



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Erasmus+ KA220-SCH Strategic Partnership in School Education

-DICOMI-

DIGITAL COMICS OF MIGRATION

[2023-1-TR01-KA220-SCH-000166103]

INTERVIEWS

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

AFGHANISTAN

AMINA

Before Migration

How did you decide to migrate? What were the reasons/motives?

My father decided that I had to leave Afghanistan because there was no future for me under the Taliban regime. He didn't want me to be forced into marriage with a Taliban member and feared for his own life because he had worked with the Americans as an English translator. Being a young woman under the Taliban regime was not something that I can explain in a few words. It is like a prison, like a nightmare. Women are treated like tools, like animals and have to obey in everything.

How can you explain the process before migration? What did you experience? How did you get prepared? (materials, emotion, documents, etc)

Before migrating, we spent days waiting at the airport for documents that never came. The situation was really scary. My father eventually decided to pay smugglers with the American dollars he had saved for me. I had to leave him behind, as my mother had already passed away. Emotionally, it was devastating. Thankfully I had a boy, neighbor of us whose parents also decided that he had to leave. So we were for while together in this journey

How did you plan the travel? Why did you choose this country? How did you feel?

The plan was to leave Afghanistan by any means necessary. Smugglers took us to the borders with Turkmenistan, and from there, we hoped to reach a safer country. The journey was terrifying, and I felt a constant fear.

During Traveling

How can you explain the process of migration? What kind of transportation did you use? How long did it last (the traveling)?

The migration process was an endless nightmare. We travelled by car and by foot. It was endless. There were many dangerous moments, including an attack by thieves who tried to take our stuff and rape me. We were saved by another group of smugglers who scared them off. It was a surprise for me as I thought that they will abuse me but they did not. We continued with them.

What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

I traveled with a small group of people and it was very hard. Under these circumstances people lose their temper and they forget civilized manners. They act violently and lose their mind. Why? Because it is endless and difficult and you start question why you left your home. I was thinking that it would be better to marry an old man and be his slave wife rather than dying little bit everyday. This is how desperate you feel.

How did your family members feel?

My father was heartbroken to send me away but knew it was for my safety. He was filled with worry and sadness. I missed him terribly and felt guilty for leaving him behind.

Was there another country you stopped over along the way? How long did it last? What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

We stopped in several countries. We stayed in a camp in Azerbaijan for about four months, where the government tried to send us back, but a humanitarian organization helped us move forward. There just a few organizations acting there but I understood that the government take money or something like that for some refugees from the European countries or something similar. Not really sure. However, we survived and pushed to Georgia and then spent six months in Turkey before finally reaching Greece.

After Traveling

Who migrated with you? Did you migrate with all your family members?

I migrated alone, leaving my father behind in Afghanistan.

If you have migrated without your family members, what can you say about this? What kind of an experience was it to migrate without your family members?

Migrating without my family was incredibly lonely and painful. I constantly worried about my father's safety and missed him deeply. I have a heavy emotional burden.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How?

In Greece, I was one of the lucky ones because I was reached by some people from an organization in Holland who met me during some workshops we did in the camp. I am good at embroidery as this is a traditional art in my country. I also know calligraphy which I learnt from my relatives back home. So my skills attracted them and we start talking. So eventually they offered to propose me for moving to Holland and help out with the formal steps.

How did you feel when you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

Arriving in the Netherlands was a huge relief. For the first time, I felt safe and not like a prisoner. It is not home but home now is a prison. So I feel a huge relief which I cannot explain it in words.

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

The disadvantages are not so connected to the society here but dealing with the trauma of the journey. The language barrier is also a problem but Dutch people speak English which makes it easy. I am very good with English due to my father who taught me well. I also learn dutch now.

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

Mainly the food but there is not dutch cuisine. So you can have access and eat everything you want. Of course the supermarket are amazing. You can find everything you want, it was not like that in my country.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

I am reserved and shy so I am still having issues feel home. I talk to some women neighbors and some people at a humanitarian organization I short of work.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

Not much to say. I am trying to feel like this is home.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How?

The locals are always polite. It is not easy to say something more friendly but they are all polite and helpful. I do not mind at all. I live in a small town outside of Nijmegen which is east of Rotterdam. So feels like this is a village and people when they see you they say hello to you. I feel nice and most of all protected and safe.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

I mostly needed psychological support which I found it. I have a deep trauma because of what I experienced and for leaving my father behind. It has been almost three years and I cannot stop thinking of him. He is my roots, my family, my protector.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family?

Of course. Who does not. You have to leave your country, it is not a journey to relax. We walked entire countries to save our lives. Can you imagine the fear of my father who did not hear about me for months?

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

I built a new life by working for a humanitarian organization and helping other refugees. Knowing English has been a huge advantage, and my job helps me stay focused and gives me purpose.

How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown? How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?

Communicating with him is mostly difficult. It has to be with a trusty person, who has a phone, and be sure that it is not connected to the Talibans. I have spoke to him just a few times the last years. It is a contact pain in my heart. You do not know how difficult is to live under the Talibans. I was a baby when the Americans

came in the country and have not lived in the Taliban world. But I know because all people described the life. So I do not want to put his life in danger.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

I am anxious and haunted by past traumas. But I am also strong and do not give up. I will succeed in my life.

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments?

I am amazed by the processes in the Netherlands. Nothing is perfect but the system most of the time work and help people. The problem is that it not easy due to the politics for people to reach the country as in reality they do not want to admit many refugees. Unfortunately, in the European Union most people are stuck in Greece which make it very difficult for them to go out of the country and they wait and wait for visas. It does not seem that there is an actual European policy to help people.

How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

I do not know. I do not have much to offer. I just want to leave in peace and show people what life is. If they knew these people how lucky they are living in this country...

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

No I do not want to go back. If I do, it would be like deciding to killing myself and also killing my father who will be devastated if I go back. I was not expecting anything here. What I hoping was safety and I got it. All the other is not important.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

I hope I can see my father before he dies. He is not very old but in Afghanistan people have shorter lives due to the lack of medicine and good life. I hope that sometime in the future I get married and have my own family and share with them all the stories from my life and our roots.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

I feel empathy and I am trying to help them. I cannot take the burden off but I am doing my best. I know how they feel.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

I do not know. Maybe be strong and never give up. It is luck if you will survive a journey like this. But do not give up your hopes.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

IRAQ

Ahmed

Before Migration

How did you decide to migrate? What were the reasons/motives?

The decision to migrate was driven by the worsening security situation in Iraq. The political instability and frequent violence from ongoing conflicts between different factions made daily life perilous. Kidnappings, bombings, and a lack of basic services such as electricity and clean water pushed me to seek a safer environment for my family. The fear of my children growing up in such an environment without access to proper education or a future was the final motivator.

How can you explain the process before migration? What did you experience? How did you get prepared (materials, emotion, documents, etc)?

Preparing for migration was a difficult and emotional process. First, I had to gather all necessary documents, which was complicated by the chaotic state of Iraqi bureaucracy. Emotionally, it was heart-breaking to leave behind my extended family and the only home I had ever known. We sold most of our belongings to finance the journey, and I spent countless hours researching possible routes and preparing for the uncertainty ahead. The hardest part was explaining to my children why we had to leave and assuring them that this was for a better future. It was just a nightmare that would last for years and I am never certain if this was a good idea. My children would have lived in violence and uncertainty in Iraq and spend part of their life in uncertainty in camps. I will always question my decision despite that now all is fine.

How did you plan the travel? Why did you choose this country? How did you feel?

The travel was planned with a mixture of desperation and hope. I chose the Netherlands because of its reputation for strong human rights protections and a fair asylum process. I had heard from other refugees that the Dutch system was supportive and provided opportunities for rebuilding lives. I am also fan of football and I have known some information about the country because of football clubs. I am fan of Ajax which is based in Amsterdam and I have seen in the videos how

wonderful was this place. Throughout the planning phase, I felt a mix of fear, determination, and hope. Leaving Iraq was like stepping into the unknown, but I was driven by the desire to provide a safer life for my family.

