

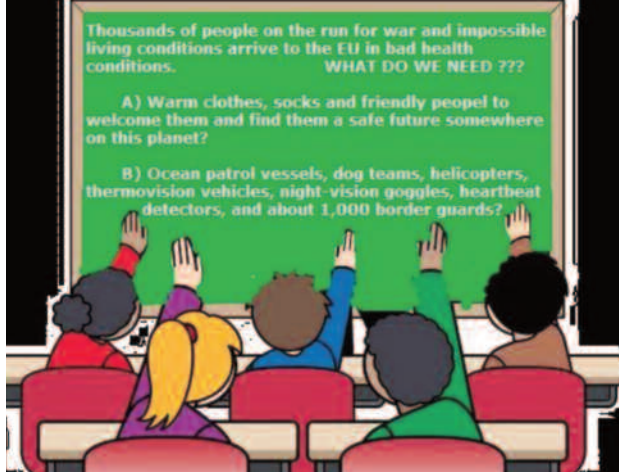
JOURNEY BACK TO LESVOS 3

CREATING NETWORKS OF SOLIDARITY
AND STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM
OF MOVEMENT



2015

WELCOME2EUROPE



Youth without Borders (JoG) is an initiative of young refugees and their friends in Germany. What they share is that they, along with their friends and supporters, collectively campaign here and now against racism and impending deportation. The greater aim, besides practical everyday support, is to increase the possibilities of participation of young refugees and to allow them a voice in public, instead of speaking on their behalf. As affected young refugees we engage in discussions with politicians, organize campaigns, events and public projects and try to thereby sensitize the public and allow young people to participate politically. To this effect, JoG promotes the empowerment of young people.

📍 [HTTP://JOGSPACE.NET](http://jogspace.net)

Welcome to Europe (W2EU) was founded after the Nobordercamp in Lesvos in 2009 when 400 activists from all over Europe came to Lesvos to protest at the outer border of the European Union against the inhuman treatment of refugees. Welcome to Europe was born in a circus tent in the harbour of Mytilene that was used as an infopoint by many newcomers in this time and which was for some of us also the place of our first encounter. Welcome to Europe is trying to provide contacts to refugees in all European Countries via the webguide

📍 [HTTP://LESVOS.W2EU.NET](http://lesvos.w2eu.net)

The **Welcome Island** is a grassroots housing project with two flats in Athens (funded by private donations) that emerged as an idea out of the daily solidarity work and the contacts of Infomobile Greece as well as from the immediate needs of refugees for a secure place to stay. We have welcomed there during the passed three years refugees from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauretania, Sudan and Syria.

📍 [HTTP://INFOMOBILE.W2EU.NET/ABOUT/WELCOME-ISLAND](http://infomobile.w2eu.net/about/welcome-island)

The **Infomobile Greece** is part of the w2eu network and grew as an idea out of the experience with the infopoint in Lesvos

📍 [HTTP://INFOMOBILE.W2EU.NET](http://infomobile.w2eu.net)

EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT – AUGUST 2015

This is a documentation of our third journey “Back to the Border” in August 2015. This much is clear: what we ended up doing in 2015 was completely different from what we had planned to do despite knowing that everything would be different, it turned out to be even more different than we could imagine by the time you are holding this brochure in your hands, everything will be very different from what we experienced while we were there. The year 2015 was a totally exceptional year. In August there were an unbelievable number of people on Lesbos. They arrived every day on the beaches in the north, but also along the entire east coast in small rubber dinghies. On most days, boats arrived in rapid succession, welcomed on the beach by volunteers from all over Europe. Unlike in previous years, single men were no longer the majority.

The boats were full of families with small children and grandparents, as well as seriously ill and injured people. While the boat trip was still dangerous, there were fewer attacks and ‘push-backs’ by the Greek coast guard, and most boats arrived without having been shoved back into Turkish waters in dangerous manoeuvres or even being deflated. Unlike in previous years, it was possible to support the new arrivals on the beach without hassle. Previously, it was illegal to have unregistered refugees as passengers in your car, now all it took was a phone call to announce that they would be brought to Mitilini for registration. When we arrived on Lesbos, there were thousands already there. Seeing them camped in the Mitilini harbour told us that this trip would be our biggest challenge yet. Shortly after our trip ended, the impossible happened: following the ‘march of hope’ from Budapest to Austria and on to Germany, the borders of the Balkan states were open for several months. The journey from Greece was safer than ever and traffickers were out of work because no one needed them. A long summer that lasted well into the winter and showed us what was possible.

