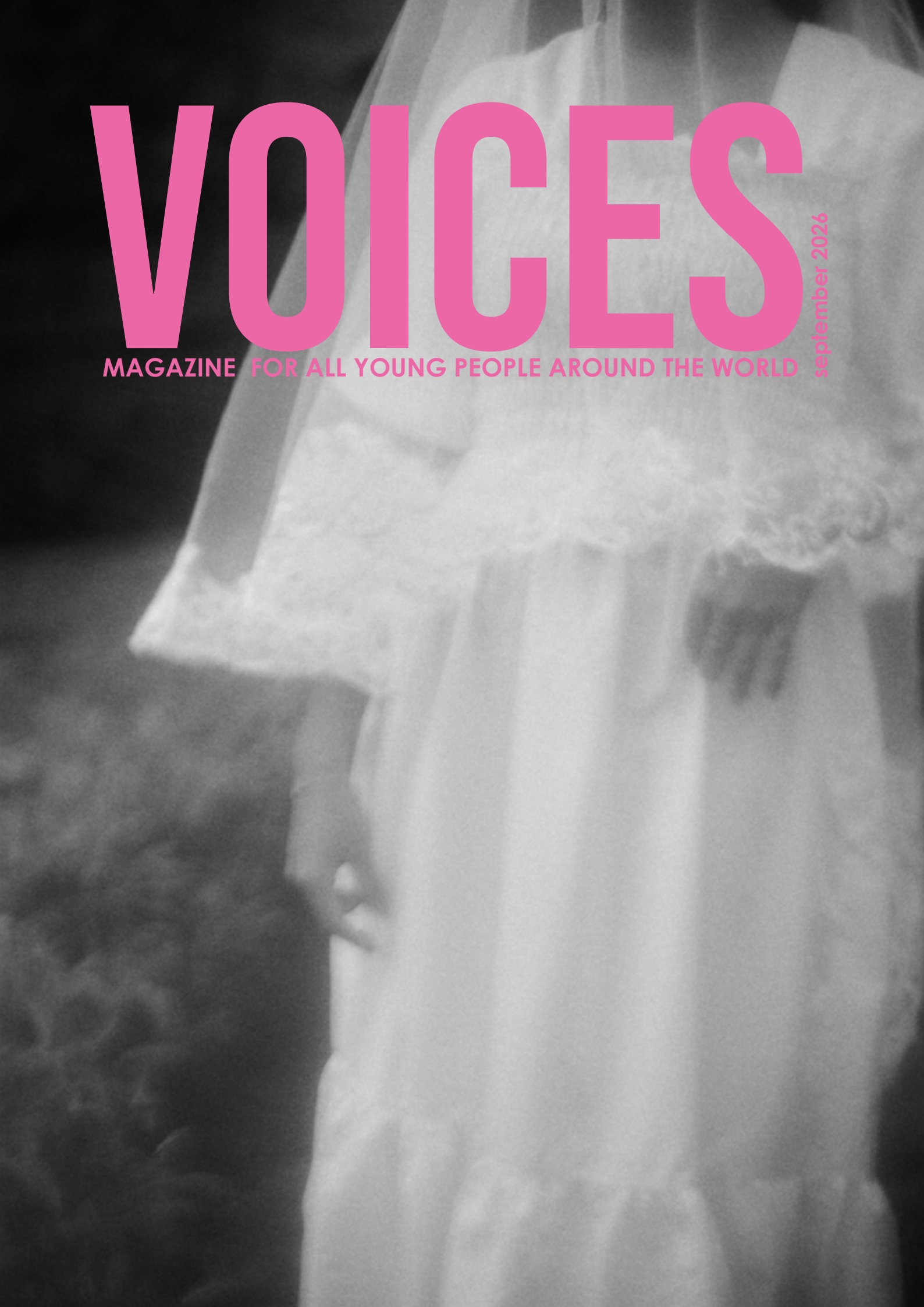


VOICES

MAGAZINE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

september 2026





It's 9 p.m. I'm sitting on the balcony. Outside, I can hear the lively voices of children enthusiastically playing football and jumping rope late into the night. It takes me back to my childhood.

When we were kids, we were always eager to grow up. We looked up to our older brothers and sisters. As children, our imagination was so much wider, and the way we saw the world around us was much more unfiltered. Now we've grown up. We've become young adults. Maybe growing up is about learning not to lose that unfiltered way of seeing the world, that sense of wonder, love, and willingness to reach out to one another that we had as children, even as we build upon the years and experiences we've accumulated along the way.

When we're young and trying to figure out who we are, we find our way to one another. We come from different cities, stories, walks of life; sometimes, we may think we could never truly understand each other. And then, a small smile, a song we both know, or a conversation at midnight reminds us of how much alike we really are.

Empathy, love, a little smile... All these things make each breath we take a little more meaningful. I believe this magazine exists exactly for that: to see the common ground within our differences, to rediscover the sincerity we thought we had lost as we grew up, and to listen a little more closely to one another's voices. Here, everyone has a story to tell, an idea to share, and something to say. Because just as we did when we were children, even as we grow older, we still have stories to tell each other, lessons to learn from one another, and dreams we can build together. We just need to remind each other of that once again.

Cansu Ertuğ

Веќе е 21 часот. Седам на балконот. Ондавдвор, можам да ги слушнам живите гласови на децата кои возбудено играат фудбал и скокаат на јаже до доцна во ноќта. Тоа ме враќа во моето детство.

Кога бевме деца, секогаш бевме желни да пораснеме. Ги почитувавме нашите постари браќа и сестри. Како деца, нашата фантазија беше многу поширока, а начинот на кој го гледавме светот околу нас беше многу понефилтриран. Сега пораснавме. Станавме млади, а возрасни. Можеби растењето е учење да не го изгубиме тој нефилтриран начин на гледање на светот, тоа чувство на чудење, љубов и подготвеност да допреме еден до друг што го имавме како деца дури и додека се надградуваме низ годините, со искуствата што сме ги акумулирале по патот.

Кога сме млади и се обидуваме да откриеме кои сме, го пронаоѓаме патот еден до друг. Доаѓаме од различни градови, со различни приказни и сфери на животот; понекогаш, можеби мислиме дека никогаш не можеме навистина да се разбереме. И потоа, мала насмевка, песна што двајцата ја знаеме или разговор на полноќ нè потсетува колку сме всушност слични.

Емпатија, љубов, мала насмевка... Сите овие работи го прават секој наш здив малку позначаен. Верувам дека ова списание постои токму за тоа: да ја видиме заедничката основа во нашите разлики, да ја откриеме повторно искреноста за која мислевме дека сме ја изгубиле додека растевме и малку повнимателно да ги слушаме гласовите еден на друг. Тука секој има приказна да раскаже, идеја да сподели и нешто да каже. Исто како што имавме кога бевме деца дури и кога растеме, сè уште имаме приказни да си раскажуваме еден на друг, лекции да научиме еден од друг и соништа што можеме да ги изградиме заедно. Само треба повторно да се потсетиме за тоа, еден со друг.

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UNICEF reports that one in five women aged 20–24 were married as children, estimating that 640 million girls and women alive today were married in childhood. Child marriage refers to the formal or informal union between a child and an adult or other child. Although it disproportionately affects girls because it is both a symptom and a result of deeply rooted gender inequalities, boys can also be affected. Of the approximately 300,000 children who got married in the United States between 2000 and 2018, the broad majority were young girls who got wed to adult men, a profound manifestation of gender inequality. Regardless of the circumstances, child marriage is a severe violation of human rights, since no child is able to provide free and informed consent to a marriage and the expectations related to it. These children get stripped of any bodily autonomy they are supposed to own.

Child brides are often expected to become homemakers, taking on responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and childbearing before they are physically or emotionally ready. In many cases, they are not even legally able to consent to sexual activity. The impact on a child's body and mind can be devastating, with early pregnancy and childbirth posing serious health risks and remaining a leading cause of death among adolescent girls in communities where child marriage is prevalent.

For a child, marriage often means being taken from their family and forced to leave school. This can lead to social isolation, limit their chance of gaining financial independence, and have long-lasting effects on their development and overall quality of life.

These disadvantages can be passed on to their own children, perpetuating this cycle of abuse and poverty. Furthermore, the girls are not just financially but also physically, psychologically, and legally fully dependent on their significantly older husbands and their families, putting them at a high risk of domestic and sexual violence. Despite these risks, child marriage remains legal in 33 states of the U.S., creating a loophole that can allow adults to avoid prosecution for statutory rape in certain circumstances.

About 12 million girls get married before the age of 18 each year, meaning

23 girls get married every minute.

India alone is contributing to one-third of child brides in the world.

Nevertheless, there is no need to leave Europe to look into the eyes of child brides.

Although marriage under the age of 18 has been forbidden in Macedonia since the enactment of the Family Act of 1992, child marriage continues to occur. In 2019, 8% of the now 20 to 24-year-old women got unofficially wed under the age of 18. Local NGOs estimate that the actual prevalence could be up to three times higher because many such marriages go unregistered, particularly among the Romani community.

Although the numbers have declined in recent years, the number is still not zero. This makes the work of organisations such as the Daycare Centre for street children in Shuto Orizari, led by its president Irena Velkoska, still necessary and highly relevant. Irena explains that the organisation

focuses on identifying and addressing the root causes of child marriage. One of them is poverty. To tackle it, they support children in their education and later help them find employment, giving them the opportunity to become financially independent and make their own decisions about marriage. This can help shift the perception of marriage from a transaction to a decision based on love and personal choice. Once they helped a girl find a job, but the family and neighbourhood pressured her into marriage for the family honour, showing another problem when trying to prevent child marriage: social norms, expectations, and perceptions.

These norms continue to enable child marriage by making it appear normal or acceptable. The idea that a grown man can request a girl in exchange for money is rooted in patriarchal beliefs that view girls and women as property or as a financial burden because they are not expected to earn money to support their families. One 12-year-old girl was married off after her father's gambling losses pushed the family into severe poverty. Another 14-year-old girl told the Centre that she was expected to marry a man in his 40s because he had agreed to pay off her family's debts. This could have been prevented and is an example of why it is necessary to educate the children about their rights, but also raise awareness with the parents in the community.

Another challenge is the lack of proper documentation. Many children do not have the necessary official documents, and some do not even have birth certificates. A birth certificate provides important proof of a child's age and can also be essential for accessing healthcare, social welfare, and education. Without proper documentation, children can become even more vulnerable and have greater difficulty accessing the services and protections they are entitled to.