During Traveling

How can you explain the process of migration? What kind of transportation did you use? How long did it last (the traveling)?

The migration process was in two words: painful and chaotic. We first moved with buses but also walked to Turkey, which took several weeks. From there, I paid smugglers to get me into Greece. In Greece, we stayed in a refugee camp for two years while I worked in nearby fields to save money. The journey continued through the Balkans, mostly on foot or in overcrowded, unsafe vehicles provided by smugglers. Overall, it took five years to finally reach the Netherlands.

What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

I traveled alone at first, while my wife and children stayed behind in refugee camps in Turkey and then in Greece. I paid the same people I used to get them to Greece. At least we would be together in the camps. But then had to leave them and seek the path to help them. The journey was filled with constant fear of being caught, lack of food, and harsh weather conditions. In Bulgaria, I worked in fields under exploitative conditions just to earn enough to continue our journey. The physical and emotional toll was immense, but the thought of reuniting with my family kept me going. Despite the hardships, there was always a glimmer of hope that we would find safety and stability. I had made some friends, other families, with which my family stayed close while I was traveling so I felt that at least they were safe behind and not starve. The conditions is not well but walking Europe as an illegal refugee is worse. You feel like someone is constantly hunting you, like you are a pray. At least this was my feeling.

How did your family members feel?

My family experienced profound anxiety and fear, especially my children who were stuck in refugee camps for years. They faced difficult living conditions and uncertainty about when they would see me again. The separation was extremely tough on all of us, but we maintained contact as much as possible and tried to keep our spirits up with the hope of being together in a safe place someday. I would say that technology helped us in that part because with the smartphones and

applications we can have some connections, it is not like in the old times. At least I could get a window to my family through the phone.

Was there another country you stopped over along the way? How long did it last? What did you do on the way?

Yes, after Turkey, I spend time in Greece, Bulgaria and then to Romania. During this time, I worked in various low-paying jobs to gather enough resources for the next leg of the journey. I was a good employee, illegal one and they exploited me but at least I could have some shelter and food. There were people that helped me. Especially the last person I worked in Romania who helped me, even financially, to prepare documents and start the process for migration to an EU country. He was connected in the government so he protected me a lot and we found ways to overcome the problems. I am so grateful to him.

After Traveling

Who migrated with you? Did you migrate with all your family members?

Initially, I migrated alone while my family remained in refugee camps. It took several years of working and saving money, along with paying smugglers, to finally reunite with my wife and children in the Netherlands.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How?

After arriving in the Netherlands, the asylum process was long and complex. Thankfully, we received significant help from Dutch refugee organizations and volunteers who guided us through the legal process, helped us find temporary housing, and provided essential support services. The kindness and support of these organizations were invaluable in helping us navigate the new environment and begin rebuilding our lives.

How did you feel when you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

Arriving in the Netherlands was a moment of immense relief and joy. The primary advantages included safety, access to healthcare and education, and the opportunity to build a stable future for my children. The sense of security and the ability to restart life in a supportive community were incredible. Not that I did not feel fear. But after all this pain, there was almost nothing that would break my spirit.

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

The disadvantages include the difficulty of integrating into a new culture, learning a new language, and finding stable employment. At least I was already speaking English. I was a tour guide back home so I was not a typical local. I had more international experience. What was difficult was the emotional burden of having been separated from my family for so long and the trauma of our journey weigh heavily on us. I see that the kids do not think of the past, at least this is what I want to believe. There has been so long that I cannot sleep well, I wake up with nightmares but when I see my family all is gone. It is a vicious circle but I can stand anything as long as I see my kids smile.

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

Yes, there were significant cultural differences, especially in terms of social customs, food, and daily life practices. Learning Dutch and understanding the local way of life were initial challenges. The great thing is that everybody speaks English so you could easily live in the country. However, knowing Dutch makes it even better and you can integrate better. My kids are speaking three languages now and I am very proud of them. They will be Dutch and forever protected. They know a lot about our culture, food and history but I would like them to also feel Dutch so they do not feel immigrants. Participating in local activities and community events has helped bridge some of these gaps, but it remains an ongoing process.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

I am starting to feel more at home, thanks to language classes and community support. Integrating takes time, but the friendly local community has made it easier to adapt and feel included.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

Generally, I feel accepted. Many people in the community have been kind and supportive, helping us navigate the new environment and offering assistance in various ways. They are foreigners but many dutch also work with us. Their acceptance has been crucial in our adjustment process. Of course like everywhere there are racists but this is common everywhere so I do not pay attention any more. I have been through hell and survived. These people cannot intimidate me anymore.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How?

The local people have been incredibly supportive. They have helped us by providing information about local services, offering practical help with everyday tasks, and showing a genuine interest in our well-being. Their support has made a significant difference in our transition to life in the Netherlands. However, we have found helpful people in Turkey, in Greece and Romania but here the government is more organized and for many reasons they accepted us and gave us shelter while in the other countries this was not the case. To be fair, in Turkey and Greece there were millions of refugees so I am not sure how a country can handle so many people. The north European countries have accepted just a small part of the people from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. I am thankful that I am among them but wanted to mention that.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

We have a lot of support and system is accessible. We of course need support in finding stable employment. There are programs but sometimes it is not always enough but we do not complaint.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family?

Migration has significantly changed our family. The long separation and difficult journey have brought us closer together, strengthening our bond. However, the stress and challenges of adjusting to a new life have also tested our patience. Again though I do not complaint. It is a miracle that we are here, safe and most of all together.

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

We constructed a new life by actively engaging with local support organizations, attending language classes, and participating in community activities. Building a network of friends and acquaintances in the community has been essential in creating stability. It is an ongoing process though but we know that we will reach the point where we will consider the Netherlands our country.

**How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown?
How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?**

We communicate with family and friends in Iraq through phone calls and social media. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints and travel restrictions, we have not been able to visit them since our migration.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

Migration has really changed me, making me more resilient, patient, and resourceful. I have been a refugee for very long and roaming around. So not I feel immigrant which is far easier than feeling a hopeless refugee. It has also instilled a deep appreciation for safety and stability. My family has become more united and supportive of each other,

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments?

The migration policies in the Netherlands are generally supportive, but the process can be bureaucratic and slow. Expediting asylum applications and providing more resources for integration would greatly benefit new immigrants. Do not mistake. This is a difficult process and nothing is easy.

How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

Promoting greater cultural understanding and providing more opportunities for immigrants to integrate through education, employment, and community activities would enhance the country. Encouraging dialogue and collaboration between locals and immigrants can foster a more inclusive society. Dutch can be open but at the same time they are reserved. It is a very different culture but they are polite and helpful in the local services.

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

Living here has been different than I expected, particularly the cultural and language barriers. However if you speak English it is more than enough, at least as a first step. However, language is also a part of culture taking into account the vast history of my country. Also people do not really touch each other, while in my culture people hug each other feel more warm. But this is what each culture has.

While I dream of returning to Iraq someday, it will depend on the situation there. For now, I am focused on building a stable and secure life for my family in the Netherlands.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

I dream of a peaceful and prosperous future for my family. I hope to see my children thrive in a safe and supportive environment. I envision a world where everyone has the opportunity to live without fear, with access to education, healthcare, and opportunities for a better life. As you see though this is not a case. You see what is going on in Palestine and in Ukraine. You have not lived in a war zone and you cannot understand the feeling. These people will have their hearts hurt for ever due to the trauma of war. It is really sad.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

I feel a deep sense of empathy and solidarity, knowing the struggles they have likely faced. I am always willing to offer support and share my experiences to help them.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

I would recommend being well-prepared for the challenges ahead. Seek support from local organizations, build a network, and learn the language as soon as possible. Stay hopeful and resilient, as the journey may be tough, but the opportunities for a better life may worth it. However, maybe when all is finished seems like a dream. Before that and until the moment all is finished is a pain, a nightmare that may take very long to finish so people should take this decisions without very much consideration.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

SUDAN

Ahmed

How did you decide to migrate? What were the reasons/motives?