While we are writing this, the border regime has come back with a vengeance. The borders along the Balkans route are shut once again and the struggle for freedom of movement has come to a head. Men, women and children are stuck in Idomeni on the Greek-Macedonian border in unimaginable conditions. All over Greece, 35 temporary camps have been erected, under military control, in order to house the many refugees who are stuck without access to an asylum system.





The EU struck a dirty deal with Turkey. The first deportations from Lesbos, Chios and Kos to Turkey have already happened, paid for and accompanied by Frontex. Among the deportees are 13 people who had wanted to apply for asylum, but couldn't. It became clear once more that for the EU, human rights and refugee conventions are not just negotiable but they are also for sale. The spirit of last summer was characterised on one side by the determination of the refugees and on the other side by a 'welcome spirit'. Now the focus is to try to close off the access routes to Europe and Germany. At the same time, everyone knows that this will only make the journey more dangerous and it plays into the hands of the traffickers.

Moria is once again a prison that is going to see more riots. We have no idea what the situation will be like by the time you are reading this. But we do know that we will continue to fight for freedom of movement and that we will continue to come here until the borders are gone and people can move freely. We recall how the Pagani prison, which was once violent reality for many of us, didn't last forever. We shut it down and made it history.

We want to record our impressions – the most important impressions – of our time on Lesbos during the summer of 2015, and we will try to convey the feelings of that time. It is important that these stories are told, also for us, so that we don't forget that solidarity and resistance are forces that can bring down borders. ★

LETTER TO THE LOCALS

Next week, in August 2015 we will return once again to the border– to the places of our first arrivals and encounters, to one of Europe’s gates and transit zones.

We will continue to warmly welcome all newcomers and we want to empower them through our presence. In the very moment as they challenge the European borders we will stand by them. If the European border regime becomes history it will be washed ashore by the wave of our collective NO; our NO to be exposed to war and repression, our NO to be excluded from education and healthcare, our NO to be exploited and forgotten. Even if our “No” is not always shout out loud, it vibrates in every single step of our journeys.

We feel solidarity and a strong connection with our friends in Greece, who have been confronted with the brutality of the European elites in another way. Their Oxi! gave us hope when most of us, after a long journey, tried to find a place in Europe, tried to figure out the relation to and within the European society. As new European citizens we demand equal rights for everyone. Obviously, not only migrants are nowadays used as scapegoats in Europe, but also those who say no to an austerity program without alternative.



✕ PORT MITILINI POLICE 1 REGISTRATION

We come back to Mitilini in a time when it is a zone of transit. It is a chaotic situation, more than ever before. We are aware of the humanitarian crisis produced by the governments in Central and Northern Europe that do not take responsibility. There is massive support from the Greek society, there are catering companies who prepare food without being paid for months while the EU only funds detention centres, threatening even the Greek government that they have to pay back EU money should they turn detention facilities into open reception centers. We come back in a time when lots of inhabitants of Lesbos are engaged in day-to-day solidarity work for the newcomers. We know that this is a big challenge for all. Especially in a time when a lot of NGOs and support structures take responsibility that cannot be taken by the Greek government because of lacking financial resources. We follow the stories of all the helpful hands who welcome the newcomers, who offer food and water, who donate clothes, who transport the people risking to be criminalized for this humanitarian act. We are impressed by how many people, inhabitants and tourists, stand together against the cruel propaganda of the right wing policy. To find solutions through solidarity is the best way to say “No” to all the propaganda.

We will try to support these solidarity networks and we stand with the newcomers who suffer on the streets, left without care by the European Union, who is not taking responsibility to open at least legal ways within Europe. We know the routes laying in front of them, via the train-tracks in Macedonia, through the Serbian forests up to the dangerous zone in Hungary, the closest door to reach the north – and the next country that is taking fingerprints that contain the risk of being deported back. We know it because some of us walked these routes and we are part of those who tore down the Dublin-system of inner-European deportations. This is what we will tell our children and grandchildren.

We will come and help to respond to daily needs together with all the others who have been doing this since months. Besides sun-hats for children and shoes, we will try to bring as much useful information and contacts as possible for the travellers. We know from our own history that this is probably the most needed: to find contacts and to build own networks. We will listen to their stories and share ours in unforgettable encounters, because the moment of transit can be a moment when you envision what you want to reach. We will remember the border deaths. We are against the continuous loss of lives at sea – a sea that is a connection between Europe and Asia and which could be so beautiful. All these dead people would not have died, if there were safe ways to reach Europe and freedom of movement.

We are going in a time that is full of worries. Some of us will miss relatives who are still affected by the war in Syria or by the newly started Turkish military interventions against the Kurdish areas in Northern Iraq and Syria. Some of us will be thinking of their families in different countries and feel the loss of not being united.

