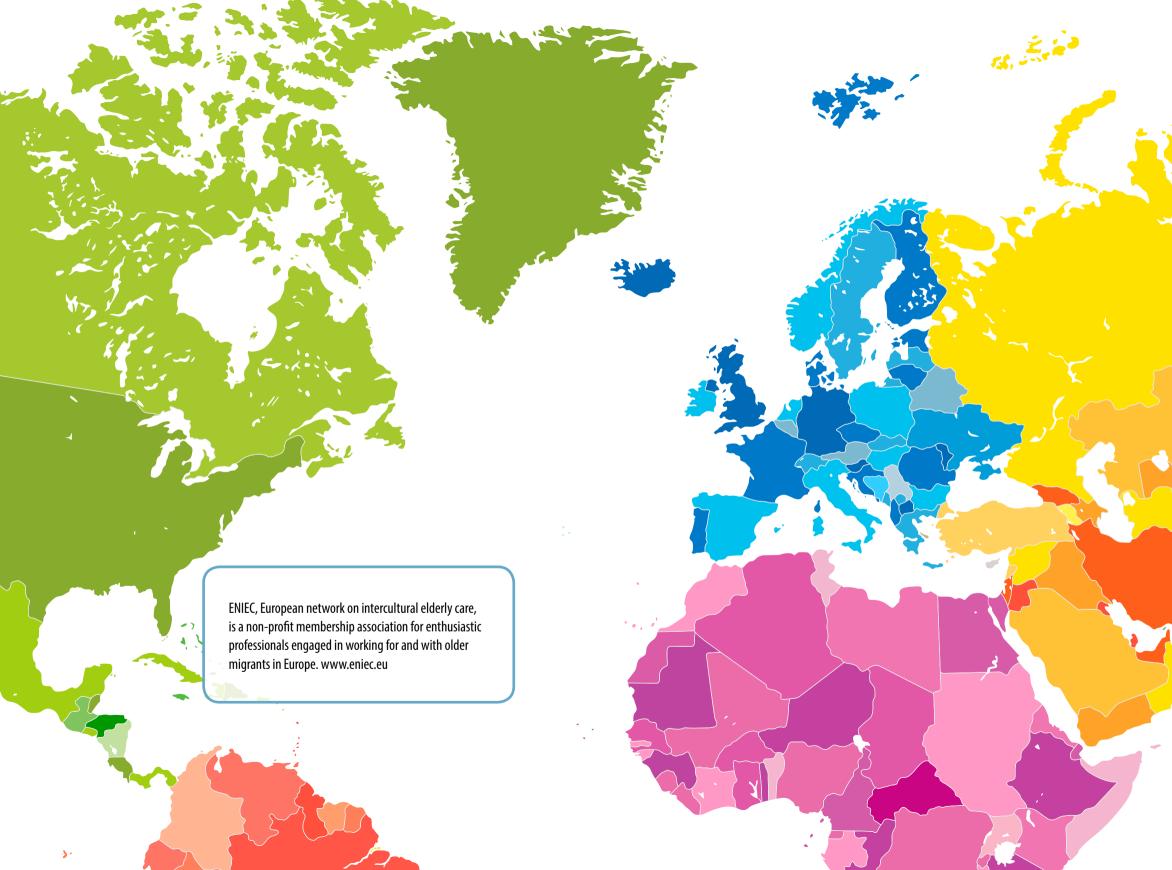


from to HOME

GUIDED BY OLDER MIGRANTS IN EUROPE





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From Home to Home

Older migrants are very diverse. It is not possible to speak of "the group of older migrants" because their history, their background is different. The reasons why they migrate are not always the same. The reasons are very personal. The way in which they adapt and cope with changes to their lives is different. But of course they have a lot in common too. Older migrants were once young and then they moved to another country to start a new life. Because of economic, political or social reasons. Others were recruited to come to build the new country and fill in the hard labour gap. The majority was young during the migration while others were already aging when they moved. They all wanted to make of this new country a place where they could feel at home and struggled to learn the new language and culture.

Like Mahmud Mneizel (74) originally from Palestine who moved to Denmark:

"We arrived in Germany in the summer of 1959. Our first experiences were the beautiful parks full of flowers and then the great looking German girls. We knew absolutely nothing about anything, we had no plans, no money, did not know how to cook, did not speak German – and the Germans did not speak English at that time."

They found a lot of warmth and help at the same time. They made new friends.

"Friendly personnel greeted us, told us what would happen next and showed us around the refugee camp. On Saturdays, the staff showed us around Småland. Swedish families, who had children our age, invited us to their homes. The families served us traditional dishes. People were kind and generous," says Saliba Marawgeh, 66 years old, living in Sweden but originally from Syria.

They started a family or sometimes a spouse followed the migrant. They also, however, had to deal with feelings of homesick and sometimes even loneliness. The socio-economic position of the majority of older migrants is poor and can be seen from their low income, modest housing and low educational level. Older migrants also suffer more from (mental) health conditions such as diabetes, depression, cardiovascular diseases and hard labour related condition than the elderly who do not have an migrant background. They feel as if one leg is at home where they were born and the other in the new country that slowly became their home. This causes feelings of being torn and grief. They miss the food, the climate, nature and the smell of the old home country, but appreciate the healthcare, other services, family and friends of the new home country. They left one home and found another, a new home. They have built a new life and often feel comfortable within it. Others wonder if the migration and all the struggles they have overcome were worth it when they look to the position of their children in this new home country. A new home country that often does not consider itself a home to this migrant population and their children.

Their children and grandchildren live in the new country and this is the main reason why especially women feel they do not want to return permanently back to the country where they were born. Some older migrants commute: they spend some months in their original country and some months in the new country. The best of both worlds. Not every older migrant can afford this though. Some older migrants have a home in the country they were born, some stay with friends and family. Some feel obliged to commute because they take care of a family member. Some older migrants do not feel at home any longer in the place they were born. But do not feel fully accepted in the new home either. Others have mixed feelings and experiences.

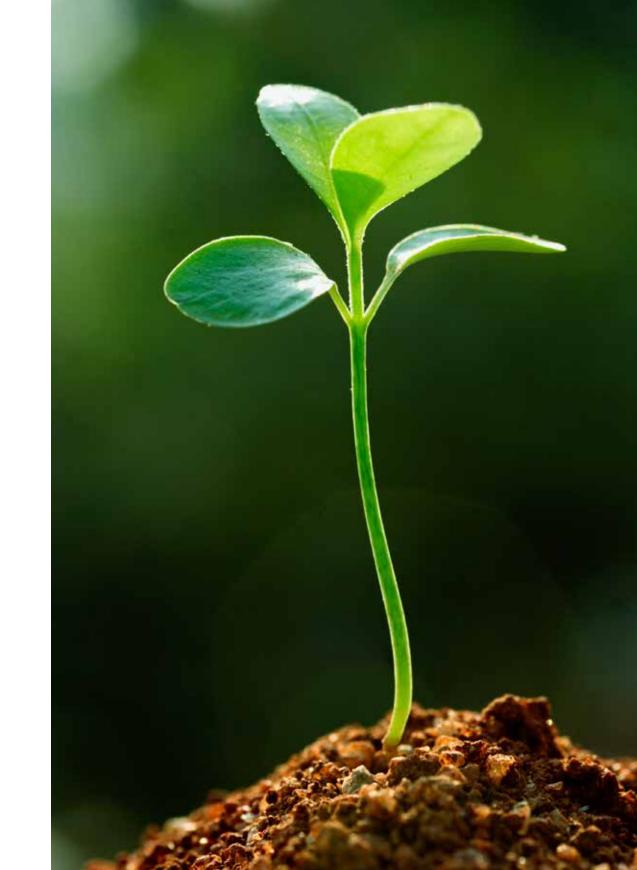
"I think I combine cultural attitudes and standards: I am 'in-between'. In my daily life, I prefer traditional Asian food combined with some Norwegian dishes," says 51 year old Bibi Thaiba Musavi who was born in Pakistan and lives in Norway.

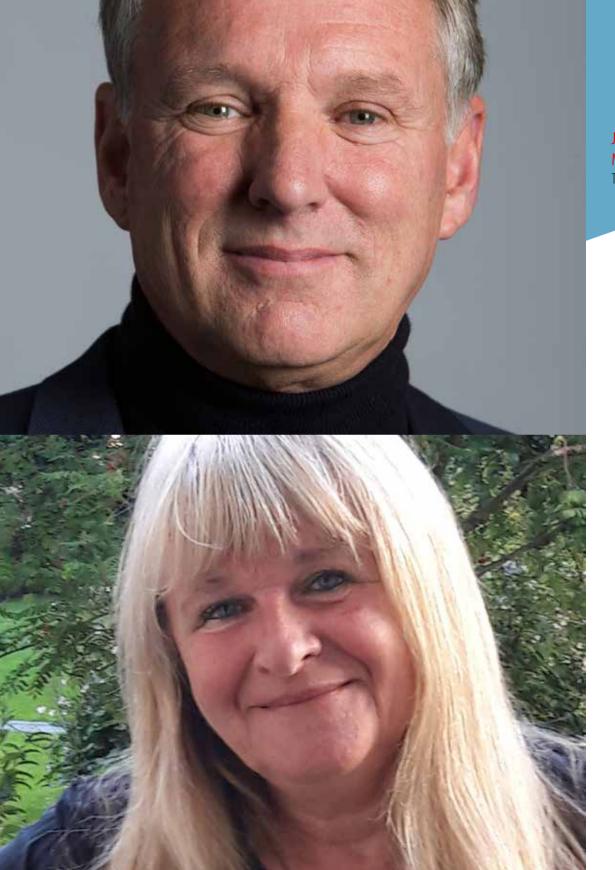
This booklet shows the diversity and variety of the older migrant in ten European countries but also their similarities. Older migrants are the protagonists of this booklet. They will guide you through their history of migration, their present situation as migrants and their thoughts about

the future. Their stories are unique and show the strength, joy, pain, courage, challenges and achievements they have faced and still face. Sharing these stories is how we, as ENIEC, wanted to celebrate our 10th anniversary. The aim of this booklet is to contribute towards putting the topic of older migrants on the of local authorities and care, welfare and housing organisations as members of ENIEC. But first and foremost we want to pay our respect to older migrants who had the courage to leave their own countries and have contributed and still contribute towards the countries in which we grew up. The stories are of great importance because they show professionals, volunteers and people in general what it is like to be an older migrant. Older migrants are often invisible. But they deserve like all older people in all societies to age in a friendly environment with respect for their history, their cultural values and their wishes. We have a moral duty to pay attention and show our appreciation for what they have brought to society and what they can bring and can contribute to society. The wisdom of the older migrant becomes apparent through this booklet. Just listen to the words of, for example, Naima Sali, a 57 year old woman who moved from Morocco to Belgium:

"This is also my message to the younger generations: discover and enrich your spirituality. It will give you peace of mind and help you deal with life challenges without fear. I wish someone had told me this when I was younger."

