Our eyes, our future, our dreams...

This week Internews presents an eight-page special issue of In The Loop featuring the voices of refugee and migrant children in Greece. Child participation is one of the core principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which asserts that children and young people have the right to freely express their views on all matters affecting them, and to have their opinions taken into account. Internews and Save the Children delivered a series of workshops designed to help Syrian children in Ritsona site and Afghan children in Oinofyta site express themselves in creative ways. The result of the workshops is this special issue, which highlights children’s perspectives about the reasons they left their countries of origin, their experiences living in organised sites in Greece, and their dreams for the future. Children selected the title of the issue: “Our eyes, our future, our dreams”. Moreover, children produced all the drawings, photographs and quotes, and many of the design elements, featured throughout.
A total of 68 children and young people participated in workshops delivered in Farsi (Oinofyta site) and Arabic (Ritsona site). The workshops enabled the children to develop skills in interviewing, recording, photography, drawing, and graphic design, and to use these skills to lead the collection of feedback from other children. Participants were consulted on key decisions, including the selection of activities, the outcomes of their participation, the design of materials they produced, and the platforms used to share their work. The children agreed to share their views and experiences in the hope that decision-makers will listen to what they have to say. One Afghan boy (aged 13-15), for example, explained: “We want the head of the European Union to see our [In The Loop] magazine.”
REASONS FOR FLIGHT: “I DIDN’T COME TO LIVE HERE BUT TO ESCAPE FROM WAR”

The children shared stories of conflict and hardship pre-flight, and of surviving the perilous journey by boat from Turkey to Greece. They were eager to convey that the reason they left their country of origin was not because they wanted to live in Europe, but because they were forced to flee.

DAILY LIFE: “I WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW THE REAL SITUATION OF THE CAMP”

The children expressed a desire to communicate to the world the conditions in which they live. Many highlighted the discomfort and humiliation they feel at having to stay in tents and containers, being unable to take warm showers and eating the same food every day. The importance of education and recreation were also common themes, and children agreed the sites do not offer enough child-friendly activities and places to play.

Shelter

“‘In the sea, it was raining and there were many waves. This is how it was when we came.’”

– Syrian boy, 8-12

“‘In Syria, before the war, there were buses and children got them to school. And when we had religious holidays we used to visit each other – not like here. We were very happy and we used to feel comfortable.’”

– Syrian girl, 8-12

“A plane dropped bombs on my house in Syria. We ran away to Turkey. We always used to say, ‘this is our country and we will not leave’. But after five years they continued bombarding us and we left.”

– Syrian boy, 8-12

“In Afghanistan there is war. I was walking in the street and there was an explosion, and the explosion killed my brother.”

– Afghan boy, 16-19

“We cannot live in these camps. If they want to know, come and live for one day in the tent to see how our life is.”

– Afghan girl, 13-15

“People try to make their place bigger by constructing decking because the Isobox is so small. Some families have seven people or eight people. They cannot live in such a small space, so they try to make it bigger.”

– Syrian Kurdish boy, 16-19

“Potato and rice is the best of the food in this camp, and also sometimes meat. We have to spend our money to get ingredients and make food.”

– Afghan boy, 13-15

Food

“‘In the camp the food is not good. The food is just potato and rice.’”

– Afghan boy, 13-15

“‘They are bringing food here but it’s not edible, so we cook our own. We can make everything – whatever you want.’”

– Syrian boy, 13-15

“‘In the sea, it was raining and there were many waves. This is how it was when we came.’”

– Syrian boy, 8-12

“‘In Afghanistan there is war. I was walking in the street and there was an explosion, and the explosion killed my brother.’”

– Afghan boy, 16-19

“‘In the sea, it was raining and there were many waves. This is how it was when we came.’”

– Syrian boy, 8-12

“The children expressed a desire to communicate to the world the conditions in which they live. Many highlighted the discomfort and humiliation they feel at having to stay in tents and containers, being unable to take warm showers and eating the same food every day. The importance of education and recreation were also common themes, and children agreed the sites do not offer enough child-friendly activities and places to play.”

“‘When it rains all the water comes inside our tents and we sleep in the water.’”

– Afghan boy, 13-15

“‘We want to show the world how we are living in these tents. On the TV they make it look very good, like refugees have everything they need. But in truth we have nothing. I want to make a Facebook page – Refugees’ Voices – to show the world what is really happening.’”