We will do our small contribution and empower all those who struggle for another world with equal social rights for everyone. We are very happy to join all those who have been doing this work for months. We will dance for freedom of movement on all walls and borders until they fall.

We are looking forward to meet you soon! ★

✖ FYGOKENTROS BEACH...



...SAME PROCEDURE

RENOVATIO RENOVATING OUR KITCHEN





✳ MITILINI PORT, NEW ARRIVALS SLEEPING NEXT TO FRONTEX

PLENARY-ACTIVITIES

Who goes to the harbour today? Who's heading for Kara Tepe? And who to Moria? These are the closing questions of our daily meetings. After 'using' the midday heat sitting in the shade to reflect on yesterday and to make plans for today, we head to these the three places – equipped with many info flyers, water, and often also medicine, clothing as well as paper and pens. Refugees go straight to the Mitilini harbour after they arrive on the island in order to register for the first time. From there they are brought to the camps either in Kara Tepe or Moria. After their second registration and after being given the white paper, which allows them to buy a ferry ticket to the mainland, they go back to the harbour. They buy a ticket and then wait for the departure date to have the chance to leave the island and continue on their way to Europe. When talking to the refugees and migrants, it is always important for us to welcome them, to tell them that we are happy that they have made it this far, to give them information and contact phone numbers that might help them on the next part of their trip – mostly through the Balkans. ★

✕ FIGOKENTROS BEACH , DAILY PLENARY



✖ ARRIVALS IN EFTALOU



➤ PATI

» **I SAW A BOAT AND IT WAS COMING TO THE BEACH.** «

I don't know how to explain about that night? It was a great memory for the night that I got to know new refugees in Mitilini! It was great for me because I had been waiting and looking for the refugees boats for 3 nights already. It was 3:40 in the morning that I heard some engine sound from the sea. I saw a boat and it was coming to the beach. I listen to their language and realized they were talking in Arabic. I was sure that they were new refugees and I turned on my light and ran down the hill towards them.

Unfortunately they were scared of me and they turned back towards the sea. I shouted in Arabic that I'm their friend and wanted help them, and at that moment a friend of the camp came and called towards the refugees: "Salammaleikum! Salamualeikum!" Then they finally decided to come to us. My friends and I helped them out of the water. We gave them water to drink and started to help. There were 40/48 people in the boat. All of my friends helped and told the other people at our place. We carried the children, women and old people to the registration centre by car. I had two different feelings that time. First: I was so happy to get to know the new refugees whom I waited for and I could help them and they were happy and thanked us a lot. Second, it was sad that the people have to leave their country and want to save their life because of the war. ★

➤ ALI

» **THEY ASKED ME ALSO, 'WHERE ARE WE? WHAT IS THE NAME OF THIS COUNTRY?' I SAID TO THEM, 'THIS IS GREECE, THIS IS MITILINI.'**«

✖ KIDS ARRIVE WEARING UNSAFE LIFEVESTS



I live in Sweden. I came here to Greece to help new refugees, if I can. I wanted to see with my own eyes what they are doing, the Greek police against them. It was the first time I saw the newcomers arrive here on the beach. They were so happy. First, they were afraid of me, they thought I was police or a thief or some wrongman. Then I said in Arabic, "come we will help you" and they said to each other, "I think it is an Arab man, maybe he is also a refugee like us." Before they arrived at the beach I arrived there and took their boat and helped the children, women and an old man. They were so happy and they asked me, "who are you? What are you doing here?" I said to them, "I came here to help you." But they didn't trust me. They said, "you must turn the light on your face so that we are sure you are a helper man and you are not a wrongman." I turned the light to my face and they became sure. Then they told me, "where are you from?" I said, "I am from Afghanistan and I was refugee like you, I was also a newcomer here some years ago. Now I come here to help the refugees", and I explained about my experiences but they were so nervous they could not control the boat. The boat was going back. I caught the boat.

And there was a girl, Patti, she was also nervous like me and she was happy and told them "Salam Aleikum" in Arabic language and then she helped me and helped them. We were two at first but then others of our friends came. I was so happy. It was my first experience arriving in Mitilini, Yunan. They asked me also, "Where are we? What is the name of this country?" I said to them, "this is Greece, this is Mitilini." They became so happy and said thank you so much. They continue to come here to get some water, medicine and emergency thing they got from us. Our group carried the women the children and the old man with the car to Mitilini port city. The young men, those who were able to walk, went by foot. It was such a happiness that I was able to help the refugee newcomers last night. ★



➤ SARA

»SUDDENLY WE SAW LITTLE GLOW WORMS, SMALL SILVER LIGHTS«

We drove on and at a corner we looked out into the black sea that was like a black hole. And suddenly we saw little glow worms, small silver lights. Two or three at first, then 40 and then the lights grew bigger and then we could make out shadows that were walking very slowly. Then these orange reflective vests appeared and 45 refugees with kids and everything, all wet, totally wet, emerged from the black hole. That was a picture that is difficult to put into words, but it is a picture I will never forget.