Even though it may not seem like it, everyone can play a role in preventing child marriage. One of its deepest root causes is gender inequality. Challenging the patriarchal structures and beliefs that portray girls as inferior to boys is therefore essential. This can start with something as seemingly small as speaking out against degrading jokes about girls, particularly Roma girls, and challenging discrimination in our everyday lives. Speaking up helps raise awareness within our communities and challenge harmful stereotypes. You can also take more direct action by supporting youth and women's organisations that work with children and families at risk of child marriage.

Child marriage is not a distant problem. It is a global issue that affects children across countries, cultures, and religions, and it must be addressed and challenged everywhere. It is the result of a toxic mixture of social and economic inequalities, rooted in gender inequality. No child should be forced to step into the role of an adult, leave their family behind, just to become a slave for the highest bidder and their family.

Nelli Winzer

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CHILD BRIDE



The bride is walking down the aisle wearing a beautiful white dress, her face covered in heavy, mask-like makeup and a delicate veil draped over her head. Her tiny hands holding the flower bouquet are shaking. Tiny hands that should still be holding her favourite teddy bear—the bride is just a child.

This happens a lot more often than you think.

THE DAY INTELLIGENCE SWITCHED SIDE

Kasparov x Deepblue / 1989-1997

1997

1989. In a silent room. A man faces an opponent unlike any other. It doesn't breathe. It feels neither fear nor tiredness. It knows neither doubt nor pride. Yet it is about to challenge the best player in the world.

Standing before it is Garry Kasparov, the World Champion, considered by many to be the greatest chess player of all time. On the other side of the chessboard, there is not another grandmaster, but a machine.

At that time, the idea that a computer could defeat the greatest mind in chess seemed almost absurd. For centuries, chess had represented one of the purest symbols of human intelligence. Every game requires logic, creativity, anticipation, intuition, and incredible mental endurance. Many believed that no machine could ever rival the human mind.

Kasparov shared this belief. In 1989, he faced Deep Thought, a computer designed by a team of engineers passionate about artificial intelligence. The result was unequivocal: Kasparov dominated the machine. Humanity remained the master of chess.

At first glance, this victory appeared to be nothing more than a sporting event. Yet it represented far more than that. It symbolized the superiority of human intelligence over technology. For a few more years, the world could still believe that certain abilities would remain exclusively human.

But in IBM's laboratories, defeat was not the end. It was the beginning. The engineers went back to work. They improved their algorithms. They developed an even more powerful computer. Its name was simple: Deep Blue.

Contrary to the way we think of artificial intelligence today, Deep Blue did not "think" like a human being. It did not understand chess. It developed no intuition. It knew neither the beauty of a combination nor the satisfaction of a spectacular sacrifice.

Its strength lay elsewhere. It calculated. Again. More and more. Where a grandmaster could analyze a few dozen promising positions, Deep Blue was capable of examining millions of them every second. It did not seek to be intelligent; it simply explored an enormous number of possibilities before choosing the one that seemed best.

This approach seemed almost brutal. Yet it worked.

In 1996, Kasparov agreed to face Deep Blue. The entire world watched the confrontation. For the first time, a computer won a game against a reigning World Champion under official conditions. The event made headlines around the world. Many already imagined that human dominance was coming to an end.

But Kasparov responded. He understood the machine's style of play. He changed his strategy, avoided positions where pure calculation was decisive, and led the machine into more complex situations. After six games, the verdict came: Kasparov won the match 4-2. Man had defeated the machine.

This victory went far beyond the world of chess.

It reminded us of an essential truth: intelligence is not merely a matter of computing power. Experience, intuition, and creativity still possess a value that computers seem incapable of reproducing.

For a few months, many believed the question had been settled. Then IBM announced a rematch.

For an entire year, Deep Blue was completely redesigned. Its power was multiplied. Its processors were improved. Its databases were enriched with thousands of games. The world's best chess specialists worked alongside the engineers to correct every one of its weaknesses.

In May 1997, Kasparov met his opponent once again. This time, the pressure was immense. He was no longer playing only for himself. He was playing to represent all of humanity.

Every move was followed by millions of people. The media presented the duel as a battle between the human mind and technology.

The match was extremely close. Kasparov won the first game. Then something changed.

During the second game, Deep Blue played a completely unexpected move. A move so subtle that Kasparov became convinced that no computer could have found such an idea on its own. He began to doubt.

And in chess, doubt is often more dangerous than a bad position.

The champion lost confidence. He hesitated more. He looked for traps where there might not have been any. His true opponent was no longer just the machine.

It was his own mind. After six games, Deep Blue eventually won the match by 3.5 to 2.5. For the first time in history, a computer defeated the reigning World Chess Champion in an official match.

The symbol was immense. Many saw it as proof that artificial intelligence had surpassed human beings.

Yet that interpretation was misleading. Deep Blue knew how to do only one thing: play chess.

It was incapable of driving a car, recognizing a face, learning a new language, or even understanding why it was playing.

Kasparov, on the other hand, could do all of those things.

The real lesson, therefore, was not that the machine had become more intelligent than man.

It showed that a machine could become better than a human at one extremely specific task.

That distinction is fundamental.

Even today, the artificial intelligence systems around us operate according to this principle. Some outperform the best doctors in detecting certain abnormalities in medical images. Others instantly translate hundreds of languages, generate text, create images, or analyze enormous amounts of data in just a few seconds. But each of them excels in a particular field.

Human intelligence, on the other hand, remains remarkably versatile.

The story of Kasparov and Deep Blue teaches us something else as well: the greatest technological revolutions often begin with events that seem insignificant.

At the time, many considered this encounter to be nothing more than a chess match.

Looking back, we now know that it announced the arrival of a new world.

Today, artificial intelligence writes, draws, composes music, assists researchers, helps doctors, and supports engineers in their discoveries.

The duel between Kasparov and Deep Blue now appears as the first chapter of a story that is still being written.

But perhaps the most important question is no longer:

"Can machines defeat humans?"

The real question now is:

"How can humans and machines learn to work together?"

Because the goal may not be to replace human intelligence, but to complement it. History has shown that a machine could win a game of chess. What remains to be seen is whether, together, humans and artificial intelligence will be able to meet the far more complex challenges that await our society.

Paul Goumault

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GEODES AND THEIR MYSTERIES

GEODES CAN HIDE GREAT THINGS OR NOTHING AT ALL; IT'S LIKE PLAYING THE LOTTERY. THEY ARE LITERALLY HIDDEN TREASURES. MINERALOGY ENTHUSIASTS AND COLLECTORS LOVE THESE STONES AND ESPECIALLY OPENING THEM TO SEE WHAT'S INSIDE. EACH GEODE IS UNIQUE AND JUST WAITING TO BE OPENED TO DISCOVER ITS STORY THROUGH THE AGES. YOU CAN FIND QUARTZ, MINERALS, OR EVEN MICROORGANISMS. BUT WHAT EXACTLY ARE THESE STONES? LET'S FIND OUT TOGETHER!

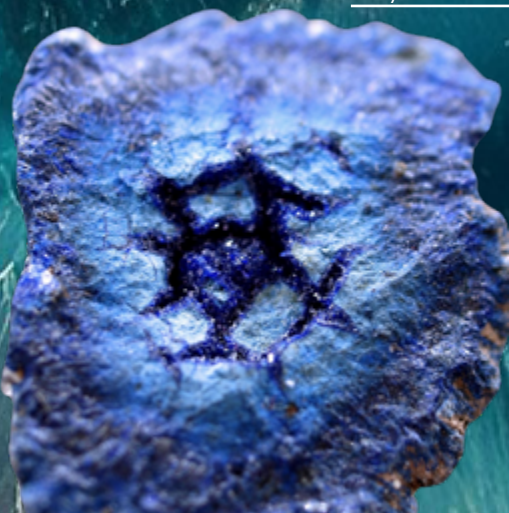


On the magmatic and volcanic side: At the heart of the cooling magma, temperature plays a major role in the crystallization of minerals. For example, those with a high melting point solidify first and adhere to the walls of the magma cavity. Finally, these are deposited at the center of the cavity, on top of the already formed crystals. This sequential crystallization process, guided by temperature, gives rise to magmatic geodes.

Here we've discussed geodes containing crystals, but let's talk about the type found in sedimentary rocks. These geodes form through a process distinct from that observed in igneous or volcanic rocks. These crystalline cavities, often more elongated than their volcanic counterparts, result from the circulation of mineralized fluids through fractures in the

To begin, what exactly is a geode? This mysterious treasure is a rock formation that is generally spherical or oval in shape. They can usually be hollowed out, and they can contain minerals such as quartz, amethyst, calcite, agate, celestial feldspar, and sometimes even microorganisms that date back millions of years.

Now let's talk about how it forms. It begins with the creation of a cavity in the rock. This occurs either due to gas bubbles trapped in volcanic lava or the dissolution of organic matter. Over time, the cavity becomes filled with groundwater saturated with minerals, or, in another case, by microorganisms that fossilize. On the mineral side, crystals can form and grow according to geochemical and climatic conditions. This process takes thousands, even millions, of years. This is the process for crystal formation.



rocks. There are differences in sedimentary origin that develop in sedimentary rocks such as limestone, shale, or sandstone. Their formation begins with the appearance of cavities or fractures, often due to tectonic movements, the dissolution of minerals, or even biological activity. The subsequent formation of crystals is similar to what was previously described, but sometimes they can be solid, and we can simply observe sedimentary rocks, which can tell us more about the age of the rocks.

The size of geodes can be the same as that of a simple stone or as large as a cave, like the Pulpi Cave in Spain. That's why they are gems, whether for science or simply for collecting.

Loïc Printemps

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From a Pirate Flag

to a Protest Symbol



What is a pirate flag from a manga series doing at protests in different parts of the world?

In 2025, amid growing public dissatisfaction in Indonesia, an unusual flag began to appear in the streets: a smiling skull wearing a straw hat. For *One Piece* fans, the symbol was instantly recognizable. It was the Jolly Roger of the Straw Hat Pirates. But the flag did not remain in Indonesia. It later appeared in youth-led protests in Nepal and the Philippines, and eventually in demonstrations in France. Despite the different political contexts of these countries, young protesters began using the same fictional symbol to express ideas such as freedom, justice and resistance to authority.

So why *One Piece*?

Created by Eiichiro Oda and first published as a manga in 1997, *One Piece* follows Monkey D. Luffy and his crew on their journey in search of a legendary treasure. Yet behind the adventure, the story repeatedly explores themes such as freedom, injustice, discrimination, corrupt authorities and resistance to oppression.

