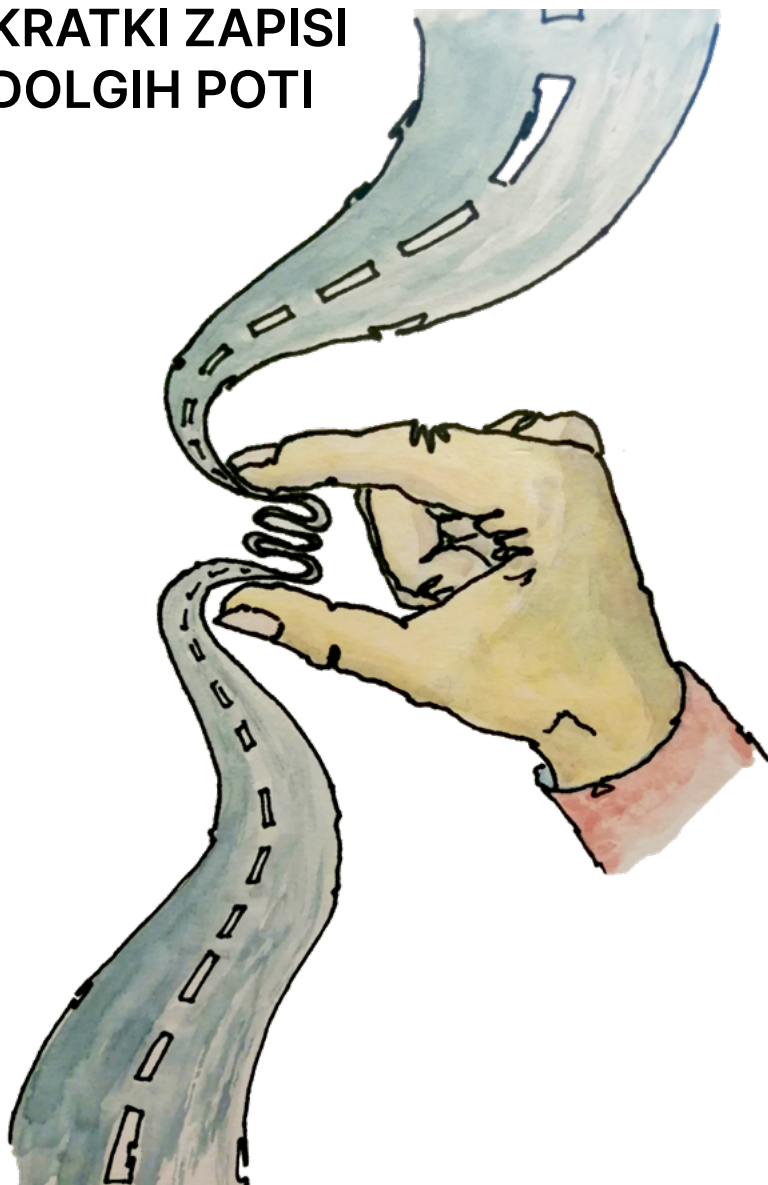
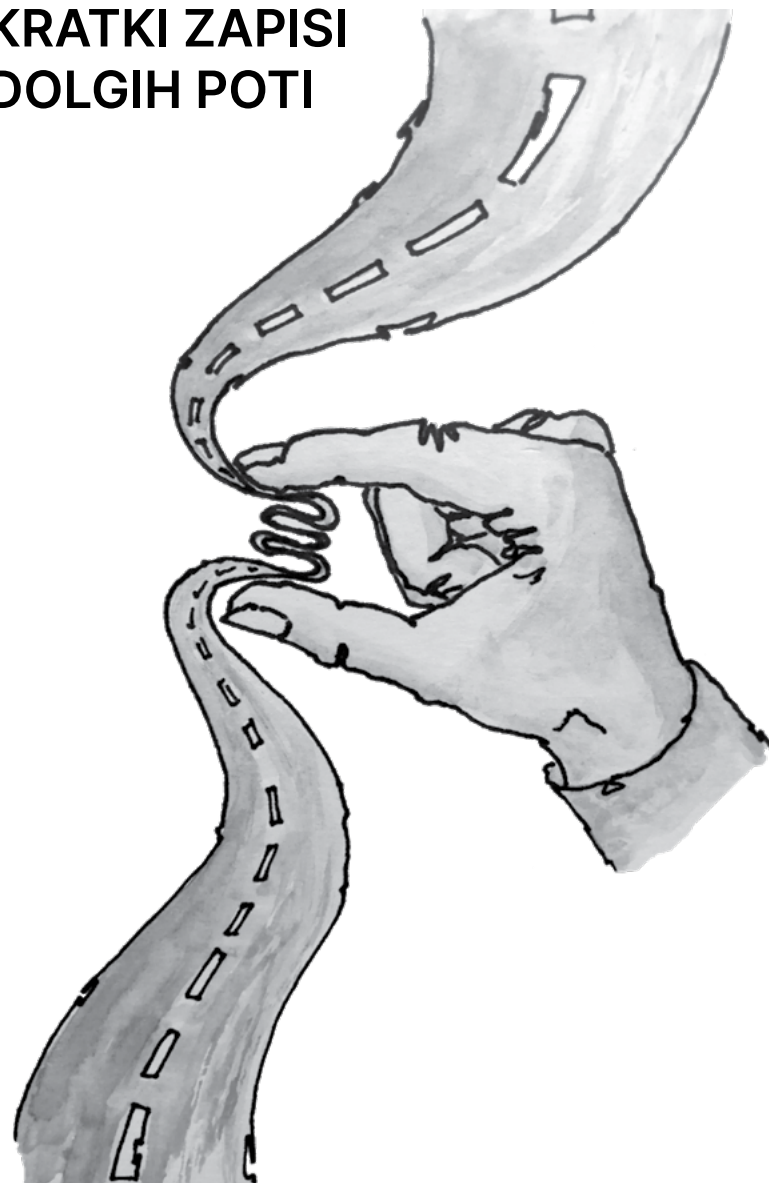


KRATKI ZAPISI DOLGIH POTI



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Avtorji: Tija Jerkič, Veronika Vižintin, Ajda Hedžet, Baran Oktay, Erazem Rihtar, Eva Pondrk in Sirak Yohannes

Kratki zapisi dolgih poti

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TEMELJNA NAČELA RDEČEGA KRIŽA

Temeljna načela so glavno vodilo humanitarnih dejavnosti Rdečega križa Slovenije, saj odražajo vrednote in veščine, potrebne za udejanjanje humanitarnega poslanstva Mednarodnega gibanja Rdečega križa in Rdečega polmeseca - "preprečevati in lajšati človekovo trpljenje ter ščititi njegovo dostojanstvo v vseh okoliščinah".

HUMANOST

Mednarodno gibanje Rdečega križa in Rdečega polmeseca, ustanovljeno v želji pomagati vsem ranjencem na bojiščih, si prizadeva s svojo dejavnostjo na mednarodni in državni ravni preprečevati in lajšati človeško trpljenje, kjerkoli se pojavi. Njegov namen je varovati življenje in zdravje ter zagotoviti spoštovanje človeške osebnosti. Spodbuja medsebojno razumevanje, prijateljstvo, sodelovanje in trajen mir med vsemi narodi.

NEPRISTRANOST

Gibanje Rdečega križa in Rdečega polmeseca ne razlikuje ljudi po narodnosti, rasi, veri, družbenem položaju ali političnem prepričanju. Prizadeva si lajšati trpljenje in nudi pomoč tistim, ki jo najbolj potrebujejo.

NEVTRALNOST

Da bi ohranilo zaupanje vseh, se Gibanje Rdečega križa in Rdečega polmeseca ne sme nikdar postaviti na nobeno od sovražnih strani niti se vključevati v politična, rasna, verska ali ideološka nasprotja.

NEODVISNOST

Gibanje Rdečega križa in Rdečega polmeseca je neodvisno. Nacionalna društva morajo, kljub temu da v skladu z zakonodajo pomagajo človekoljubnim službam svojih vlad, vedno ohraniti svojo samostojnost ter ukrepati po načelih Gibanja.

PROSTOVOLJNOST

Gibanje Rdečega križa in Rdečega polmeseca je prostovoljno in nepridobitno.

ENOTNOST

V vsaki državi je lahko eno društvo Rdečega križa ali Rdečega polmeseca, ki je odprto za vse. S svojo človekoljubno dejavnostjo deluje na celotnem ozemlju države.

UNIVERZALNOST

Mednarodno gibanje Rdečega križa in Rdečega polmeseca je razširjeno po vsem svetu. Vsa njegova društva so enakovredna, delijo si odgovornosti in dolžnosti ter si pomagajo.

Doživljanje prepletenosti različnih kultur je vse pogostejši pojav našega vsakdanjika, kar lahko med drugim pripišemo večji dostopnosti potovanj, informacij na medmrežju kot tudi migracijam.

Mešanje kultur kot koncept ne predstavlja nič novega, saj sta pojma migracije in kulturne izmenjave inherentno povezana s celotno človeško kulturo. Posledice teh fenomenov so lahko medkulturni nesporazumi, ki nastanejo ob trku različnih kultur, njihov rezultat pa se izraža v smeħu, konfliktu, uporabi ali pa zanimanju oziroma motivaciji za spoznavanje različnih kultur, s katerimi si delimo ta planet.

Cilj projekta #MI2 Rdečega križa Slovenije, financiranega s strani Evropske solidarnostne enote, v okviru katerega je nastala knjižica *Kratki zapisi dolgih poti*, je ravno slednji. Zaskrbljujoča klima naraščajoče ksenofobije je v nasprotju s poslanstvom in načeli Gibanja Rdečega križa in Rdečega polmeseca, ki stremijo k humanosti, nepristranskosti in nevtralnosti, s katerimi želijo/-mo ustvariti sprejemajočo družbo, ki na razlike reagira z zanimanjem in ne z odporom. Poleg tega je cilj projekta ponuditi vpogled v lokalne kulture in načine življenja znotraj Slovenije ljudem, ki so se nam pridružili za krajši ali daljši čas.

Knjižico zaključuje kviz, namenjen individualni uporabi ali uporabi na delavnicah na temo medkulturnosti. Cilj kviza je na zabaven način spoznavati različne kulture in ustvariti medkulturni dialog, ki je prvi korak do medsebojnega sprejemanja in solidarnosti.

Intertwining of different cultures is becoming a more and more common part of our daily lives. Among other things, this can be attributed to greater ease to travel and share information on the internet, and also, to migration.

Interculturalism is not a new concept, since the notions of migration and cultural exchange are inherently human. As a result, intercultural misunderstandings may arise from the clash of different cultures and these clashes can bring forth laughter, conflict, and reluctance, or even spark one's interest and motivation to get to know different cultures across the world.

The goal of the #MI2 project of the Slovenian Red Cross, funded by the European Solidarity Corps, which enabled the creation of the booklet "Short Records of Long Journeys" is precisely the latter. The worrisome climate of growing xenophobia is contrary to the mission and principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which is about promoting humanity, impartiality, and neutrality in order to create an inclusive society that responds to differences with interest rather than resistance. In addition, the project aims to offer an insight into local cultures and ways of life in Slovenia to people who are staying here, be it for a shorter or a longer period of time.

The booklet concludes with a quiz for personal use or for use in workshops on the topic of multiculturalism. The aim of the quiz is to learn about different cultures in a fun way and create intercultural dialogue, which is the first step towards mutual acceptance and solidarity.

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PREGOVOR

Knjiga pred vami je rezultat številnih pogovorov, v katerih so ljudje, ki so zapustili svoje države z namenom iskanja novega življenja drugod, in ljudje, s katerimi prihajajo v stike v svojih novih državah, z nami delili svoje izkušnje in zgodbe. Obstaja veliko vzrokov, da nekdo zapusti svojo državo. Prebivalci Slovenije zelo radi potujemo; bodisi zaradi dopusta, dela, priravnitva, študija ali ljubezni. Vzroki, kot so vojna, oborožen spopad, pomanjkanje svobode govora, pripadnost preganjani etnični skupini, lakota, okoljski problemi ali drugi nesrečni spleti okoliščin, pa lahko posameznika prisilijo, da zapusti svojo državo in se poda na novo pot. To je pot proti boljšemu življenju in pot, ki se velikokrat konča v neznani družbi ali kulturi. Nenazadnje so te poti pod močnim vplivom nepredvidljivosti in migracijskih politik 21. stoletja, kjer redko obstajajo možnosti o informiranih odločitvah.

Zaradi vseh zgoraj naštetih razlogov ta knjižica naslavlja dve skupini: ljudi, ki pripadajo raznolikim družbam t. i. ciljnih ali tranzitnih držav, kot tudi ljudi v gibanju. Želimo, da knjižica ponudi vpogled v raznolikosti in podobnosti lokalni populaciji Slovenije ter v enaki meri ljudem (v gibanju), ki razmišljajo o tem, da bi v Sloveniji preživeli krajše ali daljše obdobje svojega življenja. Menimo, da je glavna vrednost za prvo skupino boljši vpogled v kulturo, izkušnje in razmišljanja ljudi, ki so se nam pridružili začasno ali stalno, ter unikaten vpogled v lastno kulturo, saj so nam sogovorniki v mnogih pogledih nastavili ogledalo. Poleg tega upamo, da knjižica v enakovredni meri nudi drugi skupini – nedavnim prišlekom in priseljencem – spoznavanje družbe in kulture v Sloveniji. Končni namen zbranih zgodb in anekdot je združiti ljudi in spodbujati medkulturno razumevanje.

V tem kontekstu razumemo tudi pojem integracije – kot dinamičen dvostranski proces medsebojnega prilagajanja množstva akterjev, ki zahteva obojestransko vključevanje vseh članov družbe v ekonomsko, politično, družbeno in kulturno življenje z namenom omogočanja učinkovitega sodelovanja in spodbujanja vključenosti ter pripadnosti na vseh ravneh (OSCE, 2012). Veliko kulturnih šokov se zgodi ravno na poti do vključevanja v novo okolje in soočanja z novo kulturo, sploh če se kulturi med seboj zelo razlikujeta, saj lahko osebne kulturne vrednote v novem kulturnem kontekstu s seboj prinesejo na eni strani nesporazume, ki so rezultat določenih pričakovanj in predstav ali običajev, ter na drugi strani priložnost medkulturnega bogatenja.

Med letoma 1995 in 2010 je največje število migrantov in prosilcev za azil prihajalo k nam iz držav, ki so nastale na območju nekdanje Jugoslavije (Vlada Republike Slovenije, 2019, p. 28). Med letoma 2004 in 2015 se je raven iskanja mednarodne pomoči izrazito zmanjšala, od leta 2010 pa je napačil nov 'migracijski trend', v katerem so jasno vidne spremembe globalnih kriznih žarišč (prav tam).

Leto 2015, ki ga je zaznamovala t. i. "begunska kriza", je s seboj prineslo povečanje zadnjega trenda. Strukturo migracijskih tokov so prvič v moderni zgodovini predstavljali večinoma posamezniki iz neevropskih držav, in sicer kot posledica vojne v Siriji, ki je povečala porast števila prosilcev za mednarodno zaščito v Sloveniji. Ko govorimo o številkah, moramo poudariti, da se je Slovenija s podobnim primerom v preteklosti že srečala, tj. ob razpadu Jugoslavije, ki mu je sledila vojna v Bosni in Hercegovini (Doupona Horvat, 1996).

Tako je potrebno leto 2015 razumeti kot izziv v smislu kulturne zavednosti, saj je količina znanja in razumevanja kulturnih vidikov novih migracijskih dinamik precej nižja, kar se lahko v kombinaciji z vzpenjajočim se populizmom zlorabi v namene zbujanja strahu pred neznanim in "drugim", ki ga pogosto predstavljajo ravno ljudje v gibanju.

Sodelujoči v tem projektu smo razpravljali, kako je naše znanje o različnih kulturah povezano z geografsko in zgodovinsko bližino (na primer kultura držav nekdanje Jugoslavije nam je zelo blizu) ter z njihovo medijsko reprezentacijo. Očiten primer slednjega so Združene države Amerike, o katerih vemo ogromno, pa čeprav so geografsko še bolj oddaljene, kot je na primer Sirija.

Knjižica predstavlja pozitivne in negativne zgodbe ter anekdote, ki nastanejo ob stikih različnih kultur. Z nami so jih delili ljudje v gibanju in lokalni prebivalci Slovenije – mladi prostovoljci. Vse sodelujoče pa razumemo kot aktivne akterje v procesu družbene integracije.

Vsebina je razdeljena na tri dele in je zastavljena kot pot, ki jo posameznik prehodi do vključitve v novo družbo. Prvo poglavje je začetek poti, ki se pogosto začne že pred dejansko fizično potjo. Pred prvimi koraki v novo družbo mora posameznik preučiti število začetnih ovir, kot sta na primer izbira migracijske poti ali pridobitev dovoljenja za delo, preden lahko sploh začne razmišljati o začetku o konkretnih ciljih. Ta del vključuje tudi slovar nekaterih izrazov, ki so pogosto uporabljeni znotraj polja migracije. V drugem poglavju sledi del poti, ki jo zaznamuje prilagajanje na nove razmere, kar zajema med drugimi spoznavanje novih ljudi, jezika, kulture

in skupnosti. Osredotočamo se na kulturne šoke in podobnosti ter razlike med kulturami, ki so razvidne prek osebnih anekdot ter se (pre)pogosto končajo z medkulturnimi nesporazumi. Osrednja tema zadnjega poglavja je vpogled v pot sprejetosti in iskanja lastnega mesta v novi skupnosti, ki jo zaznamujejo številne stereotipne in velikokrat napačne predstave s strani lokalnega prebivalstva in migrantov ter se lahko končajo s smehom ali konfliktom.

Bralec lahko izbere katerokoli anekdoto v knjižici, ki ga pritegne, in jo prebere v kateremkoli zaporedju. Poglavjem sledi tudi kviz, ki združuje informacije iz knjižice in zanimiva kulturna dejstva, ki so jih z nami delili sodelovniki in kažejo na kulturno pestrost naše globalne družbe.

METODOLOGIJA

Knjižica predstavlja delo mladih prostovoljcev: Ajde, Barana, Erazma, Eve, Tije, Veronike in Siraka. Večina nas je prostovoljno sodelovala pri projektu Rdečega križa Slovenije – ESIRAS¹, v katerem smo pridobili izkušnje dela s prosilci za mednarodno zaščito in begunci. Čeprav so se naše vloge znotraj projekta razlikovale, so nam vsem omogočile spoznavanje ljudi in poslušanje njihovih zgodb, iz katerih smo se ogromno naučili. Na kratko povzeto: ta izkušnja je v nas vzbudila zavedanje, da so razlike v kulturnih ozadih le še en mejnik do medsebojnega razumevanja. Iz istih kulturnih razlik pa so nastale tako zanimive zgodbe kot tudi sivi lasje.

Projekt "#MI2" je zrasel iz naših skupnih izkušenj s ciljem spodbujanja medkulturnega razumevanja in zavedanja o tem, da nas razlike, kljub temu da lahko povzročajo tudi nerazumevanje in odpor, bogatijo, kar predstavlja temelj do uspešne družbene integracije. S tem razlogom smo se odločili dodati kamenček v mozaik izziva integracije raznolikih družb z oblikovanjem zbirke vpogledov posameznikov, vključenih v ta proces.

Zgodbe smo zbirali v kombinaciji fokusnih skupin in intervjujev. Po marcu 2020 večinoma v obliki intervjujev prek Zooma in Whatsapp, saj je bila izvedba intervjujev v živo rizična zaradi pandemije COVID-19, ki se je

¹ ESIRAS projekt je podpiral prosilce za azil in osebe s statusom begunca pri izboljšanju pogojev njihove zaposljivosti in socialne integracije. Projekt je financirala EU v sodelovanju z Mednarodno federacijo društev Rdečega križa in Rdečega polmeseca (MFERK oz. IFRC). Aktivnosti je izvajalo 8 nacionalnih društev RK (Avstrije, Cipra, Danske, Francije, Italije, Španije, VB in Slovenije).

začela v tem času. Pogovori so se odvijali v obliki polstrukturiranih intervjujev, z nekaj vnaprej pripravljenimi opornimi točkami v obliki odprtih vprašanj, saj smo želeli od sogovornikov dobiti odgovore v obliki pripovedi. Naši sogovorniki predstavljajo kategorijo "ljudi v gibanju", saj se zavestno nismo želeli omejiti na specifično kategorijo migrantov. Pogovarjali smo se s 23 pripadniki migrantske populacije iz Bangladeša, Demokratične republike Kongo, Eritreje, Irana, Palestine, Sirije, Turčije (Kurdov), Jordanije, Venezuele in Tunizije. Med njimi je bilo 17 moških in šest žensk oziroma sedem prosilcev za azil, 11 oseb s statusom mednarodne zaščite in pet sogovornikov, ki so prišli v Slovenijo na drug način. Poleg kategorije "ljudi v gibanju" smo se pogovarjali tudi s sedmimi prostovoljci Rdečega križa Slovenije z izkušnjami pri delu z migranti. Zaradi varnostnih razlogov in anonimnosti smo se odločili, da podatka o številu sogovornikov iz posamičnih držav ne bomo razkrili.

Deljene zgodbe so v svoji naravi subjektivne osebne pripovedi dogodkov in z njimi povezanih čustev. Zgodbe torej niso naše, temveč so bile deljene z nami, tukaj predstavljamo nekaj delov ter pripovedi – kot glas ljudi, ki dejavno sodelujejo v procesu družbene integracije. Posledično overjanje povedanega ni bil nikoli cilj. Na tem mestu je potrebno omeniti tudi, da so naši sogovorniki posamezniki in posameznice, ki iz svoje perspektive predstavljajo svojo kulturo in življenje v novem kulturnem okolju, zaradi česar jih ne smemo dojemati kot absolutne predstavnike teh kultur – kot glas, ki bi ga slišali od vsakega, ki bi prišel iz neke države. Ko govorimo o na primer o Eritreji, se moramo zavedati, da znotraj nje živi devet uradno priznanih etničnih manjšin s svojim jezikom in načinom življenja. Ko govorimo o Siriji, je treba poudariti, da je to izjemno raznolika država in da najdemo različne načine življenja že v enem samem mestu med različnimi ulicami. S tem v mislih smo z rezultatom našega dela zelo zadovoljni in menimo, da je primer dobrega medkulturnega sodelovanja.

Zgodbe želimo prikazati na čim bolj objektivni način, kot so nam bile zaupane. Med branjem si želimo, da ima bralec v mislih cilj ustvarjanja svobodnejše in bolj vključujoče družbe. Ob branju vam želimo veliko refleksij in novih doživetij.

