

# VOICES

MAGAZINE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

june 2026





**T**he art of noticing.  
What a blessing, huh?

Walking down the street and just hearing the loud music coming from the car stereo... that warm breeze of June hitting the back of your neck. And what do you see now? All the ingredients of summer are slowly coming out—children asking for ice cream once they feel the sunlight. It is as if every time you notice something, a burden on your shoulders lifts a little higher.

While wandering around the corners of Skopje, you can now see children playing football with great joy. Crossing the bridge, Balkan music blesses your ears with unique melodies. You are not the only one noticing things, though—your surroundings are trying to reach you as well. Perhaps they might not keep up with you while you take notice of social or personal issues that are quietly bothering you unconsciously.

A blessing comes with a price, I fear. Trying to be seen and heard weighs some of us down. However, one should never back down on the urge of absorbing the life around them.

So, go and take your VOICES magazine out.

Flipping through the pages and becoming aware of things everywhere will lead to increasingly intense feelings, making us feel closer to life and to ourselves, with both the good and the bad.

You will notice that what detrimentally affects you is also your path to being seen.

Emrecan Sargin

**У**метноста на забележувањето.  
Каков благослов, а?

Шетајќи по улицата и слушајќи ја гласната музика што доаѓа од автомобилскиот стерео уред... тој топол јунски ветрејц што удира во задниот дел од вратот. И што можете да видите? Сите состојки на летото полека излегуваат... деца кои бараат сладолед штом ќе ја почувствуваат сончевата светлина. Како и секој пат кога ќе забележите нешто, товарот на вашите рамена се крева малку повисоко.

Додека шетате по сокаците низ Скопје, ќе видите деца што играат фудбал со голема радост. Преминувајќи го мостот, балканската музика ги благословува вашите уши со уникатни мелодии. Сепак, не сте единствените што забележуваат работи - вашата околина се обидува да ве достигне. Можеби тие нема да ве следат во чекор додека несвесно ги забележувате социјалните или личните проблеми што тивко ве мачат.

Се плашам дека благословот доаѓа со цена што треба да се плати. Обидот да бидете видени и слушнати се голем товар за некои од нас. Сепак, никогаш не треба да се откажувате од желбата да го апсорбирате животот околу вас.

Затоа, прочитајте го новиот „ВОИЦЕС“.

Прелистувањето низ страниците и станувањето свесен за работите околу ќе доведе до сè поинтензивни чувства, правејќи нè да се чувствуваме поблиску до животот и до себеси, и со доброто и со лошото.

Ќе забележите дека она што негативно влијае на вас е и вашиот пат кон тоа да бидете видени.

Емречан Саргин

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# MONEY TALKS

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And for decades, women have been told not to speak too loudly.

According to a 2023 report from Harvard Business Review, women are still less likely than men to negotiate salaries, funding, or investment opportunities, not because they lack confidence or competence, but because they are more frequently penalized socially when they do. At the same time, data from McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org shows that women-led businesses continue to receive dramatically less funding worldwide despite performing just as well, if not better, over time.

The contradiction is almost ironic: women are expected to lead, create, nurture, organise, innovate, but still hesitate to ask for more in return. The contradiction feels almost absurd. Women are expected to lead, create, organise, nurture, innovate but asking for more in return still comes with consequences.

I've been self-employed for more than two years now. I started working for myself at 25, not because I romanticised freelancing, but because in the reality of the design industry, it felt like the closest thing to both survival and freedom. I was always the youngest person in the room, always moving before permission arrived, from institutions, clients, or peers. (Typical annoying Gen Z behaviour, maybe, but also necessity)

Arriving in Macedonia made me question the place women occupy in entrepreneurship here. In France, and across much of Western Europe conversations around women in business, economic independence, and representation have become impossible to avoid. Yet even there, genuinely visible female success stories remain rare. Rarer still are stories of working-class women, racialised women, queer women, lesbians the ones who rarely make the front page.

What struck me most in Macedonia wasn't only the ambition of the women I met, but the way they imagined success collectively rather than individually.

A lot of my male friends run businesses too. Whenever I talk to them about community-based or charitable projects, the reaction is almost always immediate: "You're not seriously going to do that for free?"

Maybe that says everything.

Because women entrepreneurs often understand something capitalism still struggles to quantify: community is infrastructure too. Care is labour too. Creating spaces where people can meet, learn, exchange knowledge, and support one another isn't secondary to business, it's part of building sustainable futures.

It feels increasingly urgent for women to build networks, business clubs, and communities of their own. Not in the exhausted language of performative "girlboss" culture or corporate networking circles, but as spaces for political education, financial literacy, mentorship, and collective growth. Spaces where women share resources instead of competing for the single seat historically left available to them.

Every woman I interviewed spoke, in one way or another, about transmission. The desire not only to grow, but to bring others along with them. They spoke about exhaustion, doubt, visibility, ambition but also excitement. Hope, even. A belief that collaboration, solidarity, and persistence can still reshape the future.

And maybe that's the most radical thing of all: women imagining futures large enough for other people to exist inside them too.

Throughout my conversations, one idea kept resurfacing: these women refuse to exist in only one dimension.

Women like Dina move between worlds without apology. She works in tech while DJing at night, navigating corporate structures, nightlife, strategy, creativity, and culture all at once. She refuses the idea that a person, especially a woman should fit neatly into a single category.

And maybe that's exactly where a new form of female entrepreneurship is emerging.

For a long time, society expected people, especially women, to wear only one hat. To be legible. Easy to define. Easy to market. You were either serious or creative. Ambitious or caring. Artistic or strategic. Women who moved between different worlds were often perceived as unfocused, inconsistent, difficult to categorise.

But contemporary work no longer fits inside those rigid binaries.

In a world shaped by economic instability, digital acceleration, and constant reinvention, being multi-potential is no longer a weakness, it's survival. The ability to adapt, shift industries, learn new skills, and connect different disciplines has become a form of intelligence in itself.

That's what fascinated me most about the women I met in Macedonia: their comfort with complexity. They are designers organising cultural events, developers involved in activism, founders who are also artists, mothers, researchers, DJs, community organisers. They don't separate creativity from professionalism, they use one to strengthen the other.

There's something deeply political about allowing yourself to exist fully. To refuse reduction. To stop performing a single acceptable version of womanhood.

For many women, embracing multiple identities becomes a way of recognising the full extent of their abilities. Once you stop limiting yourself to one role, you realise your skills are transferable creativity becomes leadership, empathy becomes management, artistic sensitivity becomes strategy.

None of the women I interviewed were trying to become perfect symbols of success. They were building lives flexible enough to contain every version of themselves. And maybe that's what entrepreneurship looks like now: less like a linear career path, more like an ecosystem of skills, passions, contradictions, and survival strategies evolving alongside the world itself.

Thank you so much to Jovana Kocevaska and Dina Damjanovikj.

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Aur lie Elisa Morra

"I like my money right where I can see it... hanging in my closet." - Carrie Bradshaw

# WHEN FOOTBALL STOPS THE WORLD



The world is counting the last days before the start of the football World Cup on 11-th June. For the first time, there will be 3 host countries: Mexico, the United States and Canada.

The World Cup takes place every 4 years, starting from 1930, and since then it has been held every four years, except during the war, when it was not held.

This year's edition features 48 teams for the first time, meaning we'll have more matches compared to last year's edition, which had 32 teams. This new system was introduced to give teams that have never participated in the World Cup a chance. It also includes three host countries, meaning more matches for them.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup will not only be the biggest sporting event of the decade. With 48 teams, 104 matches and three host countries, this edition represents a profound transformation of the global sports, marketing, tourism and media industries. More teams, more games, more money. According to FIFA, the global economic impact of the tournament could reach nearly \$80 billion, making this competition the most profitable football event in history.

The 2026 World Cup marks football's entry into the realm of a "global mega-industry." The increase in the number of teams and matches allows FIFA to multiply: TV broadcasting revenue, sponsorship contracts, ticket sales, merchandise, technology, and partnerships.

FIFA's expected revenue could exceed \$11 billion, compared to approximately \$7.5 billion during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

The tournament's expansion is also strategic: more participating nations mean more television markets, more local sponsors, and a wider global audience. The tournament thus becomes an arena for economic competition between sports brands, digital platforms, broadcasters, and investing states.

The 2026 World Cup will likely be the most-streamed sporting event in history. The audiovisual industry is evolving rapidly: OTT platforms, mobile streaming, TikTok content, AI for live statistics, augmented reality, and immersive fan experiences.

Television rights remain FIFA's primary source of revenue. The expanded format of 104 matches automatically increases the volume of content that can be sold to broadcasters and digital platforms. Broadcasters are now looking to transform each match into an interactive experience: integrated sports betting, personalized advertising, real-time analytics via artificial intelligence, and exclusive content for premium subscribers.