We decided to migrate because of the ongoing conflict in Sudan. The war made it impossible for us to live safely and provide a future for our children. We sold everything we had and used the money to buy our way to freedom, hoping for a better life elsewhere.

How can you explain the process before migration? What did you experience? How did you get prepared (materials, emotion, documents, etc)?

First of all we collected our documents, which was very difficult due to the chaos in Sudan. Emotionally, it was very tough to leave everything behind. We packed what we could carry and said our goodbyes to family and friends. The pain is that you are not sure when and mostly if you will meet the people again. However, we had to take the decision for our kids. It is our obligation to protect them.

How did you plan the travel? Why did you choose this country? How did you feel?

We first moved to Egypt to stay with relatives, but it was only a temporary solution. Then we went to Greece, where there is a Sudanese community and some historical connections between Greeks and Sudanese. For example my father, who was in military, studied in the Greek Army Academy, and then returned to Sudan with a high rank. So it was not an unknown place for us due to the connections my dad had with some remaining old friends of him. After that, we moved to Italy illegally as in reality we said that we were tourists but we were not. We stayed there for a while and eventually, we traveled by train to Germany and then to the Netherlands, where we applied for refugee status. Throughout the journey, I felt a mix of fear and hope, constantly worried about our safety and future.

During Traveling

How can you explain the process of migration? What kind of transportation did you use? How long did it last (the traveling)?

To be honest I felt privileged as I was carrying enough money to keep us for at least a year without jobs. And I am privileged about that. We did not leave in difficult conditions in general and also we had people that helped us in in Egypt and Greece. So it would be unfair to complain.

What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

We traveled together as a family – my wife, our three children, and I. The challenging part was that even if we reached our destination then we were not sure if all will work out. We had people from the Sudanese diaspora in the Netherlands and also due to my father's connections I knew that this was a nice place to live and that the process would possibly end up well for us. The main fear is uncertainty and also you have to be positive. We are responsible for our kids.

How did your family members feel?

My family was very anxious during the journey, especially the children. They knew that we did not leave for holidays but we have left home. They missed their home, the relatives, their friends, in a few words they missed their routine. We did our best to keep their spirits up, but it was a very stressful time for all of us.

Was there another country you stopped over along the way? How long did it last? What did you do on the way?

Yes, we stayed in Egypt for a while with relatives. Later, in Greece, we lived within the Sudanese community, which provided some support. We had to move through Italy and Germany as well before finally reaching the Netherlands.

After Traveling

Who migrated with you? Did you migrate with all your family members?

I migrated with my wife and three children.

If you have migrated without your family members, what can you say about this? What kind of an experience was it to migrate without your family members?

As mentioned I was privileged to be able to keep us altogether and stay always together.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How?

After arriving in the Netherlands, we instantly applied for refugee status. The process was long and a bit complicated. The problem was that we lacked some documents, even if we gathered all we could. Also it was difficult to find them due to the war in Sudan and the split of South Sudan. As I understood this is common, there are people that only have their passports and nothing else. It was a blessing that there are local organizations that help refugees with the legal processes so we managed to overcome them. The most fearful was to find housing as housing is extremely difficult in the Netherlands.

How did you feel when you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

Safety. This is the word that describes everything. You cannot have a life and dream for the future if you have bombs blowing next to you. Instability is causing you anxiety all day, everyday. Especially when you have children then it is mandatory to take decisions.

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

First of all being an immigrant it is a challenge anyway because you left your country for a reason. Since this is anonymous interview, I would like to say that are two types of refugees or immigrants: Poor and rich. I am not poor and left my country with my clothes and money after selling everything. So I had money to survive and also I still have money left in case it is needed. If you are poor you have no options. It is unfair for most of the people and I feel bad that I am on the other side. All was far easier because I could rent a room for many weeks, have food, have my clothes, be clean. So we should remember that most people are not like me. I had a hotel back home and I sold it half price within a few days. But now I am again from the start. So this is one of the problems. You have to start again your life, from zero.

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

Of course. Food is a thing and the high prices of everything. Dutch are mostly polite but they are a bit cold and they almost never go to more personal connection. It takes time of course but this is a reality for all the people from different cultures. The good thing is that Holland is really intentional and has people from everywhere. So you never feel that you are the only foreigner here.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

I feel nice, people are nice in general and polite. This is more than enough for me. Also that my kids go to school where they do not have problems it is wonderful. The kids are also better at learning the language. They did not speak English well so Dutch is the language they use in their everyday life now. Me and my wife are both educated and due to our work back home we are fluent in English like a mother language and everybody speaks English here.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

More or less I feel ok. The neighbors are nice and the people at work they are polite as well. I do not have local friends, only some foreigners but this ok.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How?

Yes, indeed they have been supportive. The services are open for us despite some a bit rude employees but this is not a problem. One problem for example is that in some government offices while they speak English they spoke to us in Dutch and I felt it was just a way to make it difficult for us. However, we had people from organizations that acted as translators and we solved that.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

Due to my past experience I found a job in hotel industry. I speak 5 languages so it was helpful as in the reception they need people fluent in languages. So it is helpful. When you are established here everything is accessible. The process was fast so we are short of like citizens.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family?

It would be a lie to say that all was good. Many people think that those who live in Africa are poor, hopeless or that we are used to wars or that we desperately need to go and live in Europe. This is not true and it is an offensive generalization. So for us it was very difficult to take the decision, take all of the roots from Sudan and decide to go somewhere to start again. Have you every thought how it is to leave everything and start your life like you are 18 years old? People must have strength to overcome the problems and managed to do it.

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

As said we were lucky and we started a new life fast enough. Does not mean that we enjoy it away from our relatives and culture but since our kids are happy, we are too.

**How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown?
How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?**

Social media. Very helpful, easy and not costs.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

We have been more decisive and also we decided that we should not give up. We got nothing to lose. We lost everything in Sudan so we have to move forward.

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments?

Genarally good, the system works but as everywhere some people try to make it difficult. There are racists or people who afraid foreigners everywhere. Also do not forget the type of government now in power in the country. Far right is not ideal when you are a refugee. Anyway, we are ok.

How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

I do not know. Probably with my culture and my positive spirit. And of course I am trying to make good children so they become good citizens and fair people.

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

I always want to go back but it is not possible. Also due time I am sure I will get used to it and it will seem like home. For the children seems easier as they have adapted. Also the infrastructure in the country is great and it is very beautiful, with rivers, lakes and parks everywhere. So, this is home now.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

I dream for the wars to finish and people leave a peaceful life. My dreams I think they are simple. I wish for me and my family, a peaceful, normal life, and for us to be able to have a house and jobs so we feel secure.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

I know how much they miss their family and relatives. I feel that many are also homesick. But this is life, we cannot do much. We did not leave our countries for holidays. Their conditions made us leave.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

Make sure you have a target. Prepare to ask people, find opportunities for countries that may be open for immigrants. If possible have all your documents and as much money you can with you. Try to protect from people that will offer help because there may be illegal people and you do not want to mess with them. Our pain is business for many. So keep your eyes and ears open and be sure for the people you trust.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIREG-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

SYRIA 1

Mohammad 1

Before Migration

How did you decide to migrate? What were the reasons/motives?

I made the difficult decision to leave Syria on a September morning in 2011. The city had been experiencing unrest and armed conflicts since March 2011. We lived in a relatively safe area, but one morning, armed groups appeared in our neighborhood, making it clear that staying was no longer an option. The tipping point was a terrifying incident where a shell landed near my children's school bus. The constant sounds of shelling and gunfire also made life unbearable. Additionally, I faced harassment at checkpoints on my way to work. It became clear that for our safety, we had to leave.

How can you explain the process before migration? What did you experience? How did you get prepared (materials, emotion, documents, etc)?