STOPI V MOJE ČEVLJE / POSTAVI SE V MOJO KOŽO

Pred začetkom skupnega potovanja se nam zdi pomembno, da si predstavljamo, s kakšnimi stiskami in situacijami se morajo soočiti ljudje v lastnih državah in kako se lahko te stiske odražajo v dožemanju Slovenije. Kulturo namreč lahko oblikujeta tudi nevarnost in vojna, kar pomeni, da ljudje cenijo različne stvari, kot sta občutek varnosti in svoboda izražanja.

» V Sloveniji se počutim varnega, bolj siguren pa sem tudi glede varnosti svoje žene. V Turčiji se dogaja ogromno femicidov (umorov žensk), včasih sem se bal, če je šla žena sama ven iz hiše. Tukaj naju ni strah, da se ji bo kaj podobnega zgodilo. Prav tako je velika razlika v izražanju. Lahko si kdorkoli hočeš biti in zaradi svoje etničnosti ne boš v težavah ali v zaporu. Glede tega so Slovenci dosti bolj sproščeni.

» V svoji deželi sem begunec. Predstavljajte si biti begunec v Celju. Leta 2008 je Izrael uničil naše elektrarne, kar pomeni, da od takrat nimamo elektrike. Prav tako nimamo pitne vode. Vodo moramo kupiti, za elektriko pa uporabljamo generator. Včasih imamo elektriko štiri ure v dnevu, drugič pa osem ur. Ko sem si še lahko privoščil, sem imel nekaj časa privatni generator. Imamo najdražji bencin in dizel na svetu, saj moramo plačevati ogromno različnih davkov. Kupil sem stanovanje v najdražjem in najvarnejšem delu Gaze. A konstantni strah pred zračnimi napadi je bil prehud in moral sem pobegniti. Bil sem reševalec v Palestini, tudi leta 2014 med 54-dnevno vojno. Videl sem mrtve in bombandiranje stavb. Tega si ne morete predstavljati. Poskušal sem poiskati pomoč psihiatra, ki mi ni mogel pomagati, saj je živel v enaki situaciji kot jaz.

» V Sloveniji imate varnost in svobodo. Ob enajstih zvečer lahko spreham psa in se počutim varnega. Moji starši v Venezueli živijo v hiši z ograjo, ki je visoka tri metre in ima na vrhu električno žico. To je nekaj normalnega, kar ima zelo veliko hiš. Lahko te ubijejo za tvoj avto, telefon ali pa celo čevlje. Tukajšnji občutek varnosti je zame neprecenljiv.

Premestitve in preselitve predstavljajo mednarodni instrument za nudenje zaščite beguncem, skozi katero se izraža načelo solidarnosti in pravične delitve odgovornosti. V EU predstavljajo premestitve izraz notranje solidarnosti med državami članicami, preselitve pa humanitarni ukrep in izkaz zunanje solidarnosti do držav v regijah izvora in solidarnosti z begunci.

Programi premestitve se tako izvajajo z namenom porazdelitve beguncev ali prosilcev za mednarodno zaščito med državami članicami EU, ko se ti že nahajajo na ozemlju EU, najpogosteje v obliki premestitev prosilcev za mednarodno zaščito iz Italije in Grčije (Zorko, 2020).

V tem primeru je mož naše sogovornice prišel v Slovenijo pred njo in njenimi otroci. Po prejemu mednarodne zaščite je zaprosil za združitev družine. Po odobritvi so lahko žena in otroci pridobili dovoljenje za stalno prebivanje in prišli v Slovenijo.

Najprej začnimo zgodbo na začetku poti. Zakaj in kako so naši sogovorniki prišli sem? Katere so glavne ovire, s katerimi se posameznik sooča, preden lahko postane del nove družbe? Namen tega poglavja je obrazložiti nekaj terminov, s katerimi se pogosto srečujemo, ko govorimo o mednarodni zaščiti.

NISEM SI IZBRAL SLOVENIJE, SLOVENIJA JE IZBRALA MENE

Najprej sploh nisem razmišljal, kam želim oditi. Vedel sem samo, da je Evropa varna. Informacije o tem sem dobil v medijih, ki vedno prikazujejo samo dobre lastnosti Evrope. Potoval sem od Eritreje do Etiopije, kjer sem živel eno leto. Potem sem šel v Sudan za dve leti, v Libiji sem ostal šest mesecev in nato v Italiji še dva meseca. V Italiji so mi rekli, naj zapišem tri mesta, kamor bi želel iti. Izbral sem Veliko Britanijo, Belgijo in Francijo, saj sem vedel, da so tam drugi Eritrejci in bi se lahko znašel v tisti skupnosti. Zatem so me s Flixbusom poslali v Slovenijo. O tej državi nisem vedel čisto nič; mislil sem, da grem na Slovaško. Nisem je izbral. Država me je izbrala kot del relokacijskega programa. Preden sem se vstopil v avtobus, so mi povedali, da je dobra in čista država ter da je homoseksualnost tam sprejeta. Moj brat je učitelj v Eritreji in je Slovenijo poznal ali vsaj vedel, kje je.

TAKOJ SEM SE ZALJUBILA

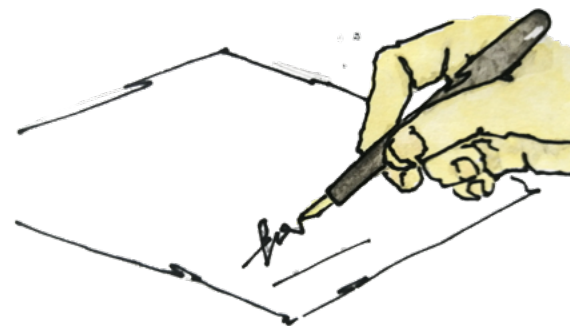
V Slovenijo sem prišla zaradi združitve družine. Predno sem prišla, sem brala knjige in iskala Slovenijo po internetu. Najprej sem videla, kako majhna je. Resnični šok sem doživela po prihodu. Vse je bilo tako lepo, čisto in zeleno. Tako sem se zaljubila v Ljubljano, še vedno sem v fazi medenih tednov.

KLEPET Z ŽIŽKOM

Nisem razmišljal, kam želim, kako bo tam, kaj bom delal. Dom sem moral zapustiti čez noč, do Slovenije sem iz Turčije prišel peš. V Sloveniji so me ujeli in mi vzeli prstne odtise. Od tistega trenutka naprej sem moral ostati v Sloveniji. Zelel sem iti v Svico, pa so me vrnili v Slovenijo zaradi Dublinske uredbe. Zdaj poskušam poiskati pozitivne stvari o svojem novem domu. Obožujem filozofijo in za Slavuja Žižka sem že slišal. Enkrat sem ga videl piti kavo v Ljubljani in bil sem zelo navdušen! Šel sem do njega in sva malo poklepotala. Še zdaj sem vesel, da sem lahko to doživel.

DELAVNICE V SLOVENIJI

Preden sem prišel v Slovenijo, sem delal v Nemčiji, Slovenijo pa sem samo obiskal, saj sem se udeležil nekaj delavnic. Potem se je nekaj zgodilo v moji državi in sem zaprosil za azil v Sloveniji. Nisem vedel ničesar o procesu pridobivanja azila in Dublinski uredbi, zaradi katere sem zdaj "obtičal" tukaj.



»Dublinska uredba ureja merila in mehanizme za določitev države članice (DČ), odgovorne za obravnavanje prošnje za mednarodno zaščito (MZ), ki jo v eni od držav članic vložijo državljani tretje države ali oseba brez državljanstva. Prošnjo obravnava ena sama DČ, in sicer tista, ki je odgovorna glede na merila Uredbe. Kadar ni mogoče določiti odgovorne DČ na osnovi teh meril, je odgovorna prva DČ, v kateri je bila vložena prošnja za MZ. Vsaka DČ si lahko pridrži pravico da ob upoštevanju pravil in zaščitnih ukrepov iz Direktive 2013/32/EU pošlje prosilca v varno tretjo državo.« (Pravno – informacijski center nevladnih organizacij, 2021) Dublinska uredba (2013), poimenovana tudi Dublin III, predstavlja osrednji mehanizem za vzpostavitev skupnega evropskega azilnega sistema. Prizadeva pa si omejiti t. i. sekundarno gibanje (t. i. asylum shopping) prosilcev za mednarodno zaščito, na katero vplivajo različni pogoji za njihov sprejem. V praksi to pomeni, da lahko prošnjo obravnava le ena država članica (Mozetič, 2016, str. 161).

Konec poletja 2015 je množičnost in moč gibanja migrantk in migrantov, ki so vsakodnevno prihajali iz Turčije na grške otoke, od tam pa po t. i. balkanski migracijski poti proti EU, močno zatresla status quo evropske migracijske politike. Velik pritisk na Evropo je namreč povzročil, da se je septembra 2015 odprl koridor za hitrejšo in varnejšo prehajanje med Grčijo in ciljnimi državami. A že 8. marca 2016 je bil koridor tudi dokončno zaprt. To pa ni pomenilo tudi zaprtja balkanske migracijske poti (Brumen in Meh, 2016).

Ljudje v tranzitu se od zaprtja koridorja zatekajo k nevarnejšim oblikam potovanja proti EU, ki pogosto vključujejo dneve potovanja pod krinko noči, skrivanje v tovornjakih ali pa skakanje na tovrstne vlake (The Border Violence Monitoring Network, 2020b).

SKRIT NA VLAKU

Skozi Turčijo, Grčijo, Makedonijo, Hrvaško, vse do Slovenije sem potoval tri leta. Nekoč sem bil skupaj s petimi ali šestimi ljudmi v vagonu vlaka, ki je prevažal koruzo. Ujeti smo bili štiri ali pet dni. Kričali smo na pomoč in tolkli po stenah vagona, da bi nas nekdo spustil ven. Mislili smo, da gre vlak v Slovenijo, bil pa je parkiran nekje v Srbiji.

RELATIVNO LAHKA POT

Potreboval sem mesec in pol, da sem prišel v Slovenijo. Prepešal sem celo pot iz Irana. Hodil sem 12 ur po meter debeli snežni odeji. Za pot sem plačal 7000 €. Vendar je bila moja pot relativno lahka v primerjavi z drugimi ljudmi. Moj prijatelj je poskušal prečkati slovensko-hrvaško mejo desetkrat, zadnjikrat se je skrival pod tovrnjakom na osi med kolesi. Igral je »gejm« (igro) in na koncu zmagal.



»GEJM« (Igra)

Najslabše spomine imam na Hrvaško. Enkrat smo hodili 12 dni. Vse, kar smo imeli, je bila vsebina naših nahrbtnikov. Hodili smo 30–35 km na dan, imeli smo ožuljene noge, nekaterim so odpadli nohti. Na meji so me grdo pretepli; bolečino v rebrih sem čutil še zelo dolgo časa. Mejo smo poskusili prečkati večkrat. Enkrat smo se morali sleči do spodnjega perila, naša oblačila so zažgala. Bežati smo morali v spodnjem perilu.

'PUSHBACK' (Nasilni izgon)

Zaradi svoje etnične pripadnosti, ker sem Kurd, me je ves čas strah pregona in zapora v moji državi. Nisem si izbral svoje etničnosti, vanjo sem se rodil. Ker sem moral oditi čez noč, nisem imel načrta, kam iti ali kako bom prišel tja. Želel sem si samo varnosti. Ko sem prišel do Slovenije, je bila moja prva misel strah pred 'pushbackom' (izgonom).

Že vse od konca hladne vojne je v razvitih državah mogoče zaslediti razvoj restriktivnejših azilnih zakonodaj in drugih ukrepov, ki temeljijo na kategorizaciji različnih skupin migrantov, zadržanju teh čim bližje izvornim državam in omejevanju dostopa do državljanstva (Zavratnik Zimic, 2003, str. 29). V okviru takšnih politik je namesto nudenja pomoči oz. zaščite v skladu z mednarodnopravnimi obveznostmi poudarjen pomen nadzora in upravljanja zunanjih meja ter preprečevanja t. i. nezakonitih migracij v imenu varnosti (Kovač, 2003, str. 75). Načelo nevračanja prepoveduje vračanje prisilcev za mednarodno zaščito v državo, v kateri bi bila njihovo življenje in svoboda ogrožena, ter predstavlja skupno točko pravu človekovih pravic, azilnemu pravu ter mednarodnemu humanitarnemu pravu (McAdam, 2006, str. 1).

Onemogočanje mednarodne zaščite in postopka za njeno pridobitev predstavlja eno izmed metod oteževanja mobilnosti. Nezakoniti kolektivni izgoni oz. 'push back' pa v tem kontekstu predstavljajo »nezakonite prisilne operacije, v katerih oblasti ljudem odrečejo vstop v državo ali jih vrnejo nazaj v državo, iz katere so prišli, pri čemer jim odvzamejo postopkovna jamstva in možnost, da zaprosijo za azil«. (Amnesty International, 2018, str. 4).

DOVOLJENJE ZA DELO

Pot do statusa begunca je zelo dolga. Čakati moraš zelo dolgo časa, nekateri čakajo leta in leta. Prav tako prvih devet mesecev ne smeš delati, saj nimaš dovoljenja za delo. Dovoljenje dobiš, če v tem času nisi dobil negativne odločitve o statusu begunca. Kaj naj počnem v teh devetih mesecih? Nič. Poskusil sem delati, a sem moral delo opravljati ilegalno. Ujeli so me in dobil sem kazen. Tako sedaj samo sedim v azilnem domu in čakam na 18€, s katerimi si lahko kupim cigarete.

Pravo EU zagotavlja beguncem enak dostop do trga dela kot državljanom EU, medtem ko je dostop prosilcem za mednarodno zaščito urejen različno. Tako je v Franciji, Belgiji, Estoniji, Latviji, Litvi, Španiji, na Hrvaškem, Finskem, Poljskem, Portugalskem in Slovaškem dostop mogoč po šestih mesecih od vložitve prošnje, prosilci navadno nimajo pravice do vložitve prošnje, pravico pa pridobijo, če jim ni izdana odločitev o statusu v tem obdobju. Nasprotno jim je že v prvih šestih mesecih omogočena vključitev v sezonsko delo v gostinstvu ali kmetijstvu v Avstriji (Državni zbor, 2020). V Sloveniji imajo pravico do dostopa na trg dela »devet mesecev po vložitvi prošnje, če mu v tem času ni bila vročena odločitev pristojnega organa in te zamude ni mogoče pripisati prosilcu.« (Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti, 87. člen).

DELAM KOT PROSTOVOLJEC

Sem prosilec za mednarodno zaščito. V Sloveniji živim več kot eno leto in vsak dan delam kot prostovoljec v domu starejših občanov. Zaupajo mi in so zadovoljni z mojim delom; rekli so celo, da bi me zaposlili. Čeprav sem tukaj toliko časa, ne morem biti več prostovoljec, saj sem dobil prvo negativno odločitev o statusu prej kot v devetih mesecih. Želim si delati, imam delovno mesto, kjer me želijo, ampak zakon mi tega ne dovoljuje.



Prišli smo do drugega dela potovanja. V tem delu prikazujemo različne vidike človeške kulture in zanimive preobrate, ki se zgodijo, ko se srečata dve osebi z drugačnimi kulturnimi in osebnimi zgodbami. To poglavje je tematsko strukturirano in vključuje podpoglavja o točkah nesporazuma in opažanja, odnosih, jeziku in telesni govorici ter seveda o hrani in pijači (navadah pri mizi).

TOČKE NESPORAZUMA IN OPAŽANJA

Že od nekdaj ima vsak človek svojo pot, po kateri hodi od začetka do konca svojega življenja. Ko se srečujemo z drugimi osebami, tvorimo med seboj točke razumevanja ali pa nesporazuma.

Medtem ko so različna dejanja v eni kulturi razumljena kot izjemno spoštljiva (denimo umikanje pogleda), je lahko v drugi kulturi dejanje interpretirano kot nesramno, žaljivo ali pa predstavlja drugačen pomen. Eden izmed naših sogovornikov je dejal: "Ko prideš v novo okolje, si kot otrok, ne veš ničesar. Ne poznaš kulture in ne razumeš jezika. Drugi ljudje te morajo ponovno vzgojiti." Dejanja, na katera se mora oseba privaditi, so lahko splošna ali pa globoko vkopana v posamezno kulturo, kar je poudarila druga sogovornica: "Preden sem prišla sem, sem razmišljala o tem, kako naj pozdravim ljudi. Naj jih objamem in poljubim, kot to delamo v Siriji? Spraševala sem se o tem, kakšno vedenje je pri mizi sprejemljivo in kako naj se obnašam. Zanimalo me je tudi, kako ljudje razumejo čas. So velikokrat pozni ali zelo točni? Po glavi se mi je podilo ogromno vprašanj." V tem podpoglavju se osredotočamo na praktične primere dogodkov, kjer se takšna in drugačna vprašanja izrazijo,

V Sloveniji so lahko ljudje zelo občutljivi glede nazivov. V slovenščini je bolje uporabljati vikanje (VI) kot tikanje (TI), predvsem kadar gre za formalne situacije, kot je naslavljanje delavcev na Centru za socialno delo, in kadar gre za situacije, ko sogovornika ne poznamo, na primer v trgovini.

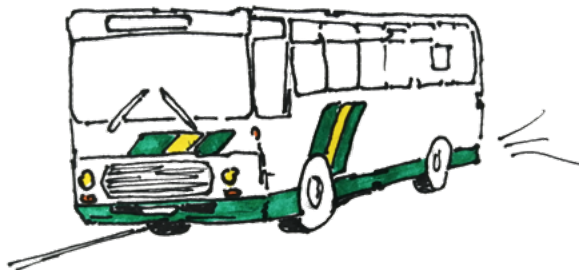
tako na naši kot na njihovi strani. Vključili smo tudi zanimiva opažanja o slovenski in evropski kulturi skozi oči naših sogovornikov. Pa pogledjmo.

ČISTILKA

V šoli Cene Štupar sem obiskoval tečaj slovenščine. Vedno sem pozdravil čistilko in ona mi je vedno odzdravila. Enkrat sem rekel: »Živijo, mami.« Čudno me je pogledala in zatem me ni nikoli več pozdravila. V Eritreji je znak spoštovanja, kadar starejšemu človeku rečeš "mami" ali "papi", v Sloveniji pa ljudi s tem spraviš v zadrego.

NA AVTOBUSU

Sedel sem na avtobusu. Poleg mene je stala starejša gospa. Vprašal sem jo, ali se želi uresti. Odgovorila je, da ne. Vprašal sem jo še enkrat in ponovno je odgovorila z "ne". Vprašal sem jo še nekajkrat, gospa pa je jezno odkorakala stran. V Eritreji moraš, če ti nekdo nekaj ponudi, ponujeno zavrniti nekajkrat, tudi če si tega res želiš. Na ta način pokažeš svojo skromnost, tisti, ki ponuja, pa pokaže svoje gostoljubje.



BI KAVO ALI ČAJ?

Lahko se zgodi tudi nasprotno. Bili smo na orientacijskem tečaju, kjer so nam ponudili čaj in kavo. Prvič smo ponujeno odklonili, vendar nihče ni ponovil vprašanja, tako da smo ostali brez čaja in kave.



PRIJATELJICA ALI NEKAJ VEČ

Imel sem sošolko na univerzi, ki je zbolela. Vsak dan sem jo vprašal, kako se počuti. Postalo ji je neprijetno, saj je mislila, da sem vanjo zaljubljen, jaz pa nisem gojil nobenih takšnih čustev. Enkrat se mi je zgodilo tudi, da mi je prijateljica izkazala ljubezen, saj je mislila, da sem vanjo zaljubljen. Zaradi tega mi je bilo zelo neprijetno. Sem zelo prijazna oseba, to je v moji kulturi. Moja prijaznost in prijateljstvo sta bila zamenjana za romantična čustva. V Bangladešu je normalno in pričakovano, da bolno osebo sprašuješ, kako je, in ji prinašaš darila, dokler se ne počuti bolje. V Sloveniji se to pogosto dojemata kot osvajanje.

V Sloveniji lahko pri starejši generaciji naletimo na kaj podobnega. Verjetno imamo vsi izkušnje s tem, da nas babice ne pustijo oditi, preden smo popolnoma siti, 'ne' pa ni možen odgovor. Ko gre za mlajšo generacijo in v formalnih odnosih, bodo ljudje večinoma vprašali samo enkrat. Če ljudje torej nekaj zavrnejo enkrat, je to dovolj, pretirano spraševanje in ponujanje je namreč lahko dojeta kot vsiljivo.

ROMANTIČNO POTOVANJE

S prijatelji in prijateljicami smo se odpravili na morje. Ena od prijateljic je bila zelo prijazna do mojega prijatelja, ki je iz arabske države. Pogovarjala se je z njim in se smejala. Nič romantičnega, bila je prijazna, on pa je mislil, da do njega goji romantična čustva. Ko smo se vozili nazaj, mi je v arabščini rekel, naj se presedem, saj mora zdaj on sedeti zraven nje. Rekel sem mu: »Še dobro, da te nihče ni razumel.« Prijateljica pa je očitno videla, kaj se dogaja, saj se je presedla. Nekateri, ki pridejo iz arabskih držav, lahko razumejo kot romantično gesto, če se jih punca dotakne, se jim smeji ali celo, če se z njimi samo pogovarja. Ampak ni povsod tako. Odvisno je od skupnosti in od tega, kako te starši vzgajajo.

PRANJE ZELENJAVE

Nekega dne je sodelavec v restavraciji, v kateri delam, pral zelenjavo. Hotel sem se mu zahvaliti in sem mu zato rekel: »Ne bi ti bilo treba.« Rekel je dobro in prenehal s pranjem. Bil sem zmeden, saj sem se mu želel samo zahvaliti. Čeprav tudi v Bangladešu poznamo izraz 'hvala', ga ne uporabljamo. Vedno rečemo: »Ne bi ti bilo treba,« ali »Tega ti ni treba storiti,« druga oseba pa odgovori: »V veselje mi je.« Tudi ko obišeš nekoga, vedno rečeš: »Opravičujem se, ker sem takšno breme,« druga oseba odgovori: »Ni problema, v veselje mi je.« Ko nekoga srečaš, vedno začneš pogovor z besedo 'namaste' namesto pozdrava, saj pomeni 'strinjam se s tvojo dušo', saj želiš začeti pogovor z nečim prijaznim in pozitivnim.