Host cities are investing heavily in: transportation, stadiums, hotels, digital networks, security.

However, this industrial approach also raises criticisms: an explosion of public costs, rising ticket prices, risk of "empty stadiums", profits concentrated in the hands of large companies.

Many economists point out that the economic impact of mega-events is often overestimated. Some discussions on Reddit highlight the fact that the profits benefit FIFA and large corporations more than local populations.

The 2026 World Cup confirms a strong trend: modern football now functions as a global entertainment industry. As the first man of FIFA, Gianni Infantino stated, *"the tournament will be the greatest show on Earth."*

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Adrien Graveraux

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Somewhere in  
Southern Spain  
My Youthpass  
Started  
Making Sense



If you have ever done an Erasmus+ training course, you probably have a Youthpass certificate somewhere on your laptop. Maybe in a folder called “documents” or “stuff” or “idk.” It says you developed competences. Important ones. European-framework-level ones. And if you are anything like me or the 30 other youth workers I met in southern Spain this April, you have absolutely no idea what to do with it.

This is the article I wish someone had written for me before I flew to Mollina, sat through sessions on the EU’s Entrepreneurship Competence Framework and slowly realized that I had been sitting on a goldmine of professional language I never learned how to speak.

**The problem nobody talks about**

Youthpass is the official recognition tool for non-formal learning in Erasmus+ youth projects. It is supposed to help you describe the skills you gained during a project so you can use them for your career, your CV, and your next opportunity. In theory, it is powerful. In practice, most of us collect these certificates like pokemon cards we never play with.

The reason is simple. Nobody teaches us the vocabulary. You

finish a training course, you get a certificate that says you improved your “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship” and you nod and move on because what does that even mean in a job interview? What does it mean on a Tuesday morning when you are trying to convince your municipality to fund a youth project?

**Enter EntreComp (and stay with me here)**

The European Commission built something called EntreComp in 2016. It is a framework that breaks down “entrepreneurship

as a competence” into 3 areas, 15 competences and 442 learning outcomes across 8 progression levels. Yes, 442. I read it so you do not have to.

Here is the thing, though. Once you strip away the EU jargon, the framework is actually describing stuff that you already do. It just gives it structure and professional weight. Let me translate.

**The three areas are:** Ideas and Opportunities, Resources, and Into Action. Think of them as: what you notice, what you bring to the table and what you actually do about it.

**The 15 competences include things like:** spotting opportunities, creativity, ethical and sustainable thinking, self-awareness, motivation, mobilising resources, working with others, coping with uncertainty and learning through experience. Read that list again. If you have ever run a project in an NGO, you have done all of these. You just never had the words.

And this is where it gets interesting. Each competence has 8 levels of progression from “I need guidance” all the way to “I am driving transformation in my field.” So it is not a checkbox. It is a mirror. It shows you where you are and where you could go.

**What gamification has to do with any of this**

In Molina, I participated in a training course called “Play and Go Green: Innovative Methods for Entrepreneurship Education.” The whole point was to take this massive framework and make it something you can actually feel and experience rather than just read about.

We did group-based Eco-Social Business Canvas sessions where you build a business model that accounts for environmental and social impact from the start. We went to Córdoba and walked through the city with what they called an “eco-lens,” looking at

real businesses and identifying where green improvements could happen.

*None of this felt like studying. All of it was learning.*

And that is the point. When someone hands you a 43-page PDF full of competence grids and progression levels, your brain checks out. When someone puts you in a room with people from 10 different countries and says “build something together”, you suddenly understand what “mobilising others” and “working with others” and “coping with uncertainty” actually feel like in your body, not just on paper.

**So what do you actually do with your Youthpass?**

Here is my attempt at making this practical.

**Step one: read it again.** Actually read the competences listed on your Youthpass. Not like a formality, but like a skills inventory.

**Step two: learn the language.** EntreComp gives you the professional vocabulary to describe what you did. You did not just “help organize an event.” You mobilised resources, worked with diverse teams, took initiative under uncertainty, and created social value. That is not fluff. That is the language institutions and employers understand.

**Step three: map yourself.** Look at the 8 progression levels. Be honest about where you are. Level 3 in financial literacy and level 6 in mobilising others are not a failure. It is a starting point. It is self-awareness, which is literally one of the competences.

**Step four: use it.** In your CV. In your cover letter. In your LinkedIn profile. In your next project proposal. The framework exists so you can stop underselling the skills you built through non-formal education. Youth work is not a gap on your resume. It is where you learned to do things most people only read about in management textbooks.

**The real takeaway**

I flew 3,384 km to a small town in Andalusia. I spent a week with youth workers from across Europe. And the single most useful thing I brought home was this: the skills you build through non-formal education are real, they are recognized by the EU, and they have names. You just need to learn what those names are and start using them.

Your Youthpass is not a participation trophy. It is a professional document. Treat it like one.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dorotea Grkovikj

*What do you do with your*



*Youthpass?*



**F**or the second time in a row, Shtip, just an hour away from Skopje, exchanges its calm nature with loud spectacle and becomes the host of Macedonia's largest summer festival: D Festival.

Founded in 2011, it has already hosted around 30.000 music enthusiasts and can best be described with: freedom, positivity and smiles, according to Ognen Stojanoski. Being part of the organizing team means for him D Festival starts long before the first guitar string is strummed.

**As Operations Manager at Password Production, what does your role involve during the preparation and organization of D Festival?**

I'm doing a bit of everything since we are a small team and I always wanted to bury my head inside all of the things. But currently I'm mostly preoccupied with the PR and communication side of things.

**What were the biggest challenges and opportunities of moving the festival to a new city?**

D Festival entered a new phase after 15 years. Insurmountable challenges forced us to find a new home. We loved the previous town and the previous venue.

But when we moved we wanted to find a new energy, not that it wasn't perfect before but every venue is different which can also lead to different logistical problems, but also opportunities.

Nevertheless, the people and the festival itself are what makes the energy so we will bring this positive energy and this festival energy with us wherever we go. Together with all the musicians and visitors that come.

**What atmosphere or feeling do you want to create for the visitors?**

We want to leave an open space for the people to express themselves.

Especially for the younger people for whom it might be a first-time experience in the festival, in love, heartbreak, staying late at night. Because I think that society is challenging enough and has enough borders so we need to make a space to let them do what they want to do.

That's why we try to build a utopian city during the festival for 3 days where we design it as we imagine the whole country to be all year long.



# WHAT'S UP?

## WITH D FESTIVAL

**How do you choose which artists and acts to include in the lineup?**

Well, it is quite the process, you talk with friends, you talk with your neighbours, you talk with your grandma, you talk with everybody, but you also need to see what you can bring financially. We are always trying to get big headliners to give the audience what they want, but also give newcomers a platform.

That leads to the music being all over the place excluding what we don't like, of course.

But usually we are very open to music as long as it's not hurtful, it's not abusive or racist.

We are open to everybody that plays music with the intention of making people happy.



**What do you think: how do festivals like D Festival contribute to shaping the Macedonian music scene and youth culture?**

Since we are a small circle of listeners here I think that the impact is quite big especially because the festival is the only one of its kind in Macedonia. So it is one of few opportunities for bands to build a new audience. Like maybe some people might show up for a big headliner and then find their new favorite band by accident on another stage. That's why we want to have such a diverse line up.



**What are your plans for the future of D Festival?**

Well, we always have some crazy new ideas to make it bigger but I think our main goal is to keep on improving because there is always room for improvement to make sure everybody has a great time and to grow our audience more and more.

Because, in the end, if we hear one or two people that say: "Wow, you know, 20 years ago at your festival I went to this act and that's how I met my love." That is more than enough to keep on going and experimenting.

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So no matter if you want to find your new favorite band or some friends, from the 26th till the 28th of June, D Festival might be the place to be.

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# THE WHALE IN THE

A large whale is swimming underwater in a swimming pool. The whale is the central focus, swimming upwards and slightly to the right. Its body is dark with a lighter patch on its side. The water is a deep blue, and the surface of the pool is visible at the top, showing ripples and reflections of light. The overall scene is surreal and captures a moment of a large marine animal in a confined, man-made aquatic environment.

SWIMMING

POOL

Millions of people tracking a ship pulling what looked like a giant swimming pool across the German coast to the Danish sea. Livestreams broadcasting the events 24 hours a day for weeks. Ministries, famous activists and influencers, as well as CEOs involved. And all this, for a dying whale.