I couldn't leave immediately due to my teaching commitments at the university. I moved to Damascus and stayed in a hotel, hoping the situation in Homs would improve. However, Damascus itself soon became unsafe. During my stay, I planned our departure to Lebanon to apply for a U.S. visa for my 14-year-old son, who had been accepted into a boarding school there. We returned to Homs in early 2012 to prepare for our final departure. My wife packed our belongings, and I scanned important documents, photos, and academic achievements onto flash drives, leaving the originals behind. Selling our car and securing our home against looters were part of the painful preparations for leaving our beloved city and home behind.

During Traveling

How can you explain the process of migration? What kind of transportation did you use? How long did it last (the traveling)?

Our journey to Lebanon was a nightmare. We hired a private car to take us to a Lebanese town where a friend had booked a hotel. We encountered gunfire on the way and narrowly escaped an armed man trying to stop our car. The trip, which

should have taken a few hours, lasted 12 hours due to roadblocks and traffic at the border.

What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel? How did your family members feel?

We traveled with our two children, experiencing fear and exhaustion throughout the journey. The kids felt a mix of relief and happiness when we reached the hotel by the sea, while my wife and I were anxious about our uncertain future. We only had enough savings for a month's stay in Lebanon, and the high cost of living there was daunting. Our goal was to secure a U.S. visa for our son, who was accepted for his academic achievements. Despite his visa success, we faced the pain of parting from him as we couldn't provide a stable environment in Syria.

Was there another country you stopped over along the way? How long did it last? What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

We lived in Egypt for a year, but it was a challenging time with poor living conditions and financial struggles. My wife faced exploitation at her job, and my daughter had a hard time adjusting to her new school. Winning an Arabic literary award provided us with enough money to survive until we moved to Jordan, where I found a job at a private university. After a year, I received a research position at the University of Amsterdam, which allowed us to move to the Netherlands. The journey included multiple stops, constant adaptation to new environments, and a mix of relief and ongoing worry.

After Traveling

Who migrated with you?/Did you migrate with all your family members? If you have migrated without your family members, what can you say about this? What kind of an experience was it to migrate without your family members?

I moved to the Netherlands with my wife and daughter. My son had already gone to the U.S. It was heartbreaking to leave him behind, but it was the best decision for his future.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How? How did you feel when

you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

We initially lived in Amsterdam while I worked at the university. My research grant ended, and finding new work was tough, so I applied for asylum. The UAF and SAR organizations provided legal assistance, and we eventually moved into social housing. The transition was challenging, but the Dutch community was supportive. The main advantages of migration are safety, education, and a stable environment for my daughter.

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

The biggest challenges include finding suitable employment, learning Dutch, and dealing with bureaucratic processes. Language barriers in healthcare settings also pose significant difficulties.

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

Cultural differences are present, but I appreciate the Dutch focus on human rights and personal freedoms. Understanding the nuances of Dutch social norms and integrating into local activities has been gradual.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

I feel partially integrated. While I appreciate the freedom and support, forming close connections has been slow. My daughter has adapted well, which gives me hope.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

Yes, generally. People are kind and have helped us navigate many challenges, but deeper connections are still developing.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How? Did you experience any difficulty?

The local people are supportive and have assisted with practical matters. However, the emotional and cultural gaps remain, making full integration difficult.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

We need continuous language support and help with finding stable employment. More community engagement activities would also be beneficial.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family? How? Has migration changed your family routines (how you live your day)? How?

Migration has changed family dynamics, especially with my daughter adapting quickly and my wife facing health challenges. The new environment has brought both stress and opportunities for growth.

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

We focused on education and employment. I continued my academic work while my daughter excelled in school. Volunteering and community involvement helped us adapt.

How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown? How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?

We communicate through phone calls and video chats but haven't been able to visit due to the ongoing conflict and financial constraints.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

Migration has made me more resilient and appreciative of new opportunities. It has also changed my family's outlook, adapting to a more liberal and diverse society.

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments? How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

Migration policies are generally supportive but could be more efficient. I suggest enhancing integration programs and creating more sustainable solutions to global migration issues.

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

Living here is different in many positive ways, such as freedom and security. However, the cultural adjustment is ongoing. I dream of returning to a peaceful Syria but I am committed to building a life here for now.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

I dream of a world with social justice and peace, where my family can thrive without fear. I hope to continue contributing to my field and supporting my daughter's future.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

I feel a sense of connection and empathy. Hearing their stories and experiences helps me understand our shared struggles and aspirations.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

Learn the language quickly, be prepared for cultural adjustments, and seek support from local communities and organizations. Stay hopeful and resilient – the journey is tough but can lead to a better life.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIREG-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been

replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

SYRIA 1

Laila

After Traveling

Who migrated with you? Did you migrate with all your family members?

I migrated with my entire family: my husband, our two children, and my parents. It was crucial for us to stay together during this challenging time.

If you have migrated without your family members, what can you say about this? What kind of an experience was it to migrate without your family members?

I don't believe that I would ever leave my family behind. I would die for them and would never leave them back. Either we would all leave together all we all stay united. If I had to decide between giving my life so they had a safe future and me staying back and die, I would choose the second. God helped us to manage to flee alive and now to be able to live the dream.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How?

After arriving in the Netherlands, our relative helped us find a place to live. This is a relative that paved the way for our visit to the Netherlands as he already knew much. He has moved many years ago, legally as his is an architect. The local authorities and refugee organizations provided assistance with paperwork and finding jobs. It was a long process, but their support was invaluable.

How did you feel when you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

I felt a mixture of relief and sadness when we arrived. The advantages of being an immigrant here include safety, access to education for our children, and healthcare. The problem in healthcare is language as they want you to speak Dutch, some of them, but all know English so it is easy to live. The facilities are amazing, and the people are polite and welcoming.

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

The main disadvantages are the challenges in finding work that matches our qualifications, the language barrier. All speak English - I mean all, even people who are 90 years old- but they also do not give up their language. Another problem is the feeling of being away from home. It took a long time to get our degrees recognized, and we had to work menial jobs initially. In reality my degree was recognized as I have studied in Lebanon and for some reason it seems easier or safer for the authorities to recognize it. I am teacher but due to the fact that my Dutch is not good yet, I cannot teach at a school. My husband still has some actions to take, as they ask for him some documents which we do not have and his university in Syria was partially bombed so it is hard to find some documents. However, he has worked in a foreign company for some years in Syria (he is a civil engineer) so it will be a good step for his recognition through a reference letter.

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

Yes, there were cultural barriers, especially with food and social customs. Making close friends has been difficult because the Dutch are very polite but reserved.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

Although we have established our lives here and our children are excelling in school, I still occasionally feel like I don't fully belong.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

Yes, we feel accepted. The community has been welcoming, and our children are happy in school. The teachers are very kind and ensure there is no discrimination.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How?

The local people are polite. Not warm, but always polite. They helped us with information and resources, and our children have been well-received in school. Their kindness has made a significant difference in our adjustment.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

Help to find better jobs, connected to our skills is always necessary. However I am glad that in this country women do not face much alienation and they access in any job, while in Syria this was not always the case.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family? How?

Migration has brought us closer together. We rely on each other more and have become stronger as a family. The shared experience of starting over in a new country has bonded us in a unique way.

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

We constructed a new life by learning the language, finding jobs, and integrating our children into the school system. Our kids helped us a lot to understand the culture and they teach us dutch. They know much more than us due to their school experience. We also connected with other Syrian families and joined community activities.

How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown? How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?

Thanks God social media exist and we do not lose contact with our family and friends.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

Migration has made me happier and more hopeful. I dream more and try to enjoy life. My family and I appreciate the safety and stability we now have, making us all stronger and more positive about the future.

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments?

Migrating to the Netherlands is a long process but the system, at least in our case worked well. There is bureaucracy but at least works and if an employee does not work they are responsible and accountable for their work. Which is some kind of protection to the people.

How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

I have brought my culture, my positive energy, my love for peace, my food culture and a family that has only love and support to offer. We are good people and despite we are not rich in money we are rich in our heart.

