

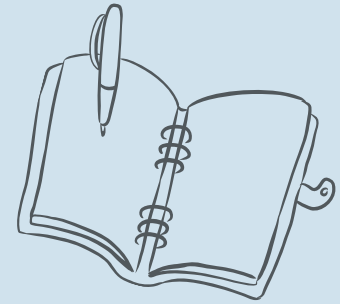
REFUGEE JOURNAL

THEIR VOICES, THEIR REALITIES

BACK TO SCHOOL THROUGH THE EYES OF REFUGEES



N°12



The Refugee Journal is a magazine dedicated to empowering the refugee community - the young people, women and men with whom SB Overseas works - and giving them a voice. They tell their stories and choose how they are told.

All the images, stories and other media in this newspaper are produced by and through the eyes of the refugees with and for whom we work in our education centers in Arsal, in the accommodation centers in Brussels and those resettled in Belgium.

In this journal, the refugee community document their experiences, share their stories and raise awareness of the challenges they face. It is also a personal and poignant insight into the journeys, struggles and successes of those who have sought or are still seeking refuge.

Subscribe to receive this journal directly in your mailbox.

PREFACE

Today's education. The tool for tomorrow's long lasting peace.

Conflict zones are desolate wastelands where schools are targeted, teachers are threatened and children are denied their right to education. Armed conflict systematically interrupts the educational process, jeopardizing the future of an entire generation. This situation perpetuates the cycle of poverty, ignorance and instability.

Education is not only a right, it is also a powerful tool for building peace and stability. Educated societies are better equipped to resolve conflicts peacefully, to participate in sustainable development and to break the vicious circle of violence. Investing in children's education means investing in their individual well-being, but also in building lasting peace and a safer, more harmonious future for all.

Respecting the right to education for all is a moral and humanitarian imperative. It is time for the international community to join forces to make education a priority, even in the midst of crises, to enable every child to realize his or her potential and contribute to a more peaceful, equitable, inclusive and representative world.



IN THIS ISSUE

Back To School in Aarsal	5
Did you know?	12
Her Choice, Her Future	14
Story : From Exile to Hope	16
Views	22