Luffy's journey is not simply a search for treasure. At its heart, it is also the story of someone determined to live freely and unwilling to let others decide how he should live.

Seen from this perspective, it is not surprising that protesters have given the Straw Hat Pirates' flag a new meaning. In the fictional world of *One Piece*, it represents a crew determined to live freely. In the real world, it can become a way of challenging authority. But what makes this phenomenon particularly interesting is not simply

the political themes of *One Piece*. It is the fact that **the same symbol can carry political meaning across very different countries.**

When a Flag Crosses Borders

The *One Piece* flag became especially visible as a protest symbol in Indonesia. Before the country's Independence Day in August 2025, people began displaying the pirate flag as a way of expressing dissatisfaction with the government. Its political meaning became even more visible during later demonstrations.

Soon, similar images appeared elsewhere. The flag was carried by young protesters in Nepal and later appeared at anti-corruption demonstrations in the Philippines. International media began describing it as a recognizable symbol among a new wave of Gen Z protests across Asia. Then the symbol moved beyond Asia.

During protests in France in September 2025, *One Piece* flags appeared among more traditional protest banners. Some young French demonstrators explicitly said that they had seen the flag being used in Nepal and Indonesia. In other words, the symbol was not simply appearing independently in different countries; at least some protesters were consciously adopting a symbol they had seen used elsewhere.

There is an important point here: **these protesters were not all protesting for the same reason.**

Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines and France have very different political contexts. The protesters were not necessarily members of the same organization, supporters of the same political party or followers of the same ideology.

Yet they were carrying the same flag.

That is what makes the *One Piece* flag more than just an interesting internet trend.

Is Gen Z Speaking a New Political Language?

When we think about political movements, certain images usually come to mind: party flags, ideological symbols, trade union banners, portraits of political leaders or slogans that have been repeated for generations.

But the shared cultural world of a generation that grew up with the internet looks very different.

A young person in Türkiye and another in Indonesia may live under completely different political systems. They may not speak the same language, support similar political parties or experience the same problems. Yet both may watch *One Piece*, recognize the same characters and understand what the Straw Hat flag represents.

Social media makes this shared cultural space even larger. An image from a protest can travel across the world within hours. Young people elsewhere can see it, reinterpret it and adapt it to their own political struggles.

And *One Piece* is not the first example of popular culture entering the language of protest.

The Guy Fawkes mask associated with *V for Vendetta* has been used by movements such as Anonymous and Occupy. The three-finger salute from *The Hunger Games*, originally a fictional gesture of resistance, became a real-world protest symbol, particularly in Thailand. *La Casa de Papel*, meanwhile, introduced a new generation to **Bella**

Ciao, a song historically associated with the Italian anti-fascist resistance.

The *One Piece* flag may be the latest example of this relationship between popular culture and political protest.

But there is an easy conclusion to draw from all this: perhaps Gen Z is becoming less interested in traditional political ideologies.

The reality may be more complicated.

Not Less Political, Just Political in a Different Language

Carrying a *One Piece* flag does not necessarily make someone less political. In fact, the ideas associated with the symbol are deeply political: freedom, justice, solidarity, opposition to corruption and resistance to oppressive authority.

What may be changing is not the values themselves, but **the language used to express them.**

Previous generations often expressed political ideas through traditional ideological symbols. Young people today can find political meaning in an anime they grew up watching, a film scene, a song or even an image circulating on social media.

Popular culture, then, becomes more than entertainment. It can also become a shared cultural vocabulary for understanding and expressing political experiences.

And this vocabulary has one major advantage: it can cross borders easily.

The flag of a political party in one country may mean nothing to someone living thousands of kilometres away. The *One Piece* flag, however, is already recognizable to millions of young people around the world.

It does not even need to mean exactly the same thing to everyone.

For one protester, it may represent freedom. For another, resistance to a corrupt system. For someone else, it may symbolize friendship and solidarity.

Perhaps that flexibility is part of its power: **it is familiar enough to be shared, but flexible enough to represent different struggles.**

A New Protest Identity?

Still, the appearance of the same flag in different countries does not prove that a single “global Gen Z movement” exists. Sharing a symbol does not mean sharing the same ideology, political goals or identity.

But it may reveal a smaller and perhaps

more interesting transformation.

The appearance of the same pirate flag in Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines and France does not tell us that young people around the world think alike politically. What it does show is that young people living thousands of kilometres apart increasingly share stories, characters and cultural references that can be transformed into political symbols.

Perhaps this is where a new kind of protest identity is beginning to emerge in the digital age: not necessarily around one political party, organization or ideology, but through shared stories, images and cultural references that allow young people in different parts of the world to recognize something of their own struggles in one another. This does not mean that ideology has disappeared.

Perhaps politics is not disappearing at all. It is simply learning to speak a new language.

Şevval Hakbilen

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Gathering around the same table and describing flavor with the same words is the most tangible proof of a shared memory that has endured for centuries, transcending borders.

When we embark on a journey through the Balkans today, we encounter a surprising linguistic and aromatic resemblance on signs and menus. The aroma of burek wafting from a bakery in Skopje, shkembe soup as a breakfast staple in Sofia, a refreshing tzatziki in Athens, or an aromatic kava served in Sarajevo all point to a deeply rooted shared history. Even as political boundaries change, the culinary culture of the region continues to endure. This culinary unity in the Balkans, a meeting point for diverse ethnic origins and religions, took shape thanks to centuries of migrations, conquests, and trade.

The Story of a Shared Table



The earliest traces of this shared cuisine date back much further than the Ottoman era, originating with the migrations of the Huns and Oghuz from the Central Asian steppes. These early Turkic communities brought essential food preservation techniques to the region, particularly meat drying and curing, which were necessary for surviving long journeys. Today, this cured meat culture is regarded as a gourmet element in Bosnian, Albanian, and Serbian cuisines. Alongside these techniques, the transfer of staple foods and agricultural products such as rice, poppies, silk, tutmaç noodles, and grain-based dishes like keşkek and kaçamak established the first bridge of flavors between Asia and the Balkans.

This foundation was profoundly deepened during the Ottoman Empire's 550-year rule, which permanently fused Eastern and Western culinary cultures. As communities from Anatolia resettled in the region, they expanded animal husbandry and spread the production of yogurt, butter, clotted cream, and cheese across a vast area. A complex supply chain emerged to meet the needs of the palace and major cities; Istanbul's meat requirements were met by Thrace and Macedonia, kashkaval cheese came from Tekirdağ and Lemnos, and tulum cheese was sourced from Wallachia and Moldavia. The Ottoman era also introduced coffeehouses, which became vibrant new venues for socializing alongside traditional wine-serving inns. According to 17th-century travelogues, the highest-quality coffeehouses of the time were found in Balkan cities such as Ohrid, Bitola, and Strumica.

By the 19th century, European travelers like Edward Dodwell, François Pouqueville, and Felix Kanitz documented the distinct class and geographical dynamics of Balkan foodways. Their accounts reveal a stark contrast between rural and urban diets. In rural areas, people primarily subsisted on barley and corn bread, rusks (paximadia), goat or sheep cheese, yogurt, olives, and fresh or dried figs, with meat consumption being quite infrequent. In contrast, urban centers and palace environments enjoyed high-quality white wheat bread (francala), various meats including lamb, kid, game, and poultry, as well as rich rice pilafs, stuffed dishes, kebabs, and syrup-soaked desserts. Despite these class differences, a shared dining etiquette unified the vast geography from the Peloponnese to the mansions of Istanbul. Meals were typically eaten around low metal trays (sini) from a communal dish, accompanied by hand-washing rituals using an ewer and basin before and after eating.

This shared history is perfectly preserved in the region's philological heritage. The linguistic interaction across the Ottoman realm is clearly visible in the etymology of everyday dish names. Many delicacies found across the Balkans today derive from this common vocabulary, from Albanian tavë kosi and byrek, Bulgarian shkembe and kebabche, and Greek tztziki and souvlaki, to Serbian čevapčići, Bosnian begova čorba and soğandolma, and Romanian ciorbă and sarmale.

Finally, the diverse religious fabric of the Balkans, particularly the calendrical rules of Orthodox Christianity and Islamic traditions played a crucial role in shaping the local diet. During the strict Orthodox Great Lent, which spanned 130 to 180 days a year, the consumption of meat, dairy, eggs, and animal fats was prohibited. This restriction drove the local population to develop rich culinary traditions based on legumes, vegetable dishes, olives, caviar, and cured fish roe (bottarga). Furthermore, food remained deeply intertwined with religious rituals, as seen in the preparation of boiled-wheat desserts like koliva for religious commemorations or the roasting of sacrificial lamb during Easter, proving that the Balkan table is a remarkable synthesis of faith, geography, and centuries of shared life.

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LET'S THINK ABOUT IT

There is a question I have been asked more times than I can count:

“What is the point of philosophy?”

And I have always given the same answer:

“it is to think”.



To think about things further away than the tip of your nose. To see beyond the immediate, beyond the urgent, beyond the present moment.

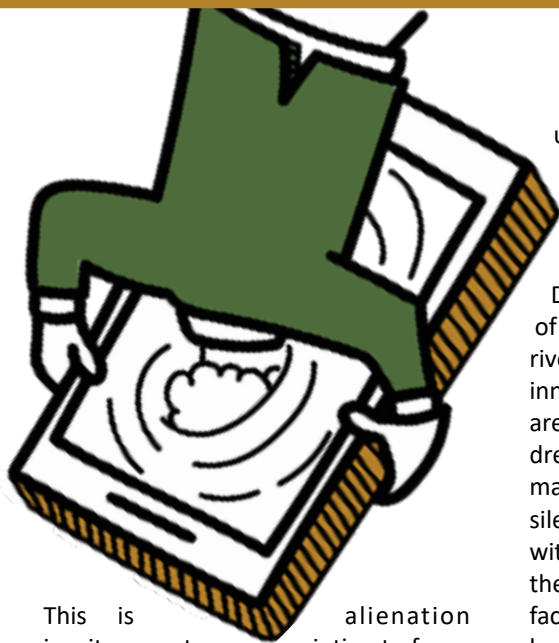
But every time I say it, I am sad. Because in giving that answer, I have come to understand something I cannot unsee: most of us, and I include myself in this confession, do not take the time to think. We do not pause. We do not tolerate silence or boredom. We do not sit with the weight of our own thoughts.

