

HERE AND THERE...

A story about
active citizenship and
inclusion



PART THREE

I. MEETING EACH OTHER

Elpida and Kim found themselves in a bus with 11 kids.

“This is your new school”, the bus driver said politely.

The doors opened in front of a big building with many students in the yard. But why were there only 11 on the bus?

Kim and Elpida followed them and noticed they spoke a strange language. She heard the rest of the children speak her language.

“We are in Greece. The students speak Greek as in Cyprus but the mirror has already helped there, so we are in Greece...”

A girl with dark hair and clean, bright, green eyes, as beautiful as a fairytale heroine, came towards them.



"and I'm Kim from Germany"

"Hi! I'm Elpida from Cyprus" ...

"Hello! I'm Irini. New students? What are your names?"

"I like your hair", Irini told him to break the ice.

Suddenly the bell rang and they had to get into the classrooms.

The head master said that the two new students had to follow the 11 kids of the bus.

"What's your name?" Kim asked two of the students who looked shy.

"My... name is Fadia" "I... Salam" they both tried to whisper in English.

A young teacher approached them and said in Greek:

"This way, come on. Do you speak Greek?"

"A little... Ligo" Fadia, who was the older of the two, answered.

They entered a small classroom at the end of the corridor, which was special for...

How had that tall teacher called them?...

Ah, yes, refugees! ... These 11 children were REFUGEES!!!

KIM
ELPIDA

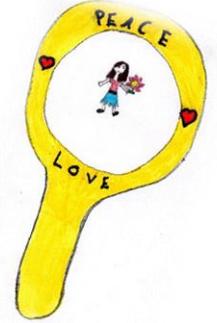


ΕΙΡΗΝΗ
ΙΡΙΝΙ



PEACE

II. THE STORY OF A REFUGEE GIRL ... HERE AND THERE



Lesson time passed by quickly and the bell for the next break rang. As soon as they got out of the classroom, Irini was waiting for them

“Hello, friends” she called them with her sweet voice. “I want to ask you something I didn’t have the chance before. Are you refugees, too? Because you don’t look like refugees. How did you come to Greece?”

“It’s a long story. This magic mirror brought us here to help but we don’t know how. Have you got any ideas?” and they described what had happened in their countries.

“Wow, I think that...” but before she could finish her sentence, Irini saw Fadia and Salam sitting alone at a corner of the schoolyard looking terribly sad.

They all hurried near them to make them feel better.

“Where are you from?” they started a conversation. “We are from Syria!” Fadia answered, her eyes dark from fear. “And how did you come here? It was a long way, wasn’t it?” Elpida asked as softly as she could.

Fadia gathered her courage and started telling their story slowly because of her difficulty in the foreign language. The magic mirror shone in Elpida’s pocket and when she took it out they realized it was reflecting Fadia’s words.

“There was war in our country. We were scared for our lives. So one day, our mother held our hands and we started walking away towards “a new, better life” as she told us. We took only a change of clothes wrapped in a blanket. A man told her that with some money he could help us cross the sea to Lesvos, the Greek island. She accepted and gave all our money to that man. While waiting, our mother got sick and didn’t make it.





So we were all alone! The journey to Lesbos started in winter. It was so cold. We reached the coast of Turkey on the back of a dirty truck with many other Syrians and there the man, our mother had paid, put us on a black rubber boat crowded with refugees. We were very scared, the sea was frozen and wavy, we didn't know where Lesbos was and we didn't know how we could talk with people there, as we didn't know the language.

