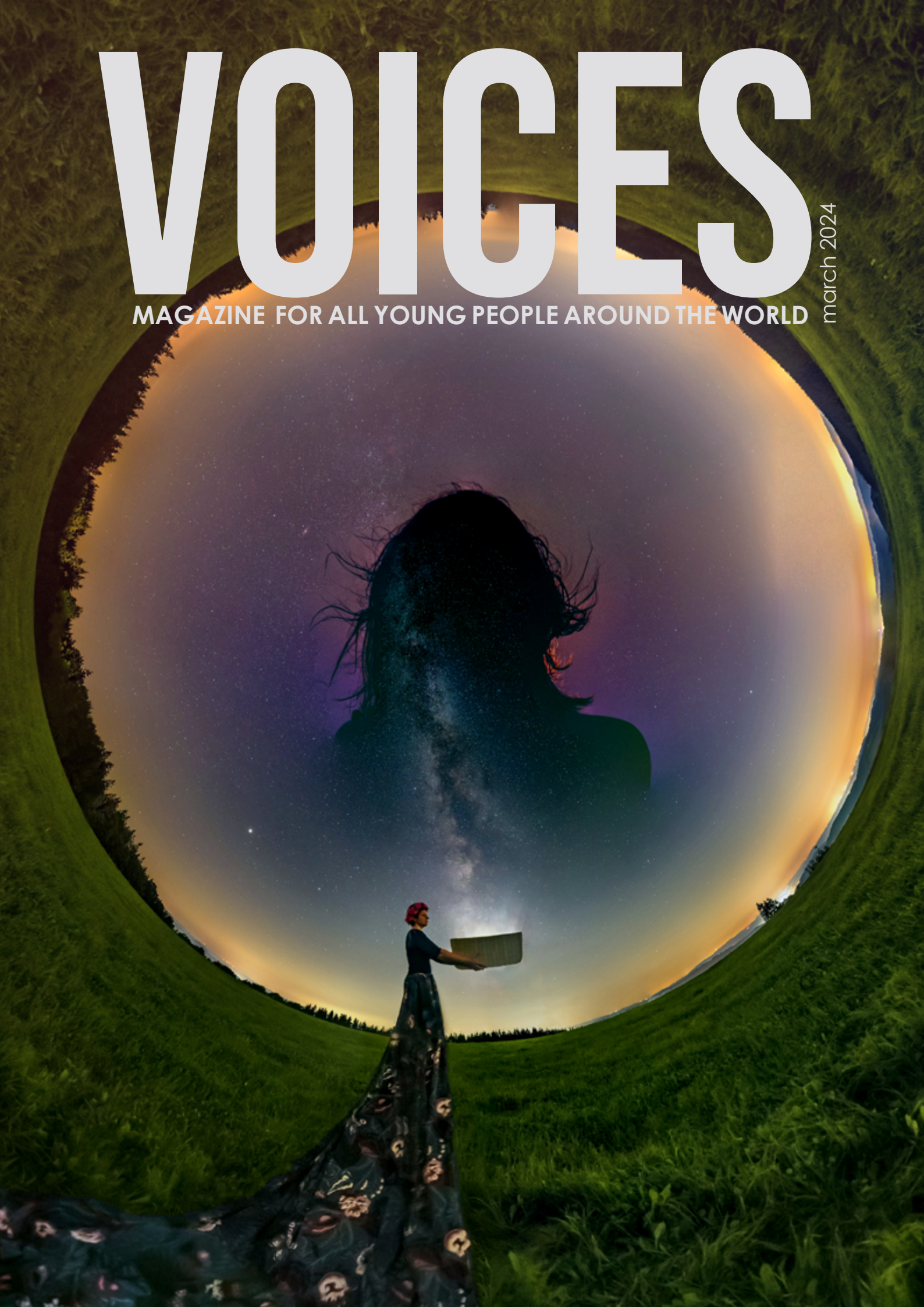


# VOICES

MAGAZINE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

march 2024







"Come with me into the woods where spring is advancing, as it does, no matter what, not being singular or particular, but one of the forever gifts, and certainly visible."

– Mary Oliver

**M**arch has arrived and with it the beginning of spring. While the first crocuses grow their way into a warmer sun, we have two international celebration days at once: Arbor Day and International Women's Day.

"Mother Nature": a term we are all familiar with. This concept runs through different cultures and shapes our idea of the earth and our relationship with nature. It is as old as time, as we can see in the stone-carved Venus figurines originating from the Paleolithic era which are hundreds of thousands of years old. Discovered all over the world, they are personifications of fertility. Similar ideas are found in old mythology, like the Greek Goddess Gaia, the beginning of all life and the mother of creation.

Personifications always rely on attributes. For nature, they are fertility and maternal instincts of protectiveness and caring. These attributes fit the notion of a mother. Still, the Goddesses of Earth are often rooted in ancient matriarchal cultures. Whereas today, the female gender is often seen as the second, weaker sex, it first was associated with the power of creation.

In the end, "female" and "male" attributes are questionable concepts. In our modern world, we strive for equality, away from stereotypes. No matter the gender, we can break out of the boundaries set by social norms.

In this month, we think about what nature offers us, how we find confidence, how to dream big. We reflect on digital waste, as the digital clean-up day is approaching and think of new ways of living. Take the journey with us and enjoy this new edition of VOICES.

Johanna Krautkrämer

"Дојди со мене во шумата каде пролетта напредува без разлика на се, не е единствена или посебна, туку еден од вечните подароци и, секако, видлива".

– Мери Оливер

**М**арт пристигна, а со него и почетокот на пролетта. Додека првите качунки растат, имаме две меѓународни прослави: Денот на шумите, како и Меѓународниот ден на жената.

"Мајка природа" - термин што ни е познат на сите. Овој концепт се провлекува низ различни култури и ја обликува нашата идеја за земјата и нашиот однос со природата. Фигурите на Венера кои потекнуваат од палеолитската ера се стари стотици илјади години. Откриени низ целиот свет, тие се персонификација на плодноста. Слични идеи се наоѓаат во старата митологија, како грчката божица Гаја, почетокот на животот и мајката на создавањето.

Персонификацијата секогаш се потпира на атрибути. За природата, тие се плодност и мајчински инстинкти на заштита и грижа. Овие атрибути одговараат на поимот мајка. Сепак, божиците на Земјата често се вкоренети во древните матријархистички култури. Додека денес, женскиот род често се гледа како втор, послаб пол, но најпрво беше поврзан со моќта на создавањето. На крајот, атрибутите „женски“ и „маски“ се сомнителни концепти. Во нашиот модерен свет, ние се стремиме кон еднаквост, далеку од стереотипите. Без разлика на полот, можеме да излеземе од границите поставени од општествените норми.

Во овој месец размислуваме што ни нуди природата, како стекнуваме самоверба и сонуваме големи нешта. Размислуваме за дигиталниот отпад, бидејќи се наближува денот на дигитално чистење и размислуваме за нови начини на живеење. Бидете дел од ова патување со нас и уживајте во ова новото издание на „Воисес“.

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# Planting and cutting down

Trees are the symbols of nature and life. We all know that they give us our oxygen and are nice to look at. There is one day where we come together, appreciate the living creatures, and give some of them a new home: Arbor Day. On the other 364 days, humans are busy deforesting the world.

The first Arbor Day (in some countries Arbour day) occurred in 1594 in a small Spanish village, when a priest wanted to point out the importance of trees for health and the environment by planting trees and having a big party afterwards. After 1805, it was celebrated in a more modern way, and it found its way to many other parts of the world. Around the Globe, Arbor Day is on different days since the climate varies from each part of the world. In the Czech Republic, it is celebrated in October, in Venezuela in May, and in Macedonia in March. People come together and plant one or more trees. Nearly every country has a tree day, but in Macedonia, there is a bit more history behind it. After the forest fires in 2007, which burned almost 27 hectares of land, the tree planting action "Tree Day: Plant Your Future" was brought to life. On the following 12th of March, opera singer and UNESCO ambassador of peace Boris Trajanov and other activists helped organise and raise awareness for the event. The government financed the action and announced a national holiday for that year. 200 000 people planted 2 million trees, which was symbolic for every citizen of Macedonia. After 2008, the tree planting action continued, but with fewer participants each year.

Trees provide us with foods like almonds, olives, cocoa, coffee, cinnamon, and other goods. They can live thousands of years and experience and observe history by just standing there. Even though trees

are living beings themselves, they are the home for many other species. Trees are not just valuable for the environment but also for us humans.

## Muscles of the ground

The roots can go deep in the ground, so the tree is able to grow tall and not fall. They stabilise themselves and hold the soil around them together. With that, trees dampen landslides after heavy rain, and there is less erosion.

## Natural filters

Trees gain energy through photosynthesis. They absorb carbon dioxide and transform it into forms that they can use for themselves. In that process, they produce glucose and oxygen and submit them to the atmosphere around them. Trees clean the air and provide us with oxygen that we need to breathe.

## Natural air conditioning and sponge

With the process called "transpiration", the trees absorb water with their roots and release the water into the atmosphere over their leaves. Transpiration works like a straw: when the leaves open, water from the roots is transported to the leaves. The released water cools the air temperature, and by absorbing large masses of water, trees help prevent flooding and droughts.

## Noise cancelling

Did you ever notice that when you are in a park, it is quieter than the city around it? Trees muff busy and often unpleasant noises by deflecting, refracting, and masking. Sound waves are redirected when hitting the surfaces of the trees and the soft textures of the trees, so the leaves and small branches dampen harsh noises. They also make noises themselves, which are more pleasant for the human ear. Therefore, it is more relaxing to be in the company of trees than in a busy city.



# our biggest life support

Soon forests will vanish from the surface of the planet. Habitable land is around 71% of the land surface, and trees now cover one-third (38%) of that. That is still a lot, but the numbers decrease constantly. In the last century, the total coverage decreased by 10%. This amount of decrease did not happen that fast before. 10000 years ago, so right after the last ice age, forests accounted for an estimated 52% of the habitable area of the world. It took 9.200 years to have the same amount of decline in the forest (10%) as in the last 100 years. The main reason for this decline is the use of agriculture. In 2018, agriculture accounted for 46% of the habitable land. 10% of global warming is caused by the loss of forests, which contributes largely to the climate crisis. Not to forget: it destroys the home of many species and contributes to the extinction of a lot of wildlife. Our species erases forests to produce food and to support certain lifestyles. In that process, it harms the whole planet.

