



# we want our BaBa back!

The story of Pastu, Kandara, Mariam, Sentara and Omeira.



*PIKPA* Mitilini 2013



We met Pashtu and her four children Kandara, Mariam, Sedara and Omeira in Mitilini when they arrived in August 2013. We saw them again in September 2013 when they returned from Athens to search for their father. The mother and her children were sitting outside the central police station, waiting and hoping that the father would get free. It took a lot of effort to convince them that it would take a lot of time for the father to be released. They agreed to spending one night in PIKPA after which we could bring them to the court the next day to speak with the prosecutor.

When we arrived in PIKPA that night their faces lit up when they saw that other Afghan kids were there to welcome them and play in the yard with them. The next day we waited for some hours at the court but the prosecutor did not show up. The days passed, the father remained imprisoned in Xios until the court hearing, and the mother had no place else to go with her kids so they stayed in PIKPA as guests of the 'village of all together'.

When the new school year started the people of the 'village of all together' made it possible for the kids to go to school. When we read Pashtu's story we understood what this meant for her when, actually, it should be normal for her kids to go to school.



We want to warmly thank the school that welcomed them with warmth and understanding. Nonetheless, their thoughts stayed with their father. Every day they had new ideas of what we could do to free their father, such as taking to the judges or the police which could decide their father's fate. They want him back.

In order to get some money, they one day asked me if they could go to Mitilini to collect garbage, such as plastic bottles, to sell them to get some money for the court hearing. We thought it would be better to make a booklet with their story rather than collecting garbage and that's how the idea for this booklet was born.

The next days we sat down with Pashtu and her eldest son Kandara and wrote down their story during which the three smaller kids drew their own memories. The idea that we could do something together for their father gave them hope.

So please do buy this book so that the expenses for the court hearing and a lawyer to defend the father can be covered. And do come to the court! We should not let the family alone!

Omeira, Mariam, Pashtu, Sedara, and Kandara  
Village of all together, w2eu.

## Kandara:

We left Afghanistan about seven months ago and went to Pakistan, to the town Kwete. After that, we continued with the help of a facilitator to Tehran, and after seven days we found another facilitator who brought us to Turkey. When we arrived in Turkey our money had finished. My family, my sisters and brother slept in a park. Then my father found work in a fabric factory making clothes. We found a place to stay for two hundred liras, a small bath and kitchen-all in one room. It smelt very bad.

Then my mother found work too. She got five hundred liras for working in the fabric factory. But the money was not enough. Because we had expenses like electricity, food and water and wanted to put money aside for Europe, my mother said that I should also start work.

I went to the fabric factory but the work was too hard for me, so after a few days I stopped working there. To earn money I started collecting rubbish, metal and plastic. With my brother and sisters we collected around a hundred and fifty kilos. When we went home we drank two bottles of water, we were so tired.

After three months we had enough money, so we spoke to the facilitator about going to Mytilene. We went to a beach in Turkey. Many people were there from many different countries. Lots of people! There we lost our father in the crowd. We looked all over the place for him, but couldn't find him. We stayed where we were and waited. We were scared and wondered whether he had died. In my mind, there were many thoughts: did the facilitator take him ? We were continuously crying.

I went and asked where my father was. They said they didn't know. We waited one day. Two days. Three days. Nothing. In the end, the police came and took us to prison. We stayed there for about ten to fifteen days. After the prison, they let us free. We went to Istanbul.

In Istanbul I started collecting garbage again. After fourteen days, we heard that our father was alive. He was caught in Mytilene, because he was accused of being a facilitator.

He told us that they had forced him to go in the boat and that he would go first and then my family. They forced him to go on the trip. He saw the kids crying and screaming, the waves and when they threw the people in the waves he wanted to come back immediately. I can't let my children go through that alone, he said.

I saw the fear also. Four children and a woman were very scared. When they were returning, they were caught. Fourteen days in prison and he didn't eat anything. Then they gave him the permission to call my mother. I was crying very much because I believed that my father had died in the sea. He is dead. We all cried.

