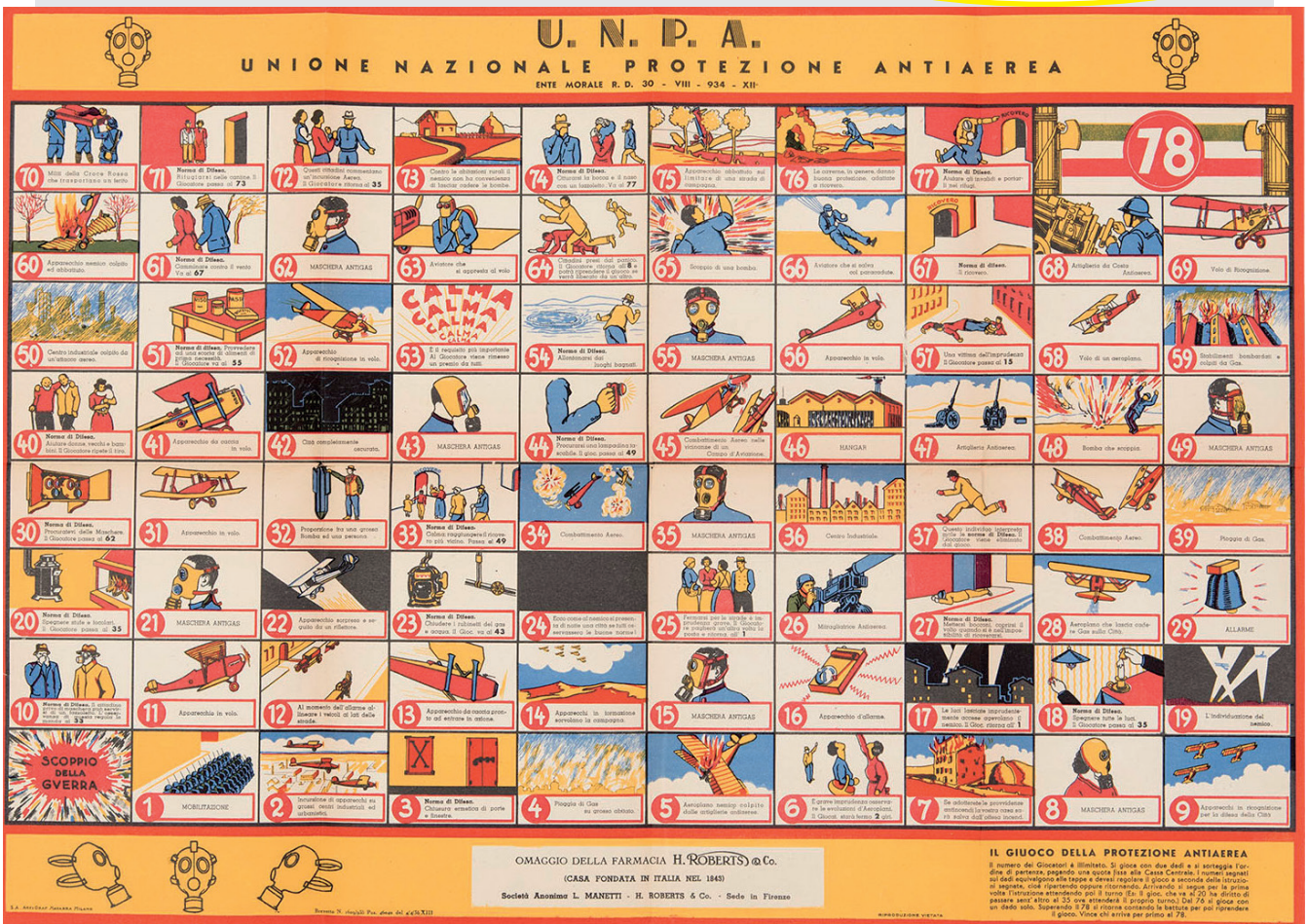


What do you think

about how difficult it must be to flee with no plan, because there was no time to make one?

By contrast: in the years leading up to the Second World War, children in many European countries were taught how to protect themselves from aerial bombing.

The actual experience of the Second World War showed this was a false belief. Think back to Filiputti's paintings and civilian experiences in Section 1.



At that time, most governments believed that citizens could survive bombing if they were well enough prepared. Italian children had a board game to prepare them. It was partly a propaganda tool issued by the fascist government. This boardgame is explored in an educational pack, *Why Do They Bomb Us?* Full details are in the further resources section below. You can download a printable copy of the boardgame here: <https://bit.ly/3Q41mqY>





Make a new boardgame

Can you create a new boardgame together, to show the dangers that refugees face, and the opportunities they must take, in order to reach safety? Remember that many refugees have passports which do not allow them to reach safety easily. You can check 'passport strength' with the passport index tool.

To make your boardgame, first draw up two lists in the space below:

- 1) the dangers facing refugees
- 2) refugees' opportunities for safety

The Passport Index is here:
<https://bit.ly/3SdCMpk>

Dangers that refugees face while trying to escape:	Opportunities that refugees must take to get to safety:

Players of your boardgame will be rewarded if they land on a square of opportunities and they will be punished if they land on a square of danger. There can be other 'neutral' squares too. Make your board five squares by five squares – 25 squares in total. You can create it digitally or on paper.

