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Imagine: the Journey

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When we first were told to go to the System&Generation office to play a board game on refugees, I did not know what to expect. Some days before we were given the rules and some basic instructions related to "The Journey" but, as a matter of fact, I could not understand how a social issue could have been transformed into a social activity.

"The Journey" is a board game where each player embodies a refugee escaping from a country, and stuck (at the moment) in Turkey but willing to travel to Europe. The aim of the game is to be the first one to exit Turkey, and in order to do that you need to collect money and information from traffickers related to when and for what amount of money you will get your passage to Greece. The initial playing phase started slowly,

but after some minutes to get the logic of the game, it continued smoothly.

My personal experience with "The Journey – Istanbul" has been very positive not just for the game itself, but especially for what happens around it between the players. We started to talk about running from the police, organizing your exit program and collecting money. I had the chance to play with good friends (other volunteers), and what impressed me is that I started to feel as a lost and homeless person without a certain perspective for my future while the days - in the game - where going through.

This feeling, even when felt in a safe environment with

the warm company of good friends, can be a good starting point for educating new and old generations to be able to look beyond, and to realise that the other side of the moon is often darker than what we think.

For these reasons, this game can be a useful instrument to spread and raise awareness around a thematic that in Turkey as well as in all Europe is nowadays one of the main political and social issues.

In conclusion, I personally believe that "The Journey" can be a way to bring students to start thinking about migration from a new perspective, the one of a refugee



Volunteering @ClockTower

Clock Tower is one of those places where my team and I have to attend. We go there twice a week. Usually we serve tea. On Saturdays working there becomes more interesting, because we have cultural lunch that we serve to the customers. It's an honour for us to share a little part of our countries' culture with them. We can easily notice their happy and thankful faces when we give them our traditional cookies.

For me, as a volunteer this is my favourite place to work at. The

main reason is that at this place I can communicate with customers. When I serve them, they start to talk with me, because they've noticed that I'm a new member of this place. This is the best way to learn Turkish language. They're always trying to get more and more information from you. In the beginning it was hard to understand them, but time by time it's getting easier, so I can say that the customers of the Clock Tower are my teachers. Clock Tower is not a place

where I have only to work, I can have an interesting conversation with people while having a cup of tea. I want to say a few words about the staff, who works there. They easily made friend with all of us from the first day. There is a language barrier but this doesn't make us uncomfortable, we can understand each other. I could not imagine if working at the café will be so interesting and enjoyable.

Meeting of Generations: Elderly House

What do you know about youth? They - energetic, full of ideas, enthusiastic, hurry to live, but at the same time they think that they have whole life ahead...And who do you think elderly people are? Wise persons, but tired of life. They have poor health mostly, but rich "baggage" of stories...But these are just supposition and we always have just one really good way to check is it true and to break stereotypes - to communicate with each other, to have meeting of generations to build bridges between us.

We are all the same, but different. And it's our choice - to stay young or to become old.

Robert Browning said: "It's not how old you are, it's how you are old". He is right. In my life I met a lot of elderly people who filled me with positive energy and showed how to feel life in beautiful way. And some of these people we met in Keçiören Elderly House during our first month of the project "NESIL Fest".

Keçiören Huzurevi is first thing that comes to mind, when you start to think about elderly care. All kinds of physical, psychological and social needs of elderly people are provided there by professional and kind staff. But it's always nice and useful for them to communicate with somebody who is out of system, especially with young people.

Combine nursery houses with nursery school. Bring very old and very young together, they interested one another", - John Cage said.

We are not from nursery school, but we are volunteers, full of energy and love. We would like to share moments of our life with elderly people. That's why we are happy to visit Keçiören Elderly House.

Despite the language barrier we found ways how to communicate with elderly people there, how to express our feelings and how to understand at least some of their stories. We smile, we use body language and basic skills of Turkish.

We have dinner with new friends. We drink tea and play tavla with smiling grandfathers and knit colorful scarfs and go for a walk with friendly granies. We really enjoy our time in Keçiören Elderly House. It's good opportunity to learn to understand elderly people and to see that there is no much difference between us.

Old ladies from Keçiören Elderly House are womanly and charming. They are drawn to beauty and always notice, that you have "güzel" necklace, bracelet or something else. Old men can look little bit serious at first sight, but then they open their soul and start to smile.

Don't read thick books about history, just communicate with living witnesses of historical events.

Don't be shy to ask them for advices, don't be afraid that old people would never understand you. Make a first step towards another generation and you will see new facets of life.

Meeting of Generations: Youth Center

Education is very important, mainly for children who were forced to leave their home. At the same time, it is an important way of integration, which is a part of political, economical, social and cultural life of every life in the asylum country. Every child has the right to have quality education but frequently, they have to deal with many problems. Many schools do not have good, skilled and competent teacher. In that case, there are volunteers to help.

To be able to help refugees' children in Keçiören Youth center was very important for me because they need help, they need to know, that somebody is there for them, they need to be loved and cherished. The most of the children are from Syria so there is a language barrier. Those beautiful sparkling eyes. Those children are so genuinely happy and glad. They are looking forward to new games and new experiences every day.

But also, they are giving me the feeling of gratitude. They always make my day better.

Their mother tongue is not Turkish language therefore we use the body language. Although, there is always somebody who can help us with the translating. It is really interesting experience, mostly because all of us are trying to understand Turkish language and learn it really quick. What I love the most about this experience is that feeling when you step in the class and you see all of those beautiful sparkling eyes. Those children are so genuinely happy and glad. They are looking forward to new games and new experiences every day. But also, they are giving me the feeling of gratitude. They always make my day better.



English Conversation Club in Kecioren

Once a week, we the volunteers and the youngsters, mostly ones that are living in our municipality - Kecioren gather in the Youth Center for the English Conversation Club. The conversation club is 2h activity in which we speak, play games and get to know each other while using and practising the English language. The people that join us at this activity are very different. Some of them have studied abroad and they speak fluent English, most of them are students in Ankara, without having the opportunity to practise English talking in the daily life.

We have few members that barely understand, but their wish to learn English and to hang out is so big, so they use google translator or their friends translate to them what are we speaking about. Usually, we start with introducing ourselves, because every week we have new members coming. Then we continue with games such as - "if you go on a desert island, and you can take only 3 objects with you, which would they be?" Etc. Sometimes we have a free conversation describing our day or what are we going to do in the following days.