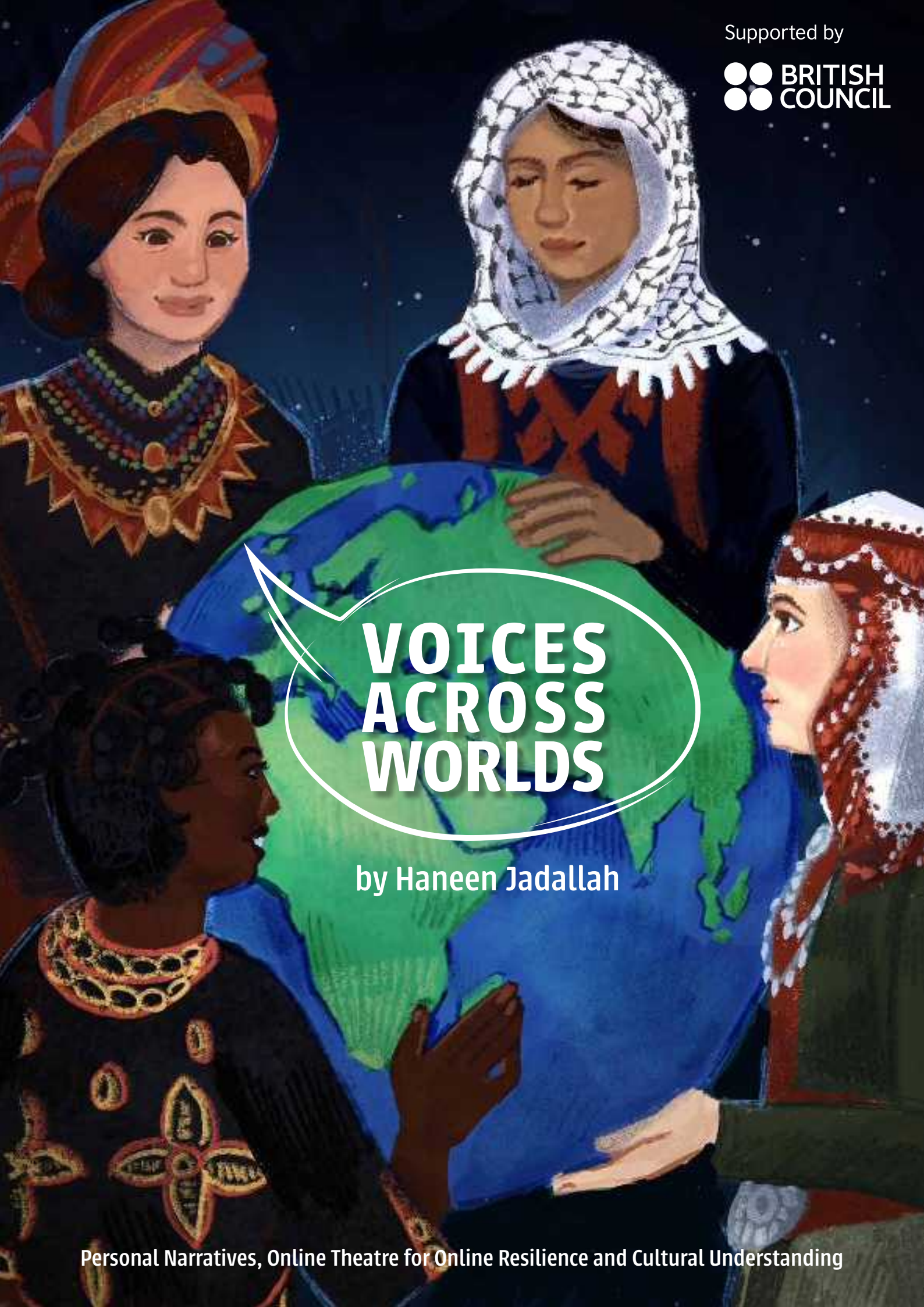


Supported by

An artistic illustration of four women from different cultures gathered around a globe. The woman at the top left wears a red and blue turban and a dark top with a colorful beaded necklace. The woman at the top right wears a white and black patterned headscarf and a dark top with a red geometric pattern. The woman at the bottom left is a Black woman with short dark hair, wearing a dark top with a colorful geometric pattern. The woman at the bottom right wears a red and white headscarf and a dark top. They are all looking at a large globe in the center, which is held by the woman at the top right. The globe is green and blue, representing land and water. The background is dark with some white specks, suggesting a night sky.

VOICES ACROSS WORLDS

by Haneen Jadallah

Personal Narratives, Online Theatre for Online Resilience and Cultural Understanding

To the loving memory of my father, who had just passed away when I was granted this award. To every teacher and educator I've worked with, and to those still working tirelessly.

To every child in Gaza, brave enough to share their story. And to every child elsewhere, fortunate to have a caring soul who not only listens with compassion, but also brings their stories to life.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Rida Thabet - an educational director and a dear friend in Gaza - who first encouraged me to join drama training. Rida played a crucial role in facilitating all the work that followed, tirelessly devoting her time and energy as an educational specialist to help teachers and children find light in the darkest of paths. Thank you, Rida, from the heart.

I also wish to honour all the dedicated teachers in Gaza who established this form of theatre and ignited its spark. With courage and creativity, they guided students to create and perform a play at a landmark conference in Gaza in 2017. From that moment, this journey took flight. Together, with the support of school administrators, educational specialists, and several institutions, we laid a powerful foundation for online theatre, developing techniques on Zoom that enabled students to resist restrictions and tell their stories to the world.

A heartfelt thank you to David Hathfield, who led the way with the first online storytelling course and continued to support this journey long after. His vision and leadership opened the door for so many of us to explore storytelling as a means of connection, resistance, and expression.

My deepest thanks to Amal Mukhairez, who first envisioned the structure for this form of theatre and brought immense creativity to the Zoom performances. Working alongside her and following her guidance has been a source of inspiration and strength.

I wholeheartedly acknowledge all the students who took part in our drama clubs—who not only developed techniques and methods of embodiment to enrich this theatre practice, but also had the bravery to share their personal stories with the world. Your voices carry power and purpose.

I would also like to thank Dana Kafina and Tasneem Alkahlout, two exceptional students from our school in Gaza, who contributed unique paintings for the book.

I thank my co-teacher Tere, who partnered with me on the first-ever personal story project in 2020. Your support, insight, and collaboration helped bring it all to life. Thank you Tere

My heartfelt appreciation goes to Runna Badwan and Rinda Saleh from the British Council team for your trust, support, and oversight throughout this journey. None of this would have been possible without your guidance.

A warm acknowledgment to Professor Steve Mann for his invaluable guidance during the early stages of this bid, for his ongoing encouragement and positivity, and for co-authoring the final report with me. Thank you, Steve—it's truly an honour.

To my brilliant project team members—Lamya, Evi, Rasheeda, Anestin, Nnane, Dayang, Luzan, and Deyar—thank you for your contributions, your wisdom, and your generosity. I've learned so much from each of you. What an honour to work together.

To all those whose names I may have missed—please know that your efforts and support did not go unnoticed. You helped this work see the light, and I am forever grateful.

Finally, thank you to Phoebe Graham, Paul Dummet, Amal Mukhairez and Moniza Fenton for your thoughtful editing, to Mark for the stunning design, and to Eddie Fenton for the creative cover. Your contributions helped shape this into something beautiful and meaningful. Thank you all.

Supported by



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by Haneen Jadallah

Personal Narratives, Online Theatre for
Online Resilience and Cultural Understanding

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How to Use This Book

Voices Across Worlds is a collection of short personal stories written by children from Palestine, Cameroon, Greece, and Malaysia. The book is designed to inspire creative and educational activities in and beyond the classroom.

Teachers and facilitators can:

- Use the stories for storytelling activities or adapt them into scripts for online or live performances.
- Refer to the chapter of 'Staging a play for online performance on Zoom' at the end of the book, which includes lesson plans and guidance for running workshops, whether online or in person.

For any questions or support, feel free to reach out. I'm always happy to help:

haneen.kh.jad@gmail.com

Introduction

by Haneen Jadallah

As a Palestinian educator coming from a refugee background, I deeply understand that stories are the essence of the power we carry within us. They are treasures we pass down through generations to ensure that our voices, our truths, and our lived experiences are shared with the world. Stories educate others about our plight, our struggles, and our resilience while opening hearts and souls to see the humanity of Palestinians who continue to live and endure on this occupied piece of land.

I have spent most of my life in Gaza, a place defined by both beauty and hardship. For around ten years, I have worked in education - as an English language teacher committed to supporting Palestinian children and connecting them to the world. In my early years as a teacher, I was deeply curious about why my students in Gaza wanted to learn English. In a place completely caged, cut off from the world, where opportunities felt like distant dreams, I wondered what drove them. Every time I asked, their answer was the same:

"Because we want to tell our story to the world."

It wasn't about jobs or exams - it was about breaking the silence, about refusing to be erased. English, for them, was more than just a language. It was a lifeline, a bridge beyond the walls that confined them. It was their voice, their resistance, their way of saying, We are here. Listen to us.

I know firsthand what it means to wake up to the sound of bombing and then, the very next morning, be expected to carry on as if life can ever return to normal. I understand the weight of listening to children as they share their stories - narratives of profound loss and unimaginable pain. Yet, amidst the grief, I have also witnessed their remarkable strength, their quiet resilience, and their undying aspirations to achieve their dreams. These are stories of young people who find

themselves confined to a narrow strip of land but, against all odds, discover ways to persevere. With the support of their teachers and families, they manage to uncover the light within themselves and, with a voice that is both deep and full of hope, begin to tell their stories to the world.

This book is the product of passion, determination, and unwavering dedication. It reflects the efforts of teachers and young people who wake up each day driven by the belief that, despite the oppression and abandonment they face, there is still beauty, dignity, and humanity to be found and shared. It is about the young people of Palestine, who often live in the harshest of circumstances and rarely have the opportunity to meet others beyond their borders. Yet, through this project, they courageously stepped into an intercultural space - virtually, through Zoom - to share their stories with people who might be living vastly different lives, whether enduring their own struggles or existing in places of comfort, unaware of where Palestine even lies on the map. It is also about other young people who are struggling in different parts of the world, fighting their own battles on different fronts. And yet, despite it all, they found care. Amidst the hopeless hopes, they reached out, they connected, and they built a bridge of understanding - one story at a time. They shared their own narratives, but also performed and amplified the voices of their peers from Palestine, echoing their pain, their dreams and their truths.

It is also about the young, caring voices who were fortunate enough to be born in peaceful places, untouched by the horrors of war. They have golden hearts, beating with love and an unshaken belief in peace. They dared to step beyond their comfort, to put themselves in the shoes of the 'other' - an 'other' whose suffering they had never known, whose wounds they had never felt. And yet, they listened. They cared and they re-played their

stories. They played the role of those whose pain they could never fully understand, but whose humanity they refused to ignore.

This collection of young voices dared to find courage in the face of oppression, sharing stories that were not only heard but embraced, retold, and even re-performed by their peers in other parts of the world. Their bravery and creativity have turned these stories into a beacon of hope, a testament to the unyielding spirit of people determined to be seen, understood, and remembered.

This book is about Voices Across Worlds - worlds that may seem different, yet are bound by the same undeniable truth: our shared humanity.

It is about opening eyes to stories that have long been unheard, shaking up bodies with the weight of untold experiences, awakening souls to the power of connection. It is a call to educators across the globe to listen, to nurture, and to protect the voices of young people. Because their voices matter. Their stories matter. And the world needs to hear them.

**“ We want to
tell our story
to the World.”**



A word from our academic advisor

Professor Steve Mann

The “Voices Across Worlds: Bridging Cultures through Performing Personal Narratives” project connects young learners (ages 11-19) from diverse countries through digital storytelling and online theatre. It was a very powerful and engaging project which was inspiring and also felt like something positive to support in times of atrocity and genocide. More than ever, it is important to remember that young learners are not just numbers and their voices need to be heard and taken into account.



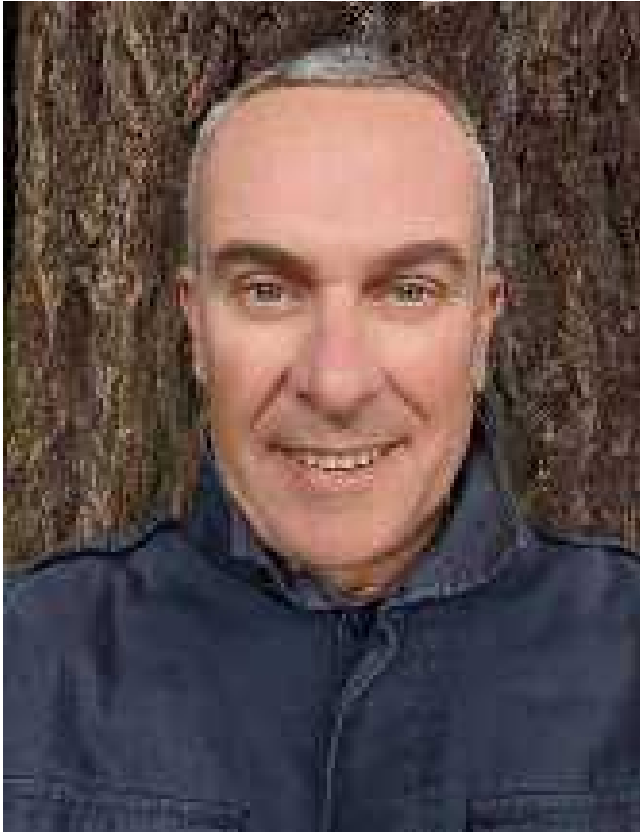
My involvement as a researcher at the University of Warwick centered on providing literature-based guidance and enhancing the project's collaborative and reflective dimensions. Working alongside Haneen Jadallah, I contributed theoretical frameworks grounding the project in established research on foreign language speaking anxiety, intercultural communication, and digital storytelling pedagogy. My role involved synthesizing literature demonstrating how personal narrative sharing and online theatre create safe spaces for language learning while addressing both internal factors (fear of negative feedback, low self-evaluation) and external factors (limited practice opportunities, peer judgment) that contribute to speaking anxiety. This all builds on other PhD researchers at Warwick in the creation of engaging safe spaces through drama.

I emphasized developing collaborative methodologies that would enable meaningful cross-cultural exchange and implemented reflective practices throughout the project phases. This included designing data collection methods combining questionnaires, focus groups, and participant interviews to capture both quantitative outcomes and qualitative experiences.

My reflections highlight how academic research can meaningfully support grassroots educational initiatives. The project demonstrates the importance of bridging theoretical knowledge with lived experience, creating safe spaces where students from conflict zones and peaceful contexts can engage in authentic dialogue. The collaborative approach ensures all voices - from Gaza to Warwick - contribute to understanding how digital storytelling transforms language learning into intercultural bridge-building. I am enormously grateful to Haneen for giving me an opportunity to be involved in a small way in supporting her important initiative.

Foreword

by David Heathfield



True storytellers are able to put into words not only their own but also another person's experience of life in such a way that we listeners can enter into that experience through our imagination. Haneen is one of the very few people I've met who is capable of making this happen and she does it naturally and spontaneously. Through a turn of phrase, she opens our hearts and shows us a vision of how life could be. The first time I read her published words I had new insights into what sharing stories online across cultures means to young people in Gaza, who have very limited opportunities to meet others in person beyond the walls that surround the strip of land which is their home. The first time I met her in a live online meeting, the way Haneen conveyed to the world the lifeline that learning English through personal intercultural storytelling means to the golden-hearted children in Gaza was spellbinding.

Now I have been collaborating closely with Haneen for a few years and we have got to know each other's working practices well. There is a huge amount of mutual respect. Haneen has participated in storytelling courses I have run for teachers all around the world, including twenty other teachers from Gaza. I have benefited from being a participant in online and in-person workshops, talks, webinars and courses which Haneen has offered educators worldwide.

Over the last two years Haneen has been living, studying and working here in the UK. She has become a close colleague and a personal friend to my wife Tammy and me. She is the expert I turn to most often for collaboration and advice, especially regarding our current joint project *Tell a Child in Gaza's Tale*.

In this book 'Voices Across Worlds' Haneen demonstrates expertly what teachers all around this spinning ball of shared humanity can do to enable our learners to step into

the shoes of a fellow user of English from an entirely unfamiliar cultural context. Personal intercultural storytelling takes people beyond the limits of horizons which are often long established and sometimes quite fixed. Through a story that we listen to with attention and an open heart we find a possibility to relate to people from diverse backgrounds in new and more cooperative ways. In *Voices Across Worlds*, personal intercultural storytelling is developed to create Online Theatre using Zoom. In the simplest possible way, young learners are invited to listen, to ask, to feel, to understand and even to become this recently met other person from an unfamiliar cultural context so they can act out their story online across cultures with empathy and respect. Becoming this person and having a sense of what it's like to live this fellow human being's life shows learners that, however different someone else's life might seem, we humans are all essentially alike. We all seek harmony, peace, justice, life.

The majority of the teachers and learners directly involved in *Voices across Worlds* find themselves in extremely challenging circumstances, many of them traumatised because of living in conflict zones. Most come from underprivileged communities. In such contexts the classroom, whether physical or virtual, permanent or makeshift, can become a place of safety, a place where healing can happen even if only temporarily. Sometimes the most healing action is not to try to forget about the challenges but rather to address them either literally or metaphorically through storytelling. There are long-established storytelling and drama practices where education and therapy go hand in hand and here Haneen draws on these practices in her approach to Online Theatre. Students who are not from disadvantaged communities also benefit hugely from learning directly from their counterparts living in challenging circumstances and entering into their experiences through drama. Empathy is key to building a more equitable world.

Haneen is a teacher, a mother and a citizen of Gaza and she freely shares with us her unparalleled experience of what it's like to deal with the most unimaginable circumstances and to remain a resilient, open-hearted and truthful seeker of peace. Indeed, her work demonstrates that she is a peacemaker. Educators might ask "How can I deal with the most challenging topics in my English language teaching context?" This book gives us useful strategies and

practical answers. For example, we can look at injustices that other human beings have experienced. We can pause, rewind and imagine how it could have gone differently, how justice could be achieved. Online Theatre offers us the possibility to see how the world can be different, can be made better. We can then share our own personal experiences of injustice and acknowledge that it doesn't always need to end in this way. Possibilities of a more just world are explored and hope is restored. By experiencing first-hand how fellow members of our human family live, we learn how to treat everyone fairly and so make the world a better place.

Since 1 January 2024 Haneen and I have been running the voluntary project *Tell a Child in Gaza's Tale*. We invite teachers, their learners and everyone else to choose a tale which has been told by a child in Gaza, retell it and share it around the world. In this way, people are able to return the hospitality shown by wonderful young story tellers telling stories from their homes or temporary shelters.

Most of the stories told in the project are short fables and folktales. However, a number of the stories are based on children's or teachers' personal experience and these often have a huge impact not only on listeners around the world but also on teachers in Gaza who are deeply appreciative of their former students' tales being republished. In some cases, the children themselves have been able to share their appreciation of their stories being retold.

Haneen dedicates her research to exploring in depth what Online Theatre based on personal intercultural storytelling can offer.