– Syrian Kurdish boy, 16-19

“‘When it rains all the water comes inside our tents and we sleep in the water.’”

– Afghan boy, 13-15

“The children expressed a desire to communicate to the world the conditions in which they live. Many highlighted the discomfort and humiliation they feel at having to stay in tents and containers, being unable to take warm showers and eating the same food every day. The importance of education and recreation were also common themes, and children agreed the sites do not offer enough child-friendly activities and places to play.”

“‘We are in a tent. It’s very cold. All the kids are sick.’”

– Afghan girl, 13-15

“‘People try to make their place bigger by constructing decking because the Isobox is so small. Some families have seven people or eight people. They cannot live in such a small space, so they try to make it bigger.’”

– Syrian Kurdish boy, 16-19

“In the sea, it was raining and there were many waves. This is how it was when we came.”

– Syrian boy, 8-12
Almost every child who spoke of dreams for the future focused on the desire for a comfortable house that they could live in with their family. Reunification with family members in other parts of the EU was also a common aspiration, while others wished to go back to their country of origin.

Some children, especially unaccompanied minors, expressed concerns about their future prospects because their education has been interrupted and they are uncertain where they will end up.

---

**DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: “WE WANT TO SPEAK ABOUT WHAT THE REFUGEES SHOULD DO NOW”**

Almost every child who spoke of dreams for the future focused on the desire for a comfortable house that they could live in with their family. Reunification with family members in other parts of the EU was also a common aspiration, while others wished to go back to their country of origin. Some children, especially unaccompanied minors, expressed concerns about their future prospects because their education has been interrupted and they are uncertain where they will end up.

---

**Education**

"The only good thing in this camp is that we have school. I like the school here so much."
- Afghan boy, 13-15

"In the beginning the schools in Chalkida were against including the refugee children in the public school system, but later on they approved. However, the teachers don’t speak the English language and they only talk to us in Greek."
- Syrian boy, 13-15

"If we want to play football we have to go far away from the camp and we are afraid we cannot go. We don’t have clothes and shoes for football, but we like to do it."
- Afghan boy, 13-16

**Play and recreation**

"There is no one to play with us, no one to teach us how we can play. In Afghanistan it wasn’t like this. We were in a bad situation but we had something to do."
- Afghan boy, 13-15

"We can’t understand the teachers. That’s why no one went to school yesterday."
- Syrian girl, 8-12

"In this cold winter in the winter we need something to make us warm... We need winter clothes. We need hot water for the showers."
- Afghan boy, 13-15

"We went to school and the only thing they teach us is Greek... We can’t understand the teachers. That’s why no one went to school yesterday."
- Syrian girl, 8-12

"We are stuck in this camp with no future to look forward to. Everything stands still. How are we supposed to survive in a country where its people cannot find a job and manage their daily expenses?"
- Syrian boy, 16-19

---

**Winter**

"This is winter and the weather is so cold. As you’ve seen, we are sleeping in the tents. When it rains all the water comes inside our tents and we sleep in the water."
- Afghan girl, 13-15

"If people sit around a fire to keep warm, everyone has their own fire in front of their caravan. They gather wood from the forest."
- Syrian boy, 13-15

"In the beginning the schools in Chalkida were against including the refugee children in the public school system, but later on they approved. However, the teachers don’t speak the English language and they only talk to us in Greek."
- Syrian boy, 13-15

"There is no one to play with us, no one to teach us how we can play. In Afghanistan it wasn’t like this. We were in a bad situation but we had something to do."
- Afghan boy, 13-15

---

Almost every child who spoke of dreams for the future focused on the desire for a comfortable house that they could live in with their family. Reunification with family members in other parts of the EU was also a common aspiration, while others wished to go back to their country of origin. Some children, especially unaccompanied minors, expressed concerns about their future prospects because their education has been interrupted and they are uncertain where they will end up.
In The Loop explores the concerns and perceptions of people affected by the EU refugee crisis. Internews documents online and offline feedback gathered from refugees and migrants on a daily basis. By providing analysis of this feedback, the review aims to strengthen accountability and close the feedback loop by giving voice to affected persons. This issue of In The Loop is based on interactions with 68 children and young people, as recorded by Internews Refugee Liaison Officers. Interactions are documented in line with a set of common standards, and themes are developed inductively using content analysis techniques. A combination of general and unique themes is presented in order to represent dominant concerns and highlight minority voices.