"Refugees are ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances"

InterArt project – report (August, 2014)

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http://fotomemoria.eu/integrart/
Introduction

With regard to refugees and asylum-seekers, European societies are often characterised by fear and suspicion; mainstream society tends to feel that they have something to lose and that their position is threatened. The resulting exclusion and discrimination causes a great deal of hardship for refugees and asylum-seekers. The quality of legal representation provided is often insufficient.

Recent media analysis by ICAR (‘Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Media, Briefing, Feb 2012) shows that

The mainstream media – particularly commercial media – has played an influential role in creating this fear of, and hostility towards, refugees. In addition to unbalanced and inaccurate reporting, news and featured articles on asylum rely heavily on politicians, and ‘individual asylum seekers and refugees are only quoted when they themselves are the subject of a report and rarely contribute directly to the policy debate.’

The IntegrArt project seeks to challenge this media discourse, by strengthening the representation of marginal groups such as asylum-seekers and refugees. IntegrArt invites citizens to think more critically about the integration of refugees. Art projects have the potential of drawing the general public’s attention to the need to re-think and re-evaluate current approaches to asylum-seekers and refugees, and to encourage more culturally sensitive, empathic and unprejudiced attitudes.

The IntegrArt project is supported by the European Union Life Long Learning programme and is realised by five partners working in different regions in Europe (Global Link – UK, Initiative für Internationalen Kulturaustausch – Germany, Nilüfer Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Vakfı – Turkey, L’Officina della Memoria – Italy, FotoMemoria/Anthropolis, Hungary).

The aim of the project is to use digital stories to empower refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe to share feelings and thoughts relating to their status, about the society they live in, what brought them to their new society, and thereby to draw the general public’s attention to the reality of life as a refugee in Europe.
Part I:

Refugees’ Situation in Germany

In 2013 127,023 applications for asylum were handed in Germany. Compared with 2012 this means an increase of 63.8%. Compared to the early 1990s this amount is not really high. For example in 1992 during the war in former Yugoslavia there were 438,191 applications for asylum in Germany.

In 2013 about 1,2 million people immigrated to Germany. This shows that only about 10% of all immigrants were asylum seekers. Most of the refugees who came to Germany in 2013 were from the Russian Federation (14,887), Syria (11,851) and Serbia (11,459), Afghanistan (7,735), Macedonia (6,208), Iran (4,424), Pakistan (4,101), Iraq (3,958), Somalia (3,786) and Eritrea (3,616).

About 81,000 decisions were made by the German authorities in 2013. About 25% received a status of protection, either a status based on the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or subsidiary protection. 38.5% were rejected and 36.7% were not even reviewed with regard to content. The majority of the latter were the Dublin cases in which Germany denied all responsibility because the refugees had already passed another European country.

In 2013 refugees in Germany had to wait an average of 7 months for the first decision. Refugees with better chances to receiving a positive decision even
had to wait longer. Refugees from Iraq waited 9.5 months, refugees from Iran 13 months, refugees from Afghanistan 14 months, refugees from Pakistan and Somalia 15 months and refugees from Eritrea even 17 months (average).

In 2013 10,198 persons were deported from Germany to other countries. Germany decided to receive a contingent of 20,000 persons who had to leave Syria due to the war.

In Germany asylum-seekers have to live up to three months in big reception camps, then they are distributed to the whole country. They live in smaller camps or individual flats, depending on local or regional authorities. There is no general binding law that prescribes how to organise refugee accommodation.

Asylum-seekers in Germany are not included in the general code of social law but there is a specific law for asylum-seekers. Until 2012 this law reduced social support for asylum-seekers more than 20% in comparison to the general code of social law for usual citizens in Germany. That is why the highest German federal court, the Bundesverfassungsgericht, declared in July 2012 that the social support of this specific law for asylum-seekers is not in accordance with the German constitution. Hereafter the payments had to be increased.

The general refugee laws in Germany are still very restrictive. Refugees don’t receive a normal health insurance but can only receive medical treatment in acute situations. Refugees in Germany cannot travel in the country. Their movement is restricted to one federal state or even to one administrative district. Exceptions require the local authorities’ permission.

Access to the labour market is a very important issue. During the asylum application proceedings refugees are not allowed to work during the first 9 months. After that they are permitted to work but are confronted with restrictions. When still in the asylum application proceedings, they don’t have free access to the labour market even after 9 months. For each job offer the labour authority checks if there is any available German or any other EU-citizen permanently living in Germany. Only if not, the asylum-seeker can take the job. Finally, after being granted a positive status of protection, the refugees have free access to the labour market as German citizens.