When your boardgame is completed, ensure you save it – as a paper artwork or as a digital image, depending on what kind of cantastoria you will make. Also consider the sounds that people hear on the move, fleeing from danger. How can these sounds be incorporated into your cantastoria?



3. FURTHER RESOURCES



The statement in the introduction about the experiences of Syrian refugees: Niveen Rizkalla, Suher Adi, Nour Khaddaj Mallat, Laila Soudi, Rahma Arafa and Steven P Segal, Manzuaat wa Musharadat, Uprooted and scattered: refugee women's escape journey and the longing to return to Syria. *Frontiers in Psychology*, February 2021. Accessible at <https://bit.ly/3zMj8cM>



Why Do They Bomb Us? An educational resource available at <https://bit.ly/3ORZNLz>. The boardgame is Source 26 on p. 34. There are translations of all the squares on p. 86.



Can you help Abdullah escape Syria? Try the Path Out video game. It was created by Karam, who now lives in Austria, and is based on his own experiences: <https://bit.ly/3POsKJT>



Here is another game, called Brothers Across Borders, about two brothers escaping from Syria. Use the characters' mobile phones and Insta accounts to reunite them: <https://bit.ly/3bjVtHi>



The Night Fisherman is a downloadable visual novel about border guards and refugees: <https://bit.ly/3zHQr0P>



4

'IN FRONT OF A WALL': REFUGEE EXPERIENCES OF ARRIVAL

IN THIS SECTION WE WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- the experiences of refugees when they finally arrive somewhere
- how to incorporate stories of refugee experiences of arrival into your cantastoria

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN REFUGEES ARRIVE SOMEWHERE?

After long, difficult and sometimes dangerous journeys, refugees often discover that there is further trauma when they arrive somewhere. Many countries try to deter refugees from trying to reach them. On arrival, refugees must request asylum (or international protection). This bureaucratic process of applying for official documents can be confusing and frustrating, and make asylum seekers feel powerless. Sometimes people wait for a decision for years. They can experience homelessness, financial hardship, and isolation. It is very hard to get on with your life when you do not have official status or protection. One study concluded that:

After arriving at the destination country, refugees often live under precarious conditions; are worried about family members remaining in countries of origin or other transition countries; have to go through lengthy and, in many cases, stressful asylum procedures; and face restrictions to healthcare services.

If refugees do not apply for asylum, they may be deported as soon as possible. Further, if a government refuses them asylum, they are arrested, held in detention centres and deported. There are very many detention centres in Europe for this purpose.

Many thousands of refugees are confined to camps surrounded by fences and walls while they wait, wait, wait for a decision. They have basic accommodation but cannot move around freely and have very little access to health services, schooling or employment. They become dependent on aid in the camps, whereas they would rather be working and contributing to their host countries.

Moria Refugee Camp, on the Greek Island of Lesbos, was Europe's largest refugee camp, surrounded by a barbed wire fence. The camp was built for 3,000 people but by the summer of 2020, around 20,000 people were living there. According to a doctor who worked at Moria, it had become a place of deprivation, suffering and despair. In September 2020, the whole of Moria Refugee Camp was destroyed by fire. A new camp has been built to house the refugees in another part of Lesbos.

This is the what the UNHCR says:

We believe that camps should be the exception and only a temporary measure in response to forced displacement. Refugees bring personal skills and assets which can benefit the communities where they are living. They also bring the qualities of perseverance, flexibility and adaptability. Refugees who maintain their spirit of independence, use their skills and develop sustainable livelihoods during displacement, will be more resilient and better able to overcome future challenges.



What do you think

about Europe's refugee camps? What do you imagine them to be like?

about deporting refugees? Open the map at <https://bit.ly/3beFkDi>

This map shows all centres in the world where refugees are held before being deported because they have been refused asylum/protection. Are you surprised at how many there are? Where are the centres in your country? (You can select your country in the box at the top.)



REFUGEES TELL OF THEIR EXPERIENCES OF ARRIVAL

Here is a selection of testimonies from refugees themselves for you to read, listen to and discuss together. You do not have to use them all. Read them together and discuss them as you go along. Think about what part of their stories made the biggest impact on you.

Some of the refugees who told us their stories wished to remain anonymous. We have given them fictional names but their stories are real. There is a link at the end of each story if you would like to listen to a complete version of the testimony in the WE-Hope Digital Memory Bank.

ABDULLAH



Abdullah [not his real name], whom we have met before, is from Sudan. He crossed the Aegean Sea to Samos in Greece, where he spent a few months in the Vathi camp:

Fortunately, I did not stay there for long. Just three months, then I got the white card which is called Ausweis. I got kind of lucky, because most of the people over there spend one year or at least eight or six months ... Living in Samos is very very bad. The island is a very beautiful island, it's very nice, I like it. But living in the camp is very hard. Because the place is very dirty and also there is no place to sleep, there is no good food, there is no good blankets, and sometimes it's raining and there is no good place to hide yourself and a lot of mosquitos and it's like

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3oK9JMA>



really really hard inside the camp ... Because everyone is angry, they fight a lot, and that makes me really scared, because of the stress everyone cannot control their feeling. People start fighting each other about small things. It was very very hard living in camp. The system of asylum over there is quite quite hard because if you're waiting in good condition, in a good place, maybe you will be able to wait for few months or few days, but the problem is that you are not living in a good place, they would put you there for one year or sometimes even more, you'd be waiting and waiting and waiting and you don't know why they keep you all these days in this place and you're not able to move on and you're not able to stay, to do anything, you feel like you are in the prison.