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

It is different from what I expected. It's safe and organized, but the emotional challenges are significant. I don't want to go back to see the devastation. We need to move forward and build a new life here.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

I dream of a peaceful future where my children can grow up safely and pursue their dreams. I hope to see a world where people can live without fear and conflict. I want to contribute to this community and help other immigrants find their place.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

I feel a deep connection and empathy. We share similar struggles and hopes. I always try to offer support and understanding because I know how hard it can be.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

Don't stop dreaming, even if the path is hard. Do not give up.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIREG-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the

guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

SYRIA 3

Mohammad 2

Before Migration

How did you decide to migrate? What were the reasons/motives?

I decided to leave Aleppo after a devastating bombardment that killed my parents. I had begged them to leave earlier, but they refused. Their tragic deaths were the final push I needed to escape. I couldn't stay any longer with those memories and nothing to keep me there. Only fear and pain.

How can you explain the process before migration? What did you experience? How did you get prepared? (materials, emotion, documents, etc)

The process was incredibly stressful and heartbreaking. I sold everything of value, gathered all necessary documents, and used all my savings. Emotionally, I was devastated, like my home. I had to say goodbye to my home and the memories of my parents. It felt like I was abandoning my past.

How did you plan the travel? Why did you choose this country? How did you feel?

I planned the travel in desperation. I gave almost all my money to smugglers to get me into Turkey and then onto a crowded, inflatable boat to Greece. I chose the Netherlands because of its reputation for being welcoming and having good opportunities for refugees. I felt scared and uncertain but determined to survive.

During Traveling

How can you explain the process of migration? What kind of transportation did you use? How long did it last (the traveling)?

The migration process was a nightmare. I traveled on foot, by car, by bus and eventually on an overcrowded inflatable boat. The journey in total took about two and half months, filled with danger and uncertainty at every turn. I mean to reach Greece because reaching the Netherlands took in total about 4 years.

What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

I traveled alone, which was both a curse and a blessing. The difficulties were immense: scary paths, rough seas, and the constant fear of being caught. I felt isolated, scared, and hopeless at times but pushed on out of necessity.

How did your family members feel?

My parents did not want to leave and never thought of not staying in Syria, which ultimately cost them their lives. I felt a deep sense of guilt and sorrow, knowing I couldn't save them.

Was there another country you stop over along the way? How long did it last? What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

I stopped in Turkey briefly before making the dangerous sea crossing to Greece. The time in Turkey was spent in hiding, constantly on the move to avoid detection. The difficulties were numerous: lack of food, shelter, and constant anxiety. It was an extremely dark period.

After Traveling

Who migrated with you? Did you migrate with all your family members?

I migrated alone. Losing my parents in Aleppo left me with no choice but to escape by myself.

If you have migrated without your family members, what can you say about this? What kind of an experience was it to migrate without your family members?

Migrating without my family was excruciatingly painful. The loneliness was overwhelming, and every step reminded me of the loss and the life I left behind.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How?

After arriving in Greece, I spent time in Moria camp, which was a horrible experience. Eventually, with the help of a humanitarian organization, I was able to relocate to the Netherlands. They helped with paperwork and finding temporary

housing. The process was lengthy and challenging, but their support was invaluable.

How did you feel when you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

I felt a mix of relief and sadness upon arrival. The main advantages are safety, stability, and the chance to rebuild my life. The Netherlands offered me a fresh start, something I desperately needed.

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

The disadvantages include feeling like an outsider, cultural and language barriers, and the difficulty of starting over. Despite speaking English, the adjustment was tough, and the loneliness was profound.

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

Yes, many. From food to social customs, everything was different. Making friends was hard because of cultural differences and that Dutch people are polite but not easy to make friends with.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

I feel bit integrated. I now have a job in a restaurant and I have an everyday life. Things I had back home and I always wonder why should I have been in all this pain and loss in order to move to another place and do the same job and seek for the same routine I had back home. I do not feel home but I feel ok.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

I do not feel part of the society. I always feel foreigner. The people are kind but very reserved outside of a work environment. It is really hard to make friends here.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How?

The local people are kind and generally supported us, I mean the refugees from Syria. They believe in freedom even if they country cannot take all refugees. I believe that they do the best they can. Do not forget that in the Netherlands now there is a far right government which means that there are many people who have far-right ideology which does not accept immigrants, especially of different color

and religion. So I believe that they society is doing well in general with foreign people.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

I need warm people around me, make friends and find a way not to feel alone. I have access to psychologist which is something I never thought about. In Syria I was making fun of the people who were going to psychologists but now I feel that this a help I will need.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family?

I travelled alone and have no close family left behind. While families are big back home, I come from a small family and also many people have died during the war leaving me one of the few that survived.

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

I started by finding any job I could, eventually working I work in a restaurant and part-time as an accounting assistant as numbers is a common language. I took some language classes and I will eventually study to become an accountant.

How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown? How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?

Unfortunately, I have no family left in Syria. Social mead and WhatsApp help me stay in touch with some friends but I cannot and do not want to visit. There is nothing else left for me there.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

I believe that all these processes have made me more powerful and take decisions, while at first I could not take quick decisions or those that could create instability in my life. Now I am strong enough to take decisions and dream for a good future.

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments?

The policies are good but there is a lot of bureaucracy. Many people believe that everything works perfect and fast but no, it does not. Bureaucracy is always there and sometimes people do only one task, the one they know and do not think in a more creative way to help you. But, I should adapt to their style.

How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

I do not know. I am not sure that I can make this country better. I do not feel a real part of the society. I guess I could bring our amazing food and family culture where we do not make appointments with our friends and family to meet them like the Dutch people do. We meet with them because are friends and family are our priority and not our jobs and money.

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

I am not sure if it different. It is safe and there is stability. I believe I am different than I expected. I thought I would be happy but I am not always. The loneliness is hard to bear but I don't want to go back to Aleppo. The memories are too painful, and there's nothing left for me there.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

I dream of a stable, peaceful life where I can build a career and contribute to my community. I hope for a world where people are not forced to flee their homes and can live without fear. I hope for myself to becoming a certified accountant in the future and helping other refugees integrate into their new lives.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

I feel like them, I am one of them. I generally do not feel well when I meet them as we discuss a lot about the past and how much we miss our homes and I do not want that. I want to go forward. I feel them and we all share a trauma in my opinion.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

Not sure. I guess I will tell them to think it a thousand times before they take this decision. Does it worth it? Are you sure it worth it or it in your mind and there other possible options in your home country? What you will you gain and what will you lose? I really do not know and I am not good with the advice.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIREs-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

UKRAINE 1

ANNA

Before Migration

How did you decide to migrate? What were the reasons/motives?

We decided to migrate because of the war. My husband stayed to fight, but we wanted safety for our children. We have three children. It was the best decision for their future.

How can you explain the process before migration? What did you experience? How did you get prepared (materials, emotion, documents, etc)?

This was my first time migrating. I have left my country only for holidays. We asked other people and act logically. We got all documents that may be asked along with birth and marriage certificates and similar documents proving who we are and where we come from along with all the money we could gather and come clothes and toys.

How did you plan the travel? Why did you choose this country? How did you feel?

We first went to Poland and stayed there for a while. It was obvious that they war will not end and it was only the beginning of the problem. I am lucky because my sister has been leaving in the Netherlands for more than 10 years so I did not go to an unknown place. I felt scared but hopeful, knowing we would be safer and closer to family.

During Traveling

How can you explain the process of migration? What kind of transportation did you use? How long did it last (the traveling)?

I wont say that the travel was horrible. It was fine taking into account the chaos and the so so many people trying to find a way out of Ukraine. We used buses to reach the Netherlands which took long but we got there safe.

What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

I traveled with my three kids. We faced many difficulties like long waits, crowded places, and uncertainty. It was stressful, but I do not complaint. Other faced more difficulties.

How did your family members feel?

My children were confused and scared, but they stayed strong. They missed their father and our home, but we kept moving forward together. There was no other option. We have to be strong for them.

Was there another country you stopped over along the way? How long did it last? What did you do on the way?