In the beginning of March, a humpback whale probably entered the Baltic Sea near Germany while hunting for prey. Soon, he got entangled in several fishing nets stretching across the sea, and after attempts to free him from these, was stranded near the German coast.

Some countries, such as Denmark, have a very clear policy on how to behave in a case like this: they just let nature take its course. For Germany, however, the procedure is not as clear.

After the whale's first stranding, rescuing operations were started. And even succeeded. The whale happily continued his journey. Sadly, this was only the beginning of his odyssey. Over the course of the next weeks, the slowly getting weaker and more injured whale stranded again and again on Germany's coast. It was decided to leave the whale in peace, and give the dying animal the space and respect he deserved.

However, by then the whale was no longer just an animal in distress. 'Timmy', or 'Hope' became a phenomenon. Videos of people gathering around the place he stranded went around all Germany, and finally the world. What

had started as a small protest of activists, turned into a nationwide drama. AI songs emerged on social media, memes and pictures of tattoos in honour of Timmy flooded Instagram and TikTok. The German national TV, as well as other channels began streaming the events with millions of people watching. 'The NY Times', 'The Guardian', 'Al Jazeera' and many other newspapers started to write about 'Germany's favourite whale'.

The pressure to do something, anything to save this whale increased. Warnings of scientists that the whale was doomed to die were not heard anymore. People broke barricades, protested for days. And finally, the government allowed a private initiative to start a last attempt to save the lost whale.

Timmy was transported into a huge vessel functioning like a swimming pool, and shipped around the coast of Germany and Denmark. The goal was to release him in an area where his survival would be more likely.

For days people watched the GPS of the ship. Pictures of the whale floating in his pool in the middle of the vast ocean went around the world. And finally, Timmy was freed. A video shows him swimming and spraying out water in the air after his escape into freedom.

Since then, all tracks of the whale have been lost. He was not seen again, the data of the GPS tracker gave no signs. A few weeks later, the media started to report again. A whale had stranded on the coast of Denmark.

He was dead. And it was Timmy. Timmy probably drowned in the sea he was released into, because he did not have enough strength to swim up to the surface again and breathe.

Scientists had been predicting this for weeks. The animal was probably already dying on the beach.

Most people probably honestly intended to save this poor animal. If the shipment around two countries and weeks of close human contact prolonged his suffering or not, cannot finally be said.

Still, countless other species disappear from our planet unnoticed at the same time. Perhaps the attention surrounding one whale may yet change how we look at the countless others slowly fading away. After all the noise surrounding Timmy, maybe that is the quietest and most honest form of hope.

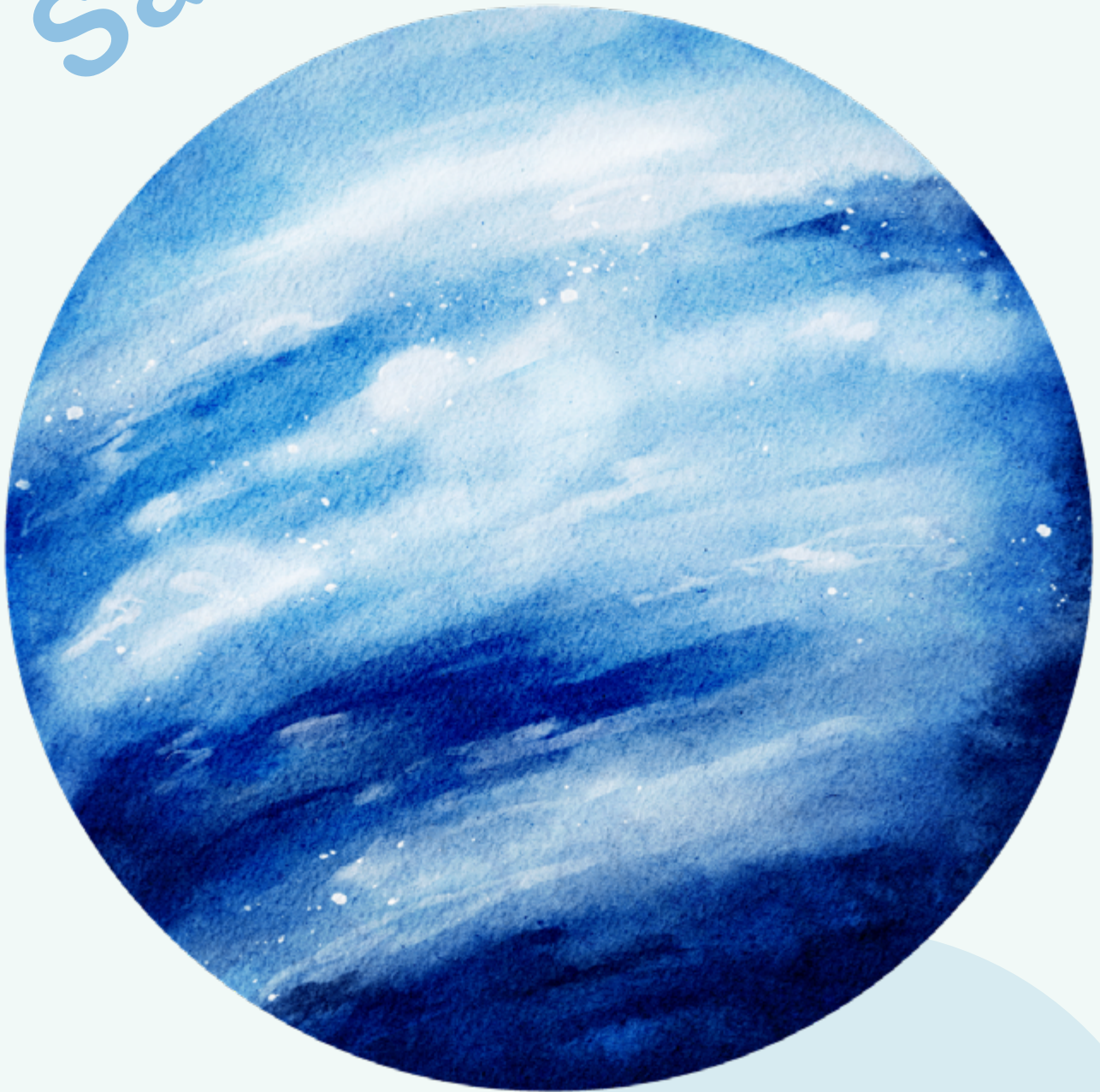
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Lea Schwegmann

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# Safe space



Caring ears, holding fast,  
waiting on every syllable.

Nothing to be read in between the lines.

A gaze, silence that says 'I am here'.

A hand close by, far enough  
to leave room for opening.

---

Lukáš Sabol



when I opened my eyes

the sky was striped  
with shapes of your smile  
as I laid in grass and dreamt  
about us

suddenly I felt  
a soft touch, a tender hug  
as I kept the memory  
under my hands

and all the bugs they crawled the leaves  
curious to see what I meant  
when I told  
about home and your name

