



Erasmus+

HERE AND THERE...

A story about active citizenship and inclusion



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THE MIRROR

Once upon a time there was a beautiful girl fresh as crystal waters! Her skin was as white as snow and her hair was black like silk, like the color of the starless night! Her name was “Elpida”, “Hope for a better world!” These were her mother’s exact words when she chose her name from the first time she faced her bright eyes and her big smile.

However, Elpida’s smile had faded away and she seemed gloomy among her gloomy classmates, as if an invisible power had stolen every smile and all the positive mood from all the children around her school!

One day, when she did not have anything to do, she climbed the curved wooden stairs which led to the attic, ignoring her mother’s orders, “Never to enter this dark place!” Elpida was apparently not really familiar with following orders! From a young age she had learned that, in cases of emergency, **orders and rules could be broken for the sake of change...**

Her instinct guided her to the attic...

With her flashlight, she lit the dark room and was flabbergasted to see her grandma’s old, wooden trunk just in front of her! Filled with curiosity, she approached it, as if a big magnet was pulling her towards it, until she slowly opened it and faced its only tenant... **A mirror!**



She held it near her heart and softly whispered, *“Mirror, mirror on the wall, tell me, please, how can our lost smiles be retrieved?”* And though she did not expect it, a light appeared on the top right side of the mirror, which meanwhile had begun to chant, *“For the smiles to be retrieved, all the hatred you must delete! Build bridges, waste no time ... Give hope ... Here and there!”*

In the blink of an eye, the light disappeared and the mirror became silent!

THE WALL

“Here and there! Here and there ...” whispered Elpida in her bed, later at breakfast, in the car and while she was entering her school the following day. Her school, an ugly building, colorless, without any trees, without smiley faces... Far in the distance stood the huge wall that was built there after the war and prevented them from looking at the other side. Because at the other side... there were the others, “the enemies”, as grown-ups used to say!

She stood there facing the other side when she heard a voice coming from there.

“Hello! Do you want to be friends with us?” Her eyes immediately lit up like fire...

“Here and there” she thought. “This is what the mirror had meant!” And without wasting any time ...

“Yes!”, she replied placing her ear on the wall!

And there, she met smiley Murad, the brave Hussein, Pana, whose name means “Tree” in her mother tongue and who constantly comes up with ideas and Hayat which mean “Life!” in her language!

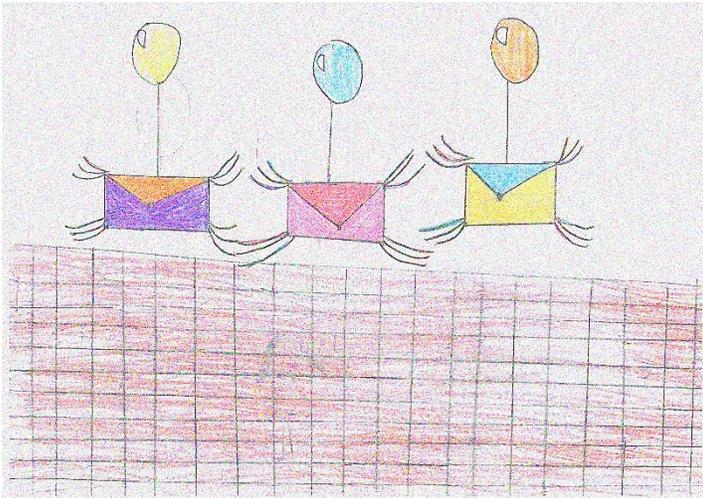
The next day ... she took with her to the big wall, which was transformed into a meeting point, Thodoris and Boris and **altogether-working like a team**- they came up with many **ideas** to retrieve their smiles!



THE PLAN OF ACTION

The following day they were all surprised when they saw the big piano near the cement wall. Little Anna was sitting and playing the amazing “Song of Joy ”of Beethoven. All around, there were happy faces as if they were waiting for something ...

And suddenly... Melodious replies came from the other side, spreading the message of unity through music... here and there!



The teachers approached to see what was happening and the children were behaving this way. There was nobody and nothing though to stop the children; they **continued** since the sound of music had captured them, and led them to an unprecedented gathering...

