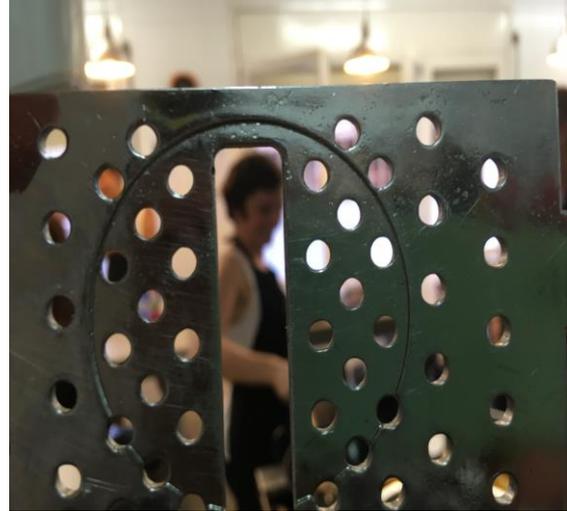


At all times, there is something we can do, after all.



It was in August, 2015 that I witnessed thousands of people fleeing from their homes, arriving daily on the coasts of the Aegean Sea. I saw fences instead of doors, I saw tents instead of houses, queues instead of lunch tables ... I saw dust and mud instead of wooden floors. I saw fear instead of hope.

I knew that this refugee crisis, was not something new to the world. Yet, it is one thing reading about it in history books or in the news, and another thing seeing it with your bare eyes.

I was on the island of Lesbos at Moria camp. We arrived at a place not far from the rest of the community, but somehow, it seemed as though it had been thrown from somewhere outside, only to be standing there on its own.

For a split second, I saw myself back in 1989 as a 15 year old girl, the year a big earthquake struck my village. It measured seven on the Richter scale and irreparably damaged the entire region. Our house had to be demolished within a few hours.

I remembered as if it were yesterday moving with my parents and siblings into that four square meter caravan with a tent stretched in front of it, without knowing how long we would need to stay there and without most of the things that would remind us of home. That was the time that I learned what it means to lose your home overnight and every certainty that it creates for you. But, I also learned the value of having good friends and neighbors who care not only for themselves but for their wider community. As I grew up, I formed the idea that what gives real meaning to life is the responsibility we carry as human beings to take care of one another.

A little girl approached me and offered me a painting she had made. Her wide smile brought me back to the camp in Lesbos. There must be something we can do, I told myself. Sharing this

thought with others, I found a growing number of people who were concerned. They were the momentum that led this small story to become the story of us and how our work with migrants and refugees came to life. At all times and under any conditions, there is something we can do, after all.

Chrysafo Arvaniti is an activist and community organizer for social change. She has worked for over 20 years with civil society groups, grassroots organizations, and international NGOs on community engagement projects, in locations around the world, specializing in the design of 'active citizenship' programs. Chrysafo is currently a Project Manager for the Médecins Sans Frontières Urban Spaces initiative.