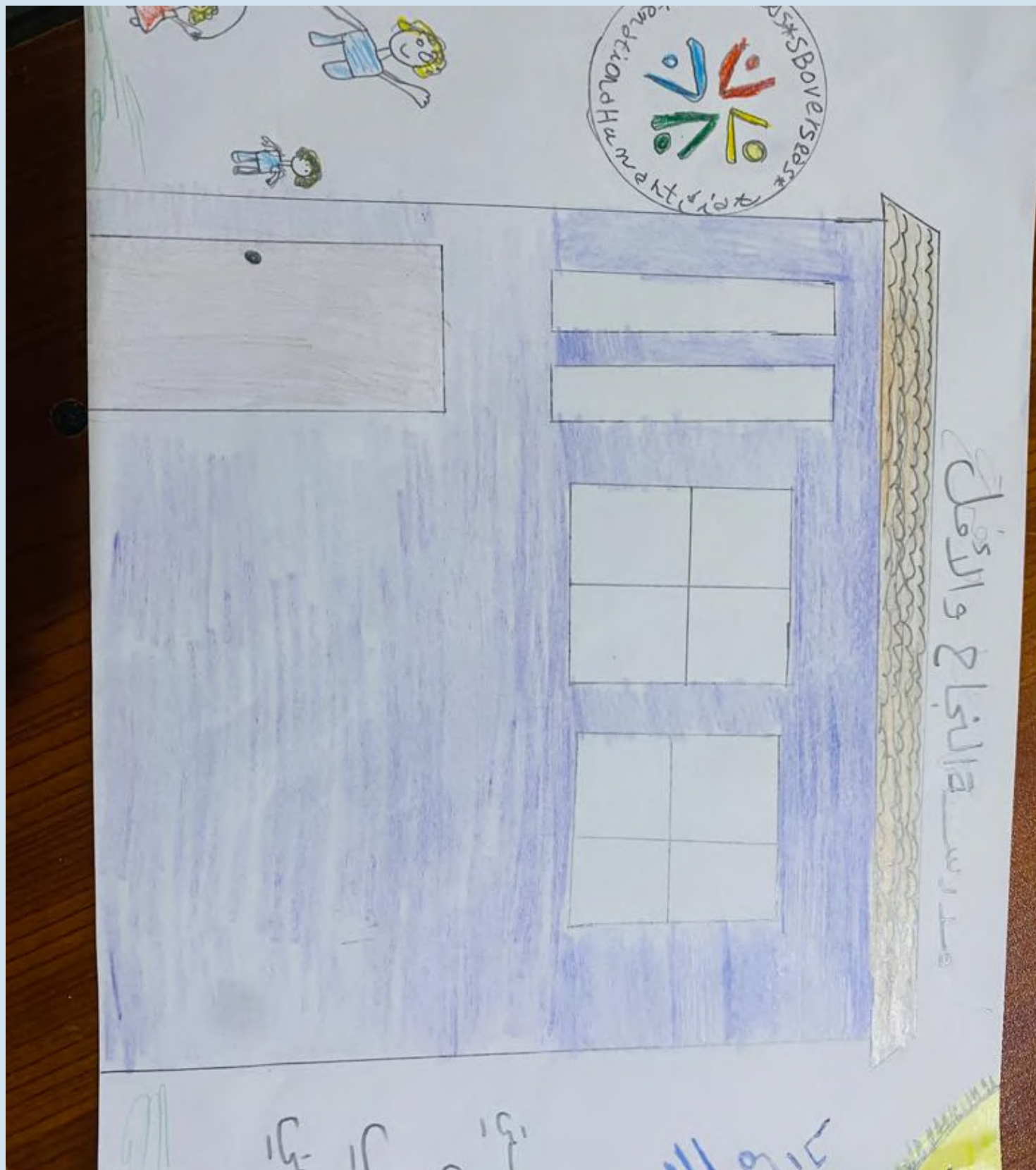
BACK TO SCHOOL IN ARSAL

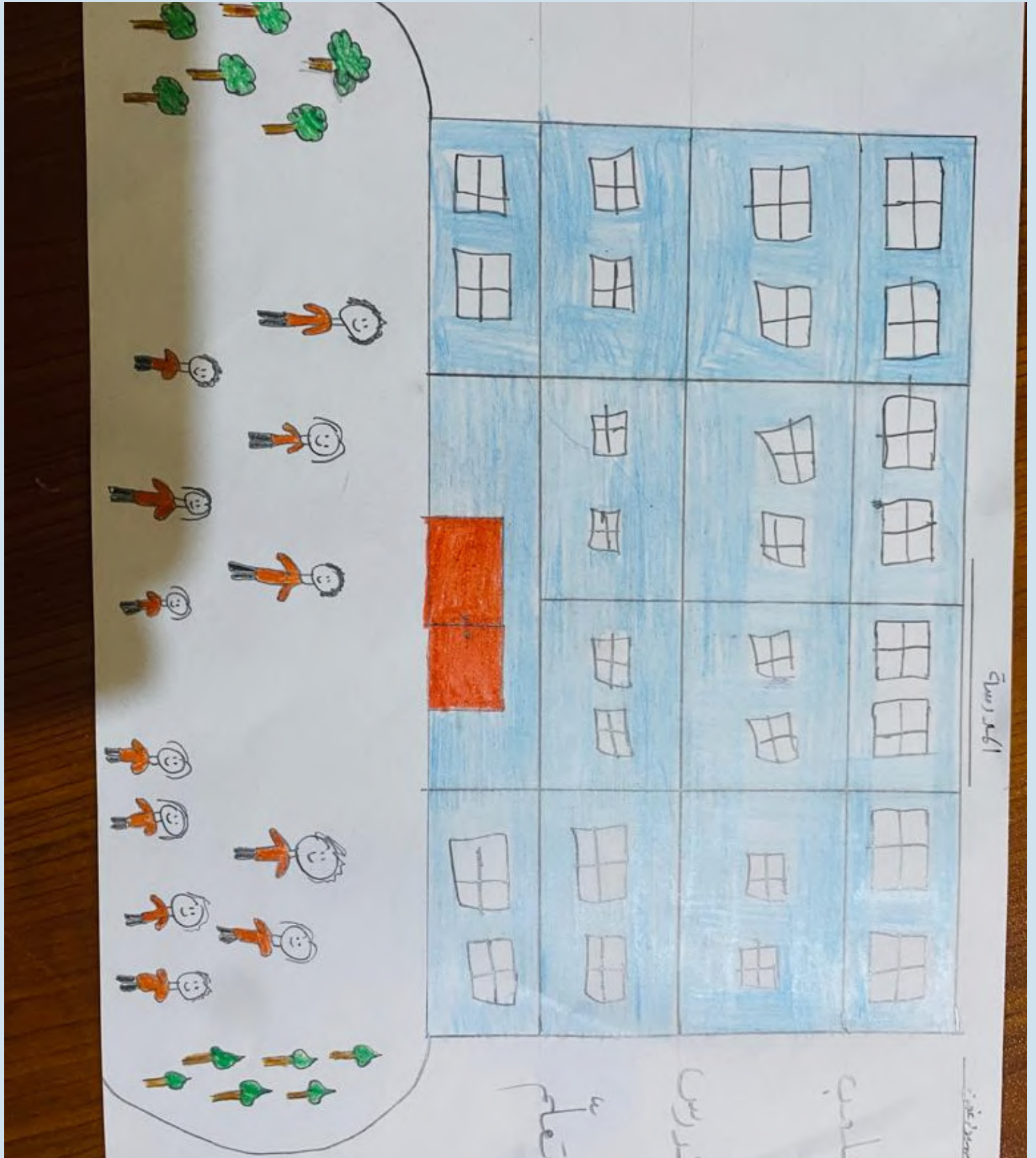
NON-FORMAL EDUCATION GIVES CHILDREN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PREPARE FOR ENROLMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS OR THE ALP. CLASSES AT THE ARSAL CENTER ARE SAFE SPACES WHERE PUPILS CAN PLAY, LEARN AND DISCOVER THEMSELVES.



Back to school, a time of excitement and promise, takes on a unique reality in the eyes of children living in refugee camps. Behind their eyes, a subtle blend of hope and resilience, lies a story of courage in the face of adversity. Back to school is much more than a simple transition to the classroom.

It's a step towards normality, a burst of normality in the midst of an everyday life marked by the extraordinary. This year, students at the Arsal Center illustrated what school and education meant to them. Images that inspire knowledge, development and opportunity. Quite simply, education.





شماره 12



* العلم نور و الجهل ظلام *

راما الفولج





Going back to school in refugee camps reveals an extraordinary resilience and an ability to embrace education as a beacon of hope. These children, with their eloquent gazes, remind us that, even in the midst of adversity,

education remains an unchanging force, capable of guiding our steps towards a brighter, more stable future. In these eyes, we read the timeless story of perseverance and the desire to build, even in the midst of uncertainty.