Another important and problematic issue is the asylum-seekers’ lack of access to German language courses. During the asylum proceedings there is no funded access to those courses. There are only limited possibilities depending on locally offered or self-financed regional project courses. After being granted a positive status of protection the refugees have access to the so called integration courses including language courses and general orientation.

As a new development in Germany refugees begin to actively organise sustainable protest campaigns themselves. The readiness of people and organisations from the civil society to accompany and support newly arrived refugees is noticeably rising.
Refugees and asylum-seekers in Hungary

In the 1990s after the change of the system Hungary joined the 1951 refugee convention. As an effect of the Yugoslavian war and Romania’s Ceausescu regime approximately 100,000 refugees arrived to the country. The cultural scene became more diverse when Hungary opened its borders for all refugees coming from non-European countries in 1997 (mainly from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq). Hungary represents a gateway for refugees and asylum seekers to come to Europe from Eastern and Southern parts of the world.

Until 2013 3500–5000 asylum-seekers arrived to Hungary a year, mainly from the former Yugoslavia, Africa, Middle-East and 5–10 % of them got refugee status.

Because of the EU requirements Hungary’s policy concerning refugees has become stricter since 2010. Hungary means the Schengen border, therefore neighbouring countries try to defend themselves from illegal migration by putting extra pressure on Hungary. In case someone does not have papers when crossing the border as an asylum-seeker he/she is sent to a detention camp (which is operated as a police lock-up). Until 2013 asylum-seekers could spend even one year there until the decision arrived. Although the regulation had been changed in 2014 and the state is pressed to make a decision about the status of an asylum-seeker in 2 months, the decision is not made during this time and a huge amount of people must leave the detention camp and stay on the street as homeless till they wait for their status.
There are three refugee camps in Hungary and five detention camps. Most of them are close to the Serbian, Romanian and Ukrainian borders, which shows that the majority of the asylum-seekers enter through these borders. The Budapest detention camp is operated at the Budapest Airport.

In 2008 and 2009, 3000 people requested refugee status and 10% got it. Most of the asylum-seekers came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Iraq these years. In case they got the status they could stay at the camp for half a year receiving accommodation and language lessons and three-month rental fee for a flat. In 2009 the Office of Immigration and Nationality announced that Hungary as a host country cannot manage quick growth of asylum-seekers. In 2012 there were 2. 157 registered asylum-seekers, and in 2013 18 900 asylum-seekers arrived. The majority of them came from Kosovo, Pakistan and Afghanistan because of political reasons.

With shrinking financial resources allocated to the asylum-system, more and more basic services have been deleted without proper quality control, which is underlined by the 2010 UNHCR (United Nations Commissioner for Refugees) report:

- reception conditions of asylum-seekers does not help integration
- asylum-seekers need to stay in police lock-ups designed for short term stays (up to 72 hours)
- this could potentially lead to mental health problems
- asylum-seekers reported several incidents: verbal, psychological and even physical harassment including beatings and racist comments occurred in police detention

People are kept in isolation during the asylum procedures (no contact with the host society). They have limited access to language learning, they are restricted in movement, as asylum-seekers are not able to pay for the local transportation, have restricted opportunities to work. They receive insufficient medical services, no translation is provided to help communication with medical stuff, which reduces the effectiveness of the provided medical care. They do not receive sufficient information about the asylum procedures. While they are transported to the court or for other reason (visit bank or post office) asylum-seekers are handcuffed.

Solidarity and the help of and also communication with refugees and asylum-seekers is very poor in Hungary. In 2007 and 2011 TÁRKI (Social Research Center) reported:

- only 10% of the Hungarian population agrees the fact that the country should accept all immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers,
- 90% of the society is xenophobic, has strong fear of the strangers e.g. for taking their jobs.
UNHCR urges Hungary to improve treatment of asylum-seekers as they reported the following problems:

- xenophobia, racism and intolerance and against the harsh conditions of detention
- access to services is almost impossible because of the financial and physical state of asylum-seekers
- the quality of legal representation provided is very poor
- lack of communication
- verbal and physical abuse by guards
- integration is almost impossible because of the attitude of the society (after getting the refugee status one needs legal rental papers of an apartment and employment papers).
Trends in asylum claims – Italy

The UNHCR Asylum Trends 2013 claims that the number of boat arrivals has remained relatively high during the year, the number of new asylum applications (27,800) registered in Italy in 2013 being at its third highest number in a decade. The number increased by 60% compared to 2012; this makes Italy the seventh largest receiving country during the investigated period. Nevertheless, these figures remained well below the all-time highest value of 2011 when more than 34,000 people applied for refugee status in Italy, mostly because of the ‘Arab Spring’ revolutions in North Africa. They are mainly Nigerian, Somali and Eritrean.