After fourteen days, we got news that he was alive and we were happy. We said ok, he is alive. When he told us the reason he was caught, we were sad again. We thought what bad luck for all of us that they had accused him of such a thing.



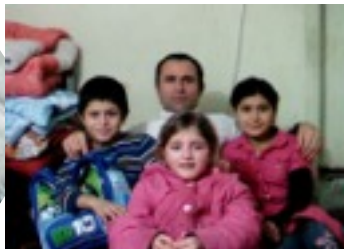
HELLO all people I'm talking  
five minute to for my father  
my name is DING DING  
my father name is DING DING  
my father name is DING DING  
my father is not a good man  
you all is things are because my father  
have four children wife in mother in  
father why my father is bad working  
we want come to hope we will come  
my father is go in the hotel  
we have problem in Afghanistan  
we come from Afghanistan to hope  
we can work in school  
in we go to school we can go to the  
school in the school is to be a good  
to be a good man  
children is not a good man  
you have not card a card we can  
work we can work in school  
a good my mother in my father is  
working in the things can find  
in we can working my father name  
in we can working

## Pashtu:

I will start from Turkey. When we arrived in Turkey, we stayed at the park. After some days, we found the room to rent. It was very small with a toilet and kitchen in the same room. We had no money.

I had some earrings and we sold them. They were for my daughters. And we sold them. I cried so much because I had to sell the earrings that were for my daughters. People were asking me, why do you cry? The people were looking at me and I couldn't understand their language. My husband was crying, we were all crying. Then we said they don't understand why we had to sell my earrings and my daughter was very sad that we had to sell the earrings and we all cried because we had no money and were forced to sell them.

We didn't even have enough money to call to Afghanistan to say that we arrived in Turkey. A woman came and we told her we didn't have any money, so she went to the people and said we were Afghans! They collected spaghetti, rice and brought it to us, they helped us with oil and so on and when the food was finished, they brought more. It was such good luck that they helped us!



The basement where we lived in Turkey

The house had no space and we only had one mattress and we all slept together on the floor. When I was sad, my stomach hurt. Since then I have these pains, when I am sad, my stomach gets bloated and hurts. The room was small, the kids were loud, I used to go to sit outside the door because when the kids screamed, I couldn't stand it and couldn't find a place to be. My husband said: come inside. No, I said, I am better here. Because I couldn't say to him that I didn't feel well. That I was sad and had psychological problems. That my heart was tight. So I sat alone. I got sick. My legs hurt badly. Anyone who entered the room had to hold their nose because it stank so much. When we left Afghanistan, we wanted to go somewhere where it would be better for our children. But it was worse in this house.

At night, the whole family collected garbage. My husband said: don't come with us. It is a shame for a woman to do this. I told him it is a shame to beg for money, not work for it. Then I stopped. We were collecting money to come to Europe.

My husband was collecting garbage and one day we found food that was clean, the bread looked fresh, so we took it to eat it. We were collecting money to come to Europe.



We went to the woods near the beach and many people were there. The facilitators called my husband: you come here to help us put these people on the boat. He left us in the woods to help put the people on the boat. That's when we lost him.



I asked everyone that passed by: where is my husband?

And they all said: we don't know. I was crying all the time and the people that were supposed to travel with us said to me, don't cry, he will come soon, don't worry. Did someone kill him? What did they do? I sat and cried all the time. Then the Turkish police came and caught us, they said: One boat that left, didn't come back to take the people from the beach.

After the prison we went back to Istanbul, in the park. I found work again, in the fabric factory. When I started work, after some weeks I said I need to get paid, but they told me, only after a month's work. I needed money because I had nothing. Then I got sick, but I continued to work, but had pains so sometimes I couldn't work. I still have these problems.

I told the chief: please, at least give me the money for the days I have worked. He said, if you don't work for a whole month, there is no payment. I told him I am sick and have pains. He said, then you don't get money.