Despite the principal's immediate warnings, the following day was full of surprises! During the break, hundreds of balloons tied with letters and colorful ribbons rose up in the sky and crossed over the horrible cement border! Soon, all the children were holding a balloon and were making new friends!

“Hi! I am Hippa. I have just arrived in Cyprus. I would love to get to know you and become friends! I do not like the wall at all!”



A small **revolution** was in the air! At the secret gathering that took place by the small hole they had made through the wall so as to **communicate** better, where **all spoke in turn**, they decided to decorate the wall instantly with messages of love and slogans of peace in all languages that were spoken in their schools!

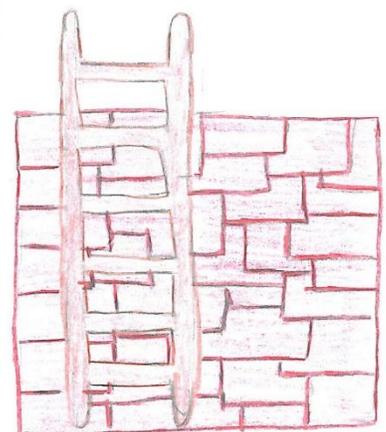
The teachers remained speechless before the colorful sight they came across with the following morning. Few of them smiled because they also wanted the two schools to reunite and both sides to come closer! However, the principal issued an ultimatum, “Whoever dares to approach, write on, or cross the wall, will be expelled!”



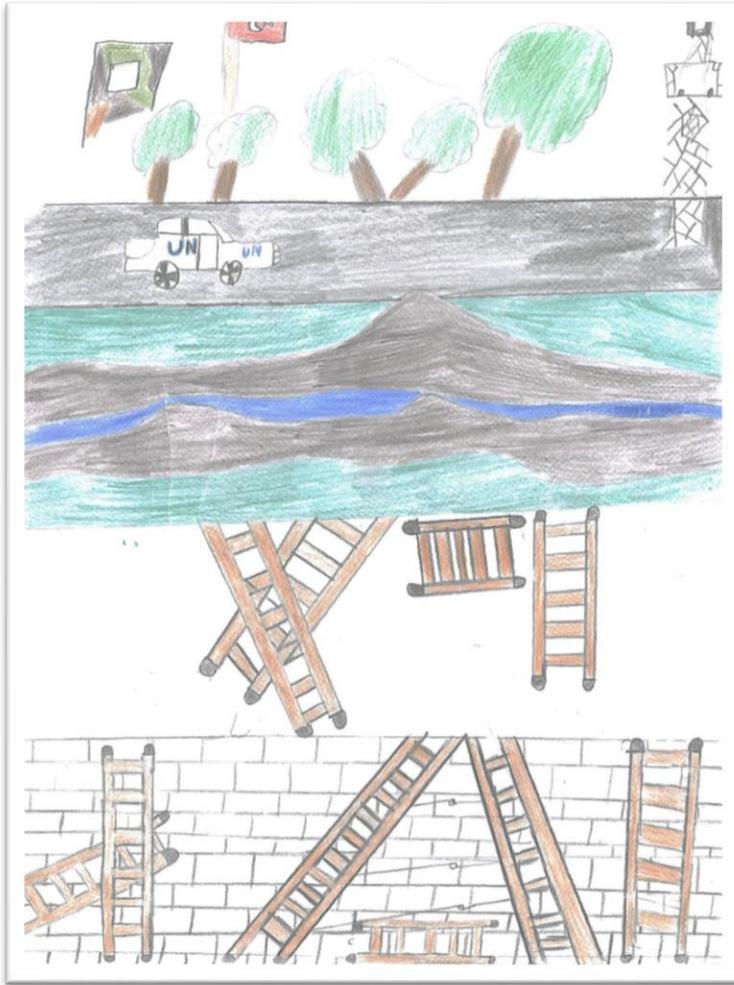
In the afternoon time to cross share their opinions and then exclaimed,

“We shall bring ladders from our houses! To climb high! To lift our hearts higher! »

On hearing such **revolutionary ideas**, some children **disagreed**, saying they were afraid of heights and the principal’s warnings, but when they **voted** later, the **majority agreed** with Thodoris and so, **the die was cast!**



Early in the morning the next day, the school was crammed with



ladders... Here and There... And immediately many children, tall, short, overweight, slim, dark, white... **all children**, began to climb, some with the **help** of their parents or the help of other children who pushed to lift them high!