Migration affects all ages and all places. Migration was, is and will always be a part of life, a part of the world. It is something that people do naturally and there will always be reasons to move, to migrate, to find asylum. History shows us that this convergence of people challenges and enriches societies. In an age that is considered 'the age of migration' because of the high mobility of people, regional conflicts and environmental adversities, we should view migration in a different light. We should accept migration as a human right and embrace the opportunities and face the challenges that it brings. Aging in a different country than the one you are born in will be a common path taken by many. Let us find inspiration from the older migrants who have shared their stories with us through this booklet. Migration enriches cultural and social life. It goes without saying that we should not deny problems and we should face the challenges that cultures coming together bring.









Jan Booij and Grete Madsen The founders of ENIEC

From idea to network

"It started with an idea." Grete Madsen from Denmark and Jan Booij from the Netherlands, the founders of ENIEC, are proud of the network. It started in 2005 ... "I was working for the municipality of Copenhagen. I was asked to organise a conference about elderly care. I was looking for a speaker who could talk about older migrants, and I found Jan through the Internet," says Grete.

At that time, Jan was the director of nursing homes in the city centre of The Hague and one of the homes was De Schildershoek. In this nursing home, he worked with people from many different cultural backgrounds. "He gave an excellent speech. The next day we were having a coffee together." Jan nods, and adds: "I had this thought of starting a European network. Grete is an excellent organiser, she was willing to set this up. I was convinced that if I really wanted to start this network, I had to do it right now, with Grete. "She is so good in organising and so strict." Grete received 3,500 euro's from the municipality and also the city of The Hague supported the funding. Jan invited many Dutch people, and some of his network outside the Netherlands. Grete focused on the Nordic countries. A total of 38 people came to the first meeting in Copenhagen.

But actually the whole idea started earlier, in 2001. I attended a meeting in Bonn and met Irena Papadopoulos (professor in London) and dr.Christine Binder-Fritz from Vienna, about intercultural care. We said that it was a pity that we did not see each other more because we could exchange so many ideas and experience, says Jan. He kept this idea in his mind until the day he met Grete.

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Keep the energy in the people

Grete and Jan suggested the idea of the network during the first meeting in Copenhagen. Harry Mertens, a Dutch ENIEC member with a lot of experience with European Organisations, helped us clarify the idea, and also Frédéric Lauscher, a German member, contributed many ideas for ensuring that the ENIEC project could move forward.

We decided at that early stage that it is vital that members are individual members and not members in the name of an organisation for a network such as ENIEC, to keep the commitment personal. During the first meeting, many different issues were discussed. Another important decision was that a low contribution should be asked. ENIEC had to be for everybody, even when they cannot afford to pay a lot of money. We proposed an association and not a foundation, to let ENIEC be a member-driven organisation with democratic values.

From the very beginning, Jan and Grete always wanted to avoid becoming an institution. "Let it be a movement instead of an institution. That's why we are always reluctant to have too much bureaucracy." Grete: "The most important thing is the objective, the needs and dreams of the older migrant. I am afraid of an organisation with a lot of reports and administration, instead of talking about real life, about the theme. We have never applied for funding. The city of The Hague supported ENIEC all those years (with 5,000 euro's a year) and we are always being invited to apply for money.

When there is too much money, you get hidden agendas. "ENIEC members should come together as persons who like to exchange knowledge and experience, not to run a business. We are not a company. We have to focus on the theme. Only then can you keep the energy in the people, in the network," says Jan. The biggest success of ENIEC is that we make membership personal, we really achieved a very high level of personal commitment and engagement.

Interculturalisation is about a good confrontational dialogue

"We had a lot of fights and a lot of fun," says Grete. "Interculturalisation is about a good dialogue. You have to deal with each other and that is never easy," admits Jan. They were confronted with

cultural differences: in the Netherlands, the chair of an association leads the General Assembly. In Denmark, an independent person leads those meetings. "I thought that Danish and Dutch people were almost the same, but I discovered that there are huge cultural differences," says Grete. Both say that they had many uneasy talks. Frédéric Lauscher, a German ENIEC member, was also on the board for several years and fulfilled a good role. "OK," said Frédéric when it started to get difficult. He often created a solution and a lot of laughter.

"During the annual ENIEC meetings, there is a lot of discussion and exchange. There is always a lot of energy. If we meet in a hotel, after we have not seen each other as members for a whole year, a lot happens. Old members meet, shake hands, and new members are immediately part of the network. That is brilliant," says Jan full of fire. "ENIEC brings people together. An association should believe in its members, and not want to become important," warns Jan. "Keep it simple". "I have never met, during my whole working life, so many nice people as in the ENIEC network," says Grete. "It attracts lovely people."

ENIEC is relevant if it contributes to the wellbeing of older migrants. "Actually, I do not believe in cultures, I believe in people," is Jan's opinion. "You should, as a care or welfare organisation, as a housing corporation or municipality, be responsible for people." Grete is concerned because she notices that in most countries of Europe there is less money and attention for older migrants. ENIEC will continue to be necessary to encourage professionals, volunteers and older migrants to keep on moving to achieve tailor-made care, welfare and wellbeing for older migrants.









Making my own choices

I am originally from Marrakech, Morocco. I migrated to Belgium in November 1977. I ended up in Wuustwezel, a village near Antwerp. The reason why I migrated had to do with wanting a husband of my own choice. I wanted a solid and quiet wedding without interference from family. I knew how family can intervene in marriage if they are in the neighbourhood. My husband was already five years in Belgium after living for a period in France. We were married in July, he came after me in November. We travelled together to Belgium. I was only 18 years old and my husband is much older. He does not know his exact birthday, but he is certainly ten years older than me.

Missing my family

When I arrived, it was horrible. It was really a horrible time. It was cold, days were short and too dark, even the food was not tasty. I was really homesick. I missed my parents, my brothers and sisters, my family. I missed the nice gatherings with family. Here I was alone, my husband worked in shifts and all I did was wait for him. I lost lots of weight during that first year, I weighed 60 kg when I arrived and I was only 45 kg when I returned to Morocco during the next summer. Our family said to me "You went to the hospital, not to Belgium". After I returned, my husband tried everything. He encouraged me to go outside when he arrived from work. Then we took the car and drove to Antwerp, to shop, to eat something, to go to ethnic stores for some Moroccan ingredients like spices or Arabic music



albums or movies . . . but it was difficult for me. I was always hoping to meet Moroccan women in Antwerp. When I saw Moroccan women in some shop in Antwerp, I went to them, just to talk to them, but they spoke Berber (there are many Moroccans who only speak Berber in Antwerp) and I speak Arabic. The only person I could talk Arabic to was my husband. I missed practicing my Arabic, I had to wait till we travelled to Morocco to do so.

New friends

We even tried to move to Antwerp. We looked for a flat for two years. The owners did not want to rent to us because we were Moroccan. Even though we did not have children at that time, they told us that they could not rent to us because Moroccans have big families and tend to destroy houses. We were offered a flat above a car showroom in Wuustwezel at this time. My husbands' colleague, Pierre, had helped us to rent the flat above the showroom. Pierre and his family had a good relationship with my husband, they welcomed my husband into their family when he was alone and this good relationship continued until Pierre died this year. His sister even named our oldest daughter. She suggested Nadia, and we found it a nice multicultural name. Due to their nice village mentality we learned to adjust to life in Wuustwezel, the city mentality in Antwerp is much harsher and foreigners are not accepted as easily. Our life is in Wuustwezel and we feel good here.

Going back?

We were married for a year and a half when my oldest daughter Nadia was born. She brought life in my life and I felt less lonely. The years went by and we had more children. They kept me busy. When they were young, we went twice a year to Morocco to visit our family. Only once, when they had grown up, I actually asked my husband to go back to Morocco. I thought it would be good to go back since I was still feeling homesick once the children had finished secondary school. We played with the idea, even with Pierre, to start up a project there. My husband was not really fond of the idea. It was important to him to reach retirement age in Belgium. After a while, we let that idea go. There is no reason to go there now. Our children and grandchildren are here. My parents are deceased and my brothers and sisters are busy with their daily lives. It has also be-

come easier to communicate with family in Morocco, you can call, use WhatsApp, ... In the early days, it was very hard to do so. The day I received a letter from my family was like a, Eid-day (Muslim religious holiday that marks the end of Ramadan similar to Christmas). I was so happy! I kept rereading the letter. I wished to hear my parents' voice but that was not really easy. You had to make an appointment in a public telephone centre to be able to hear their voice. We also sent recorded cassettes to each other and I replayed them when I missed them. I remember I was so happy when I told my mother that we would have a phone in the future through which we could hear and see each other. She said: "That would be like heaven on earth!". You see, we suffered when we migrated. Migrants today have many more communication possibilities to stay close to their family and to feel less lonely.

Home sweet home

Today, I am very busy with my children and grandchildren. I have hardly the time to go shopping in Antwerp. When I go to Antwerp, it is to visit my children. I am very proud of my children and what they have achieved. It is important to me that we get together and share time. We are very mobile. We go a lot to Antwerp. My husband likes to go to the mosque and visit friends there. I like to shop or go to Mevlana, a Turkish restaurant. The owner knows what I like. I go in and he knows what I want: a cutlet chop with rice. We also have dinner at Lunch Garden usually with friends where I like the fish and chips. I also like to cook myself. I learned to bring the right spices





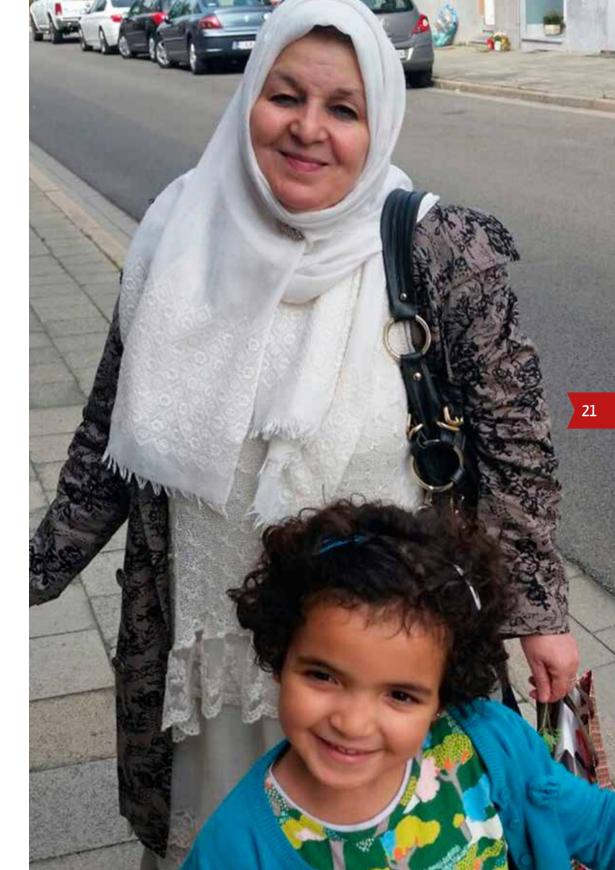
back from Morocco and use them in dishes. Traditional dishes like couscous, chicken in the oven, slilou . . . are my favourite even though I cook more Belgian dishes with potatoes for the children. I imagine my old day with my family. I hope that my children can be there for us when it is needed. I cannot see myself in an old people's home. In the meantime I enjoy spending time with my family here and in Morocco. I also enjoy working on my spirituality. I enjoy waking up during the night to pray and to read the Quran. I always say to my children that, if they are searching for a gift for me, they should endorse me to go to Mecca.