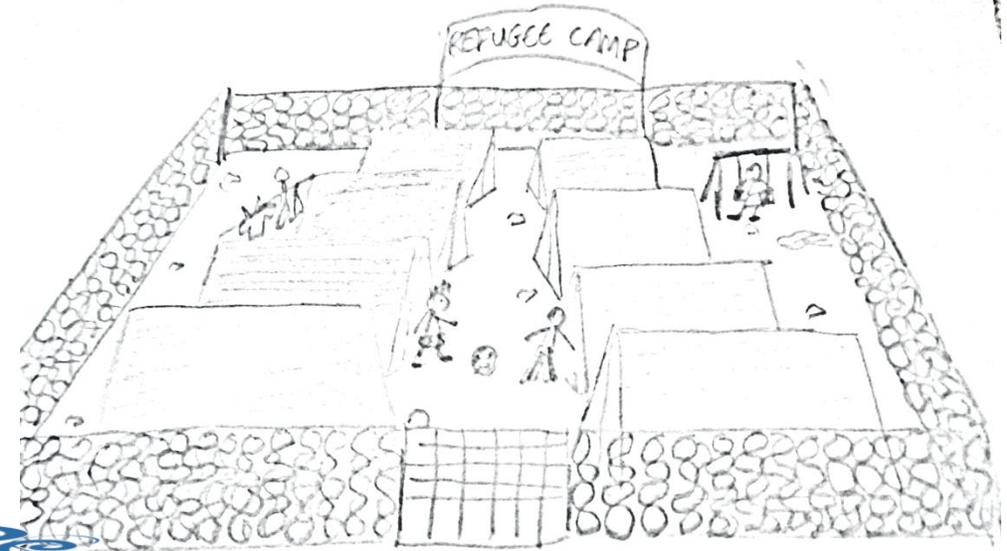
But we were saved and after many difficulties we reached the refugee camp in Moria. There we stayed in tents with other orphan kids for one year. Then they brought us here. We don't complain, a lot of people helped us, Greek and foreigners. We like coming to school but we really want to go to Germany, where our relatives live. But they won't let us leave..."

Fadia finished her story crying.



The mirror had shown the children everything, Syria, the disaster and ruins of war and all the places the two refugees crossed to come to Greece. They experienced the difficult living conditions in the refugee camps Fadia and Salam had lived.

“Here and there...” Elpida whispered. “I understand now, it’s Fadia and



III. ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DIFERRENT?

A teacher called Fadia and Salam and the three stood still.

“Unfortunately, the refugees face more problems in Greece and in our school, too” Irini said seriously.

“Like what? Hunger, cold?”

“These and worse. They feel disappointed because they have to stay in the camp, while their wish is to travel to other countries where they can find jobs and better living conditions. But they can’t leave because they don’t have their personal documents (ID, passport, work booklet). Some people don’t want them here and behave badly to them. They are afraid of them because they look different and they believe they are dangerous. The refugees have fear and prejudices against us, too. They don’t go near the local people to communicate. We accepted them very well in our school because we know how it feels when somebody excludes you. BUT, there are students who are influenced by their parents or TV channels who blame refugees and don’t want them. You have seen how they sit alone during break.”

“Then WE have to do something” said Kim with his low voice.

Irini's eyes shone: "I have an idea, come to my house when classes stop and my mother can take us to the refugee camp to see where Fadia and Salam live. **My mother is a volunteer doctor there. She is helping to vaccinate all the kids to be safe. I admire her because she believes that all people have the same rights and opportunities in life and is trying hard to offer that to the refugees with actions, not words.** Then we meet here in the schoolyard with my classmates and draw a plan of action. Do you agree?"

"Sure we do! We started a revolution in Germany so everybody accepts the different" Kim shouted in enthusiasm.

That afternoon Fadia and Salam had a surprise-visit in the camp. They introduced their new friends with pride and invited them to play with the other kids. Their tents were small and poor and the ground was full of mud after the rain last night but the people welcomed them with a smile and wanted to treat them with traditional sweets... maybe because they loved and respected Irini's mother !!