With years of experience researching and working in this field, in *Voices Across Worlds* she gets to the very heart of what Online Educational Theatre can achieve.



tasnimostafa

Palestine



Greece



Cameroon



Malaysia

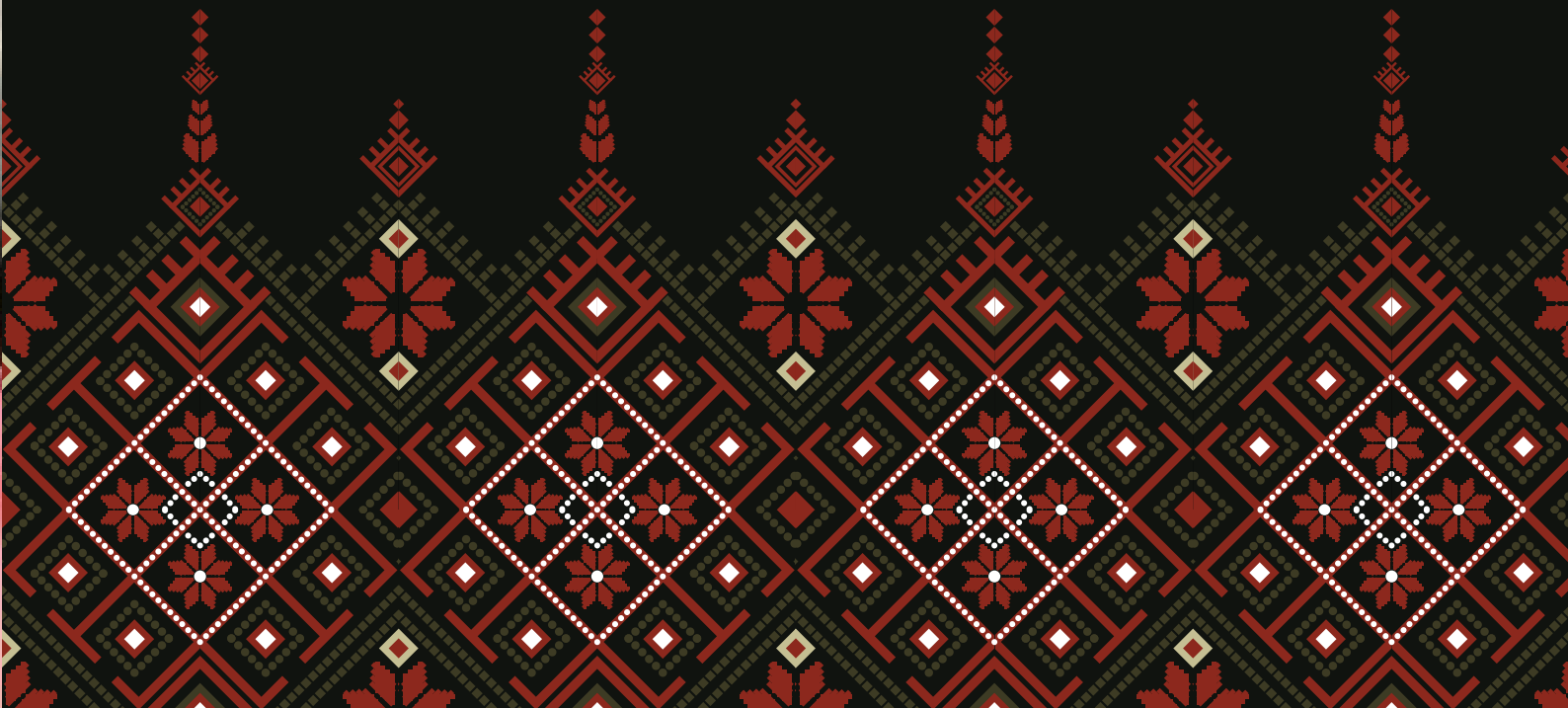


tasnimostafa





Luzan Mattar from Gaza, Palestine, works as an English language teacher in UNRWA schools. She holds a diploma in translation and a Masters in the same field. Having a strong interest in children's literature and culture, she believes that culture is the key to understanding and interacting with nations around the world, seeing art and language as interconnected, using art as a tool for teaching English to students. Her teaching methods include drawing, creative writing, storytelling, and drama to engage and educate her students in the English language. In addition to teaching she enjoys reading, drawing, writing and listening to music. She has participated in the International School Award project with the British Council and has received training in social communication, storytelling, and remote theater.



The last of the last

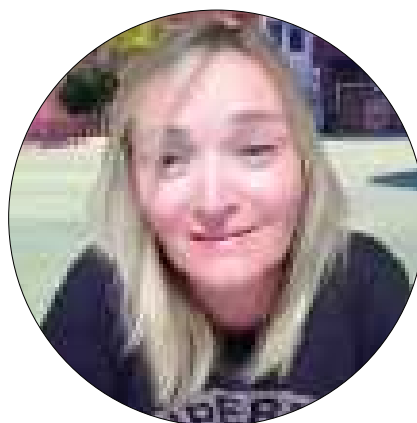
by Luzan Mattar

Luzan's play portrays the personal narrative of an educator from Gaza, performed by colleagues from Greece, Gaza, and Cameroon. It captures the upheaval educators faced when the war in Gaza abruptly halted education, leaving their lives turned upside down. Despite the chaos, the play reflects their unwavering hope and deep yearning to return to normalcy and continue their mission as educators.

Featuring:



Deyar Ismail



Evi Karydi



Anestine Lum Chi

Scan QR code
for play



T: Good morning my lovely students How are you today?

SS: We are fine.

T: Do you know what day it is today?

SS: Yeah! We are excited! Today is the off-campus day.

SS: Great! You're right!

SS: Where are we going to today, miss?

T: That is a surprise. You will soon find out.

SS: I can guess. Are we going to Al-Qattan institution?

T: I don't know; you will soon find out.

SS: I know where we are going to.
We are going to the seaside to play games and have lunch at the restaurant. (smiles)

SS: What a nice guess! (smiles)
But we will soon find out.

SS: Oh, no! I guess it is the garden. We are going to run and play on the lawn.

SS: ok, no more guesses.
Follow me, follow me. Let's go; the bus is coming.
(outside)

Prin: As-salamu alaykum!
Remember to take lots of pictures and videos for our Facebook page. The best videos and pictures will be rewarded.

SS: Miss, when is the bus coming? We are so excited.

T: Soon!

SS: Miss, how far is the place we are visiting?

T: Don't worry! We will get there before you know it.

SS: Hahaha!

T: What is funny?

SS: Do you remember the last time you said we will get there before we know it and the bus had a breakdown and we finally never got anywhere? Hahahaha!

T: Oh, sad memories! I promise today is going to be different Inshallah.

SS: Here comes the bus.

T: Yala yala. Everyone, let's go.
(on the bus)

T: Do you remember what the principal said? There is a prize award for the best photos and videos. So, please remember to take lots of beautiful pictures, videos and notes too.

SS: My phone is broken (sad)

SS: Don't worry! You can use my phone to take pictures while I take notes. Then, we can write a report together. We are so excited.

SS: That's so kind of you. Thank you!
(Bus arrives in the old city)

SS: Hurray! We've arrived.

T: Be careful as you get off the bus. Follow me in a line, please.
(students follow the teacher)

SS: This is the old city. I have never been here. Which places are we going to be visiting, miss?

T: Here is the first place right in front of you.

SS: Oh! It is Al Basha Palace. My grandma has told me about this place. She told me a lot of tourists come to Gaza to visit this place.

T: Please, remember to take pictures and notes as we move around.

SS: Ok, miss.
(Students take photos and notes as they move around the ancient monument)
(Going to the next place)

T: Ok! Dear students, let's move to the next site, please.

SS: Where is that, miss?
Are we going by bus?

T: It is quite near. We don't need the bus. Queue up and follow me, please.
(They arrive Al Omari Mosque)

T: Here we are!

SS: I came here with my dad last Eid.

T: This is the great Al Omari Mosque.

SS: It is one of the largest and oldest in Gaza.

T: You're right!
(They walk around)

T: Please, remember to take pictures and videos.

SS: Ok, Miss.

(End of tour)

T: We have come to the end of our tour.

SS: It was really exciting, Miss.

Thank you!

T: Please, remember to upload all the beautiful pictures and videos on our padlet.

SS: I promise to do so as soon as I get home.

SS: I will show the photos and videos to my mum and tell her about our tour.

T: Yala yala! Here comes the bus. Let's go.

(They leave)

(Soliloquy)

T: I still remember how they made wonderful videos about our visit to the old city of Gaza, and we didn't realize that it will be the last visit for the last view for these beautiful old places in Gaza.



Personal narratives

Luzan Mattar



Menna

Drawing is my life. I'm Mena 9 years old. I study in the primary school in the fourth grade. My mother was my teacher at school and we used to go to school together. It was early in the morning when I was getting ready to go to school as usual. I put on my uniform and had my breakfast with my mum when suddenly the sounds of bombings were really horrible. I ran quickly towards my mum to hide myself asking for safety.

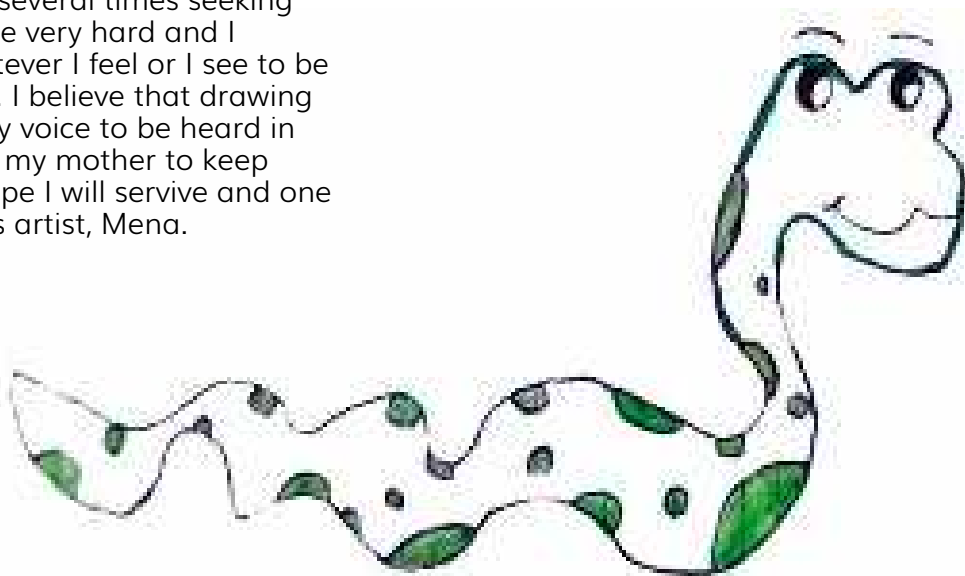
Everything in a moment turned to an awful nightmare. My mother tried to calm me down and asked each of my sisters, brothers and me to prepare our luggage to leave our home because it is not safe anymore. I ran quickly to my bedroom. I looked at my things in my bedroom: my toys, my clothes, my bed, my books, my pencils and colours I look at some story books with a sad face. I was confused what to take with me. With a very quick movement I took a bag. I put a t-shirt, trousers, my stories book and all my pencils and colors.

I couldn't leave my home and my colours at the same time because drawing is one of my favorites in my life and I can't live without drawing. As quick as we can we left our home with a hope to return back as soon as possible but unfortunately. The horrible situation seems it will never end and moved from place to another several times seeking for safety. Life became very hard and I decided to draw whatever I feel or I see to be remarkable in my life. I believe that drawing is a way that allow my voice to be heard in the world. I promised my mother to keep drawing because I hope I will survive and one day I will be a famous artist, Mena.

Mahmoud

The ongoing nightmare. It all started on the sixth day of war when I witnessed the most terrifying day of my life. We were around 100 to 150 people in one small building. We were 3 families gathered in one apartment, having fun and joking around to ignore the fact that we are in a war with the most cruel army in the world. But we never expected what will happen next. The army suddenly threatened to bomb the building that was 20 feet ahead of our building. We ran down the stairs in fear to see if the people of the neighborhood evacuated or not. But we actually discovered that it was a false report, so we got back to our apartment.

Then a few minutes later, they violently bombed the building that was right next to us. We went down to the building entrance and we saw the civilian defense screaming to run as far as possible! Finally we survived that day and we kept moving between neighborhoods to witness that nightmare over and over again.



Sarah

I love the internet so much and actually I used to spend all my time by watching movies and videos on social media. Of course these things have negative effects on me. I noticed that I didn't wanna live in my real life and I loved to stay in my fairytale story, so I didn't have friends and I was introvert person.

About my future I didn't give this idea any attention.

About my health my eyes was very tired and my mental health started to be worse.

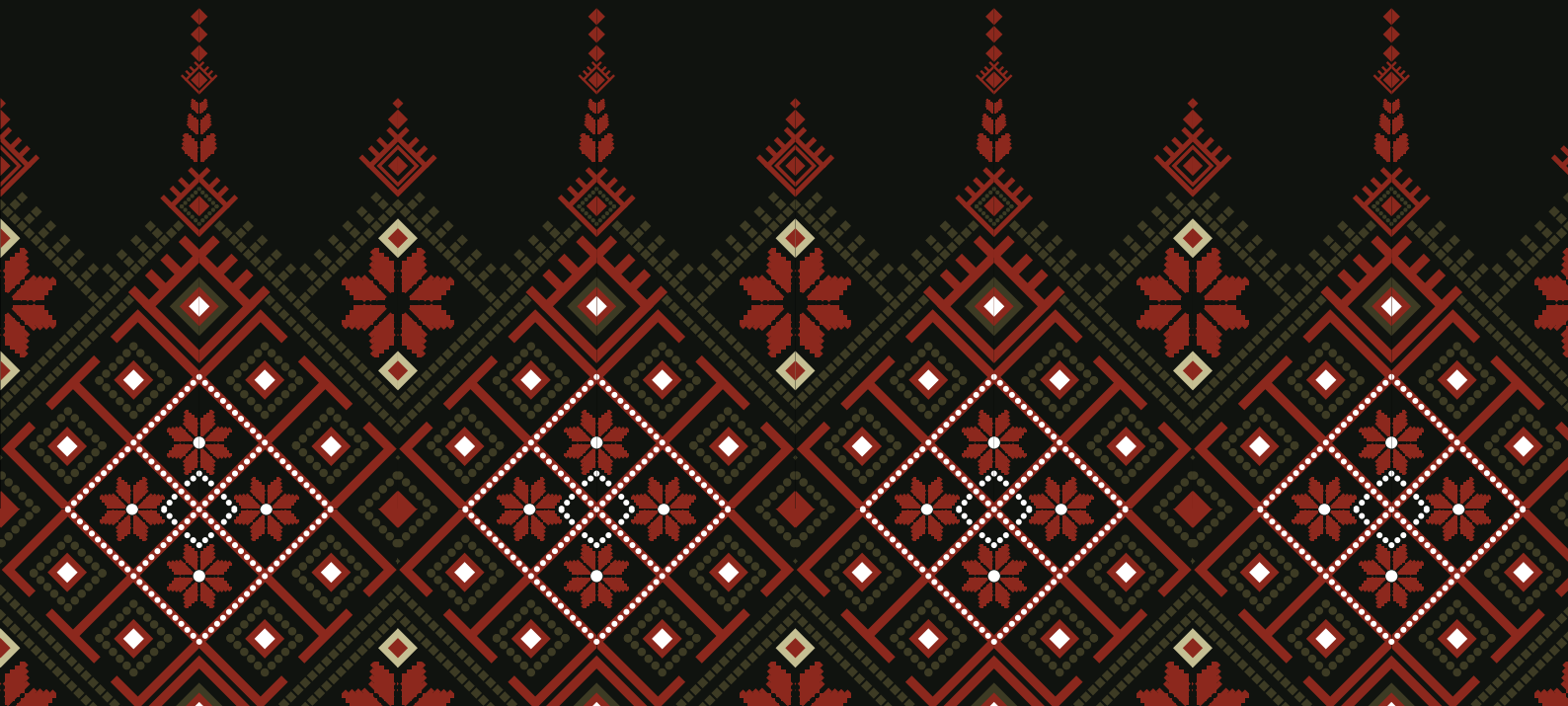
So I went to my mum and asked her about the reason things had happened with me. She told me that the only one is my mobile and internet. She said that I didn't give myself a chance to show the people my skills or even to think about my future and that I can use the internet, but in the right way to make my parents proud of me. I entered my room and remembered what happened and compared it with the reason so I decided to improve myself to be better. I focused on my studies and I realised that I'm good in Biology so I can be a doctor. I've hobbies, writing, singing and speaking a few languages"... now I'm using the internet to show the people my skills in writing... I'm practicing singing these days... and trying to learn vocabularies in many languages.. About my social situation I tried to talk with people and now I've friends I wanna tell my mum thanks for her advice and tell u that the internet can be our enemy or friend and always use it in the right way.





Lamya Tamimi is an English teacher whose journey began with a simple belief, that every child has a unique story waiting to be told.

With a bachelor degree in English literature and a heart full of passion, I set out to make a difference. My mission is not to just teach English, but to supply my students with a lifelong love of learning through the power of storytelling.



Recovered Hopes

by Palle Racheline Ahone (Cameroon)

Performed by:



Sarah Al-Bitar



Mahmood Srour



Menna Srour

Directed by:



Luzan Mattar (Gaza)

**Scan QR code
for play**



Place: Classroom

Characters: Palle, 2 Teachers, Classmate

Outro: Waving flags

Scene 1

Elder Man Reading a book, then he shuts the book and remembers...

School bell rings.

In the class, Palle was ready a literature book and she was excited to meet the literature teacher.

Classmate: Where's the teacher? The class started 10 minutes ago.

Camera focuses on the class door (Door Creaking). New Teacher enters class.

The Teacher: (says tediously) Good morning students, I'm your literature teacher for this year.

Classmate: Shall we start the lesson teacher?

Teacher: I'm exhausted to start our first lesson, you can either read from your literature book or do anything you want- (Yawns)

Palle: Teacher, Do you suffer from sleeping sicknesses?

Teacher: Yes I do, do not disturb me at all (school bell rings), as you can see the lesson has finished.

Palle: (to her teacher) I love literature and I'd love to be a writer someday, so can you give me some tips and advice to be better?

Teacher: you're too young to decide what you want to be, focus on your study, ok?

Scene 2

Teacher: Students, open your books and I'll question you all after a couple of moments.

Palle opens his book and starts studying, [Someone Snoring]

Palle (lefts head up), Notices the teacher is sleeping! (Palle-Facepalms)

Scene 3

Teacher: (enters the class angrily and speaks loudly) Students, can I ask you why your performance is so bad?

Palle: But we didn't understand anything, you spend most of your time sleeping in class. Teacher says: Me? Keep silent, focus on your books, the lesson finishes.

Palle: (says to his classmate) We must report our teacher if we wanted to advance to the next level.

Classmate: you're right!

A new teacher enters class.

Teacher: Hi my dear students, I'm you're new literature teacher. I hope we'll good days together. Before I start, I read you're writing palle, I'll give you tips when the lesson finished to improve your writing.

Palle: Thanks a lot teacher.

Teacher: and all of you have any questions? Feel free to ask me, ok?

Palle: my ambition of being writer has been fulfilled.

And you too, follow your dreams and don't give up.

(Ambitious music)



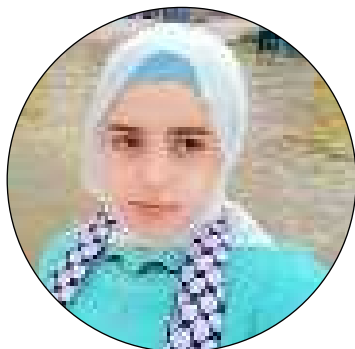
Echos of Fear

by Ndumbe Daniel Wonjah Lifaka (Cameroon)

Scan QR code for play



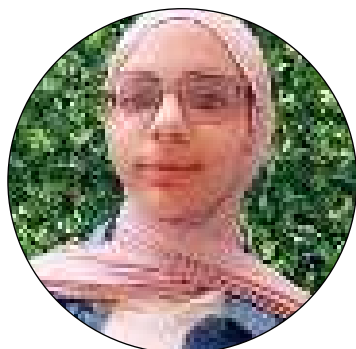
Performed by:



Ala'a Al Bana



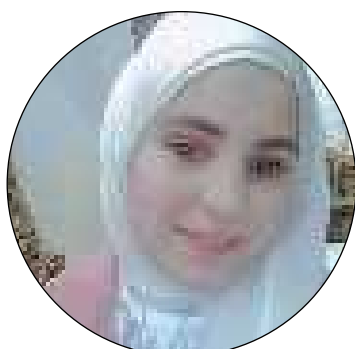
Jana Qadi



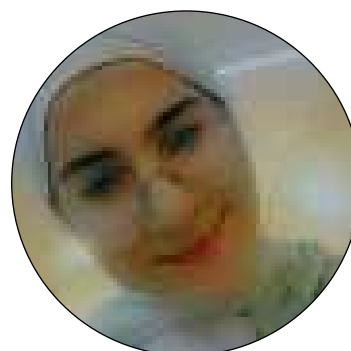
Aya Bader



Lamar Karaki



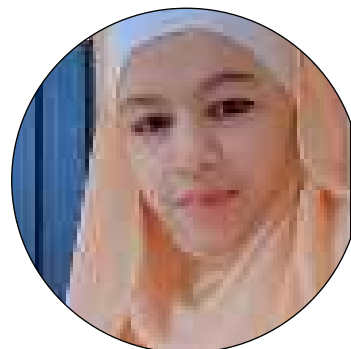
Ghazal Sider



Layan Herbawi



Islam Al Bana



Saja Bana

Scene 1

Layan: *(Introducing the setting)* In the South-West Region of Cameroon, There is an ongoing armed conflict. The region is plagued by constant unrest and danger.