DELO NA ROJSTNI DAN

Šla sem na prijateljevo rojstnodnevno zabavo, kjer smo jedli in pili, na koncu pa je vstal, da bo plačal račun. Rekla sem mu: »Rojstni dan imaš,

a si zmešan?» A je vztrajal, da bo plačal za vse. V Venezueli za svoj rojstni dan ne delaš in ne plačaš ničesar, saj je to tvoj poseben dan. V Sloveniji morate kuhati večerjo za druge ljudi, delati cel dan, vse povabiti in na koncu še plačati! Ko sem imela rojstni dan, mi je nečakinja rekla, da naj jih povabim na kosilo, a sem ji odgovorila: »Danes ne kuham, je moj poseben dan.«



NOVI ČEVLJI

Ko sem zapustil Iran, mi je mama kupila lepe tradicionalne iranske čevlje. Prijateljica jih je videla in rekla, da so ji všeč. Takoj sem ji rekel: »Ali jih hočeš? Tvoji so.« In ona je pritrčila in jih vzela! Rekel sem: »Ne, nisem tako mislil, mi tako samo pravimo!« Potem sem prosil mamo, naj mi pošlje še en par čevljev za prijateljico. V Iranu imamo obliko vljudnostnega pogovora, ki se imenuje "taarof". To pomeni, če nekdo pohvali nekaj tvojega, mu moraš to stvar ponuditi, vendar redko sogovornik ponujeno vzame. Taarof se uporablja tudi pri gostih. Gostitelj bo ponudil hrano ali pijačo, ki jo moraš večkrat odkloniti, gostitelj pa bo večkrat ponudil, dokler ne boš sprejel tistega, kar ponuja.

SIRENE

Moj prvi dan življenja v Ljubljani je bila sobota. Živel sem v petem nadstropju azilnega doma. Zbudil sem se zgodaj zjutraj in pospravil sobo.

Podobno se dogaja v drugih bližnjevzhodnih državah. Če se sprehajaš po ulici, vidiš nekaj lepega in omeniš, da ti je všeč, bo druga oseba ponavadi vztrajala, da ti to kupi. Naš sogovornik iz Sirije nam je v svojem stanovanju pokazal vodno pipo (šišo) in rekel, da jo je pohvalil v prijateljevem stanovanju. Povedal nam je tudi, da mu je prijatelj nekoč pohvalil majico. Ko je prišel domov, jo je opral, zlikal in mu jo odnesel.

Okoli dvanajstih sem si skuhal kavo, se usedel, da bi prižgal glasbo, ko sem zaslišal sirene. Pogledal sem skozi okno in videl helikopter. Pomislil sem: »To je to, Slovenija je v vojni.« Spakiral sem torbo z nujnimi potrebščinami in zbežal iz sobe. Preskakoval sem po deset stopnic, da bi čim prej prišel do recepcije. V dobri minuti sem bil zunaj. Varnostniki so me pogledali, kot da se mi je zmešalo, in se mi smejala. Razložil sem, da sem iz Palestine, in so se mi opravičili. Ta dan smo postali prijatelji. V Palestini sem imel ves čas spakirano torbo z denarjem, nakitom, zobno ščetko in dokumenti, da lahko kadarkoli zbežim. Biti moraš hiter, saj lahko tudi hitro umreš.

Bilo je leta 2014 ob treh zjutraj. Bil sem reševalec. Eno izmeno sem delal kot voznik, drugo kot reševalec, tretjo sem šel spat. V času vojne so ves čas metali bombe, eno so vrgli v petnadstropno stavbo. Šli smo v stavbo in našli več mrtvih. Preživelo je samo eno dekle in družina iz prvega nadstropja, ki ji je uspelo pobegniti. Zaradi tega imam še vedno občasne nočne more. Bilo je tako temno, da nisi videl čisto nič, tako da smo s posebnimi lučmi iskali dele ljudi. Sodelavec se je vrnil v stavbo po pozabljeno luč in v notranjosti slišal jokanje. Medtem sem bil zunaj in poskušal pomiriti preživelo dekle. Njeni notranji organi so gledali iz odprtega trebuha. Spraševala me je, če bo umrla. Ko nekdo umira, se pojavi značilen vonj, ki sem ga takrat vohal. Sodelavec je iz zrušene stavbe prinesel štirimesečno punčko in mi jo dal v naročje. Videl sem, da ima v ustih kamen, zato sem jo obrnil in jo potrepjal po hrbtu. Koža se je odlepila z njenega hrbta in ostala na moji roki, tudi njena leva roka je bila opečena. Po dogodku sem šel k psihiatru, a tudi on je živel v enakih razmerah kot jaz in mi ni mogel pomagati. Tiste noči je preživel samo en človek iz stavbe, ki se mu je popolnoma zmešalo, saj je videl umreti vse ljudi, ki jih je imel rad. Tako je bilo moje vsakdanje delo in še vedno slišim žvižganje bomb.

KAM GREŠTE NA POČITNICE?

Velikokrat me kdo vpraša, kam grem na naslednje počitnice. Spomladi ljudje sprašujejo: »Kam greš na poletne počitnice?« Po poletnih počitnicah sprašujejo: »Kje boš za novo leto?« Po novem letu sprašujejo: »Kam greš smučat?« in potem te spet vprašajo: »Kam greš na poletne počitnice?« Prav tako začnejo ljudje varčevati za poletne počitnice že pozimi in za zimske počitnice poleti. To je čudno. V Palestini se ljudje ne

obremenjujejo s takimi stvarmi, živijo bolj enostavno, ne razmišljajo o počitnicah ali dopustu. V Sloveniji pa je to začetek pogovora; nekaj, kar vprašaš, ko ne veš, kaj bi rekel drugega.

KOLIKO PA TVOJ AVTO STANE?

Bil sem šokiran, ko sem ugotovil, kako osebna in intimna vprašanja sprašujete. Vprašanja, kot so 'Kaj počneš v Sloveniji?', 'Koliko si plačal za tvoj avto?' ali pa 'Kakšna je tvoja plača?', so zame zelo osebna in če me to vprašaš, mi je zelo neprijetno. Tukaj sem, ker hočem biti tukaj, tega mi ni treba pojasnjevati. Čez nekaj časa sem ugotovil, da je to samo način, s katerim začnete pogovor.

PRITOŽEVANJE KOT HOBI

Ko sem šla do do frizerke, še nisem bila dolgo časa tukaj. Rekla sem ji, da želim spremembo barve. Imam dolge in temne lase, in rekla je: »Jooj, to bo tako težko.« Pogledala sem jo in rekla: »Dobro, hvala, nasvidenje.« Velikokrat slišim 'jooj' in potem neke vrste nerganje. Frizerka je ravnobila stranko in njene prve besede so bile pritoževanje. Zdaj razumem, da je to nekaj, kar Slovenci radi počnejo, je kot tema pogovora.

COPATE?

Prišel sem na obisk h prijateljici v Sloveniji, ki mi je ponudila copate. Rekel sem ji, da jih ne potrebujem, pa mi jih je kar naprej ponujala. Videl sem, da ima polno omaro copat različnih velikosti in barv. Imela je celo copate, ki še niso bili odprti. Rekla je: »Oprosti, moja tla so umazana, ne moreš biti bos.« Čeprav si v Palestini sezujemo čevlje, ko vstopimo v hišo ali pridemo na obisk, si copat ne ponujamo.

Vsaka kultura ima lahko različne načine začenjanja pogovora. V Sloveniji so pogoste teme vreme, počitnice, lahko pa se govori tudi o drugih zadevah, kot so npr. finance, zdravje, zadnje novice, ali o zadnji stvari, ki sta jo osebi počeli skupaj. O ceni stvari ni nevljudno spraševati, sploh če osebo poznaš. Prav tako ni nenavadno slišati pritoževanje. Ampak to je bolj oblika komuniciranja in ne izražanje resničnih problemov, ki bi jih oseba rada rešila.

SMETI I

Videla sem skupino tujce, ki so se sprehajali zunaj. Eden izmed njih je jedel čokoladico in ko jo je pojedel, je vrgel papirček na tla! Če prihajaš iz Slovenije, veš, da je to popolnoma nesprejemljivo.



SMETI II

Prva stvar, ki sem jo opazil po prihodu v Slovenijo, je bila, kako zelena in čista je. Na tleh ni bilo skoraj nič smeti. Moral sem se navaditi na to, da vedno vržem smeti v koš za smeti in jih še recikliram. Ampak ta navada mi je zelo všeč!

POZOREN PODNAJEMNIK

Imam podnajemnika iz Sirije. Enkrat mi je policija prinesla denarnico, ki sem jo izgubila. Ko sem prišla domov, se je podnajemnik že pogovarjal s policijo. Poskušal je biti prijazen, stal je zraven mene in vsaki dve minuti vprašal, kaj se dogaja. Zame bi bilo normalno, da bi se sama pogovarjala s policijo. On pa mi je na ta način izražal podporo in se želel prepričati, da sem v redu. Meni je bilo vse skupaj preveč pretirano. To je kulturna razlika med bolj individualistično, kot je slovenska, in bolj družbeno, kot je sirska.

ALI VAM LAHKO POMAGAM?

Starejšega gospoda sem vprašal, ali mu lahko pomagam nesti vrečke iz trgovine. Gospod me je jezno pogledal in me vprašal: »Kaj, a misliš, da sem star?« Navajen sem ponuditi pomoč starejšim ljudem že iz Irana, a se mi zdi, da imajo starejši ljudje v Sloveniji preveč samozavesti. Včasih vidim koga, ki komaj hodi, vendar ne sprejme pomoči.

Če v Iranu želi starejša oseba prečkati cesto ali pa nosi vreče, bodo vsi priskočili na pomoč. Tudi v Sloveniji sem velikokrat želel pomagati, pa so vsi zavrnilo mojo pomoč. Mogoče so mislili, da jih bom okradel. Videl sem tudi, da starejše osebe na avtobusu stojijo. Mislim, da je to nedopustno.

ČOKOLADICA

Videl sem ljubkega otroka v trgovini in mu kupil čokolado, vendar ga je mama potegnila stran od mene. Ko vidiš ljubkega otroka v Iranu, greš do njega, se z njim pogovarjaš, saj v tebi to vzbudi občutek veselja. Navada je, da mu tudi nekaj kupiš. V Sloveniji je to drugače, ljudje so zelo previdni do neznancev.

V Sloveniji smo zelo previdni do neznancev. Čeprav ljudje radi pomagajo, jih veliko pomoči ne sprejme. To ni nič osebnega, zgolj kulturna razlika.

Enako velja za deljenje sladkarij ali kakršnokoli komuniciranje z nepoznanimi otroki, kar je dojeno kot sumljivo dejanje. Starši že od mladih nog učijo otroke, naj ne jemljejo slaščic od neznancev.

NE POTREBUJEMO DOMOV ZA OSTARELE

Pri nas je velika sramota dati starejše osebe v domove za ostarele. V celotni Gazi obstajata morda dva doma za ostarele, saj jih tja skoraj nikoli damo. Skrbeti za svoje starše je čast, sorodniki pa se bodo prepirali o tem, kdo bo za starše skrbel. Oni so te vzgajali in zate skrbeli, ko ostarijo, pa napoči tvoj čas. Ljudje ponavadi dajo starše v dom za ostarele, ker jih snaha ali zet ne marata in se zakonca bojita, da bosta izgubila družino, a so zato zaznamovani s sramoto celo življenje.

POMAGATI

Opazil sem, da je v Evropi, in tudi v Sloveniji, veliko brezdomcev. Teh v Palestini ne vidiš, saj družba česa takega ne dopušča. Če je kdo v težavah, je njegova situacija objavljena na internetu ali pa v časopisu. Tudi ko ima nekdo težave s hišo, mu bodo ostali pomagali, pa če ga poznajo ali ne. Nekdo bo prišel in popravil streho, drugi tla in tako naprej. Če nekdo nima prostora za spanje, ga bo zagotovo nekdo povabil k sebi domov ali pa mu bo ponudil prostor na vrtu, da si lahko postavi šotor. Vedno se da nekaj urediti.

ODNOSI

Naši sogovorniki so z nami delili težave, ki jih doživljajo ob poskušanju vključevanja v novo skupnost. Soočajo se tako s kulturno kot jezikovno prepreko. Slovence pogosto opisujejo kot hladne in individualistične osebe, s katerimi je težko zgraditi odnose. A temu ni vedno tako. Ena izmed sogovornic je dejala: »Z navezovanjem stikov nisem imela nobenih težav.« Drugi sogovornik pa je imel izkušnjo, da se je »z ljudmi zelo težko povezati. Včasih se počutim, kot da imam kakšno bolezen, saj se na avtobusu ali v parku nihče ne usede zraven mene. Lansko leto sem obiskal novoletno zabavo in občutil, da nihče ne želi stati poleg mene.« V nekaterih družbah se je normalno ustaviti na ulici in malo poklepetati, tudi če srečaš neznanca v parku, v Sloveniji pa se to skoraj nikoli ne zgodi. Takšni in drugačni nesporazumi privedejo tudi do dogodka, ki ga je opisal tretji sogovornik, ki mu je dekle na listek napisalo svojo številko. Listek je strgal in rekel. »Ne želim biti vsiljiv. Če želiš, me lahko ti kontaktiraš.« Zgodi pa se tudi, da se osebe težko povežejo z osebami nasprotnega spola, saj so zelo sramežljive ali pa so na primer 'do sedaj govorili samo z mamo in sestrami'. Sledijo zanimivi odseki zgodb, ki lepo prikazujejo takšne nesporazume.

PODAJ MI ROKO

Slovenci zelo radi pomagajo. Če potrebuješ pomoč, jo boš najverjetneje dobil. Ampak ko ti oseba pomaga z nečim, se odnos prekine. Imel sem težave z razumevanjem tega, saj sem mislil, da bo ta pomoč pripeljala do nekega odnosa ali prijateljstva, a temu ni tako. Očitno je bilo, da mi želi samo pomagati.

OBRATNI KULTURNI ŠOK

Moj prvi teden v Sloveniji sem bila sama na Ptuj, saj sem čakala, da prispejo ljudje iz organizacije, za katero sem delala. Sem sem prišla s stereotipom o zaprtih in hladnih Slovencih. Mislila sem, da bom ta teden sama. Kako sem se zmotila! Drugi dan v mestu sem odšla v kavarno in naročila kavo. Naključni ljudje so se prišli do moje mize in se začeli z mano pogovarjati, mi kupili pijačo in me povabili na svojo kmetijo, kjer so mi dali tudi kosilo, večerjo in me celo odpeljali domov. Naslednji dan so me poklicali in me zastonj odpeljali na ogled Ptuja. Čez en teden so prišli tudi ljudje iz organizacije, ki so bili zelo presenečeni, da vsi poznajo gospodično iz Jordanije.



NEOSEBNI ODNOSI MED SOSEDI

Moram reči, da mi je zelo težko, da nimam toplih odnosov s sosedi. Ko se nekdo priseli v skupnost v Venezueli, gredo vsi do hiše in pozdravijo novega soseda ter se predstavijo, skupaj spišejo kavo in kmalu postanejo prijatelji. Svoji tašči vedno rečem: »Ko si v težavah, ti bodo tvoji najbližji vedno pomagali. In kdo je bližje kot tvoj sosed?« Tudi tukaj poskušam vzpostaviti dober odnos s sosedom. Vedno mu prinesem škatlo kivija, on pa mi prinese med in počasi se zblizujeva.

NE VAŽI SE

Zanimivo je, da v Sloveniji ni priporočljivo, da iz množice preveč izstopaš. Še posebej, ko si obdan z vrstniki in poskušas govoriti preglasno ali pa svoj namen izražati preveč direktno. Ko na primer delaš v šolskem projektu, moraš zelo paziti, kako boš študentu povedal, da se moti. Velikokrat moraš spraševati po mnenju ostalih, da ne izpadeš preveč vsiljiv. Mislim, da je v večini arabskih držav ravno obratno; če ostale preveč sprašuješ o tem, kar delaš, bodo mislili, da ne veš, o čem govoriš. Ti si strokovnjak in bi moral drugim povedati, kaj naj delajo.

MEHANIČARKA

Ob neki priložnosti je moj prijatelj srečal mehaničarko. Bil je zelo začuden in jo občudoval. Zelo si je želel pogovarjati se z njo, a ni vedel, kako. Bil je zelo živčen in ji kupil vodo ter čaj, ni pa vedel, kaj bi ji rekel. Nekateri prijatelji (iz Palestine in Sirije) prav tako niso videli voznice taksija ali tovornjaka. Najprej so šokirani in rečejo: »To je moška služba!« Čez nekaj časa pa ugotovijo, da je to nekaj normalnega. Vseeno pa imajo veliko težav pri pogovoru z ženskami, saj so, preden so prišli sem, govorili samo s svojimi mamami in sestrami.

UČITELJICA

Ko smo bili na tečaju slovenščine, sem videl, kako nekateri fantje strmijo v našo učiteljico. Po uri so se pogovarjali in govorili: »Oh, ta ženska!« V Sloveniji smo bili približno isti čas, prihajamo iz iste države in govorimo isti jezik. Zame je bilo videti učiteljico nekaj normalnega in videti jo oblečeno na določen način, je bilo prav tako normalno, za nekatere pa je bil to popoln šok.

KRATKA KRILA IN ŠE KRAJŠE HLAČE

Nekaj časa sem pomagal dvema mladima fantoma, ki sta prišla v Slovenijo. Bilo je prvič, da sta zapustila državo. Bilo je poletje, ko smo stali na cesti, nista mogla nehati strmeti za puncami, ki so nosile kratke hlače. Ko je šla mimo kakšna punca, sta se za njo obrnila in mi rekla: »Ej, ali si videl to?!« Na začetku se mi je cela zadeva zdela malo zabavna, čez nekaj časa pa je postala zelo zoprna. Eden izmed teh fantov ima zdaj punco, a ne želi, da povem njegovi družini, saj se boji kritiziranja. Starši bi obsojali, kako se njegova punca oblači, kako izgleda in tudi, da imata spolne odnose pred poroko.

DELAVNE ŽENSKE

Prihajam iz zelo konservativne družine, kjer je oče odgovoren za mamo in sestro. On odloča, kje in kaj delati. Čeprav je pogosto, da ženske delajo kot učiteljice, medicinske sestre in frizerke, nikoli ne delajo z moškimi. Sestra študira na univerzi in zatem bo začela delati, ampak oče ji tega ne bo pustil, če bodo na delovnem mestu tudi moški. Ko takšne, zelo konservativne družine pridejo v Slovenijo, jim ni v redu, da njihove ženske delajo ali se prijavijo na Zavod za zaposlovanje; ne zato, ker ne bi želele delati, ampak ker ne želijo delati v okolju, kjer delajo tudi moški. Slišal sem tudi za nekatere družine iz Sirije, ki so zaradi tega razloga zapustile Slovenijo. Ampak vse to se zelo razlikuje od družine do družine.

ČAJ IN MAKARONI

Ko sem punco zjutraj vprašal, če mi skuha čaj, mi je odgovorila: »Skuhaj si ga sam.« Tudi kuhati sem začel, saj ona kuha samo makarone. V Siriji ženske skrbijo za družino, medtem ko moški skrbijo za finance, 'da je kruh na mizi'. Opa-

zil sem, da je v Sloveniji nemogoče živeti od ene plače, in razumem, da morajo delati tako moški kot ženske. Veliko je tudi mam samohranilk, ki morajo delati, da lahko skrbijo za otroke. V Siriji se med seboj spoštujemo, a vsak spol ima svojo vlogo. Tukaj sem imel več kontakta z ženskami kot moškimi; mislim, da so bolj odprte in imajo močnejši karakter, zato je tudi več žensk na vodilnih položajih, moški stojijo bolj ob strani.



VICI O BLONDINKAH

V arabskih državah obstaja veliko seksizma in patriarhat je zelo prisoten. V Sloveniji sem to doživel na čisto drugačen način, zlasti na Štajerskem. Nekateri moški so si govorili veliko seksističnih vicev, predvsem o blondinkah. Prav tako sem opazil, da včasih, ko pride v družbo ženska, ne govorijo z njo, temveč o njej. Odprto so govorili o delih njenega telesa, ko pa je ženska odšla, so začeli govoriti o politiki. Zavedel sem se, kako dolga je v resnici pot do enakovrednosti med spoloma.

OGNJEVITOST!

Slišal sem, da v Sloveniji tudi ženska zaprosi moškega. Mislim, da je to odlično, ženske imajo v sebi toliko ognja! V Kongu tega ne bi videl nikoli. Noro je, da bi ženska naredila prvi korak. Moški mora narediti prvi korak, saj so ženske preveč sramežljive in moški bolj dominantni.

V Sloveniji ni tako čudno, da ženska naredi prvi korak. Včasih se tudi hecamo o tem, da so moški preveč pasivni. Ko smo o tem pogovarjali s sogovornikom, smo ugotovili, da sta obe mami prostovoljk Rdečega križa zaprosili njuna očeta.

ODNOS S STARŠI

Poročena sem s Slovencem. Preden sem se zares odločila, da se z njim poročim, sem o tem želela povprašati starša. Zaročenca sem prosila, da z njima opravi videoklic, da bi videla, kaj si mislita o njem. Potem sem vprašala partnerja, če želi narediti isto s svojima staršema, vendar je rekel: »Mojima staršema tega sploh ni potrebno povedati, jima bova že po poroki.« Opazila sem, da je moji evropski vrstniki tak odnos dojemajo kot omejujoč. Ampak jaz teh stvari ne dojemam kot nekaj, kar me omejuje ali me dela odvisno. Moja starša sta moji duši dvojčici in duhovni vodji, h katerima se zatečem, ko potrebujem razmislek, in prav to mi daje svobodo. Starša mi nikoli ne bosta rekla, kaj storiti ali česa ne, delujeta kot inštruktorja, ki mi dajeta vprašanja, odgovore pa poiščem sama. Kultura je spekter in kulturne razlike obstajajo tudi znotraj iste države ali družbe.

PRIIMKI

Na začetku sem mislil, da imajo slovenski očetje zelo čudna imena. Nekaj časa sem potreboval, da sem ugotovil, da imate tukaj priimke. V Eritreji imamo partonime; to pomeni, da je tvoj priimek v resnici ime tvojega očeta. Zelo mi je bilo čudno, da ima celotna družina enak priimek, saj je pri nas popolnoma drugače. Če bi imel otroke, bi bil priimek moje žene drugačen od otrokovih.

POLJUB MOŠKIH

Bila sem na avtobusu s sinom. Videla sva, da se dva moška poljubljata, in sin me je glasno vprašal: »Mami, mami, kaj je to?« Razložila sem mu, da je to v Sloveniji normalno in naj to sprejme. Že prej sem slišala o homoseksualnosti. Vedela sem, da obstaja in je v Evropi sprejeta, a sem bila šokirana nad svobodo izražanja, da

imaš možnost, da lahko izraziš, kdo in kaj si. To me je spodbudilo, da se učim o različnih spolnih usmeritvah.