they could notice and understand  
that the story doesn't end here

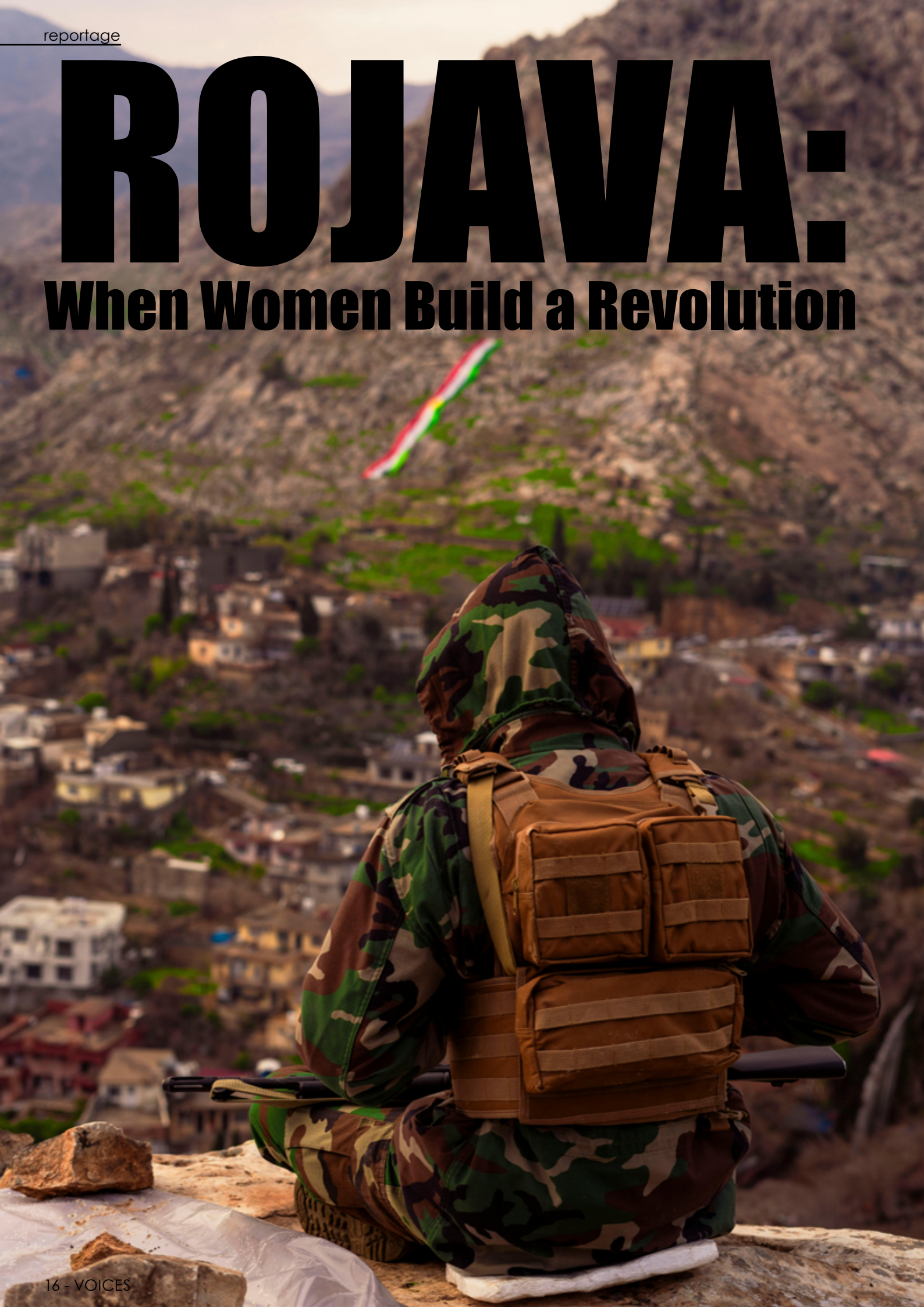
life writes itself and the rest  
is just another dream

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Lukáš Sabol

# ROJAVA:

## When Women Build a Revolution



In Syria, a special political experiment started after the civil war. This autonomous region, also known as Rojava has become a symbol of hope for ecological movements in the Middle East. Even though it's threatened from all sides, this "women's revolution" still inspires people with its universal slogan: "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî". "Woman, Life, Freedom."

The Rojava revolution is different from movements. It's built on strong ideas of justice and equality. This isn't about asking for equal rights; it's a big challenge to the existing power structures. At the heart of this idea is Jineolojî. The "science of women" or "science of life".

This science doesn't just study how women are oppressed. It tries to change history by putting women at the center of society and finding ways to break down power structures. For Rojava's activists, fighting against capitalism and patriarchy are connected. So freeing society means freeing women, who are seen as the force for change.

The Women's Protection Units (YPJ) are a known symbol of this revolution. Formed in 2013 these fighters became famous during the siege of Kobanî in 2014. They bravely fought against ISIS. For these jihadists, being killed by a woman was a shame, making the YPJ's resistance even more powerful.

The YPJ is more than just a military group. They represent women's ability to defend their land and dignity. As one YPJ commander said, the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom" came from the idea that if society is built around women, they should be its protectors, not just men.

Rojava has created ways of living. One example is Jinwar, a village for women and children. Located in Hassakeh province, this self-managed village is a place that helps women who have escaped forced violence or lost their husbands in war. Jinwar is like a "patriarchy detox center."

In Jinwar men are not allowed to enter. Boys leave when they grow up. The goal is to help women live on their own, manage their economy and raise children with equal values. A new project started there: the "Children's House," which

teaches leaders about equality from a young age. What makes Rojava special is that it has made these principles into laws and governance. Every public institution, from the village council to the administration has a co-presidency: a man and a woman share power and make decisions together.

There are also women's judicial and social structures. "Women's Houses" are in every town. These centers, often run by respected women, handle cases of domestic violence polygamy and forced marriages. They play a role in mediation and social pressure.

But this "oasis of freedom" is in danger. Since the fall of Bashar al-Assad and the rise of forces in Damascus, pressure is increasing. The new Syrian administration has launched a blockade on cities like Kobanî cutting off basic necessities. The goal is to reunify Syria under one banner, which means ending autonomy and feminist structures.

The women of Rojava are terrified of the atrocities committed by Damascus militias. They fear a return to obscurantism. "I fear Jolani more than the Baath regime," says Ilam Emer, an activist from the Women's Houses. Feminists in Europe and around the world are trying to raise awareness fearing that the end of this experiment would be a blow to women's rights in the Middle East.

Rojava has shown that it's possible to build a model based on equality, ecology and direct democracy in the midst of conflict and, in a conservative society. Women are not a "priority" there; they are its leaders, its ideology and its army.

As the world watches Syria's future, the Kurds of Rojava and their women fighters resist alone. They hope that international solidarity will not just be words. Because as the song echoing through Syria reminds us "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" is not just a hopeful wish, but a promise of life that refuses to die.

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Special thanks to my comrade who shared her experience with me and gave me her trust in not sharing sensitive information about her squad nor herself.

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Arthur Bonhoure-Tolfo



# BALKAN SONGS, SHARED MEMORIES

**B**alkan music is one of the most unforgettable parts of life in Skopje. While walking through the city center, sitting in kafanas, crossing the Stone Bridge at night, or listening to street musicians by the Vardar River, music feels present everywhere. It does not stay quietly in the background, it becomes part of the atmosphere of the city itself.

In cafés and bars people do not simply dance to Balkan songs, the rhythm changes the entire mood of the place. The way people move, sing together, and celebrate creates a feeling that is emotional, energetic, and deeply connected to Balkan culture.

Balkan songs are special because they combine many different emotions at once. Some songs sound nostalgic and heartbreaking, while others suddenly become lively and impossible not to dance to. This emotional contrast is one of the defining characteristics of Balkan music.

Traditional Balkan songs often include instruments such as trumpets, accordions, clarinets, violins, and drums, creating melodies that sound dramatic, passionate, and full of life.

Unlike much of modern Western pop music, Balkan music has a very recognizable identity and rhythm. Even people who do not understand the language can still feel the emotion carried by the songs.

Another reason Balkan music feels unique is the shared cultural history of the region. Because of centuries of Ottoman influence and close cultural interaction, many Balkan melodies resemble Turkish folk music and arabesque.

For Turkish listeners especially, Balkan songs can feel strangely familiar, almost like hearing a forgotten memory in another language. Many melodies travelled across borders and survived through generations by adapting into different cultures while keeping the same emotional spirit.

I felt this connection most strongly while visiting the Holocaust Memorial Center in Skopje. Inside the museum, I heard the melody of “Üsküdar’a Gider İken,” a traditional Turkish song many of us grow up singing in school. A few moments later, the same melody continued in another Balkan language.

It was a beautiful and emotional moment because it showed how music can move through different cultures, histories, and generations while still keeping the same soul. At that moment, the borders between countries felt almost invisible.

This is what makes Balkan songs so meaningful. They are not only entertainment, they carry history, migration, memory, and identity. The same melody can belong to different people at the same time, connecting cultures without needing translation.

In Skopje especially, Balkan music feels alive everywhere, from crowded pubs to quiet streets at night. It turns ordinary moments into memories and gives the city a warmth that is difficult to describe. That is why Balkan music is not only something people listen to, it is something people truly feel.

“  
Kaja, ove noći, Kaja,  
sklopi oči  
Kaja, ne čekaj me ti  
Kaja, ove noći, Kaja,  
sklopi oči  
Neću ti se vratiti

- Plavi Orkestar / *Kaja* Lyrics

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Berna Demirci





# ПАРИТЕ ЗБОРУВААТ

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И со децении, на жените им се вели да не зборуваат премногу гласно.

Според извештајот од 2023 година на „Harvard Business Review“, жените сè уште имаат помала веројатност од мажите да преговараат за плати, финансирање или инвестициски можности - не затоа што им недостасува самодоверба или компетентност - туку затоа што почесто социјално се казнуваат кога го прават тоа. Во исто време, податоците од „McKinsey & Company“, односно „LeanIn.org“, покажуваат дека бизнисите предводени од жени продолжуваат да добиваат драматично помалку финансирање низ целиот свет и покрај тоа што со текот на времето работат исто толку добро, ако не и подобро.

