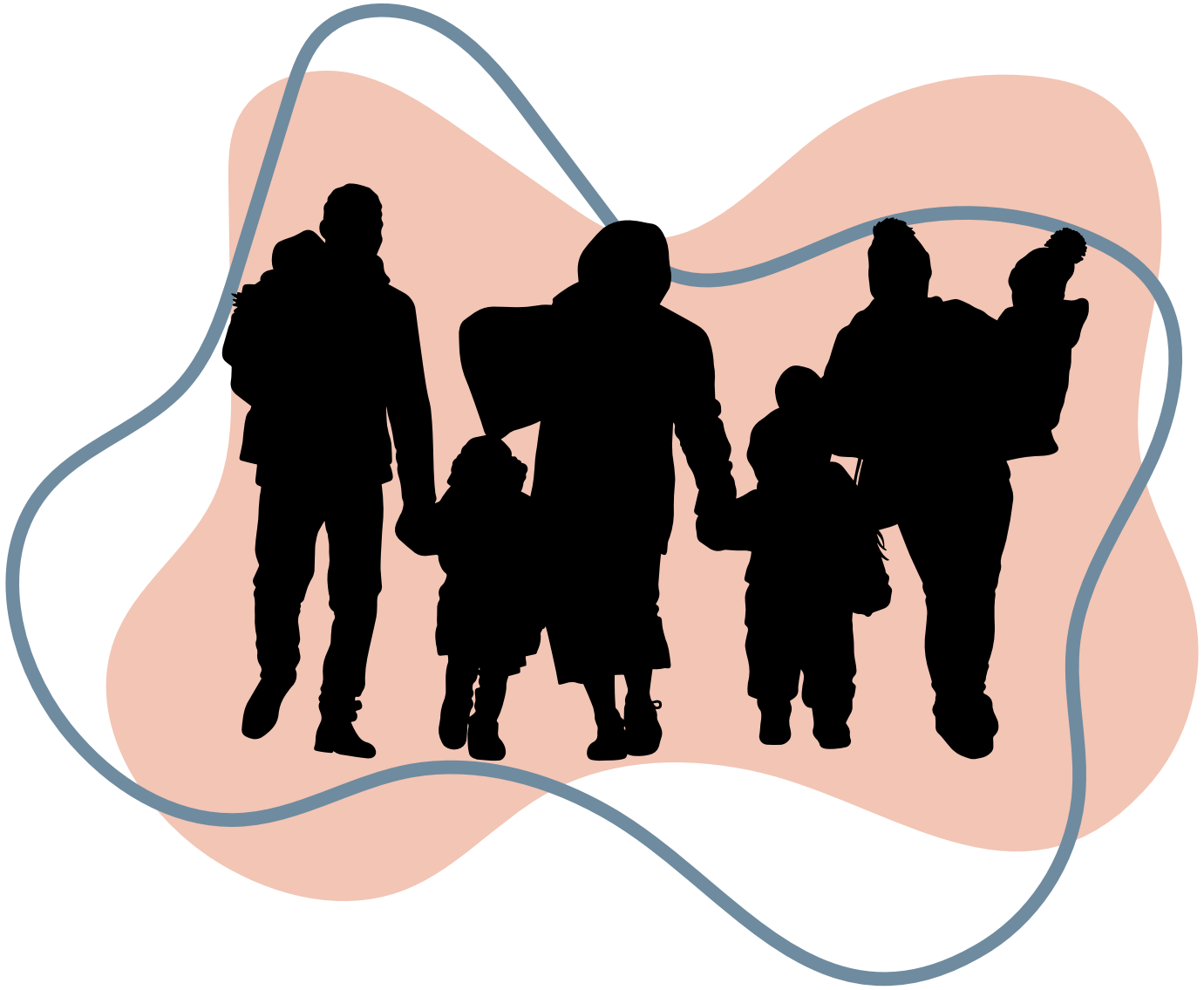


Projet Memor'Arte



Immersion into
migrants lives

By TG 1, TG2, TG3 students

My journey from Palestine to England

My name is Ahmed Chaoua, I am 18 and I come from Gaza. 2 years ago a missile destroyed my house and all the neighborhood. My family and I were homeless overnight. 6 months before this incident my mother got an idea, took a boat to Europe to live a better life and now we realize that she was on the right way for a better life for us.