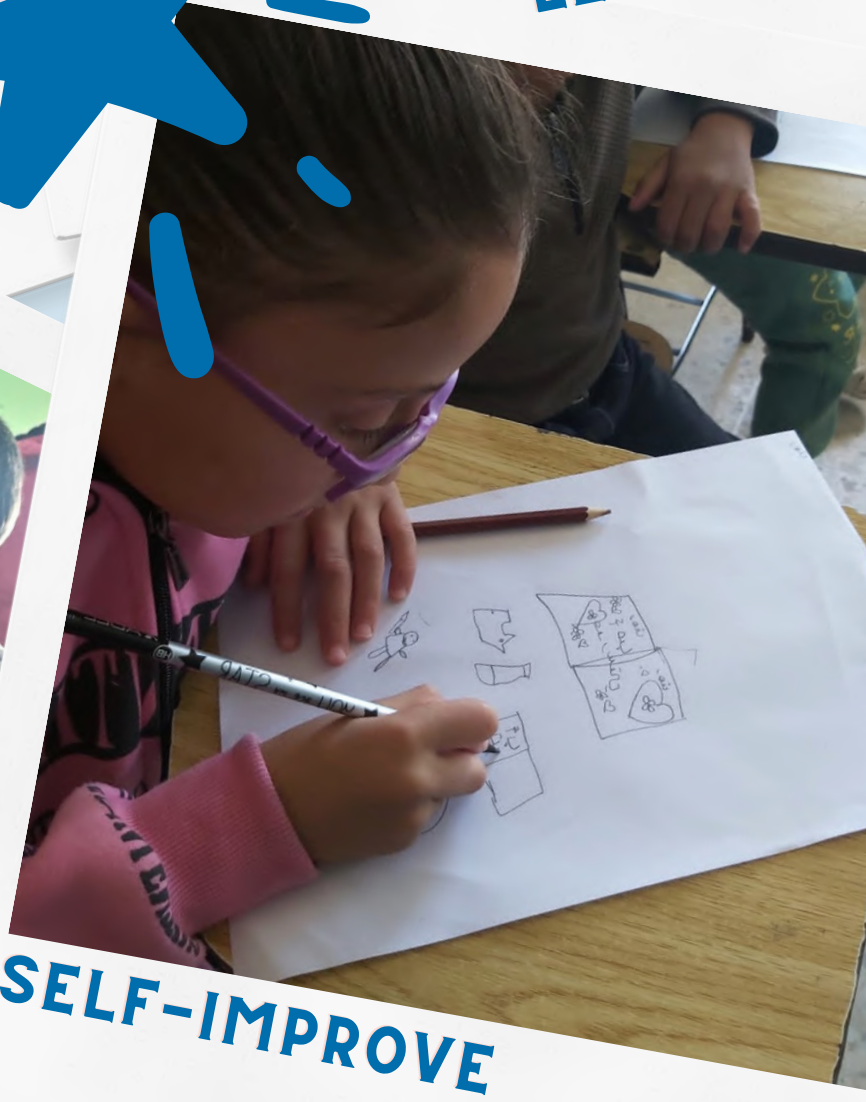
GROW



LEARN



UNDERSTAND



SELF-IMPROVE

DID YOU KNOW ?

The latest UNHCR report (September 8, 2023) paints a picture of the education situation for refugees around the world. The figures reveal an emergency situation for young people deprived of their fundamental rights.

14
M

of refugee children of school age.

7
M

children are not enrolled in a school

60
%

of the 715,000 Syrian refugee children do not go to school.

« We need fully inclusive education systems that give refugees the same access and rights as host-country learners »

- Filippo Grandi

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

*41% of all refugees are children.
In 2022, some 51,700
unaccompanied or separated
children sought asylum in
countries around the world.*

*76 % of refugees are
hosted by low and
middle income countries*

*52 % of all refugees and other
people in need of international
protection came from just three
countries: Syrian Arab Republic
(6.5 million), Ukraine (5.7 million)
and Afghanistan (5.7 million).*

*70 % of refugees are hosted by
neighboring countries. Most
people fleeing conflict and
persecution remain near their
country of origin.*

HER CHOICE, HER FUTURE



THE EMANCIPATORY POWER OF ART AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

After a summer break, SB Overseas has resumed its activities with unaccompanied foreign minors. These workshops are key moments in the integration of UAM into their host society. These young people, often vulnerable and isolated, benefit from a unique opportunity to blossom, forge social links and discover their identity through various artistic and cultural expressions.

Artistic activities are a way of building self-confidence and self-esteem in unaccompanied children. By expressing their creativity, they gain a sense of accomplishment and forge a positive identity. These experiences help to alleviate the traumas associated with their migratory journey and strengthen their resilience.