Контрадикцијата е речиси иронична: од жените се очекува да водат, создаваат, негуваат, организираат, иновираат, но сепак се двоумат да побараат повеќе за возврат. Контрадикцијата се чувствува речиси апсурдно. Од жените се очекува да водат, создаваат, организираат, негуваат, иновираат, но барањето повеќе за возврат сè уште доаѓа со последици.

Јас сум самовработена повеќе од две години. Почнав да работам за себе на 25 години - не затоа што го романтизирав фриленсерството - туку затоа што во реалноста на дизајнерската индустрија, се чувствував како најблиску до опстанок и слобода. Секогаш бев најмладата личност во просторијата, секогаш се поместував пред да добијам дозвола: од институции, клиенти или врсници (можеби типично здодевно однесување на Генерацијата Z, но и неопходност).

Пристигнувањето во Македонија ме натера да се запрашам за местото што го заземаат жените во претприемништвото овде. Во Франција и низ поголемиот дел од Западна Европа, разговорите за жените во бизнисот, економската независност и претставувањето - станаа невозможни за избегнување. Сепак, дури и таму, вистински видливите приказни за женски успех остануваат ретки. Уште поретки се приказните за жени од работничката класа, расизирани жени, „квир“ жени, лезбејки, оние кои ретко се појавуваат на насловната страница.

Она што најмногу ме погоди во Македонија не беше само амбицијата на жените што ги запознав, туку и начинот на кој го замислуваа успехот колективно, а не индивидуално.

Многу мои машки пријатели водат бизниси. Секогаш кога разговарам со нив за проекти базирани на заедницата или добротворни проекти, реакцијата е речиси секогаш моментална: „Сериозно нема да го направиш тоа бесплатно?“

Можеби тоа кажува сè.

Бидејќи жените претприемачи често разбираат нешто што капитализмот сè уште се бори да го квантифицира: заедницата е, исто така, инфраструктура. Грижата е, исто така, труд. Создавањето простори каде што луѓето можат да се среќаваат, да учат, да разменуваат знаење и да се поддржуваат едни со други - не е второстепено во однос на бизнисот, туку е дел од градењето одржлива иднина.

Се чувствува сè поитна потреба за жените да градат мрежи, бизнис клубови и свои заедници. Не на исцрпениот јазик на перформативната култура на „девојки шефови“ или круговите на корпоративно вмрежување, туку како простори за политичко образование, финансиска писменост, менторство и колективен раст. Простори каде што жените делат ресурси наместо да се натпреваруваат за единственото место што историски им е достапно.

Секоја жена што ја интервјуирав зборуваше, на еден или друг начин, за трансмисија. Желбата не само да растат, туку и да ги доведат другите со себе. Тие зборуваа за исцрпеност, сомнеж, видливост, амбиција, но и возбуда. Дури и надеж. Верување дека соработката, солидарноста и упорноста сè уште можат да ја преобликуваат иднината.

И можеби тоа е најрадикалната работа од сè: жени кои замислуваат иднина доволно голема за да постојат и други луѓе во нив.

Во текот на моите разговори, една идеја постојано се појавуваше: овие жени одбиваат да постојат само во една димензија.

Жени како Дина се движат меѓу светови без извинување. Таа работи во технологијата, додека ноќе е диџеј, снаоѓајќи се во корпоративните структури, ноќниот живот, стратегијата, креативноста и културата одеднаш. Таа ја отфрла идејата

дека една личност, особено жената, треба уредно да се вклопи во една категорија.

И можеби токму таму се појавува нова форма на женско претприемништво.

Долго време, општеството очекуваше луѓето, особено жените, да носат само една шапка. Да бидат читливи. Лесни за дефинирање. Лесни за маркетинг. Вие сте или сериозни или креативни. Амбициозни или грижливи. Уметнички или стратешки. Жените кои се движат меѓу различни светови честопати се перцепираат како нефокусирани, недоследни и тешки за категоризирање.

Но, современата работа повеќе не се вклопува во тие крути бинарни граници.

Во свет обликуван од економска нестабилност, дигитално забрзување и постојано реинвентирање, мултипотенцијалот повеќе не е слабост; тоа е преживување. Способноста за адаптација, менување индустрии, учење нови вештини и поврзување различни дисциплини стана форма на интелигенција сама по себе.

Тоа е она што најмногу ме фасцинираше кај жените што ги запознав во Македонија: нивната удобност со комплексноста. Тие се дизајнери кои организираат културни настани, програмери вклучени во активизам, основачи кои се и уметници, мајки, истражувачи, диџеи и организатори на заедницата. Тие не ја одделуваат креативноста од професионализмот; тие го користат едното за да го зајакнат другото.

Постои нешто длабоко политичко во тоа да си дозволиш целосно да постоиш. Да одбиеш редукција. Да престанеш да изведуваш една прифатлива верзија на женственоста.

За многу жени, прифаќањето на повеќекратни идентитети станува начин за препознавање на целосниот обем на нивните способности. Откако ќе престанете да се ограничувате на една улога, сфаќате дека вашите вештини се преносливи, креативноста станува лидерство, емпатијата станува менаџмент, уметничката чувствителност станува стратегија.

Ниту една од жените што ги интервјуирав не се обидувааше да стане совршен симбол на успех. Тие градеа животи доволно флексибилни за да ја содржат секоја верзија од себе. И можеби така изгледа претприемништвото сега: помалку како линеарен кариерен пат, повеќе како екосистем од вештини, страсти, контрадикции и стратегии за преживување што се развиваат заедно со самиот свет.

Им благодарам многу на Јована Коцевска и на Дина Дамјановиќ.

Орели Елиза Мора

„Ги сакам моите пари онаму каде што можам да ги видам – висејќи во мојот шкаф.“ - Кери Бредшо

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music



Nº 21.



# The Purpose of Music and its Role in Human Life

**M**usic is an indispensable part of our daily lives. We listen to music when we are happy, sad, or in love; while studying, exercising, or even during routine activities. Given its constant presence, it is important to ask why music exists, how it emerged, and what needs it fulfills for human beings.

Music is one of the oldest and most universal forms of art in human history. It has become an essential part of our daily lives, playing a significant role in emotional expression, social interaction, and cultural identity. Our constant engagement with music raises important questions about its origins, purposes, and effects on human beings.

The origins of music date back to prehistoric times, long before written history. The presence of music in all known cultures suggests that it is a shared human heritage. Many researchers believe that music may have originated in Africa and spread across the world alongside human migration.

In early history, the primary musical instrument was the human voice. People produced music through singing, rhythmic sounds, and imitating nature. Over time, early instruments made from natural materials such as bone and wood were developed. Archaeological discoveries, including the 35,000-year-old flute found in the Hohle Fels cave in Germany and wooden flutes discovered in Ireland, provide valuable insights into early musical practices.

There are several theories regarding why music developed. Charles Darwin suggested that music may be linked to sexual selection, while Steven Pinker described it as a byproduct of evolutionary processes. Other scholars argue that music evolved as a tool for communication,

emotional expression, and social cohesion. Despite these theories, the exact origin of music remains unclear.

Music serves as a powerful medium for emotional expression. It allows individuals to experience and convey a wide range of emotions, from joy to sadness. Additionally, music plays a crucial role in strengthening social bonds. Shared musical experiences, such as concerts and dances, foster a sense of unity and belonging.

Moreover, music is an essential component of cultural identity. Each society reflects its traditions and values through music. It is also widely used in education, therapy, and entertainment. With the advancement of technology, music has become more accessible, increasing its influence on modern life.

In conclusion, music is far more than a form of entertainment; it is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that deeply influences human emotional, social, and cultural life. Throughout history, music has reflected the human need for expression and connection. As technology continues to evolve, music will remain a vital and dynamic element of human existence.

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Mehmet Yücedağ

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# Why I hate reading out loud

Reading out loud seems simple for many people. However, for some dyslexic individuals, it is a difficult task. Personally, it is something I try to avoid at all costs. It is a moment of strong pressure, because immediately, you think of the worst. You imagine scenarios: if you make a mistake, how others might react, if you get stuck on a word, or if you lose your place in the text. While for some people it feels natural, for us it requires much more effort and concentration.

Even today, I remember the anxiety when I was at school. There was this oral exercise where each student would take turns reading a sentence, then naming one of their classmates. I dreaded hearing my name. So, before each sentence, I would mentally rehearse what I was going to say, in order to avoid making a mistake, which only increased that inner pressure.

**W**hen my turn came, stress took over. All eyes seemed to be on me, eyes that perhaps only existed in my mind. My thoughts became muddled as I began to read. I read slowly, and I felt like it was immediately noticeable, which made me even more uncomfortable. All I wanted at that moment was for it to be over as quickly as possible.