KAREEM

We already met Kareem in Section 2. Here he explains how he settled in Greece:

Freedom means a lot for me. I didn't like the idea of booking myself as a case and one country would choose me, I rather chose the country in which I wanted to stay. I was already almost clear with my decision that Greece was the place I wanted to stay in, I wanted to belong to. When I went to Katehachi, the building where we do our papers, I told them, 'Excuse me, I don't want to register for relocation, I want to apply for asylum here in Greece.' They were shocked. They said, 'Are you serious? Are you serious, my friend?' When they saw that I was really serious, it was really fast and I took my papers.



The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3ORzvcl>



HAMAD

Here is Hamad [not his real name] again, from Iran, whom we met in Section 2. He explains the difficulties of maintaining contact with his family:

Only some private organisations support you. Some are NGOs, some are charities, they provide food or clothes for daily needs, but they don't provide financial support. Authorities are limiting their activities. There is no support from the government. Because of this situation I haven't seen my family for two years, sometimes I cannot get in touch with them. That's why I need to go. Hopefully something will happen soon and I'll be able to travel to another country and bring my family to Europe, and finally be together as a family again. My family is the only thing I have left, and I'd really love for us to be together again. I hope other countries will help me to be with my family again!



The original interview is in Persian: <https://bit.ly/3OEkrtP>



MOUHAMAD



We also met Mouhamad, from Senegal, in Section 3. He explains the importance of his football team:

When I arrived in Italy, the first thing I put in my head was learning the language, because my idea was to stay in Italy, to build my future here. I didn't go to school long but I adapted right away ... because I had friends, I play football, so ... I always listen, I watch movies, I always watch TV to learn the language. Because I am a person who when I go to school I cannot understand anything but when I hear people talking I memorise it immediately. That's why I adapted, even if I don't speak 100% but I like to stay in Italy, for I learned the language. I also look for a team to play football, because it was my dream. In the end I didn't find luck to go to a higher level team but today I'm playing with Sant'Ambroeus so ... I can say that they are the best because they give you love, they give you the chance to move forward, that is more important to me.

The original interview is in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3zID14y>



VALERIO

Valerio is a freelance photographer and founder of the collective Arcipelago19. He has been documenting migration routes and borders for ten years. He works with UNHCR Italy and his contributions have appeared in Italian and international newspapers:

September 15, 2015 was the day when Hungary closed the border at midnight, Orban closed the official border with Serbia. I was following those paths, I was there; and I remember this Afghan family who arrived at 11.59 to enter. The next

family got stuck. So actually the first impact with Europe is a barbed wall, it's a barbed wire wall ... It is certainly not an image that a human being can foresee. So it certainly has an impact on planning, on the cognitive sphere, on the emotional sphere. It has an impact on the person, it has an impact on everyone, because no one would ever imagine being in front of a wall, with barbed wire, with the guards telling you: 'No, you cannot enter and if you enter illegally you will face a three year prison sentence'.

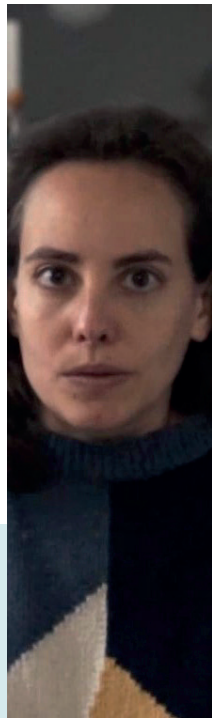
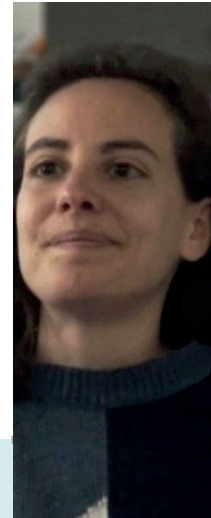
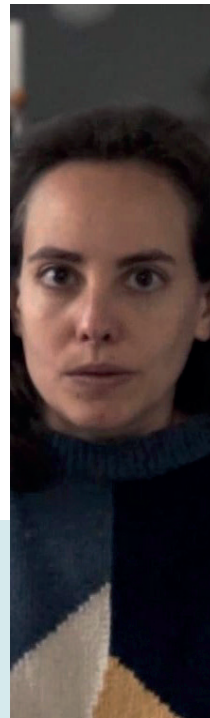
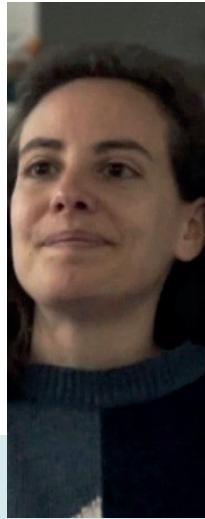
The original interview is in Italian:

<https://bit.ly/3JkvoVb>



MARTA

Marta is an anthropologist and a reception worker in a SPRAR centre (protection system for asylum seekers and refugees) in Milan, Italy:



You arrive in a place [the Reception Centre] where in theory you should be safe and in fact enter a circuit that has nothing stable and safe, because it is a continuous shuffling of the cards, a continuous precariousness, not only from the point of view of the documentary process, of the request for asylum, legalisation and all that follows, but also from a practical, material point of view of your living conditions ... [because it can take] one year, but also up to three or four, because in any case the timing for the request for asylum plus a possible appeal, etc., are very long ... those who suffered from a particularly strong post-traumatic stress disorder may in the meantime also become decompensated, or there are people who, not enduring the situation, rightly or well, I do not express judgments, have decided to abandon the reception centre; others who maybe had family networks in other countries, so maybe they did not have Italy as the first country of choice, in short, they went somewhere else.