(A tired but determined mother, enters the stage, gently waking up her daughter)

Islam: *(softly)* Rise and shine, sweetheart. It's time for school. Studying hard is our way of making our dreams come true, despite everything.

Jana: *(with a mix of determination and tiredness)* Okay, Mom. I'll go. I know it's important.

(Mother and daughter share a hug, silently showing their support and love for each other)

Layan Narrator: *(observing the touching moment)* Even when times are tough, the love and strength between the mother and daughter shine through.

(Jana enters, dressed in worn-out clothes, looking anxious)

Jana: *(whispering to herself)* Another day, another risk. I can't let fear take over.

(Ghazal enters, also dressed in tattered clothing, looking around cautiously)

Ghazal: *(nervously)* Are we going to be safe today? I can't bear the thought of losing another friend to this senseless violence.

Alaa: *(enters, frantically glancing over her shoulder)* We must keep moving forward, despite the dangers that are around every corner.

Aya: *(enters, adjusting his makeshift disguise)* It's time to show our strength when things are difficult . Education cannot wait.

Layan: *(speaking solemnly)* The characters make their way through the treacherous streets, constantly on guard and aware of the ever-present dangers that threaten to derail their pursuit of knowledge.

(Saja enters, representing a menacing presence, clad in military attire)

Saja: *(distrustfully eyeing the students)* You should all be aware of the risks you're taking by coming here. This is no place for learning.

Jana: *(defiantly)* We refuse to be silenced by fear. We will not let violence decide our futures.

Layan: *(narrating with intensity)* The students are all together in their strong decision to resist the controlling powers that want to stop them from learning and growing.

(Character 3 and Character 4 share a glance, a silent exchange of solidarity and courage as they continue on their perilous journey to education)

Narrator: *(with profound emotion)* Despite the huge barriers they face, these brave souls continue to fight for their right to education, not giving in to the fear that might surround them.

(The scene fades to black, leaving the audience with a powerful and stirring portrayal of resilience and bravery in the face of adversity)

Scene 2

(The scene transitions to the classroom, where the instructor, Character 8, is talking to the students)

Islam: *(excitedly)* Remember, education is your way of standing up to fear and ignorance. Each of you has the power to make a positive difference through learning and never giving up.

(The students, including Character 1, Character 2, Character 3, and Character 4, listen closely, their faces reflecting hope and determination)

Jana 1: *(raising her hand)* We won't let fear stop us. We won't let violence control our future.

Islam: *(nodding)* That's the spirit! Keep on learning and stay brave, no matter what challenges come your way.

Jana: Hope is the place where you want to go.

Saja: Hope is the person you want to know

Ghazal : Hope is the feeling that carries you through.

Alaa: And hope is the future for me and for you.

Narrator: *(proudly)* Despite facing tough times, the students and their teacher come together, showing how courage can lead to success, even in difficult times .



Personal narratives

Lamya Tamimi

"The Lost Necklace: A Story of Hope and Discovery"

Once upon a time I treasured a special necklace that my grandmother had given me. The necklace was shaped like a map of Palestine, with each detail holding a piece of her heritage and family history.

One sunny day, while playing with my friends at school, I suddenly noticed that my lovely necklace was missing. I searched for it everywhere, turning every corner and asking my friends for help, but the necklace seemed to have disappeared without a trace. My heart sank as I felt a deep sense of sadness and worry.

As the days passed, I couldn't shake off the feeling of loss. I missed the comfort the necklace brought her and the memories it held. Despite my friends' attempts to cheer me up, I couldn't help but feel a sense of hopelessness and was afraid the my grandma will feel disappointed.

Just when I thought she I would never find her precious necklace again and I decided to tell my parents about it, a miracle happened. One of my friends stumbled upon the necklace while playing in a classroom where we had been that day. The joy on my face was priceless as I held her necklace once more.

With the necklace back around my neck, I felt a surge of happiness and relief. The lost had been found, and my heart was filled with hope. The necklace, with its intricate map of Palestine, not only reminded me of my roots but also of the strength and resilience that ran through my veins.

From that moment on, whenever I wore her necklace, I remembered the lesson I learned - that even in moments of despair, there is always hope and a chance for unexpected discoveries that can fill our hearts with joy.

by *Layan Herbawi*

The Journey of Survival

My name is Saja Al-Bana, and the story I am about to share with you is not a work of fiction; it is my reality. I still find it hard to describe and tell the events that happened and continue to happen around me. We are a family of eleven, and our ordeal began on the horrible day of October 7th when the echoes of death started ringing in our ears.

Every missile strike sent a shiver down my spine, filling my heart with fear. Each passing day seemed like a brush with death. During the war, I would help my father in fetching water for drinking and bathing. I remember waiting for him in the chilling cold mornings as he offered his dawn prayers, so we could go together to collect water from the local source. The queues were long, lasting 5-6 hours, first for water, then for bread. Our days were consumed by this routine, with minimal food to sustain us.

Amidst the constant explosions and the stench of death that lingered in the air, my mother tried to create a sense of safety by staying close to us. We got peace in reading the Qur'an, and reciting prayers before we tried to sleep. My mother, ever the pillar of strength, reassured us that the war would end, and we would resume our education. She continued our lessons, nurturing the hope of a return to normality.

The turning point came on December 14th. After our usual drill of water and bread, while gathered around our mother studying, our humble abode was violently struck by two missiles. In an instant, a quarter of my body lay trapped inside the crumbling house, the other exposed to the outside world. Shrapnel pierced my head, causing severe internal bleeding and fracturing a portion of my skull. It was only by the grace of God and the unwavering resolve of my mother that my siblings and I narrowly escaped becoming casualties of war that dreadful day.

Blinded by the dust and debris, we found ourselves huddled together, miraculously unscathed. With divine intervention and the collective strength of our family, all nine of us managed to survive the ordeal. I held onto my sisters amidst the chaos until rescuers and my father arrived, helping to extricate us from the rubble. I sustained the most severe

injuries, undergoing surgery in Egypt where a prosthetic skull piece was implanted. My sister, Alaa, underwent multiple surgeries for her knee, while Sarah suffered a head injury, and Ibrahim sustained a foot fracture. Despite the challenges, we are thankful to be receiving medical care in Egypt, except for my father, who remains in a war-torn area, awaiting assistance.

The cost of treatment is substantial, and my father's absence weighs heavily on our hearts as we navigate this difficult chapter in our lives.

by Saja Al Bana

Overcoming Fear: Learning to Swim

When I first walked through the doors of the Tariq Centreer and Swimming Pool, I felt a mixture of excitement and fear. The idea of learning how to swim was thrilling, but the sight of the vast pool made me nervous. The water looked so deep and endless, and I wasn't sure if I could fight my fear of it. When I put my feet in the pool, the cold water made me shiver. It felt like a big challenge.

The first teacher didn't help much, which made things even scarier. I struggled to overcome my fear, and every time I tried to swim, I felt anxious and unsure. But when a new teacher started to help me, things began to change. She was patient and kind, and slowly I started feeling more comfortable in the water. Each time I learned a new swimming move, it felt like a big achievement.

Now, when I jump into the water, I feel happy and excited. Swimming has become something I really enjoy. I like going to the pool with my family to practice and have fun swimming.

by Layan Qadi

My Life in Conflict

I am a 16-year-old girl from Palestine, where wars and the Israeli occupation have become a part of our daily lives. One day, my brothers and I were getting ready for school when our mother stopped us with a grave look on her face. There was a security concern, and we were forbidden from going to school. I was heartbroken because I love learning, especially science, and I take pride in my academic achievements.

As the war raged on, what I thought would last a couple of weeks dragged on for months. We faced constant power cuts, water shortages, closed borders, and a scarcity of essential supplies. Despite the chaos, my mother made sure we had food to eat as we continued studying at home, surrounded by the sounds of explosions and fear.

One tragic day in December, while my father and uncle were out buying necessities, missiles struck our house. The impact was so intense that my brothers and I lost consciousness. When I woke up amidst the debris, my mother was bravely rescuing us one by one, trying to keep us safe.

With eleven children to protect, my mother's courage knew no bounds. My father and uncle, who had rushed back upon hearing the news, were shaken by the devastation. We were taken to a hospital where we received basic medical care due to the limited supplies available.

I'm sorry to hear about the hardships your family has endured. Here is a simplified version of the continuation of your story:

Saja's Journey to Recovery

After the tragic incident that left my sister, Saja, with a severe head injury, she needed urgent medical attention. With a broken skull and internal bleeding in her brain, her condition was critical. We were all taken to different hospitals for treatment, but sadly, some of our relatives did not survive the attack.

I was overwhelmed by the events, unable to speak, eat, or move. My father, in his grief, made the difficult decision to send Saja to Egypt for advanced medical care. However, with my mother tending to my other injured siblings, I was chosen to accompany Saja on this journey.

On the 24th of January, Saja received approval to seek treatment abroad. As my mother couldn't leave my other siblings, it was decided that I would go with Saja as her companion. Together with my father, we made the journey to the Rafah crossing, where we boarded a Palestinian ambulance that took us to the Egyptian side. From there, we continued our journey in an Egyptian ambulance to the Suez Governorate.

The road was long and arduous, filled with checkpoints and inspections that heightened my fear, especially of the guard dogs.

Finally, after hours of travel, we arrived at the Suez Medical Complex Hospital at 4:00pm. Exhausted from the journey, we were assigned to a shared room where I found solace in the presence of Palestinian women who offered comfort and understanding.

Meanwhile, back in Gaza, my mother and the rest of my injured siblings were awaiting their turn for treatment. Days turned into weeks as Saja underwent medical procedures, and it wasn't until two months later that my mother and the other siblings were able to join us in Egypt. Unfortunately, due to lack of support from the embassy and healthcare system, we faced challenges in transferring them for treatment.

The journey to recovery was long and challenging, but we found strength in each other as we navigated through this difficult time."

by *Islam*

Journey of Belief: Embracing the Magic of Storytelling

Hi, I'm Jana. I want to share with you the amazing journey of developing my skill in telling English stories. At the beginning, I faced a lot of challenges and had difficulty expressing myself through storytelling. I remember the first story I shared on Facebook – I was full of with fear and embarrassment. But thankfully, my teacher was there to provide her support and encouragement. With her guidance, I started to believe in myself and my ability to tell stories in English. I was also happy with the great comments on my post especially the comments of amazing story tellers like David Heathfield and Susan Piper. Also as the first grandchild, my grandparents' parents were so happy to see my stories on Facebook.

Throughout this journey, my muom played a crucial role in boosting my confidence. Her pride in my achievements has been a constant source of motivation. She always encouraged me to share my stories and to believe in the power of storytelling.

Now, as I reflect on my progress, I'm delighted to see that my stories are being loved and shared by children all around the world. It brings me a great joy to know that my words are reaching young hearts and helping their imaginations. I am truly grateful for the support of my teacher and the

continuous encouragement from my muom. Their belief in me has helped me become the storyteller I am today. Also, my talents in drawing and making helped me in telling stories and in making them come into life.

I hope to become a children's story writer in the future, with a dream of telling stories that will inspire young children all over the world. I am passionate about telling stories, and I cherish every opportunity to share my imagination with the world. With the support and love of my teacher and muom, I am confident that I can achieve my dream and continue to spread the magic of storytelling to children everywhere.

Grandma's Kunafa' secret recipe

As Lamar walked through the door of her grandmother's cozy house on a beautiful sunny day, she couldn't help but smile. "Grandma," Lamar said eagerly, "will you please make me that special sweet Palestinian kunafa you always make?"

"Of course, my dear Lamar, I'll make it for you," her grandmother replied with a warm smile.

Curious and excited, Lamar asked, "Grandma, can you please tell me the secret behind this delicious dessert?"

Her grandmother smiled softly and replied, "No, my dear Lamar, that is a secret for you to discover when you're older. It's part of the magic."

Lamar's eyes welled up with tears, and she couldn't help but ask, "But why, Grandma? Why can't you tell me now?"

Years passed, Lamar grew up, studied hard to have high marks to please her grandma, and asked her for the recipe. Sadly, her beloved grandmother got sick and could not remember the recipe anymore.

One day, feeling nostalgic, Lamar decided to try her hand at making the special candy herself, hoping to unlock the mystery behind her grandmother's recipe.

As Lamar mixed the ingredients and prepared the sweet treats, tears rolled down her cheeks. She whispered softly, "Oh, Grandma, now I understand your secret."

She realized that the true secret behind her grandmother's kunafa was not just the ingredients or technique but the love and tenderness with which her grandmother



made them. Lamar knew that the sweetness of the candies came from the love her grandmother poured into every batch, a love that now lived on in her memories. So she asked her mum and sisters to help her and they made the best kunafa filled with love.

And though Lamar was still just a student at school, she carried her grandmother's lesson of love and tenderness with her, cherishing the sweet memories they shared.

by Lamar Karaki

Be Careful in the Street

One day, I was getting ready to go out with my mum and dad. I was small, and they were holding my hand.

I let go of their hands and ran quickly across to the street.

I did not see the cars passing by. A car hit me, and I fell down.

I went to the hospital, but I was okay. I only had small bruises.

The lesson is: be careful when you walk in the street. Look around and stay safe.

by Ramiz Al Sahareef

Alaa's Journey Through Adversity

Hello, I am Alaa, a student who experienced the horrors of war in Gaza. On that fateful day of October 7th, as my sisters and I were getting ready for school, the sound of missiles filled the air. My mother's quick decision to keep us home spared us from danger as the war unfolded around us.

During those challenging days, we had to ration water and endure the difficulties brought by the conflict. On December 14th, while studying English, a sudden blast turned my world upside down. I woke up amidst the rubble of our shattered home, injured and disoriented. The pain of having bone fragments removed without anaesthesia stays vividly in my memory, along with the countless stitches that followed.

Despite the hardships, I persevered through multiple surgeries in Gaza and Egypt to heal my leg. The road to recovery has been long and arduous, but I remain hopeful for a brighter future. The support of my family and the strength I've found within myself have kept me going through these dark times.

Though the loss of my cousins weighs heavy on my heart, I choose to focus on the resilience and courage that have carried me through these difficult days. With faith and determination, I continue to face each challenge, knowing that brighter days lie ahead.

by Alaa Kamal

A trip to the Mosque

Let me share an incident that happened at the beautiful Ibrahimi Mosque in the old city of Hebron during the month of Ramadan. After attending the noon prayer with my mother and sisters, we had the chance to inside the mosque and visit the tombs of the prophets inside it. The time passed there very quickly, my mother called for us to head home. I was a little afraid of going through the checkpoint because of the situation in Palestine. I kept my mind occupied by talking with my sister. As we went down the steps



at the entrance, my foot slipped and I ended up twisting my ankle. I was in a great pain, and I had to limp all the way back home. By the time we arrived, my foot had swollen and become sore. Although I was in pain that I didn't want to go to the hospital., mMy wonderful mother took care of me by treating my injured foot with cold water and ice. As I rested my foot on a chair, I thanked my caring mother and she reminded me to be more careful and be brave in the future. I certainly will be more careful the next time!

by Ghazal Sider

A Story of Hope and Strength

Once upon a time, I was eagerly preparing to leave for school with excitement in my heart. However, my joy turned to sadness as the war suddenly erupted, disrupting our daily lives.

As education shifted to online platforms, we encountered challenges with internet connectivity, making learning difficult at times. Last week, there was a glimmer of happiness when the school finally reopened. I was thrilled at the thought of returning to school, but the harsh reality of the Zionist occupation prevented us from accessing education like other students.

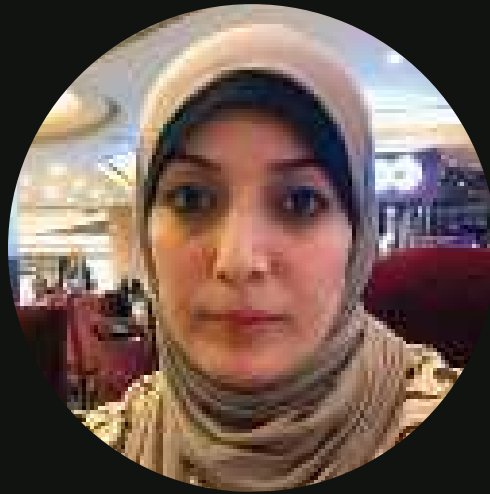
For eight long months, we were confined to our homes, unable to freely roam, spend time with family, or attend school. The restrictions imposed upon us by the occupation deprived us of the simple joys of learning and socialising outside our homes.

Even when faced with tough times because of the occupation, we stayed strong. We kept hoping for better days ahead when we could freely learn and live without restrictions.

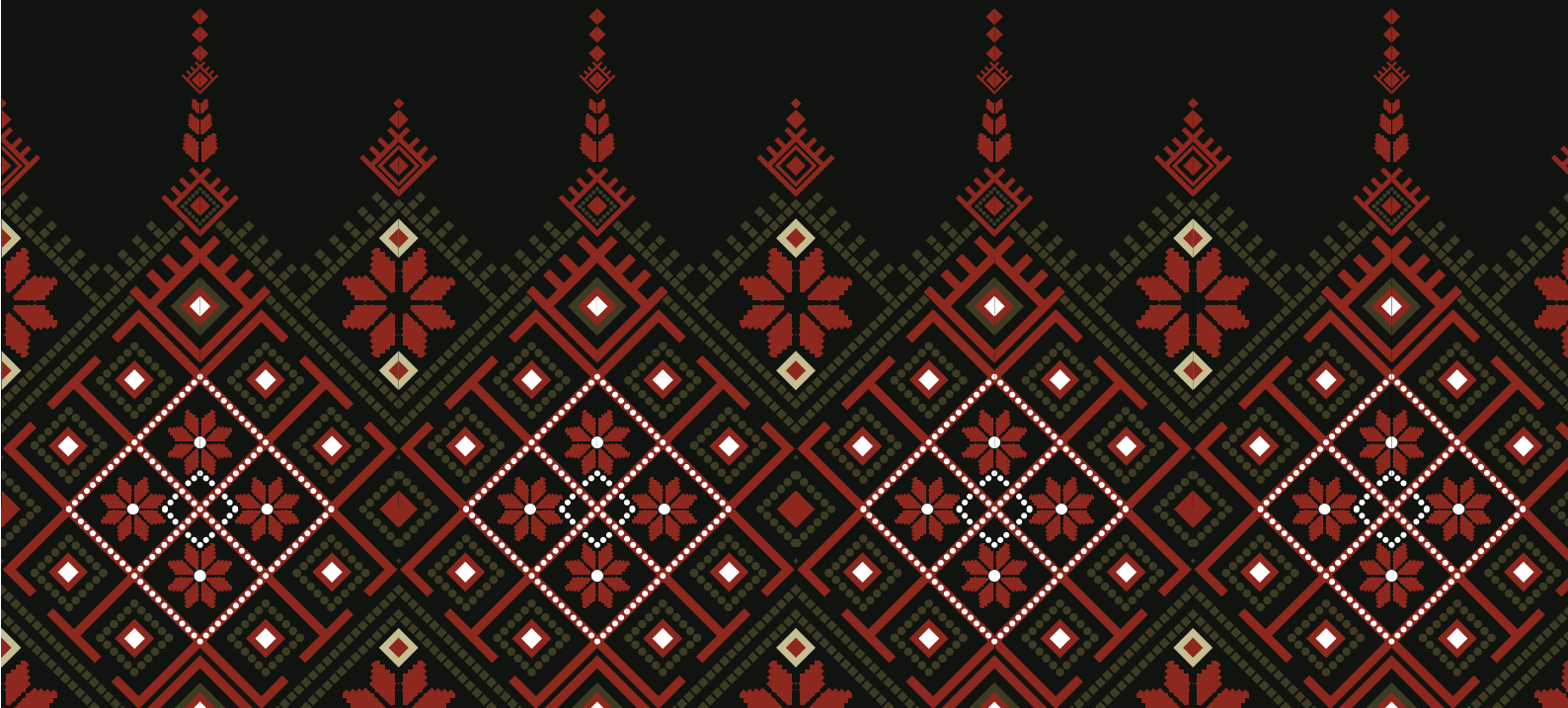
Despite the difficulties, we stuck together and stayed determined. We kept learning and sharing knowledge, finding comfort in our connections even when things were tough. Our ability to stay strong in hard times showed us that we can get through anything.