This is also my message to the younger generations: discover and enrich your spirituality. It will give you peace of mind and help you deal with life challenges without fear. I wish someone had told me this when I was younger.

Belgium

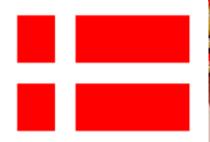
- 11 267 910 inhabitants
- 2 062 561 people of 64 years or older
- 6 10 % of these older persons have foreign roots, in cities like Brussels 27 %.
- Most older migrants come from Italy, Spain, Morocco, Turkey as a result of labour migration policy.

Future migrant elders in Belgium will diversify more in socio-economic profile, migration and origin since we have already 162 nationalities in some Belgian cities





Mahmud Mneizel (1942) Born in Palestina. Migrated to Denmark in 1959.





Equality and democracy

I am originally from Palestine; from a small village 12 kilometres from Nazareth. My father had an important business relationship with a coffee trader from Jordan. He visited us and sold coffee regularly. I was still small, and at that time the unstable political situation had started, it had started as early as 1946.

My life in Palestine and Jordan

I have no memory of it myself, but my father asked the coffee trader to take me and another child of the family back with him to Jordan. There were two reasons for that: My father had a farm in Palestine with sheep and cows, and my parents could not manage both small children and all the work at the farm. Secondly, they knew that if it became necessary for them to flee from their home one day, it would be dangerous with the kids along. Consequently, I went away with the coffee trader on his horses to Jordan, and I stayed with him. My parents followed a year later and settled down in Jordan, buying a farm there, but also keeping the old farm in Palestine. There were no ethnical or religious conflicts where we lived in Jordan. We all had the same Arabic names, we lived together in peace and harmony, and we even married across religious beliefs, without any problems. We all had dual citizenship. In 1958, my cousin had left for Germany (Stuttgart). He sent letters and photos to me and his brother, who was my age, and we went to school together. One day he suggested that we should leave for Germany, mainly to experience all the beautiful blonde girls there. We were around 17 or 18 years old. I asked my father, but he was determined to give all his kids a good education in Jordan. One morning we sneaked away. We travelled through Syria and then into Lebanon as the only route to the Western countries was through Beirut Airport.





Germany and adoption

We arrived in Germany in the summer of 1959. Our first experiences were the beautiful parks full of flowers and then the great looking German girls. We knew absolutely nothing about anything, we had no plans, no money, did not know how to cook, did not speak German — and the Germans did not speak English at that time. My father was furious, he disowned me and told me to stay in Germany and "make the best out of it". I finally lost all contact with my father when I became engaged to a German girl. He never wished to re-establish the contact between us, and he died in 1983, before I had a chance to talk to him again. I went to his funeral in Jordan. He never forgave me for leaving. At that time, you could not stay in Germany as an independent guest worker if you were under the age of 21. Therefore, a German childless couple offered to adopt me until I turned 21. I stayed with them. We started to work, the hourly wage was 1 DM (=0.50 Euro). We quickly learned German, and we already spoke some English. A little later, I got a job at a shirt factory in the packing department. As soon as I turned 21, I moved away from my adoptive parents to Frankfurt. There I worked at, Schenk, a huge electronic factory. After 9 years in Frankfurt, in 1968, I left for Denmark.

My first years in Denmark

A member of my family migrated to Demark in 1958. He and his wife visited us in Germany. He claimed that the possibilities in Denmark were much better than in Germany and that there was lots of work. I went to Denmark alone since my cousin chose not to join me. However, 5 years later, he also moved to Denmark, and is still living here in Copenhagen. Through a Danish family friend I was advised to start learning Danish immediately. At the language school, I made friends with 15 young men, all of them from various parts of the world, a Tunisian, a Pakistani, an Israeli, a Libyan, etc. At the time, there was not the same number of Turkish migrants as there are these days. I was, at the time, hired by the huge electronic factory Thrige Titan as an unskilled worker, under the condition that I continued to follow my Danish language classes. I often slept during the classes, as they were during the evening and, after a long day at work with hard physical labour, I was just too tired. One day, management decided to offer to pay for a training course to become a fitter. By coincidence, they discovered that I knew how to work with big machinery due

to my time at Schenk in Germany. However, in Denmark you had to be qualified to work with the machines. After some years, I achieved my diploma and I worked as a fitter for 38 and a half years at Thrige Titan, right up until my retirement.

Clara

I met Clara, who is herself Danish, in Denmark in 1968, when she was working at a bank. We are still happily together. At that time I rented a room in Copenhagen. Clara lived in a 2 and a half room apartment at Høje Gladsaxe in Copenhagen. There she had lived for most of her life. I moved in with her, we married, and my brother came to visit us. Clara had a baby when I met her, and I have been a substitute father for him. He started a career with the post office and has his own home, is married, and has children of his own. My brother decided to stay in Denmark, and he had several children, whom Clara raised for great deal of their childhood, as they did not have anywhere to play or other facilities where they lived themselves. As a family, we spend and share many moments together such as Christmas, to name but one example.

Kindness

What I remember the most — from when I arrived in Denmark — is all the kindness I met. There were helpful and kind people everywhere, even if I did not speak a word of Danish. My proficiency in German helped me to learn Danish quickly enough. Every friend I made had a job, there were plenty of jobs to go around. We were paid DKK 13 (= EUR 1.75) per hour. After work, we met at ABC Cafeteria in the city centre and talked over a cup of coffee (we could not really afford more).

The international club

More and more foreign workers joined us at the cafeteria and, after a while, the municipality officials offered us a location where we could be together and talk, prepare food and listen to music, etc. It was a great success for a long time. We established the International Club and we formed a board of members. I was elected chairman of the board for many years. I spent a lot of time there. Religion was not an issue at any time, everybody was welcome no matter where they came from.



I myself was raised in a Muslim family, but religion does not play a very big role in my life. After some years, a new type of person joined the club: foreigners who spent much energy on cheating the local authorities, for example, by receiving child support, even if they did not have any children. This type of attitude and lack of moral backbone increased, and — feeling responsible for the organisation — I could not handle it. I finally left the organisation, the club, and I have not been there since. The club no longer exists.

Jordan and Denmark - my two countries

I feel very much attached to Denmark, much more than to Jordan, but I call my family in Jordan once a week and I visit them in the event of an illness in the family. As I said, I also returned for my father's funeral. When I think of Jordan, I mostly miss peace in the country between the Muslims. In my youth, we never differentiated between Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds, etc. Today they are killing each other, even if the Muslim faith prescribes that you must not kill.

Clara and I, have a good life together here in Denmark. We can afford to travel on holidays, and we have a lovely little allotment garden with a small house on the grounds, and we love to spend time there. We still live in Clara's apartment at Høje Gladsaxe. I think I have succeeded in making a good life here in Denmark, and I have not been unemployed for one single day of it.

My very old age to come

When I think of the future, I accept the fact that a time may come when I need so much care that I will have to move into a nursing home. If Clara dies before me, I might consider moving back to Jordan for the rest of my days. Jordan has changed, however. Old familial structures are disappearing, apart from the fact that it is still the oldest man in the family who decides important issues concerning family members. It is as if the Jordanians have adopted the worst of Western habits and tendencies; there is far more focus on egoism and on money, than there used to be.

If I am alone sometime during my old age, my money will last much longer in Jordan, it is ex-

pensive to live at a Danish nursing home. I would not expect anybody in my family to provide my daily care if I moved to Jordan, unless I paid them to be my care giver. There I would be capable of paying them to do so.

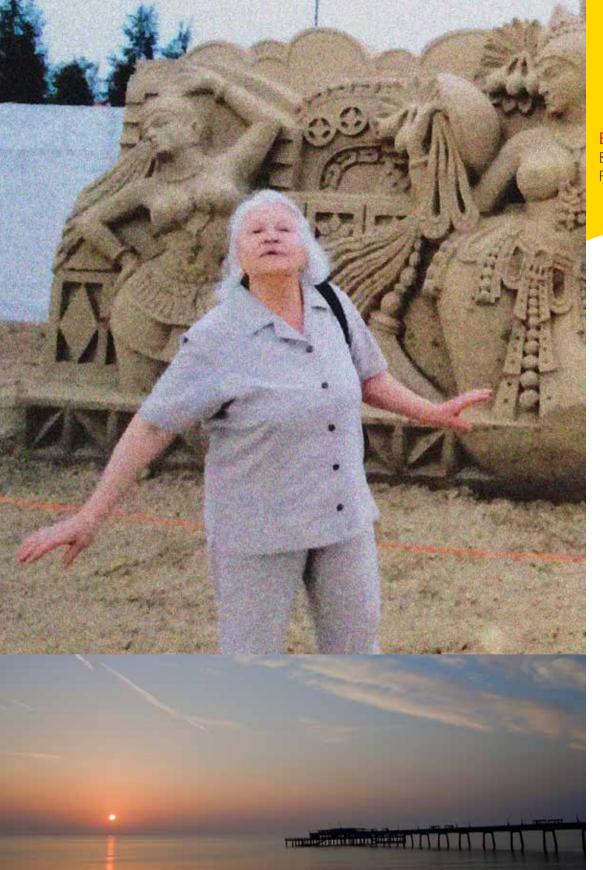
At a Danish nursing home I would not have any special needs due to my origin. I drink alcohol and eat pork. Today I have a hard time accepting women covered by veils. Islam is a democratic religion, mostly based on charity towards your fellow humans. To me you cannot be a true Muslim if you cannot accept and respect that also Jesus and Moses existed.