“When we plant trees, we plant the seed of peace and hope“

– Wangari Muta Maathai

In a time when many people work on deforestation around the world, a small number of climate activists work on creating new forests. One of the best-known tree-planting activists is Wangari Muta Maathai. In 1977, the professor founded the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, which is an organisation that plants trees and empowers women. They managed to plant over 50 million trees in Kenya. Now the GBM is an ongoing organisation, even after Maathai's death in 2011. In 2021, 24-year-old Antoine Moses got a lot of attention because he set a new record by planting over 23,000 trees in 24 hours. He says he planted

1.3 million trees by himself all over Canada and continues to do so. The couple, Sebastiao and Leila Salgado, spent 20 years of their lives restoring the forest with help from their small organisation, “Instituto Terra”. Many species came back and made the 2.7 million trees their home. There are many more tree-planting activists around the world, like Jia Haixia and Jia Wenqi, Elizabeth Wanjiru Wathuti, Leah Namugerwa, Fatou Jeng, Lesein Mutunkei, Patricia Kombo, and Felix Finkbeiner. They all see the immense value of trees and want to fight the excessive deforestation that cuts down one of humanity's biggest life supports.

Arbor Day is the day of the trees. The plants that are vital in every ecosystem and that provide oxygen. That one day does not erase all the other days when trees die. However, it is a good occasion to remember why trees are so important to humans and to the quality of life. Many people all over the world fight, so the rest of us do not forget. Maybe, this year on Arbor Day, you give a young tree a home to stay in, because they breathe and live in our own home!

Fiona Schaumann

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Canadian man fights climate change by planting 23,000 trees in 24 hours | Guinness World Records

Sebastião Salgado and His Wife Lélia Spent 20 Years Planting 2 Million Trees To Restore A Destroyed Forest (awesomeinventions.com)

Learn the effects of deforestation - WWF

# Засадување и сечење на нашата најголема животна поддршка

Дрвјата се симбол на природата и животот. На сите ни е јасно дека тие ни даваат кислородот и дека ни ја разубавуваат околината. Постои еден ден кога сите се собираме, ги славиме овие живи суштества и на некои од нив им даваме нов дом: Денот на Дрвото. Во останатите 364 дена, луѓето се зафатени со уништување на шумите на светот.

помогнаа во организирањето и подигнувањето на свеста за настанот. Владата ја финансираше акцијата и го најави како државен празник за таа година. 200 000 луѓе засадија 2 милиони дрвја, што беше симболично, по граѓанин на Македонија. По 2008 година, акцијата за садење дрвја продолжи, но со помалку учесници секоја наредна година.

и го трансформираат во форми кои можат да ги користат за себе. Во тој процес тие произведуваат гликоза и кислород и ги доставуваат до атмосферата околу нив. Дрвјата го чистат воздухот и ни обезбедуваат кислород што ни е потребен за дишење.

## Природна климатизација и сунѓер ефект

Со процесот наречен „транспирација“, дрвјата ја апсорбираат водата со своите корени и ја испуштаат водата во атмосферата преку нивните лисја. Транспирацијата работи како сламка: кога лисјата се отвораат, водата од корените се транспортира до нив. Ослободената вода ја снижува температурата на воздухот, а со апсорпција на големи маси на вода, дрвјата помагаат во спречувањето на поплави и суши.

## Неутрализирање на бучава

Дали некогаш сте забележале дека кога сте во парк, тоа е потивко место во градот отколку околината? Дрвјата ги придушуваат честите и непријатните звуци со одбивање, прекршување и маскирање. Звучните бранови се пренасочуваат кога удираат по површините на дрвјата и меките текстури на дрвјата, така што лисјата и малите гранки ги намалуваат грубите звуци. И самите тие произведуваат звуци кои се попријатни за човечкото уво. Затоа, порелаксирачки е да се биде во околина со дрвја отколку во раздвижен град.

Дрвјата ни обезбедуваат и храна како бадеми, маслини, какао, кафе, цимет и други добра. Тие можат да живеат илјадници години и да сведочат за историјата, со самото нивно постоење. Иако дрвјата се и самите живи суштества, тие се дом за многу други видови. Дрвјата не се важни само за животната средина туку и за нас луѓето.

## Мускули на земјата

Корените можат да продраат длабоко во земјата, така што дрвото може да расте високо и да не падне. Тие ја стабилизираат и држат почвата околу себе. Со тоа дрвјата ги спречуваат свлечиштата по силниот дожд, а има и помала опасност од ерозија.

## Природни филтри

Дрвјата добиваат енергија преку фотосинтеза. Тие апсорбираат јаглерод диоксид



**П**рвиот Денот на Дрвото (во некои земји Денот на Арборот) се случил во 1594 година во едно мало шпанско село, кога еден свештеник сакал да укаже на важноста на дрвјата за здравјето и животната средина со засадување дрвја и потоа со голема забава. По 1805 година се прославува на помодерен начин, а присутно е и во многу други делови на светот. Низ целиот свет, Денот на Дрвото е во различни денови бидејќи климата варира во секој дел од светот. Во Чешка се слави во октомври, во Венецуела во мај, а во Македонија во март. Луѓето се собираат и засадуваат едно или повеќе дрвја. Скоро секоја земја има ден на дрвото, но во Македонија зад него има малку повеќе историја. По шумските пожари во 2007 година, кои опожарија речиси 27 хектари земја, заживеа акцијата за садење дрвја „Денот на Дрвото: засади ја својата иднина“. На следниот 12 март, оперскиот пејач и амбасадор на мирот на УНЕСКО Борис Трајанов и други активисти





Наскоро шумите би можеле да исчезнат од површината на планетата. Населливото земјиште е околу 71% од површината на копното, а дрвјата сега покриваат една третина (38%) од тоа. Иако тоа е многу сепак бројките постојано се намалуваат. Во минатиот век вкупната покриеност е намалена за 10%. Оваа стапка на намалување не се случувала толку брзо во минатото. Пред 10000 години, веднаш по последното ледено доба, шумите сочинувале околу 52% од населената површина во светот. Потребни биле 9.200 години за да има ист пад во шумата (10%) како во последните 100 години. Главната причина за овој пад е поради земјоделието. Во 2018 година, земјоделието сочинувало 46% од погодното земјиште. 10% од глобалното затоплување е предизвикано поради губење на шумите, што во голема мера придонесува за климатската криза. Да не заборавиме: тоа го уништува домот на многу видови и придонесува за истребување на многу диви животнски видови. Нашиот вид ги брише шумите за да произведе храна и да поддржи одреден начин на живеење. При тој процес и нанесува штети на целата планета.

Во време кога многу луѓе придонесуваат за уништување на шумите ширум светот, мал број климатски активисти работат на создавање нови шуми. Еден од најпознатите активисти за садење дрвја е Вангари Мута Маатаи. Во 1977 година, професорот го основа

Движењето Зелен појас во Кенија (GBM), организација која сади дрвја и ги зајакнува жените. Тие успеаја да засадат над 50 милиони дрвја во Кенија. Сега GBM е постоечка организација дури и по смртта на Матаис во 2011 година. Во 2021 година, 24-годишниот Антоан Мозес привлече големо внимание затоа што постави нов рекорд со засадување над 23.000 дрвја за 24 часа. Тој вели дека засадил 1,3 милиони дрвја сам низ цела Канада и продолжува да го прави тоа. Двојката, Себастијао и Лејла Салгадо, поминале 20 години од својот живот во обновување на шумата со помош на нивната мала организација „Институтот Тера“. Многу видови се вратија и ги направија 2,7 милиони дрвја свој дом. Има многу повеќе активисти за садење дрвја ширум светот, како Џија Хаиксиа и Џија Венки, Елизабет Ванџиру Ватути, Леа Намугерва, Фату Џенг, Лесеин Мутункеи, Патриша Комбо и Феликс Финкбајнер. Сите тие ја согледале огромната вредност на дрвјата и сакаат да се борат против прекумерното



уништување на шумите што ја намалува една од најголемите животни потпори на човештвото.

Денот на Дрвото е всушност ден на дрвјата, растенија кои се од витално значење во секој екосистем и кои обезбедуваат кислород. Но тој еден ден не може да ги избрише сите други денови кога дрвјата умираат. Сепак, добра прилика е да се потсетиме зошто дрвјата се толку важни за луѓето и за квалитетот на животот. Многу луѓе ширум светот се борат, па ние останатите не забораваме. Можеби, токму оваа година, на Денот на Дрвото на едно младо дрво вие ќе му дадете постојан дом бидејќи тие дишат и живеат во нашиот сопствен дом!

Фиона Шауман

Превод: Горан Галабов

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Learn the effects of deforestation - WWF

„Кога садиме дрвја, го садиме семето на мирот и надежта“  
- Вангари Мута Матаи



**“YOU  
ARE TOO  
CONFIDENT”**





**W**hat is self-confidence? It is a characteristic of someone who believes in their abilities and is convinced of their worth, behaving assertively and decisively. We, as women, entangled in the stereotype of the “weaker sex,” easily lose faith in ourselves. Without exercising strength and mental resilience to shatter prejudices and stereotypes, we will be afraid to pursue our dreams and climb to the top. It doesn’t mean there is no hope for you. It’s enough to introduce discipline into your life and strive for your goal, using the necessary tools for it.

Get to know yourself, your strengths, and your weaknesses. Create your ideal version and strive towards it until you become that version. Remember that the goal is not to make you feel bad but to help you develop yourself in the direction you dream of. Throughout the process, love yourself. Love yourself in every version. Be proud of making changes and growing.

Find comfort in being uncomfortable. Challenge yourself with activities that will have a positive impact on you, such as reading books, engaging in sports, or opening up to conversations with strangers. We are not wired for happiness; we are wired for comfort. Stepping outside of our comfort zone presents challenges that, once overcome, bring satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. However, it may not be immediately colorful, as there might be a shock associated with leaving the comfort zone. Start by taking small steps in these activities. The Kaizen method is very helpful in this process.