Once my sentence was finished, I felt a mixture of relief and embarrassment. Relief because it was over, but embarrassment because I knew I had probably hesitated or stumbled over certain words. I always wondered how others had perceived it, and I stayed for a long time with this feeling of having “done it wrong,” even though I had simply done my best.

I know I am not the only one who feels this way. Many dyslexic people go through the same situations. Reading out loud may seem trivial to some, but for us, it can become a real source of anxiety. Over time, we learn to cope with it, to prepare mentally, or sometimes to avoid these moments when possible. But that doesn’t make it easy. I hope others can better understand what this represents, in order to make these situations less difficult and more kind for everyone.

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Sophia Ali



# *Pse e urrej të lexoj me zë të lartë*

Leximi me zë të lartë duket i thjeshtë për shumë njerëz. Megjithatë, për disa persona me disleksi, është një detyrë e vështirë. Personalisht, është diçka që përpiqem ta shmang me çdo kusht. Është një lloj presioni i madh, sepse menjëherë fillon të mendosh më të keqen. Imagjimon skenarë të ndryshëm: nëse bën një gabim, si mund të reagojnë të tjerët, nëse ngec në ndonjë fjalë ose nëse humb vendin brenda tekstit. Ndërsa për disa njerëz kjo duket diçka natyrale, për ne kërkon shumë më tepër përpjekje dhe përqendrim.

Edhe sot e kujtoj ankthin që ndjeja kur isha në shkollë. Ishte një ushtrim me lexim me zë, ku secili nxënës lexonte një fjali dhe më pas thërriste emrin e një shoku të klasës për të vazhduar. Kisha frikë sa herë që dëgjoja emrin tim. Prandaj, para çdo fjalie, e përsërisja mendërisht atë që do të thoja, për të shmangur gabimet, por kjo vetëm sa e shtonte edhe më shumë presionin e brendshëm.

**K**ur vinte radha ime, stresi më pushtonte. Më dukej sikur të gjithë sytë ishin mbi mua, sy që ndoshta ekzistonin vetëm në mendjen time. Mendimet më ngatërroheshin sapo filloja të lexoja. Lexoja ngadalë dhe më dukej sikur kjo vihej re menjëherë, gjë që më bënte të ndihesha edhe më në siklet. Në atë moment, gjithçka që doja ishte që të mbaronte sa më shpejt të ishte e mundur.

Pasi mbaroja fjalinë time, ndjeja një përzjerje lehtësimi dhe turpi. Lehtësim sepse gjithçka kishte përfunduar, por edhe turp sepse e dija që ndoshta isha ndalur ose isha penguar në disa fjalë. Gjithmonë pyesja veten se si e kishin perceptuar të tjerët, dhe për një kohë të gjatë më mbetej ai ndjenjë sikur “e kisha bërë gabim”, edhe pse në të vërtetë kisha bërë thjesht më të mirën time.

E di që nuk jam personi i vetëm që ndihet kështu. Shumë persona me disleksi përjetojnë të njëjtat situata. Leximi me zë të lartë mund të duket diçka e parëndësishme për disa njerëz, por për ne mund të bëhet një burim i vërtetë ankthi. Me kalimin e kohës, mësojmë si ta përballojmë, si të përgatitemi mendërisht, ose ndonjëherë si t'i shmangim këto momente kur është e mundur. Por kjo nuk do të thotë se bëhet më e lehtë. Shpresoj që të tjerët ta kuptojnë më mirë se çfarë përfaqëson kjo për ne, në mënyrë që këto situata të bëhen më pak të vështira dhe më mirëkuptuese për të gjithë.

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Sophia Ali  
Përktheu: Dora Arifi

# RAP MUSIC IS HERE TO STAY,

Rap music is an American minority artist invention with which students should take pride. Regrettably, rap music isn't viewed as an art form by many Americans, but rather a trend that they expect will eventually vanish. Whether it is an art form or not, one might argue that it is a dangerous art form for its consumers. Is it really that dangerous, as the critics may say?

The development of rap music started in urban slum environments, which can be pinpointed in the South Bronx of New York. The majority of the population in this part of New York was made up of Hispanics and black people. In the late 1960s, the Bronx saw its population drop and became the most crime-ridden and poorest district in New York City. What is the correlation between these communities and being poor? One might wonder about how these circumstances shaped the beginning of hip-hop culture. These communities started to express themselves in a number of different ways, through block parties, street art, dance, poetry that was read out loud, and through music. It was black and Hispanic people living in the Bronx who started the hip-hop culture in the 1970s. Pioneers in the field of DJing and rap were black and Latino. DJ Kool Herc, for example, was a Jamaican DJ. His sound system from Jamaica had a huge influence on the development of rap and the art of DJing.

Today, rap is seen as one of the most popular genres in the music and entertainment industry. Many rappers have multiple platinum albums to their name, and rap videos are widely popular. The music is frequently aired on TV stations including TMF, JIMtv, and MTV. Most people appreciate

rap music because they can relate to its lyrics about poverty, racism, family struggles, success, or life in the streets. Due to its powerful rhythms and confident lyrics, rap music can evoke feelings of energy, authority, and self-confidence in men, giving them a sense of power. This can also give a lot of women and minority groups power through their words. While there is a huge majority of people who despise rap music due to the extremely graphic language directed toward women, ethnic groups, authority figures, etc.

Artists like Drake, Travis Scott, Kanye West, ASAP Rocky, Soulja Boy, Future, and many others have been blasted for their lyrics that reduce women to appearance or sexual status in their tracks.

When men do it, they don't receive any criticism from their surroundings, but when a woman does, it's time to be creative with the insults. When one follows the pattern of rap songs, they can easily sense the double standard of how life goes for men and women. A catchy beat and hyper adlibs can lure you into listening to the best track you have heard in a while. However, the moment you pay attention to the lyrics, there are dismissive utterances that can offend a community of people.

*"She belong to the streets"*

A woman is for everyone, and she lacks loyalty and respectability. Saying that a woman belongs to the streets just puts them into shame in the public's eye which reduces women to stereotypes.

*"I done flew one out to Spain to be in my domain"*

A woman can be bought and used for a man's fame and pleasure. It is extremely easy to spread some banknotes, and just like that, women just obey as you wish.

*"Baby got a ego twice the size of the crib / I can never tell her s\*\*\*"*

Neither the same nor equal, women are irrational and difficult. Seeing a woman as an equal to men is not logical.

"Life is good" by Future. A wholesome look at life, assuming that life can be enjoyed through respect and honesty. That is the title of the song as well, which doesn't exactly align with the lyrics. Nothing represents romance better than reducing women to devices in a success story. In addition to these lyrics above, artists have nothing nicer to add. It never backs down in terms of offence. It all accumulates till the outro of these uplifting anthems.

While women are getting their share of the crude lyrics of rap music, another group is waiting in line: youth. Considering that young people under the age of 18 are very easily influenced, encouraging or inciting them to do wrong things is a concern.

*"I wake up in the mornin', I got murder on my mind  
AK-47s, MAC-11, Glocks, and .9s"*

*"I didn't even mean to shoot him, he just caught me by surprise  
I reloaded my pistol, cocked it back, and shot him twice"*

"Murder on My Mind" by YNW Melly is a track that highlights an ongoing socio-legal battle over using rap

# OR IS IT?

lyrics as criminal confessions. Is this storytelling or a real-life behavior? Some young people can't tell the difference between them. They want to emulate the styles or behaviors of their favorite rappers, and alongside what they perceive as good approaches, they also consume bad ones that are easily applicable in real life. Artists need to be more careful about the lyrics they use in their songs because, as you've seen, music has a huge influence on young people, and it can be very difficult to correct the negative effects that wrong messages might create later.

There is less room for both the lyrics and the music in pop and R&B than there is in rap, so while it is difficult for these artists to fit all of their feelings and emotions into a few minutes of music, the ability to put a lot of words in a short amount of time and to clearly express everything they want gives the artist more room for expression.

It is quite common and noteworthy for rap music to address social issues. In this respect, rap can be considered not only a musical genre but also a powerful tool of expression reflecting lived social realities.

Since it is a type of music that grows through conversational language, it better reflects the person's reaction through emphasis.

A massive quantity of rap music is created to mirror the societal and individual difficulties that

creative professionals and the community experience. Not all rap music deals with a problem or distress, though; there are rap songs written for entertainment purposes and frequently heard in places and concerts where people go for fun. They can express all kinds of emotions and make you experience all kinds of feelings while listening.