We left Palestine our home country by taking a boat illegally, hiding in a dark place in the hold of the boat. 1 hour before stopping over in Italy a drunk man spot us and in the panic I hit him and we ran on the deck of the boat and jumped into the sea. The water was cold, we were freezing and once we were on an Italian beach we were hungry and an old lady offered us something to eat. Her son was a chef and made us a good Italian dish. After I eat this dish I fell asleep and the old lady took care of me. The next day my mother used some of the savings we had that hadn't sunk into the sea to pay for a bus ride to Milan. The landscape was really beautiful and my little sister loved the atmosphere of the Italian countryside.



After 15 hours of ride we arrived to Milan. My mother immediately search for a job or something to earn money quickly to provide for our needs. She was quickly hired in a small bar thanks to her experience in this profession. We lived here for 4 months in a small hotel room in a poor neighborhood of Milan. I took care of my sister everyday during this 4 months and I cooked for my mother when she came home in the evening.



Once my mother earn enough money to travel from Milan to London, I thought the trip would cost more but it was only €180 for the 3 of us. It was the first time for me in a plane and I was scared because in Palestine the only plane I used to see was to destroy the homes. Fortunately the flight was without turbulence and in 2h we were in England.

In the airport my little sister saw my grandfather and jump into his arm and he took us to his farm. There we met our my father whom I hadn't seen since my sister was born.

Now it's been 2 years that we all live together, and I am a student at a big university in London and my sister is planning to study in Italy.



THE OLD LIFE

1 AM

“We have to leave the house now !”.

We all know when it's going bad in our lives, but when your environment is not a safe paradise for your children, you have to say goodbye to your previous life and leave when you can.

As a young mother, I couldn't imagine living with my baby like this. We could hear gunshots, cries, and shouts, I couldn't sleep safely and my children had to live longer than me, so I had to save them before me.

I saved money for a few months for this trip, I would take my children to the port and cry for hours and hours because I knew what was going to happen : I will probably never find him and I will probably die before I reach him.

This is the life we're going to have now.

I have to do this, for my kid, my sweet pie...

1:30 AM

It's time now, I have to say goodbye, but I don't want to. My baby, he is so beautiful. Only a minute or two, I can't just say “Goodbye”, I have to be a strong mother.

“Baby, come here.” I hugged him and said to him calmly : “Mommy loves you so much, please be courageous for me, act exactly like Mommy taught you, okay ? Don't forget you have some of those biscuits you love in your bag”.

I didn't tell him about the second thing that was in his bag : a photo of me and him when he was just a little baby, in a happy mood. I wrote something behind the photo, I wish he will do it when he is far far away...

My voice started to crack and my eyes were starting to become teary, I couldn't overcome my sadness. I'm sure he saw it because in return he hugged me with his little hands and said like a brave soldier : “You'll be proud of me. I love you mommy, please come back”. His voice was so angelic, I could listen to him for a few more hours but I couldn't.

“I'll come back, don't worry. Now, it's up to you, be as brave as a knight, I will find you, now long live to the king !”. Did my quotation work with this little smile ? I don't know but the moment I gave my money to the man standing in front of the boat, I knew I couldn't go back. I give my children a last kiss on his cheek, and look at him walking to the platform and leave the country. Until I can see him, I wave my hand standing on the bridge, crying as much as I can.

Poor things we are...

2 AM :

The moment I came back home, I noticed that my windows were broken. When will this war end ?

On the way to the house, I couldn't stop falling apart. My child leaving was the first part, I had to leave too. Unfortunately, I could only pay for 1 person. I paid for my sweetheart, now I have to quit this place and join my child who is already waiting for me.

I'm so afraid and petrified, but I'm ready to be a free bird.

3 AM :

I packed my things and I left my place as it was, destroyed and dusty. My bag on my back, I was ready to go. I had prepared food and water to keep me alive and I trained my body to survive extreme conditions. Now, I'm walking and walking to the border to pass it and then find someone to lead me to the nearest city, where I must find money and find my way to my boy.

It's a toil, but I will succeed, I have to.

Walking is natural, but it exhausts me. I made a bad decision, leaving directly after I left my children on a boat, maybe I had to wait a little bit, like one day. I'm nearly sleeping while I'm walking.

It's only 5 AM, and I'm already tired.

8 AM :

While I'm walking, I try to save my mind, I try to remember the happiest moments of our damn life. I can't relate, I'm leaning gently but my mind is not responding. I want to sleep a bit, just take a nap.

My eyes are closed, I'm seeing good memories, my baby boy, he's so pretty, I'm sure he will succeed, he's so kind and... I can't think of anything else... Please, be brave, I'm proud of you Oscar.