The original interview is in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3oL6vIV>



PASHTANA

Pashtana arrived in the UK from Afghanistan in 1999. She now works for an agency supporting refugees:

When I came here to the UK I faced a situation that I didn't know what to do and there wasn't enough information for refugees in those days, the system was not set up appropriately for this group of people and also there were so many limits. For example, you couldn't go to university unless you had status and they wouldn't give you status right away, it would take you at least three years. For myself it took more than two years, more than three years, to get a status and it wasn't straight away, they will give you a temporary residence type of visa that [permitted] you could stay in the country but you couldn't work, you could only volunteer. And you could study only courses in the college that were really, really basic. So for a refugee of my age – because I was at university back home when I lived in Afghanistan – so for me to pursue my education I had to wait for three or four years, which obviously was quite time-consuming. And in terms of living costs and other issues, housing was relatively easy I would say, because even then, because I was under 25 I wasn't allowed to rent a flat so I had to look for a room in a house. For me, because I was on my own, from a completely different culture, coming to this country and living on my own in a house where people would be coming at like midnight and they would be drunk, they would be screaming and shouting their head off, so obviously it wasn't a good experience for me.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3Sgrkcu>



HARRISON

We met Harrison in Section 3. Here he discusses contact with his family:



I told my brother ... 'Don't tell anyone about where I am and how I got here. I will call them at my own pace'. But my times never came, I had to call them when I was suffering. When she heard about it, my mother was very, very worried but in the end she was able to say, 'Okay, all right, if you've decided to do this, I'm putting you in my prayers'. Because she too is a Christian. The only thing that hurts me is that she couldn't see the person I've become now and the person I'm going to become ... since my mother died, I don't call my brothers and my father so much because I don't want to miss them ... I don't want to believe that she is no longer there, when I come back my mother will not be there anymore.

The original interview is in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3cNACGp>





What do you think

about how refugees are made to feel when they finally get to Europe? Is this the welcome you would expect if you were arriving after a difficult journey?



What would make you feel welcome?

If you were stepping off a boat after a dangerous journey of escape, what would be the first words you would like to hear? Make a big poster, as attractive as possible, featuring your chosen words. You can use it for your cantastoria, so keep it safe.

4. FURTHER RESOURCES



The statement in the introduction about refugee experiences of arrival: Elena Ambrosetti, Hans Dietrich, Yluisa Kosyakova and Alexander Patzina, The Impact of pre- and postarrival mechanisms on self-rated health and life satisfaction among refugees in Germany. *Frontiers in Sociology*, July 2021. Accessible at <https://bit.ly/3cUkj14>.



The UNHCR statement in the introduction, about camps: <https://bit.ly/3ol34CF>



Learn about the experience of Lual Mayen, a former refugee from South Sudan who spent his young life in a refugee camp, about how he learned to design a video game about refugee camps: <https://bit.ly/3oGEVfE>





IN THIS SECTION WE WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- experiences of activists who support refugees in their new environment
- how to incorporate activist stories into your cantastoria

5. REFUGEES WELCOME

WHAT SUPPORT IS THERE FOR REFUGEES?

Many organisations and individuals in Europe devote their time to making refugees feel welcome and to challenging the harsh treatment that many refugees experience. Activists include people who have lived here all their lives, who recognise the privilege of their citizenship and who are willing to put it at the service of those who cannot take citizenship for granted. They understand the benefits that refugees can bring to their own societies:

Thanks to their diverse perspectives and experiences, refugees and their children can help spark new ideas and technologies. People who have been uprooted from one culture and exposed to another tend to be more creative, while studies show that diverse groups outperform like-minded experts at problem solving.

Other activists are refugees themselves, who wish to share their knowledge to improve the conditions of those who have just arrived. They could be people who have already successfully settled in their host countries, or who are still carrying out the procedures for requesting asylum and awaiting a response.

All of them want to welcome refugees and are united in their commitment to promoting inclusion, friendliness, tolerance and respect. This sometimes means campaigning to change a system which is hostile and unwelcoming to refugees.

At WE-Hope, we have been very fortunate to work with an agency in the UK called the Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN). KRAN was founded in 2003 and is based in the south-east of the UK. It supports young refugees who have arrived in the UK without family. Many of them are vulnerable and traumatised. KRAN volunteers, or mentors, provide safe, supportive spaces for them to learn English, make friends, get to know their new community and start college or work. KRAN also campaigns for the rights of all refugees.



What do you think

about the organisations in your area that support refugees? Do some research online to find out which ones are active in your area.

about being an activist for refugees? You can become an activist through your cantastoria!