This is terrifying. But the terror is not what disturbs me most. What disturbs me most is that I understand why.

The reason is **alienation**, a word that has become abstract but describes something we all feel in our flesh. To be alienated is to be separated from something that should be near. It is to stand outside the gates of your own life, pressing your face against the bars, watching yourself move through the world as though you were a stranger in your own skin. Marx spoke of alienation from labor, from the products of our hands, from the community of the people around us, and finally from our own human essence. We were once the subjects of our work; we became objects of it. We no longer made things; things made us.

But there is a deeper alienation, one that precedes all these, one that our age has perfected with terrible efficiency. It is the alienation from thought itself. From the slow, patient, unruly act of making meaning. We are no longer subjects who think. We are objects that process, consume, and are consumed.

The shift is subtle enough to not be noticed. We wake to a world that has already decided what deserves our attention. We move through currents of information that have already interpreted reality for us. We absorb conclusions without premises, answers without questions, certainties without the labor of doubt. Our minds have become repositories for information we have never truly considered, filing cabinets for opinions we have never truly held.



This is alienation in its most intimate form, we have been separated from our own mental lives. Our thoughts are no longer ours; they are delivered to us, pre-chewed, pre-digested, pre-sold. We have outsourced the very act of thinking to systems that profit from our passivity. And the most tragic part is that we barely notice, because the alienation feels like convenience. It feels like being connected, like being informed. It feels like freedom.

Why is this alienation worse now than it has ever been? Why does this particular moment feel like the edge of something, like standing on a precipice with the wind at our backs?

Because we have created an environment that is more efficient at eliminating thought than fostering it. We have built a culture of ceaseless distraction, where every silence is filled, every pause is interrupted, and every empty space is paved over with the relentless chatter of information. We are drowning in data and starving for meaning.

Every time we accept a summary rather than engaging with the text itself, we abandon the intimate conversation between reader and page. Every time we let a system of thought think for us, be it a corporation, an ideology, or an algorithm, we deepen our alienation: we become further from our own creativity, further from our own judgment, further from the messy, difficult, exhilarating work of being a mind.

The danger is not what these systems do. The danger is what they prevent us from doing. They prevent us from dreaming. Dreaming is not merely the fantasy of sleep. Dreaming is the mind at play, unconstrained by efficiency,

untethered from utility. It is the space where new worlds are born, where connections form between distant ideas, where the possible pushes against the walls of the actual.

Dreaming is the slow fermentation of consciousness, the underground river that feeds the visible streams of innovation and understanding. And we are losing it, not because we cannot dream, but because we have stopped making time for it. We have filled every silence with stimulation, every pause with content. There is no room left for the mind to wander. This is the ultimate face of modern alienation, we have become strangers to our own inner lives. The thoughts that drift through us are no longer fully our own; they are echoes of collective anxiety, whispers of marketed desires, refrains of a culture that values reaction over reflection. We no longer have thoughts. We receive them. And in receiving them, we lose the capacity to recognize that we are receiving at all.

I do not write this as a Luddite, though I admit I can appreciate them sometimes. I do not believe we can simply return to some imagined pastoral age of pure contemplation. The world we have built is here, and it is not going away. And that is not inherently a tragedy. Our tools are powerful, capable of wonders our ancestors could not have imagined. But a tool is not a mind. And we have confused the two. We have mistaken information for understanding, speed for depth, and connectivity for community. We have become so alienated from thought that we no longer recognize what thinking looks like when it is not being mediated, optimized, and monetized. The philosopher's task, it seems to me, has never been more urgent. Not to retreat from the world, but to think about it. To ask what it means to be alienated in an age of connection. To be disconnected from ourselves when everything seems so connected. To draw the line, however faint, between processing and understanding, between information and wisdom, between the mere manipulation of symbols and the living, breathing act of making sense of our existence. This is not a luxury. It is a necessity. Because without thought, we are not free. We are merely responsive, reacting to stimuli as surely as any machine,

following the predetermined paths of influence and habit. Without thought, we are not human in any meaningful sense. We are just complex patterns of behavior, predictable and explicable, utterly without mystery. I have no grand solution. I don't think there is any. I spend an ungodly amount of time in front of my computer every day. I know the good it can create. But I also know that we need the time of reflexivity, the space of reclamation. We need to take back what has been quietly taken from us: our attention, our patience, our capacity for deep engagement with anything that does not arrive in a bright, immediate flash. We need to reclaim our sense of mystery, our tolerance for the unresolved, our willingness to live in the uncertain spaces where all real thought begins.

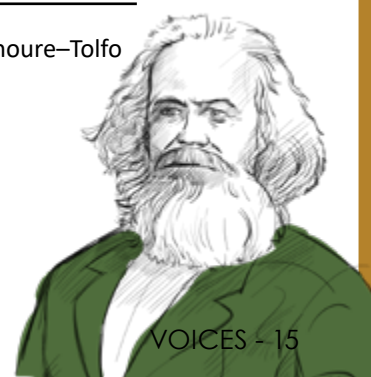
So, we will all put the device down. Close the tab. Turn off the notifications. And sit in the silence. Let the silence be uncomfortable. Let it be terrifying. Let it be whatever it is, without trying to feel it. And then we think. Not about anything in particular. Not productively. Not efficiently. Just think. Let your mind drift where it will. Follow a thought to its end and then beyond. Sit with a question until the answer seems less important than the asking. Dream.

This is the work of de-alienation. This is how we come home to ourselves. This is what it means to be human, and this is what we are losing. The systems of our age will take many things from us. They already have. But they cannot take our ability to think unless we give it to them. They cannot take our dreams unless we choose to stop dreaming. So choose. Choose to think. Choose to dream. Choose to be a human being in a world that increasingly prefers you to be a customer.

The point of philosophy, after all, is to think about things further away than the tip of your nose.

And the tip of your nose is closer than you think.

Arthur Bonhoure-Tolfo



THE PEOPLE OF THE ALGORITHM



Homogenized
Lives
Behind
Invisible
Bars

How different can you truly be? How free do you actually feel? Or most importantly: are we trapped inside an invisible prison—one with no iron bars and wide-open doors, yet one we can never seem to leave? Why is it that the moment we stop consuming or scrolling through feeds, we are instantly flooded with an unsettling sense of emptiness and deficiency?

Across different cities, distinct stories, and thousands of diverse cultural roots, the elements of our colors, art, news, and daily agendas look strikingly alike, don't they? In this new world, standing out is no longer the priority; catching what is viral has become essential. So, what is the name of this new smokeless industry that feeds people, directs them, and produces tirelessly just to keep them consuming? Algorithms! An indispensable extension of our modern existence, feeling almost like an intimate, personalized identity... A companion that knows us best, anticipating exactly which outfit, headline, news story, person, or melody we need most. Neither you nor your closest friends are thoughtful enough to track every single day of your past, take notes, and serve you the best options—and so much more.

By definition, an algorithm is a systematic method that follows step-by-step procedures to solve mathematical problems. In other words, it ranks the data we provide by order of relevance, processes thousands of data points, and presents us with the most optimized outcome. Today, a widespread assumption suggests that our devices are constantly “eavesdropping” on us. Yet the reality is far more sophisticated and chilling: algorithms do not need to listen to us because they already predict our behavior with mathematical precision. Thousands of products, objects, and songs pass through myriad filters and analytical frameworks within seconds before appearing on our screens. By design and software architecture, algorithms exist solely to present recommendations that satisfy us. However, what makes a human truly human is not flawless optimization; it is our unpredictable

tastes, irrational contradictions, and authentic imperfections that fit into no predetermined formula.

At first, you make the conscious decision about what you need and take action to buy or consume it. Over time, however, consuming the thousands of products that popular culture, fashion, and collective perception lay before you via algorithms begins to occur entirely outside your control and conscious will. This loss of control marks the exact breaking point where we cease being free

“Are we trapped inside an invisible prison with no iron bars and wide-open doors?”

“consumers” and turn into the “objects of consumption” themselves. Where the concept of “freedom” loses its meaning, the word “prison” becomes far more resonant, leaving questions echoing in our minds: Are we the ones building these prison walls around ourselves? Are algorithms, rather than genuine human connection, orchestrating the bonds and commonalities between us? How can we ever dismantle walls we cannot even see?

The word “prison” may sound like an overly harsh judgment. Yet to grasp our current reality, we must first understand how we ended up here, review our daily routines, and observe the trajectory from our past to our shared future. Today, very few people live lives untouched by viral trends. Welcoming a new beverage, a trending venue, a popular song, or a fresh habit into our lives—and being convinced by it—has become effortless. Stand on a university campus and simply observe your surroundings; you will quickly notice that the conversations, facial expressions, and shared humor are often mere echoes or remnants of what is currently viral online. Decades ago, the idea of thousands of people reading the exact same book simultaneously and discussing it on every street corner

was virtually impossible. Today, millions watch, listen to, or discover the exact same content, spending entire days debating identical topics. In turn, our communication skills increasingly mirror these shared viral phenomena. Shared algorithms make us feel close and connected. Yet this artificial intimacy, built upon uniform tastes, is not a shared freedom; it is a shared fate born of occupying the very same cell. Perhaps the first step toward leaving this invisible prison without bars is daring to disrupt the comfort of that manufactured intimacy. It means resisting the impulse to swipe to the next suggested video, stepping outside the trending topics to listen to the silence, and searching for our authentic voice beyond the borders drawn by collective algorithms.

Acknowledging that we are captives in a prison with invisible bars is not a defeat; on the contrary, it is the first step toward a genuine awakening. This awakening begins by refusing to drift passively in whatever direction the algorithmic stream carries us. It means declining to swipe immediately on the first video served to us, refusing to wear every popular idea or aesthetic like a mandatory uniform, and choosing to listen to stillness amidst the deafening noise of the collective agenda. We must learn to hear the unique resonance of our own voice again, free from external validation and platform recommendation engines.

In an era where algorithms code our reality, it is time to remember that we are human beings far too valuable to be reduced to data points. And the only way out of this endless vortex is daring to step beyond the digital borders on our screens and author our own irreplaceable stories.

İlhan Buğra Kara

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Algoritmaların Soğukluğu ve İnsanın Yeni Lüksü



Lessons from the Forest Stage

Being a teenager is not always easy. It is a period of discovering who we are, becoming more independent, dealing with expectations from others, and learning how to express what we need and feel. Sometimes, finding the right words can be difficult. Sometimes, we do not even know exactly what we feel. This is why creativity, communication, and openness to new experiences can become powerful tools for navigating these years.



