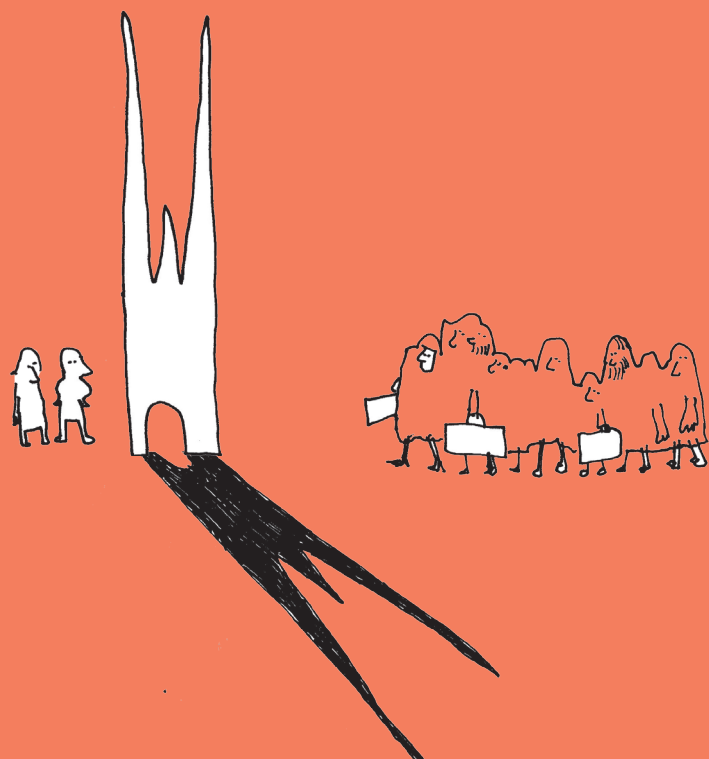


How To

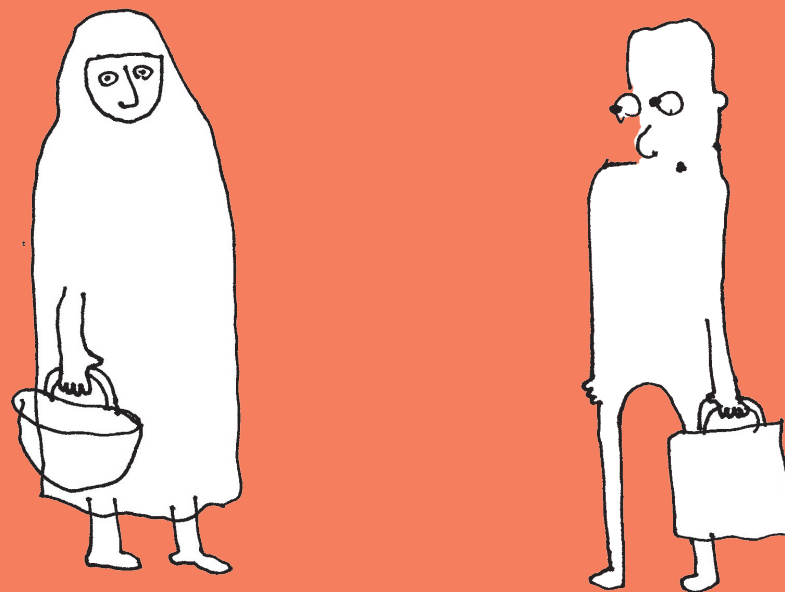
Start a Conversation With a Refugee



Recently, many people have come to Cologne seeking asylum.



Refugees go to grocery stores, cafés, parks, bakeries...



Are you curious about them?

How do you start a conversation?

We want Germans to talk to us
and understand us.

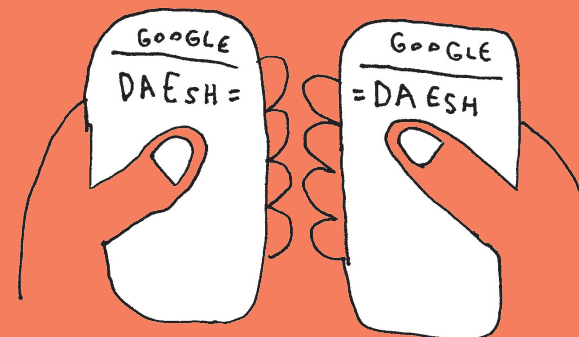


Waddah
from Lebanon,
learned German
from the Internet.

We made this book by interviewing
refugees and people who work with
refugees. I thought everyone was so
friendly and eager to talk.

Doug
and Valeria are artists from NYC.
They went all over the city and
talked to lots of people.