Asylum-seekers who accounted for this rise due to a double (Nigeria), triple (Eritrea) or almost quadruple (Somalia) asylum applications. Nigeria was the leading mother country of the asylum seekers in Italy (3,500 claims), followed by Pakistan (3,300 claims), Somalia (2,900 claims), and Eritrea (2,200 claims).

Other particularly important years as regards the asylum applications in Italy were 2008 (30,000 applications), 1999 (more than 33,000) and 1991 (23,000). This data reflect the last period’s political and geo-political sceneries: in 1991 the great Albanian exodus occurred after the first multi-party elections and the end of the socialist party government; in 1999, the Kosovo war increased the number; in 2008 the “landing emergency” of people coming mostly from Nigeria and African Horn.
Refugee protection in Italy

While waiting for the Committee enquiry, many of the asylum-seekers live in places called CARA. These centres were created after the D.L.gs.n. 25/2008 and took the place of the CDI (Identification Centres) of the “Bossi-Fini” Law, where asylum-seekers were obliged to stay.

In Italy there are many Territorial Committees in Gorizia, Milan, Torino, Rome, Caserta, Foggia, Bari, Crotone, Trapani, Siracusa.

Some of the asylum seekers in Italy enter the SPRAR Centres. They are 151 territorial projects in 128 municipalities, distributed in 19 regions. They can receive 3000 people. A Central Service in Rome by the Department of Interior, in agreement with the ANCI (Association of Italian City Councils), coordinates all these projects.

Each SPRAR project must ensure the reception, integration, protection duties that the Guideline from the Department request.

At the moment, we have three different reception systems, parallel and inhomogeneous, in charge of different subjects: Department of Interiors, Immigration and Civil Rights Department, North-African Emergency Civil protection for SPRAR and CARA.

There is the risk that these three system may work in diverse ways and do not communicate with one another.

Refugee protection in Umbria

Umbria entered the Italian reception system in 2001 with the cities of Perugia and Todi. Later on, Narni and Terni joined the system.

In 2005 the Region Council, the ANCI and the Territory Departments for the SPRAR projects signed a convention on refugees and asylum-seekers that launched the project “The right to be in Umbria”.

From July 2001 to June 30th 2012, Umbria had 706 people in its SPRAR projects. We can receive 92 people a year. According to the guideline of the protection system, every person can stay for a maximum of six months when his/her status has already been accepted. It is possible, if motivated, to apply for a longer period of staying.
National Context of Migrant Situation in Turkey

Having the geographical position at the cross roads of Asia, Europe and Africa, Turkey has been facing migration flows of economic migrants or refugees/asylum-seekers both as a destination country and a transit country for decades. Since the early 1990s, Turkey has been a transit country for migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan. It has recently emerged as a destination for migrants from Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Turkey is a country with a big population of asylum seekers. The country maintains a geographical limitation as obliged by the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees and it grants refugee status only to European asylum-seekers. Migration issues in Turkey are shaped by its efforts to become a member of the European Union (EU), which are creating pressures for an overhaul of its immigration and asylum policies.

The number of persons of concern registered by UNHCR until 21st March 2013 is 34,972 and the figures are expected to increase due to social and political changes in the region. Although Turkey is an important destination and transit country for migration and asylum, the infrastructure and legislation for providing support and protection for asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey is very limited. Turkey has not joint to all the international agreements, refugee status is not provided to asylum-seekers coming from non-European countries and the applicants for asylum are expected to reside so called satellite cities.
Limited number for resettlement results in an increasing number of asylum applicants waiting for long years without reasonable protection and support mechanisms, which are defined in the international human rights documents. The legislation for asylum and refugee protection is also rudimentary in Turkey: access to social and health services and basic human rights for asylum-seekers and refugees is very limited.

Turkey has become a destination country for refugees of transitional democracies, who are in search of better living conditions and job opportunities abroad. Former Soviet Union countries are among the main countries of origin. Refugees from these countries may enter Turkey by a visa obtained at the border and may stay in Turkey for up to one month. Mostly, they come to Turkey in search of job opportunities, which are generally available for them only illegally.

While their presence in Turkey is generally voluntary, their illegal work and resident status, nevertheless, make them subject of exploitation and human rights violations. Some of them obtain legal residency through arranged marriages. Some end up in small workshops, in the tourism and entertainment sectors, or in private households, working illegally without job security, insurance or administrative and judicial safeguards. Male workers are usually employed in the construction sector and females in domestic services.