Looking forward, we know that education and freedom are essential and no occupation can take that away forever. We keep moving forward with courage, knowing that brighter days are coming.

by Tasneem



Deyar Ismail is from Gaza, Palestine, Gaza and works as an English language teacher at UNRWA school. This is the seventh year teaching in UNRWA schools. She taught for 2 years at Greek Orthodox Patriarchate school. She believes in the transformative power of storytelling to foster creative thinking and language development in her students.





Resilience amidst chaos

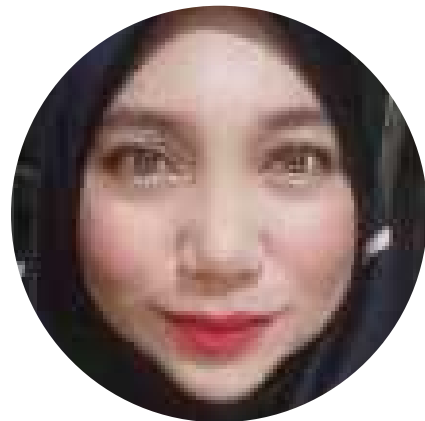
by Deyar Ismail

Resilience Amidst Chaos, written by Deyar in Gaza, captures her harrowing experiences over the past year. The story has been performed by colleagues in Palestine (West Bank), Malaysia, and Cameroon.

Featuring:



Nnane Anna



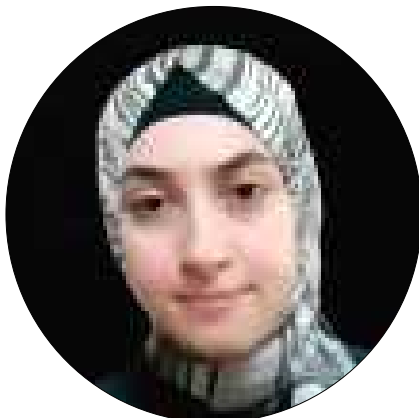
Dayang Kasimah Binti Jail Kpm-Guru



Lamy Tamimi



Luzan Mattar



Rasheeda Danna

Scan QR code
for play



Scene 1

Setting: Inside a house. The background is a virtual representation of a house in Gaza.
Characters: A mum (Nadia) and a girl (Layla)

[It starts with calm and peaceful music for a couple of seconds, with the mother offering a plate of breakfast. We can only see her hands, and then the music fades away. The camera then focuses on someone getting ready to leave, putting on a bag, holding English books, and opening the door. Mum is offering breakfast.]

Narrator (Layla): I am Layla. I am a teacher. I love my work and I always hope to make a difference in the lives of all my students. (as she opens the door)
(Suddenly, the house trembles. The sound of rockets and distant explosions shatters the calm.)

(Mum and Layla are shocked, looking at each other)

Layla: (looking out, her eyes wide) Mum, did you hear that?

Mum: (standing nearby, gripping the edge of the table) Is it thunder?

Layla: (shaking her head) No, no Mum. It sounds like bombings. I'm sure. Bombings. There's something horrible going to happen.

(The two characters look scared and worried, moving quickly and turning on the TV to see the news)

TV News: (voiceover) An attack has begun on Gaza. Rockets rain down, tearing through homes, hopes, and hearts. Almost two million people – 85% of the population – have fled their homes.

(They look at the camera as if it's the screen hearing the news, then look at each other, and then look at the camera)

Mum: It's the war, Layla. It's the end.

Layla: No Mum, there must be a hope to survive. We deserve life, Mum.

Mum: (whispering) Our city, Layla. Our memories. They're crumbling like ancient walls. *(The camera fades out, leaving echoes in the virtual room)*

The end of the scene 1

Scene 2

Setting: Each character appears in their own Zoom window. The background is a virtual representation of a dimly lit, partially destroyed room in Gaza.

Characters: Nadia (Mother), Ahmed (Father, Layla (Daughter)

(Participants mime gathering a few belongings - a small backpack, a flashlight, and a virtual family photo.)

Nadia: We'll move south tonight. We've run out of water, and Layla needs clean water

Ahmed: But it's dangerous. The airstrikes

Layla: Why did they destroy our home?

Nadia: We'll be careful. The moon will guide us. Our memories will stay with us.
(They exit their Zoom windows, fading away one by one)

The end of the scene 1

Scene 3

Characters: Nadia (Mother) Ahmad (Father) Layla (Daughter) Narrator

(The scene begins with an intro song extracted from "Daylight," performed by David Kushner.)

Layla appears in her Zoom window as the song slowly fades.

Layla: (with a sad expression, self-monologuing) It's been agonizing weeks for me. The wait is so long...

(From a distance, the voice of the Narrator is heard.)

Narrator: This is an urgent matter. Everyone must evacuate your houses to safety, as the biggest airstrikes will begin later tonight. Again, this is an urgent matter. Everyone must evacuate your houses, as the biggest airstrikes will begin later tonight.

All the characters listen fearfully. Layla covers her ears with both hands.

Nadia: (calmly) Layla, hurry up. Pack your things. We need to leave this afternoon.

Layla: But where do we go?

(Layla walks away, showing her packed bag)

Nadia, holding a bag and a piece of paper, joins her daughter.

Nadia: Where do we go?

(They walk away together on a different Zoom screens)

Ahmed: we are going to the south dear Layla. Hurry, no more asking. Pack your things now.

Layla: (crying while wiping her tears) I don't want to die father.
(Both parents look at the camera as if looking at Layla.)

Parents: god will, we will be safe

*Both the mother and Layla hold a piece of paper close to the camera with the words "WHERE TO GO?" written on it. Another paper is attached to the backpack, listing diKerent destinations like Nusairat Camp, Deir al-Balah, etc.
(They both walk away from the camera)*

The end of the scene 3

Scene 4

Characters: Ahmad, Layla, Narrator.

Sub-scene 4. i

The scene opens with a virtual background portraying an image of people fleeing from war. From a distance, a few houses are seen.

The atmosphere looks peaceful when suddenly, a faint image of a rocket crosses above

Sub-scene 4.ii

In a house. Darkness fills the room. The silhouette of a young girl is seen holding a torch in her left hand and a glass of milk in her right hand.

A loud rocket sound is heard. The house trembles. The young girl drops the glass of milk, which smashes on the floor [sound effect of smashing glass]. The torch falls as well. She grabs a cupboard firmly to maintain her balance.

Sub-scene 4.iii

Layla: (screaming) Dad! Dad! Where are you?

Ahmad: (coughs faintly).

Layla: (screaming) Dad! Dad! Can you hear me?

(A tall figure of a man is seen lying on the floor, his body covered in dust and blood)

Layla: (crying) Are you okay, Dad?

Ahmad: (coughs twice, then clears his throat) I'm injured.

Layla: (helping her dad to stand up) Let's leave this place and return to Gaza. I can't bear to see anyone else covered in blood and dust.

(The lights go out)

The scene opens with a virtual background portraying an image of people fleeing from war. From a distance, a few houses are seen. The atmosphere looks peaceful when suddenly, a faint image of a rocket crosses above their heads.

The end of the scene 4

Scene 5

It starts with sad music. (The camera is focused on someone who is carrying her luggage)

Narrator: we moved to Al Nuseirat camp with a hope that one day I will return to my home (The camera turns off)

(The camera turns on again focusing on the same person who is carrying luggage but this time with a less number of luggage)

Narrator: two months later we moved to Deir Al Balah. Every moment becomes worse of our life

(The camera turns off)

(The camera turns on)

(A girl is crying and holding a small bag to travel)



The girl: it's the most horrible situation in my life I can't hold on anymore

Narrator: it's April and the girl traveled to Egypt seeking a safe place to heal from all these catastrophic experiences with a hope to return back again.

*The girl moved closer and closer to the camera till she turns off the camera
(music of 'Oh, my Home')*

(Layla, Mum, and Dad are all holding a piece of paper close to the camera that says "WHERE TO GO?")

Narrator: [voiceover] And the family decided to flee the war.

(Layla, Mum, and Dad turn their backs to the camera, wearing backpacks with the words "TO THE UNKNOWN" displayed. Music begins to play as they walk away from the camera)

(One by one, each character appears and says their line)

Character 1: I am a teacher. I hope for a safe and peaceful world.

Character 2: I am a mother. I hope for a safe and peaceful world.

Character 3: I am a father. I hope for a safe and peaceful world.

Character 4: I am a human being.
I hope for a safe and peaceful world. All the characters then repeat their lines in their native languages.

The play ends with the instrumental music of "Oh, My Home."





Personal narratives

Deyar Ismail

My influential Teacher

I will not forget how my teacher influenced me one day and how she played an essential role in improving my personality. Although I was a smart and hard-working student, I was shy as I was not particularly eager to participate in extra-curricular activities.

One day my English teacher asked me to participate in remote theatre, but I was a little bit hesitant. She encouraged me and said, "You are such an intelligent student. You have the talent". Then, she asked me to write a short story to act it with students from another country on Zoom. I came back to my home and I was so enthusiastic to write a creative story. I wrote a short story about a great day I had in my life. I sent it to the teacher by email. She read it and she was so pleased with my story. After reading the story, she gave me feedback and she assigned the roles to us.

I practiced a lot in front of my parents at home. My sister helped me to perform the play effectively. She said, "You are good, but you need to use your facial expressions to attract the audience's attention". Therefore, I practiced using my face and my body language to express different feelings. I acted out my role in front of my teacher and classmates on Zoom. Everyone told me that my acting was great and I powerfully conveyed the message.

I realized that remote theatre is a wonderful way to express my feelings and emotions. It also raised my empathy with other people on this planet. Moreover, it helped me to improve my English skills that I acquired a lot of vocabulary. I became a confident and sociable person. I am so grateful for my teacher believing in me.

by Hala

My biggest dream

I still remember the time when I was a young child. My biggest dream at that time was to become a singer one day. I used to sing in my free time whenever I got the chance, often in front of my family and friends. It was my favorite hobby. One day, while I was sitting alone in the classroom, I started singing. Unbeknownst to me, my teacher was at the door and had been listening to my singing. When I finished the song, she started clapping. She said, "WOW... You are talented. I need to showcase your talent." Her words made me so happy that I couldn't help but cry, and then I hugged my teacher because no one had ever said such kind words to me before.

My teacher and my classmates organized a group of people who were going to sing. I was in that group as well. I practiced with my teacher and at home for two weeks. This was my chance to show everyone my talent. The day came, and I was so excited and a bit nervous. My teacher noticed that I was anxious about the performance and she encouraged me, saying, "Please calm down. I believe in your talent. Everything will be ok." Every year on the 28th and 29th of November, we celebrate our Independence Day as a country. Therefore, I was going to sing a song that I dedicated to my country and flag. Although I worked hard for this performance, I was nervous about it.

When I stood on the stage, I was shaking from excitement. I performed, and the audience clapped for me. After I finished, the administration rewarded me for the best song. I was so happy that I cried. My teacher came up to me and said, "I am proud of you. Don't stop pursuing your dreams. One day, they will come true." I will never forget that day because I was so proud of myself and so grateful for my teacher.

by Brikena

A miserable experience

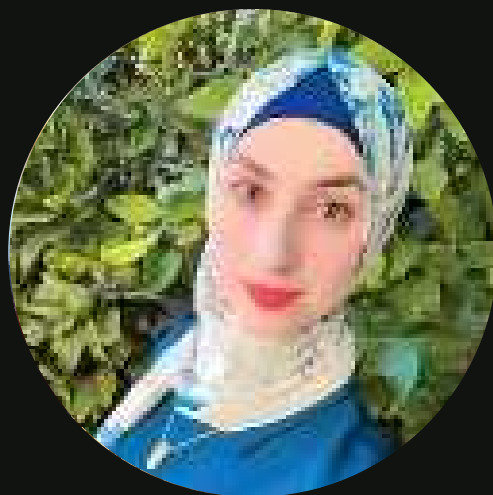
On the 8th of October, the second day of the war, we were asked to evacuate the neighborhood where I live with my family. My relatives called my dad and asked him to evacuate and go to their home. But, my father refused their offer and said, "It's just a rumor. We shouldn't leave the area".

Then, we went downstairs to see what our neighbors would do and they agreed with my dad to stay in the neighborhood. My brothers and I were terrified of airstrikes and we lived in fear of being trapped under the rubble. The following day, we evacuated to another area and started collecting only essential items to

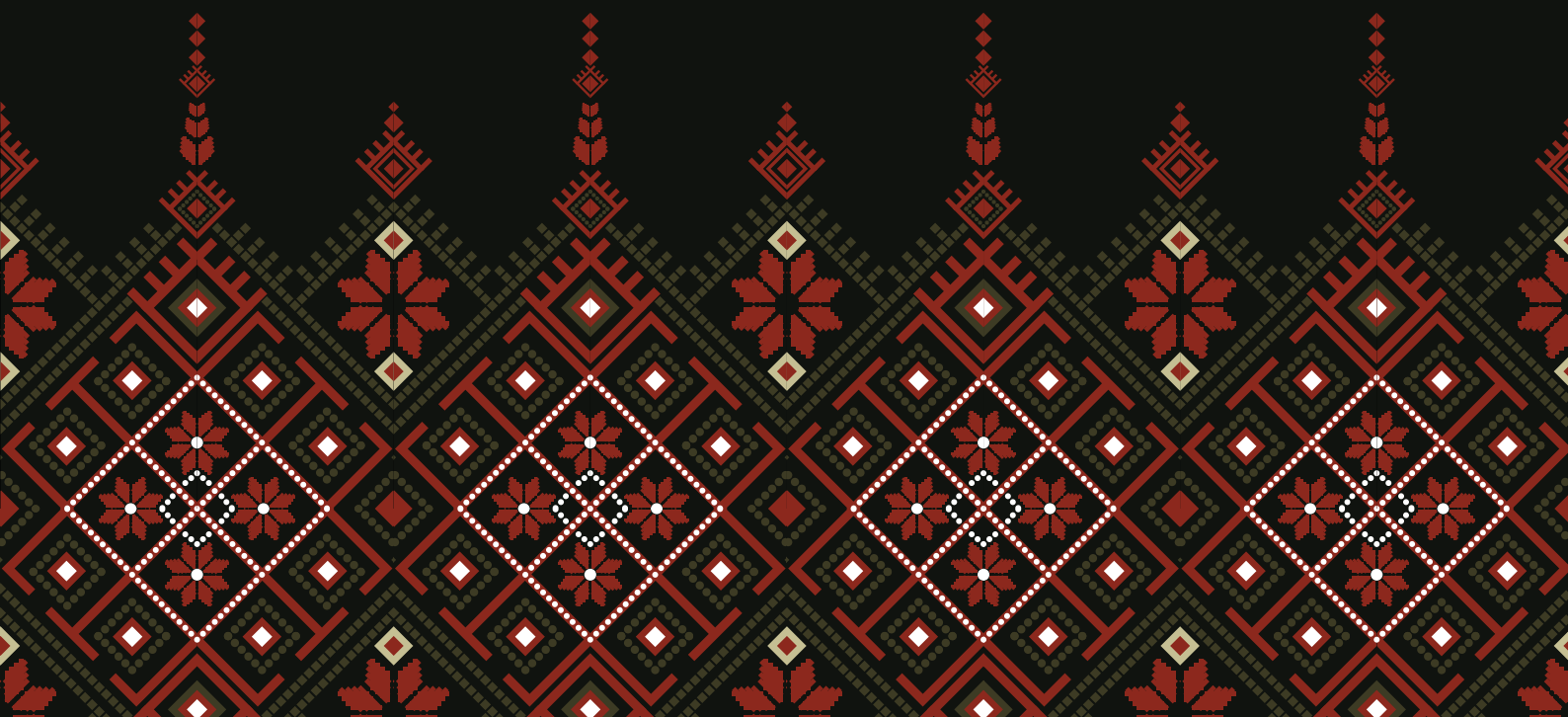
take with us. I couldn't take all my clothes, books and accessories with me. We were sure that we would return to our home the following day. We went to my uncle's house. But all the way, the bombing continued and the fear filled us. We haven't been able to go back to our house or even see it from the outside. I traveled with my family to Egypt to seek safety and I live with the hope of returning to my homeland soon.

by Rose





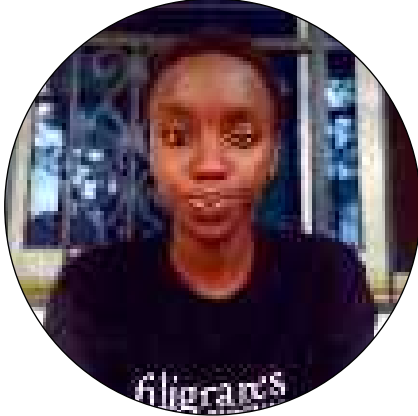
Rasheeda Dana is an English teacher from Palestine, Hebron. With a passion of making learning more enjoyable and exciting by teaching in different methods and techniques that would make a difference in teaching and learning. Enhancing learner's learning through storytelling which would be one of the best and effective ways.



The Lost Necklace

by Layan Herbawi (Palestine)

Performed by:



Thelma Landis
Kinyuy Nyuysemo

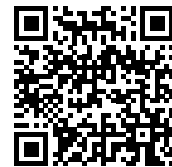


Ndi Beverley Ekiben



Ndumbe Daniel Wonjah Lifaka

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Directed by:



Anestine Lum Chi



Nnane

Layan prepares for school.

Layan: I need to hurry up. I am running late
(wears a necklace, kisses it, takes their bag and sets off for school)

(Layan at school – its break time, the bell rings. They go to the playground)

Friend 1: Let's go out for break, please.

Layan: Sure!

(They engage in a play – Layan touches their necklace and feels something is missing)

Layan: Oh, no!

Friend 1: What's the problem?

Layan: My necklace; I can't find it. I had it on in class. I just noticed it's not around my neck any longer.

Friend 2: How does it look like?

Layan: It's shaped like the map of Palestine with each detail holding a piece of our family history. Please, help me look for it.

Friend 1: Don't worry, we will find it

(They search around but find nothing)

Layan: Oh, no! That necklace means so much to me. It was given to me by my grandmother (Bell rings and Layan is worried)

Friend 1: I am sorry we have to return to class now. We will find it later, hopefully.

Friend 2: Don't worry, we will help you find it after class.

(Layan returns home sad – confides in her brother in the living room)

Bro: Welcome back, Layan. You don't look happy. Is anything the matter? Layan: No brother! Hmmm, I am fine. I am just a bit tired. Don't worry about me. Bro: I know you are not fine. Is there something bothering you? You know you can confide in me.

Layan: I lost the necklace grandma gave me.

Bro: How?

Layan: We were at the playground when I noticed it had fallen off my neck. I have searched for it to no avail.

Bro: Oh, no!

Layan: Don't tell anyone about it, please.

Bro: Sure, I won't. Sorry about the lost. I pray you find the necklace before anyone notices.

Layan: Oh Allah, help me to find it, I pray thee.

(The next day at school, friends invite Layan to play but they refuse)

Friend 1: It's break. Let's go to the playground

Layan: I don't want to play. I feel terrible about my missing necklace

Friend 1: Come here! (Friend hugs Layan). I can imagine how you feel. Have you told your parents about it?