And yesterday, a Syrian boy asked me where we are. I said “in Mitilini” and he wanted to know how far it is. I said “about 23 kilometres” and I was going to tell him what to do, but he said, “yes, yes, I go 23 kilometres, then I take registration number, I go to camp, I take my paper, then I go to Belgium.” That was so cool, as if he had read all the information there is out there and knew exactly what he was doing. ★



► MARILY

»GIVING THE PEOPLE A RIDE AND AT THE SAME TIME GIVING THEM HOPE«

✖ MORIA-HOSPITAL, MORIA: DRIVING SICK KIDS BACK AND FORTH TO THE SICKENING CONDITIONS

One morning, I stopped the car to pick up some women standing on the right hand side of the street who obviously had just arrived. I stopped and when I got out of the car to welcome them, I realised that they were not carrying bags, but two bigger children covered with blankets. They were twins who where both handicapped and unable to walk. I brought the mother and her children to the port to the registration and I knew it would be impossible for them to stand in the queue for hours holding these kids. No doctors were at the port, no NGO taking care of vulnerable people like them, no wheelchairs. I felt so ashamed and helpless letting them out, but the women were thanking me from all their hearts. This feeling that whatever you do is never enough, was the feeling that followed me all the time. What gave me strength is that when taking people in the car and explaining who we are, many people very quickly understood and thanked with a smile that said without words: "I knew that solidarity exists." Giving the people a ride and at the same time giving them hope. The hope that solidarity can always appear somewhere around the corner. ★





✖ MORIA, LOOKING FOR SAFETY EVEN IN REFRIGERATORS

MANSOUR

»WHAT SHOULD I SAY?«

The situation here is very hard for the refugees but also for us in that we realise that the situation is even worse than what we experienced. I think now people need even more help. Whatever we do is much too little. Today there was a small child that had cancer, around 6 or 7 years old, very young. I don't know how they managed to cross the sea. There were 45 people in a small boat. We see sick people all over, in Moria, in the port. Unfortunately the situation is very bad. I look and I don't know what to say. This makes my psychologically totally upset. Sure, supporting the people strengthens me, and when we are all together with our group I feel better. We bring water, blankets, clothes. For sure it is not a big help but it is useful. And the most important thing is for newcomers to see people who support them first, and not

police. For them it is really better, we show them the way, we are there for them. When I entered Greece, the first thing I saw was police insulting us and behaving as if we were stupid. All people arriving here – many women, older people, children – they need help badly. What should I say...

WELCOME TO GREECE! GUIDES.

What the refugees really badly need after their arrival on the island are informations: where they are, what can be the next step, how to proceed, where is what, who can help. And these informations are unfortunately usually not given to them by the NGOs. They have to try to find out on their own, and are often confronted with rumors instead of real informations. When we distribute our "Welcome to Greece" guides in their own languages and speak with them and answer questions, we know that they appreciate this kind of support very much. Seeing people reading our booklets deeply concentrated makes us very happy. Also hearing from people working for organisations like MSF, how helpful as well for them the booklets with the informations and the w2eu.info blog are is great. This summer we distributed in Lesbos 50.000 Welcome-booklets in Farsi and Arabic.

The most important thing for me was that we were all together and helped each other. This year we helped many more refugees because last year there were not so many refugees here. But this year it was so difficult, but we tried to do our best. Everybody did his or her job, as good so possible. I met a Syrian boy, he was 13 years old, he was alone in the port, and I asked him, "How are you?" He told me, "Who are you? Why do you ask me this?" I told him, "I am a person like you but I live now in Sweden. I want to ask you why you are unhappy and why you sit here alone." He said, "Because my father and my mother and my small sister, they are in Syria. They could not come here. Now I am alone." He became happy after I told him that I am from another country, that I came here to help refugees and to give some information. He was happy and it was happiness for me too. He thanked me. It was really good. ★

**»NOW I AM HERE AT THE
SAME PLACE,
SUPPORTING THE
PEOPLE WHO ARE
FLEEING FROM WAR AND
WANTING THE SAME
THING THAT I WANTED
SOME YEARS AGO.«**

I don't now how to start but I will try. When I arrived in Mitilini for the first time to support the refugees and migrants, it just felt like I saw myself 6 years ago when I was a migrant myself and left my home, my family and my friends for a good future. It was so heart-breaking to see people in that situation and I could not help them as much as I wanted to, because I know the feeling of being in that situation and feeling helpless and the only thing you want is peace and having a chance for a good future and to make your family proud of you. Today I am happy that I left everything and went to Europe because it was a dream some years ago. Now I am here at the same place, supporting the people who are fleeing from war and wanting the same thing that I wanted some years ago.