ACTIVISTS TELL THEIR STORIES

Here is a selection of testimonies from activists who support refugees when they arrive at a destination. You do not have to use them all. Read them together and discuss them as you go along. Think about what part of their stories made the biggest impact on you.

Some of the refugees who are also activists, and who told us their stories, wished to remain anonymous. We have given them fictional names but their stories are real. There is a link at the end of each story if you would like to listen to a complete version of the testimony in the WE-Hope Digital Memory Bank.



NADIR

Nadir talks about working as an interpreter and cultural mediator:

My time as interpreter, as intercultural mediator, was a very important time for me. I was the witness of both sides ... the ground of co-existence [should be] in harmony with all differences. The gardens with many and different flowers look always more beautiful.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3Br8Kso>





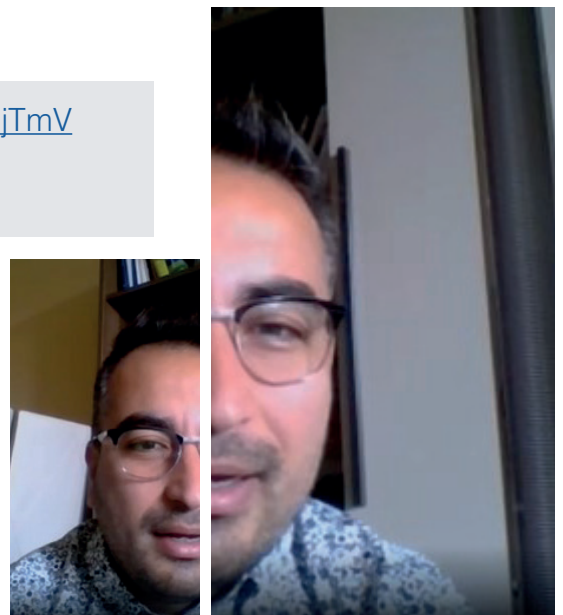
SYED

We know Syed from before. Here he talks about working in Italy, helping other refugees and asylum seekers:



One of the most important things that happened in Italy in my life was... it was like a dream that was becoming real was working with other refugees and asylum seekers. Why a dream? Because finally after you suffered and passed a lot of hard time in your life, finally you can serve the people that have similar experience ... I was lucky that I got a job in order to serve other refugees and asylum seekers ... My experience for me was my instrument, my tool in order to better serve those people ... I worked in an asylum centre, I worked with unaccompanied minors, I helped in order to provide legal advice to other migrants and refugees.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3P1jTmV>



BECKA

Becka is a coordinator of ECHO Mobile library, a van full of books in most of the languages spoken in the refugee camps in Attica, the region around the Greek capital. These books bring education, culture and enjoyment to the people confined to the camps there:

Now I run a mobile library. It's a multilingual mobile library, we have several hundred books now, mainly in Arabic and Farsi, but also French, English, Greek, a little bit of everything else, including Urdu, Bangla, Kurmanji, Sorani, Turkish and outside of Corona times we go and visit normally camp residents in the sort of further away, more isolated refugee camps around Athens ... What we'll normally do is we'll go in, we'll drive through, it's now gated. So we have to sort of smile, hope that they'll open the gate, which they have done so far, drive through to the bottom of the camp normally honking on the way or shouting and watching everyone being like 'Ah! The library, the library!' and running towards us. And we have a table, we have chairs where people sit around, this is before Corona, of course. And that will be kind of the chill, chats, study, talk about, practice your language kind of area. And normally we also have two or three volunteers who will take the children off and do kind of literacy or pre-school kind of based activities to help support their socialisation, developing motor skills, the kind of skills that will help prepare them when they go into formal education.