During the Erasmus+ youth exchange “The Forest Stage”, organized by Foundation Sempre a Frente in Janów Lubelski, Poland, from 21 to 29 July 2026, participants from different backgrounds came together to explore these topics through theatre, improvisation, movement, communication exercises, and outdoor activities. Instead of talking about communication and self-expression we were encouraged to experience these topics through activities that challenged us to step outside our comfort zones.

At first, one of our biggest challenges was simply becoming comfortable with people we had just met. We started with creative ice-breaking activities, including a fashion show, where we prepared signs to support the models before taking part in our own increasingly creative runway performances. What seemed like a simple game quickly became a way of building confidence, encouraging spontaneity, and creating connections within the group.

But the real challenge began when we were introduced to improvisation and acting. For many of us, this was completely new. In one activity, we were given a scenario and only one minute to prepare before performing it. The limited preparation time was intimidating, but it forced us to stop worrying about doing everything perfectly. We had to trust our creativity, react to the unexpected, and rely on our teammates.

This idea continued through dancing and body-expression exercises. Sometimes we worked in pairs, with one person leading and the other following; at other times, we had to express a given scenario through movement alone. These activities showed us that communication does not always require words. Body language, movement, facial expressions, and even silence can communicate emotions and intentions.

As we became more comfortable expressing ourselves, we began exploring an important aspect of communication and how to express our feelings and needs clearly. One of the most valuable topics we explored was non-violent communication. We learned to distinguish between facts, feelings, and needs and to communicate them without immediately reacting with anger or confusion. Through practical examples and scenarios, we learned that effective communication is not simply about speaking, but it also requires understanding ourselves and listening to others.

On top of this, an important part of the project was being surrounded by nature. We explored the forest and the surrounding area, participated in water activities, went on scavenger hunts, visited an open-air railway

museum, and explored Janów Lubelski. One particularly peaceful experience was a meditation session outdoors, which gave us time to slow down and reflect on our experiences and emotions throughout the project. The combination of physical activities, creative expression, communication exercises, and time in nature encouraged us to think about the relationship between our bodies, emotions, and thoughts.

As a culmination of our project, we were asked to write our own poems, using them as a way to express our thoughts and emotions. Later, we looked for common ideas within our individual poems and transformed them into a longer final play. Starting from separate personal experiences and transforming them into one collective story. Everyone brought something different, but we had to listen, compromise, and find a way to combine our ideas.

When we arrived, improvisation and acting were unfamiliar to many of us. By the end of the project, they had become tools for expressing ourselves, communicating with others, and working together. "The Forest Stage" showed us that learning does not always have to happen through lectures or textbooks. Sometimes, we learn the most by stepping outside our comfort zones, making mistakes, trusting other people, and allowing ourselves to be creative.

The project gave us practical lessons about deep communication, empathy, validating our own and others' feelings, and understanding our needs and boundaries. Some of these lessons were directly explained, while others were hidden within the activities themselves.

Most importantly, we learned that being open to new experiences can help us discover aspects of ourselves that we did not know were there.

We may have arrived as participants from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds, but through theatre, creativity, communication, and shared experiences, we became a group.

Ana Marija Atanasovska

Project organizer: Fundacja Sempre a Frente



HOW TO REGAIN THE POWER TO CHANGE SOCIETY

We live in a time when we have more opportunities, information, and comfort than ever before. Yet, more and more people feel tired, dissatisfied, or powerless. We have access to technology, travel, education, and entertainment, but at the same time, we face problems that affect our everyday lives, from mental health and social isolation to poor-quality food, consumerism, and the constant pressure of social media.

Of course, every era has had its problems. The difference may be that today we are surrounded by them constantly. We only need to open our phones and, within seconds, we are flooded with news about wars, political conflicts, the climate crisis, corruption, and economic problems. It is therefore not a surprise that many young people are beginning to feel that the future they will be left with may not be better than the present.

HOW HAS THE SYSTEM FAILED US?

Many people express dissatisfaction with the system, but at the same time do not know where to look for solutions. Distrust often comes from a lack of opportunities, corruption, or the feeling that an individual has no real influence over how the country is managed.

Young people know that political decisions affect their education, housing, employment opportunities, environment, and ability to start a family. Yet these issues are often discussed with them only to a limited extent. No one asked them for their opinion.

A lot of young adults feel deep distrust in governments, parliaments, and other public institutions. They do not feel that they have an influence on how the state functions, while at the same time feeling excluded from society. How can we expect them to be interested in public policy when they feel that public policy is not interested in them?

ESCAPE OR GIVING UP ARE NOT THE ONLY OPTIONS

When people stop believing that they can change

anything, leaving often becomes a natural reaction. Many young people therefore look for their future abroad, while others completely lose interest in politics. Some find an answer in extremism and simple solutions to difficult problems.

Moving abroad can be a great experience. It allows people to study, work, discover other cultures, and gain a new perspective on the world. The problem comes up when leaving is not a free choice, but the only way to escape a feeling of powerlessness.

If a large part of the younger generation no longer feels connected to their country, this is not only a problem for young people. It is a problem for society as a whole.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Change can begin at the local level. We can support youth committees and school councils, programmes that allow young people to travel, learn, and gain new experiences, and create spaces for regular discussions between young people and representatives of local government.

Young people should not only be invited to events where they are expected to present something. They should have a seat at the table when decisions are being made about issues that will affect their future.

The most important thing is also the simplest: listen to young people, respect their opinions, and give them a genuine opportunity to participate in decision-making.

CHANGE DOES NOT HAVE TO START IN GOVERNMENT

We often feel that if we want to change society, we have to become politicians. We do not. Change can begin with small steps. Use your right to vote. Learn about candidates and their programmes, not only political parties. Ask what they actually want to change and how they plan to achieve it.

Get involved in volunteering, even if it is only for one hour a week. Pay attention to your

surroundings. If there is an illegal dumping site in your town, pothole, a broken bench or street lighting that does not work, report it. We can also monitor public finances and contracts through publicly available platforms.

These things may seem like small actions. But they are exactly what civil society is built on.

WE NEED TO RETHINK OUR WAY OF LIFE

Fighting the system sometimes means reconsidering what we support through our everyday behaviour.

We can waste less food, buy clothes more responsibly, and think more carefully about what we actually need and what creates another desire to consume. It is not about one person saving the planet by doing small actions. It is about changing the way we think.

Many of us grew up with greater access to goods, technology, and convenience than previous generations. We can buy almost anything, whenever we want. We are constantly being told that we need another product, another experience, another dose of dopamine. Perhaps that is exactly why we need to rediscover the value of things that cannot be bought: community, friendship, nature, creativity, volunteering, genuine conversation, and the feeling that we belong somewhere and that our actions matter.

WE SHOULD NOT WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO SAVE US

It is easy to say that the system is broken. It is easy to say that politicians are corrupt, young people have no future, and society is going nowhere. It is much harder to ask ourselves: **What am I doing?**

We do not have to change the entire system at once. We can start where we actually have influence: at our school, workplace, within our community, in our town, or in our electoral district.

We need to stop seeing young people only as future citizens. They are citizens already. They have the right to speak about their future because they are the ones who will live in it the longest. If we want a stronger society, we need to rebuild trust between people and institutions.

It is not enough to point fingers. Democracy is not something that happens somewhere far away between politicians: **democracy is also what we do today when we notice a problem in our community and decide not to ignore it.**

Laura Löwingerová





A PIECE OF INFO RMA TION INSIDE OUR MINDS

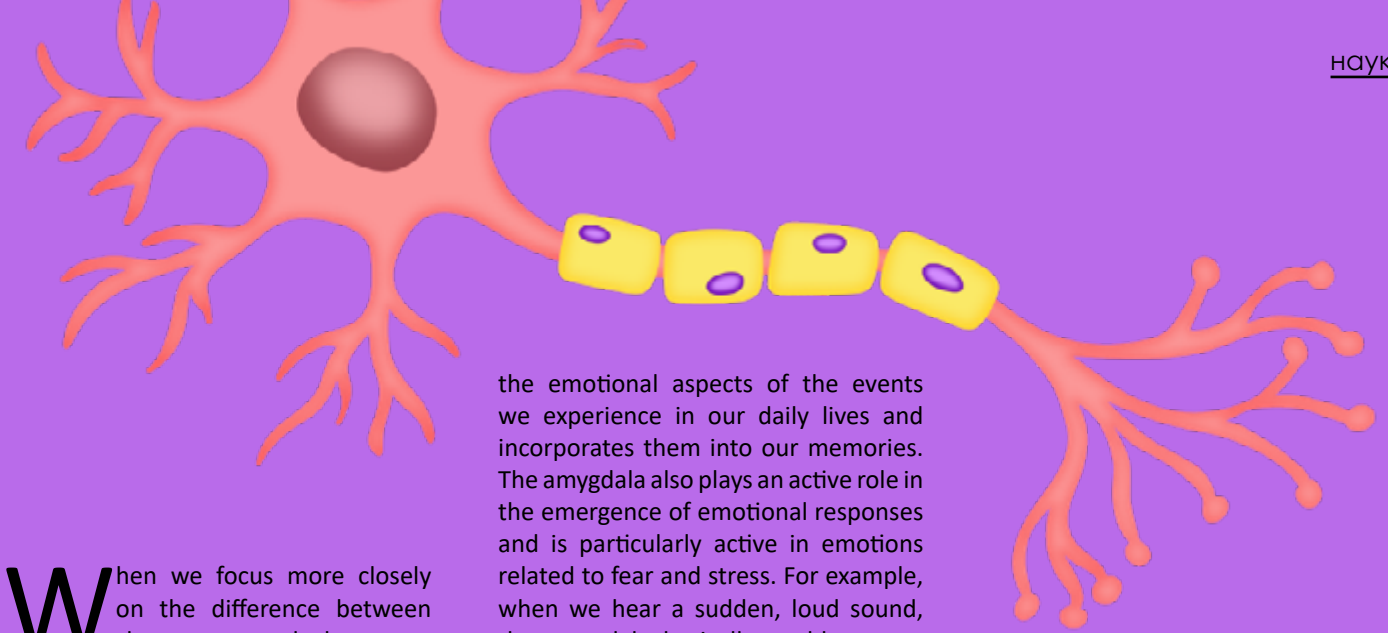
In our daily lives, we encounter many events, take part in countless activities, have many thoughts passing through our minds, and learn new things... But after experiencing all of these things and some time has passed, which of them can we actually remember? How much do we remember, and how much have we already forgotten?