In parallel to this circular migration, Turkey is a destination for human trafficking in the Black Sea region, with victims mainly coming from former Soviet Union countries.
Refugees and Asylum Seekers Situation – UK

Download the full presentation with graphs and illustrations. (pdf)

**POPULATION**
The UK receives around 2500 applications every year. 2,435 applications were made in 2011 and of these 72% were refused. The UK is home to less than 2% of the world’s refugees. In 2011 the estimated no. of refugees in the UK was 195,000 representing about 0.26% of the population.

**ASYLUM PROCESS**
A claimant is sent a place where they have to stay, known as dispersal, until their claim is decided by the UKBA and/or the Immigration Tribunal Service. Dispersal can be anywhere in the UK, where applicants are required to report regularly to a police station until their application is decided. Interviews will take place before a decision is made.

**SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS**
Cash: Depending on their financial situation asylum seekers may be eligible for support from the government while their cases are being considered. A cash benefit of £36.62 per week for living expenses for a single adult. This compares to £67.50 that would be paid to a single unemployed citizen of the same age, who might also be eligible to receive additional benefits.
Housing: Applicants cannot choose housing or where they live but will be sent to wherever the UKBA. Housing will be outside London and the South East.
Education Children of asylum seekers have the same right to education as all other children in the UK and must be in full time education the ages of five and sixteen years of age.

Health: Adult asylum seekers and their dependants receive free primary and secondary health care although they may encounter difficulty with registration with a doctor.

Work, employment: Asylum seekers do NOT have permission to work in the UK.

WHEN A CLAIM IS SUCCESSFUL
If a refugee claim is successful the claimant is granted Refugee Status for five years (since 2005). After five years the person will be able to apply for ‘Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK to stay permanently. Once someone is granted protection they have right to work receive benefits and to be re-united with their spouse and children (under 18yrs. of age). However a child who is recognised as a refugee does NOT have the right to be joined with his/her parents or siblings.

IF A CLAIM IS REFUSED
The asylum seeker will become homeless as the UKBA stops financial support and the right to further education except for children of school age. The asylum seeker will still be allowed health services support but secondary health care will be charged. He/she will have no right to work. They may be made an offer to use IOM (Immigration Office Migration) voluntary repatriation scheme
A fresh claim for review of their asylum claim can be made and might be granted by the Home Office, providing fresh evidence has been submitted. Following this an individual can apply for section 4 support, which includes housing and vouchers (no cash will be given).

Some individuals from certain nationalities may not even be allowed section 4 help after their claim has been rejected, so will be left homeless with no support from the government. The face detention and deportation.

However if the UKBA decides that an asylum seeker does not meet the criteria for refugee status the person may still be allowed to remain in the UK under a different status.

- ‘Discretionary Leave’ (DL) can be granted for up to three years and can be extended if the person cannot return home. Discretionary Leave is typically granted to children.
- Humanitarian Protection (HP) can be granted for five years if removing them would be a breach of the rights outlined in the outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights, for instance if they would be tortured on returning to their home country.
Those granted Discretionary Leave or Humanitarian Protection has the right to work, be reunited with their immediate families and to receive benefits. Some individuals from some nationalities may not even be allowed section 4 help after their claim has been rejected, so left homeless with no support from the government. The face detention and deportation. however if the UKBA decides that an asylum seeker does not meet the criteria for refugee status the person may still be allowed to remain in the UK under a different status such as ‘Discretionary Leave’ (DL) which can be granted for up to three years and can be extended if the person cannot return home. Discretionary Leave is typically granted to children.

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Those granted Discretionary Leave or Humanitarian Protection have the right to work, be reunited with their immediate families and to receive benefits.

**CHILDREN**

1,277 children applied for asylum in 2011 having arrived in the country of refuge alone with no parent or guardian.

**Detention of Asylum Seekers:**

In 2009, 1,000 children were detained with their parents for the purpose of immigration control.

In 2011, 64 children entered detention as asylum seekers (Refugee Council). Asylum seekers are often kept in detention despite claiming that asylum is not a crime. At the end of 2012, – 2,685 were detained while waiting for their asylum applications to be processed or for decisions on their deportation were being made. (Migration Observatory)

There are 11 immigration removal centres across the UK (Immigration Centres).
Part II:

IntegrArt IIK experiences from the implementation of the method of digital storytelling in Germany

Method

It was good and inspiring to have a course about the method of digital storytelling. It is advisable to keep in practice while preparing the workshop.