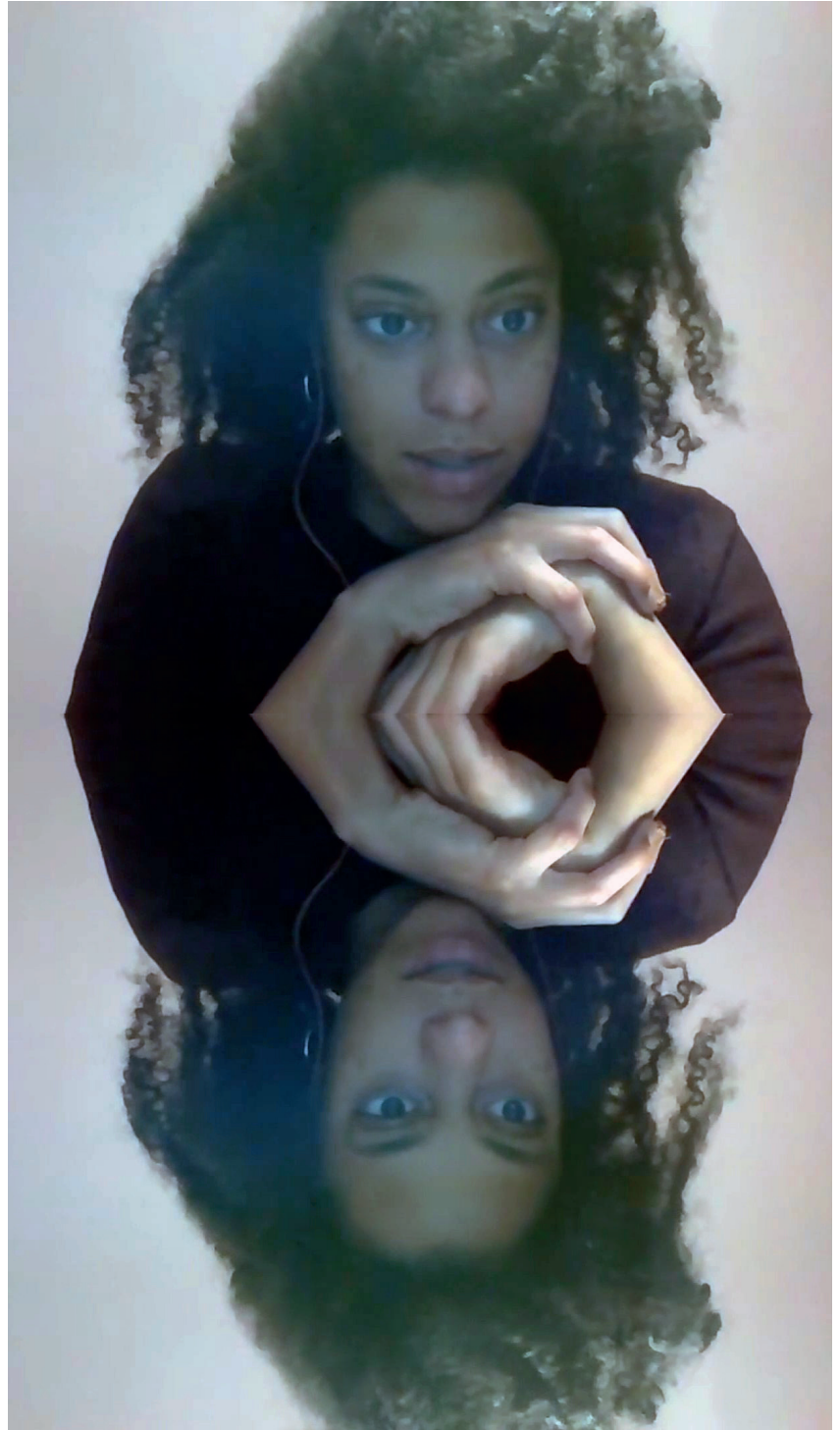
The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3Q3ZY7G>



DEBORA

Debora volunteered with Save the Children and helped to manage child-friendly spaces in the Moria and Karatepe camps in Greece:

It was December, it was cold. Maybe one day it even snowed, it was cold. These children were always cold, because they slept in tents which were cold. But we were so much outdoors because these children needed to play, to let off steam, to run. We also made a big mess all together. It was very nice because even the adults appreciated this thing ... it created this atmosphere of play and fun that in any case for those few hours brought a little joy in a space that was not really joyful.



The original interview is in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3vsfXEL>



HAYTHAM

Haytham is a medical doctor from Syria who lives in Manchester, UK. He manages a charity called Rethink/Rebuild Society, which works to improve the lives of refugees, especially from Syria:

In 2013, we established the refugees' support office because the number of Syrian refugees had increased a lot, so we are giving support to refugees in different ways, dealing with their applications, with the welfare, finding schools, and we try to connect them with the host society. So we do plenty of activities to help the Syrians to settle in the British society by having movie screenings, again fundraising, festivals like 'Celebrating Syria' festival, which is an annual festival about Syrian art and culture, and we also try to help the Syrian community by having workshops, English classes, job training ... Another aspect of our work is education in Syria. Because of the war in Syria, a lot of Syrians became without any sort of education, so part of our focus is to bring children back to school and we do this through partners working in Syria.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3ADehLy>





GIULIO

Giulio is Italian and lives in Athens. He is one of the coordinators of Khora, which supports refugees in many ways. First, it is a social kitchen, where refugees can come to eat, chat and exchange experiences. Khora also distributes clothes and hygiene products, runs a music studio and a craft workshop, and supports people with applications for asylum:

[During Covid lockdown] the kitchen has continued to work, to cook, to serve takeaway food, only to take away. So in the two or three hours that we are open to the public, who wants to take a portion or two to eat, comes to the door, there is someone there and you pass the food. For sure this was one of the most radical transformations in what I did ... we found ourselves with hundreds and hundreds of requests for more food, so much so that especially in the first lockdown, that of spring, we found ourselves in the situation that we were not cooking enough, that is, we had many more requests than we could cook, and we cooked 1200, 1300 meals a day. We managed to activate a collaboration with other Greek associations and collectives ... We created a kind of network between all these associations and we managed to open for a time a second kitchen, which was run by a collective, a group of Syrian guys who are asking for asylum or have applied for asylum in Greece called Syrian Greek Youth Forum and they for a while, for a month, they cooked every day in this second kitchen. We distributed the meals: we had a network of people on foot, by bicycle, by car, who distributed meals at home.