FROM EXILE TO HOPE

In the bustling streets of Brussels resides a family whose story embodies resilience and rebirth. Children and young adults from a refugee family resettled in the Belgian capital share their experiences, dreams and challenges with us. Their testimonies sound like melodious notes, evoking a complex and inspiring journey from exodus to resettlement, from exile to hope.



Once upon a time, there was a family whose fate brought them to Brussels. They were resettled at the end of 2022 through the Community Sponsorship program. Their first days in their host society were a blank page on which to write. Each shared experience strengthened the bonds between them, creating a living mosaic of diversity and inclusion. Today, as we celebrate their first year in Brussels, we give the juniors a voice. Through their words and reflections, we explore the emotional kaleidoscope of adaptation, discovery and the challenge of building a new self in a new world. They share with us their aspirations and the different nuances of their integration. These voices resonate like hopeful echoes, proving that even across borders, resilience and determination can weave the thread of a promising new story.

Stories

Ten years ago, circumstances prevailed and we left our country, like many families, hoping to return after two months. That didn't happen. I remember the modest luggage my mother packed for us for that short period. I saw the strength of my mother and father, despite the psychological pressure, trying to make up for the loss of our big family, our big house and everything we had. My parents worked day and night, hiding their fatigue from us, to support us until we had the opportunity to move to Belgium. It was sudden and very quick. From the first moment my father told me about the move, I began to organize my dreams and those warm family sessions as we planned our next life, building our shared dreams.

منذ عشر سنوات حكمت الظروف وسافرنا من بلادنا مثل كثير من العائلات على أمل أن نعود بعد شهرين لكن ذلك لم يحدث أتذكر تلك الأمتعة البسيطة التي رتبها أمي لتكفيننا لتلك المدة البسيطة لقد رأيت قوة أمي وأبي رغم الضغط النفسي وهم يحاولون تعويضنا عن فقدان عائلتنا الكبيرة ، منزلنا الكبير وكل شيء.... وهم يعملون ليلا ونهارا ويخفون تعبهم عنا ليوفرا لنا احتياجاتنا إلى حين أن سنحت لنا الفرصة للانتقال إلى بلجيكا الأمر كان مفاجئ وسريع جدا منذ اللحظة الأولى التي أخبرني فيها والدي بالانتقال بدأت بترتيب أحلامي وتلك الجلسات العائلية الدافئة ونحن نخطط لحياتنا القادمة ببناء أحلامنا المشتركة

Clearly, we needed a plan to ease us into the change. I didn't know how I was going to follow that plan, but I let it go. After this psychologically exhausting period of work and all the procedures involved in the journey, we finally arrived in this new country. I was very excited. I can't deny it. I also had this fear of the new: new languages, new systems, new people. However, without anticipating it, I found many people to help me...to teach me how things worked. For the first few months, I decided to look positively at everything that was new, to enjoy the air, the taste of water and the simplest things, even the bitter cold I wasn't used to.

I had to share all the difficulties with my family. The biggest obstacle for me was the language, but in this strong family, as I was used to, everyone was quickly able to rely on themselves in a very short time.

Today, after an eventful year, I think I'm implementing the plan we drew up, much better than I expected. I can understand the language, I can express what I want in this language that seemed strange at first.

Now I'd like to thank the people who shared with us everything that was difficult from the start until things became easier. These people are the SB Overseas team. One day, I hope I'll be able to return some of the favor.