In our workshop the diversity of participants’ languages was a special challenge. We faced some communication problems which could best be avoided by finding one or two mentors who speak the languages and can establish direct contact with the participants. The chosen method of creative writing is hardly applicable if all instructions and inputs have to be translated.

Lacking such mentors we should have had more training with the translators. Instead of taking interviews they should have helped the
participants focus on particular stories and get to the point. We also should have cooperated more with the local media centre who offered us help.

**Refugee Issues**

Refugees are in an adverse situation with set priorities. Many had other worries than storytelling. Our partners in Italy and the UK successfully linked the workshops with language learning, which the participants accepted as a priority and which helped to overcome language barriers.

It proved difficult for the refugees to save one weekday a week for the workshops, which could be conducted more successfully on one weekend workshop.

Not all participants have access to the same communicative means, e.g. some are illiterates, so it might be necessary to find individual approaches to storytelling like live recording. The frequent lack of personal photos typical in refugees' situation could also be met by creative solutions like drawing or re-enacting the content. When promoting the internet as a possible source of material it should be made perfectly clear, that only copyright free files can come into consideration.

We realised that the workshops require safe and supportive to cope with the intimate issues many refugees have. Since many stories use sensitive information, it is important to notify the participants of the scale of broadcast so they can decide in advance if they want to agree to the publication of the stories.

**Broadcast – PR**

Digital storytelling proved very useful for sharing the refugees' situation publically to engage people, especially groups like school classes. It is important to show the stories on an EU level to point out the scale of the issue. The method allows empathy, the audience feels closer and has the chance to imagine being in that situation. It offers the opportunity to turn the marginalised refugees into subjects.
Training experiences with refugees in Hungary

Working with refugees and asylum-seekers was a new experience in using the digital storytelling method. Our training team had to re-think all the training method we’ve been applying and entered a new field to discover by the method.

We realized that digital storytelling can only be successful, if it is appropriate to the context of the project, that it is adjusted to the special needs of participants, especially in a sensitive field as working with refugees and asylum-seekers, who are facing marginalisation, isolation and insecurity. The process of digital storytelling can provide them an opportunity to recall their memories, express their feelings in secure and supportive circumstances. It is a time-consuming process anyway, but time, especially in the preparatory phase is crucial in this field. It is to be conducted with experienced, cultural insider social workers who already have personal contact with the participants.

The main source of difficulties in this process is not the lack of IT skills, but language barriers. Especially, if story telling is done in an intermediary language, the facilitator has to play a more active and intervening role, which might result in a digital story not only assisted but dominated by the concept of the facilitator. Working with refugees requires also high level of flexibility from the trainer. Participants in a refugee camp are linguistically, socially, culturally as diverse as probably no other group we have ever worked with before.
Motivation of telling personal stories is very special too: at the beginning the participants’ motivation was not to tell and share their stories digitally, but to break the monotony of everyday life in the camp. As a result, the relationship between the trainers and the participants is closer, more intimate and even fragile than in a usual DST training. The actual physical circumstances always effect on the process of the DST training, and it’s also very special in a closed camp, where only the trainer is free to leave the camp any time he/she wants to. The trainer has to keep in mind, that he/she belongs to the majority society, which the refugees might have had bad experiences with. Digital storytelling is a great way to empower refugees, but it can be really effective as part of a structured social work system of organisations helping refugees.
Digital storytelling workshop: from oral tale to touching narrative - Italy

The digital storytelling workshop took place once a week, over the period of one month, as part of the Italian language course for foreign students. The goal was to use the digital storytelling method to encourage participants to practice Italian language through writing their own story, telling it, and listening to the stories of others. From a group of fifteen people being present at the first introductory meeting nine stories of migrants from Afghanistan, Mali, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey and Somalia were produced.

As participants had difficulties with Italian language, we decided to spend more time on story circle, writing activity and voice recording. Repeating the stories, shared within the group, has created a supportive environment, where all spoken words had relevance. Linguistic and discoursive tools slowly turned the more or less confused memory and imagination to be an object existing outside the subject in a space shared with others (Jedlowsky 2009).

The story has produced a certain distance and it let all participants overcome the sea barrier from which they were taken and to perceive themselves...
not inside an eternal present, without home, without horizon, but to objectify to themselves the horizon of their future expectations.

**Kia:** My greatest love is music. My name is Kia, I’m twenty. I’m Afghani. I’ve lived in Italy for six months. When I was seventeen, my passion for rap started, and still today it’s my favorite genre. The first time I sang in front of an audience was in Iran three years ago. As soon as I took the stage, I felt very excited, and I felt very happy. Now I listen to a lot of Italian rap. I find it very useful to learn the language, too. I love foreigner rap, too. I hope my passion will last in the future. I’d like to settle in Italy, to find a job, to go on with the gym, to find rap events where to sing.