Many migrants coming to Denmark forget that Denmark has opened its doors to them. They get so much help with money, flats, child care, education, etc. They should be grateful for all this, and behave according to Danish standards. Even if they do not assimilate, they should at least respect them. They have so many opportunities here. Denmark is a country based on the idea of equality and democracy, but most migrants come from countries where democracy is a totally foreign idea. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that they attend school quickly to be taught about the Danish system and values and learn to speak Danish as soon as possible.

Denmark

- 5 7 million inhabitants
- 330 000 migrants and 142.000 descendants
- The biggest group of migrants from non-Western origin is Turkish.
- Migrants come from: Syria, Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovenia, Iraque, Pakistan







Elina Närginen (1936)
Born in Russia. Migrated to
Finland in 1943.

Mushrooms in every place

I was born in a small village called Lottalova near St. Petersburg in 1936. I had two brothers, but the younger one died when he was three at the same time as my mother passed away. That was during the war and we were at a camp waiting to be transferred to another place. We were hungry and there were many diseases, it was a very hard time. My older brother and father and I survived.

In 1943, we came to Finland and lived there for a year. I remember how we picked mushrooms in the forest. Next, we were transferred back to Russia in 1944 to Petrozavodsk in the Russian Karelia and we also found many of the same mushrooms. I have such good memories of a lovely river where we swam and played with my friends. My grandmother lived there and she always told me not to forget the Finnish language, she taught me to write and read Finnish. She also told me many stories about Finland. She had lived in Finland when she was young, but moved to Russia. In Petrozavodsk, I often listened to a Finnish radio station and sometimes read Finnish magazines.

Later I moved back to St. Petersburg and got married and, in 1963, my son was born. I had a nice life there, we had a car and we could drive to a forest and pick mushrooms and berries and we also went fishing. I worked 30 years in the rubber factory in St. Petersburg. I studied a lot for that profession. I loved this work even though there was a special slightly unpleasant smell in the factory. I got recognition at work and I studied more to know more and to gain a higher position. My last title was as senior engineer of technology. 22,000 people worked in that factory and there were over 400 workers in my department. I made friends with my colleagues and I still have good friends from that time in St. Petersburg. We have been friends for more than 50 years. I divorced but got married again and moved to Ukraine in 1986. At that time, I was already 50 years old. He was a good





man and we had such a pleasant life in Ukraine. My granddaughter lived with us for three years when she was small. And we often visited St. Petersburg. Both my husbands always told me not to forget the Finnish language, so they encouraged me to speak and read the language. My husband died in November 1993.

To Finland

I decided to move to Finland in 2000. I had already got to know some Finnish women in Ukraine and I had a positive attitude towards Finland. My uncle had moved to Finland some years earlier. He often called me and asked me to come as well. I started the process of moving and changing my home country and quite soon I got permission to move to Finland. My uncle helped me to get a flat. I got furniture from different places: from second-hand shops and from relatives. When I arrived in Finland, I didn't have much.

I remember when I arrived in Tampere, Finland. I came by bus and I immediately felt that I had come home. Finland felt as home. It was so clean: the air was so clean and nature was beautiful, there were lakes and forests everywhere. Forests are like therapy for me, I love forests and lakes. I feel committed to my neighbourhood, as the place I live. My neighbours are very kind. This is such a nice and silent place to live. Everything is so close, shops, the doctor, swimming pool, pharmacy and even a small lake and forest. I ski in the wintertime in the forest and on the ice of the lake. Currently, I live alone in a block of flats. I like it here, this flat is very good. Every week I go to a sauna since we have a good sauna in this building.

Near here, there is a place for migrants to spend time, so I go there sometimes. I also walk around and read a lot. I love different plants, mushrooms and nature.



Transnational contacts

After I had moved to Finland, my son thought that he could come to Finland too, but then he changed his mind and decided not to. He said that he has born and lived in St. Petersburg and wanted to stay there. I keep in touch with my family and friends in St. Petersburg by calling them. I used to visit there too, but nowadays I just visit once a year or even less. My son has two daughters there and one of them has a son, so I am a great-grandmother. My grandson is 2 years now. My children come to visit me from St. Petersburg and they help me with the cleaning and everything. I, for example, have a big carpet and it is too heavy for me to take outside and clean so, when they come, they help me with it.

Present day

I miss my children and friends and former colleagues in St. Petersburg, but my life is good here, I don't have any disagreements with anyone. We have some clubs here where I sometimes spend time and I also go to church. I still do everything by myself, like cooking and the laundry. I use natural herbs when I cook and boost my health. I don't need any services yet, but even I have some health issues that I will have to tackle at some point. I'm a little bit scared. My grandchildren say that they will help me when I need help. I don't think about those services. I am forever young, or so I like to believe.

Finland

- 5 49 million inhabitants
- 229 765 foreign citizens
- Older than 50 years 39 695 Older than 60 years 16 304 Older than 70 years 6 066
- Migrants come from: Estonia, Russia, Sweden, China, Somalia









Past

My name is Zhang Xiao Zhong. I was born in 1952 in China.

My sister has been living in Hungary for several years and she invited our family to come for a European summer holiday in 2013.

Arriving in Europe I was surprised that it is a totally different world from what I had imagined.

During our holiday, we visited several countries: Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Slovenia, Italy and Hungary. All of them were amazing because of their unique beauty.

I never really thought that I would later return to Europe as an migrant. I suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and only a couple of days after my arrival in Hungary, I already began to feel better.

After our return to China, I got worse. As it was much better during our holiday, most likely due to the positive effect of the environment, my husband and I decided that we would get ready and move here for a longer period.

Luckily, we did not have to start out alone. My sister, who has been living here for a while, helped us a lot. For example, at the beginning we could use her flat and she also helped us in applying for a residence permit. It was a strange feeling to live in a foreign place, but I feel that, with her help, we were able to fit into this life more easily. Of course, I visit a doctor here regularly. He looks after me according to European standards with regard to medical assistance.





Present

Currently I live in Budapest with my husband. Luckily, we are both retired and we do not need to worry about having to find a job.

Our pensions are enough to cover daily costs and we could buy a flat from our saved money. We are very familiar with Budapest. We visit many places around the city, and we understand the local public transport system very well.

Naturally, my home is China since I lived there for a long time. Spending too much time there, however, means I physically suffer because of the bad environmental conditions and my illness. I was in China this year because we celebrated my daughter's wedding. After a few days, I again started to cough all the time and it was not easy for me.

Although I find living in Europe to be enjoyable it is also strange. On the other hand, I do not feel out of place here. We did not have any problems because of our origin and most of the people are so nice and helpful. Many people from my country live here and we have developed numerous new friendships. Sometimes my husband and I take care of children. They are like our family and it is also good to spend our time in this way.

Chinese restaurants is what reminds me of my own country while in Hungary. I can also visit exhibitions, there are different migrant forums and the crowded Christmas market brings up beautiful memories of my home country. They all help when we feel homesick.

I miss China and I suppose I will always miss it because I know the people there. We, therefore, always go back home for New Year's Eve as well as during the year sometimes.

Generally, we cook Chinese food and we often go to restaurants with my brother and we visit both Hungarian and Chinese ones.

Speaking languages is essential here and could be difficult at the beginning. Luckily I have found quite a lot of ways to improve my English and now I am also learning Hungarian.

Future

When I retired, at first I felt rather out of place. Pensioners are so lucky, people say, they can enjoy their free time and the fruits of their labour. I do not think this is true. I had the feeling I was excluded from society because I am no longer of any "practical use" to society. I felt as if I was no longer needed and that I had lost the values I have always represented. This feeling made my days miserable. But ever since I came to Hungary with my husband, I see everything from a different perspective. On the one hand, I can help my friends with looking after their children and this makes me feel useful and, on the other hand, we can go for a walk and collect some vegetables and fruit, which means we are doing exercise while having fun. I did not really have this opportunity in China.

It also helps that my condition has improved significantly since I came to Hungary. Our pensions are sufficient to live a normal life, moreover, our quality of life is better here than it would be in China. I am content with my everyday life and do not hanker after anything.

Our message to migrants: it is always the most difficult for the first family members who arrive in a strange new country.

I consider ourselves to be lucky because my sibling has lived here for years and we received a lot of help. I cannot even imagine a different scenario where no one would be there to help us.

Hungary

- 9 820 493 inhabitants
- 126 300 First generation migrants and 98 698 Second generation migrants
- 177 135 Asylum seekers (2008 tm 2016) and 78 969 migrants between 50-64 years
- Migrants come from: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Iran, Kosovo







Mrs. Tosun (1943)
Born in Turkey. Migrated to
Germany in 1964.

My life in Europe

I came as a very young woman of 21 together with my husband to Germany. At this time, we had been married two years and had a son. It was curiosity that convinced us to go to Germany although we were doing fine in Turkey.

We both had a job from the very beginning. We could build up a future for our children. We bought a house. Everything was going well.

I liked Germany. Back then, there were no Turkish shops in Germany. But this was not a problem at all. I was — and I still am — a very passionate and talented cook. In Germany I also cooked a lot and invited my German colleagues to dinner at my house.

I was lucky to have nice colleagues. We got on very well. We made several excursions, went to discos and restaurants. We just enjoyed life.

My husband was generous. He let me live my life as I wanted. He preferred to stay at home but gave me the freedom I needed.

The big change

My life changed completely after living for 15 years in Germany. I met the love of my life. I left my husband and my children and left my whole life behind me just for him.

I am an Armenian Christian. My new husband was a Turkish Muslim. This love was not easy for me. I left him twice, but returned to him each time. As he became gravely ill, we went back to Turkey. We lived there for 6 years. I enjoyed my life back there. I had not realised how I missed living in Turkey until then. The warm-heartedness, the gregariousness of the people. We had an open (welcoming) house.







Back to my second home

When my husband died, I returned to Germany. This time, however, it was very tough. I had lost everything that had ever mattered. My parents and brothers were all dead. My children refused to talk to me and I was very lonely.

I moved into a small flat. I could not work anymore. Life, however, needs to go on. So I found new and old friends.

I started to rediscover my second home. We made excursions like we did in the old days and met for a coffee. Germany became like home once again.

In 2012, I became seriously ill. I was no longer able to stay at home and live independently anymore. So I decided to move into a nursing home but with a heavy heart. Thank god that I found a nursing home where they speak Turkish.

How I live now? Life is good. My children have forgiven me and we are again in contact. They occasionally come to visit. I still go out with my friends. I am independent and do what I want.