As soon as they climbed at the peak of the wall, they found there, their **friends** from the other side and everybody hugged, smiled and wept from joy! For the first time, they could see beyond the wall! Some were even searching in the horizon to find their house, which they had never seen before!



The principal could not say anything since a bunch of cameras and journalists appeared outside the school to cover “The Students’ Rise for Peace!” after the students had notified them! The students knew that **if they made their act known**, they would manage to affect the others and achieve their purpose!



JOIN ME IN THIS JOURNEY

That night Elpida went to the attic because she wanted to thank the hidden magic mirror for showing her the way back to finding the missing smiles!

Cautiously, she took the mirror in her hands, as if she was holding the whole world, and uttered words of appreciation! And the mirror smiled, giving light to its second part and said, *“It is time for a long, for a new trip, I am going to help elsewhere ... Join me in this journey, if you please!”*

And so the mirror and Elpida disappeared instantly...





ANOTHER WALL?

...a strange tingling sensation ran through Elpida's body as she saw the sharper drawing of a girl with red pigtails and freckles on a wall with her mirror in her hand, her eyes still blurry. And indeed, her desire for change in other schools seemed to have come true.

"Here and there," she whispered softly.



50 EYES

A man came up to her, introduced himself as the headmaster, welcomed them and suddenly took Elpida to the fourth grade. Before

she knew it, they stared strangely at her eyes. Elpida was seated next to Kim. His mother had called him that, after the singer of some band. The name also meant something strong, something like "erected by Yahweh." But he himself did not like his name, because everyone teased him about it. Elpida, however, was impressed by Kim's appearance. His blue-green eyes lit up and with his long blond hair he stood out of the class...



"Kim, you are very well-read and you get along well in class. I think you will be able to support our new classmate well!", said the Headmaster.

Kim, indeed, had a bad feeling and in him grew the distrust of the strange dark-looking Elpida.



"Why do I always get these new students assigned? Did not our parents lately only scolded such refugees? They'll take our big flats away from us, get paid by the state, and otherwise they'll be aggressive pretty soon, looking for a fight. My parents have to work and rarely

All these opinions poured like a volcano through Kim's head, because if he were friends with Elpida, that would not help him in the class, they would rather annoy him even more.

Elpida gathered her courage and whispered so softly that it was hard to hear: "Hello, my name is Elpida. Who are you?" Kim's inner volcano ebbed away as he heard the lovely voice of that bright-skinned girl who resembled Snow White. "I am Kim. Where are you from?", he asked.

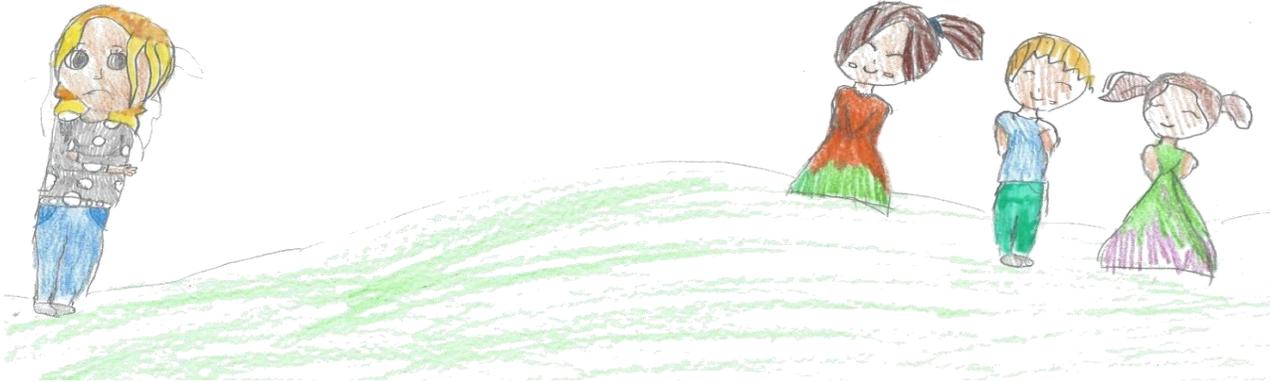


YOU GIRL

The cautious conversation of the two was interrupted by the ringing for the break and Elpida got a first painful impression as Kim fared in the class. "Well you girl, now you can finally talk about chic hairstyles with the new! Sure, she can also tell you how to live for free at the expense