The cliff in Turkey where we slept, waiting to leave

I called my brother, who gives me money: I told him, my husband was caught, he is in prison and he has to go to Greece. We have no money. We need the money to go. They sent us the money. That was when we started to come to Greece.

We went to the woods at the beach. Half of the people were caught by the Turkish police, the other half were not caught. They brought us with two cars.

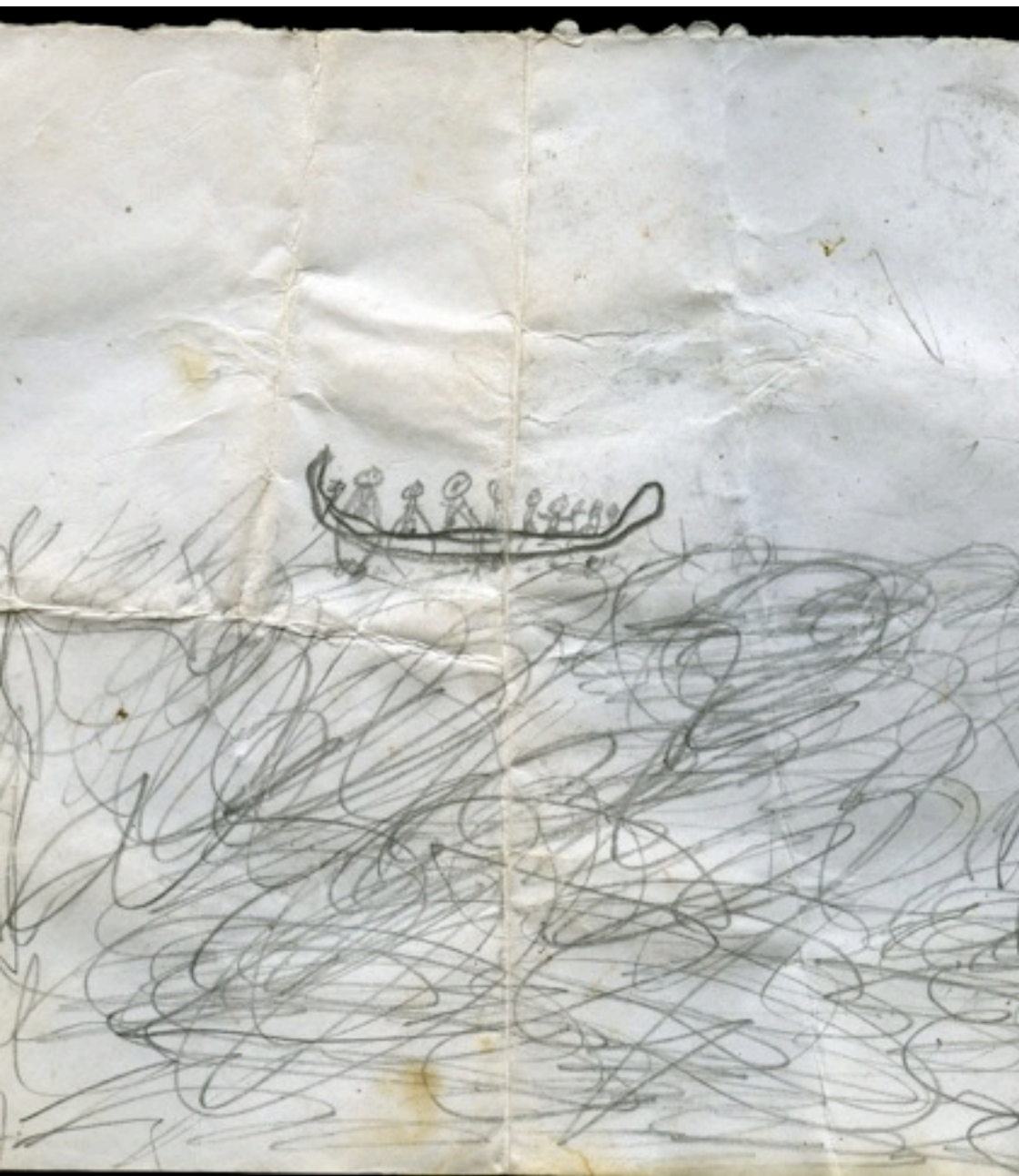
When they caught the other half, we had no papers. So we arrived at the beach until the rest came. The facilitator said: you are only few, I can't take you to Greece. We waited in the woods till the others arrived. It was very cold; we had nothing to cover ourselves with.