Yes, we stayed in Poland and crossed Europe during our travel.

After Traveling**Who migrated with you? Did you migrate with all your family members?**

I migrated with my three children. My husband stayed behind in Ukraine to fight in the war. He is in the military so even for us to leave was difficult. Anyway, we managed but he has to stay without question there.

If you have migrated without your family members, what can you say about this? What kind of an experience was it to migrate without your family members?

Migrating without my husband was very hard. We miss him a lot, and it is difficult to manage everything alone. But knowing he was fighting for our country made us proud and kept us going. At least this is what I say to my kids. Many times I would like to go back and be with him and we all feel like a family together as I know how much we miss him and how much he misses us.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How?

After arriving in the Netherlands, my sister helped us, we stayed with her and we still do. They have a big house so it is fine. We have received help from the people in the government, a specific department that handled all the Ukrainian refugees. We had all the documents and also we had my sister living and working here. So it was relatively easy.

How did you feel when you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

I am relieved. This is a prosperous country, organized with access to everything like good education and healthcare. However, we had a great life back home and Ukraine was more than enough organized. In big cities you have everything, like here.

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

The disadvantages is the language if you want to fully integrate. I do not speak dutch but my English is very good so you can live easily. Everybody speaks English here so all is fine. I cannot say that I have a big problem with the culture because my sister helped me understand some things here and also we live in a Ukrainian house but in the Netherlands. We eat our food, speak our language, watch our television programs.

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

Not really again because we live in a protected environment. My kids are 4, 6, and 7 and they all go to kindergarten and school and thus they will adapt easier and sooner. To be honest I do not want to live here for ever so it is like a break from my real life.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

Yes it is ok. There is not much to expect and my life is around my kids and offer support to my sister's family. Having my sister here helps a lot. My kids are doing well in school and making friends, which makes me feel more hopeful.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

Yes, people are very polite when you talk to them.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How?

They are polite and whenever we has a connection or asked for guidance from the local authorities we did not have any problem. They were prepared for the Ukrainian refugees so all seems prepared. I am sure that the process for refugees from other countries is different, at least this is what I here about other people.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

For not I do not work as I am supported from a specific scheme of the government for Ukrainians until I think 2025. For now my sister also supports as she and here husband have good jobs and financially we are ok.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family?

We were always close to each other and now we are even more.

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

My children have their life due to their schools and this is nice as it feels like they have not really experienced the war. They miss their dad of course but the routine makes them forget the distance. Also they talk with him almost every day so it is good for all of us.

How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown? How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?

Social media, video calls and all that.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

Yes sure. All is on me now as my husband is not around to decide together for everyday things and also I have been both mum and dad. Back home before I got kids I was an English language teacher. However, I am now teaching my children, in general so I feel ok.

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments?

I did not experience difficulties. It would be unfair to say that as I was privileged to have my sister here and also everything was easy, at least in my part, for Ukrainians.

How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

I do not know. This is an odd question. I guess I will bring some parts of my culture but either way there are people of many nationalities and they are already bringing their own civilizations in the Netherlands so I am not a carrier of something new.

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

Of course I want to go back. This is my country, my family, my people, my land and I do not want anyone to take it. This is so unfair and it seems like an endless bad dream.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

Peace. Nothing else. I want peace and our country free and my husband all soldiers and people alive to enjoy life.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

I believe I feel how much people miss their homes.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

Take all the documents you can with you. And be prepared for difficulties. Basically ask people who are already there. Now with social media the worlds feels smaller. So ask them, get their opinions and ask for their stories and learn from their mistakes and problems so you want do them again. It is more or less the same as you do now with the interviews. People may learn something from our experiences and preserve them for the future migrants.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

UKRAINE

Maria

Before Migration

How did you decide to migrate? What were the reasons/motives?

I decided to migrate because the situation in Kharkiv was becoming unbearable. The constant bombardments and the fear for my child's life made it impossible to stay. My parents couldn't leave because my dad is very sick, and my mom wouldn't abandon him. It was a heart-wrenching decision, but I had to prioritize my child's safety. We eventually had to move them further to the Polish borders to a relative of ours but it was difficult because they were persistent and they did not want to leave their home.

How can you explain the process before migration? What did you experience? How did you get prepared? (materials, emotion, documents, etc)

Before migrating, I experienced a lot of fear and uncertainty. The best I could think was to get all documents, packed our belongings, and prepared emotionally for the journey. It was incredibly difficult to leave my parents behind, but I knew I had to keep my child safe. To be honest they wanted this too, as my child is our primary concern. Emotionally, it felt like my world was falling apart.

How did you plan the travel? Why did you choose this country? How did you feel?

I planned the travel by car, but due to the crowded roads, we had to walk a significant part of the journey to Poland. I chose the Netherlands because I have Polish citizenship and makes it easier to move within Europe. I also have a friend in the Netherlands who helped us back from when I was having vacations in the mediterranean and we met and spend our vacations together. We kept contact and then she helped us. Feelings? Fear and uncertainty.

How can you explain the process of migration? What kind of transportation did you use? How long did it last (the traveling)?

The migration process was tough. We traveled by car initially, then walked due to the crowded roads. The journey to Poland took a couple of days. After staying in

Poland for a while, moving to the Netherlands was smoother thanks to the European Union's assistance and that I already had an EU passport. I have studied in Poland and also stayed there a while so back then it was relatively easy to get a passport.

What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

I traveled with my child. It was not very difficult. We were traveling through countries without being feared that we will be bombed. So it was a long and tiresome but safe journey.

How did your family members feel?

My parents were very sad and worried about us. They understood why we had to leave but it was still very hard for them. They felt helpless and I felt guilty for leaving them behind. I still feel very bad that I left them. My dad died a few months ago and did not have the opportunity to meet him again in person since we left. So how I cannot be frustrated and feel pain in my heart? In 2017 I lost my husband in car accident when a drunk driver hit him while passing the road. Now it happened this. It is unfair, very unfair that so many people have to take this hard times.

Was there another country you stopped over along the way? How long did it last? What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

Yes, we stayed in Poland for a few weeks with some relatives. The conditions were better than in Ukraine, but it was still tough mainly because of the emotional pain and the fear of my parents staying behind. Despite the hardships, it was a relief to be in a safer place.

After Traveling

Who migrated with you? Did you migrate with all your family members?

I migrated with my child. My parents stayed behind in Kharkiv due to my father's health.

If you have migrated without your family members, what can you say about this? What kind of an experience was it to migrate without your family members?

Migrating without my parents was incredibly painful. I constantly worry about them and feel guilty for not being able to take them with me. It's a heavy emotional burden.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How?

After arriving in the Netherlands, my friend helped us find a place to live. Local refugee organizations provided assistance with paperwork and settling. I cannot say anything negative. After all it is a huge process to take all the people in your country in limited time. Like Poland. They took millions of Ukrainians in so little time. Even if something went wrong it is not bizarre.

How did you feel when you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

Safe and scared. A new country, starting from the beginning and I never wanted to leave Ukraine. I studied in Poland and lived there for a while but it was enough for me. I had a great job in Ukraine as an architect so why I feel immigrant suddenly?

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

I do not know. I cannot complaint. I speak English, all speak here in the Netherlands. I have found a job easily as a junior architect. I am not a junior but this is how it works for now. I am totally ok and also having the polish passport makes it a bit easier in many ways. It wasn't not easy at first but I see the end of it and not the process. How it can be easy when you land in an unknown place, with a kid and no job?

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

No. This is place with people from many places. Dutch are polite and all is in order. So no, I do not find any cultural barriers. There a lot to do there which are not connected to dutch culture. They do not raise dutch culture a lot. They have art of course but generally people are flexible in learning other cultures, eating food from other countries. The Dutch are well-know super-power in the past so they have met the world and took parts from various cultures. At least what I think is that.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

I feel fine. People are polite and you can keep some good companies. My dutch friend also helped me feel more like my home.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

Similar with the previous question. I feel fine more or less.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How?