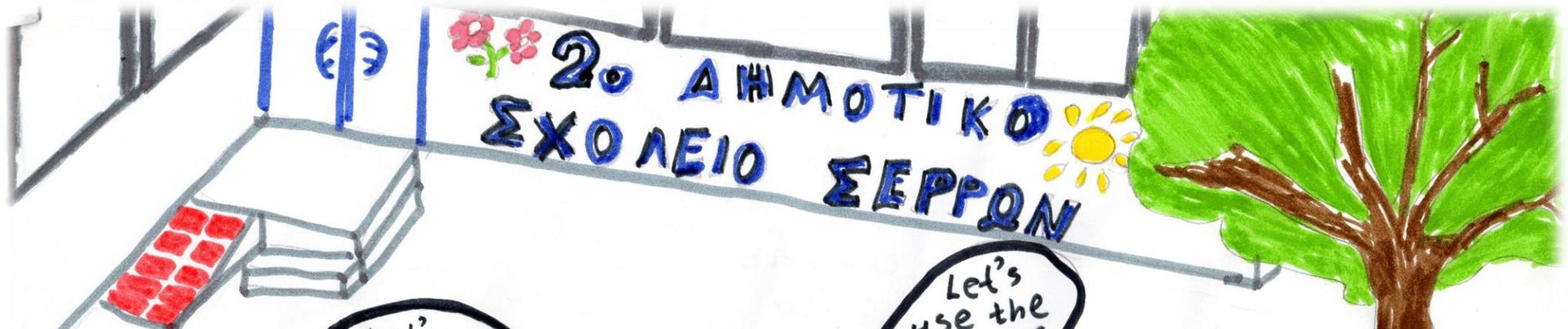
IV. IDEAS WHICH BUILT BRIDGES

Irini had asked the whole class to come to the schoolyard in the afternoon in order to think of solutions but didn't believe her eyes when she saw everybody there.

"We have called you here to find ways to learn more about the refugee kids who come to our school and to convince students who don't treat them well to stop. We can give a good example to the adults too" Irini said with enthusiasm and everybody cheered.

"Let's do the magic trick with the mirrors that worked in Germany" Kim said. "Found it, that's it! Let's organize a great feast here in the school. We can invite the refugees, kids and grown-ups from the camp to get to know each other better" Efreem shouted happily.

2ο ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΟ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟ ΣΕΡΡΩΝ



Let's write messages of peace

Let's use the mirrors

Let's have a celebration

Let's write wishes for the refugees and put them in the Communication Box

Let's invite the Mayor



«They can tell us about their lives and the problems they face, if they wish” Giota added.

“Let’s cook traditional Greek and Syrian dishes. Food always makes you happier” Vaggelis said and everybody laughed.

“Can I bring my Grandpa who was a refugee from Minor Asia to remind the people how our ancestors came to Greece as refugees and nobody wanted them at first?” Christina said seriously

“We can all write messages of friendship for our refugee friends on a poster so that everybody can see. Let’s invite the Mayor too” Anastasis suggested

“We will invite my Dad who works for the local TV channel. Then our message reaches all the country” Valantis thought loudly.

“Let’s write wishes for a better life and more rights for the refugees and put them in the Communication Box” Voula added.

“And how will we vote for the best idea now?” Dimitris cut their enthusiasm.

Elpida laughed! “All the ideas are great. Let’s use all of them”

They all raised their hand...

V. ACTION BRINGS CHANGE



The next day Irini, Elpida and Kim brought all the mirrors they could find and handed them to the students: **“Look at the mirror and put yourselves in the refugees’ shoes when you treat them rudely”** From that moment something changed inside them and saw what they did from another side. It was like magic...



The stories of the refugees from Greece and Syria moved everybody, parents met each other and exchanged recipes, the messages on the poster will remain on the school walls to remind us of this day, the Mayor congratulated us all for our ideas and all Greece heard **about a small school which took a huge step towards change.**

They never let any refugee kids out of their company and played all together without discrimination. They worked hard here and there at the camp to organize the feast. It was a great success.





The night after the celebration the fourth and last part of the mirror shone and said: ***“this journey reached the end, time to go somewhere further away...”***

Elpida and Kim gave one hand each to Irini: “You must certainly come with us” they begged her and as soon as she held their hands they disappeared along with the mirror.

That night, Fadia had a wonderful dream! She and Salam were walking in a village with little wooden houses and many trees covered with snow. At the last house, a kind old man with a long white beard and a red robe opened the door and invited them in. He asked them to write a letter with their biggest wish and he would make it come true whatever it was. Fadia immediately thought to ask **WAR to stop in her country** and Salam wished they could meet their relatives in Germany. The old man praised them that **they asked for something so important like PEACE** and not toys and gave them lots of presents.

Fadia woke up, the dream was over but a new different day, full of hope for change, for peace had come for Fadia, Salam and all the refugee kids at the camp where they still live...