Accept and truly feel certain emotions until they fade away. Putting ourselves in situations that trigger stress or awkwardness teaches us to live with them. Over time, they will become less intense than they were at the beginning. When we don’t confront our fears, we become susceptible to their control. Feel like a warrior and face it head-on. Look your fear in the eyes. As you do this, you’ll feel a surge of strength, and confidence will come.

Let go of perfectionism. Setting unrealistically high standards prevents us from accepting mistakes and imperfections. This won’t contribute to building self-confidence. The key is to become better while also learning from our

mistakes and embracing imperfections. Destructive thoughts won’t motivate us to take action. Also, you don’t have to prove anything to anyone. If you seek validation from others, you won’t get what you want because people may not understand. The vision wasn’t for them; it was for you. If you receive negative feedback from them, you might likely give up. Focus on yourself; be the most important person to you.

Take care of your inner and outer appearance. Neglecting yourself is a form of self-disrespect. If you don’t see yourself as someone worth caring for, neither will others. It’s a boomerang effect. Speak to yourself as you would speak to someone you love. Know your worth.

Ignore the biological limitations associated with gender. Develop the belief that you have the skills and resources to navigate life without relying on a man’s shoulder. Adopt the mindset of “Okay, and?”. If you want to lift weights and build muscle and someone tells you it’s not feminine, that the silhouette should be slender and delicate - okay, and? Or if you prefer wearing oversized clothes and you hear comments that you look boyish - okay, and? It’s not worth investing energy in people who dictate how you should live. You know best how to live and what brings you joy.

It doesn’t mean that mentally strong people never stumble. They do it often, but they can focus on how to get up and move forward. Women are already aware of how important this strength is. Each of us possesses mental strength. The issue is that we don’t strengthen it. Similar to physical strength, when we don’t exercise our muscles, they weaken. You’ll gain confidence in yourself. Navigate this journey, overcome obstacles, and eventually, when you sit down and reflect on what you’ve accomplished and what’s ahead, you’ll feel satisfied and motivated to keep going.

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Aleksandra Szumielewicz

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 Jak budować siłę od najmłodszych lat?





## Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter, born in 1907. Through her art she portrayed taboo topics like breastfeeding, abortion, miscarriage and more. She had a mono-brow and a faint moustache which was considered inappropriate because it was 'too masculine'. But instead of hiding her unique features, she embraced them. Kahlo was also open about her bisexuality. To this day she is an inspiration to many.

Picture: Wikimedia Commons – Magda Pach



## Wangari Muta Maathai

Wangari Muta Maathai was an environmental, social, and political activist, and she went on to be a member of the parliament of Kenya. She started the Green Belt Movement, which plants trees with mainly women groups, and was active in the National Council of Women of Kenya. Maathai was the first east and central African woman to get a doctorate degree and the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

Picture: Wikimedia Commons – Prime Minister's Office (India)



## Minna Canth

Minna Canth was a Finnish author but also an entrepreneur, organisation activist, and defender of the underprivileged. She advanced the position of women in Finnish society by improving girls' opportunities in education. Every year the "Minna Canth award" is awarded for someone who has promoted gender equality in Finland.

Canth was the first Finnish woman to have her own flag day.<sup>1</sup> The flag day is officially called Minna Canth Day and Day of Equality, and it is held every year on Canth's birthday, March 19.

<sup>1</sup>On flag days the state raises the Finnish flag to honour or celebrate important people or achievements.



## Sigrid Damm-Rüger

Sigrid Rüger was a German feminist in the 1968 movement<sup>1</sup>. Among others, she noticed a lack of female representation in the movement and built an "Action Council for the Liberation of Women." At a conference from the students' union, another activist held a speech against the repression of women. As the men seemed indifferent and carried on, Rüger threw tomatoes at the next speaker. The "tomato throw" is seen as the final trigger for the women's movement in Germany.

<sup>1</sup>The 1968 movement in West Germany was a social movement that consisted of mass student protests. The protesting students rejected traditionalism and German political authority which included many former Nazi officials. (Wikipedia) Picture: UPI





## Martyna Wojciechowska

Martyna Wojciechowska is a Polish journalist, traveler, author, and social activist. She is recognized for her involvement in the TV programme "Woman at the Edge of the World". This show focuses on exploring the lives of women in various parts of the globe, shedding light on their unique stories, challenges, and achievements. Through her career, she has become a respected personality, inspiring others with her fearlessness, curiosity, and efforts to promote understanding and equality.

Picture: Wikimedia Commons – Ralf Lotys



## Agnès Varda

Her real name is Arlette Varda, she is a successful filmmaker and photographer. She is always original and free. During the years she spent behind the camera, she struggled to tell people about her greatest gift: her perspective on the world. She always set an example for people with her sensitive and responsible personality. In fact, one of the people she looked up to is currently writing an article about her.

Picture: Wikimedia Commons – Martin Kraft



## Priyanka Chopra

Priyanka Chopra is an Indian actress and producer. The winner of the Miss World 2000 pageant. The Government of India honoured her with the Padma Shri, and Time named her one of the 100 most influential people in the world. Forbes listed her among the World's 100 Most Powerful Women. Chopra supports various causes through her foundation "The Priyanka Chopra Foundation for Health and Education", which works towards providing support to unprivileged children. Chopra always speaks about women's rights, gender equality, and the gender pay gap. She has worked with UNICEF since 2006, promoting children's rights and the education of girls.

Picture: Wikimedia Commons – Bollywood Hungama



## Sinead O'Connor

She was a singer and songwriter who talked about issues such as sexism, racism and abuse through her music and performances. She inspired many to use their platform for social commentary and to not be afraid to be unique especially for the women in the music industry. She sadly died on 26 July 2023 at the age of 56. Even though she is not here now she sure has left an impact.

Picture: Wikimedia Commons – Bryan Ledgard

# Violence against Women

Violence occurs in a lot of forms, from and towards humans. While we often think of organised crime, shootings, and war, which are especially present in the news and movies, violence happens every day in ordinary life. Domestic as well as sexual violence is often experienced by women for no other reason than the fact that they are women. It is important to categorise violence against women as such to be able to measure discrimination against women.

In Europe, one in three women after the age of 15 has experienced physical or sexual violence. Globally, nearly 40% of murders of women are committed by a male partner, around 137 women get killed by a male partner or relative every day.

Violence against women has many faces. It is domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, stalking, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, violence in conflict and post-conflict situations such as war... the list goes on. Depending on the age and community there are higher risks for specific forms of violence. But they all are a violation of basic human rights.

Why focus on violence against women? In general, more men are victims of murders. The difference is the intention. Men are more likely killed in random or organised crimes. Women on the other hand are more likely killed by their intimate partner or a family member. While violence against men is also concerning, it is a more general problem of crime, whereas violence against women is often a form of discrimination. If violence is committed because of the gender of the victim, it is called gender-based violence. Women are more often subject to this as they generally have a lower social and economic status than men. Discrimination is not only the

cause but also a result of gender-based violence. There is a long history of men dominating personal relationships as well as professional fields. Women do three times more unpaid work than men, earn 24% less than men and hold not even a quarter of leadership positions in business, politics, and jurisdiction. This economic disadvantage paired with discrimination because of social norms and cultural or religious beliefs leads to a higher risk of experiencing violence.

Additionally, there is a lot of shame surrounding domestic and sexual violence. Especially in one's own family, it takes





Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence). Today, 45 countries which include all the European countries as well as Georgia and Armenia as well as the European Union signed the papers. So far, the convention has been ratified in 39 countries. With their signature, the countries are obliged to act on four main objectives: preventing violence against women, protecting victims, prosecuting perpetrators, and implementing coordinated policies. In 2021, Türkiye became the first country to withdraw its signature.

While this was an important success for the legal recognition of gender-based violence, the reality doesn't always reflect this progress. There is still a need for the constant fight against violence, both from governmental and non-governmental organizations. There are different actions to take, both on an institutional and personal level.

Most people have someone in their surroundings who has experienced sexual or domestic violence. It is important to listen to and believe survivors to create a safe environment for sharing their stories. Breaking the stigmatism around that topic helps to take action against it. On an institutional level, women's shelters and helplines are essential for the protection of victims.

To prevent future violence, education is key. The earlier the more effective. The Education has to be inclusive for every gender, religion and financial situation. This also includes spreading resources and information about shelters and other services.

In the end, we have to hold each other and the institutions accountable. If at a private party, at work or anywhere else, we can look out for each other.

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Johanna Krautkrämer

a lot of courage  
to step up and talk  
about it.

"We are only having  
fun."

"My brother would never do  
this."

"That's what happens to women  
when they dress like that."

Due to comments like this, disbelief and shaming of the victim, women rarely report the violence they experienced. As a result, it is very hard to estimate the actual dimensions of the problem.

In 2011, a new convention was  
signed, called the "Istanbul  
Convention" (Council of  
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a n d

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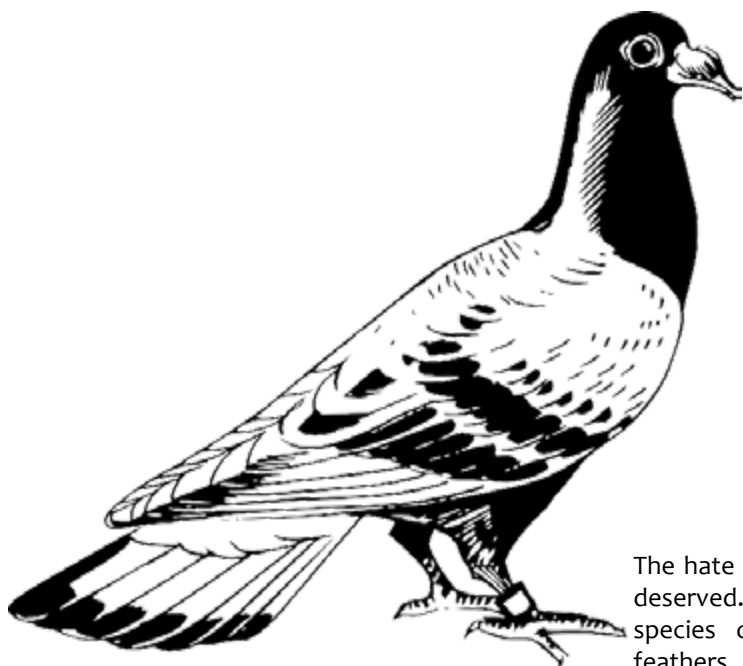
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# Pigeon – man's forgotten best friend

Pigeons, the rats with wings, the jerks who poop on you or your stuff - the enemy of most people. These medium sized birds, originally from the mountain areas of the world, seem to have found their way here, attached to us humans. Everywhere you turn, there they are. You can't escape them. But why are they always around? Why are they so attached to us humans? But the main question is why do we humans hate them?