The most important moment for me in this journey was when I saw the situation of the refugees at the port. Especially the sick children, eating only bread at the port. It was a hard way to Sweden but I am happy now and I am living a life that I just could dream about when I was in Afghanistan. There are so many babies and children on their way to a better future too!

Finding solutions means to accept that the border does not exist any more in reality and that all energy and resources should be used to support the refugees instead of closing the borders. Talking about the numbers is just the one side. Behind every number we find a human, we find a life with hope and fear and desperation. Our work in this harsh and inhumane situation seems like not even a drop on a hot stone, but is on the other hand more important than ever. Many volunteers try to face this difficult situation. But this will not really change it or solve it. It is not the responsibility of Lesbos, nor of Greece to work on it. It is a European issue. And finding solutions means to accept that the border does not exist any more in reality and that all energy and resources should be used to support the refugees instead of closing the borders. ★

✖ PORT W2EU.INFO



➤ MARIAM

»THEY TRIED TO
PROCESS WHAT THEY
HAD EXPERIENCED
THROUGH PAINTING.«

During the camp, we did a painting activity with the kids at the harbour, in order to defuse the situation a bit and to allow them to process their experiences through painting. The goal was to distract them and for them to relax. They loved it and asked if we were coming back the next day. We went back every day and played with them. We gave them paper, street chalk and lots of pens, and they played with them well. At first they hesitated to join in, but after a while all the kids around us came and painted. What really touched me were the pictures they drew, of ships and police and water, and what they said about their experience. That was special. They tried to process what they had experienced through painting. One little girl, maybe four years old, asked me to draw a ship with police and people for her, and she told me, the police were bad, they tried to beat us. Her name is Kadishe, the same name as my sister, that is why I remember her. She talked a lot. ★

HARBOUR- DRAWING

Going to the harbour or to Moria, equipped with paper and pens to paint with the children. For a few moments, some of them forget their difficult situation, others paint it. It's fun and works without language.



✖ PORT MITILINI PAINTING WITH KIDS

► YASIN

»THE CHILDREN ARE AWARE OF THE SITUATION AND IT IS PAINFUL TO SEE THAT THEY UNDERSTAND HOW DIFFICULT THE SITUATION IS.«

It is always hard to see people in difficult situations, especially in the harbour or in other refugee camps, where they don't even have a roof over their head. The situation is very, very difficult, but it's especially hard to see the children who ask if they can trust us: "Daddy, daddy, can I ask him something? May I give him something? May I tell him this?" The children are aware of the situation and it is painful to see that they understand how difficult the situation is. They cannot be children, and something is being taken away from their childhood. That is a real shame, and I give everything I can to make them happy and not worry about their situation. I always try to advise the adults, so they are not so worried and have more time for their children and their life. So that they don't just plan for today and tomorrow, but for next month and the future, which will be better. To think about those moments. ★



MOJTABA

I saw a 10 or 11 old boy, he had come by himself and I just wondered how he managed to come all the way here, a minor, a 10, 11 year-old by himself. Now he is in Moria. I saw him, he went by himself all the way. I did not know if we can help him or not. He was Afghan. I talked with him when he was in the port. He was totally OK, he was not stressed at all. I felt stressed for him.



✖ NEW ARRIVALS NOT
SURE IF THEY SHOULD TAKE THE LIFEJACKETS OFF

SHUTTLE II

One of the most important activities for many of us during the summer of 2015 was to drive the new arrivals – either to the harbour, or to the nearest official registration point. We met them on every street. Having just climbed out of the boats, they started walking to be registered, often for many kilometres. Children, women, old people. Often still in their wet clothes, without having had anything to drink or eat. We never managed to pick them all up, so we took women, children and old people first, and then did another trip, and another, and another.

➤ MARION

» **I HAVE A LOT OF
MEMORIES OF DRIVING
IN THE MORNING, MIXED
FEELINGS ABOUT
THAT..**«

I especially remember women, whom I placed on the front seat next to me, some of them very strong and who said straight away, "I am faster than my brother, because I have always been faster than my brother. I said to my brother, I'll be in Germany before you are." They were going full speed. That really touched me.