When we take a deeper journey into our brain and look at what is happening inside our minds, we are faced with a highly complex network of neurons. It is through these neurons that our memories are formed. We can describe

these memories broadly as short-term and long-term memories. Neurons play an important role in the formation of memory. When we learn something new, a number of changes also take place within our neurons.

Most neuronal connections, known as synapses, are important structures that enable communication between neurons. When we look at these synaptic connections, the two neurons do not directly come into contact with each other; instead, there is a synaptic gap between them. In general, communication between these two neurons occurs

through certain chemicals called neurotransmitters, which are released into the synaptic gap, allowing communication to take place. Whenever new information enters our minds, neural changes occur. During the process of acquiring this information, synaptic activity may increase; in other words, communication between neurons may occur more frequently. These synaptic connections may become stronger or weaker, and some connections between neurons may even be eliminated. All of these processes, which we refer to as synaptic plasticity, play an important role in the formation of memory.



When we focus more closely on the difference between short-term and long-term memory, we encounter certain parts of the limbic system, such as the hippocampus and amygdala, in relation to long-term memory. There are two of each of these structures in the brain, with one located in each hemisphere. In addition, the Prefrontal Executive Function System and the parietal cortex, which includes the angular gyrus, are among the structures responsible for certain short-term memory processes. Furthermore, short-term memory is thought to exist in the form of closed and reverberating electrical circuits between neurons.

When we examine the hippocampus more closely, we can say that, in addition to not playing a role in short-term memory, it has an important and critical role in the transfer of information from short-term memory to long-term memory. Furthermore, some studies have shown that the hippocampus is not the storage site of long-term memory and that it has no role in the process of retrieving and remembering information from long-term memory. Research has also indicated that the hippocampus provides the underlying framework for the consolidation process and that consolidation lasts for approximately two years.

When we examine the amygdala, we see that it is located very close to the hippocampus anatomically. Functionally, it is an important part of the limbic system because it is involved in the processing of emotions. It regulates basic emotions such as fear, anger, happiness, and anxiety, and manages the perception of danger. In addition, it plays a significant role in the formation of emotional memories. Due to its physical proximity to the hippocampus, it processes

the emotional aspects of the events we experience in our daily lives and incorporates them into our memories. The amygdala also plays an active role in the emergence of emotional responses and is particularly active in emotions related to fear and stress. For example, when we hear a sudden, loud sound, the amygdala basically enables us to rapidly receive and process information from external stimuli, causing our bodies to startle and preparing us to defend ourselves. Emotionally intense events that happen to us in our daily lives may become more permanently embedded in our memories, perhaps because of the strong emotional role of the amygdala. Through this, we can also recall our memories through the emotions associated with them.

It has been observed that, during or after the formation of long-term memories, new synaptic connections can be established between neurons in limbic structures, particularly in the posterior association cortices and the hippocampus, while existing synaptic connections can also become stronger. Some studies have shown that these effects occur in the form of repeated, reverberating activity moving back and forth between the neocortex and the hippocampus.

In order to retrieve and recall information stored in our minds, we need to actively activate these memory networks, whereas during the recognition process, access to them occurs more passively through cues. However, if our attention is not sufficiently focused on an event while it is happening, our memory of it may not be formed strongly enough. Likewise, if the connections between the nerve cells associated with that event are not sufficiently strong, the memory in our minds may gradually fade and eventually be forgotten. A psychologist demonstrated through his research that learned information is rapidly forgotten over time and introduced the “forgetting curve.” According to this model, if learned information is

not reviewed, a large portion of it begins to be forgotten during the first hours and days. However, reviewing information at regular intervals allows it to remain in memory for much longer. This strengthens the neural networks associated with that information and causes it to be stored more firmly in long-term memory. We can add another point to this: if we review a subject sufficiently, the neuronal connections associated with that subject in our brains may either increase or become stronger, which means that we use less energy when accessing that information again compared with when we first learned it.

There are several factors that are important for our memory. For example, as mentioned earlier, not paying enough attention to an event can affect how well it is remembered. In addition, insufficient sleep, stress, emotional states, and information that is important for a person’s survival are among the factors that can affect how persistently information is retained in our memory.

Çağan Şengül

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travel dilemma

What makes a trip worthwhile? Is it the sightseeing? Discovering new flavors? Shopping? Relaxing? There's no single right answer.

Traveling is an experience shaped by expectations, budget, time constraints, and unexpected events along the way. For many of us, traveling can mean discovering new places, trying local food, meeting new people, and accumulating lots of memories and experiences. A young person traveling abroad for the first time may begin to question their own habits when they see the daily lives of people from different cultures, thus realizing that there is no single normal. S/he can try foods s/he has never tried before, talk to strangers, or gain self-confidence by traveling alone. In this sense, travel teaches us things that we cannot always learn from books or classrooms.

A young person considering a vacation might also want to relax; the trio of sea, sand, and sun is essential for them. Some young people, for example, enjoy camping. All of these things add new things to a person's life. On the other hand, items purchased during holidays, such as souvenirs, gifts, or magnets, constitute a kind of consumption area as important objects that tangibilize the holiday.

Most of us do research before traveling. First, we choose a place, select a hotel if we're staying there, and note down the places to visit. Then we look into where to eat and drink, maybe mark the shops to shop at, or watch vlogs about the place. So, we make a list of things to consume even before we travel. This can be useful in some ways to give an approximate answer to the question "How much money will I spend on vacation?", but if we're thinking about what we'll bring back from somewhere even before we go, how much can we truly experience the trip?



At this point, a question comes to mind that I think is worth considering: Why do people shop when they travel? To eat. To find somewhere to stay. And, of course, for souvenirs. To bring a physical reminder of the place back home with us. Or perhaps to buy something we saw there and liked, knowing that we wouldn't be able to find it in our own country.

Bringing something back from the places we visit allows us, in a way, to keep that door of return open in our minds—as if a part of us is still on that trip. A perfume bought in Paris, a bag found in Rome, a piece of pottery selected in Japan, a coffee cup from Istanbul... Are these really just products? Or are they tangible reminders of the experiences we had while we were there? At the end of the day, when we look at one of these objects, we say to ourselves, 'I bought this when I was in Paris.' Shopping creates memories. And so, when an object becomes a reminder of an experience we have had, it can acquire a meaning that goes beyond simply being an object.

Moreover, shopping at local markets or small businesses can be a way to get to know the culture, art, and traditions of a country, or it can contribute to its local economy. This reminds us that shopping is not limited to consumption but also has an experiential dimension.

But what about living the moment itself, rather than simply buying things? Truly getting to know a city means walking its streets, spending hours in its museums, taking its public transportation, observing its people, eating at a local restaurant... Most of these experiences can't be packed into a suitcase and taken home. But perhaps that is precisely what makes them so valuable: the things we cannot take with us. Because some experiences may not fit into a suitcase, but they stay with us in our memories.

Experiences can retain their value longer than material possessions because they transform into memories, regaining value and continuing to exist in our lives. From this perspective, a T-shirt or accessory we bought might lose its significance just a few years after a trip; however, memories of an interesting event we experienced in a country or the people we met can stay with us much longer.

Experiencing different cultures, connecting with people from different backgrounds, and stepping outside our familiar surroundings can change the way we see the world. Something we buy during a trip, by contrast, rarely has the same power to do so.

On the other hand, because the value people place on travel and their expectations of it vary from person to person, the balance between experiencing and buying can also differ. Everyone has a different idea of travel. These ideals can also change completely when time and budget constraints are taken into account. For one person, spending three days visiting museums might be the perfect holiday, while for someone else, balancing sightseeing with shopping might be much more satisfying. For this reason, there doesn't seem to be a single right answer to the question of what an ideal holiday looks like. Instead, if we shift our focus toward understanding what we expect from travel, we may be able to have a travel experience that suits us better and ultimately feel more satisfied with our own holiday.

Being in a place or seeing a place doesn't always mean experiencing it. Visiting 10 shops, 5 restaurants, 15 tourist attractions, while taking the same photos from the same spots as everyone else, may mean seeing a place but not really experiencing it. At some point, instead of connecting with the city, we start "completing the to-do list". This brings us to the distinction between visiting and experiencing a place: visiting is limited to seeing a place, while experiencing requires establishing

a meaningful connection with it. Experiencing a place can give us entirely new perspectives and ways of thinking. It permanently changes things in a person, like Heraclitus's saying you can't step into the same river twice. In a way, the person who returns from a trip is not quite the same person who left. And that is why I believe there is a fine line between merely visiting a place and truly experiencing it.

It seems to me that when we return from a trip, we actually come back with two kinds of things: physical and intangible. Our physical luggage contains clothes, souvenirs, and purchases, while what we bring back with us mentally includes memories, stories, tastes, encounters, and new ideas. And perhaps the true value of travel lies in how these intangible things continue to reveal their value over time. When we buy an object, we know its value immediately. But sometimes, we only understand the value of an experience months or even years later.

I return to the question I posed at the beginning of my writing: what makes a trip valuable? Is it what we bring home or what we experience there? To me, the value of a trip is not measured by how full our suitcase is, but by the lasting impact it has on our lives. Perhaps what truly matters is not simply what we bring back from a trip or how many places we get to see, but what the journey leaves within us. A bag, a book, or a cup can keep the memory of a trip alive for years. But sometimes, we return home without buying anything, and years later, we still remember a street we walked down, a scent in the air, or an evening we spent in that city. I believe a good trip is not measured by how full our suitcase is, but by the value of what we continue to carry within us long after we return home.

Cansu Ertuğ



A Secret Journey to the Bare Skanderbeg Mountains



Photo: Arlis Alikaj

I wake up bright and early in the morning, to the sound of crows below my 5th-story window. I am afraid that this will be the last morning I wake up in my comfortable bed.

It was 5:30 in the morning and my ride was coming at 5:50 to take me up into the mountains. My father had arranged with a truck driver, explaining that I was studying biology at university, and needed to examine some of the rare plants in the national park. As I quickly prepared for the day, I thought back to a

conversation with my family from the day before. They were very afraid of what I might find up in the mountains. Everyone has heard the rumors of drug operations and other illegal activity up where the broken terrain and general inaccessibility make illicit activity that much easier. The Administration of Protected Areas in our Elbasan Region as well as the State Police, have recently been publicizing intensification of patrols and monitoring of drug activity in these remote areas, the sort of activities that people might take extreme measures to keep from being

exposed. My parents just wanted to be sure their only son would return at the end of the day, and to be honest, I felt a little bit of their fear myself. And these fears would be validated before the end of the day.