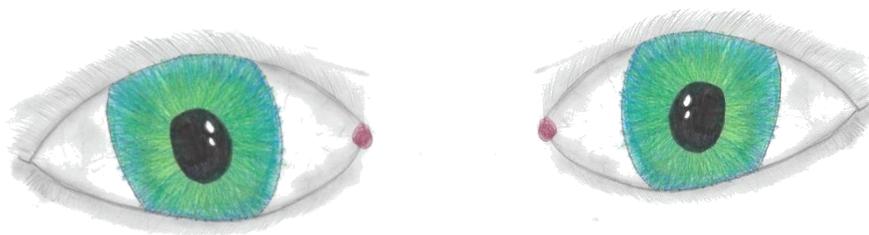
of others.", Eric cursed as he passed by. Kim immediately looked down and blushed. Surely, he thought, Elpida would now take the side of the others.

"Here and there ..." Elpida immediately shot it in the head.



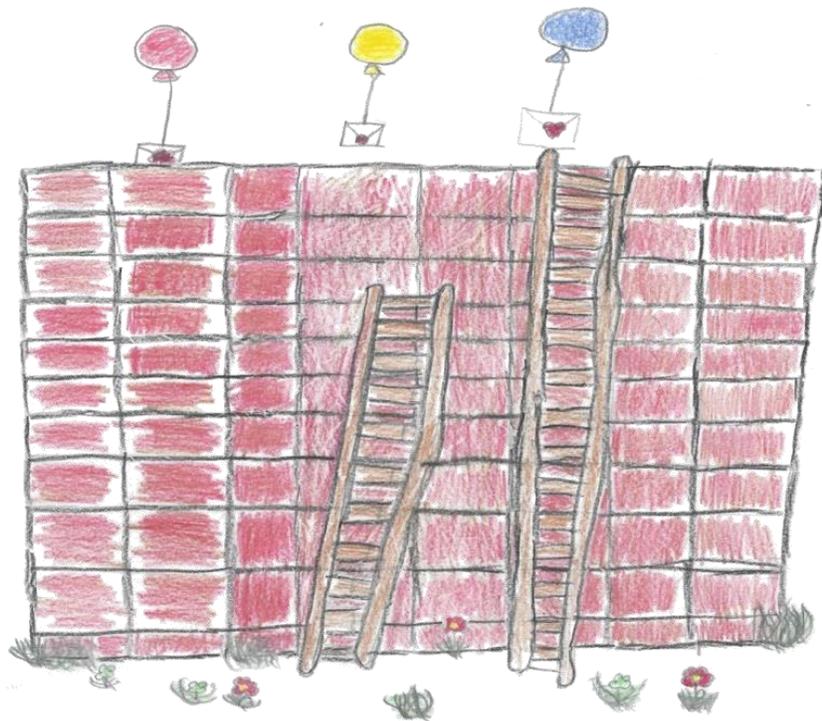
That is their mission in Germany. Help children who are bullied for their appearance, ethnicity, or religion. It fell from her eyes like a dandruff and she noticed how the revolutionary thoughts of her homeland stirred in her.

Kim, I have an idea how we can improve your unsightly situation!", she babbled immediately on him. Kim opened his eyes and raised his head.



Never before had anyone wanted to help him out of his predicament. So far, he was considered an outsider and, like the immigrant refugees, hardly noticed by the others, mostly ignored.

NEXT REVOLUTION



We're starting a student revolution like in Cyprus“, Elpida told Kim, still looking baffled. "A wall set up by two governments crossed our country. Families were separated, friends were torn apart and we students could not get in touch with each other. But we did not accept it." Elpida told him all about the music, the balloon mail, the ladders ...

They made an appointment for the afternoon, and Kim remembered his parents' stories when they were still burning for revolutionary action and in the late 1980s involved in overcoming the wall in Germany.

"I know a place where this happened as well. The name is Berlin. There I would like to go with you to show you everything, but we have to solve our problems here in school! I also have an idea.", Kim said excitedly, infected by Elpida's zeal.