Pigeons were originally from Europe and the Middle East. The earliest known recording of pigeons comes from 5000 years ago in Mesopotamia. Carved into the rock formations you can see pigeons, they were used for sacrifices by the Ancient Egyptians. The domesticated pigeon was originally rock doves, and as the name suggests they lived in cliffs and caves in rocky areas, but with time humans domesticated them by feeding them and breeding them till they became their own breed: the domesticated pigeon. These birds were first bred to be food for humans, but with time people would keep them as messengers and pets. These birds are amazing with directions. If you were to send them somewhere far away they would be able to find their way home. The pigeons have this magnetic sense called magnetoreceptor which uses the Earth's magnetic field to find their way back home, but they can also use visual cues and landmarks to navigate. Because of this, pigeons became messengers for humans. The sailors and other people travelling to new lands would take pigeons with them to use for not just sending and receiving messages but also for navigating. And thus, pigeons found their way everywhere in the world. Everywhere there were people, there were pigeons. But as you know with time new technology was discovered, and the pigeon became no longer useful to us, so we simply got rid of them and "set them free". But where would they go? They only ever knew one way of living. They only knew to live with us for food, and now that we don't need them, we have abandoned them and left them in the streets to eat our garbage.

The hate for pigeons is absolutely not deserved. The pigeon is a beautiful species of bird with blue-ish grey feathers and colourful iridescent feathers around their necks and chest. The pigeon is also of course smart with their navigational skills. In World War II a small pigeon named G.I. Joe saved the lives of many British allies by simply delivering a message to the US Air support. They had plans to bomb the city of Colvi Vecchia, Italy to help the British and make entering the city easier, but the British had already invaded, and thus if G.I. Joe failed to deliver the message, many British allies would have lost their lives by their very own allies. However, people still don't like pigeons because they think they are dirty and filled with diseases. I mean, they are street animals and of course they are going to be a little dirty. These animals live outside in the big, bad world. They eat garbage and live in big groups in their own filth, so it is bound to happen that disease spreads. They also poop everywhere, and no one wants poop on their clothes or the bench they sit on. They dirty our cities and statues, beautiful monuments desecrated by pigeon poop, which is a valid reason to hate them, but one thing to always keep in mind is that pigeons are animals. What seems like something gross to us is normal for them. Our cities have become their homes. We brought them here with us to use them, but now that we don't need them we discarded them and got mad that they won't leave? They only know how to be around us. Pigeons don't deserve hate as they used to be a useful and loyal pet. They would help sailors navigate, they would send messages for noblemen and if I'm being completely honest I would rather receive a letter from a pigeon than via text, that is WAY cooler.

Sadly, not everyone will see the beauty of pigeons. I personally have always found pigeons beautiful. They are smart, strong birds that have survived so much in this world. And they also mate for life, which is so cute. They are like us, but if we were birds, and yet they get no love. If we were to help the pigeons instead of hurting them and getting mad at them we could reach a place where we both enjoy life together. Because we brought them into our world, so we should try to now make it a home for us all.

And remember, never disrespect a pigeon by calling them ugly or gross, because pigeons are the reason why we humans are where we are now. So put some respect on the domesticated pigeon's name.



Kimberly Heronimo

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# Dream Come True

## ESC in Spain



**L**iving in Spain has been my dream for over 5 years. As a psychology student I was searching for some project where I can have practice in my field. One day while I was scrolling my Instagram I saw the post of Volunteers Centre Skopje for volunteering in Spain in an association that helps disabled children and adults and I was eager to apply. After a few months I was really happy to see I have been selected as a volunteer for this project. The preparation for my trip was a long waiting and document gathering process but I was really lucky to have the VCS team helping me through it. Guided by the fear and excitement of starting a new unknown chapter in my life I arrived in Barcelona airport where me and the other 4 volunteers from France, Germany and Turkey were welcomed by our director Judit and another volunteer that was already working there and from Macedonia, Jojo. He was really helpful and gave us a lot of information on what we should expect and what we will do during our volunteering. And just like that we started this new journey together.



**M**y project started around 5 months ago in a cute small town called Tarrega, just a 1 hour bus ride from Barcelona. The organisation that I'm volunteering for has a big community and centers for people with disabilities. Hundreds of people are working to make the lives of these people easier and better. I am working in a special school for physically and mentally disabled children from ages 6 until 21, playing all sorts of games, taking walks, doing physical exercises, horse and dog therapies, pool activities and musical therapy. These kids have shown me a new world - one that celebrates the richness of human experience and the beauty of diversity. Through their unwavering spirit and joyful presence, they are inspiring us to overcome obstacles, embrace differences, and strive for a more inclusive and compassionate world. They have taught me determination, to have a positive attitude when I'm facing challenges, to be more empathetic and to have patience. Watching some of them progressing and doing things they couldn't do when I first met them is making me very happy and fulfilled.





Getting used to taking things slow, siesta time, the Spanish and Catalan language, people not knowing how to speak English were kind of new to me but regardless of that my coworkers were very nice and welcoming and they all wanted to get to know me as much as I wanted to get to know them. My roommates (Louane, Luise, Yanis, Jojo and Ilayda) are the best and we are all like a small family. We go on trips together, to bars and parties, we play all sorts of games, talk about our work days and spend a lot of time together. I can say that I am very happy to have met them and I am sure we will be friends for life. We are already making plans on visiting each other once my project ends. Exploring Catalonia's and Spain's vibrant cities like Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, Girona, Tarragona, Lleida, Lloret de mar and their historical landmarks offered me a deeper understanding of its cultural heritage.

Moving abroad offers a unique opportunity for personal growth, cultural immersion and making a meaningful impact on the world for a volunteer. It offers individuals the opportunity to make a tangible difference in the world while gaining invaluable insights, skills and experiences. While I am at the end of my project with certainty I can say that I will return home with a life-changing experience I will never forget.

Ivana Nikjiforovikj  
Our volunteer on the long-term ESC project with Associació Alba



# ***Wandering the world solo***



The tourism industry has grown massively during the last decades. People want to see the world, and travelling has become more affordable and accessible to more people. The wonderful world of travelling gives us many ways to see the world, but is it better to travel alone or with someone?



There probably isn't a right or wrong answer to this question, and everyone should travel in the way they feel most drawn to. I have been able to travel both with my friends and alone, but I'm now especially interested in getting more experience and feeling more comfortable travelling alone. Even if it still sometimes feels scary, so far, it has always been worth it. I see benefits in both travelling alone and with someone else, but there are big differences between these two ways of travelling that might be good to consider before making a decision and booking your next trip.

Usually, the first thing that might come to mind about travelling alone is its safety. What if something happens? Will you be safe walking on the streets late at night or sleeping in a hostel full of people you have never met? With this in mind, it's good to note that there are other options for accommodation than hostels with mixed dormitories. Maybe it would feel safer to book a smaller hostel room? Or a room separated by gender? This way, you can still get the benefits of living in a hostel, such as meeting new people more easily and feeling more comfortable at the same time.

There are also many Airbnb and hotel rooms available at affordable prices in many cities if staying with strangers doesn't feel comfortable. Often apartments and hotel rooms are designed to accommodate more than one person, making it more expensive for a solo traveller to stay there alone, not being able to split the costs of the stay. In this sense, travelling with someone may make it more affordable. It's also possible to stay in a hostel with friends if you want to meet new people, and this way, even staying with strangers might make you feel more comfortable. You can also try a new hostel for one night and then book for more nights if it turns out to be good. Although usually, the biggest thing about feeling safe and enjoying the stay is the people there, whom you won't know before actually being there.

With costs in mind, there are also websites such as Couchsurfing, and for example Facebook groups such as Host A Sister, where people offer a place to stay in their apartments for free. This is both very affordable and a great

opportunity to meet people and maybe get someone to show you around the area since they probably know all the best, not-so-touristy spots you should see. I have no experience with these sites yet, but using this way of staying in someone's apartment might be easier if you are travelling alone since often people only have room to host for example one person. But again, this option just might feel even more unsafe than staying in hostels, since if something happens, there is no one you could report the problems to like in hostels, where in my experience, the staff has usually been very helpful. Host A Sister requires your Facebook account to be at least one year old or otherwise you need to send a picture of yourself with your passport picture and your name to them, trying to ensure more safety for other members of the group.

Travelling alone usually forces you out of your comfort zone if you want to meet people. You just have to start a conversation with the people you meet. If you are travelling with someone, it might be harder for other people to approach you, especially if you are speaking in your native language, making it seem more like you are not necessarily looking to find company. In this case, meeting new people might have to rise from yourself, not just wait for someone else to find you. In my experience, other travellers staying in hostels are generally also interested in meeting new people, and despite being alone or with friends, people have usually just started talking with me.

It might seem scary to start travelling alone, or sometimes it can feel awkward when you don't know what to do, just wandering around, but having someone else with you can make it feel much more comfortable. If feeling uncomfortable doing something alone would make you skip doing something you want to do, travelling with someone might be a good idea. On the other hand, doing the things you want to, lets you find people that share your interests. Travelling alone also allows you to discover new, maybe even surprising things about yourself. After returning home from a trip that was completely out of your comfort zone, you can see how much you have changed during the trip. At least for me, that has always been the case.

While solo travelling can be the best way to learn new things about yourself, some of the best memories I have with my friends were created when we travelled together. It might also be easier to deal with any upcoming issues if you have someone with you, and at least for me, usually, the challenges during the trip also created some of the best stories to think back with friends afterwards.