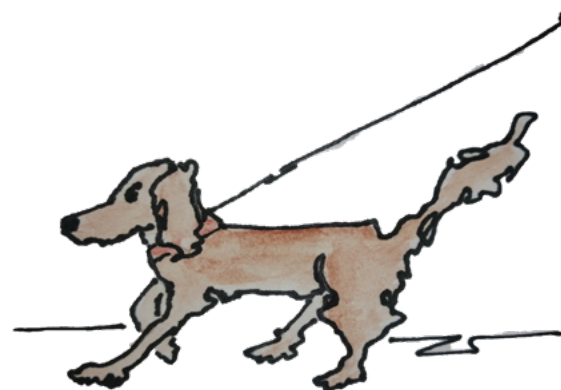
HOMOFBIJA V EVROPI?

S Slovencem sem govorila o homoseksualnosti. Rekel mi je: »Ti ljudje se morajo spreobrniti, potrebujejo neke vrste terapijo.« To je bil zame velik šok. Prihajam iz Jordanije in sem mislila, da je v Evropi vse dobro in dovoljeno ter homofobije ni. Ko sem slišala takšno izjavo državljana Evropske unije, sem bila zelo šokirana. Kar me je še bolj šokiralo, da so ljudje na referendumu o porokah istospolnih partnerjev glasovali proti.

PES NA POROKI

Prijatelj iz Kameruna se je poročil s Slovenko. Imela sta pogovor o tem, ali bi se njun pes udeležil poroke. Ženska je želela, da je pes prisoten, moj prijatelj pa se s tem ni strinjal. Na koncu sta se strinjala, da je lahko na zabavi po poroki. Tudi v Kongu imamo radi živali, naše krave celo pokopljemo, ampak Slovenci ste v tem ekstremni.

V nekaterih državah, kot je Jordanija, homoseksualnost ni prepovedana z zakonom, ampak preprosto 'ne obstaja'. Tako ne more biti zločin, otroci so od malih nog naučeni, da predstavlja greh. V nekaterih državah, kot je Demokratična republika Kongo, si lahko zaradi dejstva, da si gej, pretepen in celo ubit, brez kakršnegakoli zakonskega varstva. V Sloveniji je istospolna usmerjenost priznana z zakonom in večinoma družbeno sprejeta, diskriminacija na podlagi spolne identitete je prepovedana. Vseeno pa je lahko ta tema delikatna, saj imajo nekateri o homoseksualnosti še vedno predsodke.



Seveda smo se radi zabavali, ko smo bili mladi, pa čeprav smo živeli v okupirani coni. Da smo prišli do nočnih klubov, smo hodili od mesta do mesta; če so nas izraelski vojaki ujeli, pa smo lahko šli v zapor ali plačali visoko kazen. Bili smo mladi in vihravi. Veliko nadzornih točk nismo mogli prečkati, zato smo imeli s sabo rezervne obleke, saj smo hodili čez blatne hribe. Plezali smo čez devet metrov visoke zidove in skočili, če so Izraelci tekli za nami. Večkrat si je prijatelj zlomil nogo. Takrat smo rekli samo: »Zdaj pa imamo!« in ga naskrivaj peljali v bolnico.

ALI IMAŠ DROGE?

Bil sem v centru Ljubljane. Dve puncici, mislim, da sta bili mladoletni, sta pristopili do mene in me vprašali, če imam kaj drog. Bil sem šokiran in sem jima rekel: »Ali izgledam kot prodajalec drog?« Potem sta prišli do mene vsakih pet minut in skakali okoli mene. Mladi ljudje imajo tukaj preveč svobode, kar težko sprejemem. Prehitro se jim zmeša. Dejstvo, da sta me vprašali za droge, se mi je zdelo nespoštljivo, zaradi njunega skakanja pa mi je bilo zelo neprijetno. V Palestini se mladim prav tako zmeša, ampak ne do te mere in še posebej ne puncam.



ZAMUJANJE

Ker delam z ljudmi iz drugih kultur, sem velikokrat izkusila zamujanje, kar je lahko včasih zelo neprijetno. Na začetku se mi je zdelo tudi nespoštljivo. Imeli smo učitelja iz Sirije, ki nas je učil arabsko in je vedno zamujal, učila sem fanta iz Eritreje, ki je vedno zamujal, in gospoda iz Irana, ki je vsakokrat, ko sem ga klicala in vprašala, kje je, rekel: »Sem v svoji sobi.« Zame je bilo najhujše to, da se ljudje niso opravičili vnaprej in mi podali razloga za zamujanje. Počasi sem spoznala, da ne smem tega jemati osebno in da zanje to ni nespoštljiv odnos. Imamo pač različno dožemanje točnosti in čez čas so se vsi navadili prihajati ob uri.

TAKO PAČ JE - HABESHA

Če gre za nekaj zelo uradnega, kot je obisk sodišča, bom točen. Kadar se dobim s prijatelji, včasih zamudim 1–2 uri. To je normalno in nihče ni prizadet, če zamujaš. Ko kdo zamudi, se ponavadi samo nasmejemo in rečemo: »Ah, to je habesha.« Ker veš, da bodo vsi drugi zamudili, tudi ti zamudiš.

OBISK ZDRAVNIKA

V Sloveniji sem šel k zdravniku, ne da bi prej poklical. Ko sem se slabo počutil, sem šel kar naravnost tja. Medicinska sestra me je vprašala, ali sem naročen. Nisem bil in ni bila ravno zadovoljna zaradi tega. V Eritreji greš k zdravniku brez kakršnegakoli naročanja.

SKLEPANJE DOGOVOROV

Migrant me je klical z Zavoda za zaposlovanje. Potreboval je mojo pomoč, ker ne govori slovensko. Želel je, da se pogovorim z zaposleno, vendar je rekla, da se ne bo pogovarjala po telefonu. Moral sem se voziti eno uro do Zavoda za zaposlovanje za opravke, ki je trajal 15 min (po leg čakanja na vrsto) in bi se lahko opravil po telefonu.

NI URBANE, NI VOŽNJE

Šel sem prvič po uvedbi Urbane na avtobus. Moja kartica je bila prazna in nisem vedel, kje bi jo lahko napolnil. Vprašal sem voznika in mi je rekel: »Plačaj s telefonom,« vendar nisem imel monete. Voznik me ni hotel poslušati in mi je samo rekel, naj izstopim. Sploh nisem vedel, kako naj polnim Urbano.

Za Slovence je biti točen zelo pomembno, še posebej na formalnih dogodkih. Če nekdo zamuja, je to dojetje kot nespoštljivo, celo priporočljivo je biti prezgoden kot prepozen, pa čeprav za pet minut. Slovenci čas vidijo kot nekaj dragocenega in če nekdo zamuja, pomeni, da so vrgli čas stran. Na ta način se izgubi priložnost, tisti, ki čaka, pa bo verjetno jezen in užaljen. Seveda pa vedno obstaja možnost, da je nekaj prišlo vmes in da ti ne uspe priti pravočasno ali pa sploh ne. V tem primeru je to čisto razumljivo, a samo v primeru, da se o tem osebo obvesti vnaprej, tudi če je ta oseba prijatelj.

Slovenci se zelo držijo pravil, težko ali nemogoče je z njimi sklepati dogovore. Če je nekaj pravilo, je pač pravilo. V Palestini tega problema ne boste imeli. Ljudje radi pomagajo in z veseljem najdejo kompromis. Imamo veliko taksijev. Tudi če nimaš denarja, bo taksist rekel: »Ni problema, boš plačal drugič.«

V Sloveniji ljudje večinoma sledijo pravilom, čeprav jih kot posamezniki zelo radi tudi kršimo. Pogajanja in 'dogovori' niso zlahka sklenjeni in tudi ne cenjeni v vsakdanjem življenju. Ljudje večinoma mislijo, da morajo enaka pravila veljati za vse, kar vključuje enake cene in ugodnosti. Zato bodo ljudje razburjeni, če kdo ne bo upošteval pravil ali bo želel 'posebno' obravnavo, ko se sami trudijo držati pravil. Podobni mentaliteti sledijo tudi ponudniki storitev: če nekaj storim za eno stranko, bom moral enako storiti za vse.

CENA JE CENA

Po Ljubljani sem vodila skupino Iračanov. Šli smo v majhno trgovino z oblačili. Preden smo vstopili, so v skupini rekli, da bi se radi pogajali za ceno. Povedala sem jim, da je to slaba ideja, vendar so vseeno poskusili. Prodajalka se je zaradi pogajanja zelo razjezila in jim rekla, da niso na bazarju.

JEZIK IN TELESNA GOVORICA

Človeška govorica je sestavljena iz govora, kretenj in telesne govorice. Komunikacija, ki vedno zadeva vsaj dva človeka, je tako pogojena z veliko faktorji, ki jih lahko napačno interpretiramo, in naša dobra gesta je lahko razumljena kot nezaželena ali celo sovražna. Jezika in telesne govorice se nikoli ne nehajo učiti, vedno lahko odkrijemo nove oblike izražanja, ki jih pred tem še nismo poznali.



IMAM TE V MISLIH

Na obisk sem povabil prijateljico. Rekla mi je, da ne more prečkati meje občine (to je bilo med drugim valom korone). Potrepljal sem se po glavi in rekel: »Dobro.« Vprašala me je, kaj delam. Razložil sem, da za Kurde trepljanje po glavi pomeni "imam te v mislih ali v glavi in ne bom pozabil na vabilo". Če želiš pokazati, da se z nekom strinjaš, se potrepljaš po prsih. Prav tako, če ti nekdo daje preveč komplimentov in želiš, da preneha.

JA, VSTOPI

Živela sem v stanovanju s cimro, ki je bila Slovenka. Enkrat je potrkala na vrata moje sobe, med-

Slovenija je zelo majhna država in Slovenci smo vajeni, da nekdo ne govori slovenščine, čemur se stalno prilagajamo. Če pa govori slovensko, nam lahko to pove, saj je za nas to kar šok in ponavadi, ko se pogovarjamo s tujci, avtomatično uporabimo angleščino. Vsaj osnovno znanje slovenščine bo običajno sprejeto in pospremljeno z velikim odobravanjem, pa tudi z vprašanjem, kje in kako se je nekdo naučil slovensko ter ali je slovenščina težak jezik za učenje (in da je lahka, ni najboljši odgovor).

Veliko ljudi iz držav na območju nekdanje Jugoslavije dela v tovarnah, gradbeništvu in proizvodnji. Zato ne bodite presenečeni, če slovenščina ni primarni jezik na delovnem mestu. Poleg tega večina Slovencev govori ali pa vsaj razume južnoslovanske jezike, ki so zelo podobni slovenščini (z izjemo makedonščine in bolgarščine).

tem ko sem bila naga. Rekla sem: »Ja,« in odprla vrata. Nisem vedela, da "ja" pomeni "ja, vstopi", saj v Jordaniji pomeni "ja, počakaj, da pridem do vrat in jih odprem".

MI LAHKO POVESTE, KJE JE ...?

Iskal sem ulico v Ljubljani. Ustavil sem gospo in jo vprašal, kam moram iti. Vprašal sem v slovenščini, odgovorila mi je v angleščini. Nadaljeval sem pogovor v slovenščini, ona pa je vztrajala v angleščini. Pomislil sem, da sem se mogoče naučil napačen jezik, da mogoče govorim madžarsko. Velikokrat tudi dobim elektronska sporočila v angleščini, tudi potem ko ljudem razložim, da razumem slovensko, ne razumem pa angleško. Slovenci nočete govoriti s tujci v svojem jeziku, avtomatično uporabite angleščino. Vsi Slovenci govorite angleško, vendar jaz ne. V Iranu se ne učimo angleščine v šolah tako kot tukaj.

JEZIK NA DELOVNEM MESTU

Velikokrat sem delal v proizvodnji in različnih skladiščih po Sloveniji. Poznal sem slovenski jezik, vendar velikokrat nisem razumel sodelavcev. Spraševali so me: »Šta ima?«, »De's bolan?«, »Koliko godina imaš?« Ko sem rekel, da ne razumem, so me vprašali: »How old are you?« Spoznal sem, da v Sloveniji ni dovolj, da govoriš slovensko. Moraš govoriti tudi druge južnoslovanske jezike.

BIPOLARNI SODELAVCI

Delala sem v pisarni v Sloveniji z veliko ekipo sodelavcev. Skupaj smo preživljali veliko časa, vendar me je presenetilo, da se včasih niso niti

pozdravili, ko so prišli v pisarno, samo usedli so se za svojo mizo in začeli delati. Včasih pa so bili zelo veseli in pozdravili celo ekipo. Zato sem na začetku pomislila, da so ti ljudje bipolarni. En dan so zelo jezni, drugi dan veseli. Čez nekaj časa sem dojela, da niso jezni, temveč da je to normalen izraz na obrazu Slovencev. Včasih sem mislila, da se ljudje kregajo, čeprav so se normalno pogovarjali. To je zaradi tega, ker se ljudje ne smejiyo toliko kot v Latinski Ameriki. V Venezueli je vljudno, če se pogovarjaš z nasmehom.

PREKLINJANJE

V Slovenijo sem kot študent prišel kar nekaj let nazaj. Bil sem v študentskem domu, kjer smo se družili v prostorih kuhinje. Ko prideš v novo državo, se ponavadi najprej naučiš kletvic. Tako je bilo tudi pri meni, poznal sem jih kar nekaj. Kar me je šokiralo, je bila količina kletvic, ki je prihajala iz ust deklet. Vsaka druga beseda je bila kletvica. Prav prizadelo me je. Neko punco sem vprašal, zakaj toliko preklinjajo, pa mi je rekla: »To je za nas kot dobro jutro.« To je nekaj, kar še vedno težko sprejemem. Tudi preklinjanja družinskih članov se ne morem navaditi. Saj tudi pri nas preklinjamo, ampak ne toliko, sploh ne ženske. Tudi družinskih članov ne preklinjamo. Če je kletvica povezana z družinskim članom, bo mogoče sledil velik konflikt.

KA KOS' I MAMA?

Poklical sem svojo mamo v Iran. Rekla mi je, naj ji povem nekaj po slovensko. Rekel sem: »Kako si?« In ona me kregala, ker preklinjam. "Kos" - je v jeziku farsi namreč vulgaren izraz za ženski spolni organ. Zelo sem se smejal tudi, ko sem slišal, da imate ptico, ki ji pravite "kos", ali pa ponudite "kos" pice.

VELIKI KIR

Pogovarjal sem se z gospo o "Korošu velikem", kot ga mi imenujemo. To je ustanovitelj perzijskega imperija. Vprašal sem jo, ali je že slišala zanj. Gospa je odvrnila: »Seveda sem, Veliki Kir!« Bil mi je malo neprijetno in bil sem malo šokiran. Kir v jeziku farsi namreč pomeni vulgaren izraz za moški spolni organ.

ROKOVANJE

Bila sem na srečanju z arabskimi ženskami. Ena izmed žensk je prišla pozno, ko smo bili že vsi zbrani. Sedeli smo v krogu in ona je šla do vseh, stisnila roko in se predstavila. Na dogodku smo bile ženske in en prevajalec. Ko je prišla do njega, je stegnila roko, vendar jo je, ko je opazila, da je moški, hitro umaknila, dala na prsa in nadaljevala z rokovanjem z ženskami. Nekateri muslimani se ne bodo rokovali z nasprotnim spolom. Namesto tega bodo dali svojo roko na prsa in rahlo pokimali z glavo.

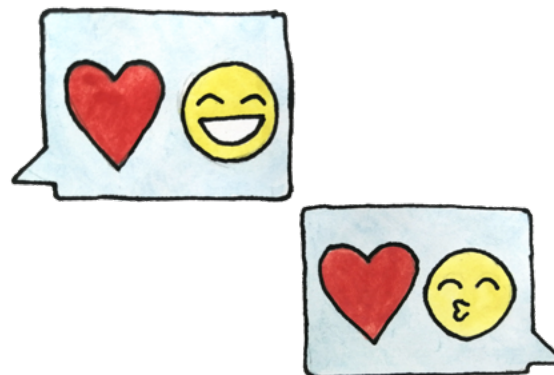
OČESNI STIK

V Eritreji se med rokovanjem s sogovornikom izogibamo pogleda v oči, saj to ni vljudno. V Sloveniji pa sem opazil, da je očesni stik izredno pomemben. Včasih postane že malo čudno. Na primer med nazdravljanjem je potrebno vsakega v skupini pogledati v oči. Če je v skupini veliko ljudi, je to zelo dolg in kompliciran proces.



SRČKI IN POLJUBČKI

Dopisovala sem se s fantom iz Irana, ki sem ga učila slovenščino. V njegovih sporočilih je bilo veliko šopkov rož, "emojijev" s srčki in takih, ki pošiljajo poljube. Počutila sem se neprijetno, saj sem razumela te simbole kot znak ljubezni, zato sem začela omejevati stike z njim. Potem sem videla njegovo objavo na Instagramu, pod katero je bilo morje takih "emojijev" s strani moških in žensk, na kar je odgovarjal z istimi "emojiji". Zatem sem mu povedala, da mi je bilo neprijetno, in zatrdil mi je, da je to zanj samo način komunikacije in do mene ne goji nobenih ljubezenskih čustev.



DRŽANJE ZA ROKE

Moj prijatelj, Slovenec, je šel v Indijo. Ko se je vrnil, me je vprašal, ali je v Indiji veliko gejev. Vprašal sem ga: »Zakaj?« Povedal mi je, da je videl veliko moških, ki se držijo za roke in med sprehajanjem po ulici objamejo drug drugega čez ramena. Razložil sem mu, da verjetno niso geji, temveč le prijatelji in je to običajna prijateljska gesta. Podobno je v Bangladešu. Preden sem prišel v Slovenijo, sploh nisem pomislil, da bi kdo lahko držanje za roke interpretiral kot znak homoseksualnosti.

V nekaterih kulturah se prijateljska bližina med osebami istega spola izraža veliko bolj odprto kot v Sloveniji. V Iranu se moški poljubijo na lice, ko se srečajo, v Indiji in Bangladešu se pripadniki istega spola držijo za roke, v Jordaniji se moški med seboj nazivajo z "ljubi moj". V Sloveniji te geste pomenijo nekaj več kot le prijateljstvo. Pozdravni objem je običajen med prijatelji ali sorodniki, sicer pa fizični stiki niso običajni. Mnogi naši sogovorniki so omenjene naklonjenosti po prihodu v Slovenijo opustili.

DOTIK

Bila sem na dogodku, na katerem so bile večino Arabke. Med nami je bila tudi ena Slovenka. Arabke se rade dotikamo drugih žensk, za nas je to popolnoma normalno. Slovenki pa je bilo to neprijetno. Med dogodkom ji je ena izmed Arabk položila roko v naročje. Slovenka me je pogledala in me vprašala: »Ali se spogleduje z mano?«

NATAKARJI IN TLESKANJE S PRSTI

V baru smo želeli naročiti in smo proti natakarju tlesknili s prsti. Videti je bil zelo nezadovoljen. V Sloveniji je narediti kaj takega zelo nespoštljivo, v Eritreji pa je takšna gesta popolnoma primerna.



HRANA IN PIJAČA

Hrana je del človeškega življenja, ki je resnično skupen prav vsem in je ključen del našega preživetja. Hkrati nam velikokrat nudi užitek in predstavlja občutek zadovoljstva ter medsebojnega povezovanja. Načini dojemanja hrane in njene priprave pa se razlikujejo glede na prisotnost določenih surovin na območju, vsebino babičinih nasvetov in seveda glede na osebni okus.



KROMPIR Z RIŽEM

Prijatelj v Sloveniji je bil šokiran, ko me je videl jesti krompir in riž skupaj. Povedal mi je, da tega tukaj ne delajo. Po drugi strani sem bil presenečen nad količino kruha, ki ga pojedete, kruh je povsod. In kvaliteta je včasih zelo slaba, prodajalci pa vam prodajajo star in trd kruh. V Bangladešu je kruh vedno tako mehek, topel in svež. V slovenski kuhinji manjka tudi začimb in je zelo medla. Imate veliko kisle hrane, kot je recimo kislo zelje, ampak razumem njen namen. V Bangladešu nam ni treba pripravljati ozimnice.

TI PIJEŠ PIVO?

Ko smo s prijatelji sedeli v kavarni in sem naročila pivo, so me vsi šokirano pogledali. Sem muslimanka iz Sirije in vsi so vedno presenečeni, ko

me vidijo, da pijem pivo ali vino. Tudi za nas je to nekaj normalnega. Kar je presenetilo mene, je, da pijete alkohol pri kosilu ali večerji. V Siriji se je pilo ob vikendih.

BUREK IN SOLATA

Slovenci jedo veliko hitre hrane in pekovskih izdelkov, kot so pica, burek, kebab, česar v Kongu ne jemo. S hrano smo zelo povezani. Pripravljamo in kuhamo jo zelo počasi. Pri tem moški in ženska sodelujeta, končni rezultat pa je zelo dober. Enkrat sem skuhal liste manioke (oz. juke) in jih dal poskusiti varnostniku v azilnem domu. Najprej je bil zelo previden, ko pa je hrano poskusil, je rekel: »O, mama moja!«, vzел v roke žlico in začel jesti.

RIŽ IN OLJE

Vaši hrani manjka začimb in v njej ni dovolj olja. V Iranu je težko najti hrano brez olja. A zaradi tega je okusnejša. Zaradi pomanjkanja olja v hrani tukaj nimam občutka, da je že skuhana. Prav tako ne znate dobro pripraviti riža. Riž in olje zmešaš in pustiš stati dve uri. Potem zavreš vodo in daš vanjo mešanico riža z oljem. Po petnajstih minutah riž odcediš, potem pa ga spet zmešaš z oljem in ga skuhaš na pari. Po tem postopku dobiš zelo dober riž, ki se ne lepi. Iranska hrana potrebuje za pripravo dolgo časa, vsebuje veliko različnih sestavin, postopkov in začimb.

POVSOD VRTOVI

Opazil sem veliko podobnosti z našo kulturo. Imate veliko vrtov, ki jih opazimo tudi v stanovanjski sooseski, kjer so rožne gredice, zelenjava in začimbe. Nekateri kuhinjski pripomočki so podobni našim. Šel sem v etnografski muzej, da

bi izvedel kaj o slovenski kulturi. Miza, na kateri ste zamesili kruh, je zelo podobna naši. Tudi hrano shranjujemo v enakih posodah.