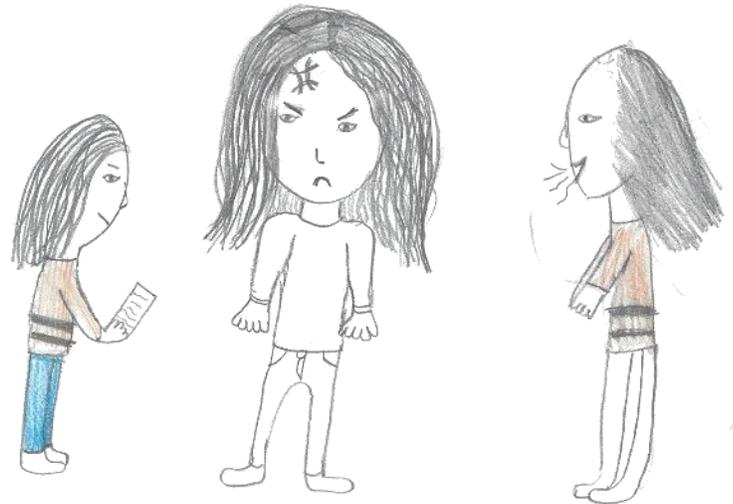
The next morning a poster stuck to the wall in the middle of Pippi's arms. On it one could read:

"I wish that all children of the school are valued in their uniqueness. That every girl and every boy can be as he / she wants to be and nobody is expelled because of his appearance, his homeland or because of his religion. "

"Here and there ..." Elpida and Kim whispered. The mirror in her pocket began to glow with the sound of Kim's words. "That's it!", both thought. The mirror will help us. She pulled the mirror out of her pocket with a sweep and held it out to the children. Many did not believe their eyes, because they were also responsible for bullying and exclusion. Their words had been unreflective, shaped by friends, adults, the media, and not by the opposite. This had made their faces mellow, pale and limp. "Laugh, be merry, be tolerant, and you'll notice how your positive behavior is mirrored to your classmates and you can experience the same back," Kim said, tucking in everyone's smile.

The students planned a parents' meeting over coffee and cake, in which all parents could get to know each other and reduce fears and prejudices. Dispute mediators should become contact persons, should give opportunities to solve conflicts peacefully and be role models for tolerance and appreciation of each. The chosen mediators quickly became active and it was the change hoped for by Elpida and Kim. From then on, the students were always held a mirror to show them a respectful behavior.

Then, during the break, something incredible happened to Kim. "Hey Kim, you're good at holding balls, do you want to play football with us?", Eric shouted to him, who had insulted him days before. "Oh, by the way, I'm sorry I called you a girl." It was the best break in Kim's life.

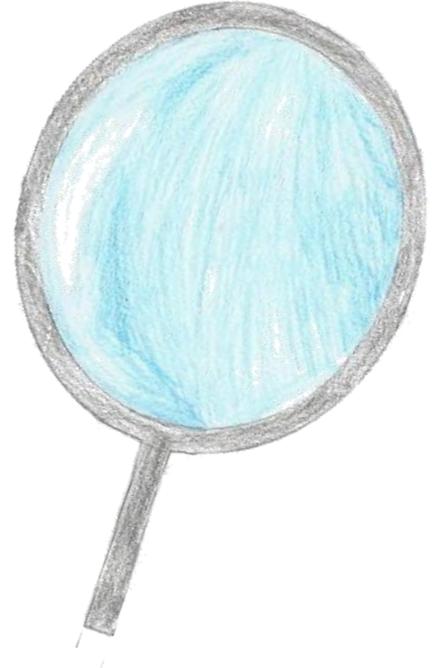


Thank you Elpida.", he said, hugging her. "Now we have been able to move a lot in our heads. Now I can show you what our parents once did. Some traces can still be found in Berlin today." They held hands and stood in front of the Eastside Gallery in Berlin, the symbol of the peaceful revolution in 1989. "The wall shows how people enjoyed the fall of the Wall back then, what a great hope they had for a better, more humane society, without oppression and bondage." Elpida and Kim looked at the picture when they suddenly heard a voice.



ES GILT VIELE MAUERN ABZUBAUEN

A look behind the wall did not provide any certainty about the origin of this voice, only the mirror shone. "There are 3 parts, look Kim. Here and there.", Elpida said, claspng his hand tightly. "May I accompany you on your further journey Elpida?", Kim asked quickly. But before he could reciprocate Elpida's smile, he felt Elpida and he go there ...