**Mohamed:** My name is Mohamed. I’m from Somalia. I’m twenty-three. I arrived to Italy two years ago. I obtain my documents: the residence permit, the travel document, the fiscal code and the health insurance card. Now I live in Perugia, in 24/L Favarone Street by the Migrant Centre. I study Italian language. I met many good people in Italy. I’m looking for job, but it is difficult to find one. The first city I saw was Catania, then Palermo, Trapani, Naples, Rome, Florence, Bologna, Milan, Arezzo, Terni and Perugia. The most beautiful cities for me are Milan and Naples. I liked the big buildings in Milan and the organization in the streets. In Naples I was touched by the people’s generosity: everybody was happy and kind to me. I’d like to live in a beautiful city like Naples and with the same public facilities of Milan.

**Ahmed:** I come from Afghanistan. I’ve lived in Italy for two years. Before living in Perugia, I stayed in Rome, where I worked as a tradesman at the stadium. The most beautiful match I saw at the stadium of Rome was Lazio-Roma, ended 2-1. It was a beautiful match, but I was sorry because my favourite team is Rome. Italians love football very much, and since when I’ve been here it became my favourite sport, too. I also love cricket, but I love playing it, not watching it. I started working now, so I have little time for sport. I hope I soon will have the occasion to watch a nice football match again.

**Rashid:** My name is Rashid. I was born in Somalia. I lived in my country for thirty years. I left for Italy one year ago. I arrived to Sicily. The first people I met were policemen. I stayed in Sicily for nine months, then I moved to Perugia. I started studying. On my documents it’s written “student”. Now I live at the Immigration Centre. I like very much to be here. I have many friends. I wake up at half past eight every morning and I go to Miss Floriana’s lesson. Lessons are sometimes very easy, sometimes
difficult. I like studying very much. I hope I will learn Italian well, because the language is very important for the work. I’d like very much to meet my wife who lives in Somalia. We got married three years ago. I imagine my life in Italy. I hope I’ll have babies.

We passed from telling the stories to the phase of writing, the voice recording and the selection of images that made up the narrative fabric of the story. At this stage, an Apple iPad tablet was used as an intermediate technology to set up between the facilitator and the learner. The instrument without keyboard, has allowed learners to break down the language barrier and make editing easier. Most of the images used in the stories were taken from the Facebook profiles of participants, some of them were taken from the Creative Commons section of Flickr. The time of selection and displaying the photographs attracted other people form the Centre, and it turned out to be an opportunity to show others some images of their country of origin.

The use of a lightweight and immediate tool such as the iPad has facilitated relationship between the migrants, but it was not successful for all of them. Some of the storytellers did not show interest in taking part in the editing process, for them telling the story completed its usefulness. Like Ali, who was really interested, left the Centre as soon as he finished telling his story.

In this case, the media is used not to return home, but to create a moveable home, the narrative is a light dwelling, mobile, like a tent that you put up when bad weather looms or you take a break; comes alive when it is animated by some guests. Travel with us and among us. (Jedlowsky 2009)

**Ali:** I arrived to Italy on 15th March 2011. I travelled to Cortona by train, then by bus. I arrive to the hotel at 11:00 o’clock. At the station of Cortona I met some people. Two boys from Eritrea and another girl and a boy... 5 people were at the station. We started talking. They asked me “Where are you from?” I told them “I’m Pakistani”. Another one said “Eritrea” and two others I don’t know. I told them “Do you want to eat?” and they said “Yes”, so I gave them something to eat. We ate together. We stayed at the station for a while, then they told me “Do you want to stay here or to go downstairs?”. I asked “Where downstairs?” They said “There are other people downstairs”. We went downstairs and I saw there were 14 people more sleeping on the floor on the pasteboard. I sat on the stairs and slowly the morning came, so we went to the police station in Cortona. There were a lot of people there. Some of them were asking for a permit renewal, some were new. I was new, too. We waited until five p.m., then went to the Reception Centre St. Ann. They asked me “Do you have any friends here?”
I said “No, I haven’t. I’m alone, I don’t have any friends”. There were many people in the Reception Centre. I stayed in a container for two or three days and three days later I got out and went to school to learn Italian language. I sat in the class I drew a flower, and the teacher saw it and asked me “Can you draw?” I said “Yes, a little”. Then the teacher spoke with the Art teacher and four days later I attended the Art class. The teacher gave me a sheet and told me “Try”. I drew a flower by pastels. The teacher told me “Quit those pencils!” and brought me some paints and a brush. Three or four days later I finished my first painting. The teacher looked at it, and other people did, then he came to the class and said “Ali painted a beautiful painting”. I was very happy because I liked this work very much. Then the teacher gave me other canvases. Every morning I go to the class at eight o’clock. I stopped the language classes because I always paint. I work until one p.m., then I pray, ‘cause I’m muslim, I have to pray. Then I have lunch and rest a little bit. Then I start working again until six o’clock. I had an exhibition on the 18th December and many people came. Also the head of the police came, and gave me a paper where she wrote “Ali, you’re a great artist”. Then the time came I received my residence permit for one year, and then my passport. I left the Centre in January.

