

# Reflections on My Experiences at the Critical Deliberations on Migration, Refuge, Peacebuilding, Memory, and Narrative Conference

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I attended the Oxford Initiative for Global Ethics War and Peace Series: Critical Deliberations on Peacebuilding, Memory, and Narrative conference in Oxford and Greece in August, 2022. This two-week . The conference discussed challenges linked to migrants and refugees, healthcare, the environment including water and habitat, economic security and justice, sexual violence, and humanitarian policy.

The first week consisted of an intensive workshop with multidisciplinary approaches to engaging peace and conflict issues. During that week, I stayed in Oxford and attended sessions on practical peace-making, international criminal networks (mafias) in Russia, environmental world views, post-conflict gender-based violence, trauma (PTSD) and resiliency, stories untold - artwork from Syria, religion and international law, diplomacy and intractable conflict, the Northern Ireland peace process, high-risk feminism in Latin America, ethics of narrative and trauma stories, theaters of peace for women in Ukraine, and additional training activities and debriefs to prepare for fieldwork in Greece.



The second week consisted of fieldwork, meetings with actors in Athens and Thessaloniki, and the study of lived experience to apply what we learned in the first week. We also gathered

publishable narratives from refugee women in these locations to share their stories and spread more awareness about the refugee experience. The second week in Greece was directed by Manas Ghanem, a lawyer and international specialist with the United Nations since 2006, who focused on exploring the lived experiences of migrants and current developments in international law and policy, including trans-border ethical and political decision-making.

In Athens, we worked with the Melissa Network, which is an organization and network for migrant and refugee women in Greece promoting empowerment, communication, and active citizenship. There, we had meetings with the NGO's leadership and other humanitarian workers, and we conducted interviews of refugee women. We also met with a former politician and current director of the Greek Council for Refugees and the Migrant Integration Center of the City

of Athens. We went to a daycare facility created to support refugee families and children in partnership with the Melissa Network. In Thessaloniki, we worked with Solidarity Now in their Blue Refugee Center (BRC) and in a refugee camp.



Solidarity Now is a non-profit organization that provides psychosocial support, legal counseling, cultural mediation, employability services, educational activities, and support for parents and children, and the BRC is a support hub as well as a place of meeting and interaction for refugees and asylum seekers in the greater Thessaloniki area. There, we shadowed humanitarian workers and exchanged knowledge, and we interviewed more refugee women. We also visited the Diavata refugee camp, one of three refugee accommodation sites in mainland Greece, just outside the center of Thessaloniki in an industrial outskirt, and we met with some women living there to hear about their experiences.