Layan: No, I haven't. My grandma will be so disappointed when she finds out the necklace is missing.

Friend 1: I know but you still have to tell them.

Layan: I will try.

(Noise outside the class attracts Layan and friend 1)

Friend 2: I found it. Layan, I found it.

(Layan and friend 1 rush out of the class)

Layan: Thank you, thank you. I am so happy (hugging the friend). You don't know what this means to me. Thank you so much.

Friend 2: I am glad that we found it. I am happy to see you regain your smile. Layan: Come on everyone (they all hug). Thank you so much for your support during my low moments.

(Layan wears the necklace, kisses it, smiles and speaks directly to the camera/audience)

Layan: Even in moments of despair, there is hope and a chance for unexpected discoveries that can fill your heart with joy. Never give up!

Personal narratives

Rasheeda Dana



The Lost Adventure in Jordan

One day, after the school year ended and our summer vacation began, my family decided to take us to Jordan. My brother Youssef and I eagerly prepared for the trip, packing food, drinks, clothes, and money.

During the trip, we spent a wonderful time together. It was full of joyful family laughter, bright sunshine, and a fresh breeze. The conversations and songs carried us along so quickly that we did not feel how long the journey was.

When we arrived, we saw very tall buildings in a large residential area. All the buildings looked very similar. We rented an apartment there, and after unpacking our luggage, my brother Youssef and I became very excited. We went downstairs without asking our parents' permission.

We walked around the area talking about our plans. Suddenly, during a pause in the conversation, my brother Youssef asked:

"Walaa, do you remember the way back to our apartment?"

"No, I didn't pay attention," I replied.

"How will we get back now?"

"We will walk in a straight line, and then we will meet someone who can help us find our apartment."

"Well, although I'm not convinced, let's try it." "Let's go."

After walking for a long time, we lost hope of finding our way back and didn't know what to do. We sat on the pavement and started crying.

A man came and asked us, "Why are you crying?" "We are tourists, and we got lost," we explained.

The man asked if we knew the name of our street or any nearby shops so that he could help us find our way back. Unfortunately, we could not answer because every building looked the same.

After two hours, we heard laughter coming from one of the balconies in the residential area. To our surprise, our family was there!

Youssef exclaimed, "Do you see what I see?"

"Yes!" I replied.

It was our family, and they could see us from the balcony. As we walked back to our apartment, we realised that we had become lost because all the buildings looked alike and because we had been walking around the same block without noticing.

When we reached the apartment, we felt nervous about our parents' reaction. At the door, we started arguing about who would knock and go in first.

Youssef said, "You are older than me, so you have to go in first."

But I disagreed.

"No, they will be angrier with me because I am older and should have known better."

"What should we do? I'm afraid," said Youssef.

Suddenly, the door opened, and my mother was standing there looking at us. She started crying. We began crying too and hugged her.

"Where did you go without telling us? We were very scared and worried about you," she said.

"Mum, we are very sorry. Please forgive us. We will never do it again," we replied.

After this adventure, we returned to our apartment and spent the rest of our vacation enjoying our time together.

by Walaa

A Mother's Gift

On Wednesday, the 20th of August, my family and I went to school to receive our certificates. I received my certificate along with a gift, which was a cup with a beautiful princess drawn on it. Unfortunately, my sister did not receive a gift because her academic performance had declined. My best friend, Nawar, also did not receive a gift.

I felt very sad for them, although I was happy with my own gift.

After the ceremony, my mother wanted to go home, but I did not want to leave. Before she left, she advised me to let her keep the gift so that it would not break. However, I



was stubborn and did not agree because I thought it would never break as long as I had it.

My mother returned home, and I stayed at school. Later, the teacher asked me to bring some things from the classroom, so I left my gift with my best friend, Nawar.

I do not know why, but when I handed her the gift, I felt that she disliked me, and I thought I could see it in her eyes.

When I returned, I found everyone gathered around Nawar. I went to see what had happened and, to my horror, discovered that my gift had been broken. I cried a lot over it.

Then I turned to Nawar to tell her that our friendship was much more important than the gift, but I found her laughing. It seemed as though she had intentionally dropped it and broken it.

I went home, still crying, and told my mother what had happened. I felt very remorseful because I had not listened to her advice.

After several days, I gradually forgot about the incident. One day, my mother went to the market and returned with gifts for me and my sisters. She had prepared them as a surprise.

When she handed me my gift and I opened it, I was delighted. It was the same cup that had been broken at school.

I was very happy. Indeed, a mother is the person who feels your sorrows most deeply and always tries to make things better.

by Shaimaa

The Argument

One day, I went to my grandfather's house, where the whole family had gathered. We started by talking about our summer vacation plans and what we would do during the holidays.

After we finished discussing our plans, we had lunch and then rested for a while. Later, we decided it was time for some fun and games.

We played several games to pass the time and enjoy ourselves. First, we played a question- and-answer game. It was enjoyable, although some of the questions were quite challenging. Next, we played musical chairs, which required concentration and quick reactions.

After that, we decided to play Snakes and Ladders. However, a disagreement broke out over who should roll the dice first. Instead of playing, we began arguing.

Just then, my aunt came over and reminded us that we should not let a game cause an argument. She suggested that we take turns, starting with the oldest and ending with the youngest.

From this experience, I learned that it is important to wait patiently for your turn, even if you go last. I also learned that disagreements should not ruin the fun we have while playing games together.

by Nada

An Unforgettable Rescue

This is a story that I will always remember.

On the first day of the vacation, my family and I went to the Dead Sea, and I was very excited. I played with the sand and splashed in the water.

I wanted to swim, but my mother told me to wear my protective gear first. I did not listen and went into the sea without it.

That was when the trouble began.

The water pulled me away, and I started to drown. The salty water pushed me in different directions, and I struggled to keep my head above the surface. Panic set in as I felt myself sinking. I tried to call for help, but the water kept filling my mouth.

Suddenly, the lifeguard came and rescued me. He pulled me out of the water, and I was safe. My mother ran over, looking very worried.

"Are you okay?" she asked.

I felt terrible for not listening to her advice.

That day, I learned an important lesson: always listen to my mother. She knows what is best for me.

By Ghina

Lost in Jerusalem

One day, my family and I travelled to Jerusalem to visit my aunt. We stayed there for two days, enjoying the city and spending time together.

When it was time to leave, we decided to head to Hebron. As we walked through the crowded streets, I became distracted by some colourful stalls and let go of my mother's hand. I was so fascinated by the things around me that I did not notice she had walked away.

Suddenly, I looked around and realised that I was alone. Panic set in as I could not see my mother anywhere, and I started to cry.

Just then, a kind shopkeeper noticed me and realised what had happened. He had seen where my mother had gone and gently came over to help me. He gave me a sweet and tried to calm me down.

He stayed with me until he saw my mother returning.

When my mother arrived, she looked very relieved and hugged me tightly.

From this experience, I learned an important lesson: always stay close to my family and never become too distracted by the things around me.

The Unplanned School Lock-In

On Global Cleanup Day, the school organised an event to clean the entire school. I was in the fourth grade, the oldest grade in the school.

We started cleaning the school at the beginning of the school day and finished earlier than expected. Afterwards, the girls from the first, third, and fourth grades went home, while only the second-grade students remained.

I stayed at school with my friends because some of them had younger sisters in the second grade. We decided to wait with their

sisters so they would not have to go home alone.

We went into the last classroom in the hallway, closed the door behind us, and started playing and having fun. We became so absorbed in our games that we completely lost track of time.

Suddenly, a teacher came and opened the door.

"What's going on here?" she asked in surprise. "I thought the school was closed."

One of us replied shyly, "We're here waiting for our sisters from the second grade, and we lost track of time."

"But the school closed a while ago," the teacher said. "Why didn't you leave?"

"We lost track of time while we were playing. Sorry if we disturbed you," I replied.

The teacher laughed.

"Alright, but you need to be more aware of the time next time. It's time to go home."

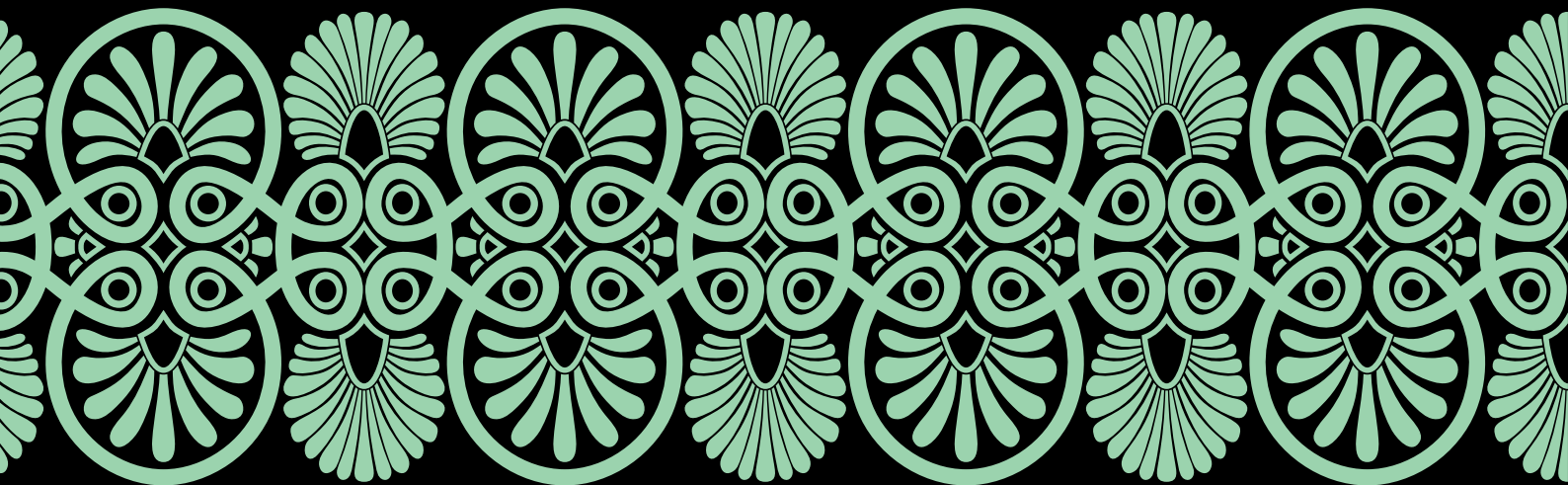
We all laughed at the situation and then decided to head home after realising how late it had become.

This experience taught us the importance of being aware of time and staying organised, even while having fun. It reminded us that while enjoying ourselves is important, being responsible and mindful of our surroundings helps us avoid unnecessary problems. It is a balance between fun and responsibility that helps us manage our time better in the future.





Evi Karydi is an EFL teacher and the owner of iLearn Language School in Greece. She is a certified storyteller, educational drama coach and teacher trainer. Evi is also the founder of 'Dramaactive', a teaching method through embodiment, and a volunteer educator.





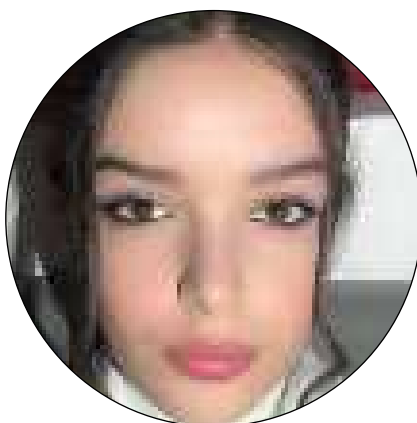
Scripted and performed by:



Rose Sabbah

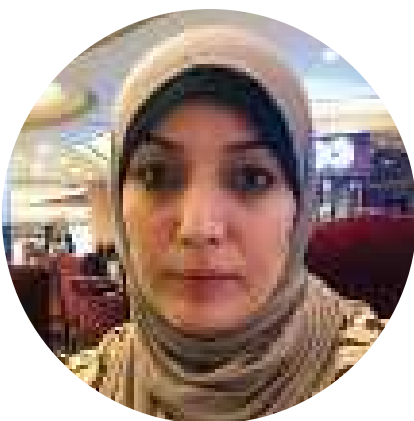


Hala Sabbah



Brikena

Directed by:



Deyar Ismail (Gaza)

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Scene 1

The teacher tells her students to prepare well for the math exam. Teacher: Good morning, girls

Teacher: How are you today?

SS: Good morning, teacher. We are fine. Thank you.

Teacher: I'd like to inform you that we have a math exam tomorrow.

Jenny: Can you please tell us which lessons are included in the exam?

Teacher: The exam will contain the 1st and 2nd units

Eva: Oh Miss. Will the exam be difficult or easy?

Teacher: Don't worry, Eva. Study hard to get high marks. The exam won't be difficult.

Jenny: Ok Miss. We promise to study hard to get high marks. **Teacher:** Good Luck, girls.

Scene 2

Eva called her friend Jenny. Her voice was so nervous because of the math test.

Eva: Hi Jenny.. How are you (stressed voice)

Jenny: I am good. What about you? Your voice sounds nervous.

Eva: I am so stressed. If you aren't busy, could you come to my house to help me prepare for the math test? I can't understand anything and the test is tomorrow.

Jenny: Don't worry, Eva. I will be at your home in one hour. We can revise the lessons together.

Eva: Thank you so much, Jenny. I'm waiting for you. Good Bye

Scene 3

Jenny went to Eva's house to prepare well for the math exam. Jenny knocked on the door, she was holding snacks in her hand. Eva welcomed her warmly.

Eva opened the door with a smile. She hugged Jenny.

Jenny: Hi Eva. How are you?

Eva: Thank God. I am so happy that you came because I am so stressed.

Jenny: Look. I brought your favourite snacks with me.

Eva: Thank you. You know that my favourite snacks always make me happy. **Eva:** Let's take these snacks and study in my bedroom.

Jenny: This is a good idea.

In the bedroom

Jenny: Let's start with unit "1". Don't worry, Eva. You need to practice.

Eva: Oh. It's too difficult for me. I think I won't succeed in the exam.

Jenny: You are a smart student. You always get high marks. You can do this. After 2 hours

Mum: Good afternoon. I brought you lunch. You have to eat well so that you can concentrate.

Eva: Thank you, mum

Jenny: Thank you

After 5 hours

Eva: I don't find it difficult as before. It's easier now. I think that I am ready for the exam.

Jenny: We're really exhausted. If you are ready, we can go for a walk. **Eva:** This will help us to clear our minds. Let's go.

Scene 4

Eva is sitting in her bench. She can't concentrate in her lessons as she is so stressed.

Teacher: Hello, everyone. How are you? Are you ready for the exam? **SS:** Yes, we're ready.

Teacher: You look stressed. Don't worry. I am sure that you will do well in the exam.

The teacher distributes the papers to students

Teacher: You have 30 minutes to answer the questions.

After the exam

Eva: Jenny, Jenny. I've just finished the exam. I did very well. I was stressed for no reason.

Jenny: I told you that it will be easy.

Eva: Thank you so much, Jenny. You helped me a lot to prepare for the exam. I am so grateful for you.

Jenny: You are my friend. I'll always be here whenever you need me.

"True friendship is when two friends can walk in opposite directions, yet remain side by side"





Lost and found

Last summer I went on holidays with my mum, my grandma, my friend Theodore and his parents. We went to Naxos, a beautiful greek island in the Aegean sea. One evening we went to eat in a traditional tavern at the busy port. The dishes were delicious, there was greek music coming from the speakers, there was a cool breeze from the sea so we stayed until very late. At one moment we saw a disgusting cockroach walking on Theodore's new, yellow T-shirt. Theodore started screaming in panick. When he finally stopped we went straight to the nearby kiosk because we wanted to buy some baby-wipes to clean himself. Our parents stayed at the tavern. We zig-zagged through the crowd, bought the baby-wipes and then we wanted to quickly head back. But there were so many people at the port that you couldn't walk through. That's when I made a very big mistake: I decided to go through the port all by myself to avoid the crowd. Theodore followed the route through the many people and he got back. But I got lost. I couldn't find the tavern and I was getting upset. I was looking to the left, looking to the right. But I just couldn't find the tavern. Everyone was worried. My mum, my grandma, my friend Theodore and his parents. They were all looking for me everywhere. They had been looking for me for a long time going up and down the port and the busy street, getting more and more worried. After sometime my grandma found me. She was so upset! "Where have you been? We've been so worried!", she said. Everyone came back to the tavern. They started shouting at me and I felt terrible, I felt stupid. Everyone told me me that I shouldn't do that again but I could only hear a noise in my head. In the end I understood my mistake and I was very angry at myself. I'll never get lost again.

by Apostolos Leriou

The Math Test

I remember one year ago my friend Eva called me. I could hear the stress in her voice so I knew something was wrong from the very first moment . She told me: "Hi, If you aren't very busy, could you come to my house to help me with my maths exam? I am so stressed because I can't understand anything and the test is tomorrow. Please help me". "I will be at your house in 1 hour", I told her. Before going to her house I bought some of her favourite snacks. Eva opened the door, looked at me and then saw the snacks in my hands. She smiled and we went straight to her bedroom to study. Explaining maths to Eva was not an easy job. We were there for about 5 hours! After the study, we were both exhausted so we went for a walk to relax and clear our minds.

The next day we had 7 hours of lessons at school but math was our last period. It felt as if time was stuck and Eva's stress was building up. I could see it in her face. Why couldn't we write the test and get over with it?

When we finally took the math exam she told me that she did great and that all that time she had been stressed for no reason. She thanked me and said that I had helped her a lot. I could feel her happiness warming my heart and I thought: It's so nice to help a friend!

by Kristel Ndoka

An Unforgettable Incident

About 8 years ago, when I was 5 years old, I was playing tag with my friends at school in Greece and we were enjoying ourselves. But when we sat to rest at a bench, my friend Alexandra accidentally pushed me. My head hit the corner of the bench and I started bleeding.

Alexandra was really sorry and she started apologizing over and over again. She was about to cry.

She seemed more shocked than I was. My other friends called our teacher, Mrs Despo, and my mum who was a teacher at a different class and they both came running to me. My mum tried to seem cool but I know she wasn't. They brought gauzes and a first-aid kit but the bleeding didn't stop. Then they brought a bowl so that the blood would drip in it. At that point I was really scared and I was shaking. I was about to faint.

When the ambulance came and they put me in, my mum jumped in with me without asking anyone. She wanted me to feel better and safer. I don't know if I fell asleep or if I actually fainted but I could hear the syren of the ambulance screaming in my ears.

We reached the hospital and they rushed me to the emergency rooms where the doctors put stitches on my head. The whole procedure seemed endless and unbearable because they had me face-down on the hospital bed.

In the end they gave me a lollipop and some marshmallows for being brave. I will never forget how scared I felt by this incident but thank God my head healed quickly and I went back to normal pretty soon.

By Angelos Davoultzopoulos





Anestin Chi is a multiple award-winning English and French languages teacher and teacher educator from Cameroon. She has over 11 years of teaching experience with exposure to Cameroon, UK and US curricula.

She's equally an equal opportunity advocate who's passionate about empowering learners to help them to attain their full potential through storytelling and connecting classroom projects.



Phone Addiction

by Sarah (Gaza)

Scripted and performed by:



Palle Racheline Ahone



Munjah Success Bemba (Cameroon)

Directed by:

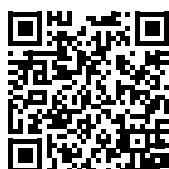


Anestine Lum Chi



Nnane Ntube

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Sarah on her phone in her room, her mother walks in.

M: On your phone again, Sarah? Stand up. Go and do your morning chores, please.

S: Please, mom. Just a few minutes more. Let me just finish this movie. I am coming, please.

M: No! I am not going to listen to you. You have to do the chores now. Let's go
(In the kitchen – Sarah does the dishes and mum advises)

M: My daughter, I am not happy with you. You no longer have good grades. You spend all your time on social media and that makes you lazy. You don't even speak to anyone. You are always on your phone. That's not good.