All people are polite. Not warm but polite. But it is not that Ukrainians are warm with someone they do not know. I mean when you see someone in the street or the supermarket you cannot become friends. They are polite and helpful if you ask something. Some will only speak dutch when you are something but most of them change into English language instantly when you speak English.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

I have had phycological support when my husband died and I kept the same person who helps me a lot. She is also left Ukraine and now she is in Poland. The local communities here, no I do not have much connection but the social services are very good and work well.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family?

I miss them and I feel really unhappy that I did not see my father before he dies.

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

I have found a job as mentioned. I do not take a full salary as it is not a full time job but also get a support from the government and also support for my kid for school. Generally I feel ok and I plan my life here so I can get my mother live here will us as soon as possible.

How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown? How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?

Social media of course. It is so helpful that we have them.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

I do not know. I am most of the times skeptical and sad. Of course, I am grateful for my luck that I got here but also angry for the war. It is a mixed feeling that changed me as a person. I am angry a lot and that is not good for me.

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments?

Everything was fine for me. I hear for others that the process was not difficult as well and all worked good.

How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

I cannot do it better. I can be part of it, follow the rules and also make my child a good person and good citizen, respectful person. I cannot make a change in a country.

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

No. It was as I expected. Safe, calming, all in order. I did not search anything else. Safety and a future for my child. And yes, I would like to go back to my country but I do not know when this will end. I want my mother to come here and if all go fine we will go back home if we still have a house, a job and a way to live. Going back to a place and you do not have job or life it is not easy.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

To see my child grow nice with not problems and not bombs around.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

When I see people from Syria, as I know many in the neighborhood, I feel very bad. They had major problems come here as they were not EU citizens and they had to leave in the camps. I cannot complaint about us. They had so many problems.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

I do not know. The only I can say is prepare if you can, somehow. With money and documents and contact people through media that already live in a place and take information from them. I do not know as all these can turn to be a nightmare for people. I really do not know. When you are desperate there is not much you can do. You just have to live.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIREG-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

UKRAINE

Ivan

Before Migration

How did you decide to migrate? What were the reasons/motives?

When I realized the invasion was actually happening, I knew I could not return. Going back home and fighting seemed pointless to me – I didn't believe we could defeat Russia, and I feared the war would continue for long. I was already studying in the Netherlands for my Master's degree, so decide to stay here.

How can you explain the process before migration? What did you experience? How did you get prepared? (materials, emotion, documents, etc)

I did not had these problems. I have a Polish passport as my mother is Polish so I came to the Netherlands like a European citizenship and not an outside of the Union student visa. Also I have left the country before the war. So I have no opinion on the process. I can say that when I arrived as a students all was organized and the university had already made arrangements so I register in the town hall, open a bank account and all the typical ones. I did it so easy and all the people have struggled so much.

How did you plan the travel? Why did you choose this country? How did you feel?

I was already in the Netherlands for my studies, so it made sense to stay. I feel safe anyway here and home but home is this now. I am relieved because I am safe, yet guilty and scared for my family back home. I have my parents and my brother who is involved in the war because he works in the army of Ukraine. I feel bad that I am scared and feel weak that I cannot go back and fight but again I am so scared. I cannot do that go to war. I do not know how to be a soldier who actually fight in a war. I feel bad and guilty and that is why I would like to see my anonymity.

During Traveling

How can you explain the process of migration? What kind of transportation did you use? How long did it last (the traveling)?

Since I was already in the Netherlands, my journey wasn't like others fleeing from Ukraine. I didn't have to endure long, dangerous travels.

What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

All was organized when I came and during my master's I had the opportunity to move to a researchers position in my university, which was very smooth and logical. So again I am not the typical person for migration.

How did your family members feel?

My parents were disappointed but understood my decision. They stayed behind because they couldn't leave, especially with my father's health issues. My sister, who went to Poland, supported my choice, though it was hard for all of us to be separated and my brother stayed because he is in the military. From a united family now we split and also we have arguments mainly because I do not want to go back and fight. If my brother was not in the military maybe it was different for my parents. Now they have one son living a life in the Netherlands, a daughter in Poland who is also engaged to a Polish so she will not leave and a son in the war. How should they feel, who should we feel?

Was there another country you stopped over along the way? How long did it last? What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

No, I didn't stop in another country. My main journey was from Ukraine to the Netherlands for my studies. Felt excited when I came here for my studies. This is a very organized and powerful country. It is so obvious when you live here. Since the war started I constantly feel either angry, or guilty or sad or sometimes that I took the right decision and people should decide for their own luck. All of them is a mix of feelings.

After Traveling

Who migrated with you? Did you migrate with all your family members?

This does not apply to me.

If you have migrated without your family members, what can you say about this? What kind of an experience was it to migrate without your family members?

This does not apply to me.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How?

I can tell you for when I came here as a student. Everything was smooth, super easy, and very well organized. They were expecting me, I got a pack of info and all the steps prepared, even the meeting with the bank and town hall to register. All was great.

How did you feel when you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

Excited because a new chapter was starting in my life in a very different country, a wealthy Scandinavian country. The Netherlands is not considered in Scandinavia but in reality it is due to the common social system and welfare.

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

It would be unfair to say anything about that.

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

Yes I did but I tried to adapt and not enforce my ways. The food is international as there is not actual dutch cuisine except of the milk, cheese and some soups. The people are very polite but not easy to make dutch friends. I have countless international people I know though and I consider many of them my friends.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

I feel like I belong here. On the other hand sometimes I feel like I push myself to belong here because I do not want to go back to Ukraine. I feel that I am weak and that I am embarrassing my country and its people but I cannot go back and live there. I do not want to experience all these problems.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

Yes, I am fine as I belong to the big international community in the Netherlands. I live in the Hagues which is super beautiful and also very hospitable.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How?

Dutch have many NGOs and organizations that people can take part in order to socialize. I helped in on NGO which helped Ukrainians but I did not want to be there in person because I am ashamed that I am afraid to go back. So I donated money, clothes, helped finding housing or translating documents but mostly without interacting with the refugees.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

The government is supportive in general. Unfortunately, the government now is a far-right one and to be honest is it a bit of a problem. But I would not like to talk more about that.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family?

I have problems with my family as I feel that they feel ashamed of me. They have not told me but they think that I am weak and I only care about myself. This is very difficult for me.

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

I focused on completing my Master's degree and then found a job in Den Haag. I generally have a life here, with routine, friends and I even go to some holiday trip as everything is connected here, everything is very close with train or airplane. I never tell my parents that I go on holidays as it would seem like I enjoy myself here and I left them in Ukraine experiencing such difficulties.

How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown? How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?

Mainly media but the last many months I only call them and not with video. I feel terrible when I see their look on their faces as I feel that they judge me all the time. They do not say anything but this is what I see.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

I feel that we have a barrier and that this is wall that will never fall apart. Even when the war will be over I will probably be the weak in the family chain that did not care about his country and relatives while my brother will be the hero. Of course I wish everyday that he is safe and nothing will happen to him. I love them but I am not sure if they can understand it.

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments?

I think the government has been supportive in general with refugees, at least from what I have seen and heard.

How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

I just part of it, not sure how I can make it better. That is difficult question and I do not have an reply on that to be honest.

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

I always want to go back but even if I could, I am not sure that I would go. It is so much to handle emotionally.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

I hope the war ends soon and that me and my family are happy and close to each other. I know that it is not easy and probably will not happen but maybe it will. I have two negative things that may keep us always apart: I do not go back to support the country and the family and also I am gay, which is something that I never said it openly to my dad (my mother knows it) but I am sure he believes that I am weak because of that. He is very old fashioned and the combination created big barriers.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

Always feel the pain they feel and maybe sometimes how lost they are. It is very hard for many to adjust to the new country. Many people they move somewhere, even if it is their decision, but they always live and continue their lives by remembering their past life. This makes it even harder as many seems to feel like prisoners in their life. They do not adjust to the new life but they are grabbed from the past. In my opinion that makes it very difficult for a person to stand it.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

All kind of documents and ask for support on the media from people. There are so many groups that can help out.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship

YEMEN

ALI

Before Migration

How did you decide to migrate? What were the reasons/motives?