But I miss Turkey

I often remember my childhood. I was born in Istanbul. My family was an old-established Armenian family. I already started my apprenticeship as a seamstress at the age of 12. I loved the work in the wealthy neighbourhoods. Those beautiful dresses and those beautiful houses.

I know that I cannot live in Turkey now. Life in Turkey is only pleasant if you have no financial worries. I do not have much money. In Germany, I miss the emotions I felt in my hometown and the warm-heartedness of the people. In Germany, people do not seem to talk or laugh much.

Germany

- Total population in Germany: 81 250 000
- Migrant population: 17 1000 000
- Migrants older than 65 years: 1 590 000
- Top countries: Turkey 1 506 113 (in 2015), Poland 740 693 (2015), Italia 596 127 (2015), Rumania 452 718 (2015), Syria nearly 600 000 (in 2016)









Your diploma is like your first husband

Cassava with butter

It was back in the summer of 1983, when I came to the Netherlands, all by myself. Since I had already visited Holland before, way back when I was younger when on holiday, I knew which bus lines to take and it wasn't very long until I reached my grandmother's house. My grandmother lived here already, in a nice neighbourhood in Rotterdam. She decided to live here when Surinam became an independent country in 1975. After I graduated from the teacher training college in Surinam, I came to the Netherlands to continue studying: civics and sociology. You can't take these subjects in Surinam. When I came to the Netherlands, I thought that everything was different. It was big. For example, the wide roads and while the sun sets at 6 o'clock in Surinam, it doesn't set until after 10 o'clock in the Netherlands, which was strange. What I miss the most is Surinamese fruit. Papaya is my favourite fruit. My sister frequently sends me several citrus fruit and pomelos. She even has a tree and picks fruit herself, that's why it's always fresh. I still use Surinamese species when cooking. And if I am having a rough day, I eat cassava, which I think is delicious. I bake it myself in my oven, with melted butter. Yum!

During the first year I was in the Netherlands, I attended the 'social academy' and the second year I attended the teacher training college where I studied geography and social studies in Delft. I volunteered at a helpline for children during college to get to know Dutch society better. I was also part of the board in a home for women in Rotterdam. I felt very welcome in the Netherlands and I've always felt this way. Because of my volunteering jobs and college, I made many new friends. My grandmother had a









close friend who, later, became my friend too. She even got me a job at a caravan and camping company so, while attending college, I could make money too.

In the meantime, my younger sister came to live in the Netherlands too, but my brother and two other sisters still live in Surinam. I don't go there every year, but I do go there frequently. The tickets are really expensive. When my father was dying, I returned to Surinam for the first time. When my mother was still alive she came now and then to Holland for a holiday. I will be going to Surinam again for a holiday next year. That's what it feels like, a holiday. I live and work in Holland. This is where I'm settled. Holland is my country, this is where I belong.

Of course I've thought of permanently returning, but the jobs that I'm able to apply for aren't there. The national healthcare system isn't exactly good either. See, if I did want to go back, I should have gone right after my study. If I do return, I'll go for my family.

I have changed because of my stay too. When I'm in Surinam, the people around me often tell me: you act different, the way you walk is different, you walk so fast. I notice that I ask questions that they never think of asking. Since I went to college, people look up to me. They are very proud of the fact that I finished my studies.

Diploma as first husband

After teacher training, I studied sociology in the city of Rotterdam. I also followed a course to become a teacher in Social Studies with a grade-one qualification. My parents always told me: your diploma is your first husband. My father thought studying was very important. I always kept studying. And I always kept working. Just like my grandmother. She always worked very hard and took care of foster children. In 1993 I worked for one year at the Zadkine College, I taught social studies. Since 1994, I've taught social studies and Dutch at the Albeda College in Rotterdam. I work 40 hours per week but I am still studying. My thesis is about living, lifestyles and integration of older Creole, Hindu and Javanese people. First I thought of studying psychology. I had already started, but then Margriet May, my friend and also a member of ENIEC, said to me: why won't you write a thesis? Professor Dr. Frits van Engeldorp-Gastelaars, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, is my supervisor. When I have finished my thesis I would love to work with

and for older migrants. Maybe I will write some articles about older migrants. I think I know more about older migrants because of my roots. People have faith in you because you have the same roots. That is my ambition for the future.

Grandmother as role model

The leitmotif in my life is advocacy for women. Maybe it is because of my grandmother. She was, like many other women from Surinam, alone. She worked hard at a school and altered and made clothes for other people. She took care of herself. She was very independent. She is my role model. Surinam women are very powerful, they need to be strong. A heritage from the slavery period. I am a board member at Stichting Prefuru, who do advocacy work for Surinam women in Rotterdam and its surrounding areas. We try to inspire them to take action. 'Prefuru' means 'dare' in the Surinam language. Together with Margriet, I set up two walk-in and meet projects for Surinam older people. We do this together with the professional care organisation Humanitas. We only work with volunteers. The volunteers are taking the lead and we support them where needed to offer support and to organise activities with them for the older people.

My friends do have different cultural backgrounds. I do not care about the term 'migrants.' I am a Surinam Dutch woman and I will always be this. We know Babel, my last name, from the bible: Tower of Babel. I know from the archives that the first person with the last name 'Babel' came to Surinam in around 1800. Descendants of two brothers, Broos and Kaliko, who rejected colonial dominance at the Rorac plantation. My grandmother came from British- Guyana. She spoke English. My father told us not to speak in Surinam. Only at markets and shops should you speak in Surinam, but at home we were told to only talk Dutch.

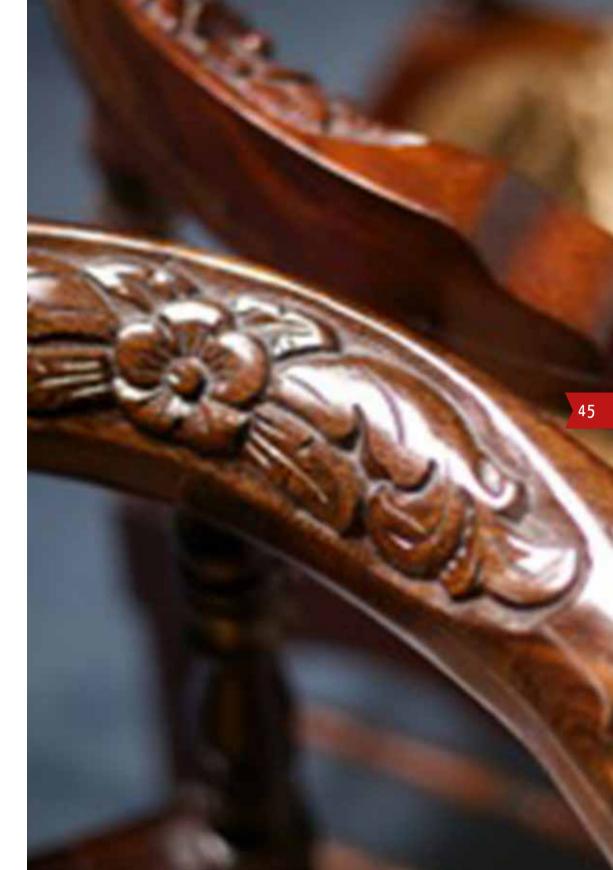
Growing old? I do not know the answer. As a family we own a piece of land, so I am always able to go back to Surinam. I am not sure whether I would like to live there permanently when I am old. Maybe I could commute. Yes, I think that is logical. I would like to grow old healthy and I would like to stay active. Otherwise, I would get bored. My husband has a grandchild. We would like to see the child grow up and like to do nice things together. That is why he will not go back to Surinam. I think we will 'commute'.



When I need care myself, I hope there is a cousin or niece who will be my informal care giver. I do not have any children. If you have been raised in a big family, you are used to taking care of each other. We are supposed to take care of each other. My aunt, who is 96, lives with my sister in Surinam in our old house where we lived with our parents. I would like to be in control of my own life as long as possible. In the Netherlands healthcare is better. There are more services for older people than there are in Surinam. Some people in Surinam do not have enough money to pay for services. Sometimes their relatives help them financially. My relationship with my brothers and sisters is strong. We have always been there for each other and this will not change. My nephew studies in Belgium. I am temporarily responsible for him. That is the way things go in our family. What I like to teach them and other youngsters is: get a diploma so you will stay independent and can always take care of yourself. I always kept developing and learning. What my father taught me and what I saw my grandmother do, I have put into practice. It is this important lesson that I would love to teach to the next generations.

The Netherlands

- 16 979 120 million inhabitants
- 1 45 300 migrants
- 78 000 older migrants (65 years or older), in 2050: 520 000
- Migrants come from: Turkey, Surinam, Dutch Antilles, Morocco, Caribbeans









Migration history

Like many others, my father moved from Pakistan to Europe for work. He went to Denmark in the 1960s. He worked hard. Some years later, he had earned enough money to bring his wife to Denmark. My little brother and I were left to live with our grandparents in Pakistan. I was not prepared to be separated from my mother. I cried and ran after the train, in vain. As a five year old girl, I felt I had been abandoned, but I did have a strong feeling of responsibility for my little brother. A couple of years later, however, my brother was sent to join our parents. This separation was also very painful. I was the last one to move to Europe when I was 8. I found it difficult to rebuild the relationship with my parents and adapt to the new language and conditions in Denmark. I went back to my grandparents in Pakistan for a few more years, but came to live permanently with my parents in Denmark at the age of ten.

I was dressed differently, I did not understand the language and I felt ashamed to go to a class of younger students. I dropped out of school as much as possible. No one intervened. My parents were both working long hours and were unable to help me. In secondary school, I luckily met a girl with a similar background. I could talk to her in Urdu. My school results improved, but I had no ambitions to make a career. I tried different kinds of practical work, but after a while I wondered: "would this be my life?" I went back to school and combined formal education with practical work.





Building a new life

I married a man from my country of origin. At the age of 20, I moved with my husband and first child to Norway. In the beginning, we lived with my husband's family. A new life, a new language, a new family situation ... Once more, I wondered: "would this be my life?" After a while we got our own flat. I was happy to get municipal support to go to high school. After passing an exam with top marks, I went to college to study. I got a driver's licence so that I did not waste time travelling and could get between college, kindergarten and my home as quickly as possible. I had to fight traditional values about the role of women in the family. When I broke with traditional expectations, I could not count on support from my husband. I had to work on two fronts.

I spent long hours using three different dictionaries, Norwegian — English, English - Urdu and a stranger dictionary in Urdu when studying. The terminology was difficult. I had to look up every second word in the textbooks. I managed, got my education as a Municipal Candidate and have since worked full-time doing accountancy work, in education and at organisations. I also have a Master's in School Administration.