The original interview is in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3BwUHBK>





ABDULLAH

Abdullah [not his real name], whom we know from Sections 2 and 4, helps in the Khora kitchen:

I cook my traditional Sudanese food, Damaa, Salata, Asida, this is the food I used to cook. I'm so happy people like what I'm doing over there. They say, 'Oh, this is from Sudan. It's really nice and delicious'. That really makes me feel proud of myself. Also, I knew the situation for the refugees, how hard it was to find food. I feel happy to cook for a thousand people, that makes me feel happy and proud of myself, that I'm helping people in the same situation as me.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3Ji0qgi>



ANGELA

Angela has been a volunteer mentor for Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN) since 2013:

What do I do with the mentee? It depends very much on the young person. When I started out in 2013 I was matched with a very young Afghan lad who had just arrived, he was only 13 at that time ... he spent most of his time sitting in a room, didn't have many friends because he was one of the very young ones and so for him it was important to do something and get to know the area, so we went cycling and canoeing, and did lots of activities ... I had a different mentee who mainly wanted to learn English language so we arranged language lessons and met up once or twice a week to go over his writing or work on speech and so forth. A different young lad just wanted to sort out his papers and needed a lot of help with that. My current mentee we meet once a week ... usually in town, he's a bit older, he loves football so we talk a lot about football ... he comes with all sorts of issues with his social worker and we try to sort them out, or at least find out what's going on so things can be sorted out ... It really depends on what the young person needs.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3Ji0qgi>





LYNN

Lynn is another KRAN volunteer mentor:

The idea of being able to help people who make it to these shores under the most unbelievably difficult circumstances – and we make it so hard for them to get here, and we make it so hard for them to survive here – it just gives me a tiny little bit of feeling less purposelessness, and I think KRAN is doing a brilliant job of work and I'm very pleased to be part of it.

The original interview is in English: <https://bit.ly/3vsh6Mz>





What do you think

about the importance of books in the refugee camps?

about all the ways that activists support refugees?



Becoming an activist

Create an artwork that expresses some of the ways that people help refugees. When your art is completed, ensure you keep it safe to use in your cantastoria.

Would you consider donating a book to ECHO library? There are details of how to do this in the further resources section below.

5. FURTHER RESOURCES



The statement in the introduction about the benefits of welcoming refugees: Philippe Legrain, Refugees are not a burden but an opportunity, at:

<https://bit.ly/3ziwCM1>



The KRAN website: <https://bit.ly/3vuPNBn>



The Khora website: <https://bit.ly/3zl9VXF>



Details about ECHO:

This is the ECHO website: <https://bit.ly/3JkxpRl>

This is how to donate books: email contact@echo-greece.org and they will advise you what to do!





6

COMPLETING AND
CELEBRATING YOUR
CANTASTORIA

This final session is all about completing your journey to create your own cantastoria.

It is time to create a video. It will be maximum ONE MINUTE.

If you have made physical art, such as drawings and paintings on paper, you can now arrange these all in sequence and take a video with your phone or with an app like TikTok. You can record the soundtrack at the same time.

If you have made digital art, or a combination of digital and physical art, you now need to assemble the digital images you have created. Using your digital editing skills, combine all elements of your art, plus a soundtrack, using a digital editing programme.

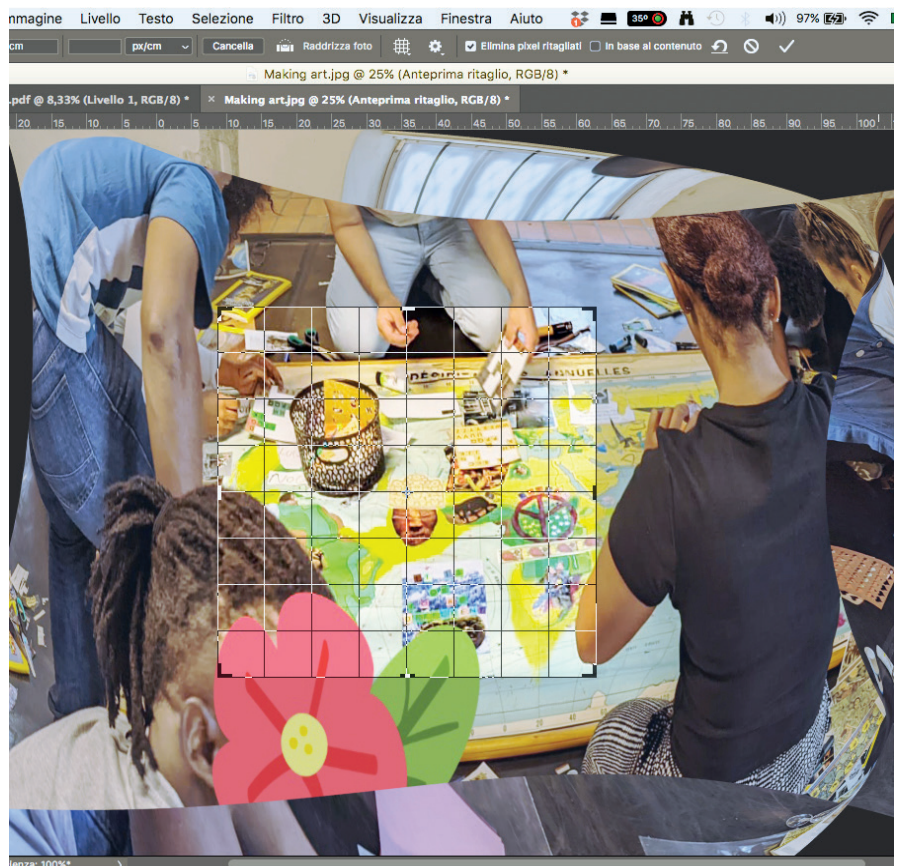
If you encounter difficulties please contact the WE-Hope team at WE-Hope@lincoln.ac.uk. We can offer support.