Many people wait here to leave and come

We stayed there and waited at the beach for two nights. He said, with ten people we can't put you on a boat, we have to wait for the others. The next day, the police gave papers to the other people and they came to the wood. When my kids saw the car coming, they got so scared because they thought it was the police.

They told us: come, we are going now. We were happy but they only brought us to other woods. There we stayed until nine-ten in the evening.



Us on the boat



Us on the boat

We arrived at the beach in Mitilini and he told us to get out, he threw us in the water. Sedara was taken away by the waves and I was saying, I lost my husband and now I will also lose my children.

They threw us all in the sea but one person helped us and took everybody out. But he didn't see one and I said my child was taken away by the waves. He went and found him. When the man came to help me, I said, not me, get my child. And so, the man helped him and got him.

The boat on which we travelled and which through us into the ocean



The boat hadn't turned over. The facilitator told us to jump in the sea. I said this is water, we can't swim. He told us, the police will come and so he pushed us in the water. He threw me in the sea.

I was not thinking about myself, but about my children. I just said it is my children. One helped me find my children and the other helped me get out of the sea.

When we arrived in Mitilini we walked, the shoes of one of my children was broken, we thought it is better to go to walk on the street. But they told us we should not because the police will catch us and send us back. So we said ok we will walk in the mountains. But the children cried, they said they had thorns in their feet. The thorns didn't matter though, the important thing was that they didn't throw us in the sea and send us back. We climbed on the mountains and went in the woods. We were walking in the woods for one night. We went everywhere and slept in the mountains. Only I sat down and thought.



Mitilini: when we arrived we were told not to sit down but always to move on



Mitilini: We were exhausted and sat down on the street so that someone would pick us up. But nobody stopped.

When the morning came we climbed in the mountains again. Then we found a way down. We walked on the street but none of the cars stopped to take us. My daughter Omera was saying that her stomach hurt. I said: I can't even walk alone, how can I carry you in my arms and walk?

I said to the men, please help and take the baby in your arms. They helped, although they were very tired themselves.

When we arrived in Mytilini we separated. I asked: in which direction is the camp? They said, don't come with us. Each has to go alone and find their way. I didn't know where to go and said, don't leave me alone. I told them I have no husband, help us find the camp. They said, we won't go to the police, we will go on our own, don't follow us. I said, ok, it doesn't matter, just show me the direction and then you can go.

Then we separated but we were looking where they were from a distance and followed them. Then we saw the harbour and there were other people with whom we had travelled together. So we entered. The others said: afghan woman, you managed? And we were happy to meet them again.

We stayed one night at the harbour and then went to the police to ask, where my husband was. They said, we don't know. I said that he called us, saying he is here in Mytilene. They said they took him to Athens, because he was sick. They gave us the address of the police in Athens and said that we should go there.

The police in Athens said we should go to the hospital. We went back to the police because he was not in the hospital. Then we found him in another hospital. I asked him what has happened to you? How are you? He said: I am just sick. I asked: did they operate on you? No, he said, I am just ill. I had put the children in the corridor, to sleep. He asked, where the children were. I said they are in a room, so he doesn't worry. One minute I was with my husband, the other with my children. We stayed three nights there.

After three days, the police came and took my husband, saying that he is healthy now and that they will take him back. I was crying. Now that I found you, they are taking you away? Where are they taking you?

They will put me back in prison, he said. Take the children, so they don't see the handcuffs and get very sad.