بكل تأكيد لقد كنا نحتاج إلى خطة لتسهيل علينا الطريق
لم أكن واثقة كيف سأمشي على تلك الخطة لكنني
تركت الأمور تمضي .. وبعد تلك الفترة المرهقة
نفسيا من العمل وإنهاء إجراءات السفر أخيرا وصلنا
إلى البلد الجديدة كان بداخلي حماس كبير لا أنكر
أني شعرت بتلك الرهبة بكل ما هو جديد
اللغة، النظام، الناس

لكن بلا تخطيط مني وجدت أناس كثيرة
لمساعدتي.. لتعليمي كيف تجري الأمور
في الفترة الأولى قررت أن أنظر بإيجابية لكل ما هو
جديد أن أستمتع بالهواء بطعم الماء بأبسط الأشياء
حتى ذلك البرد القارس الذي لم أكن معتادة عليه

لأتشارك مع عائلتي كل الصعاب لقد كان الاعتماد
الأكبر عليي بسبب اللغة ولكن تلك العائلة القوية
كما إعتدت عليها سرعان ما استطاع كل فرد منها
الاعتماد على نفسه في فترة قصيرة جدا ..

الآن وبعد مضيّ سنة لقد كانت مليئة بالأحداث
أعتقد أنني أمشي على تلك الخطة التي رسمناها
بأفضل بكثير مما كنت أتوقع
الآن أستطيع أن أفهم اللغة ، أستطيع أن أعبر عما
أريد بتلك اللغة التي بدت غريبة في البداية

والآن أريد أن أشكر الأشخاص الذين شاركونا بكل ما
هو صعب منذ البداية إلى أن باتت الأمور أسهل هؤلاء
الأشخاص هم فريق SB overseas
عل أمل أن أستطيع رد جزء من الجميل



- Yasmine

Today marks our one year anniversary, one year since my family and I arrived in Belgium. It hasn't been an easy year for us. Everything seemed strange. And we were foreigners too.

We accepted this feeling of fear in the face of the new. We accepted that nobody learns easily. We accepted that it takes a great effort to integrate and build a new life from scratch, and there's nothing wrong with rebuilding a life for the third time after losing what was built in Syria, then Egypt, for ten years, and, now, we're trying again, for the third time.

It's a good thing. My family has always been strong.

I've adapted to every circumstance.

From the first moment we arrived, we decided that we would use every minute to achieve what we set out to do.

I'm proud of what we've accomplished.

الان وبعد مُضي عام من وصولي
انا وعائلي الى بلجيكا
لم يكن عاما سهلا بالنسبة لنا
لقد بدى كل شئ غريب
ونحن كنا غرباء أيضا
تقبلنا شعور الخوف من كل ما هو
جديد.

تقبلنا بأن لا أحد يتعلم بسهولة
تقبلنا ان الامر يحتاج إلى مجهود
كبير للاندماج لبناء حياه جديده من
نقطه الصفر ولا بأس بأن نعيد بناء
حياه للمره الثالثه بعد أن فقدنا ما
تم بنائه في سوريا ثم في مصر
ولمده عشر سنين ونحن نحاول
والان للمره الثالثه

لا بأس بهذا
لطالما كانت عائلي قويه
لقد تكيفت مع جميع الظروف
لكن قررنا منذ لحظه وصولنا الأولى
اننا سنستغل كل دقيقه لتحقيق
ما خططنا له

فخوره لما وصلنا له الآن

I am well aware that what we're doing is taking small steps on a long road. I know very well that it won't be easy.

I remember the first time I heard this language, how strange it was. I couldn't understand a single word. However, after a year, it became very familiar to me. It's easy to understand conversations in this language that used to make me nervous.

My family and I are learning.

I think that after a long time of losing the feeling of stability, we have now touched it. At this stage, that's the most important thing: security. My family is with me and they're safe now.

I've tried to surround myself with people who have succeeded... so that I can learn from them and regain hope, because there are those who have reached their goal, who have struggled and worked hard.

Enthusiasm may fade, but that doesn't mean the quest has to stop.

One of the best things was that we were lucky enough to be welcomed by a wonderful team who organized themselves to receive us and make the relocation easier.