Going alone allows you to decide everything about your trip, where you want to go, what you want to do, and you don't have to make compromises like you often might have to do with friends. It's also possible to combine going on a trip together, but for example, splitting for one day or one activity, doing solo excursions to see the things each of you want to do, and meeting again in the evening, making these perhaps your first steps to travelling alone, while still having the company of each other and possibly feeling more secure.

I often find myself talking about travelling with my friends and planning a trip together, but embarking on the journey just never seems to happen. You can ask them multiple times, then maybe your schedules won't meet up, and suddenly someone has no money for travelling or something else comes up, and in the end, you won't go for the trip. Going alone, you can just decide when and where you want to go and book the flights.

There are many benefits to travelling with others as well as travelling alone. If you're still not sure which would be the best way to travel, maybe you should try different ways of travelling and find out what feels best for you. But don't just wait for your friends to book a trip; go by yourself if no one is joining! Discover everything the world has to offer because the world is not waiting for you!

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Alisa Koponen



# Living Off Grid – an Alternative Way of Living





**In the past, long before the complexities of financial systems and modern conveniences, humans relied on natural resources to survive. We would collect water from streams and wells, grow our own food and build our own shelters from the materials we could find. We were completely independent. Nowadays, we rely on public resources. We need supermarkets for food, utility companies to produce our water and electricity and construction workers to build our house.**



Lately, off grid living is becoming more popular. More and more people are seeking alternatives to the standard life. Living off grid traditionally means being disconnected from the electrical grid. But in many cases it also includes being disconnected from utilities like water and gas. One of the benefits of living off grid is that it's financially cheaper. Your overall expenses are lower since you don't really depend on external services. You don't have to pay utility bills and since you grow your own fruits and vegetables, your food costs are lower. Another benefit is that, since you're in control of producing your own food, you know exactly where it comes from. You don't have to worry about harmful pesticides and fertilizers. If you choose to grow your food organically, it's guaranteed that your food will be free from chemicals.



Off grid living also allows you to spend more time outside, in nature. In today's society we barely even see the sunlight anymore. Especially with technology taking over. We go to school or work,

which both usually take place indoors. Then we often spend the rest of our day inside, either at home behind our phones and computers or in any other indoor facility. It's really easy to get disconnected from the natural world. Children also barely play outside anymore. Instead they often choose to play video games or use social media. When living off grid, you have no choice but to spend at least a part of your day outside. Doing things like gardening, collecting wood or hunting. Spending time outside is really beneficial to your mental and physical health. It reduces stress, enhances mental clarity, and increases overall happiness. You get vitamin D and breathe in fresh air, both essential for your physical health.

Although it has many benefits, living off grid can also make life more challenging. You rely completely on your survival skills. You can no longer go to the supermarket whenever you're running out of food. And you depend on the weather conditions for generating power through systems such as solar panels and wind turbines. So there might be days where you're stuck without electricity. On the other hand, it also offers a lot of freedom. When you think about it, in daily life, we spend more time with our colleagues than with our loved ones. We spend 6-8 hours a day either at school or at work and once we get home we only have little time left with our family. Living off grid gives you the flexibility to choose how you spend your time. You can focus on what really makes you happy.

Living off grid gives you more financial freedom, but that doesn't mean you don't need any money. Especially when you're first setting up your off-

grid life. First you will need to buy land, then you'll need to buy all the materials and tools needed to build your home. Once everything is set up you will still need money for things like maintenance, health insurance and unexpected expenses. There are many ways you can earn money when living off grid. You can sell products like eggs, meat, fruits and vegetables. You can work an online job, make furniture or even start giving educational workshops about sustainable living, survival skills, organic growing etc.

The off grid life definitely isn't for everyone, but for those who are tired of the modern, materialistic lifestyle, it can be a great alternative. Not only is it a more sustainable option, but it also allows you to reconnect with the natural world.

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Tara Richardson



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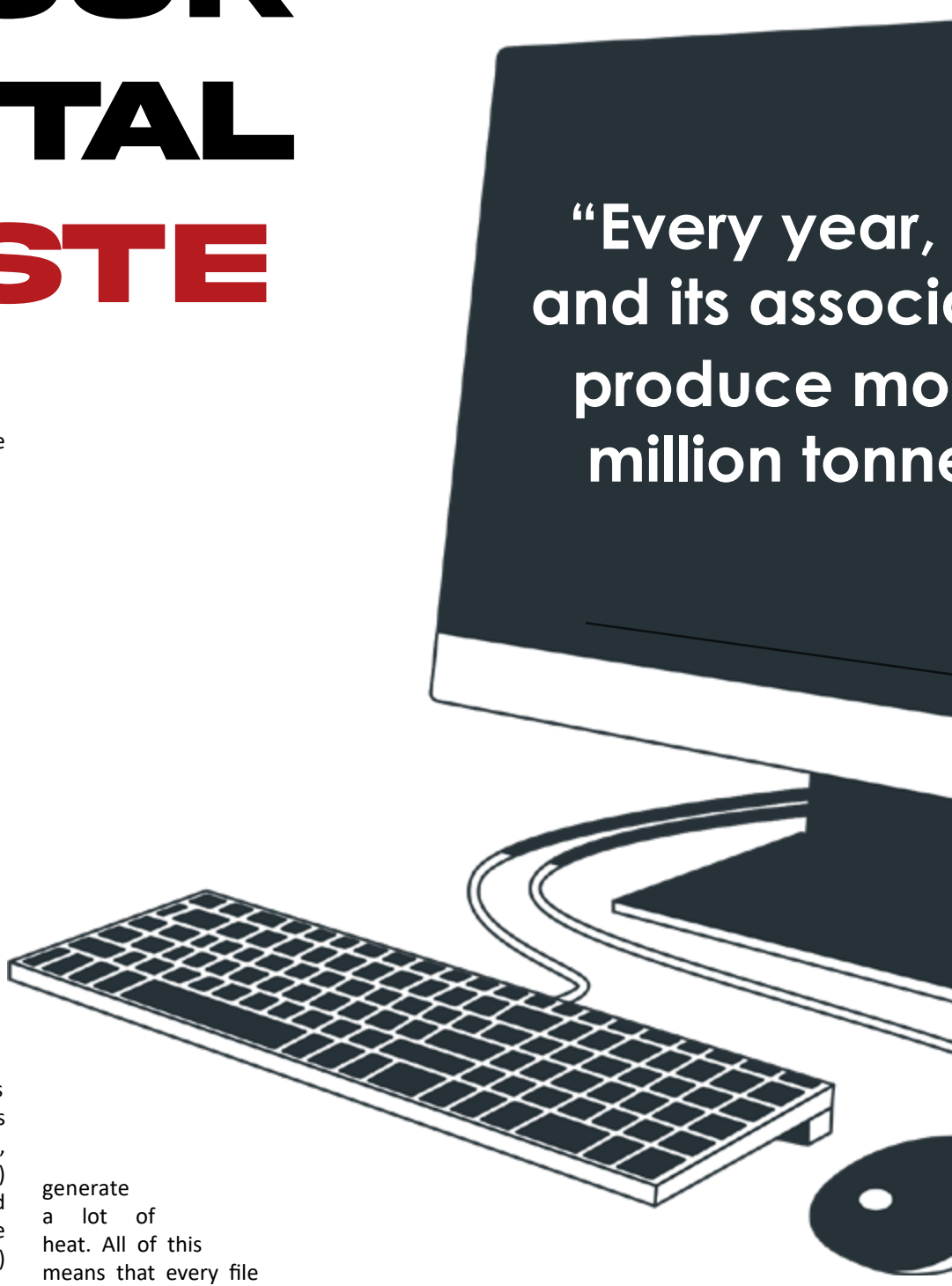


# THE IMPACT OF OUR DIGITAL WASTE

**T**oday, more and more things are being dematerialized. Our photos, our films and music, as well as all our paper documents. But if dematerialization allows for the elimination of the physical object or support, the thing that has been dematerialized still has an impact on the environment. Because if no plastic, metal, or paper is used for storage, the file still must be stored somewhere. And if it's not stored on our personal electronic device (computer, tablet, or phone), the file is stored in the 'cloud.' The 'cloud' refers to file storage spaces that we can access via the internet (drive, email inbox, photos and videos posted on social networks). If for us, this storage space is entirely invisible, it still exists somewhere in reality. In fact, all our files stored in the 'cloud' (photos, videos, audios, messages, documents, etc.) are actually stored on servers around the world, which truly exist. These servers are large buildings (data centers) containing rooms filled with server PCs, being constantly powered on. It is on these 'supercomputers' that all internet files are stored. But these servers require a tremendous amount of energy to operate continuously: electricity for their operation and especially very powerful cooling systems, and thus very energy-intensive, because their electrical circuits

generate a lot of heat. All of this means that every file we store in the cloud actually consumes energy so that we can access it at any time from anywhere. Among all the files we store, some are surely useless to us (such as old emails already read) and are therefore stored for nothing, representing a waste of energy. This is what we call digital waste.

More and more of us are choosing digital means to store our information and data. However, the burden of storing this data is very significant and represents a considerable source of greenhouse



“Every year,  
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million tonne



the Internet  
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re than 900  
es of CO2."

gas emissions. That's why, in order to combat climate change, the Digital Cleanup Day was launched in 2019. This initiative aims to promote a more environmentally friendly use of the internet and to raise public awareness about digital waste. To achieve this, the Digital Cleanup Day has been established every year on March 16th. This annual event was conceived by Kévin Guérin and a collective of associations, including the "Institut du Numérique Responsable", which is a French corporate foundation aiming to promote a more ethical use of digital technology. Also involved is the Let's Do It World association, accredited by the United Nations Program, which works for environmental preservation. In addition to awareness-raising activities and various events organized around the world, this day encourages everyone to clean up their personal storage spaces and then visit the website to register and specify how many bytes of data they have managed to delete. At the end of the day, a tally will determine how much data has been erased worldwide thanks to this initiative.