Please remember:

- You can give your cantastoria a title at the beginning and you can list yourselves at the end – but only first names, NOT surnames.

- For protection and safeguarding reasons, you MUST NOT include any images of yourselves in your cantastoria, only your artwork. You can record your voices if you wish.

- Check again that any content you have reused from online sites is 'Creative Commons' – that is, that it is free for anyone to use and is not owned by someone who may demand payment.



When you are happy with the result of your cantastoria, save it and share with each other on social media. Use hashtags #WEHope and #WEHopeCantastoria.

We invite you also to share your video with us at WE-Hope, so that we can upload your cantastoria to the WE-Hope Youtube channel.

To share your video with WE-Hope, please use <https://wetransfer.com/>. When you use wetransfer, you need to enter the recipient's email address. Please use we-hope@lincoln.ac.uk.



FURTHER RESOURCES

In this section, there is information about We-Hope and its partners, as well as lists and links to organisations. In this section, there are lists and links to organisations that advocate on behalf of refugees. These are in addition to the ones already mentioned in previous sections. They often have great learning resources to share.

THE WE-HOPE PROJECT AND ITS PARTNERS

The We-Hope website, with links to the Digital Memory Bank, cantastoria performance, blogposts, and the electronic version of this learning resource: <https://www.we-hope.eu/>

University of Lincoln: <https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/>

National Technical University of Athens: <https://www.ntua.gr/en/>

Michael Culture Association: <http://www.michael-culture.eu/>

Threshold: <http://thresholdstudios.tv/>

Bank of Memories Italy: <http://www.memoro.org/it/>

Greek Bank of Memories: <http://www.memoro.org/gr-gr/>

Lapsus: <http://www.laboratoriolapsus.it/>

Di+: <http://www.associazionedipiu.org/>

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NGOS

Care4Calais is a volunteer-run refugee charity working with refugees in the UK, France and Belgium: <https://care4calais.org/>

Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati (CIR) is a charity based in Italy since 1990s and aims to support refugees and asylum seekers. CIR has a network of lawyers, doctors and psychologists who operate both at national and international level: <https://www.cir-onlus.org/chi-siamo/>

Global Compact on Refugees brings together a community of Member States, refugees, NGOs, UN organisations, businesses, faith groups, academics, charities and community groups to find practical, long-term solutions that will allow refugees, internally displaced

people, stateless people, and their generous host communities, to thrive: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/about>

Mediterranea rescues refugees in the Mediterranean Sea: <https://mediterraneaescue.org/>

Refugee Action is a charity which provides information and supports to refugees so that they can re-build their lives in the host country or wait for their home country to become safe for them to return: <https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/>

Refugees International advocates for lifesaving assistance, human rights, and protection for displaced people and promotes solutions to displacement crises: <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/>

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Refugee Welcome is an Italian network of activists which fosters cultural change and a new model of integration: <https://refugees-welcome.it/>

Rethink, Rebuild Society provides community assistance and support to improve lives and promote aspirations of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants, in particular but not exclusively Syrians and other Arabic speakers in the UK: <https://www.rsoc.org/>

Safe Passage helps unaccompanied child refugees to find safe, legal routes to sanctuary. The Safe Passage head office is based in London but they also have a presence in France and Greece: <https://www.safepassage.org.uk/>

CULTURAL INITIATIVES

Refugee Week is a UK-wide festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. Founded in 1998 and held every year around World Refugee Day on the 20 June, Refugee Week is also a growing global movement: <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

-
Step by Step Together offers practical tools for youth work on the inclusion and participation of young refugees at local level: https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261953/FINAL+step+by+step+together_reduced_size.pdf/8103c431-afc3-f978-9117-20776950be-df

EU MIGRATION REPORTS AND POLICIES

Chatelard, Géraldine. 2017. "Survey Report Intangible Cultural Heritage of Displaced Syrians": <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/38275-EN.pdf>

European Commission. 2015. "A European Agenda on Migration." Brussels: European Commission: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/pages/glossary/european-agenda-migration_en

European Commission. 2021. "Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027." Brussels: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/watch-eu-action-plan-integration-and-inclusion-2021-2027-explained_en

TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT REFUGEES

This page contains a collection of UNHCR teaching material on refugees and asylum seekers for primary and secondary education, as well as some guidance for teachers working with refugee children in the classroom: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/teaching-about-refugees.html>

Help young people challenge assumptions about migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and to develop mutual respect, empathy and understanding. <https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/refugees-and-migration>

Understanding Refugees experiences to celebrate refugee contributions to the UK and promote a better understanding of refugee experiences and creativity, here are a range of resources from The Open University: <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/society-politics-law/understanding-refugee-experiences-refugee-week>

Empower students to defend the rights of refugees with the following education resources: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/education-resources-refugee-asylum-immigration>

Resources to support and raise the awareness of refugee and asylum seekers: <https://www.leedsforlearning.co.uk/Page/17320>



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