Present time - To help others build their own lives

My combination of education and work experience was a good preparation for the role as a leader of the LIN organisation. LIN stands for: Equality (in Norwegian: Likestilling), Inclusion and Network) and it is, a voluntary multicultural organisation established in 2009. The organisation works for equality and inclusion of minority women. LIN is a platform for information, knowledge, communication, dialogue and trust between the minority population and Norwegian society across ethnicity, religion and culture barriers (http://www.linorg.no/en/what-is-lin/).

The emotional preparation for this role started much earlier. I learned a hard lesson when I was five regarding migration because family units often have to split up in order for the breadwinners to find work. I continued to learn as an migrant schoolgirl in Denmark and as a young mother in Norway. Now I am in a position to support migrant women from all over the world. I can inform them about opportunities and aid measures in Norway and give them a foundation for choice by learning the language and by participating in courses and networks.

Now I can say: "This is my life". With compassion, I can use my own experiences from life, educa-

tion and work to stimulate courage and strength in migrant women and work for multicultural communication and trust. I was, for example, so pleased to help an old widow who had relied on her husband for all contact with the community. Her children were busy and she felt lost. I was so happy to see her smile again. That was my reward. I feel as if my work pays Norway back for the opportunities I was given. I would also very much like to do something for the city where I was born by establishing an orphanage.

Future - What about growing old?

I do not like to reflect on dependency in old age, whether the caregiver is a family member or a formal carer. I would, however, prefer professional home care. I pray to God to be able to use my hands, feet and head and I cannot picture myself as a very old woman. I can imagine the girl of five who was forced to be independent. I remember my endeavours as a lonely school girl in Denmark and as a young mother in Oslo. Independence is a central value for me. I have worked hard for it and I will rather not give it up.

My grandmother in Pakistan was the queen of the family. Everybody respected her and she had the last word when decisions had to be made. She had given all her time and resources to her family. As an old woman, she got respect and care in return. In Islam, there are clear obligations for children to take care of old parents: "Heaven is under the feet of your mother", says the Koran. Children are rewarded for their care in the afterlife.

When I reflect on the traditions of family care for the elderly, I come to realise there are differences. In Norway, both husband and wife usually work and few live in multi-generation families. In addition, religious edicts get gradually weakened in the Western world. Discussions with elderly women from Pakistan in Norway show that they have different attitudes to family care when compared to formal care. Some point to strong traditions of family care and the obligations of children while others reflect on the changing living conditions and gravitate towards formal care. Both elderly people and their next of kin stress the importance of individually adapted services with respect for cultural values and traditions.



Future and life review - values and dilemmas

When looking back, I am proud of my organisation, my education and my efforts to build a home and a secure economic platform for my family. I am happy to be the mother of four children who are doing well with regard to work and education. I still have some thoughts about my priorities and values. I strongly believe in caring and human values, both in families and networks. I followed Western standards when it comes to work and sent my children to kindergarten. I still wonder whether mothers in Western society share the same doubts and feelings of guilt for not giving more time to their children.

I value friendship, but my migration history gave me few opportunities to build and stick to close friendships. When I came to Denmark with no knowledge about the language, I felt excluded. In my teens, when I managed the language well, Danish girls were interested in dating boys and tried out smoking and drinking. This was far removed from my cultural standards and values, and I kept away. When I moved to Norway, I met some young women who had just arrived from Pakistan. I experienced, however, a great difference between my world and theirs, and it was difficult to identify with them. In addition, I had to make hard choices in order to take care of my family and also be able to study. It may surprise some that I am now working in a centre where networking and support are highly appreciated by the women who come here. I felt this need to help other people because I had missed a lot in my life. When I came here and saw that women needed help, it was quite natural for me to make an effort. I worked in the municipality, on adult education and at the LIN organisation. Initially, I worked for free, travelled around with a laptop and borrowed facilities for holding meetings. If you want to develop as a human being, knowledge is important. I had learned about the community and wanted to share that knowledge with others so they would not feel excluded. Everyone must make their own choices. But it is a pity if they sit at home alone and feel they have nothing to contribute. I want to show them the opportunities they have.

I think I combine cultural attitudes and standards: I am "in-between". In my daily life, I prefer traditional Asian food combined with some Norwegian dishes. I feel at home in Norway. I also keep in contact with my family in Denmark. I feel attached to Iran for religious reasons, but I have no close links to Pakistan. I am proud to be a Muslim woman and I dress traditionally. There are still prejudices about Muslim women and many consider them "stupid and suppressed". I think

it would have been easier for me to be taken seriously if I had adhered to a Western dress code. I wanted to show that I am an active and contributing citizen even though my personal values may be different. I oppose prejudice in the community: they have to accept me as I am. I admit, however, that it is difficult to hear negative comments and statements that equate Muslims to terrorism.

I am willing to embrace the struggle for values of compassion, human rights and peaceful coexistence based on an all-embracing community solidarity. This is my way of living and aging.

Norway

- 5 2 million inhabitants
- 698 500 migrants
- 64 000 older migrants (60 years or older)
- Older migrants (50Plus) are from: Poland, Denmark and Sweden followed by Germany, Great Britain, Pakistan, Bosnia- Hercegovina, Vietnam, Iran and USA
- Most migrants are from: Poland, Litauen, Sweden, Somalia and Germany









Lourde Gandía (1954)Born in Cuba. Migrated to Spain in 2003.

In life, you must travel light

I arrived in Spain in 2003, on 24 December, just right for Christmas. I had visited Spain several times since 1996. One of my three sisters lived in Mallorca, and I first came to help her when she married, and then when she got her children. I asked for leave of absence at the University of La Habana where I worked as a professor, and came. In 2000, during one of those trips, I met my husband Juan in a queue at the Cuban Consulate in Madrid. We married in Cuba in August 2002 and moved to Madrid in March 2003. However, I had to return to Cuba in May to care for my father until he died. At first, I suggested to my husband that we live in Cuba because capitalism really scared me. You are brainwashed in Cuba where they tell you that Cubans are discriminated against and nobody gives you a job. They say that doctors scam you, poison you and kill you for money! Honestly, I was terrified to come but my husband had started his business here so we did not have a choice. I remember the first time when I went to a doctor. Afterwards I was walking around really surprised! I was expecting horrible things and everything was great! I felt that I had been deceived my whole life! I felt such a fool and I felt hurt.

I have always wondered how I let myself be tricked like that! In Cuba they really censor and block access to information and they thoroughly brainwash you. When someone tells you good things about capitalism, you naturally assume that they are pulling your leg, that they are lying! Until you see it with your own eyes, you do not believe it. When I understood how the social security system works, I just could not believe it! The idea that everyone contributes to a system that allows each person, with or without resources, to have a doctor is amazing! It is such a fair idea!



Keep on working

When I arrived in Spain the discipline that my father had taught me when I was a child really helped me to integrate here. He was a military man and at home there was always order and rigidity. Spain is a country with more social discipline than in Cuba, and in some way, I could identify with the system, I felt as if I was in my natural environment even if this is not the social discipline of Sweden! I was surprised for example, to see people recycling. In Cuba, I had never seen anything like that! In the beginning, I considered continuing with my career as a teacher at a university, but in Spain the university system is guite closed. In addition, it was difficult to homologate my degree as an Engineer (Roads, Canals and Ports). In fact, they homologated it only as a civil engineer. I had to study 6 more subjects if I wanted my full degree. I decided to focus on working instead. It was the time of the property bubble and I was really lucky. I started working in January! However, not everything was easy. My first winter here was difficult, not just because of the cold, but because I felt sad and listless. I did miss my father. It rained a lot and I have never liked rain! In addition, I did not like my boss; I did not like how he treated my colleagues. He did, however, always respect me. "Forewarned is forearmed", so I left my job and looked for a new one. I was again lucky and I found a new job and stayed there until 2010 when the building crisis came. But do not think that I stopped, I kept looking and established my own company. I am not quite ready to retire yet. I want to work as long as I can!

My daughter came also with me. She went straight to College, but if she would not have wanted to come, I would never have come either. She took the decision to move here. Before coming, I said to her that I did not want her to one day blame me for being unhappy here. She is also happy here and it makes things easier. Some things here are similar to Cuba. For instance, the food. We cook and eat pork and chicken in the same way. Perhaps the biggest difference is the side dishes. In Cuba, we eat a lot of rice in many ways, but I never liked rice so much, so it has never been a problem. I have also got used to the weather. It is also funny to hear people complaining about the cold. I always say that the one who was born in the Caribbean, is me! But, the best are the long days full of light! I am always excited in April when days become longer and longer. After all these years, it still thrills me! You would never see that in Cuba.

Right now, I cannot image my life anywhere else than in Spain. Things are getting complicated, too. I am concerned about the socio-political situation. Politicians are cheeky here! If I wanted

that, I should have stayed in Cuba! I am worried about my pension and the system here. My age has also been an issue. The only time that I felt discriminated was when I looked for a job. I did not get it because of my age. Sometimes I am surprised to be here since I never thought I would live anywhere else but Cuba. No one consciously sets out to immigrate and I am still surprised that I actually took the decision to up sticks and more here! In some way, I feel like I was born here, but that does not mean that I do not feel Cuban too. The truth is that I have never felt as if I fully belonged in one place. In addition, in Cuba we have the "the land's law". I can never lose or deny my Cuban nationality. Although I was given Spanish citizenship in 2008, if I go to Cuba I use my Cuban passport. However, now it is a nightmare to renew it!

Travel light

Since I came to live here, I have travelled to Cuba several times. In fact, I still have a house and a flat in Cuba, but I never think about going back there at all! One day, I will have to make a decision about what I am going to do with the things I got there. Because I do not want to leave anything behind me. When you die, you do not take anything with you. When my father died, he had many things stored up that were invaluable to him, however, for my sisters and I, they held no value at all! We were embarrassed because we did not know what to do with them. We had no use for these possessions, but respected the fact that my father had kept them all those years. In life, you must travel light, you must make your life and the life of others light too. You may say that this is too pragmatic, but it is what life has taught me.

I have been taking care of my mom since 2005 and I am happy I am. However, I do not want my daughter to assume that she must take care of me. I am going to remove that idea from her head! It is my decision whether I want someone to care for me, not hers. I have decided that I want to go to an old people's home when the time comes. Do you know that in Cuba we do not have retirement homes? People care for the elderly in their own homes, however, I do not want that for my daughter because caring for someone who is in pain and not being able to help is a nightmare. I experience this every day. I want to take care of my mother, but I do not know how I can take away her pain. Being unable to do anything really upsets me.