Then there is this moment of shock, entering the harbour, that's the other side of it. What I really liked was last night at the concert – again connected to the driving – where many recognised the red van. So the red van is there again doing this concert, and they asked, "What sort of a group are you really? What do you do? Can we join you?" That happened a lot yesterday and I really liked it. ★

✕ EFTALOU



DORO

**»I'M NOT SURE WHAT I
REMEMBER ESPECIALLY,
BUT THE DRIVING WAS
REALLY IMPORTANT.«**

In the beginning, people were quite suspicious, and it was a strange encounter, and then the faces lit up, and the hearts. That was beautiful. To meet people with whom I can't talk, and still feel that it touches you, in the smile or in the good-bye. These form of encounters are what I liked best and what touches me. Being in Kara Tepe yesterday really disturbed me, because the conditions there are so horrible. But even there, there was feeling of meeting each other and taking each other seriously, that made a difference. Right now I am feeling the same way. I am in a mood where I could just start crying, because it touches me and makes me sad. But there is also this energy, like: carry on, it's right, it's all good. There is a lot that touches and moves me. That is what drives me on because I feel that the people take that with them, and so do I. ★

✕ KARA TEPE

KARA TEPE

Depending on the boats coming every day from Turkey, Kara Tepe camp houses an average of 1,000 to 2,000, mainly Syrian, refugees. The stay in this transit camp is supposed to last 2 or 3 days. Our findings on site, however, reveal that some refugees (in July) would have waited for their papers for up to 11 days.



DORO AND ZUHEIR

» **DESPITE NOT HAVING A COMMON LANGUAGE, WE HAVE BECOME FRIENDS.** «

We meet Zuheir and Mohammed on the footpath outside the “Syrian Camp” Kara Tepe. All they own is the shirt on their back and they have run out of money. Mohammed (three years old) is totally frightened, he doesn’t want to speak to us, cries a lot and clings to his father. Zuheir is exhausted, desperate and helpless. His wife and their other children were separated from him during the crossing from Turkey and were captured by the Turkish coast guard. He hasn’t had contact with them because his wife doesn’t have a phone – he has the only one. His feet hurt, they were injured during a bomb blast in Syria. Nevertheless, he has walked several kilometres without proper shoes.

We talk to them and bring another blanket for Mohammed, as well as some food. In the following days we meet every day and start to build trust. When one day, we can’t find them at their usual spot – a footpath on a busy road – we are sad. Without a translator, it is impossible to make proper appointments. Shortly after, Mohammed finds us among hundreds of people. He recognises our car and waves. He is getting calmer and happier every day. Despite not having a common language, we have become friends. We exchange phone numbers and promise to contact each other in Germany. We watch them board the ferry with mixed feelings – sad to see them go, but happy to know they are one step further along their way. Two weeks later, my phone rings and a woman from Berlin tells me she has Zuheir with her, who said: “Germany – friend, please ring”. We are overwhelmed with joy that the two have made it. Despite his foot injury, Zuheir managed to carry Mohammed on his shoulders for several hundred kilometres on the ‘march of hope’ through the Balkans to Berlin. Due to support in Berlin, they have found a place to live. We met again a month after being back and were very happy to see Mohammed laugh and play. He was starting to process the difficult times. They are in touch with the rest of family, the eldest daughter is also in Berlin. One of many stories we have taken with us, an encounter that will stay with us. ★

✕ FIRST MEETING IN MITILINI AND AGAIN IN GERMANY







OF A SOMALIAN WOMAN THAT DIED IN MORIA WAITING TO GET REGISTERED.

► DONATE COFFINS

1357 DEATHS IN THE AEGEAN SEA IN 2016 OFFICIALLY.

“Donate coffins!” says a friend on Lesbos when we tell him that we have just been given 25 wheelchairs in Hamburg to take to Lesbos. Every day people drown, mostly small children and women. Every day people go missing. That is the reality of the ‘hotspot’ Lesbos. While the ‘hotspot’ was opened with a pompous ceremony, including an official visit to the Moria detention centre, the survivors of the boat accidents had to wait in a queue for several days and nights to be registered. Without the support of activists, they would have had nothing to eat. Many collapsed from exhaustion during the wait. Our Europe doesn’t need borders, instead it has open doors and people can arrive on regular ferries, like everyone else. This is what even the mayor of Lesbos demanded publicly in 2015. They would be registered as refugee seekers, they could stay in a hotel if they have enough money and eat in a restaurant and support the local economy. Those who don’t have money, could stay in welcome centres. FCK HTSPT ★



»REUNION«

What impressed me was that despite the thousands of refugees on Lesbos, it didn't blow up. All these people managed to somehow make it work, under horrendous conditions, with hardly any supplies. And I was impressed by us being able to do something, or to clarify the situation, for every person we met. That was wonderful, that was fantastic.