It was an easy and hard decision together. We are family. I got three children and it is me and my wife. Our parents are too old to travel. We come from a relatively wealthy family because of the family company we had in Yemen. We dealt with oil and had connections in the Arab peninsula and the neighboring countries. The war has created huge problems in everything. It is unbearable to live and also more wealthy people are targeted because of their money. Who can live in such a country with constant conflict and instability? It is like an endless nightmare. So either we stayed in this condition or we had to leave.

How can you explain the process before migration? What did you experience? How did you get prepared (materials, emotion, documents, etc)?

What we did was to contact some friends we had in Saudi Arabia so we stay with them as tourists and then continue our trip as tourists to Turkey and then to Greece. We has booked holidays stays so it was not difficult to prove that we are there for vacations. Then I paid a person to buy a car for me and then I used the car to drive to the Netherlands. I feel and I am privileged and I did all I could to offer my family a good life. Financially I do not belong to other refugees and I feel very bad sometimes about that. However, I feel like a refugee because I had to leave my parents behind and I believe that I will never see them again.

How did you plan the travel? Why did you choose this country? How did you feel?

I tricked the system because I have money to reach my destination easier. If I was poor I would be in a camp even now. The situation is very difficult but it is a decision I had to make. Do the best for my family. We decided to come to the Netherlands as I had done my master's there many years ago. So I had an excuse and also had connections through my business. Of course I did not tell my partners that I would like to find asylum because there were professional relationships and not actual friends. So I was afraid their reaction.

During Traveling

How can you explain the process of migration? What kind of transportation did you use? How long did it last (the traveling)?

This process took us about 3 months, I mean to reach the Netherlands. And then because we hired a lawyer through an international organization as they wanted to deport us, because we came there illegally. I do not understand why would be legal if we could come to the country and have spent years in a camp in Turkey or Greece and find smuggles to get us to Europe? It is illegal anyway. The only legal process supposedly is to ask for asylum while you are still in your country. Which is crazy because until I wait for a decision I would be died. The lawyer and us presented facts about the situation there, how much I was targeted due to my work and my life and my family is in danger. It was a long process but we succeeded. I have a lot to say about these processes but we need more time.

What did you do on the way? With whom did you travel? What kind of difficulties did you experience? How did you feel?

As said travelled with my family. In a privileged manner so we come faster and play the rich people who travel across Europe for holidays. I always felt and still feel that I had to uproot myself from my country. I also feel pain because here nobody understands about these countries. They think that Africa is for poor people and all want to travel to Europe and all Arab countries are with rich people. Stereotypes that create the wrong image and people think that we do not care about our countries and we are thirsty to use their sources and services.

How did your family members feel?

Only me and my wife knew about that. Are children are small and complaint sometimes but we managed to make them feel safe and enjoy it. We were faking it but we were happy when they are happy. Me and my wife knew that there was not way to go back. It was only forward. If it was not Holland it would be another country. Anywhere we will be accepted, anywhere my children will have a good future.

Was there another country you stopped over along the way? How long did it last? What did you do on the way?

Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Austria, Germany and Netherlands.

After Traveling

Who migrated with you? Did you migrate with all your family members?

Yes, said it above.

How can you explain the process after migration? How did you find residency? Did you get any help? From whom? How?

When we arrived in Holland we found a place to stay for a couple of weeks until I talk to the organizations and the lawyer. Then we applied for asylum which made it a bit awkward because we were placed in a a camp as we were illegal here. Very crazy but anyway this is another story. If I did not have the lawyer nothing would have happened and also I would have been deported back. We would probably be dead by now.

How did you feel when you arrived at your new residency country? What advantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

I only now feel happy and relief that all has ended fairly well and we count the years for becoming proper immigrants and not stay with refugee status. Another process but again it is complex.

What disadvantages can you tell about migration/being an immigrant?

The country was not unknown to me as I had the privilege to study here for a while. So I knew that English was crucial and me and my wife are more than fluent in English. Other than that, I knew that dutch people are reserved like all Scandinavians but I did not care. They are polite and the government and local services work well and people are doing their job.

Did you experience any cultural barriers?

Not much. Here you do not feel alienated because of religion for example. We feel ok and we are allowed to live our life without labels.

How do you feel? Do you feel integrated (into the culture, local community, etc)?

We feel ok. Our children are small. When they go to primary school then we will make more friends I guess and they will feel better and part of the society.

Do you feel accepted by the local community? How?

Same as previous reply.

What do you think about the local people? Are they supportive? Did they help you? How?

They are polite. We live in a village close to Breda and in small places people are more open. However, it is nice to feel accepted or at least I am happy that people do not see us and feel fear or turn their heads.

What kind of support do you need from local communities, social services, the government?

They do a lot and I would be happy if everything was not so expensive. It is a crisis so it is difficult everywhere.

Did you experience any difference in your family when you migrated? Has migration changed your relations within your family?

We did well and stayed together. This is the most important. That we manage to bring our children to safety.

How did you construct a new life in a new country?

I have already found a job as a translator because I speak Arabic, English and French. I am educated so it is part of the good image they want to see. People here do not understand what it like living in a country with war. They have a good life here, very privileged that if the government cut some support only then they feel that they have to complain. They do not know what it when everything collapses around you.

How do you communicate with your family and friends in your hometown? How many times a year do you see your family and friends in your hometown?

Communication through social media and similar services makes very easy to communicate. This is very important as we talk and see our families every single day.

Has migration changed who you are? How? Has migration changed the characters of your family? How?

I do not know. I am not sure. I am always thinking what will happen if something goes wrong and for some reason they force us to leave or go back. When I am alone I always think the bad scenarios and try to think solutions in case they happen. I assume that I have a deep fear in me but I do not want to share it with anyone. I share it here as this is protected and nobody will know that it is me.

What do you think about the migration policies? What are your ideas/comments?

Good country, good state and people that do their work well enough. It is not perfect but perfect is only a dream. I do not complain. I do not like that some times they keep talking in dutch while they all can speak in English and they keep giving us forms and applications in dutch. But anyway, this is the reality and that is why I am learning dutch, the basics to help myself.

How would you make this country better? What are your ideas?

Better? I do not believe they expect me to make it better. The fact that there are many immigrants does not mean that they change the culture of the Dutch people. I do not want to change their culture and do not know how to make the country better. I only try to be good person and raise good and useful people.

Is here different than what you expected? Do you want to go back to your hometown?

I do but I do not want to think of it. I cannot go back and this is final for the next years.

What kind of dreams do you have about the future? Where do you see yourself in the future? What kind of world are you dreaming of?

I do not dream much. I only hope for stability and my family live a peaceful life. I hope my children have good chances and good life with many opportunities.

What do you think when you see/meet an immigrant from other countries?

That they are survivors.

What would you recommend to people who are about to/thinking of migrate/migration?

I believe this process is not for all people. Most people fail. I do not if I should advice them to take this action but I cannot tell them not to do it. Prepare deeply in

your hearts and also get documents and money with you. Try to talk first to organization in the country you would like to go and also get into chatrooms to meet with people who are already done the travel. Be careful of scammers. Try to meet with people through video, discuss and make sure that they say the truth. Do not think of the last destination. Try to see all the previous stops and always prepare for difficulties. This is not an easy street.

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

These interviews were conducted by GIRES-Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship in a written format and/or verbal communication through email correspondence and/or telephone.

In compliance with all pertinent European Union data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR](#)) and the guidelines established by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) ([EDPS guidelines](#)), all necessary measures have been taken to ensure the protection of personal data during these interviews.

The interviewees did not want their personal information to be revealed. Thus, anonymization techniques have been rigorously applied, and all names have been replaced with aliases to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the participants' identities. This adherence ensures that all personal data is managed in accordance with the highest standards of data protection and privacy.