I will go to a retirement home even though I have mixed feelings about such places. It does not matter how you look at it, they are sad places but there is no other choice. When you get old, you

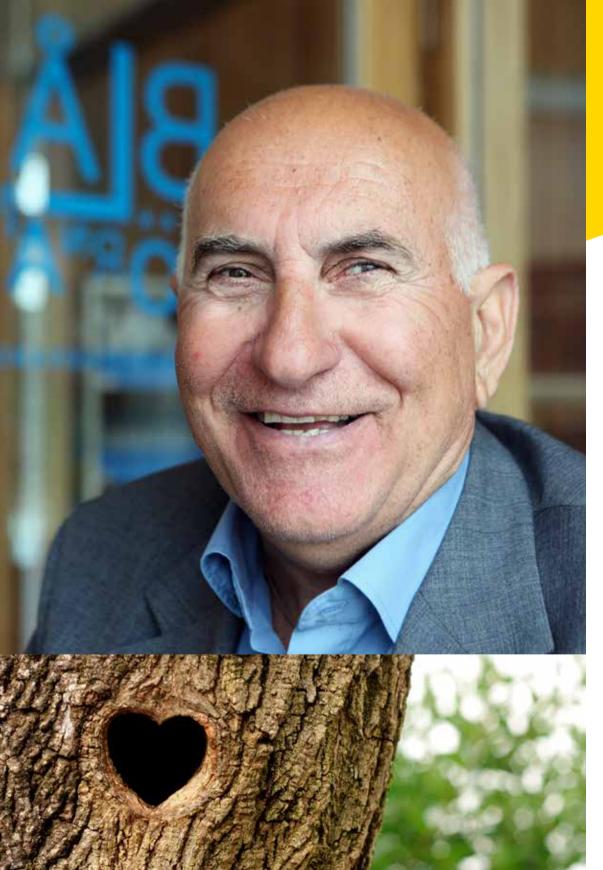


get old and we stop doing things as we used to. I do not want to complicate anyone's life, not even after I die and that is the reason why I do not have special wishes such as being buried in Cuba or why I do not want to leave many things behind. I would like to help my loved ones to cope with their loss and maybe that is the reason why I have never liked to accumulate things. In fact, when I moved to Spain, I almost brought nothing, just a few books. For me, there was no point in bringing things, there are always things that will be missed. Once you have moved, there is no point in thinking about what you left behind, you cannot cry for what you do not have because then you stop living. You need to want to fit in.

Spain

- 46 438 442 inhabitants
- 4 418 898 migrants
- 304 765 older migrants (64 years or older)
- Migrants come from: Morocco, Rumania, UK, China, Italy, Ecuador, Colombia, Bulgary





Saliba Marawgeh (1949) Born in Syria. Migrated to Sweden in 1967.

I love Sweden

I arrived in Sweden as a UN refugee from Beirut on 13 April 1967. I lived and worked in Lebanon before I fled. As a Syrian with Syrian citizenship, I risked being drafted to fight in the war in 1967. As a Christian, I was against war. I read that Sweden was a socialist society, with social security and people who adhered to human rights. So along with 215 others, I chose to move to Sweden.

Kind and generous

Life in Sweden was very beautiful, especially my first months in Alvesta, a small town in Småland. Friendly personnel greeted us, told us what would happen next and showed us around the refugee camp. Our teachers were also very nice. On Saturdays, the staff showed us around Småland. Swedish families, who had children our age, invited us to their homes. The families served us traditional dishes.

People were kind and generous. We managed to fit into the community immediately and developed insight into family life and how Swedes live. On Saturday evenings the 'local boys' drove us to the dance hall. As we danced, we took off our jackets, left them on the floor and to our surprise they remained there. We wrote home: "In Sweden you can throw gold in the street and it is still there a week later". However, the weekly wage of 10 crowns was really low, so we joined a demonstration to get a raise.



Work, studies and political commitment

After two months in Alvesta, I moved to Gothenburg. I rented a room with the Larsson family. I studied, worked at a department store and at the port on weekends. Sometimes, I could not afford food. I was ashamed and did not tell anyone. But the Larsson's understood and invited me to live there for free. After three months I learned Swedish, I was young and just hung out with Swedes.

In 1968, I got a job at Volvo trucks and left school. Outside of the Volvo factory, the SSU (Social Democratic Youth Association) were often stationed and actively recruited new members. I joined them immediately and got very involved and developed many contacts. I got to know the Municipality Chairman, a Gothenburg's leader who I can say 'saved my life'. He took me seriously and supported me. I was politically active and became vice chairman of the SSU at my workplace. In 1969, I started working at Götaverken building large ships. Next, the shipyard hired me as an instructor. It was a full-time job and well paid, which I combined with my job as a translator and interpreter with the police and law firms. However, as my dream was to be a social worker, I continued to study in the evenings. In 1974, I did my military service. In September 1975, I got a job at the social welfare office in Angered and I have worked as a social worker for 37 years.

My dad's words of wisdom "My son, as soon as you set foot in a new country, you need to learn about the culture and how society works - otherwise you are deaf and blind." has been important to me. I have read Swedish literature, history and about the labour movement. I have worked hard in my life to become 'something'. I have succeeded. So, it was important for me to also be part of building our community and society.

Happiness, love and pride

In 1968, I met my wife. Her parents and brother liked me and I felt part of their family. We have lived in our own house in Angered, Gothenburg, since the 1970s. I have enjoyed living and raising my two children here. My neighbours are very nice and I walk my dog around the area every day. Both my children graduated from university and have a good life here in Gothenburg. I have two



grandchildren that I ADORE. I have lived in Sweden for nearly 50 years. This is now my home and my country. I am happy and grateful for everything I have achieved in my life and that my family is doing well. I like Swedish food and even eat cod a couple times a week. We travel and spend time with our children and grandchildren. I am proud that I, as a social worker, participated in producing the legislative text concerning the right to property after divorce from a foreign citizen. I started the class called "Swedish for Migrants" and, with some colleagues, started what today is a big multicultural annual happening called the Hammarkullecarnival. This year, we held the 41st edition.

There are only a few things left from my arrival to Sweden: the bag I had packed and a worn wallet with four Lebanese pounds. I have asked my children to throw the Lebanese pounds into my grave so that they continue to be with me.

My roots

I grew up in Syria, which I continue to love. My family are from an Ottoman Turk background and it was my grandfather who moved to what is now Syria. In 1916, my aunts and uncles were murdered but my father and one uncle survived by hiding in the mountains. Syria became a French protectorate in 1920 and my father started working as a French gendarme to survive. When Syria became independent in 1948, all French civil servants were encouraged to move to France.





My dad intended to do so and the family went to Beirut, where I was born in 1949. However, soon after, when our Patriarch began negotiating amnesty and retirement possibilities, my family moved back to Syria since my dad had land there. I have returned to visit Syria about ten times. When my father became ill, our family paid for his medical care and, when he died in 1976, it was my duty to take care of my siblings. I brought all three to Sweden. Many of my relatives on my mother's side have also moved to Gothenburg. I miss the 'togetherness' from my past, when families stayed together and took care of each other. At that time, family came first, then relatives and, next, society and government. As I grow old, I think of this and feel disappointed when families do not meet and that the love and support for each other has gone.

Growing old

Aging worries me. I have visited nursing homes where migrants were treated without dignity during my professional life. They got food they did not want to eat, but, the language difficulties, kept them silent. Older migrants who suffer from memory problems were left without anything to do. My confidence in elderly care is not very high. We clearly need more and better trained personnel as well as special elderly care services for migrants. I have told my children: "Find a good place for me and keep in regular contact so that you know that I will be treated well". I have also visited nursing homes where elderly migrants have been treated with dignity. Where their accommodation was in great locations, well planned and with balconies where the elderly can sit with a glass of wine and enjoy the sun and watch the sea. This is how I would like to live.

Some advice

In Sweden, all persons under 40 have an opportunity to continue their studies on a global scale. Invest in yourself! Educate yourself. This does not always have to be from an academic perspective: working as a craftsman also provides a good living. Do not be lazy and do not depend on social welfare! Hold on to the traditions that have meaning and get rid of those traditions that no

longer fit your life. Enjoy what the country has to offer — accept diversity, value all religions and make sure there is gender equality. I want to say the following to ENIEC members: "To hide the truth is worse than racism. Tell me how it is. Make demands on me and then help me get there".

Expectations and hope for the future

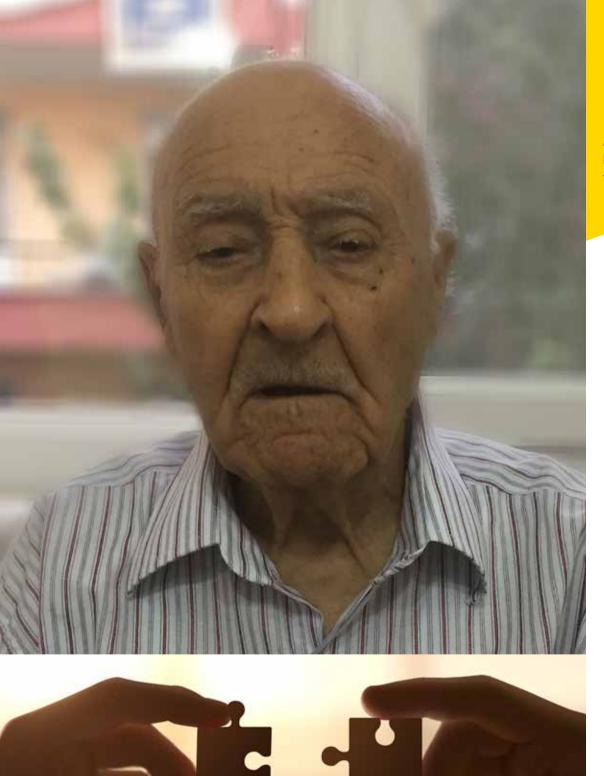
No one has ever called me an migrant, but NOW I feel like a stranger. The media contributes to the sense of alienation with their superficial depictions of migration and refugees. People, who try to take care of themselves, suffer because of those who abuse the system. How can those who see me in Angered know that I have worked here for 47 years? We are all viewed the same: as migrants. It does not matter whether you have led a productive working life or not.

I am concerned about my grandchildren - given society's widespread extremism and terrorism that exist today. But I still have hope for the development of a more humanitarian and inclusive society. It is important that all migrants, regardless of the reason why they have come, receive information about how Swedish society works and try to learn the Swedish language. This will hopefully support and influence their own lives, their children's situation and will ensure they can make a contribution to society in general. This was an important lesson that my Dad gave me when I left my country. Finally, I would just like to say that "I love Sweden"!