I was surprised to see so many Kurds, I would have never thought that I would have to talk all the time. Another thing that I found impressing was one day when we picked up people on the beach who had just arrived. They stood on the road and it was a Kurdish family with a daughter, who fell in love with me, and I fell in love with her. We gave them a lift, she was thirsty and wanted to drink, and seemed to be somehow under shock. Then I saw her the next day when we had the concert, she was dancing all the time and when she saw me, she ran to me and didn't want to leave me. She cried when her parents wanted to take her back. She just didn't want to leave us. That is one of the things I will never forget. I think we did really well, and we have become so good that we can resolve most things better than any of the organisations that are all over the place now and don't really do anything. ★

★ POLICE BRUTALITY IN MORIA
TOWARDS PEOPLE WAITING FOR
HOURS TO GET REGISTERED



FARID

»WAR HAPPENS STILL AND THE PEOPLE HAVE TO COME.«

I was here myself 7 years ago. No, I never would have thought so many people would arrive here. But war happens still and the people have to come. The problems have become more and therefore more people flee. If they would not have problems in their home countries, they would not come. I am happy that I returned back from Sweden to here and help as much as I can. Yesterday we were in Moria as a group and helped and talked with the people and all of a sudden I saw a friend of mine from Afghanistan with his father and his grandmother. We hadn't seen each other maybe 10 years. He said, "you are Farid?" I said, "how do you know?" He said he has seen photos of me and knew I am in Europe but he was not sure, if it was me. He knows my family. When I came here I didn't know anybody, but here I met people I knew. ★

✕ MORIA: WOMEN WAIT TO GET REGISTERED
PORT MITILINI WAITING TO GO TO ATHENS



RENOVATIO

The most touching things are the people camping here, all of you...you are always in the streets, sleep only two hours, support these people all the time. If all people would be like you there would not be any problem on this island. That is what hurts me and touches me, and that what I love. What I don't like are the people in Mitilini, the shops that, although they make money with the refugees – they actually get their food from the money the refugees give them – they offend and insult them. This hurts me much. ★



✕ RENOVATIO

PIKPA PARTY

One of the Syrian boys, maybe 12 years old, made hip-hop music about his country, his journey. In the year 2012 activists had set up an accommodation structure based on solidarity in PIKPA, a former community summer camp for teenagers. Since then, PIKPA has established itself as an alternative accommodation for vulnerable people, and it has become indispensable simply due to the high demand. The wooden huts have been complemented by large, heatable tents. Many of the brick buildings and the sanitary blocks have been renovated with the help of donations. The centre that is run entirely by activists has a capacity of 150.



Back in 2014, when arrival numbers were low, the mayor of Lesbos wanted to shut down the open welcome centre PIKPA that was run by activists from the network “village of all together”. As arrival numbers shot up, he proposed building additional reception centres in the north, as well as transferring refugees directly from there to Athens, in order to avoid the overcrowding and subsequent escalation in Moria and Tara Kepe. Generally, local politicians don’t act but rather react to new developments.

Last night w2eu and JOG hosted a welcome party in the self-organized space PIKPA to welcome and exchange experiences with the refugees staying there. Over the last three year this has become a PIKPA – w2eu – JOG tradition. The musicians Leon, Leo and Max travelled from Berlin and Istanbul to be part of the JOURNEY BACK TO THE BORDER and again managed for everybody to forget their sorrows for a few hours by singing and dancing. The solidarity kitchen ALLOS ANTHROPOS had cooked all day – food cooked with love and solidarity.

The groups (Village of all together, w2eu, JOG and Christian peacemakers), as well as the refugees and especially the children, connected well. We played and painted and at night we all danced together. After some music we had an open mike for everyone to contribute. One of the Syrian boys, maybe 12 years old, made hip-hop music about his country, his journey through Turkey and Greece. He also sang about being a 12 year-old boy living with his parents and all the problems, for example turning the stereo up too loud or not cleaning his room. ★

MUSIC

Some of us gave concerts in the harbour, in PIKPA, in Kara Tepe, at the camp – some with, some without amps, sometimes with two singers and guitars, sometimes with a rapper, sometimes everyone together.