I sent the children out to play.

When they took him away, I was crying and screaming.

## Where are you taking him?



Mum and the four of us.  
Baba is not on the  
picture because he is in  
jail.

2.3.2020



Baba in prison



Turkey before we left

## Pashtu:

I have nobody to talk to. I cry. I walk up and down and sit alone, my mother calls and asks: How are you? My mum was sick and was operated on and now she has psychological problems. She says, what will you do? Your husband is in prison and you are alone with your children. What will you do? I tell her, don't worry, we are fine. We have everything we need but when I sit alone. I cry because I can't tell her how bad my situation is and that I have no one to talk to and I cry alone. I don't tell them that she doesn't know how I feel ,because if she knows I am bad, she will be bad too. I go to sit from wall to wall in Pikpa.

If you are happy and you eat only bread, it tastes great. But if you have no happiness, even the best food like lamb and chicken have no taste. If you have no joy. If you have no peace of mind, the good food doesn't help. God has given us a mouth and gives us food. The food is not important, everywhere you go, you find the same food. My child went to school. Now he helps me.



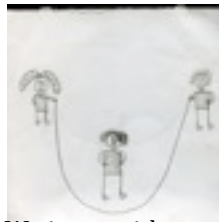
Sedara skips with friends



Our house and the river where we bathed



Bread and baker in Afghanistan



We jump with my cousin

The Taliban wanted my man to go back to them. They said you are Mullah, Qhari. Yes, he was with the Taliban before we got married. I was crying and begging him to stop. They always brought dead people that did not obey them. Every day I begged him to stop, I was afraid he would die.

My husband thought about it and said ok, he will stop. The Taliban asked him to go back. We got our first child and it grew up in Jalalabad. We left Jalalabad and went to Kabul, but again the Taliban called him to return. His friends came home and would ask him: why don't you join us again? You are a Mullah. They said, if you don't come back to make Jihad we will take your child. I said that this will happen every day, they will come to force you. Not to take my child.

So I had the idea that we should go away. I said it to my husband. He said: it's good that you opened your mouth and said this.



Afghanistan, our house, the river, mum and Mariam



This is how we slept in Afghanistan with mum



Afghanistan: the oven in which we bake bread

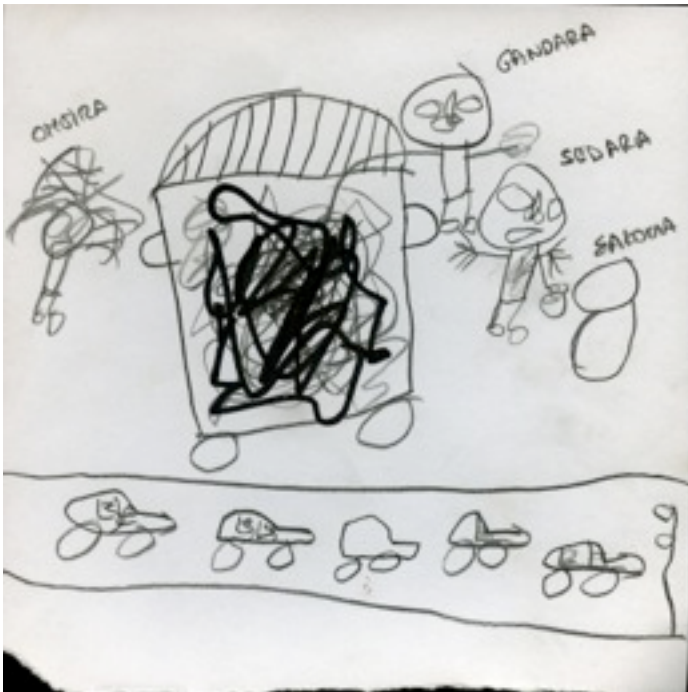


Afghanistan: Mariam and Omeira collect leaves for the fire

We came to Turkey. We arrived and thought that we are no longer in Afghanistan, so we can stay here. In Turkey, the houses for rent were 500.600.700 liras. We took a very small house for 200 liras. In this small house was only one room including the toilet and the kitchen. We lived there because we had nothing else. My husband and kids collected garbage. We thought that it would be good for the kids to go to school. But they were not accepted because we had no papers, no asylum.