S: Come on mum! You know I am just fitting in as a Gen Z (smiles)

M: I agree with you. But you are not making good use of the Internet. You need to limit the amount of time you spend on the Internet. Spending too much time on the Internet or using it wrongly could have negative effects on you.

S: OK mum! I have heard you.
(Sarah goes to her room)

(Sarah is in her room in a soliloquy)

S: Is mum really right? She might be right; I don't know. Come to think of it! But I love having my phone. I enjoy watching movies and chatting on social media. It makes me feel good. I guess I don't have to worry too much about what mum said. Let me just get back on my phone.

(Sarah gets back to her phone – a few minutes later, she starts rubbing her eyes)

S: What's happening to me? My eyes, my head. Ah!
(Sarah stands up and walks to the living room)
(In the living room)

S: Mum, my eyes are hurting; my vision is blur and my head aches too.

M: How long have you had these?

S: It's been going on for some time now.

M: I told you. It is possibly because of your addiction to the phone and the Internet. I told you about the negative effects of the phone on your health, studies and even social interaction, didn't I? You need to spend less time on the Internet and focus on developing your skills instead. You can use the Internet for your studies instead of watching movies.

S: Ok, mum. I think you are right. I will do as advised.

(Sarah goes to her room)

(In the room – Sarah in a soliloquy)

S: Mum is right! I haven't been doing well at school. My health is beginning to deteriorate too. I think I need to change. Yes, I will make my mum proud.

(The next day – Sarah on her way out to school)

S: Good morning mum.

M: Good morning my daughter. Ready for school?

S: Yes mum, about yesterday, I heard all you said and I promise to make you proud.

M: Come here my daughter. I am so happy
(They hug).

(Sarah in a soliloquy – speaks directly to the Camera/audience)

S: I decided to focus on my studies. I became passionate about Biology. I hope to be a medical doctor someday. Also, I stopped watching movies and used my free time to develop my writing skills. Today, I use the Internet to share my narratives and perform them through Zoom too (while displaying a piece of writing and the Voices Across Worlds banner). I have learned other languages too (says a few words in foreign languages – Bonjour, divertisé, yarhamuk Allah). I now have friends too
(smiles while showing a picture of friends).

Now to you my friends, the Gen Zs, the Internet can be a foe or a friend. Use it wisely!

The struggle for survival

The hunter woke up early as usual and got ready for the day's hunt. He took his bag, bow and arrow and set off for the forest. He wandered through the forest for long but couldn't find anything. Then he decided to return. As he turned around to set off, he saw a big monkey. He knew it was forbidden to hunt monkeys but he said to himself: "I know this is not right but I need money. If I kill the monkey no one will find out and I will earn a lot of money selling it". Then, he immediately pulled out his bow and arrow but the monkey ran off, hopping from tree to tree. At some point, the hunter noticed the monkey was struggling with a snake. The monkey had actually found a nest of eggs and was heading for the nest when the snake made its sudden appearance. So the snake attacked the monkey. As they got into a fight, the hunter thought to himself: "what an opportunity!". So, he tip-toed towards the snake's nest. Unfortunately for him, the snake spotted him and turned around to retaliate violently. The hunter's heart raced with fear. He rapidly drew back his bow and arrow and struck the snake. The monkey took advantage of this moment to run away with all the eggs. The hunter did not get the monkey he so desired nor the snake's eggs but he retired home thankful for his life.

By Ndi Beverley Ekiben, Munjah Success, Nsaingeh Bernadette and Abanda Prisca

PS: The story is the outcome of a warm-up activity. The narrative is a representation of how humans struggle to survive while preying on others.

The journey to resume education

Part one: The call

I remember vividly how we were playing in the courtyard during break. The wind blew slowly and dry leaves from trees in the school yard detached themselves and fell to the ground one after another. It was about to rain so we all ran into our classes.

As soon as we got into our class, the mathematics teacher walked in, greeted us and we responded with excitement. Just like many of my classmates, I loved mathematics. Although the teacher's overgrown moustache gave him a scary look, he was very good at his job and friendly too. The teacher turned to write on the board but his phone rang almost immediately. He picked up the call. His

facial expression was scary as he answered. Straightaway he urged us to run for our dear lives as there was a shoot-out between separatist fighters and the military very close to the school campus. The news quickly went round and the campus was in complete disarray: both teachers and students running helter-skelter – some falling and trampling on others. I jumped through the window. Our school was a rural school situated in Noni. It was made up of four blocks roofed with thatches. The classrooms had no window protectors, which made it easier for us to escape. But as I struggled to jump, a group of classmates seeking to run to safety too pushed me out of the window. I fell and hurt my ankle. I was rescued by the maths teacher. I used to be scared of him because of his overgrown moustache but at that point I wasn't frightened anymore. I clinged to him as though my survival depended on him. He helped me home.

I don't remember exactly what my mother was doing in the courtyard. But as she saw me limping with the help of Mr. Moustache (we had nicknamed the maths teacher), she rushed towards us. Before she could say a word, the maths teacher whispered: "there is trouble; it is not safe here" and then ran off. I hugged my mum, clinging to her with no intention of letting her go. She asked, looking worried: "Kiven, what's the problem?". As I opened my mouth to narrate the ordeal, we heard a thunderous sound that seemed to shake the earth. Then, we perceived smoke from afar. We ran into the house, locked the door, crawled under the dining table and laid down flat on the floor. We could hear the sound of gun shots. The raining bullets seem to be playing an unpleasant music that got my heart beating unevenly. After about three hours, the sound started fading away, yet panic would not allow us to come out of our hideout. We eventually fell asleep there.

Part 2: Escape to safety

The next morning when we woke up, everywhere was as quiet as a graveyard. First, we were scared to open the door but my mom mustered courage and did. We stepped out and discovered that many houses around ours had been destroyed. There were several holes in our roof and windows and the spent bullets were scattered all around our house. We could hear people yelling in neighbouring houses. They were mourning their loved ones, victims of yesterday's stray bullets. We later learned that my school had been reduced to ashes. Sorrow and pain had filled our once very lively community.



My mother was aware that this silly war was going to linger on especially as the government perpetually ignored the cries of the people. So, she made the very courageous decision to move to another region. The real challenge was how to get there with no secure means of transportation. But her mind was made up.

When we returned home that evening, she asked me to pack a few belongings. We woke up early at 2:00am to embark on the journey. I asked my mum where we were heading to but "come with me; we need to leave now" was all she said. We carried our bags on our heads like refugees and instead of heading to a bus station, we walked along a narrow path down to a nearby river and then into the forest. It was dark and I was really scared. My mum led the way with an old lamp. The light from the lamp was too faint for me to see anything. The cracking sound of dry leaves under our feet made me even more scared. I could perceive strange sounds that made my heart palpitate. The thought of being followed by an animal or even a ghost forced me to move so fast that my mother did not have to urge me on. We trekked several kilometres through the bush till dawn. My mum told me it was safer than using the road as we might easily be halted by military men or separatist fighters. Finally, we got to Nso, a neighbouring village after about four hours of trekking. My feet were hurting and I could barely walk. There we were lucky to find catch the last bus leaving for Bamenda. Eventually we got to Bamenda and boarded a bus en route to Yaoundé, our haven.

That was the last time I saw Noni or heard from my childhood friends. I wonder what became of Mr. Moustache and the other teachers. I wonder what became of our neighbours. It's been five years now. Although I am safe in Yaoundé with access to education, I feel there's something missing in me because there's no place like home. I miss my beautiful homeland, Noni.

by *Ndi Beverley Ekiben*

The imaginary calabash

We grew up believing in the existence of a sacred calabash that protected every family member. The calabash was said to be in a room, which no one was allowed to enter, in my grandfather's house.

I remember how on arrival at the village for summer holidays, grandpa warned us about the room, which we must never come close to, let alone open. We obeyed the rule for several weeks but one of my cousins, Bello, kept questioning what would happen if we opened the room. First, I told him it was a bad idea to try. But later, he told me we could secretly go and pray to this calabash, in grandpa's absence, to receive blessings. Then, I was convinced.

So, the next day when everyone had gone out, Bello and I executed our plan. Unfortunately, we found no calabash. As we stood in the room wondering if the calabash had disappeared, my aunt walked in and screamed as she saw the "no access" door open. We were terrified at the thought of the consequences of our action. The incident was reported to grandpa. It was then he confessed that there was never a calabash in the room. It was only a test of obedience. We had failed the test and as consequence, we should never inherit any of grandpa's properties.

by *Nang Cedric Che*

The broken clay pot

My name is Limnyuy and I live in Yaoundé with my parents.

Once upon a time, my extended family had this sacred tradition of assembling in the village every April for some sacred rites that were believed to have been passed down by our ancestors. So during this annual gathering, which used to take place in my grand uncle's house, family members were required to drink from a clay pot. I always had a negative feeling about this family gathering.

This year, I joined in the family rite. It was my first time actually. Previously, I was just an observer; but this year I actually took part in the rite – drinking from the clay pot. When the clay pot was handed to me to drink from, I noticed a strange spot at the bottom. As I took a closer look, my grand uncle quickly seized the pot from my hand and took it to a room immediately. To satisfy my curiosity, I later on sneaked into the room where the clay pot was kept. The room was quite dark. As I struggled to navigate through the dark room, I stumbled and something fell just behind me. While I was still trying to figure out what fell, I heard a loud cry

outside. I quickly rushed out to see what was happening. What a shock! My Grand uncle was lying on the ground struggling between life and death. No one knew exactly what had happened to him. An elderly member of the family advised that they should rush him to the nearest traditional doctor.

The traditional herbal home looked more like a shrine. The floor was covered with a red carpet. On the wall, there hung a carved figure. The figure had two cobra heads with horns on them. The herbalist looked so frightful too. He was a skinny looking man. His face and chest were covered with white spots. He had a red loin cloth tied around his waist. In a corner of the room, there was a pot. As soon as the herbalist started talking, fire lit under the pot and it started to boil. I was really scared. He did some incantations in a strange language no one could understand and then turned to us (the family) and said: "Take him away. He is an evil person. The pot that fortified him by taking away others' lives has been broken. He can't survive". Almost immediately, my grand uncle breathed his last. He was buried as an outcast and my family decided to abolish this tradition.

by *Thelma Landis Kinyuy*

Surmounted adversity

I remember when my mum became terribly ill and I had to take over the management of the family's affairs. As young as I was, I had to take care of my sick mum and cater for my siblings while struggling with my studies too. The burden was too much for me and I started falling into depression as a result of stress. Sometimes, I got so depressed that I would go without food for many days. I grew so pale that my strength would fail me on some days. Many times I prayed and wished the burden was taken off my shoulders. But amidst the distress, I found solace in talking with friends. I remember Thelma, a true definition of a friend in need, who supported me through this trying times. She stood by me through the tough times. She organized a campaign to get blood donors for my mum. She also helped me to get counselling, which aided in relieving the stress and helped me to pick up with my studies again. I realized just how important having a true friend is and the value of a supportive network in our low moments.

by *Nsaingeh Bernadette Berinyuy*

Recovered hopes

I fell in love with literature in my early years of secondary school. I was so passionate about literature that I dreamed of becoming a writer someday. Unfortunately, my bond with literature was jeopardized at some point in my academic journey. This was because of a lazy teacher. First, she used to come very late. Then, she would fall asleep in class. It was so bad that at one point I imagined she was suffering from a sleeping sickness. This had a negative impact on our class performance and shattered my hopes of becoming a writer someday. This unfortunate situation went on for a long time until we could no longer bear it. We decided as a class to file a formal complaint to the school administration. After due investigation, this teacher was sacked. We got a replacement before we knew it. The new teacher was simply amazing. She rekindled my hopes as I bonded anew with literature.

by *Palle Racheline Ahone*

The inherited name.

Once upon a time in a village called Tombel, there was a little girl named Epede. She inherited the name "Epede" from her late grandmother. She behaved exactly the same as her grandmother. She noticed that everything that happened to her grandma happened to her as well.

Epede did not like going to school. She was very lazy and disrespectful. Only her grandmother believed that she would one day become a better person. Her grandma took her to a priest for prayers. It was then discovered that the name she had inherited from her grandmother was the problem; the name had a negative influence on her.

The priest did everything to deliver her from the curse of the name. Epede was finally delivered from the spirit that had possessed her name. From that day on, she changed and became a better person. She started behaving as a normal child would.

by *Palle Rachiline Ahone*

Language barrier

Have you ever felt excluded simply because you don't speak or understand a language? Let me share my experience with you.

Cameroon is a bilingual country, unlike the Cameroonians themselves (ha ha ha). It sounds funny but that is our reality. I remember leaving Bamenda (an English-speaking region) to Yaoundé (the capital of Cameroon, which is predominantly French-speaking) to continue my education due to the civil unrest in the English-speaking regions of the country. I was enrolled in a bilingual school. This is a type of school that hosts teaching in both English and French in distinct sections of the same campus. So, on one campus you will find French-speaking students and teachers as well as English-speaking students and teachers. Very few might speak both languages.

I was excited about resuming school on my new campus. I woke up very early, finished my morning chores, took my bath and was ready for school. I was so excited that I didn't eat my breakfast. I remember my mum urging me to eat breakfast before leaving but I told her I wasn't hungry and quickly ran off before she could insist further. I was able to find my way to my new school because I had been there previously with my aunt for formal registration. When I got to the campus, my excitement died down: I couldn't find my class. I was moving around searching in vain. Then, I found this group of girls standing and chatting in front of a classroom. I smiled because I believed they were going to help. I walked up to them and with a broad smile I greeted them but no one answered. I greeted them again and moved straight on to enquire about the location of my class. They looked at me and burst into laughter. I was confused. So, I asked: what was funny? The more I spoke, the louder they laughed and uttered some words which I couldn't understand. I stood there lost and ready to cry. Thank God! A teacher was passing by and he intervened. He could understand both languages. So, he made me understand that the learners did not understand English and he helped me to find my class.

By *Munjah Success Bemba*

Echoes of Fear: My Journey through the Anglophone Crisis

Going to school in the South-West Region of Cameroon, a region marred by an armed conflict between separatist fighters and government forces, is an experience I will never forget. Ghost towns are often declared by the separatist fighters, with shops and businesses shutdown, sometimes for many days, and at times no public transportation is allowed. Some days are bloody – the sudden sharp crack of gunshots fills the air and lives are lost. This has been my experience for the past three years.

Amidst the horror and impending danger, I have to go to school. Yes, education cannot wait! I leave my house with a heart full of fear. I disguise to blend in. Yes, I have to, so that no one will suspect I am going to school. It is that bad. Let me shock you. Primary and secondary school students do not use school uniforms anymore for fear of being kidnapped. Many schools are now held on church premises or in private homes. Attending classes is a risk only the brave take. Schools are burnt down if they open their doors to welcome hungry knowledge seekers. So, you understand my disguise. Sometimes, I dress as if I were going to the farm just to derail attention. Then, once I get to the campus, I change. Even there, it is not safe. The university campus is heavily militarised. Military men are everywhere, their long guns polluting the air with tension. There is this oppressive feeling that accompanies everyone on campus. In the lecture theatre, I often find just a handful of classmates. Others have become school dropouts because of fear. On campus everyone acts in fear. Lecturers cut short their lectures to ensure learners leave the campus early enough. Returning home after a lecture is just as complicated as coming to campus.

Taking public transport, on lucky days when it is in circulation, isn't easy either. My heart races with fear as I await a cab. I feel a wave of relief when I finally get into a cab. But even in the cab, I pray so hard nothing goes wrong on my way home. When I reach home safely, I silently thank God. Every day when I return, my mum enquires: "How are you?" and I reply, "I am fine, mum." But fine is just a word. The fear, the tension, the uncertainty lingers, shaping every moment of my life.

By *Ndumbe Daniel Wonjah Lifaka*

COVID-19

I remember it clearly. It was on Tuesday 6th January, 2020 that we were granted this forced break – barely a few days after Term 2 resumed. After our usual morning devotion at school that day, we noticed that teachers were absent. We waited in class in vain. After the long wait, the bell rang; there was a request for us all to assemble at the school chapel. It was there our vice principal announced the outbreak of a deadly pandemic. We were required to pack our things and get ready to return to our homes the following day, as our parents had been informed to come and pick us up.

I thought it was going to be just for a few weeks but I was wrong. I was unhappy because I missed receiving my prize award for that year as the best student in my class. Also, measures to curb the spread of the pandemic required us to stay indoors for a long time. This meant I was unable to attend church or visit friends and family members. This made me feel depressed. To combat depression, I resorted to watching the TV a lot. This had a negative effect on my health as my eyes grew worse and I was required to change my lenses. I was worried about my studies, especially taking the GCE Advanced level next year. Fortunately, the Ministry of Secondary Education created a distance learning scheme. Thanks to this scheme, live lessons were broadcasted on TV. These lessons helped me to stay afloat. My parents also made provision for me to get private lessons.

Finally, the pandemic was somehow contained and we went back to school. I was so happy. Thanks to the private lessons I received and the live lessons broadcasted on TV, I was ready to go. It was the most decisive academic year in my life as I looked forward to passing the GCE and going to university.

By Nsaingeh Bernadette Berinyuy

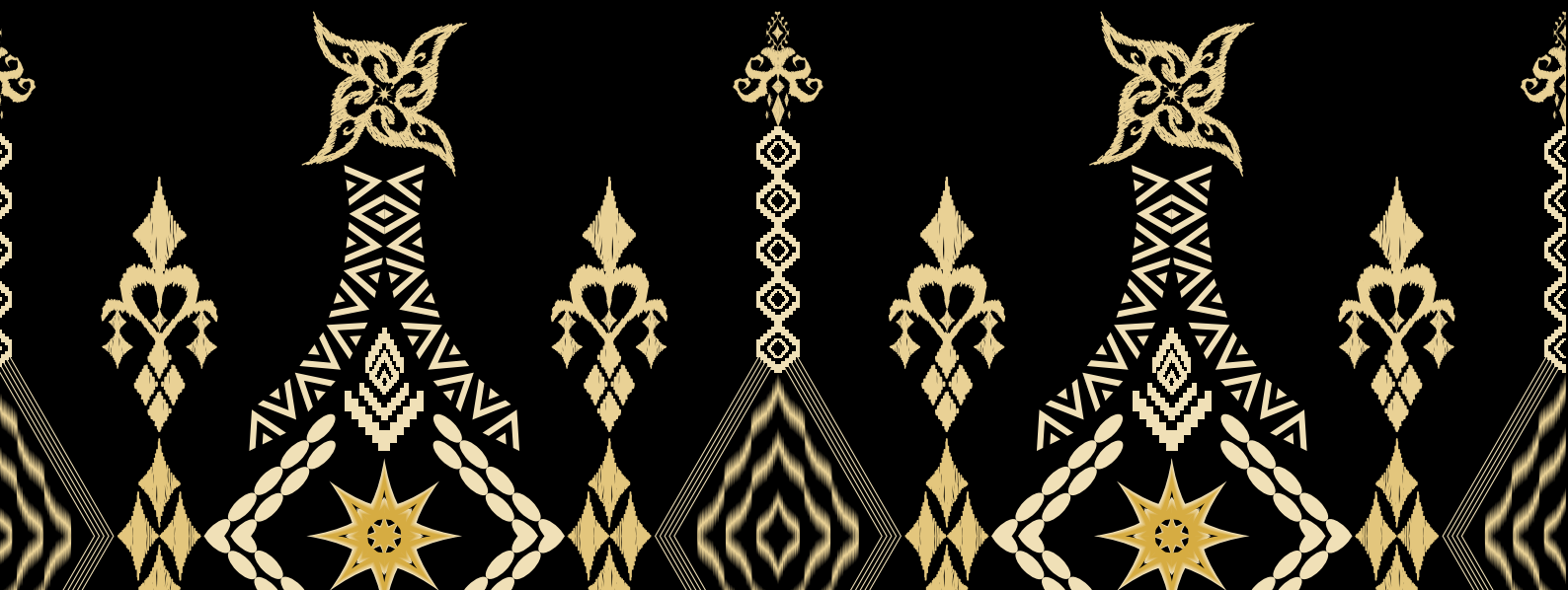




Dayang Kasimah Binti Jail Kpm-Guru

has been teaching English for the past 18 years. Recently, she went through a phase in her life where she transitioned from urban living to a calmer, more peaceful life by choosing to teach in rural and secluded areas.