✖ NIGHT CONCERTS
IN THE PORT OF MITILINI



MAX

» **WHOEVER SAYS
'WELCOME TO EUROPE'
ALSO HAS TO SAY: 'IT'S
COOL THAT YOU'RE
HERE, LET'S
CELEBRATE'.** «



We played a lot of music and one of the moments I can remember well was when we set up the sound system in the harbour, and everyone started to dance. Depending on whether the music was slow or fast, people got more or less into it. There was a delicate balance to strike with playing Syrian or Afghan music, depending on whether the people were from Syria or Afghanistan. We had to play exactly equal amounts, otherwise they would beat us up. That showed me what emotions music can set free, especially when people are in extraordinary situations and want to let go of some energy. Otherwise, I just enjoyed the people, like one time when I sat down to play guitar and it didn't really matter what I played, they just sang and we handed them the guitar. When we left, they just continued to sing and clap to their own songs. That's what I enjoyed most. Playing music regularly in the harbour, so that we recognised the people and the same people came back and said, "play that song from yesterday." That we didn't just do all the existential, humanitarian things – eating, sleeping, moving on – but also made sure that they have a good time and can let off some energy. That's what I liked best every year. I felt that people were in a bad state, but it was summer and most of them wanted to take the Balkans route to get to Germany or northern Europe. So the situation was foreseeable, you can handle being in the shit when you know it's for two weeks. At that stage, they were just being waved through at the borders, and I thought it's cool if they have some nice memories of those two weeks. That is why my focus is to help people in this way, that is the best way for me to communicate. Music is a language that everyone understands, you always find people to join in, no matter where and when. It transfers a certain energy that everyone understands, that's why I find it really important. I play music all the time, but for the refugees it's a special moment and if we call ourselves 'Welcome to Europe' then we can't sit there and say, "hey, everything is fucked, here are all the laws and this is what you have to do". OK, this is important information, but whoever says "welcome to Europe" also has to say, "it's cool that you're here, let's celebrate." We have to remain positive, and music is the right tool for that. ★

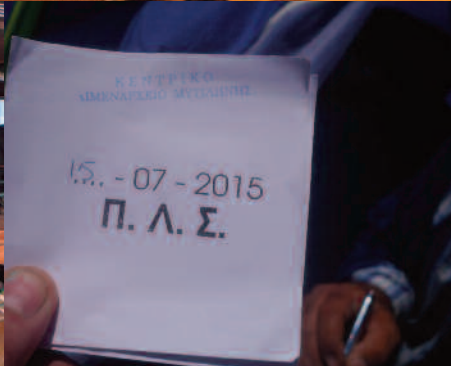
ROLA

»WHAT AFFECTED ME WAS SEEING WOMEN WITH CHILDREN ALONE ON THE ROAD.«

I felt helpless and I still can't cope with it. Having to leave them without any help was hard for me. But then there is the thankfulness in the eyes of these people, and some express that – like the last ones we picked up yesterday, who said, “you are angels.” I just thought, no we're not. But maybe we are. They said, “right now you are like angels to us.” That's what makes it all worthwhile. ★



★ PORT MITILINI – MOTHERS FIND ALWAYS
WAYS TO LET THEIR KIDS SLEEP COMFORTABLE



✖ PORT MITILINI –
ENDLESS WAITING AT THE PORT

► EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL

Margret Geitner/Marily Stroux

TEXTS

participants of the camp 2015 Back to the border, in Lesvos

PHOTOS

Abdollah, Salinia, Marily and Doro. JOG & w2eu

TRANSLATIONS

Marcus

LAYOUT

Christian

YOUTH WITHOUT BORDERS

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Webguide for Refugees and Migrants | 📄 <http://w2eu.info>

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Our thanks go to all who supported us with money that we used for: blankets, water, shoes, printing costs, sim cards, food and wheelchairs and also for supporting the solidarity kitchens, No-border Lesvos NBK, O allos anthropos and PIKPA kitchen. Cafe Libertad Kollektiv Hamburg, Reha-Service Loose, Hamburg-Stellingen, Herr Vincenzo Luongo. für die 25 Rollstühle, Aegean Air, Sisterhood St. Pauli Heike. Hänsel, Nina Lorenz, Heike Müller, Reinhold-Keppler Stiftung Diakonie RWL Katja Stürken, Veronika Zinn, Heike Meinen, Medico International for the printing of the welcome to Greece guides, Tina Weggler, Ioanna Zacharaki-Eleftheriadis Diakonie Sollingen, and all other supporters.

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✖ PORT MITILINI: GOODBYE ACTION!



**OUR EUROPE
DOESN'T NEED
BORDERS,
INSTEAD IT HAS
OPEN DOORS
AND PEOPLE
CAN ARRIVE
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LIKE EVERYONE
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