Again we thought to go further.

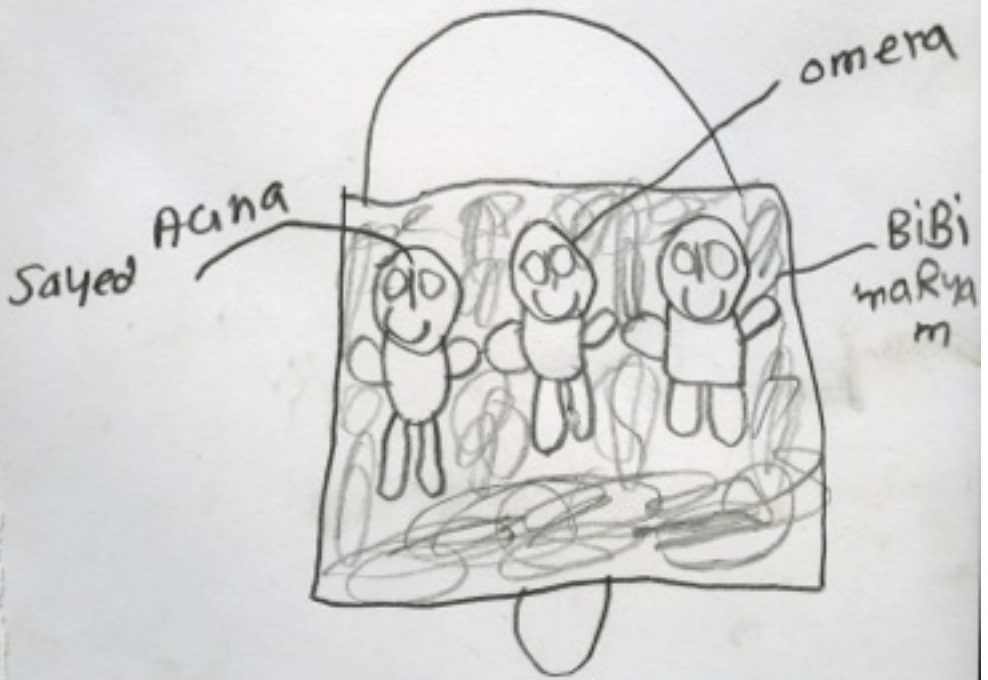
It is impossible for my kids to collect garbage. We left so they can go to school. The kids came home from work with black dirty hands. When the people saw the small one they said, you are Turkish, why do you collect garbage and Omera said, I am not Turkish, I am Afghan. When they talked to her, they noticed she speaks Afghan and said: what a pretty girl you are and you collect garbage.



Turkey: we collect plastic

It was out of need that we collected garbage. We had no money. And I see other clean kids that go to school and I think to myself, the ones that have money, have clean kids. We have no money and our kids have to collect garbage.

The people said pity words for the little girl. We said give us the papers, give us asylum and they can go to school. Since they didn't give us asylum we had to leave again, so we came here and that is when all this happened to my husband.



Turkey: we climb into the garbage container to search

Now the kids are at the age to go to school. I wish my husband gets out of prison so my children can go to school.

They have to go to school now, to learn the language otherwise, if they don't go now and grow up, they won't be able to study and learn something. Now they have to go to school, as long as they are still kids.

I hope their father will be freed, so they can go to school.

That's why we left-because of the Taliban and the children, that nothing bad happens to them and that they will live in peace and go to school. They eat a little bit of food, we can find it wherever we are.

We left our whole family behind, for the future of our kids.

That was it. Thank you.





Mitilini: in PIKPA, the hotel with the swimming pool, the tree on which we climbed (Mariam and I), the kitchen in which we prepare food and the set table.