Rajcë Skëndërbej is a remote village with a landscape that one cannot believe exists anywhere in the world. It has recently been given international recognition from UNESCO for its forests, and this was my destination.

The time was 5:50, and the driver was right on time. He saw me and he said, *"Come student, we do not have time to lose, my bosses are monitoring me with GPS."* He nods at my father, and starts moving the car before I have even closed the door. He says *"mirupafshim!"* (goodbye!), and the car takes off.

"Have you taken food and water with you? We have a long road..."

"Yes," I told him.

"Ok, very good," he says, and continues talking to me, explaining that the trip is around 3 hours each way, and that we should be back in Librazhd around 2:30 in the afternoon.

I was trying to analyze each of his gestures, the way he seemed confused at all the cars passing by us, how he was constantly sweating and had 3 simple telephones on him, which had long batteries. He saw me with my own telephone in my hand, and he said:

"When we are up there, you will switch that off, I will tell you where you can take photos of flowers that you need. We are going over 1900 meters above sea level and I will tell you when to take photos. If you take photos of other things and spread them around, we will be in trouble."

After an hour on the road, the driver stops for coffee and invites me. At this remote roadside café, I saw several other truck drivers. I noticed that they did not speak in the local Librazhd dialect, but seemed to be from other cities.

"And him, who is he?" One of the drivers asked in a gravelly voice. He seemed bothered by my presence.

"He is a student from Librazhd, studying

biology, and for his diploma he needs to see some rare flowers in the park. Will we help him or not, our compatriot, to get a good grade? He is the same age as my daughter."

"If he is with you, you can take the risks," answered the other driver. As the coffee break went on, the conversation turned to business. The drivers argued back and forth amongst themselves over who would get to take the best wood, and thus the best payday, from the logging happening at the higher altitudes. I was feeling a little awkward at this point, and a little bad that I had misled the driver about my purpose. But it was a *"white lie"*, for a good cause – keeping myself safe.

And so we continued onward and upward. The ongoing trip was terrifying, the sort of trip where I was constantly holding my breath as the driver willed his truck up the narrow, treacherous dirt roads. We spent the next 45 minutes going 10 meters forward, 5 meters backwards. At one point, the driver stopped the car and put sticks and stones under the wheels to get it through the mud. A little further on, on a particularly narrow stretch, I closed my eyes because I could not bear to look anymore out of fear. At points we only had 3 wheels on the road, the 4th being forced up onto rocks or up into the air. To make things worse, the driver was in a bad mood after his argument with the other drivers at the coffee stop, cursing at every bump in the road. But he was a devout Muslim and he trusted in his faith, saying *"if Allah wills it, we will go forward, but if Allah wills it, we will die now."* This did not reassure me.

Further along the road I saw a construction vehicle, of the type used for opening new roads in the mountains. Here I gave a quick thought to just how much money must be coming through this remote

section of the mountains to be able to afford to bring construction vehicles up into the mountains to open new roads.

I also saw muscular young men, both from the local area and elsewhere in Albania, appearing every half hour or so to check up on us and make sure we were staying on the road. When the spotty cell phone reception came through, I noticed that I had missed 9 calls, from my father and other family members. They were concerned for me, and I was a bit afraid myself. But I did my best to remain professional, and to take in every detail that I could.

Finally we arrived in a village, where young guys from the area climbed on to the back of our truck and began their daily work. I had a chance while they were taking a water break to take photos of what I was seeing. An old village woman approached me when she saw what I was doing. She said to me:

"Do it, do it, show everyone what is happening here." She pointed at the sap of the trees that had been felled. *"We elders, we call that the 'tears of the tree'. The trees cry when they are chopped. Oh my boy...it hurts my soul."*

In front of me was a big mountain, completely deforested. I felt for a moment that I might be out in the Sahara desert, but up in the mountains, so bad was the situation. A whole mountain range was being conquered by deforestation. These mountains bear the name of our national hero, Skenderbeg, who fought to defend Albania with his sword.

Today, the blades of business are destroying the land.

Arlis Alikaj

Невестата оди накај олтарот носејќи прекрасен бел фустан. Нејзиното лице е покриено со тешка, шминка како маска и нежен вел врз нејзината глава. Нејзините мали рачиња коишто го држат букетот се тресат.

Мали рачиња во кои треба да го држи своето омилено плишано мече – невестата е само дете.

Ова се случува многу почесто отколку што мислите.

УНИЦЕФ објавува дека една од пет жени на возраст од 20-24 години се омажени како деца, проценувајќи дека 640 милиони живи девојчиња и жени биле омажени во своето детство. Детски брак се однесува на свечена или несвечена заедница помеѓу дете и возрасен или пак друго дете. Иако тоа непропорционално влијае врз девојчињата бидејќи е воедно и симптом и резултат на длабоко вкоренети полови нееднаквости, може да делува и врз момчињата. Од околу 300.000 деца кои се венчале во Соединетите Американски Држави помеѓу 2000 и 2018 година, мнозинството биле млади девојчиња кои се омажиле за возрасни мажи, впечатлива манифестација на половата нееднаквост. Без разлика на условите, детскиот брак е значаен прекршок на човековите права бидејќи ниедно дете не може да даде слободна и информирана дозвола за брак, како и очекувањата поврзани со тоа. Овие деца се лишени од секаква телесна автономија којашто им треба да им следува.

Од детските невести се очекува да бидат домаќинки, да преземат одговорности како готвење, чистење и раѓање деца пред да се физички или емоционално спремни. Во многу случаи, не се ни законски во можност да се согласат на сексуална активност. Влијанието врз детското тело и ум може да биде ужасно, со рана бременост и породување кои претставуваат сериозни здравствени ризици и остануваат водечка причина за смртта кај малолетните девојчиња во заедници каде што е често застапен детскиот брак.

За едно дете, бракот често значи да бидеш одведен од своето семејство и да си принуден да го напуштиш образованието. Ова може да предизвика социјална изолација, ограничување на шансите за стекнување финансиска слобода и долготрајни ефекти врз развојот и општиот квалитет на живот.

Овие неповолности можат да бидат пренесени на нивните деца, продолжувајќи го циклусот на злоупотреба и сиромаштија. Понатаму, девојчињата не се само финансиски туку и физички, психолошки и

законски целосно зависни од значително постарите сопрузи и нивните семејства, што ги изложува на ризик од семејно и полово насилство. Без разлика на овие ризици, детскиот брак останува легален во 33 држави во САД, што создава можност за заобиколување на законите, кој им дозволува на возрасните да избегнат кривично обвинување за обљуба врз малолетно лице при одредени услови.

Речиси 12 милиони девојчиња секоја година се венчаат пред да наполнат 18 години, што значи дека

23 девојчиња се венчаат секоја минута.

Индија сама придонесува со една третина од детските невести во светот.

Сепак, нема потреба да ја изоставиме Европа за да ги погледнеме детските невести.

Иако стапувањето во брак на возраст помала од 18 години е забрането во Македонија од донесувањето на Законот за семејството во 1992 година, детското венчање продолжува да се случува. Во 2019 година, 8% од сегашните 20 до 24-годишни жени биле неофицијално венчани на помалку од 18-годишна возраст. Локалните невладини организации проценуваат дека вистинската застапеност може да биде трипати поголема бидејќи многу вакви бракови не се регистрираат, особено во ромските заедници.

Иако бројката се намалила во последните години, таа сè уште не е нула. Ова ја прави работата на организациите како Дневниот центар за деца на улица во Шуто Оризари, предводен од неговата претседателка Ирена Велкоска, сè уште потребна и релевантна. Ирена тврди дека организацијата се фокусира на идентификување и справување со основните причини за детскиот брак. Една од тие е сиромаштијата. За да се справат со тоа, тие ги поддржуваат децата во нивното образование и потоа им помагаат да најдат работа, давајќи им можност финансиски да се осамостојат и сами да донесат одлука во врска со својот брак. Ова може да помогне со промена на перцепцијата за бракот, од трансакција во одлука основана врз љубов и лична одлука. Во еден случај му помогнаа на девојче да најде работа, но притисокот од семејството и заедницата го принудија да стапи во брак со цел да се зачува семејната чест, што укажува на друг проблем при спречувањето на детските бракови: социјалните норми, очекувања и перцепции.

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Овие норми продолжуваат да овозможуваат детски брак со тоа што го претставуваат како нормално или прифатливо. Верувањето дека возрасен маж може да побара девојче за пари е длабоко вкоренето во патријархалните верувања каде што девојчињата и жените се гледани како сопственост или финансиски товар бидејќи од нив не се очекува да заработуваат пари за семејството. Едно 12-годишно девојче беше предадено за брак откако нејзиниот татко го довел семејството во значителна сиромаштија со своите загуби во кладењето. Друго 14-годишно девојче му кажало на Центарот дека од неа било очекувано да се омажи за маж во четириесеттите години бидејќи ветил дека ќе ги отплати долговите на семејството. Ова можело да биде спречено и стои како пример за потребата од образување на децата за нивните права, но и потребата да се подигне свеста меѓу родителите во заедницата.

Уште еден предизвик е недостатокот на соодветна документација. Многу деца ги немаат потребните официјални документи, а некои немаат ниту извод од матична книга на родени. Извод од матична книга на родените служи како доказ за возраста на детето и може да биде неопходно за пристап до здравствена грижа, социјална помош и образование. Без соодветна документација, децата можат да станат уште толку незащитени и имаат поголеми тешкотии при пристапот до услугите и службите кои им следуваат.

Колку и да не ни се чини дека е така, сите можеме да имаме важна улога во спречувањето на детскиот брак. Една од најдлабоко вкоренетите причини е половата нееднаквост. Спротивставувањето на патријархалните структури и верувања коишто ги претставуваат девојчињата како инфериорни во однос на момчињата е неопходно. Ова може да започне со нешто како гласно спротивставување против деградирачки шеги за девојчињата, особено девојчињата ромки и оспорување на дискриминација во нашето секојдневие. Проговорувањето помага да се подигне свеста во нашите заедници и да се оспорат штетните стереотипи. Исто така можеме да преземеме подиректна акција преку поддржување на младински и женски организации кои соработуваат со деца и семејства изложени на ризик од детски брак.