This is her second year working with the underprivileged children of the indigenous people on Banggi Island in Kudat, Sabah. The Bonggi, the natives who have lived on Banggi Island for generations, have offered her new perspectives, both personally and professionally. While she has yet to fully overcome the challenges, difficulties, and constraints of this environment, the spirit and enthusiasm she brings to her work help her bring out the best in her students.



Lost in Jerusalem



by Dayang Bint Jali

Scene 1

Father: Ahmad and Lisa, let's take some pictures here. (clicking some pictures)

Lisa: Father, Mother... Look! What a beautiful? (Pointing to the scenery)

Mother: Watch out your step dear! Please be careful. And Ahmad, please stop running. I don't want you to get hurt. God forbid!!! After a few days...

Scene 2

Father: Okay kids, it time to go home, back to Hebron.

Ahmad: Oh father, can we stay for another one night? Please.

Mother: No Ahmad. Your father is working tomorrow. That's why we need to go back okay.

Scene 3

Hebron town

Ahmad: Father, Mother. Wow! There are so many people here and there are stalls. (happily)

Mother: Yes Ahmad. Do you want to buy something?

Lisa: Mother... Mother... I want that chocolate ice cream. Yummy. (let go her mom hand)

Lisa: Awe about the town situation. (Wah..) mouth open, mesmerizing

Scene 4

Lisa: Mother, Mother.... Where are you? (panicking)

Lisa: Father, Father... Listen to me please. (Sobbing)

Lisa: Mother, Father, Ahmad..Where are you? (yelling and crying)

Seller: Hello young child, are you ok? Why are crying?

Lisa: I want my mother, my father and my elder brother.. I couldn't find them. (crying)
Seller: Poor child. Ok don't worry. Come, let's go to my shop. (taking lisa hand) Lisa reluctantly at first.

Seller: here, take this sweet.it will calm you down. I'll help you to find your mother Walking together hand in hand

Scene 5

Mother: Excuse me, have you seen this little girl? (showing Lisa photo)

Seller: Gracious... Yeah, she's here with me. She found her wondering around the market.

Mother: Thank god.

Seller: Hey, little girl. Can you come here for a while?

Lisa: Yes, what is going on?

Seller: I want you to meet someone.

Lisa: Mommy, mommy, please don't ever leave again. I miss you so much.

Lisa and her mommy walk away from the stall to get her family.

Scan QR code
for play





An Unforgettable Rescue

by Ghina

Scene 1

The dead sea.

Mommy: Let's set up our mat here under the tree.

Ghina & Brother: Okay Mommy. We will help you. (carrying things)

Brother: Ghina, let's play with the sand.

Ghina: Yeah, sure can brother. But I want to swim.

Ghina walks and meets up with her mom.

Scene 2

Ghina: Mommy, can I go swimming?

Mommy: Yes, you can honey. Do you have your protective gear with you? You hardly can swim.

Ghina: Nope, I didn't bring it. But, don't worry Mommy. I will be alright. I will not swim into the deep sea.

Mommy: Okay honey. Make sure you are careful.

Scene 3

In the sea.

Ghina: Help, help me... (drowning)

Ghina: Someone, please help me. Help!!!

Lifeguard: Wait young girl. I'm coming.
(He swims quickly)

He drags her slowly to the shore.

Scene 4

Mommy: Ghina, Ghina, are you alright? Oh you poor kid.

Lifeguard: Don't worry Mam, she will be fine. Let her get her breath first.

Ghina: Mommy... Mommy... I'm sorry. I should have listen to you.

Mommy: It's okay honey. The most important thing is that you are safe.





A Mother's Gift

by Shaimaa

Scene 1

Shaimaa: Mummy, mummy, Look, what I've got? (showing the cert and the cup)

Mummy: Wah! Congratulation to you dear Shaimaa. (Hugging Shaimaa)

Shaimaa: Thank you so much mummy, but I ... (feeling sad)

Mummy : What's wrong dear?

Shaimaa: I am sad because Nayla (her sister) and Nawar didn't received any gifts from the ceremony. I feel bad for them.

Mummy : You shouldn't have dear. I have to go home now. Are coming home with me?

Shaimaa: No mummy. I want to wait for Nayla and Nawar.

Mummy: All right then. But it's better for me to bring the cup home. I'm afraid you might break your gift. (pointing to the cup)

Shaimaa: Erm... (Thinking for a while) mummy, I think I will keep the cup myself. Don't worry I will make sure the cup is safe and isn't broken, okay.

Mummy: All right then Shaimaa. Good bye.

Scene 2

Shaimaa: Hello Miss. (standing in front of the teacher)

Teacher: Hello Shaimaa. Congratulations to you. Can you help me with these books?

Shaimaa: Thank you Miss. Yes, of course Miss. (Carry the heavy books)

Nawar appears

Nawar : Hey Shaimaa! Where are you going?

Shaimaa: I am helping Miss to carry these books. Can you please hold my gift for a while? I'll get it back once I send these books. (hand the cup)

Nawar: Erm... (reluctantly). Ok (roll her eyes)

Scene 3

Shaimaa: Running towards the crowd. What happened?

Shaimaa: Oh no!!!! (sobbing). Nawar (wiping her tears), don't worry I won't get mad. Our friendship is way important than this.

Nawar: HAHAAHHAHA (and walks away)

Scene 4

Shaimaa: Assalamualaikum mummy, (running towards her while crying)

Mummy: Walaikumsalam dear. Why are you crying?

Shaimaa: Mummy, my cup was broken. (crying). I have shouldn't give you the cup. Oh I wish, I've just listened to you.

Scene 5

Mummy: Shaimaa, Shaimaa.. where are you? I have something for you.

Shaimaa: Yes, mummy. I am here. What is it you want to talk about?

Mummy: Can you please close your eyes first?

Shaimaa: Oh mummy, Ok

Mummy: Ok now. Open your eyes slowly. Surprise!!!!

Shaimaa: Oh mummy, thank you very much for the gift. (happy tears) Oh goodness! Nayla, Nayla... (calling her sister)

Nayla: Yes Shaimaa.

Shaimaa: Look at this gift. Mummy buys for us. (Showing the cups)

Nayla: Thank you mummy, I really love it.



The Giant Python Tragedy

Before I stayed at my school hostel, I used to walk to school on daily basis. Walking to school with my best friend, Farish, is the best thing to ever happen to me. On the one hand, I live quite far away from school, but on the other hand, Farish, my so-called best of friend (BFF), lives a stone's throw away from school. So for a few minutes, like 20 minutes, I walk to school pretty much by myself.

Well, there is nothing to fear, though the village road is covered by the jungle on the left side and the serene beach and sea on the right side. There are a few houses along the road and sometimes I meet the villagers but normally they use a bike to send their children to school. My father occasionally accompanies me to school but most of the time he is in the sea to fish he's a fisherman, you know.

So, this one morning, the road was muddy because the night before it was raining cats and dogs, with a torrential downpour. Nothing was unusual really, except the weather was a bit colder. As I was walking and nearly approaching Farish's house, a few metres away, I saw something slimy slithering on the road. At first, I thought I saw a rotten log or a long rotten tree trunk, but since it was moving along the road, so my best guess was that it's a snake. In fact, to be precise, it was a giant Malayan python: the biggest and longest python I have seen in my entire life.

Somehow, the python stopped moving and turned his massive head towards me as if he knew that I was spying on him. My heart stopped beating and I could feel my soul fly away from my body. I wanted to run away from the python but I couldn't move my legs, as if I was glued to the ground. The python quickly slithered towards me and all I could think of in that moment was to pray to Allah. Dear Allah, please help me from this misery. I don't want to be eaten by this giant python. Help me Allah and have mercy on me.

Once I finished my prayer, just in the nick of time, I quickly ran as fast as Usain Bolt until I bumped into Farish and her mother. To my surprise, the giant python turned out to no longer be chasing me at all. I guess my BFF, Farish and his mother came in at the right time or else who knows - I might have been the python's big breakfast.

by Shamsul Abdullah

The crazy cows' rampage

When I was a kid, I used to go to church with my elder sister. We normally went to church every weekend. So, on this one fateful day, as we were walking steadily, we stumbled upon a herd of cows that appeared out of nowhere. Being the apple of the eye in my family, my sister is so protective of me. I was considered as a "petit boy" and surely I couldn't have climbed up the tree if the fierce cows hurtled directly towards me. With their huge bodies and sharp long horns, I wouldn't survive the impact.

And how unfortunate it was, when the cows started to run frantically and directly towards us. My sister didn't have much choice, she quickly grabbed me on my waist, lifted me on her back and ran as quickly as possible to avoid being hit by the cows. She tried her best to climb the coconut tree. And lucky enough, we did survive the rampage. We stayed in the tree for a couple of minutes until all the cows were gone for good. And yes, we didn't go to service at church that day.

The thing with the crazy cow rampage was that one of the cows stepped onto a ground beehive. How lucky that none of us were stung by a swarm of bees. I saw a few cows were badly stung by the bees. But my right leg was in pain because I accidentally bumped into the coconut tree trunk. That is one experience that I will cherish for life.

by Shamsul Abdullah



The Balabaq Spell

This is a story that happened long time go. Norah is an ambitious beautiful young lady who loves reading books. She is a bookworm and was ready to hit the books when she started at the local university. Norah isn't only known for her brightness but also at the same time for her beauty. Yeah, you can consider her a "beauty with brain". So, Norah is quickly becoming the household name at her university.

However, just like any other normal human being, Norah also has flaws: her arrogance. She portrays a grandiose behaviour towards everyone, even to Ali. When Ali wanted to give her a bar of chocolate, she then, without hesitation, threw away the chocolate. Ali couldn't believe his ears when Norah said all those rude things to him. He can accept Norah's rejection, but not to humiliate and insult him in front of the others. Ali left the place with almost tears bursting out from his eyes, full of frustration and humiliation. He never felt so humiliated like this before.

Norah, on the other hand, never felt so proud, just like a peacock. She's continued being rude and showing obnoxious behaviour towards everyone. Until one day, she realized that she doesn't have any friends anymore. She was constantly alone by herself. It seemed that all of her good friends avoided her.

Until one day, during the semester break, Ali went back to his hometown in Banggi, the mother of mystical islands in Kudat. Ali told his problems to his grandmother. To Ali's surprise, his grandmother didn't show any affection to him even after hearing the problem, instead she was just smiling.

The next day, his grandmother woke him up at dawn. They walked around the village until they reached the edge of the jungle. As they reached the deep jungle, his grandmother then stopped in front of the tallest tree. It was the infamous balabaq tree that can only be found in Banggi island. The tree's oil can charm one's heart both near and far away. Its perfume can change hatred into love, the forgotten to the cherished. His grandmother quickly scraped off a bit of the tree trunk with her blade. Then they went straight home. Exactly at midnight, his grandmother handed him a small bottle of perfume. She explained that Ali must put a pinch of the perfume onto Norah's body. And this is a secret that no one is to be told if Ali really wants to marry Norah.

Ali was so over the moon when Norah started to fall in love with him. Of course, the love was faked and artificial and worked only when he used his balabaq perfume on Norah. Everyone was curious as to how on earth Norah could fall in love and be married later that year to Ali, the man that she used to hate so much.

So the moral of the story: never humiliate anyone or put an egg on their face.

by Nurayman Mohd Jabide

Back to Basics

I'm not really fond of living in the rural areas especially on a secluded island, like Banggi itself. No offense, but this my mother's hometown and a place where my grandparents were born and grew up. My previous school was located in the main city; it was a Chinese school. Well, in Malaysia, we have this so-called vernacular school where the main language used is based on the majority of students. Just like my school, if there are many Chinese students, then the medium of communication is Chinese and Bahasa Melayu becomes the second language of the school.

To make a long story short, my parents decided out of the blue to go back to Banggi Island in Kudat, Sabah (the land below the wind), Malaysia. It was a big decision I guess for any family, to go back to basics. Yeah, in this case, my mother's hometown. Banggi is a beautiful island, in fact not many people realize that Banggi is the biggest island in Malaysia. So, my mother is an indigenous person of Banggi Island, known as Dusun Bonggi. Her village is located approximately 55 km from the main town in Banggi, called Karakit.

So, living in a new place, with a new school and new friends, was quite nerve-wracking for a 10 year old girl. Luckily, I quickly fit into the new environment. And I promise that I like it here way more than in the city. Just last year, I got involved in two big projects. The first one was a collaboration with my new Palestinian friends in the remote theatre competition and we won third place. Then, in the same year, I went to Kuala Lumpur, the capital city in Malaysia, to compete in the English singing competition for the indigenous students in Malaysia. And, guess what, I won and became a champion. Who would have thought a small girl from the

secluded island won the biggest title ever. Thumbs up for me!!! Well, there was just one thing, I got sick in the last few days while staying in Kuala Lumpur.

by *Debbie Chau*

The inherited name.

Once upon a time in a village called Tombel, there was a little girl named Epede. She inherited the name "Epede" from her late grandmother. She behaved exactly the same as her grandmother. She noticed that everything that happened to her grandma happened to her as well.

Epede did not like going to school. She was very lazy and disrespectful. Only her grandmother believed that she would one day become a better person. Her grandma took her to a priest for prayers. It was then discovered that the name she had inherited from her grandmother was the problem; the name had a negative influence on her.

The priest did everything to deliver her from the curse of the name. Epede was finally delivered from the spirit that had possessed her name. From that day on, she changed and became a better person. She started behaving as a normal child would.

by *Palle Rachiline Ahone*



Staging a play for online performance on Zoom

by Haneen Jadallah and Luzan Mattar

This Chapter informs Teachers how to stage a play using Zoom. There are 4 plays to practice before choosing a play of your own.





Menna's Colours

by Menna

Written by: Menna (10 years old, Gaza)

Scripted by: Haneen Jadallah

Character: Menna (9 years old)

(The camera is on with a tiny hand, holding a pencil or colour marker with musical background. A blank sheet or sketchbook lies nearby. Soft, distant sounds of birds or morning ambiance can be heard faintly and then we can see the girl's face close up to the camera.)

Menna (softly, thoughtfully):

Drawing is my life. I'm Menna. I'm nine years old. I'm in the fourth grade at primary school.

My mum... (pause) she was my teacher.

We used to go to school together every morning. (Brief pause. Menna smiles at the memory.)

I remember that day, it was early... I was getting ready like usual. I wore my uniform. Had breakfast with my mum.

Then...

(Suddenly, Menna's tone shifts—urgent, frightened. Sounds of distant rumbling or a low explosion fade in and out briefly.)

Menna (quieter, faster):

The bombings started. So loud. So close.

I ran to my mum - I just wanted to hide, to be safe. (Silence.)

Menna (slower):

And just like that... Everything turned into a nightmare. My mum tried to calm me.

She told me - "Get your things. We have to leave. Now."

It wasn't safe anymore.

(Menna looks off screen as if seeing her bedroom in her mind. We might have Menna off camera and another girl in a dark shadow theatre screen running around to collect things and we hear Menna carrying on in the background)

Menna (gently, emotionally):

I ran to my room. I looked around...

My toys, my bed... My books, my pencils, my colors.

(She holds up a pencil.)

I was confused. What do I take? What do I leave behind?

(Quickly, she acts out stuffing a bag.)

I grabbed a t-shirt. Trousers. My storybook.

And all my pencils. All my colors.

(Pause. She holds the pencils tightly.)

I couldn't leave both - my home and my colors.

Because drawing... drawing is one of my favorite things in life.

I can't live without it.

(She slowly closes her eyes, remembering.)

We left our home quickly, hoping to return soon.

But...

(Shake of the head)

We didn't. We kept moving. From one place to another. Looking... for safety.

(Pause. She looks directly at the audience.)

Life became very hard. So I decided -

I will draw everything.

Everything I see.

Everything I feel.

So that nothing is forgotten.

(She lifts up a sketch she's made—real or imagined.)

Drawing is how my voice travels - when I can't speak.

It's how I shout into the world:

"I am here."

(Pause, then gently, hopefully.)

I promised my mum - I will keep drawing.

Because I believe... one day, I'll survive.

And one day, I'll be a famous artist.

(Menna smiles softly. Fade to black.)

Menna's Story - Menna's Colours



Age Group: 8 - 16 years old

2

Rehearsal/ Workshop duration (it might take two workshops)



45 - 60 minutes

Lesson Objectives

To help children understand and express emotions through intercultural playback theatre performance.

To rehearse a personal narrative of their international peers with voice, body, and feeling.

Resources

- Copies of the script
- internet/device
- Blank sketchbooks or paper
- Colour pencils or markers
- Simple props (bag, pencils, storybook, T-shirt)
- Soft background music (optional)

Suggested Activities

1 Warm-Up (20 min)

Ask:

What do you love doing at home?
Drawing? Playing?"

Let the students draw something important to them-important memory?

Ask the students to tell each other about their drawing in groups.

If you had to leave your home quickly, what would you take?"

2 Story Time (10 minutes)

Read the story "Menna's Colours" aloud slowly in a circle with the learners.

Ask:

How does Menna feel at the beginning?

What happens to change everything?

What does she decide to do with her pencils?

3 Understanding Emotions (10 min)

Ask the students to express the following in front of the camera taking turns:

Practice voice:

Happy voice (for the start)

Scared voice (for the bombings)

Strong voice (for the ending)

Practice actions:

Holding a pencil gently

Stuffing a bag quickly

Looking around the room

4 Rehearsing and performing (30 min)

Divide the students in groups and give each group a scene to practice. ask them to start assigning roles in that scene.

Encourage the students to start practicing the lines using one device as a camera.
Practice slowly, line by line.

Encourage:

Using eyes to show emotion

Holding props naturally and close to the camera

Speaking clearly, with feeling

Go round the groups and help in facilitating and directing.

You can start a Zoom recording and the groups to come one by one according to the scenes order to perform to the camera.

5 Reflect and Share (10 min)

Ask:

What did you feel when you acted as Menna?

Why do you think she kept her pencils?





Gaza: The Ongoing Nightmare

by Mahmoud

A Script for Online Zoom Performance

Written by: Mahmoud (14 years old, Gaza)

Scripted by: Haneen Jadallah

Cast: Minimum 3

Narrator (Mahmoud): Main storyteller

Echo Voices: Repeat/emphasize key lines

General Zoom Setup: Use virtual backgrounds or plain walls (dark or white preferred). Set Zoom to Gallery View or spotlight performers when needed. Use shared sound for background effects (bombs, silence, heartbeat).

Scene 1

Narrator is on camera. Echo Voices appear in background or dim lighting.

Audio: Soft musical background fades out.

Mahmoud (sitting close to camera, low lighting)...

It all started on the sixth day of war...

Mahmoud: The most terrifying day of my life.

Echo Voice 1 (softly in the background): ...the sixth day...

Mahmoud: We were around a hundred people.

Packed into one building. Three families in one apartment. Laughing. Joking. Pretending. Pretending this wasn't war.

Echo Voice 2 (smiling bitterly in the background): Pretending we were anywhere else...

Scene 2

Mahmoud Stands close to the camera, then moves slightly off-screen. Switch virtual background to a stairwell. We could hear a distant drone sound in the background.

Mahmoud (on camera, urgently): Then the threat came. "They'll bomb the building 20 feet away," they said.

Echo Voice 1 (repeating in the background): Twenty feet...

Mahmoud (on camera): We grabbed the kids, ran down the stairs... Checking - had anyone evacuated? Turns out—it was false. We went back upstairs.

Echo Voice 2 (calmly, in the background and

Mahmoud (on the screen looked pale): Back to the jokes. Back to pretending.

Scene 3

Mahmoud raises his hand toward the camera, revealing the word "BOOM" written on his palm. A loud bombing sound is heard in the background.

Mahmoud(shaken on camera in a complete darkness): Then it happened.

BOOM (in the background)

Not the other building. The one right next to us.

Echo Voices (urgent, overlapping): Right next to us!

Mahmoud (on camera): We rushed down again - and we saw them...