Blood is flooding, I have been hit, I didn't hear the gun shooting, I hope he will be a great man, I can't buy happiness but I'm sure he will find it.

CAILLET Tigane

My name is Nadeira.

Whereas most girls my age, 18, have not had many problems to worry about in their early lives, I have lived in constant fear due to the situation of my country, Afghanistan. Around 3 years ago the Taliban returned and since then our rights have been erased. It's as if women no longer exist in the eyes of the Taliban.

We have no rights to education over the 6th grade, not allowed to work, not allowed to leave the house without permission. I got married at 14 due to my parents' wishes, what was expected of me it was what all Afghan girls did. When I was around 17 more and more women started rebelling. I didn't understand at first but then a woman explained to me. This life style was not normal, we should not have to live in fear due to the beliefs of someone else, women were not a sin but moreover a vital part of our society.

Soon after my 18th birthday I managed to escape and flee Farah, Afghanistan. It was a long journey, I spent many nights wondering if I would make it. Eventually I made it to a shelter in Turkey, where hundreds of other women like me waited for asylum. There is no hope to return to Afghanistan, my life was in constant danger, even talking was not permitted. I am beginning to see a future for myself, I have goals in my life. I would like to become a doctor and help other women get their basic hospital checks, the ones we were denied the right to in Afghanistan. Although Turkey is not an idyllic place to live, for the minute it is better than my home country.

It is difficult, I had to leave behind all my family, my friends everything I've ever known. I don't think I will ever understand how on the other side of the world there will be a girl just like me except due to geographical privileges she will never know the pain that it takes to have to leave everything behind due to the actions of someone else. By speaking up, I wish to inform people about the situation.

Taylor Olivia
Pain Adelyne

The story of a Mexican deportee under the Trumps governance

Hello my name is Pablo and I came from Mexico, before living in Mexico I was living in Florida but I was forced to leave America after Trump take the power and sent back, over a million stranger to their country.

America was very happy after Trumps became the new president but nobody could have expect a man, freshly name to take such a drastic measure about the stranger and non American people. The fact that he tell that he want to make America great again and then he send out every non-American people make people regret their decision, this act can be qualified to a non human act, and it revive the flame of racism present in America.

The way I was send back to Mexico is grave forever in my head because it was so unusual, so unreal, that even for someone who have do the war its shocking, to send us back in your country we were force to sit on a plane and without telling us were were going they start the plane and take of right after.

For me, this was a very hard time because this event separate me from my wife and my son because there are American.

The fact that I will leave this country by force make me feel very sad at a point that I cannot sleep at night it was like America betray and the liberty was just a pipe dream, it cause me a lot of trouble because I almost cant speak Mexican Spanish at all.

But anyway I don't like to talk about my past cause it take me a tear every time. Today I still in a state of depression because I got a lot of fear but my biggest fear is that my wife and my child can be in danger or in need, and i stuck here, incapable of helping them because the new president of America seems to be a little bit racist and I'm not allow to enter the territory anymore because of a person who take is dream for reality.

I've some hope that in the future I will able to go back into America to see my wife and my kid again and catch up the time loose with my family. My dream are that my family and me can go and live in another country like South Korea because its more "cool " to live in such a calm and peaceful country.

*L.A
Tsmtg*

Child of war

My name is Nour I am 8 years old and I am a refugee from the war in Palestine...
I was born in Gaza but I don't live there anymore.

One day, there was a huge noise, as if the sky was falling.
My mother took my hand and told me we were leaving. We never came back ...

I was 6 years old when I fled Gaza with my mother and my sister.
My dad stayed in Gaza but I haven't news from him since I don't know if he is still alive...
I miss my dad, I pray for him every night hoping to see him again one day in a world in peace.

With my mom and my sister we landed in a camp that became our home.
The houses are made of flimsy materials. When it rains, everything leaks. At night I can hear the rats running on the roof. But at least here, I'm not afraid of an airplane destroying our house while I'm sleeping.

I haven't the childhood that every kid dreams, I tried to study when I don't have to help my mom.

With my friends we have a punctured ball. We play with it we're happy anyway. But I'd like to have a real field a school not holes in the wall. I miss having a real bed, good food and a whole family happy.

One day, I'd like to return to Gaza, not the Gaza actually, but a Gaza at peace with trees, laughter, and where there's no need to run away,

I am tired to pray to believe to hope because everybody knows our misery but I feel like the world ignores us.

I am just a child who dreams about a happy life so why I don't have the childhood of every little girl have...

I just want peace.



