

Photobook of UNTOLD STORIES of BCN



STORIES



WE ARE ALL
UNIQUE, EACH OF US
IN OUR OWN WAY

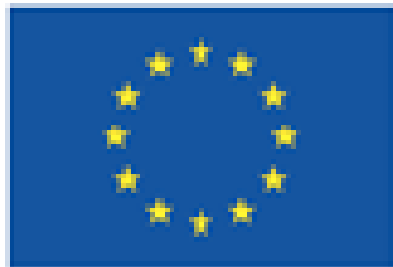


PHOTOS

UNTOLD STORIES



**Book with stories
and photos of
some of the heroes
of the project who
now call Barcelona
home**



**EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS**



"Untold Stories Bcn" is a youth initiative, dedicated to telling the stories of people who have made their home in Barcelona.

This platform aims to engage more with people who have inspiring stories to share, thus revealing the richness and diversity of the cultures that meet in this city every day. Through interviewing people from different backgrounds and cultures, we would like to promote a sense of solidarity and intercultural dialogue, at the same time illustrating the fact that we are all different, each of us in our unique way.

Untold Stories is funded by the European Commission through the European Solidarity Corps program. The initiative intends to financially support projects and activities carried by groups of young people to help to bring positive change to the local community. Open Cultural Center acts as an umbrella organisation for the project.



MOUAZ, SYRIA

"It all started on 11th March 2011, the biggest and toughest war yet. At first it was hard to accept it, but in order to win our freedom, we knew we would lose friends, family or even our country at some point. Our dreams weren't so big; we just wanted a country in which we could think and live freely, but this was just an illusion that could never happen.

We knew from the beginning that not all of us would survive until today; that was what we were always afraid of. We were all shocked about what was happening.

The decision wasn't really difficult. None of us would accept staying there to kill the people we were defending the whole time. Still, it was so painful to leave".



SARA, AFGHANISTAN

"Leaving Afghanistan was not an easy decision to make, especially when starting a new journey and you can't see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, we had no choice. It was either to leave or continue experiencing death every day; racial discrimination, rape, and being surrounded by corpses, it was natural that we left.

I am tired of endlessly traveling and I just want to settle down in a permanent location so that I can get a stable job so that can work. As a child, I dreamt of going to Germany, but it didn't work out. I just longed to be a successful person, to be out of trouble, and help others as much as I can".



ROY, SYRIA

"As a child, I did gymnastics and I liked to go to the swimming pool. I would play football and everyday after lunch, I would go to gymnastics. In Syria, I learned how to make sweets. I loved cooking. I was a chef and I had a job making sweets.

My family decided to leave Syria because of the war. I was 17 years old when we left. It was hard to leave but we could not do anything. It was not our decision.

I do not think I will ever go back to Syria, I do not wish to return. In the future, I hope to have my own business. I want to have my own sweet shop and sell cakes".



HARETH, SYRIA

"I had to leave my country because of the many wars. I arrived in Greece from Turkey by boat. It was the first country I had visited. My goals were drawn around becoming an army officer and learning the meaning and content of the English language better, just like my father. But my destiny was different.

I want to return to my country after this wrong and miserable dream. Yes, I have a dream, which is to see those countries that destroyed my future be in the same situation that we are in. As for the future, I do not know what will happen to me, but I hope to learn more and more, and, one day, change my status from refugee to citizen or return to my country".



AHID, SYRIA

"I felt relieved after crossing the last Syrian checkpoint, only to find myself stuck between Syrian and Lebanese borders without a visa to enter Lebanon. I spent the night sleeping on the street and I was lucky to get my permission for entering Lebanon the next morning.

Lebanon was a nightmare for me with all the racism I faced, all the exploitation I had to accept, but now I am considering that experience as the main reason for appreciating the rights I have right now and enjoying my life here in Spain.

Now, I am studying for my master's degree in Data Science at UAB, in Barcelona. I feel more like home here, even more than in my home country. Finally, I am enjoying the opportunity of being myself".



ALI, PAKISTAN

"Initially, I flew to Italy. I spent a week there. I didn't know how to get work there and I never did farming work in my whole life. I didn't want to spend my time under the sun on a farm, I didn't have this experience. I was trying to figure out what to do next. My cousin was living in Barcelona and he called me.

I was working on whatever I could to survive. So that was a big challenge. I would say I didn't face much trouble, but other people do.

Now that I have my resident card, I'm legal here so I can do anything I want. I always wanted to go to university, so when I got my resident card I went to the university and tried to get information. I ended up realizing I didn't think I was ready for that, because there was a huge gap in my education".



BIPASHA, BANGLADESH

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MICAELE, BRAZIL

"Life in Brazil was very overwhelming. I worked for 4 years in a company as a receptionist. I worked 12 hours every day so it was very complicated. It reached a point where I thought that 4 years in that life was enough. I needed to change, to go to a new place. I needed to have a new experience.