The ability to gain experience is put into play in the communication process. We have seen how the problem of atrophy corresponds in large part to the absence of adequate community narratives.

The community narrative does not coincide with existing communities: it is the space that is created when the story is a gift, which is given and taken. The feeling of having a Heimat can derive more from the ability to tell stories, than from dwelling permanently in a place. (Jedowlosky 2009)

The stories produced in the workshop are accessible via the project website IntegArt, they are back again in the vast sea of the Internet.

*Have these stories completed their usefulness or is it possible to imagine a new beginning?*

The new beginning of these stories start with an exhibition called “Migranti per forza”.

http://www.officinadellamemoria.com/?q=node/360
Experiences on Implementation of Methods in Turkey

To start digital storytelling workshop for IntegrArt project we developed a participant profile. At first we couldn’t reach refugees and asylum-seekers we started our workshops with migrants. Müzeyyen from Governor’s Office of Nilüfer helped us, so we had ten applicants for our first workshop. Umut and Semih from Nilüfer SYDV started to work with this migrant group using the digital storytelling method they had learnt in Budapest.

In the first day of our workshop we started with short icebreaking games group building activities. Then we made a presentation about EU Grundtvig projects and about the concept and aims of IntegrArt project. After introducing digital storytelling method and screening some films we went on with creative story-writing activity and story circle as one group with ten participants.

The participants had ten days to write their stories and select their photos they would use in their stories. Almost all participants came back with their stories ready to use. We prepared the storyboards and voice records. That was one of the most difficult parts of the workshop, as the participants were emotionally touched and couldn’t stop their tears when they were reading out their stories.

Next day we had a presentation about Sony Vegas program and started to create digital stories. Some participants had difficulties with using the software, so Umut and Semih and Samet, one of the participants, provided support. The screening took place in the afternoon. Everyone felt proud of his/her work.
We had three more workshops with another group of five migrants, with a group of seven Syrian refugees and with another group of five Syrian refugees. Hanife, head of Nilüfer SYDV, helped to reach Syrian refugees and Hülya from Governor’s Office of Nilüfer helped us as an Arabic-Turkish interpreter with the Syrian participants. Five migrant participants and seven Syrian refugee participants said that they enjoyed the workshops and they were happy to participate in this project but they cannot let us publish their stories on internet for their own security. So we gave their stories to them and didn’t use their stories on public screenings.

**Evaluation of Nilüfer SYDV:**
Semih and Umut from Nilüfer SYDV had new experiences at the workshops. It was very exciting to listen to personal stories of refugees and see these amazing life stories using family photos and the storyteller’s own voice. Helping them to create the stories, teaching them a new method and some IT skills, and taking this emotional journey with them provided us a better understanding on migrants and refugees. We have received positive feedbacks. We are planning to develop and use this method in other projects as well.

**From Participants:**
“I have written a story for the first time in my life and it was the story of my life. It was very emotional and enjoyable to go deep in my past and live those moments again.”

“I have learnt a lot. At first it was hard to use a computer program for me but I was surprised when I learnt that easily and fast. I discovered that sharing makes me really happy.”

“I think the workshop was very useful. I discovered my creativity.”

“I made new friends here. It was very enjoyable to listen their stories and share my own story.”

“I have learnt new technologies, created my own digital story and read it to a microphone. I developed new skills. My grandchildren liked my story very much. It was an amazing experience, thank you very much.”
Description of the Digital Storytelling Workshops in Blackburn (UK) with refugees and asylum-seekers, including evaluations from the trainers

Dan and Gisela from Global Link worked with Mukhtar at ARC (Asylum Refugee Community) based at Wesley Methodist Church Hall in Blackburn to organise and deliver digital storytelling workshops with refugees and asylum-seekers. We planned the workshops with Mukhtar and Aftab who both came to the original ‘train the trainers’ digital storytelling workshops run by Anthropolis in Hungary.