SLADKORNE KOCKE

Čeprav drugače pijemo čaj, ga tudi v Iranu imenujemo "čaj". V Iranu pijemo črni čaj in imamo različne vrste. Ko začnemo piti čaj, vanj namočimo sladkorno kocko, da se malo stopi, potem pa damo kocko v usta. Na tak način lahko hkrati okušamo sladko in grenko.

JESTI Z ROKAMI

V Siriji imamo nekaj tradicionalne hrane, ki se jo lahko je samo z namakanjem kruha -- temu se reče 'tahmis'. Nekateri ljudje v Sloveniji so precej šokirani, ko vidijo, da tako jem.

PROCES KAVE

Tako kot Slovenci tudi Eritrejci obožujemo pitje kave, le da mi iz tega naredimo celo ceremonijo. Pravzaprav se imenuje eritrejska kavna ceremonija in se izvaja dnevno. Ko te nekdo v Sloveniji povabi na kavo, greš v kavarno, kjer naročiš kavo, jo spiješ in se pogovarjaš kakšno uro. V Eritreji se zbere veliko ljudi, ki kavo pijejo več ur. Najprej na ognju popražimo zelena kavna zrna. Medtem vsak prisoten kavo povonja in komentira, kako diši. Potem zrna ročno zmeljemo v lesnem ali keramičnem mlinčku. Nato damo kavo v lonec, ki se mu reče 'dжебena' - zaradi tega imena sem tukaj doživel par zabavnih presenečenj - in jo trikrat kuhamo. Kavo nalijemo v majhne skodelice do vrha. Če tega ne obvladaš, lahko nastane zmešnjava. Kavo pijemo v štirih rundah, vsaka ima svoje ime. Prva se imenuje 'awel' (tudi beseda pomeni prva), druga 'kaleyati in jo lah-

ko pijejo tudi otroci. Tretji rečemo 'berek', kar pomeni blažena, četrto pa imenujemo 'dereja'. Vsaka runda je šibkejša od prejšnje, saj je voda vedno prelita čez isto kavno usedlino. Kavno pijemo s sladkorjem, zraven pa naredimo sladke kokice.

BONTON PRI MIZI

Bila sem šokirana, ko sem videla, da si za mizo brišete nosove. Vzamete prtiček in si obrišete nos. V Venezueli gremo na stranišče in to naredimo tam. In ko pijete pivo, rignete naglas, včasih celo pri kosilu.

NAPAČNE PREDSTAVE O MIGRANTIH

Pot se konča s sprejetjem lokalne družbe. Nekateri se počutijo sprejeti s strani Slovencev in da so našli svoje mesto v novi družbi. Marsikateri so si ustvarili družine in imajo dobro socialno mrežo ljudi, ki so jim pripravljene nuditi pomoč, kar bistveno olajša proces vključevanja v družbo in družbene integracije. Ne smemo namreč pozabiti, da je integracija dvosmerni proces. V vlogi gostiteljev moramo biti pripravljene sprejeti ljudi, ki so prišli sem ali pa jim vsaj dati priložnost. Nekateri izmed sogovornikov so nam zaupali pozitivne izkušnje, spet drugi so bili šokirani, saj jih »nihče ni pripravil na rasizem v Evropi. Pogosto tako lahko slišimo tudi: »Veš, da tukaj ne smeš delati slabih stvari?«, »Pojdi nazaj, od koder si prišel,« ali »Kaj sploh delaš tukaj?« Trudim se, da mi ti komentarji ne pridejo do živega, ampak je težko. Ponavadi rečem samo: »Oprostite,« in se umaknem. Ampak mislim, da se mi te stvari ne dogajajo zato, ker sem migrant ali begunec, temveč zaradi moje temne polti.«

Slovenija je majhna ter precej neznana država. Slovenci smo vajeni razlagati, kje in kaj je Slovenija in da ni Slovaška. Člani ekipe smo že slišali vprašanja, kot "Ali je Slovenija v Srbiji?" in "Ali je Slovenija v Afriki?" Spomnimo se tudi šale o bivšemu predsedniku ZDA Georgeu Bushu, ki želi napasti Slovenijo, vendar namesto tega napade Bratislavo. Slovenija je tudi etnično precej homogena država, sploh izven mest. Zaradi tega je lahko za nekatere ljudi videti neznane kulture kulturni šok sam po sebi! Zdaj prihajamo Slovenci v stik s kulturami, o katerih vemo zelo malo ali pa imamo o njih popolnoma napačno predstavo. Včasih so te predstave smešne, spet drugič se lahko končajo s predsodki in negativnimi dejanji. Vprašali smo svoje sogovornike, s kakšnimi napačnimi predstavami o sebi so se srečali v Sloveniji in kako so se izrazile.

SEM SI PRIŠEL Z LETALOM?!

Peljali smo se na izlet z avtobusom. Prijatelju, ki je sedel poleg mene, sem pokazal letališče. Slovenec, ki je bil z nami, me je slišal in bil presenečen, da vem, kje je letališče. Še bolj presenečen je bil, ko sem mu rekel, da sem prišel v Slovenijo z letalom. Podobno se mi je zgodilo tudi pri zdravniku. Ne vem, ali ljudje mislijo, da smo vsi priplavali sem ali pripešali. Čeprav je mnogo prosilcev za mednarodno zaščito in beguncev prišlo do Slovenije po izjemno zahtevni, nevarni in težki poti, nismo vsi preplavali morja, prehodili gozdov in preplezali gora.



ZANIMIV IZLET

Delala sem kot prostovoljka. S skupino približno tridesetih Eritrejcev smo šli na izlet po Ljubljani. Peljali smo jih v center in na grad. Eritrejci imajo temnejšo polt. Ko smo šli na avtobus, so vsi strmeli v nas, kar se mi je zdelo čudno. Doma sem vprašala svojo družino in partnerja, ali so Slovenci rasisti. Razložili so mi, naj si tega ne razlagam kot rasizem, temveč radovednost. Slovencem je nenavadno videti toliko temnopoltih ljudi v skupini, saj že posameznika redkokdaj srečaš.

NISEM BEGUNEC

Ko me ljudje vidijo, pogosto mislijo, da sem begunec. Tudi policisti me velikokrat ustavijo, saj domnevajo, da sem prosilec za mednarodno zaščito. Vendar nisem. V Slovenijo sem prišel kot študent, tako kot mladi iz Slovenije odidejo

študirat v druge države. Tudi sam rad potujem in spoznavam nove kulture, enako kot Slovenci. Vendar zaradi moje malo temnejše polti ljudje domnevajo, kdo sem. Tudi varnostniki v trgovini mi pogosto sledijo.

TERORISTI

Ljudje včasih mislijo, da smo teroristi ali da podpiramo teroriste. Stal sem pred šolo, na kateri sem obiskoval tečaj slovenščine. Mimo je šel mlad par. Punca me je pogledala in rekla: »Ti si terorist.«

ODNOS DO ŽENSK

V Sloveniji sem imel punco. Povabila me je na družinsko večerjo. Ko smo se usedli za mizo, je njena babica rekla: »A te nisem opozorila, da so nevarni?« Babica ni vedela, da razumem slovensko. Vprašal sem jo, ali misli, da smo vsi teroristi. Potem se mi je opravičila, vendar sem bil razočaran, saj je bila zelo izobrazena ženska. Slišal sem, da tepemo ženske in jih ne pustimo iz hiše. To je nekaj, s čimer se ne strinjamo, nekaj, v kar nas hoče prisiliti režim, proti kateremu moški in ženske aktivno protestiramo. Večina Irank v Sloveniji ne nosi hijaba, hodi v službe, se svobodno giba. Nekatere so muslimanke, nekatere kristjanke, nekatere ateistke. Vedno smo spoštovali ženske, zadnjih 40 let se vse poslabšuje. Pred tem pa smo imeli cesarice, pesnice in pisateljice, ki so uživale visoko stopnjo spoštovanja med ljudmi.

ALI IMATE ELEKTRIKO?

Nekateri ljudje so me vprašali, če imamo asfaltirane ceste in elektriko. Neko dekle me je vprašalo, ali sem imel doma elektriko. Pošalil sem se

in ji rekel, da imamo samo sveče. Verjela mi je. Nekateri res mislijo, da smo prišli iz puščave ali da smo nešolani reveži, ki so prišli iz gozdov, da krademo Slovencem denar. Prišli smo zaradi pomanjkanja svobode, vendar za napačne predstave ne krivim ljudi, temveč medije. Ljudje ne vedo, da je Iran izjemno razvita država. V ekonomskem smislu sem bil zelo dobro preskrbljen, boljše kot bom kadarkoli v Sloveniji.

KJE JE VAŠ HIJAB?

Peljala sem se z avtobusom in neka gospa me je vprašala, od kod sem. Povedala sem ji, da sem iz Sirije, gospa pa mi je rekla: »O, nimate hijaba?« Sirija je kulturno zelo pestra država z 22 milijoni prebivalcev. V nekaterih družinah moški nadzorujejo ženske, v drugih, kot sem jaz, pa ne. V Alepu, ki je le eno od mest, lahko najdete naselje, kjer ženske ne smejo govoriti z moškimi, če niso člani njihove družine, v sosednjem naselju pa se boste počutili, kot da ste v Evropi.

NUDISTIČNA PLAŽA

Čeprav obstaja manjšina žensk, ki nosijo hijab ali burke, mislim, da so v Tuniziji ženske bolj slečene kot oblečene. Ljudje so zelo presenečeni, ko izvedo, da imamo celo nudistično plažo.

NEVARNOST

Včasih se mi zdi, da ljudje mislijo, da sem nevaren ali da jih bom oropal, saj velikokrat opazim, da ljudje prečkajo cesto, ko me vidijo. Tudi v trgovinah mi vedno sledijo varnostniki. V trgovini smo s prijatelji iz Eritreje imeli polne vozičke hrane in pijače. Nekaj smo praznovali. Na blagajni smo plačali 100 €, vendar nas varnostnik ni izpustil iz oči, dokler se ni prepričal, da smo plačali. Potem

je šel pred trgovino na odmor in prižgal cigareto. Če sem s slovenskimi prijatelji, se mi to nikoli ne zgodi.

RADOVEDNI DEČEK

S sinom sva se peljala na avtobusu. Ker je zelo radoveden, me je ves čas spraševal: »Kaj je to? ... Kaj je tisto?« Govoril je malo v jeziku farsi, malo v slovenščini. Starejši gospod naju je slišal in začel grdo govoriti o beguncih. Rekel je: »Povsod so, pa še svojih otrok nočejo naučiti govoriti slovensko.«

NAJETI STANOVANJE

Zelo težko je najeti stanovanje. Ljudje spremeni-jo mnenje o tebi, ko vidijo, da na tvoji osebni izkaznici piše "begunec". Ko smo z družino iskali stanovanje, so nam nekateri kar naravnost rekli, da nočejo oddajati stanovanja tujcem in beguncem. Pogovarjal sem se tudi z gospodom, ki oddaja svoje stanovanje. Povedal mi je, da je imel slabe izkušnje s tujci. Vendar nismo vsi enaki.

NAKUP POMARANČ

Z družino smo v trgovini kupovali pomaranče. Želeli smo dobre pomaranče, zato smo jih prijeli v roke, pogledali in potežkali. Mimo je prišla gospa in komentirala: »Sem so prišli, zdaj pa še izbirajo dobre pomaranče.«



(ŠOKANTNI) INCIDENT

Bili smo v centru Ljubljane. Do nas je pristopila skupina deklet in fantov. Bili so pijani. Začeli so nas spraševati: »Kaj delate tukaj?» Pomislil sem: »Pa ne spet!» Ponavadi, ko me kdo vpraša, kaj delam tukaj, rečem, da sem študent, in začnem govoriti francosko, tako da me nihče ne razume. Vendar je moj prijatelj storil napako in povedal, da smo iz azilnega doma. Vzdušje se je takoj spremenilo. Fantje v skupini so postali agresivni, prijatelju so zbili pijačo iz rok in se hoteli tepsti z njim. Prišli so policisti in začeli spraševati, kaj se dogaja. Pričakoval sem, da bodo vprašali fante, ki so nas napadli, a so namesto tega zahtevali naše dokumente. Zdi se mi, da policisti vedno mislijo, da počnem nekaj narobe, in imajo napačno predstavo o meni zaradi barve moje kože.

Ob zaključku branja se morda počutite zmedeni. Predstavljene zgodbe so si včasih nasprotujoče in vzbujajo več vprašanj, kot pa ponujajo odgovorov, vendar je to njihov namen. Ko razglabljamo o kulturi, se moramo venomer zavedati, da ne obstajamo "mi" in "oni", temveč množica raznolikih "nas". Geografske, nacionalne in verske identitete niso nikoli homogene, saj če tujka opazi razlike med Ptujem in Ljubljano v državi z dvema milijonoma prebivalcev, si lahko predstavljate, kakšne razlike obstajajo, kadar govorimo o arabski, muslimanski, eritrejski, kongovski ... ali celo migrantski identiteti. Vse te identitete znotraj sebe vsebujejo bogato in ogromno raznolikost, ki smo se je v tej knjižici zgolj dotaknili.

Upamo, da bo lahko bralec po branju knjižice uporabil pridobljene informacije v vsakdanjem življenju in postal bolj odprt do spoznavanja drugih kultur. Želimo si, da bi knjižnica v njem zanetila raziskovalno iskrico, ki ga bo gnala v samostojno raziskovanje različnih načinov življenja, ki obstajajo na tem planetu.

Po branju knjižice, poskušajte rešiti kviz o medkulturnih razlikah. Vprašanja so namenjena tako lokalni (slovenski populaciji) kot migrantski populaciji. Vprašanja se lahko naključno zbirajo glede sestavo skupin, ki rešujejo kviz. Cilj kviza pa je vedno enak – učenje, načenjanje razprave in zabava.

1. Kaj se ob kavi postreže v Eritreji?

- a. Sladoled.
- b. Piškoti.
- c. Kokice.

Pravilen odgovor: Sveže pripravljene sladke kokice.

2. Kaj je patronim?

- a. Priimek, ki izhaja iz očetovega imena.
- b. Družinski duh varuh.
- c. Verski objekt, ki se ga najpogosteje najde v cerkvi.

Pravilen odgovor: Priimek, ki izhaja iz očetovega imena.

3. Če se nekdo kurdskega porekla potreplja po glavi, kaj to pomeni?

- a. Nekaj sem pozabil.
- b. Imam te v mislih.
- c. To je neumno.

Pravilen odgovor: Imam te v mislih.

4. Obiščeš prijatelja iz Bangladeša, ki ti skuha kavo. Kako se mu zahvališ?

- a. Rečeš "Namaste".
- b. Rečeš "Ne bi ti bilo treba tega storiti".
- c. Rečeš "Drugič jaz kuham kavo".

Pravilen odgovor: Rečeš "ne bi ti bilo treba tega storiti".

5. Kaj imajo skupnega naslednje letnice: 2021, 2012, 1399 in 1441?

- a. Nič.
- b. Gre za isto leto vendar po različnih koledarjih.
- c. Leta obeležujejo leto, ko so določene države pridobile svojo neodvisnost.

Pravilen odgovor: Gre za isto leto po različnih koledarjih. V Sloveniji sledimo gregorijanskemu koledarju, po katerem smo začeli šteti z rojstvom Jezusa Kristusa 2021 let nazaj. V Eritreji sledijo Geez koledarju, po katerem naj bi se Jezus rodil 2012 let nazaj. V Iranu in Afganistanu štejejo leto 1399 po Sončnem Hijri koledarju, ki zaznamuje migracijo preroka Mohameda iz Meke v Medino imenovano "hijrah". Številni muslimani sledijo luninemu Hijri koledarju, ki postavlja "hijrah" 1441 let v preteklost.

6. Kaj pomeni, dati starejšega člana družine v dom za ostarele v državah kot so Palestina, Sirija ali Iran?

- a. Nekaj nujnega.
- b. Znak bogastva, saj so domovi za ostarele zelo dragi.
- c. Sramota za celo družino.

Pravilen odgovor: Sramota za celo družino. Ker so starši skrbeli za tebe, je čast da lahko zdaj ti skrbiš za njih.

7. Če nekdo iz Eritreje ne naredi stika z očmi med rokovanjem, kaj vam s tem sporoča?

- a. Kaže da ga ne zanimate.
- b. To se zgodi samo med rokovanjem z nasprotnim spolom.
- c. Kaže spoštovanje.

Pravilen odgovor: Kaže spoštovanje. Med rokovanjem v Eritreji je vljudno pogledati stran.

8. Ste ženska, ki čaka na avtobusni postaji. Mlad fant iz Eritreje pristopi do vas in reče: "Živijo mami, ali mi lahko poveste, kdaj prihaja naslednji avtobus?" Katera od naslednjih trditev je pravilna?

- a. Fant vam izkazuje spoštovanje.
- b. Fant vas osvaja.
- c. Fant se norčuje iz vas.

Pravilen odgovor: Fant vam izkazuje spoštovanje.

9. Prijatelj iz Slovenije vas povabi na kosilo za svoj rojstni dan. Natakak prinese račun, kdo ponavadi plača?

- a. Tisti, ki praznuje rojstni dan.
- b. Vsak plača zase.
- c. Plačajo vsi razen tistega, ki praznuje.

Pravilen odgovor: Plača tisti, ki praznuje.

10. Kako se v Sloveniji pozdravi?

- a. Trden stisk roke in stik z očmi.
- b. Objem in poljub na lica.
- c. Rahel dvig glave v kombinaciji z besednim pozdravom "živjo".
- d. Vse od naštetega, odvisno od situacije.

Pravilen odgovor: Vse od naštetega, odvisno od situacije.

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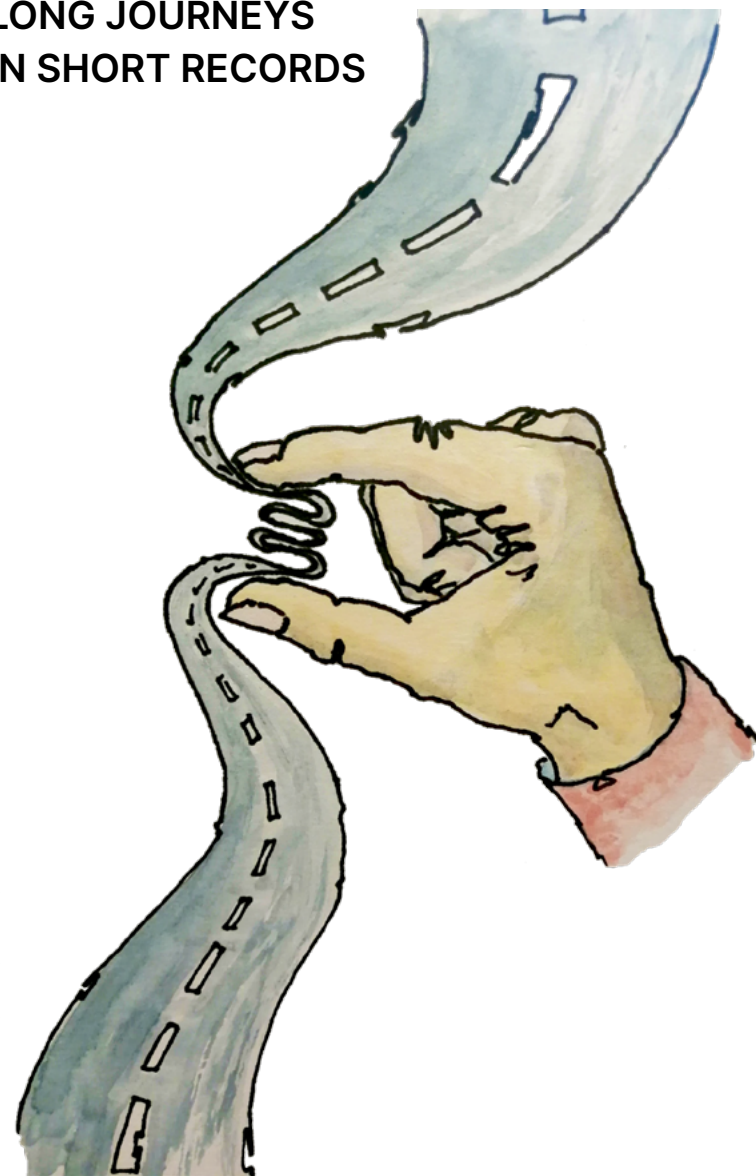
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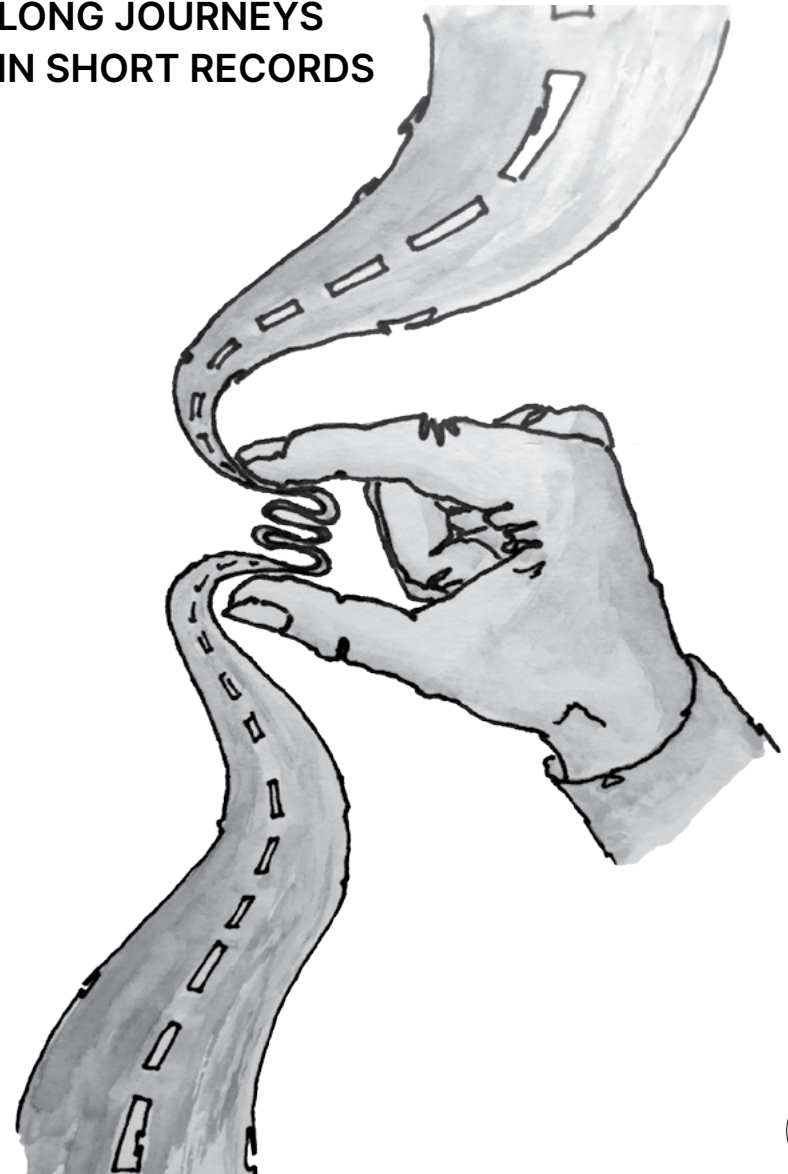
project #Mi2/Us2

LONG JOURNEYS IN SHORT RECORDS



project #Mi2/Us2

LONG JOURNEYS IN SHORT RECORDS



FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE RED CROSS

The basic principles are the main guidelines of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as they reflect the values and skills needed to implement the humanitarian mission of the Slovenian Red Cross, which is to 'prevent and alleviate human suffering and protect its dignity in all circumstances'.

HUMANITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace among all peoples.

IMPARTIALITY

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

NEUTRALITY

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

INDEPENDENCE

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

UNITY

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

UNIVERSALITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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FOREWORD

The booklet in front of you presents the results of many conversations in which the people who have left their home countries to find a new life somewhere else and the people that they came in contact with shared their stories and experiences. There are many ways and various reasons for a person to leave their home country behind. After all, it is a well-known fact, for example, that people living in Slovenia tend to love to travel abroad, be it for vacation, work, internship, educational opportunities, or love. However, there are also several other reasons, or more precisely causes, such as war, armed conflict, lack of freedom of speech, belonging to a persecuted ethnic group, hunger, or some other unfortunate chain of events that can make someone leave their home behind and start a new journey. A journey towards a hopefully better life. A journey that in many cases leads a person to an unfamiliar society or culture. After all, these journeys are often affected by unpredictable realities of migration policies of the 21st century, where there are rarely opportunities to make informed decisions and choices.

For all of the above-mentioned reasons, this booklet also intends to address two groups: the people belonging to diverse societies of the so-called destination and transition countries and the people on the move. Our aim is to offer an insightful read especially to the local population in Slovenia and, equally so, to the people on the move who might be considering either a short or a long stay in Slovenia. We believe that the main takeaway for the first group is the ability to gain an insight into the cultures that the people who have permanently or temporarily joined us come from. Perhaps it can even show something new about our own culture, as the shared insights of the interviewees often (also) holds a mirror up to our local culture. We hope the booklet might offer the second group an equally insightful way to familiarise themselves with the culture and society in Slovenia. After all, the stories and anecdotes gathered here have one thing in common: they aim to foster intercultural understanding.

It is in this context that we also intend to understand and use the term integration, which to us represents a dynamic process that includes a number of actors and requires mutual engagement by all members of society in the economic, political, social, and cultural life, with the intent of facilitating effective participation and fostering a shared and inclusive sense of belonging at all levels (OSCE, 2012). It is on the path of integration that

cultural shocks tend to appear. After all, applying our cultural values to a new cultural context tends to bring with it a possibility of a clash caused by mismatched assumptions and expectations, but also an opportunity for enrichment.

Between 1995 and 2010, we saw that the highest numbers of migrants and refugees were coming from the Western Balkans and that their countries of origin had once belonged to Yugoslavia (Government of RS: Migration strategy, 2019, p. 28). However, two changes took place in the second part of this period. Firstly, between 2004 and 2015, the numbers of international protection seekers greatly decreased. Secondly, from the year 2010 onwards, the countries of origin slowly started to better reflect other regional and global crises that had caused such global migration shifts.

The year 2015, which also saw the beginning of the so-called refugee crisis, brought a great increase in migrations. The structure of the incoming migratory flow was, for the first time, largely represented by the non-European countries of origin. In large part, this was due to the conflict in Syria, which caused a great increase in the numbers of asylum seekers in Slovenia, which, number-wise, had a similar situation following the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian war. Thus, the year 2015 can and needs to be better understood as a change or the beginning of a new challenge in terms of cultural awareness. After all, the scope of knowledge and understanding that people generally had, and still have, of the cultural aspects of this new migratory dynamic is much lower. In connection with the rising wave of populism, it holds a risk of being utilized to produce fear of the different—fear of the unknown and the ‘other’, which often tends to translate into people on the move. (Doupona Horvat, 1996).

For example, the members of this project have discussed the amount of knowledge we have about cultural differences and that we are generally more familiar with those cultures that are close to us geographically and historically—like ex-Yugoslavian cultures. We are also more familiar with cultures that are covered more in the mainstream media. A good example is the United States of America. We know so much about it, even though it is farther away than Syria.

The booklet represents positive and negative experiences, anecdotes and stories that occur when different cultures come into contact with one another. They were shared by the people who were and are on the move, who were and are taking long journeys, as well as the local people in Slovenia, like us, (young) volunteers, who are all active members of this ‘multi-shareholder’ process called integration, which was categorized in

the three following parts that represent the journey an individual partakes before including oneself into a new society.

The first part starts with the journey, which, in many cases, marks the beginning. However, it is worth keeping in mind that the beginning of a journey often begins mentally long before the actual material journey; before physical steps are taken. This involves many initial obstacles one must face before even thinking of integrating, like choosing the migratory path or getting a work permit. This part of the booklet also includes a glossary of terms that are usually used when discussing policy-related aspects of different kinds of migration. What follows in the second part are accounts of the journey of adapting—adapting to people, a new language, a new way of functioning or a new community, among many others. Thus, the focus also moves to the cultural shocks, their differences and similarities that can be seen in personal anecdotes and are usually a result of cultural misunderstandings. Last but not least, the third part shows insights into the last and often also very difficult part of the journey—finding acceptance and their own space within the community. That is where feelings often tend to flow in both directions, range from cultural shock to mutual misunderstandings and often end up in either conflict or laughter. This last part consists of our local stereotypical observations, our knowledge and understanding of the migrant population, the manifestation of these views and the consequences they may have.

A reader may thus choose an anecdote from any part of the book he or she might find interesting and read the book in any order. The thematic parts are also followed by a quiz which gathers the information presented in the booklet, offers some interesting cultural trivia that has been shared during our conversations with people and shows the richness of culture that our global society possesses.

METHODOLOGY

The booklet is a product of a team effort of young volunteers, Ajda, Baran, Erazem, Eva, Tija, Veronika and Sirak, who found themselves heavily influenced by the ideas and experiences gained through volunteering for the Red Cross project ESIRAS¹. While the roles of our team members on the project varied, the project allowed all of us to meet people, hear their stories and learn an incomprehensible amount from them. In short, it made us realize that the differences in our cultural backgrounds can be just another frontier on the way to gaining mutual understanding. However, it goes without saying that these same cultural differences have also caused a great many stories, several gray hairs and made some parts of life harder at times as well.

The project, ‘#Mi2’ or ‘Us two’, grew out of our shared experience aimed at extending the ideational foundations of the project—fostering intercultural understanding that represents the basis of successful integration. To achieve that, it needs to be acknowledged and accepted on all sides and by everyone involved that our differences enrich us. It is for this reason that we have decided to add a small stone to this challenging project—the integration of diverse societies—by creating a collection of insights gathered from the participants involved in the process.

The stories were gathered with focus groups and interviews, after March 2020 mostly in the form of Zoom or WhatsApp interviews, since we were unable to perform the interviews in person, due to the health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews took the form of a half-structured interview, which means that some initial questions were prepared beforehand, but generally they were left open to enable us to gain insights and stories of the people we spoke with. Our interviewees represent the category of ‘people on the move’, as we did not want to limit ourselves to a specific migrant category. Together we interviewed 23 people on the move, of which 17 were male, 6 were female; 7 were asylum seekers, 11 had received refugee status and 5 were people who came here for other reasons. Considering geographical representation, the interviewees came

¹ ESIRAS Project has supported asylum seekers and refugees in improving the conditions of their employability and social integration. The project was funded by the EU in collaboration with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Activities were implemented by 8 RC national societies in Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain and Slovenia.

from Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Palestine, Syria, Turkey (Kurds), Jordan, Venezuela and Tunisia. We also spoke with 7 volunteers of the Red Cross who have experience with working with migrants. For privacy and security reasons, a decision was made that the number of speakers from each individual country will not be disclosed, nor will any names, ages or other basic details, in order to ensure the required level of anonymity.

The shared stories and insights are, as we fully realize, in their essence, subjective personal accounts of events and the emotions connected with them. They are not our stories; they are stories that have been shared with us. We are deliberately presenting parts of them here as the voices of those who are living this process called integration. Therefore, verifying what was said was never our goal. Additionally, it has to be mentioned that the people interviewed are individuals and not absolute representatives of their culture and that they come from very diverse communities. When we talk about Eritrea, for example, we must keep in mind it has 9 official ethnic groups with distinct languages and cultures. When we speak about Syria we must realize that it is very diverse and that you can find cultural differences between different streets of the same city. The people we spoke to have shared their point of view about their homeland and their culture and their impressions of us, just as you could give a representation of your culture from your point of view. With this in mind, we are very happy with our results and we think that the project is a great result of multicultural cooperation.

We are trying to present the stories and (miss)connections in the most objective way possible. Please consider all the stories and explanations with this goal in mind: to make the world more free and inclusive for everyone. We wish you many good reflections and new adventures while reading.

WALK A MILE IN MY/THEIR SHOES

Before we start our journey together, we feel it is important to try and imagine some hardships that a person has had to face in their own country and how they may project onto their perception of Slovenia. A culture can be shaped by danger and war, meaning that people start to appreciate different things, such as feeling safe and freedom of expression.

» I feel much safer in Slovenia and I also feel better about my wife's safety. In Turkey, there are a lot of femicides, so it didn't even feel safe for her to be outside on her own. Here we feel different, I don't feel nervous that something might happen to us. There is also a big difference in expressing yourself. You can be whoever you want to be and you will not get in trouble for the things you can't affect, like your ethnicity. Concerning this, people in Slovenia are much more relaxed.

» I am a refugee in my own country. Imagine being a refugee in Celje. In 2008, the Israelis destroyed the electric companies, which means we have no electricity. We also have no drinking water. You have to buy bottled water and use a generator to get electricity. Some days you can get 4 hours of electricity, other days you can get 8 hours. We had a private generator, we could afford it. But we also have the most expensive petrol and diesel in the world, because we have to pay so many taxes. I bought an apartment in the most expensive and safest part of Gaza. But the constant fear of an attack was too much. I had to get away.

» You have safety and freedom in Slovenia. I can walk my dog at 11 p.m. and feel safe. In Venezuela, my parents have a house with a fence that is 3 meters high and on top there is an electric wire. This is something normal, which a lot of houses have. You can be killed for your car, your shoes, or even your phone. The feeling of safety is priceless for me.

FROM PAST TO PRESENT

Relocation and resettlement programs are an international instrument of providing protection to refugees while respecting principles of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibilities. In the EU, relocations are an expression of internal solidarity between member states, while resettlement is a humanitarian measure and expression of external solidarity towards the countries of origin in the region and solidarity towards refugees. Relocation programs are implemented with the aim of distributing refugees or applicants for international protection among the EU Member States once they are in the EU territory, most often in the form of relocation of the applicants for international protection from Italy and Greece (Zorko, 2020).

In this case, our interviewee's husband arrived in Slovenia before her and received international protection. After it was granted, his wife and kids received permanent residency permits and they were able to come to Slovenia.

First, let us take a look at the start of the path. Why and how did our interviewees get here? And what are the main obstacles that a person must cross to even begin the journey to become part of a new society? In this part, we also want to explain some terms that we often come across when discussing international protection.

I DIDN'T CHOOSE SLOVENIA, SLOVENIA CHOSE ME

At first, I wasn't thinking about where I want to go, I just knew Europe was a safe place. I got the information about this from the media, which only ever shows good things about Europe. I traveled from Eritrea to Ethiopia, where I lived for 1 year, then I went to Sudan for 2 years, Libya for 6 months and then I was in Italy for 2 months. In Italy, they asked me to write down 3 places that I would like to go to. I wrote down the UK, Belgium and France, because I knew other Eritreans were living there and I could find a community. They sent me to Slovenia with Flixbus. I didn't know anything about this country. I thought I was going to Slovakia. I didn't choose it. The country chose me as part of a relocation program. Before we went, they told us it was a good and clean country and that homosexuality was accepted here. My brother is a teacher in Eritrea and he knew about Slovenia, or at least where it is.

I FELL IN LOVE RIGHT AWAY

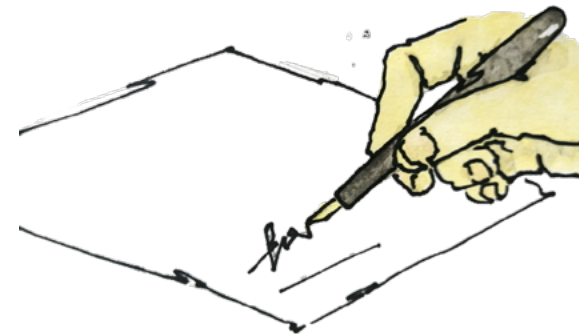
I came to Slovenia through family reunification. I had read books and searched for Slovenia on the internet. First I saw how small it is. But the real shock came when I got here. It was so beautiful, green and clean. I fell in love with Ljubljana and I am still in the honeymoon phase

A CHAT WITH ŽIŽEK

I didn't think about where I want to go, how it will be and what I will do. I had to leave my home overnight and I walked from Turkey to Slovenia, where they caught me and took my fingerprints. From then on, I had no choice but to stay in Slovenia. I tried to go to Switzerland, but they returned me to Slovenia because of the Dublin regulation. Now I am trying to find positive things about my new home. I love philosophy and I had heard about Slavoj Žižek before. Once I saw him drinking coffee in Ljubljana and I was so excited. I went to him and we had a little chat and I am still so happy to have experienced that.

WORKSHOP IN SLOVENIA

Before I came to Slovenia, I was working in Germany. In fact, I came to Slovenia as part of a workshop. But then something happened in my country and I asked for asylum in Slovenia. I didn't know anything about the asylum procedure then, I didn't know about Dublin, because of which I am now stuck in Slovenia.



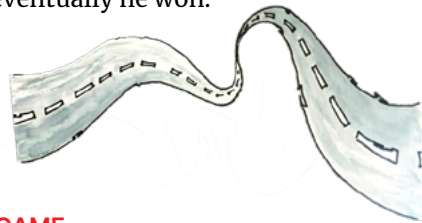
The Dublin Regulation regulates the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State (MS) responsible for examining an application for international protection (IP) lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person. The application is considered by a single MS, namely the one responsible according to the criteria of the Regulation. Where it is not possible to determine the responsible MS on the basis of these criteria, the first MS in which the application for IP was submitted is responsible. Any MS may reserve the right to send an applicant to a safe third country, subject to the rules and safeguards set out in Directive 2013/32 / EU (Legal-Informational Centre of NGOs, 2021). The Dublin Regulation (2013), also called Dublin III, is the central mechanism for establishing a common European asylum system. However, it seeks to limit the secondary movement, the so-called asylum shopping, of applicants for international protection, which is affected by different conditions for their reception. In practice, this means that the application can only be processed by one Member State (Mozetnić, 2016, p. 161).

HIDING ON A TRAIN

I traveled through Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia, all the way to Slovenia. It took me 3 years. I was stuck on a train carrying corn for 4 or 5 days. There were 5 or 6 people trapped with me on that wagon. We screamed for help and knocked on the walls of the wagon for someone to let us out. We thought the train was going to Slovenia but it was parked somewhere in Serbia.

A RELATIVELY EASY PATH

It took me 1,5 months to come to Slovenia. I walked the whole way from Iran, I walked through a 1 m thick blanket of snow for 12 hours and paid €7000 to get here. But my path was relatively easy compared to other people. My friend tried to go through the Slovenia-Croatia border 10 times, he was hiding beneath the truck on the axes of the wheels. He was playing 'the game' and eventually he won.



THE GAME

The worst memories are from Croatia. Once we walked for 12 days with only what we had in our backpacks. We walked 40 to 45 km per day, we got bad blisters on our feet, some people's toenails fell off. At the border, they beat me very badly, I felt pain in my ribs for a long time after that. When we tried to cross the Slovenia-Croatia border they stripped us to our underwear and burned our clothes. We had to run away in our underwear.

PUSHBACK

Because of my ethnic origin [Kurdish], there is a constant fear of being prosecuted or locked up. I didn't choose my ethnicity, I was born into it. Because I had to leave overnight, I didn't have a plan where to go and how to get there. Just somewhere safe. When I came to Slovenia, my first thought was fear of a pushback.

Ever since the end of the Cold War, more restrictive asylum laws and other measures have been seen in developed countries, based on the categorization of different groups of migrants, keeping them as close as possible to their countries of origin and restricting access to citizenship (Zavratnik Zimic, 2003, str. 29). In the framework of such policies, instead of providing assistance or protection in accordance with international legal obligations, emphasis is put on the importance of control and management of external borders and the prevention of so called illegal migration in the name of security (Kovač, 2003, p. 75). The principle of non-refoulement prohibits the return of applicants for international protection to a country where their life and liberty would be endangered and constitutes a common interest of human rights law, asylum law and international humanitarian law (McAdam, 2006, p. 1). Disabling international protection and the procedure for obtaining it, or requirements for initiating the procedure for obtaining it, or the requirements for initiating the procedure for obtaining it is one of the methods of impeding mobility. In this context, 'push backs' represent »illegal coercive operations in which the authorities deny people entry into or return them to another country from which they came, depriving them of procedural guarantees and the opportunity to apply for asylum.« (Amnesty International, 2018, p. 4).

WORK PERMIT

The path to receiving refugee status is very long. You have to wait a very long time. Some people wait for years. And for the first 9 months, you are not allowed to work, because you do not have a working permit, which you receive after 9 months, if during this time you didn't receive a negative decision regarding your refugee status. What can you do during these 9 months? Nothing. I tried to work, but I had to work illegally and I got caught and received a penalty. So you just stay at the asylum home and wait with €18 per month that you spend on cigarettes.

At the end of the summer of 2015, the mass movement of migrants who came daily from Turkey to the Greek islands, and from there after along Balkan migration route to the EU, has shaken the status quo of European migration policy. In September 2015 the great pressure on Europe has led to the opening of a corridor for faster and safer crossings between Greece and the target countries. On March 8, 2016, the corridor was closed. But the closure of the corridor did not mean the closure of the Balkan migration route (Brumen and Meh, 2016).

People in transit began to seek more clandestine and more dangerous paths towards the EU, which often include days of traveling under the cover of night, hiding in trucks, or clinging to freight trains (Border Violence Monitoring Network, 2020b)

EU law provides refugees with the same access to the labor market as EU citizens, while access to applicants for international protection is regulated differently. In France, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Slovakia access is possible after six months of applying for refugee status. In contrast, they are already allowed to be involved in seasonal work in catering or agriculture in Austria in the first six months (Državni zbor, 2020). In Slovenia, however, they have the right to access the labor market »nine months after applying, if they have not received the decision of the authorities and this delay cannot be attributed to the applicant.« (Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti, 87, člen).

I VOLUNTEER EVERY DAY

I have been living in Slovenia for more than a year and I volunteer in a retirement home for older adults. They trust me, are happy with my work and have even said that they would employ me. But even though I have been here for more than a year, I can't be more than a volunteer because I received my first negative decision about my status in less than 9 months. I want to work, I have a place that wants me to work for them, but Slovenia won't allow me to work.



We are now at the second stop in the journey. This part shows all the different aspects of human culture and the interesting twists that happen when people from diverse backgrounds meet. The chapter is structured thematically and includes subchapters about acts of miscommunication and observations, relationships, languages and body language, and, of course, food and drinks. In each of these parts are various anecdotes which shine a light on individual stories that we can all relate to in one form or another.

ACTS OF MISCOMMUNICATION AND OBSERVATIONS

Since the beginning of our kind, each person walks along their path right from the start of their life up until the end. Along the way, we meet all kinds of different people with whom we share many acts of communication and, of course, miscommunication.

Some actions are considered rude in one culture and polite in another (for example, not looking someone directly in the eye) or they even take on a whole new meaning. Like one of our interviewees said, "When you come to a new place, you are like a child. You don't know anything. You don't know the culture and you don't understand the language. Other people have to raise you." These can be very trivial actions, like another interviewee told us, "Before I came here, I was thinking about how to greet people, do I hug them and kiss them, as I do in Syria? How do I behave at the table, what manners are acceptable and how do people perceive time? Are they late, are they punctual? I had all these questions running through my mind."

In Slovenia, people can be quite particular about the way you address them. Especially when speaking Slovene, using a formal version of addressing someone is usually the norm 'vi' instead of 'ti'. It is a bit impersonal but necessary in formal situations such as CSD or even in the supermarkets.

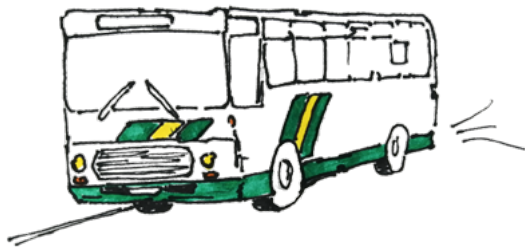
In this chapter, we share examples of these actions and general observations about our culture as seen through the eyes of our interviewees. Now let's have a look.

CLEANING LADY

I was going to Cene Štupar for Slovene language classes. I always said hello to the cleaning lady and she always said hello back. One time I said, "Hello, mommy," and she looked at me funny and after that, she stopped saying hello to me. In Eritrea, if you say "mommy" to an older female or "papa" to an older gentleman it means you are showing respect to them. But in Slovenia, you offend people or make them feel uncomfortable.

ON THE BUS

I was riding the bus. I was sitting and an elderly lady stood next to me. I asked her, "Would you like to sit down?" and she said no. I asked again and she said no. I asked a couple more times and then she went away and she looked angry. In Eritrea, if someone offers you something, you are supposed to decline the first couple of times even if you want it. This way you show that you are humble and the person who is asking shows their hospitality or goodwill.



WOULD YOU LIKE TEA OR COFFEE?

The opposite can also happen. We were in the orientation course and they offered us coffee and tea. We declined and no one asked us again, so we didn't get anything.