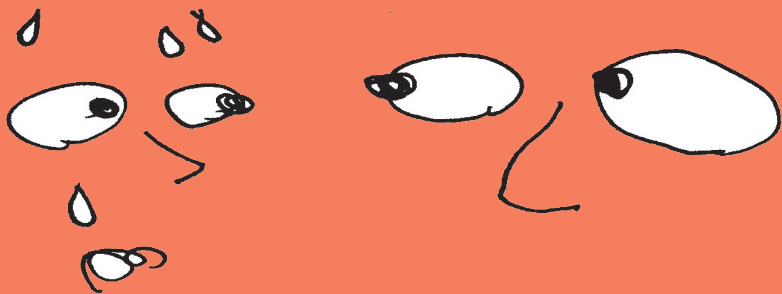
On our first day in Cologne, we met Basam by
chance. He invited us into his flat. We could
only communicate via Google Translate. His
family was very generous, and it was nice to
meet them. Basam worked in a barley silo in
Mosul. Heeba brought us cappuccinos and
very sweet cake, and Mohammed painted
with our watercolors on the floor.



...We followed Basam's example and the next
day, we invited Ibrahim for coffee...

... And Mohamad L. & Mohamad A. for ice
cream the next day...

Starting a conversation with a stranger can be hard.



When we interviewed people, we just started out simple, the same way you would with anyone. "Hi! How are you?"

Valeria

is in Cologne for the first time.

ENGLISH

HELLO!

GOOD MORNING

HOW ARE YOU?

MY NAME IS...

WHAT'S YOUR NAME? MA ISMUKA?

DO YOU LIVE
AROUND HERE?

DO YOU LIKE
IT HERE?

ARABIC

MARHABAN!

SABAAH AL KHAYR

KAYFA HAALUK?

ANA ISMI...

HAL TAAISH
HUNA?

HAL YUAJIBOUKA
ALMAKAN?

What if refugees get upset talking about what they just went through?



We were really worried about this, so we only talked about the present. It was up to them to decide what parts of their experience they wanted to share.

Valeria

Will refugees get offended if I ask where they are from?

No, I like it!

Mohamad A.

tells great stories, like one about rescuing a suitcase full of cash from a burning building.



It's nice to talk, and it helps us practice our German.

Mohammed
is from Iraq.

What should we talk about?

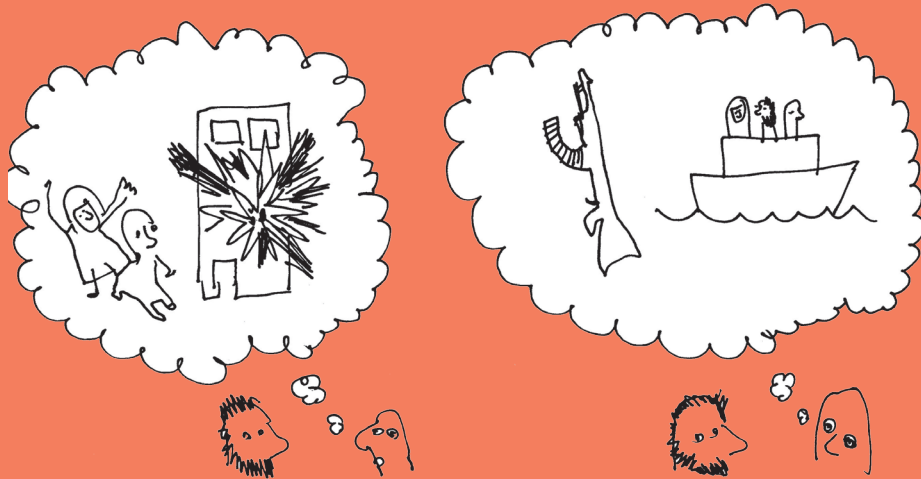
It's nice when people want to hear how you got here. But then I want to talk about normal things, like movies and music.

Madyan
practiced law
in Syria



Meet refugees. It's more fun than people think. Be normal. Don't be fake. Don't be too sorry.

Kristina
went to Bosnia to work
with refugees, now she
works with them at home.



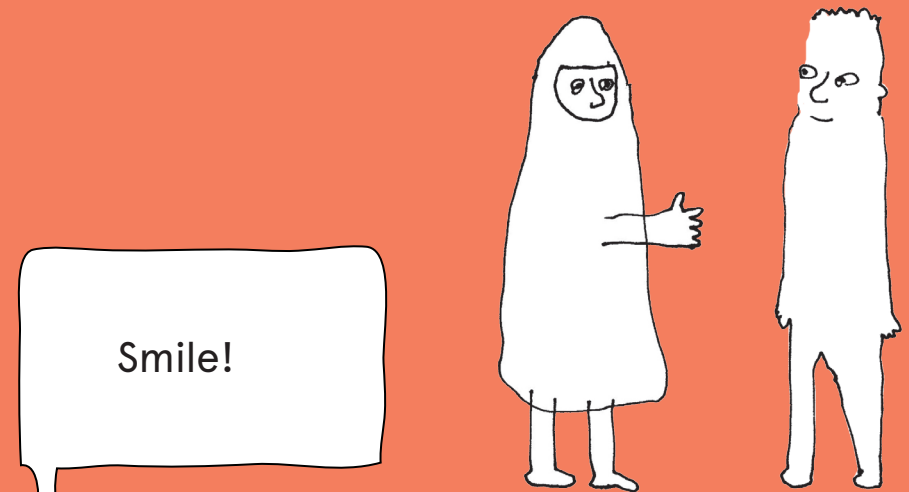
What have I learned from refugees? Nothing is normal. Don't make assumptions.