انا اعرف انها مجرد خطوات بسيطه على طريق طويل
واعرف تماما انه لن يكون سهلا
اتذكر المرة الأولى التي سمعت بها اللغه كم هيه غريبه
لا استطيع فهم ولا كلمه واحده
بعد عام باتت مألوفه جدا لي
من السهل فهم المحادثه التي كنت اتوتر من سماعها

ومازلت انا وعائلتي نتعلم

اعتقد اننا بعد فقدان شعور الاستقرار لفتيره طويله الان لمسناه. وهذا الجزء الأهم بالنسبه لي في هذه المرحله وكذلك الأمان . عائلتي معي وهم بأمان الان

والأهم اني سعيت جاهدة بأن احيط نفسي بأشخاص ناجحين لكي استمد منهم بعض النصائح ولاستمد الأمل فإن هناك من وصل إلى هدفه وسعى واجتهد

قد ينطفئ الحماس لكن السعي لا يجب أن ينتهي

والأجمل من كل ذلك كنا محظوظين بفريق رائع نظم لاستقبالنا نظم لتسهيل كل شيء في حياتنا

After a very difficult period of preparing the trip and other things to end our life in Egypt and say goodbye to our friends, and as I was on the plane, I remembered that no one would be there to welcome us or that no one would be interested in our arrival. Until we arrived and found the whole team right in front of us with a bouquet of pretty roses.

It was very touching.

We found them to be like family to us.

They paid attention to every little detail.

Now, after a year, they are giving me the opportunity to write this text via SB Overseas.

بعد فتره صعبه جدا من
الاستعداد للسفر وأمور اخرى
لأنهاء حياتنا في مصر ووداع
اصدقائنا وانا في الطائره تذكرت
انه لن يكون أحد موجود
لاستقبالنا او لن يكون أحد مهتم
لوصولنا
الى ان وصلنا ووجدنا بانظارنا
الفريق كاملا مع باقه من الورود
اللطيفه

لقد كان ذلك لطيفا جدا
وجدناهم كعائله لنا
لقد اهتمو بكل التفاصيل
الصغيره
والان وبعد عام يتيحوا لي
الفرصه لكتابه هذا النص عبر
sb overseas

- Asma



VIEWS

In the current context, where conflict and forced displacement have thrown millions of people into uncertainty and precariousness, education is, more than ever, a fundamental right that every child, whatever their origin or status, should be able to enjoy. However, in Lebanon, as in many other regions affected by humanitarian crises, refugee children face enormous challenges when trying to access education.



The start of the new school year for refugee students in Lebanon should be a time of joy and excitement, but unfortunately it is often overshadowed by obstacles that are difficult to overcome.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that access to education is an inherent right of every individual, regardless of origin, nationality or refugee status. However, for many refugee children, this right is often denied or severely restricted due to factors such as lack of adequate educational infrastructure, language barriers, financial constraints and social discrimination.

These obstacles hinder not only their intellectual development, but also their ability to contribute positively to their host society. That's why the return to school of refugee students should be synonymous with new beginnings and opportunities, having already survived situations of conflict and forced displacement, demonstrating their resilience and determination. However, without equitable access to education, their potential remains largely untapped, a huge loss for them and for society as a whole.

It is imperative that the international community and local authorities recognize the crucial importance of education for every refugee child. Concrete steps must be taken to overcome the obstacles to education, including the construction of safe and accessible schools, the training of qualified teachers and the establishment of accelerated learning programs for children who have missed out on many years of formal education.



More over, it is essential to promote an educational environment that is inclusive and respectful of diversity. Refugee children should not only be integrated into the education system, but also encouraged to participate actively in school life. This requires efforts to sensitize teachers and students alike to cultural and linguistic diversity, thus fostering mutual understanding and solidarity within the educational community.

As the new school year begins, it is imperative that every refugee child, in Lebanon as elsewhere, is able to enter the school gates with hope and determination. Education is more than just a right: it's a powerful tool for social transformation and building a better future. We must unite as a global society to ensure that every child can realize his or her full potential and contribute positively to a more just and equitable world. It is our moral duty and collective responsibility to future generations. The return to school of refugee students should not be a distant dream, but a reality accessible to all. It's time to turn this vision into concrete action and give every child the education and future they deserve.





10 YEARS OF SB OVERSEAS!