A SICK FRIEND

I had a friend in university who got sick, so I asked her every day how she is feeling. She got uncomfortable, because she thought I was in love with her, but I had no such feelings. It also happened that because a girl thought I was in love with her, she expressed her love for me. Which made me uncomfortable. I am a very friendly person, this is in my culture. My friendliness has been mistaken for romantic feelings. In Bangladesh, you are supposed to ask the person how they are feeling and bring them gifts until they start feeling better again. In Slovenia, this can be mistaken for romantic intention.

A ROMANTIC TRIP

One day I went to the seaside with some male and female friends. One of the female friends was nice to my male friend who is from an Arabic country. She talked to him, laughed at his jokes,

Something similar can happen with the older generation in Slovenia. We have probably all experienced our grandmothers not allowing us to leave their house until we are full of home-cooked food and they won't accept no for an answer. But when it comes to younger generations and formal occasions, people will usually only ask once. If you decline something once, it is enough. Excessive offering and asking may be considered intrusive.

but nothing romantic, she was just being nice and normal so he thought she was romantically interested in him and asked me to change seats with him because now he has to sit next to her. He told me this in Arabic, and I said, "Thank god no one understood you." Some of my friends, when they arrived in Slovenia from certain parts of certain Arabic countries, interpreted a girl talking to them, laughing at them, or maybe touching them in a sexual way. But you have to understand that not everyone is like this. There are different communities and it depends on how your parents raise you.

WASHING VEGETABLES

Once my coworker in a restaurant was washing vegetables. I wanted to thank him and I said, "Oh, you didn't have to do this," and he said, "Okay," and stopped washing them. I got confused. After all, I just wanted to thank him. Although we have a word for 'thank you' in Bangladesh, we don't use it. We say, "You didn't have to do this," and the other person should respond with, "It is my pleasure." Also, if you visit someone, you should say, "Sorry for being such a burden," and the other person should respond with, "No problem, it was my pleasure." And you always start the conversation by saying 'namaste' instead of hello which means 'I agree with your soul', because you want to start the conversation with something nice and positive.

WORKING ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

I went to a friend's birthday party. We were eating and drinking and in the end he wanted to pay for everything. I said to him, "It's your birthday, are you crazy?" But he insisted on paying for everyone. In Venezuela, when it is your birthday, it means it is your special day, you don't have to do

any work and pay for anything. But in Slovenia, you have to cook lunch for other people, work all day, invite everyone and pay for everything! When it was my birthday, my niece told me I have to invite them for lunch, but I said, "No, I am not cooking, it is my special day."



NEW SHOES

When I left Iran my mother gave me a pair of beautiful traditional Iranian shoes. My friend saw these shoes and complimented them. I asked her immediately, "Do you want them?" She said, "Yes," and took them! And I said, "Nooo, I didn't mean it, it's just something you say!" Then I asked my mother if she could send me another pair for my friend. In Iran, we have a form of polite speech called "taarof", which means when someone offers something to you, you have to decline 100 times and the other person has to keep offering it to you, until you accept it. It also means that when a person compliments something of yours, you are supposed to offer it to them, but they are not supposed to accept it.

This is similar in other Middle Eastern countries. If you are walking down the street and see something nice and mention that you like it, the other person will usually insist on buying it for you. Our interviewee from Syria showed us a Shisha in his apartment, which he complimented in a friend's apartment. Also, he told us a story that a friend of his told him he has a nice shirt. So he went home, washed it, ironed it and brought it back to him.

SIRENS

The first time I came to Ljubljana, it was a Saturday. I lived on the 5th floor of the asylum home. I woke up early in the morning and cleaned my whole room. Around 12 o'clock I made some coffee, sat down, put on some music and then I heard a siren. I looked out of the window and saw an army helicopter. I thought to myself, "This is it, Slovenia is at war." I packed my bag with the essentials and ran out of the building. I jumped 10 stairs at once to reach the front desk. I was in front of the building in 1 minute. When I came outside, the security guards looked at me like I was crazy. I explained I was from Palestine, they apologized for laughing and we became friends that day. In Palestine, I always had a packed bag with money, jewelry, toothbrush, clothes and documents, so I could run at any time.

In 2014, I was a paramedic. You work one shift as a driver, the second as a paramedic and you go to sleep the third. Someone threw a bomb, during the war, from the 5th floor. They were always throwing bombs. We went into the building to see what we can do. We found two or three generations dead. One family from the first floor escaped and one girl survived. I still have nightmares about this. It was so dark you couldn't see, so we had these lamps and we were picking up pieces of people. One of my coworkers went inside to get the light that we forgot and he heard some crying inside the house. I was outside, trying to calm the girl that I found. Everything was outside of her stomach, and she was grabbing me asking, "Am I going to die?" and I knew she was going to die soon. You can even smell this smell of the dead person. My coworker brought out a baby from the building and he put her in my arms. This was a 4-month-old baby. I saw that she had a rock in her mouth and I turned her over and patted her on the back, so that she would spit it out, and her back came off on my hand, it was melting, and her left arm had its skin lifted because she had so many burns. I went to the psychiatric hospital after that, but the psychiatrist lived in the same mess as me, so he couldn't help. Just one guy survived that night, but he got completely crazy, because he saw everyone that he loved die. And I worked like this, I remember it was a 54-day war. I can still hear the bombs ringing in my ears.

WHERE WILL YOU GO ON HOLIDAY?

I get asked a lot where I will go on holiday next. In spring people start asking where you will go on summer vacation, after summer vacation they start asking where you will be for New Year's Eve.

After New Year's, they ask you where you will go skiing and after that they ask you where you will go for summer vacation. People start saving for their winter vacation in the summer and their summer vacation in the winter. It is very strange. In Palestine people don't concern themselves with things like vacations, they live more simply. But in Slovenia, this is like a talking point, something you always say if you have nothing else to say.

HOW MUCH DID YOUR CAR COST?

I was quite shocked by how personal and intimate questions people asked me, like, "What are you doing in Slovenia?" or "How much did you pay for your car?" or "How much is your salary?" This made me very uncomfortable. I am here because I want to be here, I don't have to give any explanation for this, but in the end, I realized it is just a way to open a door to communication.

COMPLAINING IS A NATIONAL PASTIME

I went to a hairdresser, it was my first time there, and I said to her I want a change of color. I have long and dark hair so she said, "Ooooh, this will be hard." So I looked at her and said, "Ok, thank you, bye." I hear a lot of "Ooooh" here, followed by a complaint. The hairdresser received a customer and her first reaction was to complain. I realize now that this is something Slovene people love to do, it's like a topic for conversation.

SLIPPERS

I came to visit a friend in Slovenia and she offered me slippers. I said, "It's ok," but she continued offering them to me. I saw she had a cup-

Different cultures can have different ways of starting conversations. In Slovenia, the usual topics are the weather, holidays, what you did during the weekend or it can be questions about finances or the last thing the people meeting did together. It is not rude to talk about the cost of something, especially if you know that person. It is also typical to hear Slovene people complaining. A lot. But this should be understood as a form of communication, not as an expression of real problems that one would like to solve.

board full of slippers of different sizes, colors and materials. She even had a pack of slippers that were still unopened. She told me, "I am sorry, my floor is dirty, you can't go barefoot." Although in Palestine you have to take your shoes off when you enter someone's house, they don't offer you slippers.

TRASH I

I saw a group of guys walking outside. One of them was eating a candy bar and after he ate it, I saw him throw the candy wrapper on the floor! If you come from Slovenia, this is completely unacceptable.



TRASH II

The first thing I noticed about Slovenia was that it is so clean and green there is almost no trash on the floor. I loved this immediately. But I had to learn this and I also had to learn to recycle.

A THOUGHTFUL TENANT

I have a tenant who lives at my house, he is from Syria. One time the police brought me the wallet

that I had lost. I came home and the police were already talking with my tenant. He was trying to be nice and was standing next to me and asking what is happening every two minutes. For me, it would be normal that I go inside the house and let the person deal with the police, but he was offering his support and wanted to make sure I was okay. For me this was overwhelming. But this is the cultural difference between a more individualistic culture, like Slovenian, and a more communal culture, like Syrian.

CAN I HELP YOU?

I asked an elderly gentleman if I can carry his bag for him and he was mad and he looked at me and asked me, "What, do you think I'm old?" I am used to offering my assistance from Iran, where we always offer help to the elderly, but here it seems that some elderly people have too much confidence. I see them being barely able to walk, but some just won't accept help.

CHOCOLATE BAR

I saw a cute child in front of the store and I bought him chocolate, but his mother pulled him away from me. In Iran, if you see a cute child, you are so happy and you want to give him something, like chocolate. But in Slovenia, I think people are very cautious when it comes to strangers.

NO NEED FOR NURSING HOMES

It's a big shame to put elderly people in old people's homes. There are perhaps 2 old people's homes in the whole of Gaza because it is an honor to take care of your parents. People will fight over who will take care of their parents when they get

People in Slovenia may be careful when it comes to strangers. Although people like to help, sometimes they may not want to accept help, which should not be taken personally, it is simply a cultural difference.

The same goes for giving candy (or other interactions with other people's children), which may be seen as a suspicious act. Parents teach their children to never take sweets from strangers.

old. They raised you, they took care of you. Now it is your turn to take care of them. The people who put their parents in old people's homes do this because their spouse doesn't like their parents and they fear they will lose their family, but they will be shamed their whole life for doing so.

HELPING PEOPLE

I noticed there are a lot of homeless people in Europe, and Slovenia too. You can not find homeless people in Palestine. Society does not allow for that to happen. If someone is in trouble, they put it on Facebook or some journalists put it in the paper. Even if someone has trouble with their house, people will help them, someone can fix the floor or the roof, and you don't have to know that person, they can be strangers. If someone has no place to sleep, someone else will invite them to their home or set up a tent in their backyard or something.

RELATIONSHIPS

Our interviewees shared with us the difficulties of including oneself in a new society. They describe Slovene people as being cold, individualistic and not easy to form relationships with, but this is not always the case. One of our interviewees said, "I had no problem meeting people." One of our interviewees, however, said, "It is very hard to connect with people. Sometimes I feel like I have a disease because no one would sit next to me on the bus or in the park. I was at a New Year's event last year and I felt like no one would stand next to me." In some cultures, it is common to stop and have a conversation with strangers or to see someone in a park, stop and have a chat. In Slovenia it is mostly not possible. Some have been met with nonacceptance from other people that have led them to act as one of our interviewees did, who tore apart a note with a woman's number, which she gave him, saying, "I do not want to be intrusive. If you want to contact me, you can." In other cases people find it hard to form connections with the opposite gender, as they are too shy or as one interviewee said, "have only spoken to our mothers and sisters before."

HELPING HAND

Slovene people love to help and most of the time if you need help, you will receive it. But after the person will help you with something that is it. Your relationship stops. I had some trouble comprehending this. I thought this help was a door to a new relationship or friendship, so I continued chatting with the person, but it was obvious they just wanted to help me and continue with their day.

A REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

My first week in Slovenia I was alone in Ptuj because I was waiting for the people of the organization I worked for to arrive. I came here with the stereotype of closed and cold people, so I thought I would be alone for that week. I was wrong. The second day I went to a cafe and ordered a coffee. Some random people showed up at my table, started talking with me, bought me drinks and invited me to their farm. They gave me lunch, dinner and even a ride home. The next day they called me and gave me a free tour around Ptuj. After one week the people from the organization came back and were surprised to see that everyone knows the lady from Jordan.



NOT SO NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS

I have a hard time with not having good relations with our neighbors. In Venezuela, when someone moves into the neighborhood, everyone goes to their house to say hello, introduce themselves, have a coffee and in the end become friends. I

always tell my mother-in-law that when there is an emergency, your friends can help you and who is closer to you than a neighbor? I am trying to establish good relations with my neighbor. I always bring him a box of kiwis and he brings us honey; we are coming closer together.

DON'T BE A SHOWOFF

An interesting observation I made about Slovenia is that it is not appreciated to stand out from the crowd too much. Especially when you are with peers and you try to express yourself with a loud voice or try to push your agenda directly. Like, when working on a school project, I noticed that you have to be very diplomatic when telling other students that they are wrong. You have to ask for people's opinions very often to not be considered too pushy. I think in many Arab countries, if you ask what others think too much, they will think that you don't know what you are talking about or what you are doing. You are the expert and you are supposed to tell us what to do and what to think.

THE MECHANIC

One time my friend saw a mechanic that was a woman. He was so surprised, but he also admired her. He wanted to talk to her, but he didn't know how. He was nervous so he just brought her tea and water, but didn't know what to say. Some of my friends (from Palestine and Syria) have never seen a female taxi driver or a truck driver! At first, they were shocked and said, "That's a man's job!". After some time, they learned it is something normal and accepted it. But especially in the beginning, some had real trouble talking with women, since before coming here, they had only spoken with their mothers and sisters.

FEMALE TEACHER

When we were at Cene Štupar to learn the Slovene language, I saw some guys staring inappropriately at the teacher and after the class we were speaking and they said, "Oh, this woman." We had been in Slovenia for a similar amount of time, we come from the same country and we speak the same language. For me, seeing a female teacher is normal and seeing her dressed a certain way is normal as well, but for some of them it is a complete shock.

SHORT SKIRTS AND SHORTS

I had two very young friends. It was their first time going out of their country. It was summer and they couldn't stop staring at the girls who were wearing short skirts and shorts. Every time a girl walked by they turned their heads and asked me, "Hey, did you see that?" In the beginning, I thought it was a little bit funny, but after a while it got annoying. One of them has a girlfriend now, but he asked me not to tell his family, for fear of judgment. They could judge the way his girlfriend looks, dresses, and even that they may have premarital relations, which are not acceptable to some people.

WORKING WOMEN

I come from a very conservative family, so in the family my father is responsible for my mother and my sister. He can tell them what to do and where to work. Although it is common for women to work as teachers, nurses and hairdressers, it's uncommon for them to work with men. My sister is studying at a university. After that, she will start working, but my father will not allow her to work if there are men in the workplace.

So when some very conservative families come to Slovenia, they are not okay with mothers or daughters working or even applying to the unemployment office. Not so much because they don't want to work, but because they don't want to work in the same environment as men. I heard about some families from Syria leaving Slovenia for this reason. But this is very different from one family to another.

TEA AND PASTA

When I ask my girlfriend in the morning to make me tea, she says, "Make it yourself." I also started cooking for us, because she only makes pasta. In Syria, the women take care of the family while the men work and provide financially. But in Slovenia I noticed it is impossible to live off of a single pay, so I understand why men and women have to work. There are also a lot of single mothers who have to work to support their children. We respect each other but every gender has a role. Also, I mostly had contact with women in Slovenia and I think women here are more open than men and have a stronger character, that's why I saw more women in leading positions. Men were on the sidelines



JOKES ABOUT BLONDES

I experienced patriarchy and sexism, it happens a lot in Arabic countries. But then I saw it differently in Slovenia, especially in Štajerska. Some men were making a lot of inappropriate and sexist jokes, especially jokes about blondes. I also noticed that sometimes when the women were present, they were not part of the conversation, but rather the topic of the conversation, with

In Slovenia, it is not (so) strange for the woman to make the first step. Sometimes we even make jokes about men being too passive. When discussing this, we concluded that both of the team members' mothers who were conducting the interview had proposed to their fathers.

some men openly commenting on their body parts. But after the women left, the men started talking about politics. It made me realize how long the path to gender equality is.

FIRE!

I saw that in Slovenia women propose to men. I think that this is so great, you have so much fire. In Kongo, you would never see this. It is crazy for the women to take the first step. The man has to take the first step, because women are too shy and men are more dominant.

RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS

I am married to a Slovene. Before I decided to get married, my first thought was to ask my parents about their opinion and what they think of him. I asked him to do a video call with my mother and my father. I also asked my partner if he would ask his parents about their opinion before we make our final decision. But my partner said, "My parents don't even have to know, we will tell them after the wedding." Their advice, questions and opinions are very important to me. I do not perceive discussing my life choices with my parents as limiting or that it makes me dependent. They are my soul twins, my guardian spirits that I turn to when I need a reflection and this gives me freedom. I noticed that for some European peers this is considered a dependent relationship. My parents never told me what to do or what not to do, but they are like coaches who give me spiritual questions and I find my answers by myself and I think for many people coming from more collective cultures this relationship starts at a young age and it does not change with time. Culture is a spectrum, and cultural differences exist within the same country or society.

SURNAMES

I thought Slovene fathers had very strange names. It took me a while to realize the concept of the last name in Slovenia. In Eritrea, we have patronyms, which means your surname is your father's name. So for me, it was very confusing that the whole family has the same last name. It's different. For example, if I've got children even my wife's surname will be different from her children's surname.

KISSING MEN

I was on the bus with my son. We saw 2 men kissing on the lips and he loudly asked me, "Mommy, mommy what is this?" I explained to him that this is normal in Slovenia and that he should accept it. I knew about homosexuality myself, I knew it existed and I knew it was accepted in Europe, but I was shocked by the freedom of expression to be who you are and to express yourself. This motivated me to learn about different sexual orientations.

HOMOPHOBIA IN THE EU?

I was talking to a Slovene man about homosexuality and he said, "These people need to be converted; they need some kind of therapy." This was a big shock for me, coming from Jordan. I thought this is Europe, everything is okay, everything is allowed, no homophobia, and to see this kind of statement from an EU citizen was shocking. What shocked me even more was the referendum on same-sex marriage, and that the people voted against it.

In some countries like Jordan, homosexuality is not prohibited explicitly by law or rather "it doesn't exist" so it can't be a crime. Children are taught at a very early age that it is a sin. In some countries like D.R. Kongo, you can get beaten or killed for being gay without any legal protection. In Slovenia being gay is legal and socially accepted. But unfortunately, this can be a touchy subject as some people still have a prejudice against homosexuality.

When we were young we liked to party, of course—even if we lived in occupied territory. But we had to go from city to city to reach the nightclubs. We were scared, we could go to jail or pay a lot of money if the soldiers caught us, but we were young and threw caution to the wind. There were checkpoints we couldn't cross, so we went across muddy hills with spare clothes, so we could change our dirty and muddy clothes before going inside the clubs. Other times we climbed over a nine-meter wall and if the Israeli army came we had to jump. A few times someone broke their leg and we all said, "Oh, thank you for ruining our night!" And then we had to sneak him to the hospital.

A DOG AT THE WEDDING

My friend from Cameroon got married to a Slovene woman and they discussed if their dog could attend their wedding. The woman wanted the dog to be at the wedding, but my friend said no. In the end they compromised and allowed the dog to come to the party, but not the wedding. In Kongo we also love our pets, we even bury our cows, but Slovenes can be extreme with this.

DO YOU HAVE ANY DRUGS?

One time I was out and two young girls, I think they were underage, came up to me and asked me if I had some drugs. I was shocked and said to them, "Do I look like a dealer to you?" After that, they kept jumping on me, every 5 minutes. Young people may have too much freedom here, which for me is difficult to accept. They go crazy too soon. The fact that they asked me for drugs felt a little disrespectful and the jumping made me feel very uncomfortable. In Palestine, young people go crazy as well, but not to this extent and especially not girls.

BEING LATE

Working with people from other cultures I have experienced people being late all the time. It gets frustrating and annoying. In the beginning, I even felt disrespected. I remember we had a guy from Syria teaching us Arabic and he was late almost every time. I was teaching Slovene to a guy from Eritrea and in the beginning he was at least 15 minutes late every time, which is a lot. I was teaching Slovene to a guy from Iran and every time I called him he said, "I'm in my room". The worst for me is that people didn't call in advance, apologize or give a reason for being late. Slowly I realized that it is not disrespectful or person-

al. We just have a different conceptualization of what it means to be on time. And after some time everybody got used to being on time.

THE HABESHA WAY

If I have an appointment in court or something that is a big deal, I will be on time. But with my friends, I could be late for 1 or 2 hours. This is normal for us and no one complains. People are not offended if you are late. Usually in our group of friends when someone is late we just laugh and say, "This is the Habesha way." You know everyone is going to be late, so you are late as well. Sometimes my friends have to call me 3-4 times if they want me to come somewhere. But this is normal for us.

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

In Slovenia, I went to my doctor without calling, without an appointment. I just went there and she asked me, "Do you have an appointment?" I didn't and the nurse wasn't happy about this. In Eritrea, you just go to the doctor without making an appointment.

MAKING A DEAL

A beneficiary of ESIRAS called me from the unemployment office. He needed some help from me regarding translation, because he doesn't speak Slovene. He wanted me to speak on the phone with the worker, but she said that she won't do it over the phone. I had to drive for 1 hour from my town to go with my friend to the administrative unit again for a task that took 15 minutes (plus waiting in line) and could have been completed over the phone.

For Slovenian people, being on time is very important, especially at formal events. If someone is late, it is considered disrespectful and it is much better to be early than late, even if for 5 minutes. Slovene people view time as valuable, so when someone is late, it means the other person made time for nothing. You can lose opportunities if you are late and probably make people feel angry and disrespected. But of course, there is always a possibility that something comes up and you are not able to make it on time. In this case, you should always inform the person you are meeting, even if you are meeting a friend.

In Slovenia, people mostly follow the rules. Although as individuals, we also like to break them. Negotiations and "deals" are not easily made in everyday life and are also not appreciated. People have the mentality that the same rules apply for everyone, which includes the same prices and the same benefits. So it makes people upset to see someone trying to break, bend or evade the rules, or get any kind of special treatment when they try to follow them. A similar mentality is also used by the service provider: If I do this for one person, I have to do it for everybody.

NO MONEY, NO RIDE

Another time I went on the bus. It was my first time using the Urbana card, which was empty, and I didn't know where to fill it. I told this to the driver and he told me to pay with my phone, but I don't have Moneta on my phone. So he just told me to get off the bus, and wouldn't hear any reasoning. Slovene people stick to the rules too much. You can't make deals with them, not even in restaurants or hotels, and they won't listen to you (most of the time). If something is a rule, it can not be bent. In Palestine, you won't see this problem. You can take a cab and if you don't have the money, most cab drivers will tell you it's okay, you will pay them next time.

A PRICE IS A PRICE

I was guiding a group from Iraq around Ljubljana. We went to a small shop with clothes. Before we entered, they told me they want to negotiate about the prices. I told them it is a bad idea, but they did it anyway. The lady working there got quite angry, saying that this is not a Bazar.

LANGUAGES AND BODY LANGUAGE

There are a lot of points in communication where information can get lost in translation. It could be a hand gesture or the way you speak or act towards each other that could make you understand something completely different from what was meant. The point is that we are always learning about different ways of communicating.