To well understand the impact of digital wastes and the use of internet on global warming and environment, here are some figures:

- Every year, the Internet and its associated systems produce more than **900 million tonnes of CO2**.
- According to some calculations, Internet use accounts for **3.7% of global emissions**, equivalent to all the world's air traffic. And this figure is set to double by 2025.
- Streaming (video and audio) accounts for **60% of data flows on the Internet**. And **1 hour of video streaming** represents the **consumption of a refrigerator for 1 year**.
- In 2022, an average of **306 billion emails** will be sent around the world every day. And sending **20 emails emits as much CO2 as driving a car 100 km**.
- One email stored means 10 grams of CO2 generated per year.
- One gigabyte of stored data produces **0.24 grams of CO2** per day.

- Data centers are responsible for **2% of greenhouse gas emissions**.
- One hour every day spent on social networks generates **1,250 kg of CO2 per year**.
- Between 2013 and 2017, **energy consumption** in the digital sector **rose by 50%**.

As we have seen, the impact of the use of the internet on our planet is serious. To reduce our personal impact, we already can adopt some reflexes:

- 1 Delete unnecessary emails that have already been read.
- 2 Activate automatic spam deletion.
- 3 As far as possible, use the memory of your electronic devices rather than online storage.
- 4 Deactivate automatic video playback on social network feeds.
- 5 Regularly clean out online storage spaces and delete any unnecessary files.
- 6 Paper versions of documents are often less polluting than digital versions (provided they are recycled).

So if you would like to play your part in the fight against global warming, I invite you to clean up your storage spaces and then register on the "Digital Cleanup Day" website ("digitalcleanupday.org") to find out how much data you have managed to delete!

Augustin Magaud

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# NDIKIMI I MBETJEVE DIGJITALE



Në ditët e sotme, gjërat po dematerializohen veç e më shumë. Duke filluar nga fotografitë tona, filmat e muzika, si dhe dokumentet tona nga letra. Por, edhe kur dematerializohen gjërat si objekte fizike, ndikimi i tyre mbetet përsëri i pranishëm në rreth. Sepse edhe nëse nuk duhet të ruhet ndonjë plastikë, metal ose letër në formë materiale, përsëri e dhëna digjitale diku duhet të ruhet. Po nëse nuk u ruajtën në pajisjet tona elektronike si kompjuteri, tableti ose telefoni, të dhënat tona duhet të ruhen në “cloud”. Kjo “re”, pra “cloud”, i referohet memories tek e cila kemi qasje përmes internetit (drive, email, fotografi e video të rrjeteve tona sociale). Ndonëse për ne kjo memorie është e padukshme, ajo ekziston diku në realitet. Në fakt, të gjitha të dhënat që ruhen në “cloud” (si fotografi, video, incizime audio, mesazhe, dokumente, etj.) janë të ngarkuara nëpër serverë diku në botë, të cilët vërtetë ekzistojnë. Këta serverë janë objekte të mëdha (qendra të të dhënave – Data qendra) të cilat permbajnë dhoma të mbushura me kompjuterë serverë, të cilët vazhdimisht mbahen të ndezur. Në këta superkompjuterë ndodhen të gjitha të dhënat. Por, duhet sasi jashtëzakonisht e madhe e energjisë për t’u operuar me to vazhdimisht: energji elektrike për operim dhe sisteme të forta për ftohje, duke qenë se këto janë qarqe elektrike të cilat gjenerojnë shumë nxehtësi. E gjitha kjo nënkupton se çdo e dhënë që ne e ruajmë në internet, në fakt shfrytëzon energji për të patur qasje deri tek ajo, kudo dhe kurdo. Mes atyre të dhënave, disa sigurisht që janë të panevojshme (si për shembull disa email që veçmë i kemi lexuar) dhe janë të ruajtura pa nevojë, duke bërë harxhim të kotë të energjisë. Kjo quhet mbetje digjitale.

Shumë nga ne zgjedhim mjedise digjitale për t’i ruajtur informacionet dhe të dhënat tona. Ndërkaq, barra e këtij shërbimi është e dukshme dhe paraqet një burim të konsiderueshëm të gazrave serrë. Prandaj, me qëllim për ta luftuar ndryshimin klimatik, Dita e Spastrimit Digjital u shënua në vitin 2019 si iniciativë për të promovuar përdorimin e internetit në mënyrë më të përshtatshme për ndikimet ndaj mjedisit jetësor, si dhe për të ngritur vetëdijen rreth mbetjeve digjitale. Me këtë synim, Dita e Spastrimit Digjital u vendos më 16 mars. Kjo ngjarje e përvitshme u krijua nga Kévin Guérin dhe një numër shoqatash, përfshirë “Institut du Numérique Responsable”, që është një fondacion korporatë franceze me pikësynimin të promovojë përdorimin etik të teknologjisë digjitale. E përfshirë është edhe shoqata Let’s Do It World, e akredituar nga Programi i Kombeve të Bashkuara, e cila punon për mbrojtjen e ambientit. Në vazhdim të aktiviteteve ndërgjegjësuere dhe ngjarjeve të ndryshme të organizuara nëpër botë, kjo ditë nxit gjithkë të bëjnë spastrimin e memorieve personale të tyre dhe të regjistrohen në uebfaqe duke shkruar saktë madhësinë e të dhënave të cilat i kanë larguar nga pajisjet e tyre. Në fund të ditës, me shumën e gjithë atyre numrave, do të përcaktohet se sa shumë të dhëna janë fshirë falë kësaj nisme.

Për ta kuptuar edhe më mirë ndikimin e mbetjeve digjitale dhe përdorimin e internetit në nivel të ngrohjes globale, ja disa fakte:

- Çdo vit, interneti dhe sistemet e lidhura me të, prodhojnë më shumë se **900 milionë tonë CO2**.
- Sipas disa përlllogaritjeve, përdorimi i internetit paraqet **3.7% të emetimeve globale**, ekuivalente me të gjithë trafikun ajror të botës. Madje kjo shifër pritet të dyfishohet deri në vitin 2025.
- Transmetimi (video dhe audio) paraqet **60% të rjedhës së të dhënave në internet**. **1 orë transmetim video** është e barabartë me **konsumin që bën një frigorifer për 1 vit**.
- Në vitin 2022, mesatarisht **306 miliardë email** pritet të dërgohen në mbarë botën çdo ditë. Dërgimi i **20 emaileve lëshon po aq CO2 sa ngasja e një makine për 100 km**.
- Një email i ruajtur nënkupton **10 gram CO2** të gjeneruar në vit.
- Një gigabajt i të dhënave të ruajtura prodhon **0,24 gram CO2** në ditë.
- Data qendrat janë përgjegjëse për **2% të emetimeve të gazeve serrë**.
- Një orë çdo ditë e kaluar në rrjetet sociale gjeneron **1250 kg CO2** në vit.
- Ndërmjet viteve 2013 dhe 2017, konsumi i energjisë në sektorin digjital u rrit për **50%**.

Siç e kemi parë, ndikimi i përdorimit të internetit mbi planetin tonë është serioz. Për ta zvogëluar ndikimin personal, mund t’i merrni disa nga shprehjet, si:

- Fshini emailt e panevojshme që veçmë janë të lexuara.
- Aktivizoni fshirjen automatike të emaileve spam.
- Për aq sa është e mundur, përdorni memories e pajisjeve tuaja elektronike në vend të internetit.
- Çaktivizoni luarjen automatike të videove në rrjetet sociale.
- Pastroni rregullisht hapësirat e ruajtjes në internet dhe fshini çdo permbajtjet e panevojshme.
- Versionet në letër të dokumenteve shpesh janë më pak ndotëse sesa versionet digjitale (me kusht që ato të riciklohen).

Pra, nëse doni të kyçeni për të kontribuar në luftën kundër ngrohjes globale, ju ftoj të spastroni memoriet tuaja dhe më pas të regjistroheni në faqen e internetit “Dita e Spastrimit Digjital” (“digitalcleanupday.org”) për të zbuluar se sa të dhëna keni kanë arritur të pastroni!

Augustin Magaud  
Përktheu: Faton Qerimi

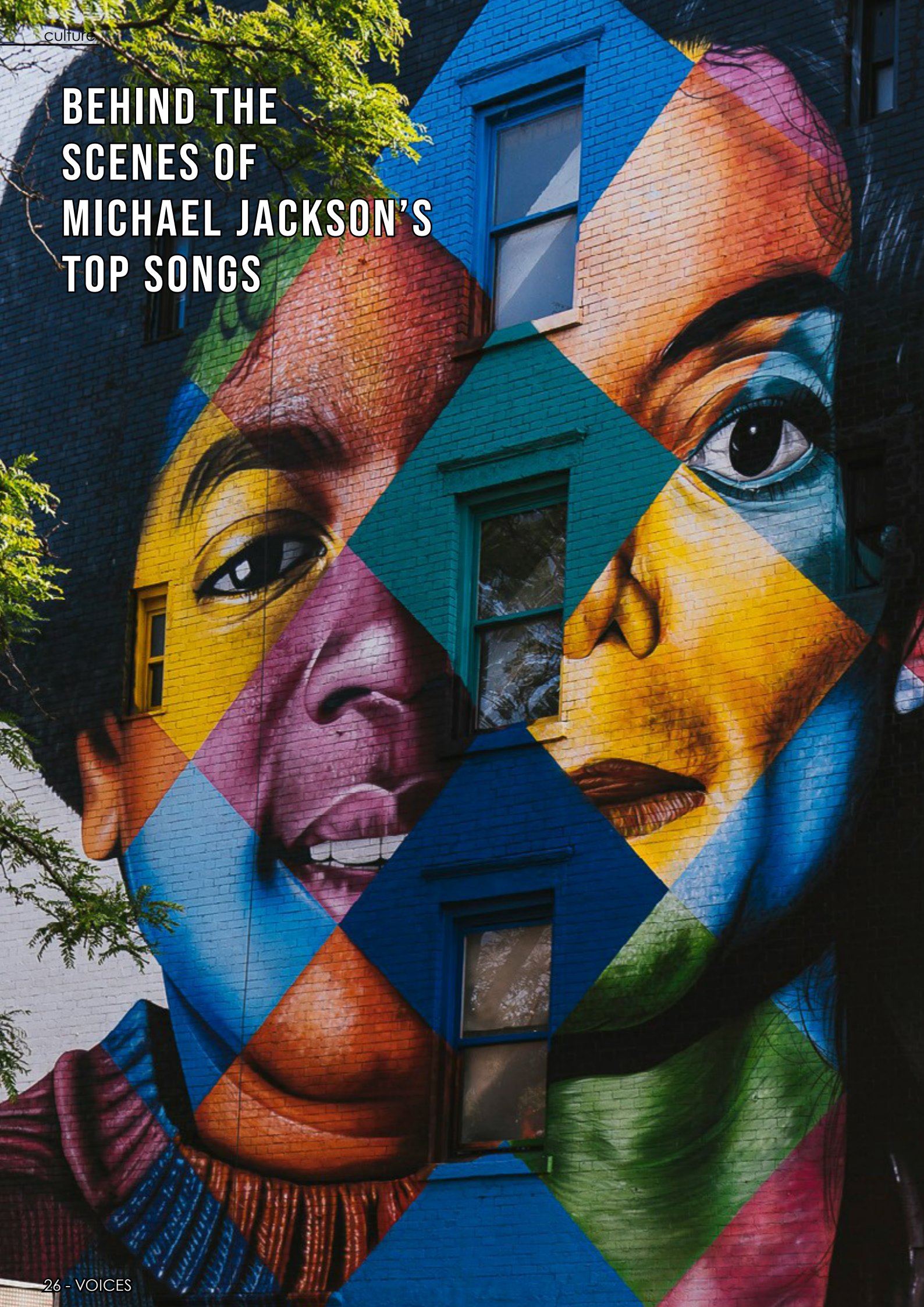
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# BEHIND THE SCENES OF MICHAEL JACKSON'S TOP SONGS