Mitilini: it's me, Omeira in PIKPA



Mitilini: PIKPA party with friends and music



Mitilini: we write to the judge about our father

HELLO all Peoples iam Talking  
five Minute To for my father  
My name is PAND ANNA  
My Father name is ZAMIL akind  
why my father in GIEL in  
My Father is NOT a alien NOT CARD  
You All is Things see becuase my father  
have four children wife in mother in  
father why my father is bad working  
we want card To come we NOT want  
my father is go in the GIEL  
we have problem in AFGHANISTAN  
we come From AFGHANISTAN To TURKEY  
a alien we want a School  
in we go To School we ASK in the  
School in the School is Talk is my  
father you have NOT a card your  
Children is NOT go School becuase  
you have NOT card a alien we shat  
work becuase we have NOT School  
a alien my mother in my father is  
working in the cloths company  
in we others working my sister brother  
iam other working

we HAVE NOTS money for eating  
for cloths for homes many  
alien we come To Near Beach  
we seating in the near Afghan  
Peoples Suriya Peoples a very  
people is not for SHIP for Boat  
alien my father is NOT Near  
me we Talk where my father  
where alien my father is NOT  
we seats in is the near Beach  
we Talks now my father is come  
now alien my father is NOT  
come we seats one night in  
the near Beach a Day 3 Day 4 Day  
5 Day we seats the near Beach  
a alien my father is not come we  
go To Istanbul ofther 14 Day my  
father is taking me Now iam in  
Greece my father is taking me  
we very Happy a alien the with  
Talk To my mother Now iam in  
the polistation my mother is too  
why my father is Talk iam come  
To Greece Side iam want comcha

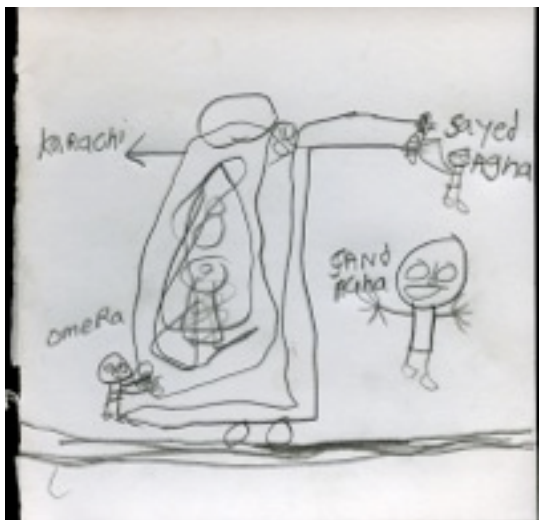


The girls: we collect garbage from the dumpster



Mitilini: Mariam and Omeira, we play on the trees in PIKPA

Turkey side because i see this  
 problem this water this small  
 Boat is for twenty person for  
 twenty five persons is very big  
 Problem aghen idm wants come  
 To Turkeye To see my daughters  
 sons wife aghen the Polis into  
 water Polis water attack To ship  
 aghen my father coming To Polisstation  
 Now my father in the Polisstation  
 Now we we wants to why my father  
 in sick you's talk To my father  
 you explain why my father is have  
 a problem with my father in well  
 aghen we come To my home kump  
 we get To Polisstation aghen they  
 give for us Paper one month's Paper  
 aghen we talk To the Polis we wants  
 father where is my father we asking  
 my brother my sister my mother  
 iom we talks we wants father  
 why my father in sick Now we see  
 my father is good not good aghen  
 the wife aghen for my father



Turkey: when Omeira got tired and could  
 not walk anymore she sat in the cart and  
 we pushed