Fatma's experience through her journey from Libya to Sicily.

My name is Fatma and 14 years ago began my journey to find a new home far from my country. In 2011, I had a six years old daughter and a beautiful husband, but then, when I thought everything was fine, the civil war began in Libya.

I felt so unsafe in our home, I was scared to die, or that my daughter was going to die. Every night, I was terrified to fall asleep because I didn't know if I would wake up, and if I did, what would I discover once my eyes would be open ? Our home destroyed ? The bodies of my daughter Asma and my husband Nabil on the floor of our house, not moving ?

I wanted to leave so badly but Nabil didn't want to. He said that it was our home and that we wouldn't be cowards and just leave the country because of fear. So I stayed, asking God to protect my daughter at all costs. I should have prayed for Nabil too. While my prayers kept my daughter alive for a few months, Nabil didn't get that luck. He died when a bomb exploded where he worked. I was even more scared after that. I lost the protection and love of my husband, but despite all the sadness and mourning that I was feeling, I no longer had anyone to prevent me from leaving. And that's what I did.

One night, I took all the money that I saved for years, a little bit of food and I woke up Asma who took her doll. We left Birak, our town, and the rest of my family. The rides in the buses were tiring and absolutely uncomfortable. The buses were full all the time, and there was a horrible smell of sweat. It was also very hot and we couldn't pee when we needed to. We had to wait until the bus took a break, which was not very often. Between the bus rides, we had to walk a lot. Sometimes I carried Asma on my back who was tired of all the walks. Sometimes there were bodies on the roads, I tried to keep a straight face but I just wanted to cry. But I needed to be strong for Asma.

Three days later, we finally arrived at Tripoli. There I met a man close to the port, who offered to take us away, in Italy. I didn't have enough money for a journey on a good ship so I agreed. We spent our day hiding in the same area. I bought bread but it wasn't enough for both of us. I remember a kind woman with a beautiful smile. She saw us and offered us two apples. At night, we went to the beach, and climbed into the little boat. There were 40 other people with us and the journey was chaotic. I tried my best to keep my daughter away from all those men who were pushing each other, some fell off the boat and the captain refused to help them. I hugged Asma the whole ride because I was terrified of losing her.

4 days later, we arrived in Sicilia, in Pozzallo. This is where we started our new life. We lived with a nice woman who accepted us in her house. She had two children who helped Asma with her english. I found a job after a few months and I finally could pay the rent of a little apartment. Asma also went to school and I couldn't be more proud of what she has become.

We stayed very close to the family who helped us when we arrived here. Now, I'm free, and even if I miss my homeland sometimes, I don't regret the decision I made the night we left. This was for my daughter, for her future, and here in Pozzallo she became an art teacher, she's respected. This is what I always wanted, a life for her in which she is safe and independent.

Asma's experience through her journey from Libya to Sicily.

My name is Asma and I'm 22 years old. When I left Libya, I was 6, my mother took me out of the country for political reasons. The civil war in our country was too dangerous for us so she preferred to leave. We were living in Birak, in a little house near my grandparents' one. I can remember my room with some of my toys and my stuff, it was one of my favorite places, even if I didn't have a lot of things, they were so important to me. But when the civil war exploded, our city became unlivable, I couldn't go to school, see my friends or simply go out because of the bombings, it was way too dangerous, it became horrible to live in Birak, even for a 6 years old girl. My father died because of a bomb so it was just me and my mother Fatma. She wasn't feeling safe, she tried to hide it to protect me and to not make me feel scared but I noticed it anyway. One day, she made her decision, it was time to leave, it was the only way to live a better life.

We left in 2011, she woke me up in the middle of the night and told me to take only the things that were important for me. At this time, I wasn't totally able to understand what was going on and why we were leaving. We took only a few stuff, food, a little bit of money that my mother saved and I took my favorite doll with me. Her name was Anna, she had blond curly hair and a dress with a lot of flowers on it. I loved it very much. For three days, we traveled to Tripoli, there were only a few buses with a lot of people on it. The smell was horrible, it was really hot but we were too tired to complain about it. A big part of our journey has also been made by walking on trails. I remember that I was hungry, we weren't eating a lot but the trip was tiring, my feet hurt a lot and I was really scared because of the dead corpses around us. In Tripoli, we met a guy who offered to take us to Italy. There was no other option for leaving our country, we cannot afford plane tickets so my mother accepted the proposition. We joined him and fourteen other people on a beach. It was at night, the stars were shining, and Anna reassured me. The boat was completely full, all of those people scared me, they were pushing each other, there were many noises and I hated that. The waves were stirring us, some people fell off and the others refused to help them, it was awful to see that.