I have been in Barcelona for 2 years already, and 2,5 years living in Spain. I lived in Alicante, Murcia, and now Barcelona. I like Spain a lot, but it was never my dream to live in Barcelona. It was a thought like "if one day it happens, I will go".

I would say that it is necessary to be brave and have courage. If you plan, it can be wrong or good".



ZAQUIEL, VENEZUELA

"I don't have good memories of my country because I didn't live the best of Venezuela.

In Venezuela, I lived well until 2016 more or less. I was studying Electronics at a very good university, I lived with my parents and my sister. Everything was well. Then the situation started to get complicated.

What I most enjoyed about Barcelona when I arrived was the good vibes of the city. It is a happy city and the people are very relaxed. I also have one dream of my life. I would like to transcend. I mean, I want to do something to help millions of people - just like Steve Jobs, that helped people to connect with each other through their cell phones or Zuckerberg created social media to connect people".



RUBEN, VENEZUELA

"Before leaving I was about to start a business in Venezuela. We had this huge family farm, I worked there and I was going to college studying something related to veterinary. But at one point I really wanted something of my own.

What I have seen here in Spain is not the same kind of strong connection we had in Venezuela. I feel that here people celebrate birthdays with family and close friends.

I guess starting a new life is always a really hard experience. Getting my red card and renewing this was a really difficult situation and the only safe way to do it fast is paying someone to get the appointment for you".



IDRISS, BURKINA FASO

"I don't know my age. We lost our family when I was 6 years old and we stayed in our village without knowing where to go.

I used to play music with the animals as an entertainment, because when you are a shepherd you have to follow the animals, you don't usually go to town.

One day, I met a Frenchman who ran a restaurant in Burkina, and it was thanks to meeting him that I got the contract to come to Spain as a musician.

My dream is to make art in Barcelona, or in another country. Another dream I have is that I would like to set up schools where children could learn art, drawing, music, acrobatics and theatre".



SHEL, MEXICO

"I decided to leave my country due to some coincidences and inner transformation that I was passing through. I came to Barcelona with the idea to do one thing and in the end, I am doing a completely different one.

I did not wanna have the life I was having in Mexico, Barcelona opened so many doors to me. In Mexico, at my age, I am supposed to be married with kids. Whereas here In Barcelona, I feel free and safe.

My main goal is to create a holistic center in Barcelona where women can connect. Every woman has some different qualities to contribute with and when we acknowledge all our female power is amazing".



AMANDA, BRAZIL

"I have a collection of good memories because I lived in four different cities in Brazil, and I had a different kind of life in each one of those cities. My favourite memories are of course staying with my family, traveling with them

My experience of moving here was very nice and very intense. I came in September 2019 to do a master's. I've met a lot of different people from different countries. The experience has been so intense because I have to meet new people more often once in Barcelona people are always passing by. They come and they go very fast.

About my dreams, well, It's important to me to feel like I am giving back to my community. I'm here because at some point I had access to opportunities that are not available for all".



MOUSSA, DAKAR

"I grew up by doing many artisanal and artistic projects with the homeless kids who lived there, so they could have better tools to gain a living in such a difficult situation.

In 2011, due to the difficulties I was facing at the time, I decided to go to Europe. My first stop was the Spanish Balearic island of Mallorca, where I worked for 4 years.

The way I gain a living is through selling my art in the streets of Barcelona. People already recognize me as the man who does paintings that combine paint and scraps of aluminum that I cut from used beer cans. Despite the difficulties, people help me a lot. They see that I'm doing something – something original and artistic. Some buy the paintings, others give me money or food, and most motivate me to keep going".



SUNDAY, NIGERIA

"I got in contact with some traffickers that agreed to take me from border to border if I paid a high price. This allowed me to go from Nigeria to Niger, then from Niger to Algeria, and finally from Algeria to Morocco. This long and arduous journey across the Sahara Desert.

I stayed and worked in Morocco for three years, trying to gather the necessary sum that would lead me to Europe. My family, back in Nigeria, were also desperately helping me, by selling anything lying around the house, including furniture.

I remain optimist about what the future may hold, especially for my wife and children. I have to take care of them so that their own future will not be the way I lived my life. So that they will not suffer, the way I suffered in life".

We would like to say a big thanks to all the people who supported the project as heroes, volunteers and coordinators.

CREDITS:

Joana Serrat Rovira

Juan Gonzalez del Cerro

Matias Chiofalo

Melina Magdalena Nearchou

Juan Genco

Lenka Stepanova

Charlotte Lloyd

Amanda Vieira



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Contact details:
untoldstoriesbcn@gmail.com
<https://www.instagram.com/bcn.untoldstories>