YOU ARE IN MY THOUGHTS

I invited my friend to come to visit from Ljubljana. She told me she can't because we are not allowed to cross the borders of the municipalities (this was during the 2nd lockdown). I patted my head and said okay. She looked at me and asked me, "What are you doing?" I explained that for Kurds, this means I am keeping her in my head and that I won't forget the invitation and she explained to me that in Slovenia this means you are stupid or you forgot something. If you want to show you agree with someone, you pat your chest. Also if someone is complimenting you and you want them to stop, you pat your chest.

YES, ENTER

I was living in a flat with a Slovene girl. She knocked at my door while I was naked and I said,

Slovenia is such a small country, we are used to the fact that no one usually speaks our language and that we have to adapt all the time. If you know the language, you can tell us to speak in Slovene, since it is usually a shock and we automatically switch to English.

There are a lot of people from ex-Yugoslavian countries working in factories, construction and manufacturing. So don't be surprised if Slovene is not a primary language of communication in some workplaces. Besides, most Slovenes understand most South Slavic languages, as they are very similar to Slovene (excluding Macedonian and Bulgarian).

“Yes”, so she opened the door. I didn't know that yes means, “Yes, enter,” because for us in Jordan it means “wait until I come to the door and open it.”

ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS

One time I wanted to ask a lady for directions. I asked in Slovene and she responded in English. I continued to ask and speak in Slovene and she continued to speak in English. At that time I thought I learned the wrong language, maybe I was speaking Hungarian? I also get a lot of messages and e-mails in English even though I have explained to the people that I understand Slovene, but I don't understand English. Slovene people refuse to speak Slovene with foreigners, you automatically use English. I know that everyone here speaks English, but I don't. In Iran, very few people speak English. We don't learn it in schools.

LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE

I have worked in a couple of factories and warehouses in Slovenia. I knew the language, but I couldn't understand the people when they asked me, “Šta ima?”, “Dže's bolan?”, “Koliko godina imaš?” When I said I don't understand, they asked me, “How old are you?”, again in English. That is when I learned it's not enough to speak Slovene and English in Slovenia, you have to learn more South Slavic languages.

BIPOLAR COWORKERS

I was working in an office in Slovenia. There was a big team of people there working together, spending a lot of their time together at that

office. But people just came to work, sat at their desk and started working. Sometimes they came to work happy, saying hello to me. So I thought okay, maybe these people are bipolar. One day they are angry and another day they are happy. But I realized that they are not angry, it is just their normal expression. Also sometimes when I heard them talking, I thought they were angry because they were talking in a loud and angry way and because they didn't smile. In Venezuela and other Latin American countries, we always smile. It is considered polite to smile when you talk to another person.

CURSING

I came to Slovenia as a student a long time ago. I was in a student dorm and we used to hang out in the common kitchen. Usually, when you come to a new country, the first thing you learn from the language are curse words. So I knew a lot of them, but I was shocked by the amount of curse words the girls used. It affected me. I asked one of the girls why they curse so much and she said, “Oh, it's like saying good morning to us.” This is something I can't get used to. Also cursing your mother or any other family member is something I can not accept. Women do not usually swear in my country. Also, we never curse family members. If you do that someone will fight with you. We curse random objects like the table or something.

HOW ARE YOU, MOM?

I called my mother from Slovenia and she told me to say something in Slovene to her. I said, “Kako si?” and she was angry at me because I was swearing. ‘Kos’ in Farsi is a vulgar word for the female reproductive organ. It was also very

funny to hear that a bird in Slovenia is named 'kos' and that sometimes you offer a 'kos' (slice) of pizza.

KOUROSH THE GREAT

I was talking to a lady and I was speaking about Kourosh the great, the founder of the Persian empire. I asked her if she had heard of him, and she said, "Of course, Veliki Kir". I got a little shocked and uncomfortable. 'Kir' in Farsi is a vulgar word for a male reproductive organ.

HANDSHAKE

There was an event for Arabic women. One of the women arrived late, when everyone was already there. She went around and introduced herself and shook their hands. There were mostly women present and one male translator. When she came to him, she extended her hand, but after noticing he is male, she retracted her hand, put it on her chest and moved forward, shaking the hands of other female participants. Some Muslims won't shake hands with the opposite gender. They will put their hand on their chest and nod with their heads.



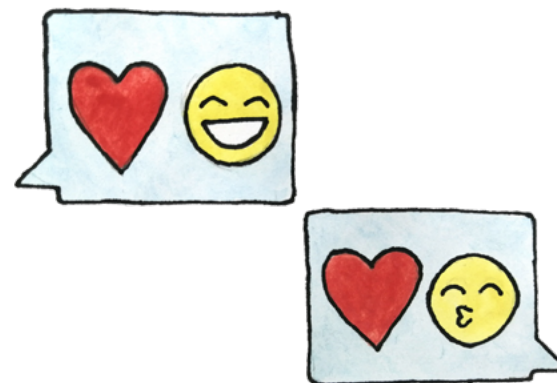
EYE CONTACT

When shaking hands in Eritrea, we avoid eye contact, which is considered polite. But in Slovenia, there is a lot of eye contact. It gets really weird, for example, when you toast to something with drinks, you have to look every person in the eye. If there are a lot of people at the table this is a very long and complicated process.

In Slovenia, it is usual to greet people with a firm handshake and direct eye contact. It is also common for friends to hug when meeting or to kiss on the cheek on special occasions like birthdays or New Year's celebrations.

HEART EMOJIS

I was texting a guy from Iran whom I was teaching Slovene. In his texts there were a lot of heart emojis and faces with hearts, sometimes kisses and flower emojis. I was getting uncomfortable because I understood these emojis as a sign of romantic intention, so I started limiting my interactions with him. But once I saw he made a post on Instagram and beneath it were tons of heart emojis and kissing emojis from men and women, to which he reciprocated. After this, I told him I felt uncomfortable by the emojis and he told me that he had no romantic intentions, that this is just a normal way of communicating for him.



HOLDING HANDS

My Slovene friend went to India one time and he told me that he saw a lot of gay men there. I asked him why and he said he saw a lot of men holding hands and having their hands over each other's shoulders when they were walking in the street. I explained to him that they were probably not gay and that it is common for men to hold

Some cultures express affection between the same genders much more freely than in Slovenia, without it being considered anything else but friendship. In Iran, men kiss on the cheek when they meet and in Jordan, people of the same gender hold hands and men say "my love" to each other. If people are making gestures like this in Slovenia, they are considered romantic.

hands when walking outside as a sign of friendship and closeness. It is similar in Bangladesh. Before coming to Slovenia, I never thought that this might be considered gay.

TOUCH

I was at a gathering. There was one Slovene woman and the others were Arabic. Arabic women like to touch other women, for us this is normal. But for the Slovene woman this was unusual. One lady put her hand directly into her lap and she asked me, “Is she flirting with me?”

CLAP YOUR HANDS AT THE RESTAURANT

We snapped our fingers at the waiter in a cafe. He was not happy about it. In Slovenia, it is disrespectful to do this, but in Eritrea, it is a normal gesture.



FOOD AND DRINK

Food is, more than anything, the basic substance for human existence that all of us have in common. It also brings us pleasure, contempt and the feeling of mutual connection. The way we perceive food and how we prepare it depends on our environment, the contents of grandma’s recipes and of course, personal taste.



POTATOES WITH RICE

My friend was shocked when he saw me eating potatoes and rice together. He told me that I can’t do that here. But then I was surprised by the amount of bread you eat, there is bread everywhere. And the quality of it is sometimes very bad. In Bangladesh, the bread is always so soft, warm and fresh, but here they sell you old and hard bread. Also, Slovene food lacks spices. It is very bland and you have a lot of sour food, like cabbage—but I understand the purpose of it. In Bangladesh, we don’t have to make preparations for winter.

YOU DRINK BEER?!

I ordered a beer in a cafe among my friends, which shocked them a lot. I am a Muslim woman from Syria and everyone gets surprised that I drink beer or wine. It is something normal for

me, I also used to do this in Syria. What surprised me was drinking alcohol at lunch or dinner. In Syria, they used to drink only during the weekends.

BUREK AND A SALAD

Slovene people eat a lot of fast food and pastries, like pizza, burek and kebab. You also eat a lot of salad, which we don't eat in Kongo. In Kongo, we have an important connection with our kitchen. The food is prepared and cooked slowly and both the man and the woman participate and the result is so tasty. Once I cooked cassava leaves and I gave a little taste to the security guard in the asylum home. First, he was so scared and hesitant. He took a little spoon and tasted it. Then he said "Oh, my mother!" and started eating with the big spoon.

RICE ADVICE

Your food doesn't have enough spices and enough oil. In Iran, it is hard to find the food in all the oil. But that makes it tastier. Because of the lack of oil, I don't feel like the food is finished. Also, you don't know how to prepare rice. You should soak the rice in a mixture of water and oil for at least 2 hours. Then you boil the water and put the rice in it. After 15 min you drain and rinse the rice and put it back on the fire with some oil to cook in the steam. Then you have very good rice and it is not sticky. Iranian food takes very long to prepare, there are many procedures, spices and ingredients.

GARDENS EVERYWHERE

I noticed some similarities between our cultures. I see you use a lot of vegetables and have lots of

gardens that can be easily spotted in residential areas, growing flowers, vegetables or spices. The mentality is the same here as in Congo. Also similar is some kitchen equipment. I went to the ethnographic museum to see the Slovenian culture. I saw some chairs and tables that were exactly the same in both cultures. A table for making bread was similar to ours. The pots to keep the food in were also the same in both cultures.

SUGAR CUBES

There is a difference in drinking tea, but we also call it 'čaj'. In Iran, we drink black tea. There are many different sorts of tea. Also, in Iran we take a sugar cube, dip it in the tea and then put the sugar cube in the mouth, so you can taste the sweetness and bitterness together.

EATING WITH HANDS

We have some traditional food in Syria, that can be eaten only by dipping bread into the food, it is called 'tahnis'. Some people in Slovenia get quite shocked when they see me do this.

THE COFFEE PROCESS

Like Slovene people, Eritreans love to drink coffee. But in Eritrea, we make a whole ceremony of it. It is called the Eritrean coffee ceremony and it is done daily. When someone invites you for coffee in Slovenia, you go to a cafe, order a coffee, a waiter brings it and then you drink it and talk for maybe an hour. In Eritrea, a lot of people gather and it takes hours. First, we roast the green coffee beans over charcoal. When roasting, each participant has to smell the coffee beans and comment on the smell. Then the roasted beans

are hand ground in a wooden or ceramic mortar. After that, we put the coffee in a pot called 'djevbeno' and boil it 3 times. After, we pour the coffee into small cups and don't stop until the cups are full. This can be a messy process, if not done skillfully. The coffee is drunk in 4 rounds and each has its own name. The first one is called 'awel' (meaning first), the second one is called 'kaleyati' (and can also be drunk by children), the third one is called 'bereka' (the blessed one) and the fourth one is called 'dereja'. Each round of coffee is weaker than the one before, as the water is poured over the same coffee sediment. This coffee is drunk with sugar and we also make sweet popcorn with it.

DINNER ETIQUETTE

I was shocked when I saw people blowing their noses during dinner. You take your paper napkin out and blow your nose. In Venezuela, you go to the bathroom to do this. Also, when you drink beer you burp, loudly, sometimes even at lunch.

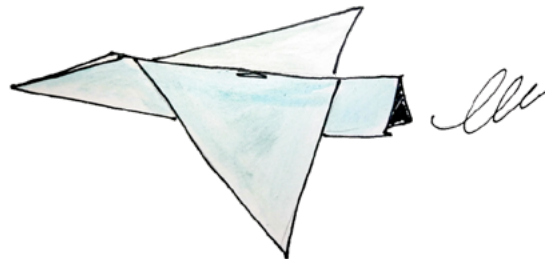
MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MIGRANTS

The journey ends with acceptance from the host society. Some people feel accepted and have found their place in Slovenia. Some have started a family here and have a good social network of people willing to help them, which makes integration much easier for them. After all, we mustn't forget that integration is a two-way process. We, as the host society, must be willing to accept the people who have come here and at least give them a chance. Some of the people we interviewed had very good experiences, but some were shocked, saying, "No one prepared us for racism in Europe. Often I get comments, like, 'You know you are not allowed to do bad stuff here?'; 'Go back to where you came from', or 'Why are you here?'" I try not to get hurt by the comments and not to react to them. Usually I just say 'Okay, I am sorry,' and go away. I don't think these things happen because I am a migrant or a refugee, but because of my dark skin.«

Slovenia is a small country, and not very known. As Slovenians, we are therefore used to explaining to foreigners where and what Slovenia is and that it is not Slovakia. Our team members have been asked if Slovenia is in Serbia and have heard questions about Slovenia being in Africa. There was even a joke about former USA president George Bush wanting to attack Slovenia, but hitting Bratislava instead. Slovenia is also ethnically very homogenous, especially outside of cities, so for some people, coming in contact with unfamiliar cultures might be a cultural shock in itself! But now Slovenes are coming in contact with cultures they know little about or have a completely wrong impression of. Sometimes these impressions are funny, but other times they can result in prejudice and negative actions. We asked our interviewees what are some misconceptions they have experienced in Slovenia and how they manifested.

YOU CAME HERE BY PLANE?!

Once we went on a trip with a bus. We were riding past the airport and I showed where the airport is to the person sitting next to me. Another guy who was Slovenian heard me and he was surprised I knew where the airport was. He was even more surprised when I told him I flew here. The same happened at my doctor's office. He looked at me with shock when I told him I came here by plane. I don't know what people think, that we all swim here? Or walk? While many refugees and asylum seekers had to undertake a long difficult journey to get here, not everyone had to swim across the ocean or walk through forests and mountains to reach Europe.



SPECIAL FIELD TRIP

I was working with a nongovernmental organization as a volunteer. We took a group of about 30 Eritrean men for a field trip around Ljubljana. We went to the city center and to the castle. They were, of course, darker-skinned and when we went on the bus, everyone was just staring at us. When I came home, I asked my partner and my family if Slovenian people are racists? And they said this was not racism, but curiosity. It is very rare to see a darker-skinned person in Slovenia, so a group is even more unusual.

I AM NOT A REFUGEE

When people see me, they often think I am a refugee. Even the police often assume I am an asylum seeker. But I am not. I came here to study at university, just like young people from Slovenia go to study abroad. I like traveling and experiencing different cultures, just like Slovenian people. But because my skin is a little darker, people assume my identity. And I get followed by security guards in shops a lot.

TERRORISTS

People think that we are terrorists or that we support terrorists. One time I was in front of the school where I go to learn Slovene. A young couple went by (23 or 24 years old), looked at me, and said, "You are a terrorist."



ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN

I had a girlfriend in Slovenia and she invited me to dinner with her family. When we sat down, her grandmother said in Slovene, "Didn't I warn you that these people are dangerous?" She didn't know I understood Slovene. So I asked her if she thinks we are all terrorists. After that, she apologized, but I was really disappointed, since she was an educated woman. I have heard that we hit women and do not let them out of the house. This

Statistics show that 3 million first residence permits were issued in the European Union in 2019. Nine percent were issued for international protection and fourteen percent for education reasons (Evropska komisija, 2021).

(The word "terrorism" is derived from the French word "terreur" and was used during the French Revolution. It originally signified a system of government with violence and intimidation under the auspices of the Jacobins. The period between 1793 and 1794 is also known as the Jacobin terror (Fine, 2010; Smolej, 2003, p. 10-11).

is something we do not agree with, it is something that is forced on us by the government and that we actively protest about (men and women). Most Iranian women in Slovenia are not covered by a hijab and they work and move freely. Some are Muslim, some Christian and some are atheist. We have always respected women. In the last 40 years, everything started to go downhill. Before that, we had women empresses, poets and writers, who enjoyed a lot of respect from people.

DO YOU HAVE ELECTRICITY?

Some people asked me if we have asphalt roads or electricity. A girl once asked me if we have electricity in Iran. I jokingly responded that we only have candles and she believed me. Some people think we came from the desert, where we ride sheep. Or that we are poor uneducated people, who came from the forest to take money from Slovene people. But that is just not true. We came because of lack of freedom. But I don't blame the people for this. I blame the media representations. People don't know that Iran is very developed and rich. Economically speaking, I was in a very good place. Much better than I could ever be in Slovenia.

WHERE IS YOUR HEAD SCARF?

I was riding a bus and a lady asked me, "Where are you from?" I told her I am from Syria and she said, "Oh, no headscarf?" There are 22 million people in Syria and it is extremely diverse. Some women are controlled by the men in their family, but some, like me, are not. Even in Aleppo, which is just one city, you will find a street where women are not allowed to talk with men outside of their family, but in the next street, you will feel like you are in Europe.

NUDIST BEACH

In Tunisia, you can see women in burkas and hijabs, but this is a minority. For the majority of women, you could say they are more undressed than dressed. People are very surprised by the fact we also have a nudist beach.

DANGER

I get the feeling that people think I might be dangerous or try to rob them, because oftentimes I see people cross the street if they see me. We also get followed a lot by security guards in the stores. One time I was with my friends and we had full carts of food and drink, we were celebrating something. We paid €100 for everything in the end, but the security guard didn't let us out of his sight until he saw us pay. Then he went outside for a smoke break. But this never happens if we are with a white, Slovene friend.

A CURIOUS BOY

I was riding the bus with my young son. He is very curious and he kept asking me, "What is this", "What is that?" He was speaking in Farsi and Slovene. An elderly gentleman overheard us and started talking badly about refugees. He said, "They are everywhere and they don't even want to teach their kids to speak Slovene.«"

GETTING AN APARTMENT

It is a problem to get an apartment when people see 'refugee' written on your identity card. They change their attitude towards me, they see me differently. When we were looking for an apartment with my family, some people even said to

us directly that they do not want foreigners or refugees. I talked with one landlord and he said he had a bad experience with foreigners, they left the apartment in a bad state. But not everyone's the same.

SHOPPING FOR ORANGES

My family and I were looking at oranges in a store. We picked each one up, looked at it and weighed it in our hands, so we would buy good oranges. I overheard a lady say, "They came here and now they are picking out which oranges to buy."



A SHOCKING INCIDENT

We were outside in the center. A group of guys and girls approached us, they were drunk. They started asking us, "What are you doing here?" I thought to myself, "Mama Maria, here we go again!" Usually, I just say I'm a student and start speaking French so no one understands me. But my friend made a mistake and told them we are asylum seekers. The mood changed instantly, the guys from the group got aggressive, knocked the drink from my friend's hand and wanted to fight him. The police came and started asking us what happened. I was expecting them to ask the guy about why he attacked my friend, but instead, he asked us to give him our documents. I feel like the police think I am always doing something wrong. I think they have the wrong impression of me, because of the color of my skin.

The reader might be feeling confused after reading all of these anecdotes. The stories presented can contradict one another and can raise more questions than answers, but that is the point. When discussing culture, we must understand that there is no 'us' and 'them', but rather a multitude of 'us'. Geographic, national or religious identities are never homogeneous. If a foreigner notices the differences between Ptuj and Ljubljana in a country of about 2 million people, imagine how many differences occur if we speak about identities like Arab, Muslim, Eritrean, Congolese, or even migrant. All of these identities have incredibly rich and enormous diversity. In this booklet, we have only scratched the surface of what it means to belong to a certain identity, so we strongly encourage the readers to do some research of their own and learn more about the different cultures that shape and enrich our global reality.

We hope that after reading this booklet, the reader can use the information in everyday life and become more open towards other cultures. We also hope that this booklet ignited a spark of interest and investigative spirit in the reader, which will drive them to keep learning about the different ways of life that exist on this planet.

THE QUIZ

After reading the booklet, try solving this quiz about cultural differences.

1. What is served with coffee in Eritrea?

- a. Ice Cream.
- b. Cookies.
- c. Popcorn.

The correct answer is: Sweet popcorn, made fresh during the coffee ceremony.

2. What is a patronym?

- a. Last name, derived from the first name of the person's father.
- b. A guardian spirit of the family.
- c. A religious object found in a church.

The correct answer is: Last name, which is derived from the person's father. They are found in Eritrea, Iceland and Malaysia, among other places.

3. If a Kurdish person taps their head with their hand, what does it mean?

- a. I forgot something.
- b. I have you in my thoughts.
- c. This is stupid.

The correct answer is: I have you in my thoughts.

4. You visit a friend from Bangladesh and he makes you coffee. How do you thank him?

- a. I say, "Namaste."
- b. I say, "You didn't have to do this."
- c. I say, "Next time I am making the coffee."

The correct answer is: I say, "You didn't have to do this. Namaste is used as a greeting and although Bengali people have a word for thank you, they don't use it.

5. What do the following years have in common: 2021, 2012, 1399 in 1441?

- a. Nothing.
- b. It's the same year, according to different calendars.
- c. These numbers mark the years when different countries gained their independence.

The correct answer is: It's the same year, according to different calendars. In Slovenia we follow the Gregorian calendar, so we started counting 2021 years ago with the birth of Jesus Christ. In Eritrea, they follow the Geez calendar, according to which we are in the year 2012 (the birth of Christ). Iranians and Afghans mark the year 1399, following the Solar Hijri calendar which marks prophet Mohammed's migration or 'hijrah' from Mecca to Medina. Many Muslims, however, use the lunar Hijri calendar, which means that for them, the 'hijrah' took place 1441 years ago.

6. What does it mean to put an elderly person in an old people's home in countries like Palestine, Syria, or Iran?

- a. It is considered a necessity.
- b. It is considered a sign of wealth, since the homes for the elderly are very expensive.
- c. It is a big shame for the whole family.

The correct answer: It is a big shame for the whole family. You have to take care of your parents like they took care of you. It is an honor to take care of them.

7. If someone from Eritrea doesn't make eye contact with you when you shake hands, what are they saying?

- a. They are showing a lack of interest.
- b. This only happens when shaking hands with the opposite gender.
- c. They are showing respect.

The correct answer is: They are showing respect. It is polite and respectful to look away when shaking hands in Eritrea.

8. You are a woman waiting for the bus at a bus stop. A young man from Eritrea approaches you and says, "Hello mommy, can you tell me when the next bus is coming?" Which statement is correct?

- a. He is showing you respect.
- b. He is hitting on you.
- c. He is making fun of you.

The correct answer is: He is showing you respect.

9. A friend from Slovenia invites you to lunch on your birthday. The bill arrives, who usually pays?

- The one who is celebrating his or her birthday.
- Everyone pays for themselves.
- Everyone pays except for the person celebrating.

The correct answer: The one who is celebrating his or her birthday.

10. How do you greet someone in Slovenia?

- A firm handshake with eye contact.
- a hug and a kiss on the cheeks.
- A slight head nod with the combination of the word hello.
- All of the above depends on the situation.

The correct answer: All of the above depends on the situation.

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