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...”

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

“Hello! I’m Irini (Peace in Greek). New students? What are your names?”

“Hi! I’m Elpida from Cyprus”... “and I’m Kim from Germany”

“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!!!

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 Lesvos 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 Lesvos 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 Salam’s journey from Syria to Greece.”

“And I know now why the mirror brought us here...” Kim said.

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DIFFERENT?

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 they exclude them. 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!!

IDEAS WHICH BUILD 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” Efrem shouted happily.

«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...

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...



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 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 peace.



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



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...



TOIVO AND RAUHA

When Fadia woke up in the morning, she went to tell Elpida, Kim, and Irini what she had seen. She walked, until she found them talking to the other refugees. When Fadia told them about her dreams, the mirror glowed, and then, suddenly, Elpida, Kim and Irini were found in Finland walking in a school. When they walked inside the school, they found a boy being bullied.



The bullies had new and expensive clothes, while the boy just had ripped jeans, an old hoodie and sneakers. When the bullies went off, the boy saw the trio and went to talk to them.

-Hello. said the boy,

-Hi! Why did those guys bully you? asked Elpida.

-Because they are rich, and I am pretty poor. My parents do not have a job, said the boy sadly.

-Hey! Do you want to be friends with us? Elpida, asked kindly. My name is Elpida, she continued.

-And mine's Kim!

-And mine's Irini!

-Yes! My name is Toivo!

Just then, the bell rang.

-Ok! See you guys after the break! said Toivo, as he ran inside the classroom. Then, the trio ran to the playgrounds and found a girl, named Rauha. They all introduced to each other.

- Do you know Toivo? asked Irini.

-Yes, I do! He is a pretty fun guy to be honest, Rauha said.

-Well, do you want to meet him on next break, asked Irini, trying to help Toivo find friends and stop being lonely in the school.

Rauha agreed gladly as she had already noticed that Toivo spends a lot of time alone and that made it an easy target for being bullied.



During the break, the four went to meet Toivo. Toivo was being bullied again, but this time the group went to protect him. They tried to go in between Toivo and the bullies, meanwhile Rauha said,

-Imagine what it would feel like to be bullied yourself! Just hold a mirror and reflect on your bad behavior! It's not fair to be bullied at all, and even less fair to be bullied about a thing you can't control!

And just then, the mirror that Irini was holding glowed in a red color, helping the bullies to understand their mistakes.

They said,

-You know what? I want to stop this. I'm sorry we bullied you Toivo, said one of the kids courageously.

-That's ok! We can be friends from now on Toivo said happily.

The children sat under a tree and shared their stories with the children from Finland. And then Toivo and his new friends learned about the children revolution in Cyprus to bring peace between the two sides. They also learned about the revolution in Germany for accepting and respecting the different children. Last, they learned what it is like to be a refugee and what is needed for welcoming and including refugees in their new home, away from their motherland.



-Let's all go to a trip to Koli, a place I love! It's a very beautiful landscape with a big lake that resembles the mirror that was with you in your long journey. A journey that helped us all, suggested Toivo.

Koli was indeed a magical place for their final gathering before returning home. They stood all at the top of the hill looking mesmerized

at the beautiful lake that was ahead. Toivo threw a stone into the lake shattering its mirror- like surface into a series of homocentric circles that seemed to be continued forever!

-Our journey started from a small initiative in Cyprus! exclaimed Elpida. Our efforts there were like this small stone thrown by Toivo into this beautiful lake!

-And look how many revolutions have happened after this small stone, this first revolution in Cyprus, said Kim excitedly!

-This is what active citizenship is about! Taking an example from the others and continuously making efforts to change the world!

The children held their hands in silence... They all felt emotional and wanted this moment to last for eternity!

-One for all and all for one! shouted Toivo. We will be forever connected through our story! he concluded.

Then, the magic mirror glowed brighter than ever and everyone was back home.

Elpida found herself back in the attic of her home. She tried to feel where the mirror was, but it wasn't in her pocket anymore and when she tried to see outside, through the window, she saw fireworks making a heart-shape as they blew up in the air.

Slowly, a smile was formed on her face and stayed with her forever!

THE END