We arrived in Sicily in the city of Pozzallo after a week of travel. I was exhausted and really apprehensive in front of this new country where I didn't know anybody. Even if Sicily is a beautiful place and if some people offered us some help, at the beginning, I felt like we weren't welcome but after some months in town this feeling has faded. It's a family who welcomed and helped us. We lived with them (a mother and her two childrens) for a whole year and they are now like my own family. I started school the next year, I learned Italian, and met a lot of people who are still my friends. I have never left Italy since this time. Even if I remember it was really hard for my mother and I to leave the Libyans life, she knew it was a good decision and we adapted ourselves very quickly to this new life. If we had stayed, I know that I would never have had the life I have today in a good or in a bad way.



1:30 AM

It's time. We're trying to sneak into the port, chased by officers. We were not ready to leave, but, sometimes you don't get to choose. We finally are on the edge of the port, just in front of a boat, which I would say is normally for a group up to 10 persons, but as I count them, there's already 25 of them, and mommy and I aren't on that boat yet. As we approach, mommy hand 2,000\$ to what seems to be the captain, and I start going on the boat.

I was separated from my mother, it was not her choice, you could tell by her teary eyes. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and, my mother gave me the chance to take it. The place were we used to live was quite curious, while playing in our house, I could see big fireworks in the sky, making big sounds. Once, I asked my mom what they were celebrating, and she just closed the old curtains we had on this broken window.

I never felt in danger, I probably should have, since my mother looked very anxious almost all of the time. One time, she was looking anxious, but not as usual, she was really stressed. That time, she told me to sit on this couch, a very old couch with a stained fabric, it's almost the most comfy thing in this house, we don't have much, and we try to do our best with what we have. When I sat on the couch, she explained to me how to act if I had to go on a boat, she called that a 'trip', but here I am, and that doesn't seems like a trip at all. When she explained to me everything, she told me that she started saving money, and that when it will be time, we'd use it to quit our actual life, and live in a happy place, but, now that time as come, only me is going to a brighter future, I don't even known if it will be brighter to be honest, since I'm alone on that boat, and I'm not sure if I'll see my mom ever again.

3:00 AM

We've been sailing for almost an hour now, and I feel really bad. I haven't eaten since yesterday night, and being with almost 40 complete strangers makes me uncomfortable. I'm tired, but not that much, I think it's because sadness is taking the lead on me, I don't feel like I'm controlling what's going on, it's like we're going nowhere. At the of the day, I understand my mother, she wants me to pursue my life as she always

Nolann CHOLLET

wanted, she always told me sorry, I never understood why she'd told me that, but now, I think I get it, she apologizing because of the life I had, but it wasn't her fault, at all.

Before I left, mom handed a bag to me. I finally decided to open it. Inside, there is some snacks, a picture of her and me, and a first aid kit. I take a snack, it's some sort of cake she used to cook me when we I was younger, when I was like 5 or 6. Seeing them reminds me of all the memories I have with her, even though it's only been one hour and a half, I already miss her so much. I choose to put it back the snack, I only have a few of them, so I'll keep them for later. I take the picture of us in my hand. I love my mom. This picture was taken by a pool, when I was just a baby. And as I turn the picture, I see her handwriting. « I'll always be there, even if you don't see me, I'll always keep an eye on you ». I don't need more to let some tears out of my eyes .

5:00 AM

It's been a few hours, and, people are starting to fall asleep. Without any hesitation, I follow them, and fall asleep. I didn't sleep last night, obviously, we were in a hurry and needed to leave until it was possible.

7:00 AM

I was woken up by the screamings of a baby, apparently, I'm not the only child on this boat. If I trust my eyes, I can see a coast, which seems really close to us. I open my bag, and take out a snack that my mom made. I eat it slowly, as if I knew it would be the last time I could eat her treats.

When I'm done eating the treat, I check my bag to see if everything is still in there. Nothing's missing. I close the zip of my bag, and I put the bag handle in my hand, squeezing it as hard as I can, so nobody can steal it. I'm on a boat, full of strangers, I need to protect what I have.

8:00 AM

Here we are. We arrived on the coast, and we all disembarked. Now, I'm fully on my own, and I know I have to continue this alone. I start to walk, following the others, trying to find a city, or somewhere to start my new life.

My name's Oscar, I'm only 8, and I'm already starting a new life, on my own.