Echo Voice 1 (shouting): "Run!"

Echo Voice 2 (overlapping): "Run as far as you can!"

Mahmoud (breathing heavily): We just ran. We didn't look back.

Scene 4

All performers appear in Gallery View. Dim lighting. Some wrapped in blankets, some hiding their faces, sitting in different "locations." . We could hear quiet, slow heartbeat sound in the background.

Mahmoud (sitting again): We survived that day.

But the nightmare didn't stop. We kept moving, from one neighbourhood... to the next.

Echo Voice 1 (fading in and out): Nightmare... nightmare...

Mahmoud: We lived it again,, and again.. and again.

Echo Voice 2: Still running. Still surviving.

Mahmoud (looking directly into camera): And still telling the story. So the world doesn't forget.

Scene 5

Each performer holds a handwritten sign up to the camera. Example messages: We survived. But we are still afraid. Still human. Still here.

All (softly, together): This is not just a story. This is our life.

[Heartbeat sound in the background fades into silence, followed by soft, sad music].

Mahmoud's Story - The Ongoing Nightmare



Age Group: 12–15 years old



Lesson Length: 60 minutes (can be extended over 2 sessions)

Lesson Objectives

Interpret a real-life narrative through drama performance, showing understanding of character emotion.

Collaborate in an online setting to rehearse and present a short, powerful script using voice, movement, and minimal props.

Suggested Activities

1 Opening Discussion (10 minutes)

Begin the lesson with a whole class discussion to introduce the script.

Ask students reflective questions such as:

Why is it important to tell real stories like Mahmoud's who is living in war Zone?

Explain to the students that the script they are about to work with was written by a 14-year-old boy from Gaza and adapted for performance.

2 Script Reading and Role Assignment (10–15 minutes)

Distribute the script and read it aloud as a group using circle reading.

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one scene to rehearse. Encourage each group to use their own phone or laptop camera for their part of the performance. Assign the main roles among students in each group/ or ask the students to choose their own roles:

Narrator (Mahmoud), Echo Voice 1, Echo Voice 2

Explain the performance style: students will use Zoom to perform, using minimal props, expressive voice and gestures, and creative use of virtual backgrounds.

Ask the students to prepare the sound tracks and the virtual backgrounds they would like to use.

3 Scene Rehearsal & Practice (20–25 minutes)

Each group rehearses their scene, integrating technical and creative elements such as:

Dramatic vocal delivery to reflect tension, fear, or exhaustion

Facial expressions and gestures appropriate to the mood of the scene

Zoom settings, such as Gallery View, spotlight, music and virtual backgrounds (e.g., stairwell, dark room)

Sound effects, including distant drones, a loud "BOOM," and slow heartbeats

Camera movement, including close-ups, hand gestures to the camera, or turning away,

In Scene 3, emphasize the coordination between Mahmoud's physical cue (showing his hand with "BOOM" written on it) and the sound effect.

In Scene 4, students should appear in different "locations" on screen, using lighting and body language to convey trauma and displacement.

Each group should also rehearse the final scene, in which performers hold handwritten signs with powerful statements like:

We survived. Still human. Still here.

Encourage students to echo lines with emotion, vary their volume and pace, and experiment with subtle movement in limited Zoom space- leaning in, sitting in shadows, hiding their face, etc.

Use Zoom's recording feature to allow groups to rehearse in turns and record their performances.

4 Reflection and Creative Response (10 minutes)

Bring the class back together for reflection. Invite students to share how it felt to perform Mahmoud's story. **Ask:**

What part of the story affected you the most?"

How did it feel to speak Mahmoud's words out loud?"

Encourage them to reflect creatively by:

Drawing an image inspired by a moment in the story. Writing a personal response or short journal entry

Sharing a voice note or short video message about what the story meant to them





My Biggest Dream

by Birkena

Original Story: Brikena - a UK based refugee.

Adapted for 4 Performers on Zoom.

Scripted by: Haneen Jadallah

Cast:

Performer 1 (Brikena – Narrator) – tells the story from a personal point of view

Performer 2 (Teacher) – plays the teacher

Performer 3 (Echo Voice/Friend) – echoes powerful lines and acts as a classmate

Performer 4 (Emotions/Stage Voice) – embodies inner feelings, anxiety, pride, and dreams

Scene 1

Set the Zoom to Gallery View. Play soft instrumental music in the background (optional).

Brikena: I still remember the time when I was a young child... my biggest dream was to become a singer.

Echo Voice (a friend): A singer...

Brikena: I sang in my free time - to my family, my friends - it was more than a hobby. It was hope.

Emotions (whispering in the background): A voice waiting to be heard...

Scene 2

Brikena appears on camera in a close-up, looking around curiously. The virtual background shows a classroom. After a few seconds, the focus shifts briefly to the Teacher, who appears at the "door" on another camera frame and listening quietly before speaking.

Brikena: One day... I was alone in the classroom, singing softly to myself.

Teacher (clapping hands): WOW... You are talented! I need to showcase your talent.

Friend (as a voice in the background): Did she just say... talented?

Brikena: I couldn't help but cry. I hugged my teacher. No one had ever said something so kind to me before.

Emotions (voice in the background): Recognition. Joy. A heart ready to sing.

Scene 3 Rehearsals

Brikena appears on camera practicing. Background could be a living room or virtual classroom.

Brikena (close-up to the camera): My teacher and classmates formed a singing group. And I was in it. (with excitement)

Friend (appears on camera holding a picture of Brikena): We practiced together - every day! I knew Brikena would shine.

Teacher (with Brikena on screen): You're special. This performance is your moment. Believe in yourself. (Brikena smiles.)

Emotions (voice off): Nervous hands. Deep breaths. The spotlight is coming...

Scene 4 Independence Day Performance

Brikena stands confidently in a close-up shot. Background sounds of cheering are played softly. Use an applause track (light).

Brikena (on camera): It was the 28th of November—Independence Day. I was going to sing for my country.

Friend (joins her in Gallery View): She looked so nervous backstage.

Emotions (voice off): Your hands are shaking. But your voice is ready.

Teacher (joins in Gallery View, warmly): Please calm down. I believe in your talent. Everything will be OK.

Brikena (on her own camera – deep breath): I stood there, under the lights... I sang. And the audience clapped.

Emotions (as a voice in the background): They didn't just clap— They cheered for you!

Scene 5 The Reward

Brikena is on camera, bowing and smiling proudly. Another performer joins her on screen and passes a certificate through the screen.

Brikena: After the performance, The school administration gave me an award... Best song. Emotions (joyful): Tears of pride. Not fear. You did it.

Teacher (joins Brikena on camera): I'm proud of you. Don't stop pursuing your dreams. One day, they will come true.

Brikena (joining the teacher on camera): I'll never forget that day. I was proud of myself. And so grateful... for you, my teacher.

Scene 6

Gallery View. Each performer holds a sign or says a line.

Brikena: Every voice matters.

Teacher: Every teacher can ignite a spark.

Emotions (voice off): Every dream begins with belief.

Brikena (again): And mine began with a song and a belief.

Teacher (softly, to audience): Don't stop dreaming. One day... it will come true.

A song to mark the ending with everyone on gallery view.

Birken's story - My Biggest Dream



Lesson Objectives

Rehearse and perform a personal narrative using Zoom-based tools effectively.

Suggested Activities

1 Introduction & Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Begin with a short discussion:

What is your biggest dream?

Has someone ever said something that changed how you saw yourself?

2 Script Reading & Role Assignment (10–15 minutes)

Distribute the script and read it aloud as a group using circle reading.

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one scene to rehearse.

Encourage each group to use their own phone or laptop camera for their part of the performance. Assign the main roles among students in each group/ or ask the students to choose their own roles:

Brikena/ a friend/ a teacher.

Ask the students to Set Zoom to Gallery View or use spotlight for key scenes. Rehearse each scene in order:

Scene 1: Use soft instrumental music at the start. Introduce Brikena's dream. Focus on tone and pacing.

Scene 2: Show the teacher's encouragement. Use close-ups to the camera and emotional expression.

Scene 3: Practice group dynamics and performance preparation.

Scene 4: Simulate performance day using applause sounds in the background and add light cheering and applause.

Scene 5: Display joy and recognition. Use objects for passing the award.

Scene 6: Gallery View closing. Ask the students to prepare the signs. Each performer holds a written message or speaks a line.

3 Reflection & Creative Follow-Up (10 minutes)

Ask students:

How did you feel performing Brikena's story?

What does this story teach us about encouragement and believing in others?

Have students write or draw their own 'dream moment' or thank-you message to a teacher who inspired them.





Saja's Journey to Recovery

by Haneen

Title: Saja's Journey to Recovery

Format: Zoom/Online Performance

Scripted by: T. Luzan Mattar

Cast: Saja, Saja's Sister, Doctor, Father, Palestinian Woman, Narrator

Scene 1 Explosion

[All cameras off. Black screen for everyone.]

Sound shared via host: Explosion, Ambulance siren, Sad music.

(one camera (Saja's) turns on slowly. A hand rises into frame and covered with red paint or fabric accompanied with sad music in the background.) (Fade to black again. Music continues softly, then fades out.)

Scene 2

Hospital Room in Gaza , A gallery view for all the performers.

(Spotlight: Doctor, Saja (lying still), and Saja's Sister.)

(Simple backgrounds :plain or virtual hospital bed image].

Doctor (looking serious, camera on):

I'm sorry. Saja has suffered serious head injuries. We've done what we can, but... her chances of recovery here are limited. She may need to seek treatment in another country.

Saja's Sister (visibly distressed, voice shaking, joins the first camera on a gallery view): Please, Doctor... You must try to help her. Please - anything.

Doctor (softly): Of course. I will do my best. Don't worry.

Scene 3 Days Passing

(Doctor and Father spotlighted on camera.)

(Background: Static calendar image or a clock overlay shared by host to show time passing).

Doctor (on camera): I'm sorry, sir. There's no improvement. It's best for Saja to be transferred out of Gaza for further treatment.

Father (quiet, holding back tears): She deserves to live. I'll do whatever it takes to help my daughter.

Scene 4 The Departure

(Shared screen: Calendar image marked January 24th. Followed by an image of the Egyptian flag. Ambulance sound plays.)

Narrator (reads text on screen): Saja departs Gaza, accompanied by her sister, to seek treatment in Egypt.

Scene 5 Hospital in Egypt

(on gallery view: Saja's Sister, Saja, and Palestinian Woman. Background: Simple or virtual hospital room.)

Palestinian Woman (warm, on camera): Did you come from Gaza? How is it now?

Saja's Sister (tired, emotional): We're not fine... Gaza is not fine. Yes, we came alone. My family is still back there. They're suffering... and I worry about them every day.

Palestinian Woman: Don't worry, sweetie. May Allah bless and protect them. You're not alone. I'm here for you. If you need anything - just ask. Now rest. You've been through so much.

Saja's Sister (softly): Thank you... truly.

Scene 6 A Bit of Hope

(On camera: Saja and her sister.)

(Saja sits upright or leans in frame. Sister smiling with joy)

Saja's Sister (on camera): I'm so glad you're feeling better! And - amazing news - our family got permission to leave Gaza. They're coming here soon!

Saja (smiling, weak but happy): Thank you... for everything you've done for me.

Scene 7 Together Again

(All actors appear one by one. Each holds out a hand toward the camera, simulating reaching out.) (Hopeful music plays softly.)

Narrator (voice-over): The journey to recovery was long and full of pain. But we found strength in each other. We still have hope - because we are human, and we deserve to live!

(Blackout. Music fades. End slide: "For Gaza. For Humanity.")

Saja's Journey to Recovery



Age Group: 13 - 18 years old



Duration: 2 - 3 sessions (each 60–90 mins)



Platform: Zoom/Any virtual classroom

Lesson Objectives

To explore themes of resilience, family, and hope through online performance on Zoom

Resources

- Music & Sounds: Teacher prepares MP3 files or YouTube links.
- Play via Zoom's "Share Sound."
- Props: Red cloth, hospital background, Egyptian flag image, hand gestures, etc.
- Papers and pens

Suggested Activities & Sessions

Session 1: Introduction & Script Familiarization

Duration: 60–90 minutes

Objective: Understand the story, assign roles, and begin initial read-through.

Activities: Warm-Up

Icebreaker: One word to describe how you're feeling today.

Ask the students to get into groups of three to perform one of the words they have chosen. Students get in front of the camera to perform the one word theatre.

Script Reading (30–40 min)

Teacher shares the script on-screen or give out copies to the students.

Read the script together in a circle or in a gallery view format on Zoom (if online).

Pause after each scene to reflect: What's happening here?

Casting (5–10 min)

Divide the students into groups and give each group a scene of the scripts.

Ask the students to choose their roles in agreement.

Each student can play one part (or more, if group is small).

Task: Ask students to think about simple props/ backgrounds they can use.

Encourage them to rehearse their lines with expression.

Session 2: Rehearsal & Technical Planning

Duration: 60–90 minutes

Objective: Rehearse scenes and plan Zoom-based staging.

Activities: Tech Rehearsal Basics (15 min)

How to turn camera on/off on Zoom

How to use virtual backgrounds or plain walls

Share screen practice (sounds, etc.)

Scene-by-Scene Rehearsal (40–50 min)

Practice each scene slowly.

Focus on Voice and emotion

Timing (when cameras come on/off)

Coordination between actors and narrator

Use of hands, props, or positioning on camera

Feedback & Adjustments (10–15 min)

Ask students: What worked well? What was challenging?

Teacher gives constructive feedback.

Reassign parts if needed.

Task: Students finalize their lines, props, and technical setup at home.

Optional: Practice with a friend via a call or to the mirror.

Session 3: Final Rehearsal or Live Performance

Duration: 60–90 minutes

Objective: Present the play or do a final rehearsal with audience prep.

Activities:

Run-through with Transitions (30–45 min)

Full performance with music, appearance etc.

Live Performance and recording (30 min)

(If time and group are ready)

Reflection (10–15 min)

Post-performance discussion:

How did it feel to tell this story?

What did we learn about empathy, family, and hope?





Teacher's Reflections

Lamya says:

"It was quite an amazing adventure diving into remote theatre with no prior experience, but it turned into an extraordinary journey as we worked together on creating an intercultural play with my students. At first, they weren't very culturally aware, but as we began into the process of choosing a personal story and creating the play, they began to understand the conditions in Cameroon and even found similarities with ours in Palestine.

It was a learning experience for all of us as we navigated through the challenges of remote collaboration and cultural exchange. The students showed great enthusiasm and openness to understanding and incorporating different cultural elements into the play.

Seeing them develop empathy and a broader perspective was truly insightful and quite inspirational.

We have developed a great knowledge and experience in using technology and problem-solving.

Overall, it was a valuable experience that highlighted the power of storytelling and theater in bridging cultural gaps and fostering understanding. I can't wait to see the final publication and share our collective journey with others.

Nnane says:

Voices Across Worlds: A remote theatre project did not only provide a learning space for students but a reservoir of merriment and lasting connections. I can still see the spark in the students' eyes as they stood in front of their screens, acting out plays from students they have never met. Their excitement was contagious, and it makes each rehearsal session a feast of innovative ideas on how to navigate the Zoom app, reduce background noise, resolve connectivity challenges, etc.

At first, it was very challenging for my students to get into the shoes of the characters in the story they had chosen. This was because they needed to be culturally

immersed in the story to better understand the characters. This involves how to speak or pronounce some words, how to gesticulate, etc. The students had a hard time silencing the Cameroon in them to let Palestine speak. In the end, Cameroon and Palestine became two voices in one person, and the beauty of their union is exhilarating.

Anestin says:

Voices Across Worlds was a learning experience not just for the learners but for me too. First, the struggle to leverage technology and the scuffle to understand digital staging.

Eventually, we adapted traditional theatrical moves and innovated.

Navigating cultural differences wasn't easy either. I still remember the near-miss in performing a play from Hebron. We had envisaged a performance in a mixed school. Thanks to the collaboration of our partner teacher, we were able to rethink the performance, maintaining its original cultural identity.

We leveraged the power of the pen to give voice to our learners' thoughts and emotions, elevating the diversity of the narratives presented. They could identify with stories from Palestine, which reflected their lived experiences in Cameroon, and so more than ever they saw the need to work towards a peaceful world where they can go to school without the fear of being silenced by guns.

Evi says:

Voices Across Worlds has been a transformative experience both for me and for my students.

The whole project started by placing us, the teachers, in the role of the learners. We worked individually and in teams with other colleagues whom we hadn't known before and we travelled through uncharted areas of self-exploration, cultural exploration, creative exploration, educational exploration and most importantly humanitarian exploration.

The next step was to take our own experience and pass it on to our learners. My own learners are accustomed to drama activities but had never been involved in something similar. They had no knowledge of the different "reality" that their peers in Gaza have experienced and it came as a "slap in the face" to them. It was that exact "slap" that made them become more willing to delve deeper into the project.

The tasks they had to deliver honed their creativity, their language skills, their understanding of other cultures and their empathy. They made extensive use of all the 21st century skills: they had to communicate, collaborate, negotiate, think critically, problem solve, be flexible, use digital literacy, take initiative, make decisions and produce results through the use of their EFL hard skills.

It was a holistic experience that has made an indelible impression on them as it did on me.

Dayang says:

When I first received an email from my dearest friend, Haneen, back in September last year, I could not believe what she had offered me - to participate. Of course, I was beyond thrilled and excited. I have now collaborated with Haneen and Mr Steve Mann for the second time, and it was a success for my students, my school, and, of course, for myself. There was no way that I could decline this wonderful opportunity.

To make a long story short, I received good news from Haneen again sometime in April this year, stating that our project Voices Across Worlds had won the British Council: Language for Resilience 2024. After a few weeks, we had our first participating teachers' meeting via Zoom. I had the privilege of working with some of the most wonderful, talented, hardworking, and resilient female teachers from all over the world. During this meeting, we were briefed about the timeframe and the activities involved in the project.

After completing the training sessions, we needed to perform for the teachers' intercultural drama on 31 August. At that time, I was travelling to Malacca in Peninsular Malaysia for another professional commitment, and I was actually on a moving bus while doing the performance. It was such a wonderful experience for me. At the same time, we also needed to prepare with our students. I was very lucky to have my

partner teacher, the talented Miss Rasheeda from Hebron. We discussed the stories we wanted to perform from both sides, and we exchanged pictures and videos of our surroundings to give a glimpse of what our environments are like.

For some background, my school is located on a very remote and secluded island in Kudat, Sabah, Malaysia - Banggi Island, the largest island in Malaysia. Most of my students are from the indigenous Dusun Bonggi tribe, along with other ethnic groups such as Ubiangs, Rungus, and Banjar. English is their third language, as they first speak their mother tongue, followed by Bahasa Melayu, our national language.

I have to admit that it was quite challenging at first. The students needed to write their personal narratives and then transform them into scripts. We conducted several workshops on scriptwriting so that students could apply these skills to their own stories. Once completed, the students, who were divided into three groups, selected drama pieces from their partner students in Hebron. Exchanging stories with peers from another part of the world was very exciting for them. It offered new perspectives, allowing them to explore stories that differ in culture, background, and lifestyle. In addition, my students also learned how to use Zoom, adapting technology into their extracurricular activities through intercultural online theatre.

In the end, everyone involved gained something valuable, including the students, teachers, school, parents, and the wider community. As for my students, I want them to become the best version of themselves through this project. As our English language panel motto says, instead of us as educators bringing students to the world, why don't we bring and present the world to them?

Thank you very much for this opportunity - we truly cherish it. Last but not least, we look forward to seeing these dramas performed around the world.



Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.

Thank you for making the world listen.
Thank you for being our allies in this
fight for light.

In your hands, stories become shields,
classrooms become sanctuaries, and
solidarity becomes a language we
all understand...

VOICES ACROSS WORLDS

Bridging Cultures through
Performing Personal Narratives

**“Education is resistance.
Gratitude is solidarity.
And together, we are louder
than the silence they impose.”**

Ndumbe Daniel Wonjah Lifaka

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This unique book is about Voices Across Worlds - worlds that may seem different, yet are bound by the same undeniable truth: our shared humanity.

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