Without Mukhtar and Aftab’s support, the workshops and the resulting stories would not have been possible. Not only did Mukhtar organise the room, the refreshments, the timetable, but crucially, both Mukhtar and Aftab ‘recruited’ the participants. 12 were signed up, but on the first day 2 people didn’t come; one because she had received a letter from the Borders Agency that morning informing her that the letter they had sent her the previous week granting her asylum had been sent to the wrong person.

On the first day we had 11 participants; one had come who wasn’t signed up. We showed some digital stories in the morning, and talked about the process. In the afternoon we broke into two ‘story circles’ where Keri from Action Factory and I ran some creative writing exercises. Despite a heated argument about homosexuality and homophobia in one group, they all enjoyed the writing exercises. Each person ended the day with a first draft of the ‘story’ they would record the following week.
The second day of the workshops took place a week later. During the week each participant was supposed to have finished writing their stories, and have gathered as many personal photos as they could (either from the past or present). Gisela, Emily from ARC and Keri from Action Factory helped the participants to complete their stories, while Dan, Mukhtar and Aftab recorded each participant reading their own stories. The afternoon was spent ‘storyboarding’, using Word to ‘match’ personal images with lines or words of the story.

On the morning of the final day, Dan taught the participants how to use the Sony Vegas software. Gisela helped Maria to create her digital story and Emily helped Christine to create her digital story, while all the other participants worked on their own, with support from Dan, Mukhtar and Aftab.

The screening of the stories took place in the early evening of the next day. All the participants were there, as well as key stakeholders from ARC, Wesley Methodist Hall and the YMCA. All the participants were very positive about the digital storytelling workshop experience, and clearly took pride in the end result: their own short films.

**Participants said about the workshops:**

“Digital storytelling was a very enjoyable experience.... Learning and creating”

“The digital storytelling workshop helped to learn new skills, build my self-confidence, do something creative...”

“The digital storytelling workshop helped me to improve my creativity (thinking, writing and editing), and also gave me a new idea to introduce myself through a very different form.”

“The digital storytelling workshop did help me very much as I did something creative which made me develop self-confidence. ... In our culture we believe that the people who never visit other’s homes and eat with them always believe that their mother is the best cook. So as I heard other people’s stories, I should move on with life as there are even worse experiences than mine.”

“....I did not know the methodology about how I could use software such (Sonny Vegas) and it was extremely tremendous for me to be part of the project and the outcome was a successful story.”

“I enjoyed the digital story workshop, because I met new faces, work with different peoples, and the most interesting part is when the time comes to see your own work and others as well, watching a short story or documentary created by yourself makes you proud, because it is something of your own ability and creativity skills that led to a successful work.”
Global Link’s evaluation as trainers:
Dan and Gisela learnt a lot from running our first digital storytelling workshops, mainly how powerful a process it is. It is quite an emotional journey, building relationships with participants, helping them tell their stories, and sharing in the pride of achievement during the screening. Practically, it is challenging, particularly if participants miss a day, but still want to create a digital story. We would like to develop use of the methodology as it is a good way of empowering marginalised groups, and are looking for ways to get funding to do this.

Aftab’s evaluation as a co-facilitator:
The training workshops in Blackburn were very successful because of good team work. Everyone took some responsibility and put a lot of efforts towards making the workshops successful. Certainly, Gisela is a very good organiser. Mukhtar has the ability to do things on time and Dan is good at doing the technical work. Kerry was a wonderful addition in the team.

We contacted many people to participate in the workshops, but very few agreed to come along because most of them were not confident enough, and were somewhat nervous over the thought of writing a story and then using computer software to create a digital story. Those who agreed were, however, not fully clear on how to organise their thoughts and put them on a piece of paper. Nevertheless, after getting over their initial nervousness everyone grasped the idea clearly and then all wanted to put a powerful message across.

Despite language barriers, lack of computer and technical skills, the outcome was remarkable. All participants fully enjoyed the whole process from start to finish. They felt proud when they completed their stories. It was very promising that all stories had a positive and thought-provoking ending.

The digital story telling workshops were not only a learning process, but were also an experience of creative thinking.

After the workshops, when some of the participants got a chance to speak during other activities, they were articulated because they were more confident of organising their thoughts before they speak.

Personally, my digital story helped me introducing myself during various activities in Blackburn and also in Preston, where I gave presentations on refugee and human rights issues.

Aftab Alexander Mughal
Blackburn, England, 11 May 2014