When creating a song, the author always cares about the most accurate message possible. However, sometimes the meanings of some of their tracks can be puzzling. I am going to introduce you to selected songs by Michael Jackson, which, apart from their popularity, may not be entirely obvious in their message to everyone. Their importance can sometimes go unnoticed by people.

"Billie Jean," considered Michael Jackson's biggest hit, has quite a strange and also disturbing story. The main theme of this piece is the growing problem of how huge impact made-up accusations can have even on a world-famous musician. With this song, he wanted to make it clear that he knows what such fans are talking about and he won't let himself be pushed around so easily.

One day around 1981 or 1982, the King of Pop started receiving a large amount of letters from a fan named Billie Jean, who seemed to have fallen deeply in love with him. I think it's quite obvious that the most popular artists are used to these types of awkward situations, where love or rather obsession are involved. What is important is how to deal with the situation and set boundaries. Billie Jean strived to gain more attention around herself and did not stop her tiresome writings. So, the singer started rejecting and ignoring all the love messages he received, but then she decided to go even further and throw unnecessary accusations at him which took the form of a serious slander.

She openly admitted that in the next letter she sent, Michael was the father of her newborn child. If you look at the first verse of the song, Michael sang "She was more like a beauty queen from a movie scene, I said don't mind, but what do you mean, I am the one?". Thus, Michael confirmed the fact that she fell madly in love with him almost immediately, wanting to enter into a permanent relationship. The fascinated singer obviously wouldn't turn down the

opportunity to spend at least one night with a charming fan, but he was even more concerned about her words that he was the one.

Despite his mother's earlier comments about being careful with such moments, he didn't listen to them. There was a beautiful woman around and the emotions took over. As you may recall, MJ dealt with private issues during this period, given their confirmed night together. In the same song, he released his next official statement on the matter using the words: "She says I am the one, but the kid is not my son". Probably to this day, Billie Jean claims that Michael is the father of her child.

Let's move on to another song with a completely different sound and meaning - "Stranger in Moscow". When this song was released, the King of Pop had undergone plastic surgery and his appearance was completely different from before. There are at least a few theories as to why he decided to write this track. The first one concerns his bittersweet feelings when quite loud pedophilia scandal took place in 1993, and when the media was constantly attacking him from every side.

The second story is that MJ wrote the song's lyrics during the so-called "Dangerous Tour" when he could see a crowd of his fans from a hotel window in Moscow. At the same moment, he apparently felt a terrible loneliness within himself, having no connection with those people outside the window. Then he found the motivation to write and perform this song. In the end, you can hear hostile Russian words, probably directed at him: "Why have you come from the West? Confess, to steal the great achievements of the people. The accomplishments of the worker".

It's time to look deeper into another hit by Michael Jackson, which also gives a lot to think about. It is one of the most recognizable songs of the artist, which was released in November 1988. There is a dark story behind the writing of

this piece, which is probably not that known to everyone. "Smooth Criminal" shows an existing problem of spousal or partner abuse. The lyrics of this song are extremely strong and emotional. MJ makes it clear that many women have experienced physical abuse and violence from their partners.

The song prompts us to ask a question to the victim of rape: "Annie, are you okay? Will you tell us that you're okay?". This crime was carried out by the titular "smooth criminal" and during the song, you can hear the policeman's voice. The horrific act happened and is followed by apologies and expressions of remorse by the perpetrators. But in many cases, it doesn't end and the cycle repeats itself.

Each time, especially the most popular songs around the world, are interpreted differently by recipients. And the interpretations make the song being played over and over again. Curiosity and speculation fuel interest and we have to remember that one of the main goals of every musician is to gain as much interest as possible.

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Marcel Mańkowski



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# Drinking Chocolate Milk



Drinking chocolate milk may not be as simple as you think. That beautiful milk you drink with the pleasure you get from sharing or living the moment may not seem as interesting to you as I describe. I know that sometimes I get too poetic when I write, but I guess that's the point of this magazine. We constantly jump from topic to topic. That's why I don't want to get stuck on one topic in what I write. When evaluating a subject, I want to talk about every aspect of it, but when I talk about every aspect, I am not talking about its benefits or different aspects. I mean it in every possible sense. Even though the topics I mentioned below do not match the title, you will see that they do in the future. Think of it as a different voice in each head. After all, not everyone has to appeal to a common goal or a common thought. I think this structure I'm in forces me to look from a different window. Because you are constantly around people from different backgrounds, you unintentionally gain this mentality. Going back to chocolate milk, aside from what I wanted to talk about, chocolate milk can be a beneficial drink. Chocolate milk actually has calcium, protein and vitamin D. On the other hand, as you know, it is a chocolate drink. But when you think of chocolate, I want you to think more abstractly than having a physical meaning in your mind. Sometimes, let's try to think about the physical objects we know and have seen before in our lives with a little abstract thought. In short, let's look at them from a different window. I don't think I've ever had a bad moment while drinking chocolate milk. Of course, maybe you had a bad moment. The time I spend with a glass of chocolate milk makes me happy. Because I experience a different emotional change every time I drink. Even though I get lost in a sea of different emotions and have to think over and over again about how I should feel when writing or taking photos, I cannot stay fixed on a particular thought. I guess I don't want to stay either. Even though sometimes I need to focus on only one thing, my environment, people, and mood affect my focus time and focus. Even though I feel comfortable writing, sometimes I have difficulty and I just write what I say. Just like I'm doing right now, I just say what I feel without thinking too much or focusing on it. Sometimes when I do this in real life (whatever real life means) I feel selfish. Because I put my own wishes first and convey my words accordingly, without

thinking about whether it will hurt the feelings of the other person. So I don't pass it through any filters. Sometimes, though, I pass it through filters. Because even though I want to say whatever I want, I think my level of tolerance increases depending on the importance of the person in front of me. By the way, I'm not saying I can't stand anyone. Of course, there is no such thing as whether to put up with it or not. I have to decide this situation myself. For example, when I talk to my close friends... I don't think much when I talk to them. Because no matter what I say, I don't think they will misunderstand me. I guess they can understand what I actually want to say or say. Sometimes, out of the blue, that is, while walking on the road, in short, just as a person lives a normal life, I too get stuck in my normal time. I'm always trying to look at different places. I don't want to freeze in one place. I feel like I'm afraid I'll miss something. No one is going far from me, but I'm afraid. I guess I usually go away. No matter which person I talk to, I usually hear the same sentence. "Aren't you going to make time for me?" Of course, I want to make time for you. You are my friend, so I enjoy the time I spend with you and I want to spend more time with you. But sometimes I get torn apart trying to make time for everyone. Or sometimes I have to get up and leave because I want to see others while I'm with them. Because I don't have any other time. Actually, being so planned and programmed didn't even have a place in my life. When I started to seriously take responsibility for things, that's when I had to schedule some things for some reason. Actually, I don't have much planned, I just make a few plans in my head and try to act accordingly. It's just that every once in a while I miss something or forget some notes that I should have written in my brain. After reading all this, do you think you are a planned person? I know I'm going way off topic. I don't even realize how far we've come from chocolate milk. I think the lack of awareness is the important point here. Because the things we do unconsciously may be a reflection of our subconscious. Even though our subconscious is full of secrets, I cannot help but admit that it is a little boring. So why do you have to stay so low? Isn't what we call consciousness actually who we really are? Why do we call it subconscious even when we talk about it? I think things get more attention when they seem complicated. I think it's because it evokes a sense of mystery in people.

I think we don't wonder about a person's features until we like their appearance. As social and somewhat selfish people, it is not enough for us to be at the top of the food chain, we can also shape the world as we wish. Therefore, wanting to leave the playing field given to us with a good score is an expected feeling from people. Since I'm a human myself, I think I can understand this.

I seriously think that eyes are a mirror of the soul. Because even communication starts with the eyes. Watching you look at me or making eye contact with you and speaking with words is not the beginning of communication. In fact, communication begins directly when I look at you or when you look at me. But we don't need to make eye contact with each other. Because when you look at a person, you can get information about them. You can understand what kind of person they are simply from their clothing style, body language or the style of their hair. I guess that's the beautiful thing about communication. There is no need for either of us to listen and understand each other. I can initiate communication whenever I want. This is exactly what I like so much. I think being able to do what we want, whenever we want, without needing a different person explains me in a way.

I think I have learned many things on my own so far. I continued my life by thinking about many of the things we learned from our families or felt obliged to learn. Actually, after a while, I wanted to continue this way. Because I've already learned.