Детскиот брак не е далечен проблем. Тој е светски проблем кој влијае врз деца од секакви култури, држави и вери, но мора да се оспори и да се спречи насекаде. Тој е резултат на токсична мешавина од социјални и економски нееднаквости вкоренети во половата нееднаквост. Ниедно дете не треба да е присилено да стапи во улога на возрасен, да го остави семејството зад себе, само за да стане роб на оној што понудил најмногу и за неговото семејство.

Нели Винзер

Превод: Андрија Крстиќ

Извори:

Is an End to Child Marriage within Reach? | UNICEF DATA

Child Marriage in the United States | Equality Now

About child marriage | Girls Not Brides

North Macedonia (MKD) - Demographics, Health & Infant Mortality | UNICEF DATA



IRELAND IN SKOPJE



Walking through Skopje's musical landscape you could expect traditional melodies, sure, but Irish ones? We propose you to meet six friends who have known each other for over a decade and have formed something that defies easy categorization. The Lorekeepers Guild, as they call themselves, exists somewhere between keeping a story and retelling it a fitting description for a band that has made its mission the preservation and evolution of Irish traditional music from their home in Macedonia.

The band is a six-piece ensemble brought together by a shared fascination with Irish music and, perhaps just as importantly, by the sheer joy of playing it together. Slobodan handles vocals and flute, Ivona contributes vocals and bodhrán, Bojan moves between whistle, mandola, and whatever other instrument the arrangement demands, Darko works his magic on guitar, bouzouki, and essentially anything with strings, while Kristijan provides drums and Andrej anchors the sound on bass guitar.

But before being bandmates, they are friends of more than ten years standing, a fact that has shaped their creative process in ways both wonderful and delightfully chaotic. *"On the positive side,"* they explain, *"there is a kind of musical shorthand that comes from knowing each other for that long."* They know each other's instincts, peculiarities, and moods, often understanding where someone is going with an idea before it is fully explained. *"All polite boundaries disappeared approximately nine years ago."*

The band's name tells part of the story itself. Lore is something passed down, like stories, songs, beliefs, and memories that survive because people keep telling them. A guild, historically, is a gathering of people united by a particular craft, like blacksmiths, bakers or merchants. Together, these concepts became a remarkably fitting description of what they do, six friends gathering around old songs, becoming their temporary keepers, and then sending them back into the world that has slightly changed.

"We like to think of traditional songs as little keepers of memory," they reflect. *"They travel through generations, change along the way, cross borders, and somehow remain alive."* The Guild does not attempt to preserve Irish traditional music behind glass like a holy relic that shouldn't be altered. Instead, they play it from where they are, Skopje, with their own musical instincts and heritage inevitably finding their way into the arrangements.

There is something strangely familiar about Irish music to Macedonian ears. On paper, Ireland and Macedonia may seem quite distant from one another, but musically and culturally, that distance becomes surprisingly small. Both traditions share a deep relationship with storytelling, with songs that carry memory, loss, humour, rebellion, and belonging. Both have that wonderful ability to make melancholy and celebration exist in the same piece of music.

The band members were drawn to this world individually and in different ways, but once they began playing together, they started discovering how naturally elements of their own musical heritage could live inside these songs. *"Every now and then, a Macedonian rhythm, melody or fragment of a traditional song finds its way in,"* they explain. *"We are not trying to make Irish music Macedonian, it happens more organically than that. Sometimes one old melody simply seems to recognize another."*

Not all of them have been to Ireland, yet! Ivona and Bojan have both visited, though separately and under very different circumstances. Ivona travelled there as a member of a Macedonian choir, performing in Cork and Dublin, so her first relationship with Ireland itself was fittingly through music. Bojan travelled privately and had the opportunity to explore more of the country, its landscapes and places. For the rest, Ireland has largely been

encountered through its music, literature, history, and stories. *"Perhaps that is one of the strange powers of traditional music: you can develop a relationship with a place long before you ever physically arrive there."*

The band hopes Lorekeepers Guild will eventually give all six members a reason to make that journey together.

When asked whether they consider Kneecap (an Irish hip-hop trio from Belfast, Northern Ireland, using Irish and vocal about Irish right to self-determination) to be Irish music, the Guild's response is unequivocal, *"Absolutely, although perhaps they belong to a very different room in the same house."* They argue that Irish music cannot only mean music that sounds as it did a hundred or two hundred years ago. A living culture keeps producing new forms of expression, and Kneecap are very much a product of contemporary Ireland, particularly of Northern Ireland, Belfast, the Irish language, politics, identity, and the realities of their generation.

Musically, what Kneecap does is obviously far removed from traditional Irish music, but culturally, the Guild would not place them outside Irish music at all. *"If anything, there is something very old in the idea of using music to tell the story of your time, your place and your people, even when the instruments, language and attitude around that story have completely changed. Tradition survives not only by being preserved, but also by being argued with."*

The band's relationship with Ireland began with music, but it inevitably became wider than that. When you spend enough time with traditional songs, you begin wondering what lies behind them. Who sang them first? Why did certain stories survive? Why are exile, home, rebellion, love, loss, and longing so persistent? Eventually, the songs lead you towards the history and culture that created them.

Perhaps this is another reason Ireland resonates with them as Macedonians. They come from a culture where music also carries much more than melody. Traditional songs can contain pieces of collective memory, identity, historical experience, and stories that survived because somebody kept singing them.

They are careful not to pretend Ireland is theirs or that they understand it in the way somebody born and raised there

would. They approach it as outsiders, but very affectionate ones, with curiosity, admiration, and respect. *"And perhaps our own background gives us a particular way of hearing it,"* they reflect. *"We do not experience Irish music as something exotic or completely foreign. Very often, underneath the different language and melodies, there is an emotional vocabulary that feels remarkably close to home."*

Irish traditional music remains something of a niche in Skopje, which, in a way, makes playing it there even more interesting. The Guild's natural home has become Skopje's Irish pub, where they play most often. They do not perform constantly, partly because this is quite a specific kind of music and there are not endless stages for it here. But over time, something much more valuable has happened, they have gathered their regulars.

There are people who come to hear them again and again, who know the songs, recognize the arrangements, and turn up whenever the Lorekeepers Guild is playing. That little community means a great deal to them.

And then there are people who encounter the music almost accidentally. They may walk into the pub without knowing what a Bodhrán is or expecting to hear a centuries-old Irish song in the middle of Skopje, sometimes with a Macedonian rhythm suddenly hiding inside it, and then, somehow, they stay.

The Guild actually likes that Irish music occupies this slightly unusual corner of Skopje's musical landscape. They were never particularly interested in making the safest or most obvious musical choice. After all, a guild does not need to be enormous. It just needs enough people willing to keep the stories alive.

Lorekeepers Guild continues to perform regularly in Skopje, carrying forward the tradition of Irish music while allowing it to evolve through the distinctive lens of their Macedonian heritage.

We would like to thank The Lorekeepers Guild for accepting to answer our questions, it has been a pleasure to learn about them.

Nelli Winzer & Arthur Bonhoure-Tolfo



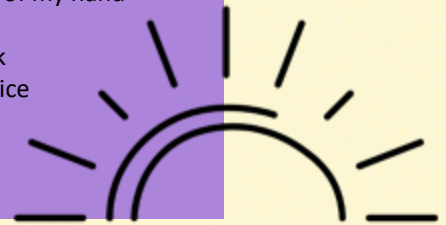
Your eyes
Shining, colorful, full-life
It makes me an idiot, like someone who
doesn't know what they're doing
I am in between sunshine and your eyes
The sun reveals original color of your eyes
as a honey blonde
Hours and minutes are passing while I
was looking to your eyes
Yet, I have been there just a moment

Ilhan

Mountaintop
majestic, snowy
emerging, reaching, breathe-taking
I can feel the icy freeze
above the sea level
Sun

Rustic bench I sit on
People like barely noticeable dots
can't see what I see now
Sun in the reach of my hand
Sun off their site
Sun on my cheek
Sun melting the ice
Sun

Ewe



Bells
Joyous, merry, used for everything
Tiny, portable or giant
Sometimes might be devastating
Streets and churches ring, this is fascinating
Bells always feel inspiring

Cansu



Color
bright, vivid
shining, glowing, spreading
It paints the whole around us
Sea

I am in the middle of the sea
there is ship there
It's blue, like ocean
It gives me peace like sea and my mother
embrace
a late afternoon

Secem



Hope
Bright, strong
Growing, shining, inspiring
It gives me strengths to keep going
Light

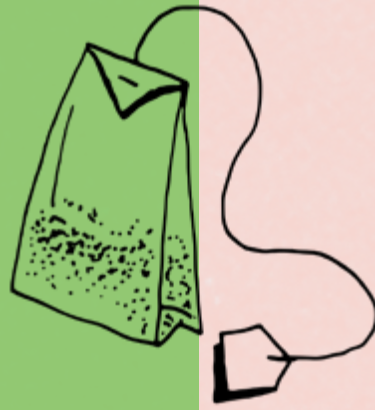
I walk into a quiet room with one small
window. Everything is gray but I can see tiny
flowers growing near the wall. A warm feeling
slowly fills the air. Then soft light enters
through the window and touches everything.
Suddenly, the room doesn't feel empty
anymore.

Şevval



The women before me

While the recipes holding comfort got bleached with time
Its taste lingers in the kitchen of my grandmas tea
Making me feel just quite at ease
Life moves fast and, I am knitting slow
Like my mom thought me quite some time ago
Every loop filled with ancestry
I'm shaped out of the love they have for me
Sometimes the taste seems so strong - I forget she is gone



Nelli

Rock
Resilient, hard
Holding, throwing, weighting
It only breaks under the great pressure
Heaviness

I walk through the desert, stopping in front of the light
castle
There is no one around
It's impossible to enter. A high mountain is looking down
at me. The wind sharply blows around but wouldn't hurt
a soul. It feels like a dream you wish to explore more,
but it feels scary to be there by myself. No one to share
a thought with. A little feather falling down.



Laura

Jungle
Green
Fresh (air)
Walking (in the jungle)
Watching (the scene)
Raining
Tree

I just opened my eyes in a fresh air
wherever I look is green
There is so much oxygen that it is able to blow my mind
The nature constructs so many wooden houses that may be a life for them
The sun is barely visible when I looked up
And then the air helps me to sleep easier when I breathe deeply



Çağan

Mountain
Imposing, majestic
Climbing, reaching, surpassing
The place the nature didn't want
human to go
Kill

The place no one was supposed to go
Snow and ice have covered everything
Someone is coming slowly to take them away from the poisoned beauty



Paul

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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