Sweden

- 9 9 million inhabitants
- 17 million migrants
- 243 412 older migrants (65 years or older)
- Older migrants (65 Plus) come from: Finland, Germany, Yugoslavia, Norway, Denmark
- The five biggest migrant groups are from Finland, Iraq, Syria, Poland and Iran









Ahmet Sen (1923)
Born in Yugoslavia. Migrated to Turkey in 1940.

My family has always come first

Before the war

I was born in 1923 in Stip, formerly known as Yugoslavia, and came to Turkey in 1940. Because of the war (World War II), I could no longer live in Yugoslavia. There were 28 of us who came by lorries, horse-drawn carriages and a bus. It took us 31 days to get to Turkey with some friends.

First, we went to Sofia and, then, by bus to Stara Zagora (in Bulgaria), and later to Burgas by train. We stayed a few days in Burgas and then went to Istanbul. Next, we went to Izmir and settled there. When I still lived in Stip, I remember when playing a game of billiards with my friends hearing a lot of noise outside during the war. We saw nine German military planes. We were very scared and had to run to the shelters. I ran without stopping and saw people dying everywhere. It was terrible and frightening. Many people died because of the bombs. I was in shock and this memory is still vividly imprinted on my mind. After the bombing had stopped, I came back to my house. I did not see my mother and father and thought they were dead. Luckily they were not, but had run away to the mountains. My parents thought that I had been killed by the bombs. I remember going to Turkey through Bulgaria where you only got bread with a special certificate (because of the famine). Without a certificate, you could not get bread. My friend was playing cards and I suddenly stole the certificate from his pocket and gave it to the soldiers. After that, the soldiers gave us bread during three days. I had taken a Bulgarian Cap and one soldier caught me. I knew some Bulgarian words and yelled: "I wish to salute Tito!!" (I was making it up as I went along.) They promptly allowed me to enter and asked me what I wanted. I said that we were hungry and would be grateful for some food and bread. And they gave us food and bread some more days.







Building up a life

We did lead normal lives in Stip. After having arrived in Turkey, however, almost everything felt different and new to us: the town, jobs, traditions, the neighbourhood. I felt it was not my country and I knew I should work very hard. When I came to live in Izmir, I wanted to create a new life in Turkey, no matter how. I wanted to find a job, work very hard and have a family. Actually, all men who came with me to Turkey thought like me.

We came here to Turkey so that we did not die because it was not safe anymore in my country. Yes, sometimes I miss the smells, especially the white cherries of Yugoslavia and some objects but mainly I remember the war, the bombing and the tough times.

At first, I worked in a market place in Izmir and, after that, in a cotton factory. I met my wife while doing my military service. We got married in 1948 and have now been married for 67 years. Like me, my wife is also an migrant from Yugoslavia. After my military service, 1943-1947, I worked as a consultant for Yugoslavian people in Istanbul for a long time. During this time, my family and I liked to travel to Bursa and Antalya.

Later I worked as a taxi and lorry driver and afterwards as a bus driver for the municipality. After I retired, I continued to work as a private driver. After the War, my friends told me that some employers offered 600 Turkish liras for a job. When I took the job they offered only 200 Turkish liras, which I did not accept. However, I never thought of going back to Yugoslavia. I always wanted to live in Turkey.

Current situation

I have been living in Izmir since 1940. We are a typical migrant family. I have 2 daughters and 2 sons. My oldest son who was a plumber is now retired. My youngest son works in construction. My oldest daughter lives in the USA with her family and the younger one is a housewife and lives in Izmir. When I arrived in Istanbul in 1940, the Turkish government said to us: if you go to the place where we want you to settle, you will be given land and a house. I rejected this offer because I wanted to live with my relatives and friends in İzmir. After that we found a job by ourselves. All my relatives were in the same position at that time. They all escaped certain death by their own means. We were strict with ourselves, struggled to make a decent living, worked hard and looked

after all our family members. I feel very happy about being in Turkey and it feels as if it has always been my home. And yet I miss the cherry trees of Yugoslavia. The cherries were so luscious. The cherry colour is white and the fruit has many cherry seeds and looks amazing. There were many more cherry trees in the place where I was born than in other towns. Also I like the bean soup with bacon, Büryan Samsa, from my younger years (a traditional Yugoslavian dish). I just like this dish. My wife and I always loved to travel within Turkey to visit places we had not seen before. I can no longer drive but we can use public transport for free so my wife and I go everywhere in Izmir. When we travel, we see a lot of older people like us. We have become close friends with them.

I have worked all my life really hard, but my family has always come first. I have spent much time with our children and grandchildren; cooking, eating and having a chat. These things are important to me especially because I do not have any special hobbies. I came to this country in 1940 and I am an migrant, but, after 76 years, I feel that we belong here. This is my home and country, forever.

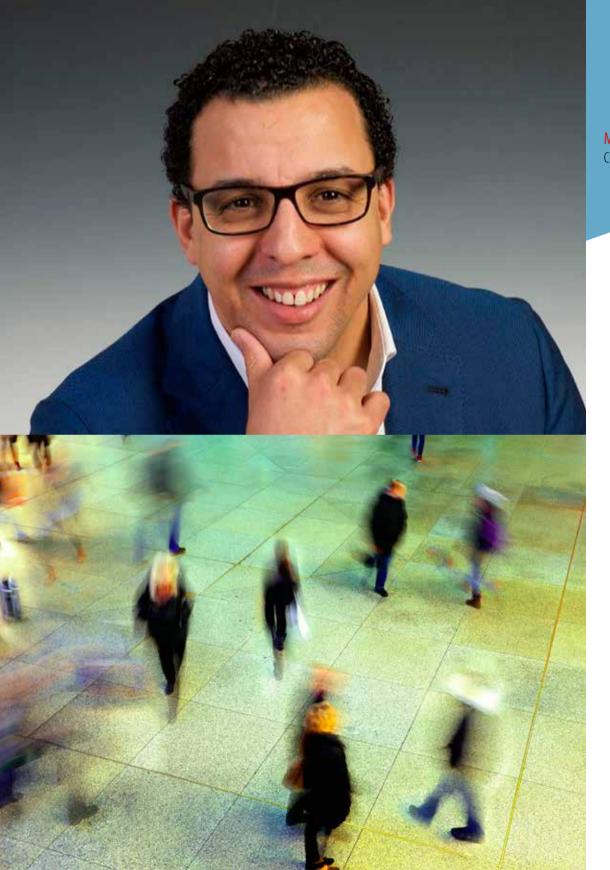
What is the meaning of ageing to me?

Physically, age has not been kind to me. I cannot walk or move easily. Usually I need someone to help me with my routine chores such as going to the grocery shop. I am waiting to go to the cemetery (laughing!!). My wife and I are still able to look after each other. We have kind and responsible children. We depend on them. If we need their help, they are willing to look after us. We are very lucky (thank God!).

Turkey

- 78 750 million inhabitants (2015)
- $\, \bullet \, 2.5 \, \%$ of the population are citizens with foreign background, incl. descendants, approx. 1 900 000 in total
- The biggest group of migrants from non-Western origin is Syrian especially 2011-2016 periods. (appox.16 million)







Mohamed Baba Chairman of ENIEC since 2015

Power of the Network

"Interculturalisation is an important issue because the number of older migrants is increasing. Yet it is difficult to get and keep the topic on the social agenda," says Mohamed Baba, chairman of ENIEC. "That's where my motivation comes from to stay focused on the subject." Mohamed has more than 13 years work experience in the field of diversity as the owner/director of his own company. In his current job as director of a housing corporation, it is also a very important issue.

Mohamed has been a member of ENIEC since 2010 and has been its chairman since 2015. "I'm happy to make a concrete contribution. Not just to talk about older migrants but to take action. Through ENIEC, I can make a significant contribution to put the issue on the agenda. When I was just a member, meetings gave me a lot of energy. Overwhelming. I became an active member to use that energy. My Moroccan background definitely plays a role. I feel obliged with regard to and responsible for the Moroccan community, especially for the first generation. I want to contribute to a good old age for all older people with an migrant background. It is important to work on this here and now. In the Netherlands, we have, in recent years, been facing a significant growing group of elderly people with an migrant background. Everything we develop now will benefit future generations of migrants, including my own!"

"As the chairman of ENIEC, I noticed that we can learn a lot from each other from the way we communicate. It is important to respect one another and not to stick to our own believes without listening to others. People from Scandinavia think in a different way when compared to the Dutch, for example, about the process of decision-making in an association. This is interesting and broadens your mind. As a chairman, I learned that ENIEC

members like to get involved and are critical. Their energy levels seem to be boundless, which they pass on. I hope we can keep this combination that strengthens our network."

Mohamed thinks the ENIEC network supports professionals to feel more confident about the important but also hard work they do. The network can be valuable to find inspiration and connect to one another. The annual meetings of ENIEC are filled with joy and inspiration. It is also important that members can meet during the rest of the year. Otherwise, there is the chance that you only make use of each other's strengths during the annual meeting. The power of the network! It is, therefore, nice when there are exchanges in-between the annual meetings. For example, Finnish members organise national meetings during the year. The board of ENIEC empowers members to ensure that they also find each other in-between meetings. For this purpose, several working groups are formed, including a working group on communications and the future of ENIEC.

"My goal is getting ENIEC to the next level." As a professional, Mohamed loves to work on transformation issues. He likes to use this experience for ENIEC. Communication and sharing knowledge will, of course, be the big issues of the 10th anniversary. Members who are active in the communications working group will make a proposal on how we can use communication to inspire new members to join ENIEC. An effective website, this booklet and a digital flyer are tools that we can use for interested and potential members in countries that are currently not part of our network. We have a great platform to share information. We want to keep the vitality going in order to keep the network alive. It is not a target in itself, but more members would be nice. We are a network of professionals who are members in a personal capacity and want to exchange ideas and information that we can use in our daily work. That is what ENIEC is all about. That's the power of the network.

ENIEC

ENIEC is a non-profit membership association for enthusiastic professionals engaged in working for and with older migrants in Europe. A formal network with the objective of creating an informal platform to exchange ideas and experiences across borders in today's Europe. The professional aim is to ensure that European elderly people with a foreign ethnic background can live in an environment of tolerance, intercultural understanding and respect for their needs and cultural background. ENIEC has 81 members from 12 different countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Norway, The Netherlands, Turkey) and was established in 2007. This booklet has been brought about through the contributions of ENIEC members.

www.eniec.eu

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Editors: Saloua Berdai, Wendela Gronthoud, Ineke de Kam

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