To better understand the issue, people were asked for their opinions on the positive and negative aspects of rap music. While some argue that there is no detrimental impact, attributing it to people not shaping their lives according to rap songs, others might say that the explicit language in rap songs leaves a controlling effect on people's brains. Whether it's an art form or not is perhaps nobody's business, because it's such an influential genre of music today. People can feel stronger and more excited while listening to rap. Even if we are aware of the very raw lyrics that pour into our ears, we might not care about them. When opposing viewpoints arise

in everyday life, do we have to react the same way when listening to rap songs as we do when faced with them in a simple setting?

Couldn't we simply appreciate the feelings the song evokes in us without creating an impact or reaction within our own world?

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Emrecan Sargin

Sources:

The Relationship between Mainstream Radio Music, Vulgar Lyrics, and Race and the Impact on the Criminal Black Male Stereotype - DeAngelo K. Brown  
The Depiction of Women in Rap and Pop Lyrics - Klara Grönevik



# Has Money Killed Emotion in Sport?

For a long time, sport was seen as one of the last spaces where human emotion ruled everything: the fear before a final, the tears of defeat, the uncontrollable joy of an unexpected victory. People watched competitions to feel something, to vibrate with strangers who, for a few hours, became their heroes. Yet, for several decades, a growing concern has emerged: is sport still a story of emotions, or only of billions?

When the first modern Olympic Games were organized, the idea rested on the nobility of effort and the brotherhood between nations. Athletes competed above all for honor, for the pride of representing their country, and for pushing their own limits. Sport embodied an ideal almost too beautiful: a world where merit, discipline, and perseverance were enough to create legends.

This memory of a purer sport remains deeply rooted in the collective imagination. We like to believe that the feats of yesterday were driven solely by passion and determination. This nostalgia doesn't mean money was absent, but it wasn't yet the dominant force. Emotion seemed to fill all the space.

With the arrival of international television channels, sponsors, and major brands, sport gradually changed scale. What was once a national or regional event became a global spectacle. The NBA is now followed on every continent, Formula 1 gathers hundreds of millions of viewers, and the Tour de France crosses cultural and linguistic borders.

This transformation brought more spectacular images, modern stadiums, immersive broadcasts, and total professionalization of disciplines. Sport became a global industry capable of making billions of people dream. But this expansion also introduced a new logic: that of performance, profitability, and constant growth.

In this new universe, athletes are no longer just competitors; they have become global figures, companies in their own right. Legends like Michael Jordan or Serena Williams embody both sporting excellence and immense economic power. Their influence extends far beyond courts and fields.



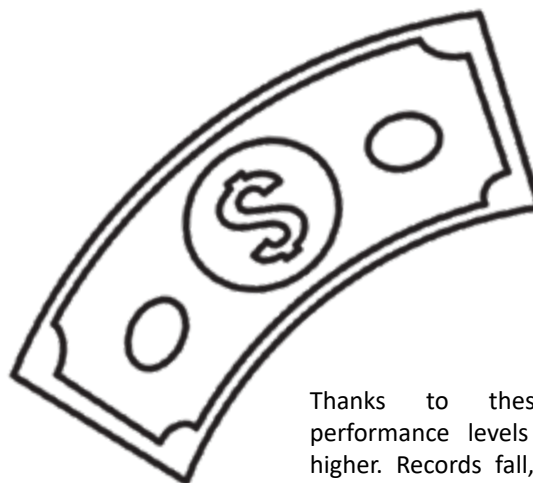


It's fair that these athletes are rewarded for their talent and hard work. However, this evolution changes our perception. When advertising contracts, image rights, and marketing strategies become omnipresent, some fans feel their heroes slipping away. The emotional bond, once simple and direct, becomes more complex.

In almost every discipline, seasons grow longer, competitions multiply, and calendars become increasingly demanding. This inflation of events follows an economic logic: every match, race, or tournament generates revenue. The show must go on without interruption.

For athletes, this reality often means more travel, less rest, and constant pressure to perform. Behind trophies and medals hide tired bodies. When a competitor breaks down or withdraws, the public suddenly remembers they are not machines but human beings facing immense expectations.

To claim that money has destroyed sport would be unfair. Massive investments have enabled extraordinary progress: modern infrastructures, scientific preparation, and global visibility. They have also contributed to better recognition of women's sports and opened professional careers for thousands of athletes.



Thanks to these developments, performance levels have never been higher. Records fall, disciplines evolve, and sport now reaches audiences that once had no access to it. Money has, in part, expanded the dream.

If the question of money stirs so much emotion, it's not because it's inherently negative it's because it awakens a deeper fear: the fear of losing the magic of sport. Sport lives through unpredictability, surprises, and improbable stories. It thrives on those moments when the underdog triumphs, when victory seems impossible until the very last second.

When financial gaps grow too wide or decisions appear dictated by profitability, some fans fear that this magic is fading. They dread a sport that's more predictable, more calculated, less spontaneous.

Money hasn't killed sport, but it has profoundly transformed it. It has enabled its global expansion while introducing new tensions between passion and profit. The challenge for the future isn't to eliminate money, but to preserve the balance between emotion and economy.

Because as long as sport continues to make us tremble, cry, and dream, it will remain alive. The day those emotions disappear, the question will no longer be whether money has changed sport but whether it has taken over completely.

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Paul Goumault



# Ајде да си помуабетиме...



Стереотипите и предрасудите, се како кратенки на мислењето.



Понекогаш ми се чини дека првиот впечаток не се случува кога ќе се запознаеме со некого — туку многу порано, некаде длабоко во нас. Како да секој нов човек доаѓа во веќе подготвена приказна, а ние само му доделуваме улога.

И тамам мислиш дека си го запознал — сфаќаш дека всушност си го „препознал“.

Седам и си мислам — дали навистина нема простор за втор впечаток, или тоа е само уште една од оние реченици што звучат премногу сигурно за да бидат целосно вистинити? Првиот впечаток го славиме како пресуда донесена во миг, како нешто што нè дефинира пред воопшто да имаме шанса да се објасниме. Но кој судија пресудува толку брзо — разумот или стравот?

Стереотипите и предрасудите, колку и да не сакаме да признаеме, се како кратенки на мислењето. Ни заштедуваат време, но ни крадат вистина. Ние не го гледаме човекот, туку неговата категорија. Не го слушаме гласот, туку претпоставуваме што ќе каже. И токму тука се раѓа првиот впечаток — не како откритие, туку како компромис помеѓу она што го гледаме и она што веќе сме одлучиле да веруваме.

А колку е тој впечаток точен? Можеби доволно за да функционираме, но ретко доволно за да разбереме. Вистината, ако воопшто сакаме да ја наречеме така, бара време. А ние сме нетрпеливи. Сакаме веднаш да знаеме кој ни одговара, кој не, кој вреди, а кој не. И така, одлуките што треба да се развиваат низ искуство, ги носиме во неколку секунди.

Прашањето е — дали е тоа правилно? Дали треба да се потпираме на нешто толку брзо и толку несовершенно? Или пак тоа е неизбежен дел од човечката природа, како рефлекс што не може да се исклучи?

Некои ќе речат дека постои „енергија“ меѓу луѓето, некаков невидлив закон што ги поврзува или оттурнува. Но ако навистина постои таква равенка, таа сигурно не е едноставна. Не е формула што можеме да ја пресметаме. Повеќе како во економијата отколку во физиката — со закони што важат во тенденција, но секогаш со безброј исклучоци. И токму тие исклучоци го прават светот интересен, непредвидлив... човечки.

И тука доаѓа дилемата што тивко ме прогонува: дали повеќе би сакала да имам моќ да го вратам времето и да ги поправам првите впечатоци, или пак да ги знам сите тие исклучоци однапред? Да не грешам во проценките, да не пропуштам луѓе, да не оттурнам некого што можеби требало да остане. Но можеби одговорот е поедноставен отколку што изгледа. Можеби не треба ниту да се враќаме назад, ниту да знаеме сè однапред. Можеби треба да дозволиме времето да ја заврши својата работа. Да не му веруваме слепо на првиот впечаток, но и да не го оттурнеме целосно. Да го сфатиме како почеток, а не како заклучок.

Зашто ако нешто вреди, нема да се изгуби во првите неколку секунди. А ако се изгуби — можеби никогаш и не било навистина таму.

...или можеби грешам.

Можеби вие имате поинакво искуство, поинаква логика, поинаков „закон“ по кој ги читате луѓето. Можеби за некого првиот впечаток е единствениот што некогаш навистина значел. А можеби некој научил дека највредните приказни почнуваат токму откако првиот впечаток ќе се распадне.

Па ајде да си помуабетиме до крај.

Ако имаш свое видување, своја дилема или свој одговор — напиши го. Продолжи ја мислата во следниот „ВОИСЕС“. Искрено, го чекам со нетрпение.

А дотогаш... ќе оставам малку простор да не бидам во право.

Ако ништо друго, барем разговорите ќе продолжат.