Turkey: we found garbage and  
 collected it in our cart

Polis is talk my mother Zami  
 normal now in the aghen in the  
 hospital we go To aghen agha fene  
 aghen the well give my father Paper  
 Polis is talking me your father is  
 aghen Hospital we go to aghen  
 Hospital we see father my father  
 is very very sick we crying  
 we talks aghen is my father well  
 in other aghen is sick in the  
 hospital why why aghen my  
 father time finish To go agha fene  
 Polis is come for my father  
 we talk To the Polis Please give  
 my father aghen my father is  
 go to agha fene aghen i day  
 aghen my father come to  
 aghen the well saying me now  
 iam in xios you alls come  
 To my home Polis basan you ask  
 why my father in well because  
 you all is comes you sleeping  
 in the wood victoria park in the  
 near agha fene door in agha fene

Now we wants Father why  
 my father in Giel my fathers  
 wants my children wife sleep  
 in the Park in the attikog hospital  
 in the near aladafave Door Now  
 you calling to aladafave to attikog  
 you ask this children this woman  
 is not sleep in the Near aladafave  
 Door in attikog hospital Now we  
 wants Father Becu my father is not  
 rapian not a agent in my father man  
 is capitan the well wants my children  
 wife sleep in the Park in Dirty year  
 my father wants my children is cruel  
 every time my father wants my  
 wife children is no happy in other  
 people children is happy my son father  
 wants this my father is not see  
 for my brother mother asper is not  
 see why ~~the~~ thank you marily  
 thank you saurva thank you eli  
 thank you iPhema thank you Sima  
 thank you Harold your helps thank  
 your your help see wants father  
 thank you your helps

5

thank you marily your help  
 thank you Eli your help  
 thank you saurva your help  
 thank you Harold your help  
 thank you iPhema your help  
 thank you Sima your help  
 thank you Lena your help

we not wants other  
 thing we wants father you all  
 helping me because we have  
 a problem & in marily you sent  
 this papers to President to Politician  
 to disastiri because people is see  
 they have a problem is not he  
 have a problem

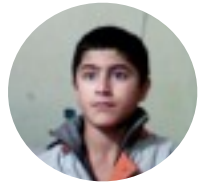
thank you all  
 helping person

6



Turkey: the police arrested us and we raise our hands

**Kandara:** They caught us because we were selling water in the streets, bottled water. One time the police came and said: don't sell water! Go away! We were earning good money. For one bottle of water, they gave us one Euro. It was in a street, where many cars pass. All of a sudden, a car came which you could not tell it was a police car and the man said: come in the car. We said: why?



He said: we are the police. They had caught the two of us and we were crying. Crying! My two sisters ran home, our mother thought a car had hit us. She asked: did a car hit them? The girls said: no, a car stopped and took them. Pashtu asked: was it the police?

## Pashtu :



Then we found an Afghan woman, she was Uzbek and could speak Farsi. I went to her and told her that my children were taken in car of unknown people and I don't know what to do, my husband is not here. I am alone and don't know what to do.

The woman said: ok we will go to the police and look for them.

In the meantime, the police said to the children: You have no papers and sell water. We will deport you back to Afghanistan. We were crying so much that my head was hurting me. Then the woman and me came to the police and saw the children there and were happy. The woman who could speak Turkish, talked to the police so that they would set them free. The police said, no they have no



papers, who are you? The woman said: I am their aunt. They asked: do you have papers? Yes, she showed her papers. The police said, if she has responsibility for them, will she sign? She said yes and she signed for them that they would never do it again.





Mitilini: we  
have found  
good friends



People come and go in PIKPA, it is only us who stay and wait for Baba.



Mitilini: in PIKPA there is a tennis court next door which we like



Mitilini: now we are off to school

Drawings: Omeira, Mariam, Sedara

Translation: Hamid, Dari, Aristos Greek Kathy, Maurice, Ian : English

Pictures: Marily Stroux

This booklet exists in English and Greek



when we arrived the boat the sea and the lights

This booklet was produced collectively by people from Mitilini, Athens, Hamburg and London, in solidarity.

We hope that it helps to free the father of the children soon

**Freedom!**

<http://lesvos.w2eu.net>

<http://xorioolomazi.blogspot.gr>