You should know that you are an observer of your thoughts, not the voice speaking them. You receive countless throughout your day, now think of the ones that really grab your attention. It's often the ones that are backed by emotions. Be calm, be patient, and become aware of the thoughts you think.

With these many memories I have accumulated with chocolate milk, I think I can fully explain what drinking chocolate milk is like. I think, aside from its sweetness and beautiful aroma, drinking chocolate milk makes me remember the memories I had.

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İsmail Eren Demirtekin

Sources:





# Criticism or insult?

## Is there a clear boundary?

Every day we are exposed to the eyes of the world in different ways, whether that is by just walking to our job, school, university or at our favorite late night club, and of course, through social media. It's inevitable to receive various reactions to the ways we exist, look and act, in exactly the same way we would react to somebody else. It is precisely this exposure of oneself to the world that makes us a target of criticism, which unfortunately is more often equated with insult.

Understanding the difference between these two concepts is crucial in order to nurture healthy communication and relationships. Criticism is created to be constructive and it serves a great purpose. Criticism is pointed out to strive for the better, it exists to give suggestions for improvement and not as a need to attack. But clearly these principles

aren't always the case. Of course, the boundary between giving a constructive opinion and insulting is subjective, and in my opinion the received feedback really depends on how we perceive somebody's body language, tone, empathy etc.

There are a few factors that significantly influence this unclear distinction. The first thing that comes to my mind is social media, as "basic" as it sounds. Hundreds of platforms have democratized communication through actualization of terms that imply disparagement and underestimation. Allowing individuals to express freely can lead to harassment and cyberbullying that we witness more and more often. Typing through a screen with anonymous or open identities allows us to comment on everything that triggers our eyes. I am not saying that the medium is only promoting

negativity, but we cannot deny that it has increased it. On the other hand we can't only blame social media and technology for this phenomena. Polarized societal viewpoints, political correctness, "cancel culture", subjective sensitivity and many more things highly influence this distinction.

I would add that regardless of the intent, both criticism and insults have psychological impact on the individuals and that is exactly why instead of arguing about taste, morals and norms we should try and promote healthier communication that is at the core of empathy. As cliché as it sounds, it really costs nothing to be kind, and if you really think it through, every problem starts with the lack of kindness, while the solution comes with its presence.

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Martina Danilovska



Секојдневно сме изложени пред очите на светот на различни начини, без разлика дали тоа е само по патот до нашата работа, училиште, универзитет или во нашиот омилен клуб доцна во ноќта, и секако преку социјалните мрежи. Неизбежно е да се примат различни реакции за начинот на кој постоиме, изгледаме и постапуваме, на ист начин како што би реагирале и ние на некој друг. Токму оваа изложеност пред светот нè прави мета на критики, кои за жал сè почесто се поистоветуваат со навреди.

Разбирањето на разликата помеѓу овие два концепта е од клучно значење за да се негува здрава комуникација и односи. Критиката е создадена за да биде конструктивна и служи за поголема цел. Критиката е посочена за да се стремиме кон подобро, таа постои за да дава предлози за подобрување а не како потреба за напад. Но, очигледно овие принципи не се секогаш случај. Се разбира, границата помеѓу

давање конструктивно мислење и навредување е субјективна, и според мене добиениот фидбек навистина зависи од тоа како го перцепираме нечиј говор на телото, тон, емпатија итн.

Постојат неколку фактори кои значително влијаат на оваа нејасна дистинкција. Првото нешто што ми паѓа на ум се социјалните медиуми, колку и да звучи „очигледно“. Стотици платформи ја демократизираат комуникацијата преку актуелизирање на термини кои подразбираат омаловажување и потценување. Дозволувањето на поединците слободно да се изразуваат може да доведе до вознемирување и сајбер-малтретирање на што сме сведоци сè почесто. Пишувањето преку екран со анонимни или отворени идентитети ни овозможува да коментираме за сè што ги поттикнува нашите очи. Не велем дека медиумот само промовира негативност, но не можеме да негираме дека ја зголемува. Од

друга страна, не можеме само да ги обвинуваме социјалните медиуми и технологијата за овој феномен. Поларизираниите општествени гледишта, политичката коректност, „културата на поништување“, субјективната чувствителност и многу други работи многу влијаат на оваа дистинкција.

Би додала дека без разлика на намерата и критиките и навредите имаат психолошко влијание врз поединците и токму затоа наместо да се расправаме за вкусот, моралот и нормите треба да се трудиме да промовираме поздрава комуникација која е во сржта на емпатијата. Колку и да звучи клише, навистина не чини ништо да се биде љубезен, а ако навистина добро размислите, секој проблем започнува со недостатокот на љубезност, додека решението доаѓа со неговото присуство.

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Мартина Даниловска

## Критика или навреда? Дали постои јасна граница?



Casa Santa Chiara –  
where disability means  
**THIS ABILITY!**

98

le menu  
(2x)



Disability or special educational needs is a hot topic nowadays, especially in my country of origin - Macedonia. There we have the new inclusion law and all the children with special educational needs are now going to regular schools with an opportunity to visit the "special schools". Those special schools are becoming resource centers where professionals (special educators and rehabilitators) can help each student to achieve their goals using special methods from special education.

I am a special educator with experience working in the NGO sector in Macedonia and in Turkey on projects connected to inclusion and disability as well as directly with children and youngsters with disability. I have to say that I have always been focused on raising awareness about the disability topic, conducting research, projects, organizing trainings, workshops and direct work with users with disability but mostly connected to education and through the use of assistive technology as well with the "regular methods".

At the moment, I am part of Casa Santa Chiara - a foundation with a lot of day centers for youngsters and adults who finished their official education or students who are enrolled in schools but need to spend time in our Center after they finish their school classes and activities.. I found myself for the first time working in the field of occupational therapy and with users with multiple disabilities and most of them have affected motorics, speech, intellectual abilities etc.

What does one day in Casa Santa Chiara look like?

First, me and one or two other educators meet at a certain point, and with the special vehicle we pick up four users every morning. Two of them are with Down syndrome, two others are with multiple disabilities and in a wheelchair. It takes some time to position all of them in the vehicle since we use belts for the

wheelchairs and they need to be securely fastened, especially that we are on the way to the center in rush hours (mornings when people go to work and afternoon when they come from work). Once we arrive at the center we help users to change themselves and some of them have a small snack. After the snack we have "music time" where one of the educators plays the guitar while we sing and dance with the users. We use "maracas" with some of the users so that we can stimulate the motorics in a way. After the "music time" one of the educators reads the schedule for the day and we are separated into small groups or pairs of educator(s) and user(s). The schedule changes every day as well as the activity for the day so that the educators and users can get the chance to work with different people and try many different activities/ stimulate different parts of the body and cognition.. Some of the activities are such as the one from the picture, using clay, and sometimes we use some other material, papers, we do colouring, painting, crafts, or we bake pizzas and other pastries that the users take home at the end of the day.



*Me and Beste, a user from the center using clay in order to stimulate the motorics and create decorative items for the upcoming carnival.*

Once the activity is finished it's lunch time and we prepare the tables and plates where educators eat together with the users. After lunch we all clean the tables and the plates as

well as we help users to brush their teeth and do the hygienic routines.

The day finishes around 16:00 when we drive the users back home to their parents.

On the one hand it's a challenge to work in such a center - on the other hand it's a pleasure to see that a center like this can actually work and have amazing educators who are fully committed, positive and professional. It would not be nice just to criticize my country - but when I was a student and was visiting such centers in Macedonia the picture was lack of hygiene, lack of professionals and overall a sad picture. Here in Italy, sometimes I feel that I am lucky to have such an opportunity for professional growth. At the same time, I feel like this is how it should be and my country needs to give a lot of effort in order to have normal conditions for the disabled people who visit the day centers.

In Casa Santa Chiara, I also do work with users from Turkish families since I speak Turkish fluently and it can help stimulate the users without speech. I am really thankful for the opportunity to be part of this organization where I learn everyday about what professionalism is and how important it is to do what you love! I am learning everyday something more on a professional but also on a personal level.

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Sofija Stojanovska

# HOW TO WRITE ARTICLES FOR VOICES



## TOPIC

Anything, except politics or hate speech

Think of topics that would interest **our audience** (youth)

Maybe a **current event or trend** that you could write about?

## RESEARCH

Use **credible sources** when researching your topic

**Double-check** any information you include in your article to ensure **accuracy**

**Don't plagiarize**

**Link the sources** at the end of your article

## STRUCTURE

Use **short**, attention-grabbing **headline**

Write an **introduction** at the beginning (what, who, when, why, how)

Include **body** and **conclusion** in your article, maintain a logical flow

Write your **full name** at the end

## WRITING

Use **clear and concise language** that your audience will understand

**Avoid** too technical terms and **hard language** unless necessary

**Be engaging** and try to make your article interesting to read

## FEW RULES

The article should be around **500 - 1000 words**

**Don't** include images or illustrations in the document

Send possible **photos separately** (with sources and assured they're **free of copyrights**)

**Edit and revise** (clarity, grammar, and spelling error)

## WHAT ELSE?

You can write in **English, Macedonian** and **Albanian**

You don't need to be pro, VOICES is **open for everyone!**

Writing to the magazine is **voluntary**

We can provide you with a **certificate** if you become a writer for VOICES magazine







Our monthly magazine has a very simple, yet powerful, mission - to be the voice of youth. And how do we do that?

We encourage young people to take an active part in today's society through journalism and designing by giving them a platform to express themselves. VOICES is produced in Skopje, Macedonia, and published online every month and four times per year as a printed edition.

## Join VOICES team!

Contact us in our social media pages or write us an e-mail. What would you be interested in doing?



### Writing articles

VOICES accepts articles about anything, except politics or hate speech. Brainstorm your ideas with us and write articles once, twice, or every month!



### Translating articles

VOICES is published in three languages: English, Macedonian and Albanian. If you are a native speaker or fluent in these languages, join our translation team!



### Featuring your work

If you are an artist, photographer, designer or other, your work can be presented in the magazine. Send us your method of art and a short bio of yourself!



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