Се читаме,  
Анастасија Ѓорѓиевска



Дали  
навистина  
нема простор  
за втор  
впечаток?



# The Rise of Skopje's

## “Gaseri”

### What are *gaseri*?

Gaser is a word that refers to a member (oftentimes male) of an urban subculture that has emerged in the streets of the Western Balkans in the early 2010s. The name comes from the Slavic phrase “ide gas” which directly translated means – the gas is going, but its real meaning is to start a party or to *show off*. Its popularity in Skopje is at an all time high with places like Debar Maalo and Taftalidze being a hotspot for its members. More and more high school and elementary school students are attracted to the wealth and glamour being showcased by popular figures in the space. Many might think that *gaseri* are a new presence in the streets of Skopje, but in truth this isn't anything new in both Macedonia and the Balkans as a whole, being mostly a re-imagining of a few older subcultures.

### What are their defining traits?

They follow mostly right-leaning, patriarchal ideals, with a tinge of patriotic beliefs. They're often compared to, or are themselves, football ultras. Their appearance and presentation reflect these beliefs with short hairstyles and all black or white outfits. The music in the scene is also a point of contention among other groups, with trap and turbofolk being considered as of *poor quality* because of cultural associations.

A large part of the *gaser* identity is based on perceived luxury, mainly through branded clothing. These include things like shoulder bags, Nike Air Force sneakers, Hugo Boss and Armani Exchange shirts and hats, flashy watches, Napapijri jackets and the absolute fan favorite – ripped skinny jeans. Those who are keen eyed will immediately notice something strange about all this apparel – none of it is actually high end. Hugo and Armani Exchange

are both cheaper and lower quality versions of the *Boss* and *Armani* brands. Oftentimes the clothes are replications and knockoffs bought for a cheaper price or are traded from one person to another. The flexing only serves as a way to bolster the confidence of those doing it. Even in a subculture that prides itself with the idea of luxury, the same problems observed across most of the Balkans are still present – most people can't really climb past the middle class economically and socially.

### Comparisons to other older subcultures

The absolute closest subculture to today's *gaseri* are the *dizelashi* that appeared in 1990s Serbia. Both groups are filled with young people who idolize either money or power, shown mainly through demeanor and clothing. Both groups listen to similar music, mainly turbofolk, and share a few similar ideas. The main difference is in the fact that *dizelashi* were more dangerous and rowdy leading towards their extremely negative perception in the eyes of most regular people.

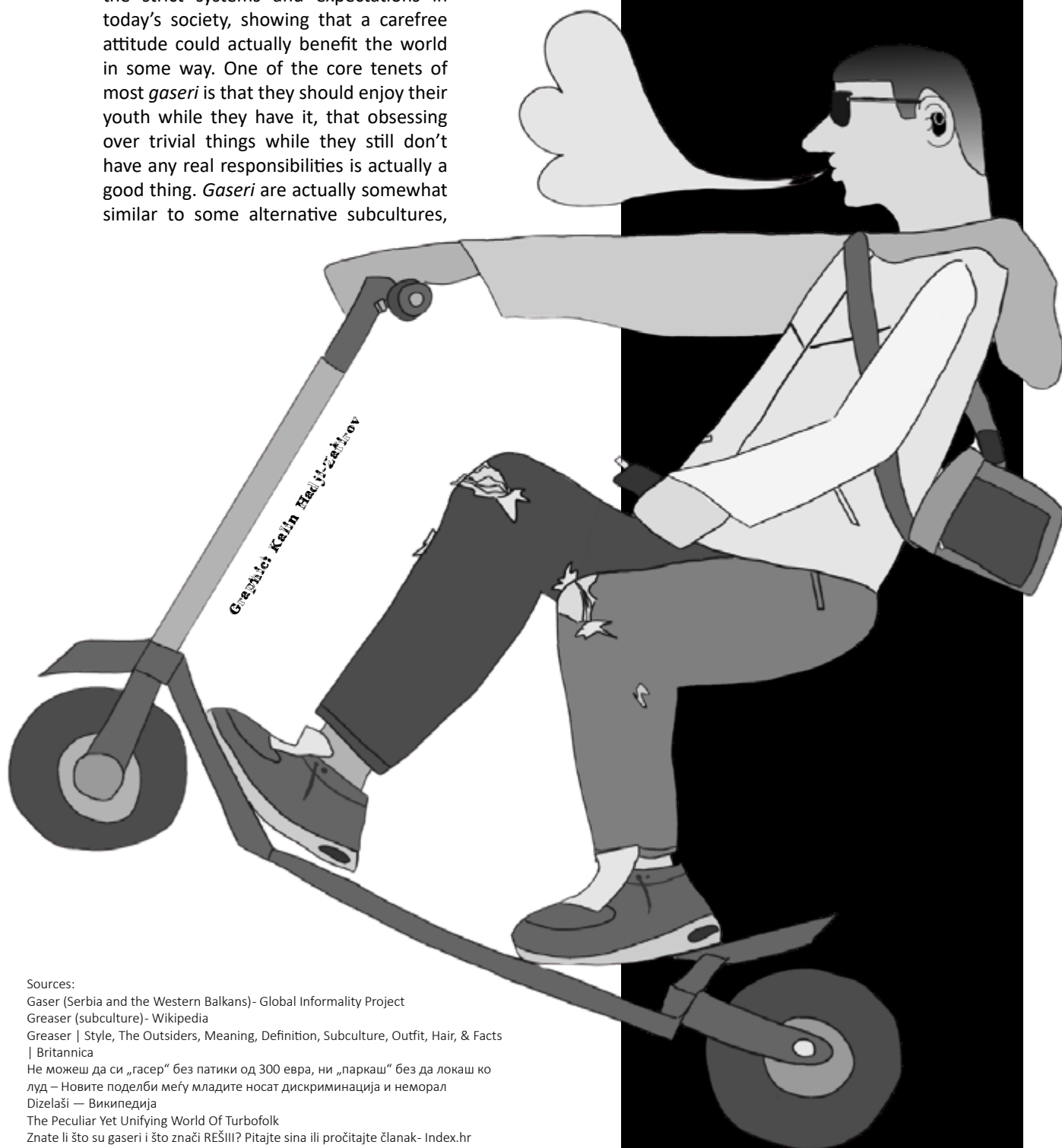
Most people from older generations might be confused by the term *gaser* at first. Many of them might associate it with another similar term, *greaser* which is also a word that describes a member of a subculture which dates back to even the 1950s and 60s. There are a lot of similarities between the two. Both subcultures come from niche countercultures (bikers and thugs) and are mostly popular among middle class youth. They don't really follow any concrete rules, mainly following general trends. The difference between the modern *gaseri* and the ancient *greasers* is that the *greasers* were originally formed as a protest of the capitalistic post-war economy which was pushing a sterile and homogeneous popular culture, while *gaseri* are basically the embodiment of a new homogeneous culture.

## Is this a positive subculture?

While it has its merits, there are a lot of negative aspects. Most of the group's ideals are quite naive and a large number of its members don't really care about any sort of societal change and eventually grow out of this mindset. Both the style and most of the music that has come out of the culture is often described as kitsch by other communities. It's a subculture that preaches about money and status, promising that contentment will come from excessive partying and spending. But, not all of it is negative – it works around the strict systems and expectations in today's society, showing that a carefree attitude could actually benefit the world in some way. One of the core tenets of most *gaseri* is that they should enjoy their youth while they have it, that obsessing over trivial things while they still don't have any real responsibilities is actually a good thing. *Gaseri* are actually somewhat similar to some alternative subcultures,

both representing their respective beliefs in a somewhat mild way and going against the “old ways” while not becoming radical or outright political, still mainly existing within the boundaries of what is accepted in society. In conclusion – while there are good and positive ideas in the *gaser* mindset, the subculture also brings in a lot of harmful ideas that can have a very negative effect in the development of the younger generations that participate.

Kalin Hadji-Zafirov



### Sources:

Gaser (Serbia and the Western Balkans)- Global Informality Project  
 Greaser (subculture)- Wikipedia  
 Greaser | Style, The Outsiders, Meaning, Definition, Subculture, Outfit, Hair, & Facts | Britannica  
 Не можеш да си „гасер“ без патики од 300 евра, ни „паркаш“ без да локаш ко луд – Новите поделби меѓу младите носат дискриминација и неморал  
 Dizelaši — Википедија  
 The Peculiar Yet Unifying World Of Turbofolk  
 Znate li što su gaseri i što znači REŠIII? Pitajte sina ili pročitajte članak- Index.hr  
 VIDIMO SE U CITULJI, Dokumentarni Film O Srpskoj Mafij

# 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!**

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