Julia

works with young people and is warm and talkative.

Should you shake hands when you meet a Muslim woman?

What should you do if you're not sure?



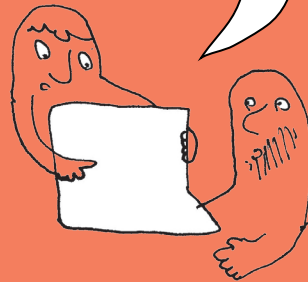
... this is a difficult question because it depends on the person. I wait for her to put out her hand.

Jalal

is standing in front of the cathedral.

In Syria every week you visit your friends for coffee & tea. Here I don't find this, it's not as important for people here. It's important for us. This tradition is important in all Arab countries.

Mohamad R.
is sitting with Fadi and Wesam. They're showing us short documentaries they're working on.



We heard variations on this so many times. People miss their friends but they also miss the friendly interactions in public space.

Doug

By sitting around in a café with Germans, refugees can learn their habits.



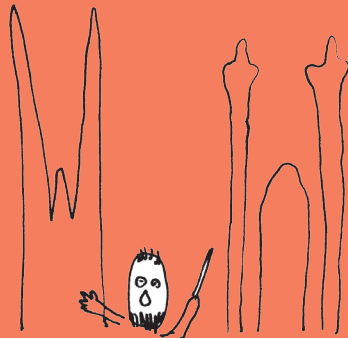
Ibrahim
shows us TV clips he's been in. He's a skilled interviewee.

You don't learn German from a book, you learn it while talking over coffee.

Most Germans don't go and ask about our culture and our country. They think they just need to help us survive. Here there isn't really a cultural exchange. My dream is that Germans start to inform themselves about our culture and religion.

Jalal

was born in Germany, but describes himself as both German and Iraqi. "Integration worked well for my father, he has been here since 1980. He was an enemy of the Baath party and fled."



Every morning in Syria you drink Arabic coffee and listen to Fairouz. Her voice is like an angel!



Mahmoud

taught math, and is an excellent chess player.

"As-salamu alaykum." It's like hello! It's the oldest greeting in the world.

Mustafa

talks to us outside a party with his friend Felix. Felix says Mustafa has really grown into himself since he first arrived in Cologne.

If I made an integration course for Germans, first they would learn the history of the Middle East.

Can

from Anatolia, studies International Law.



When you don't speak the language, everyday stuff, like going to the doctor, is hard.

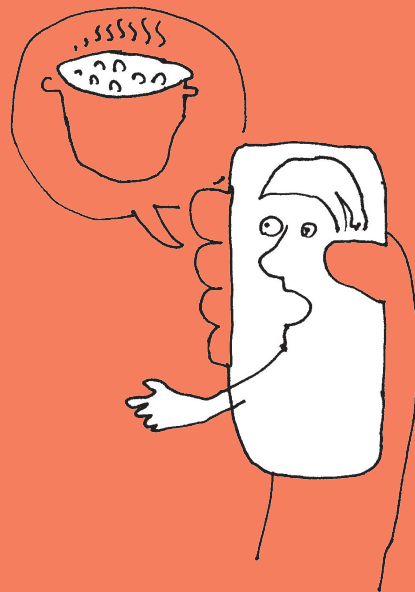


You can help someone read their mail and fill out forms. Or take someone to their appointment and translate.

When I finally got an apartment I was so excited to cook. I called my mom in Syria and she gave me her recipe for spaghetti and rice.

Mouaffaq

is so grateful for the friendship he developed with a refugee worker.



The vacuum time: always the feeling that you have too much time. No school. No language. Too much time.

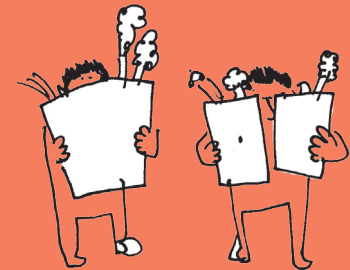
Mouaffaq

As children, Mohamad A. and Mohamad R. used to live on the same street in Aleppo. They re-met in Cologne through this project.



Where I'm from, when people in the street need help, you help them, it's good-doing. And that person helps someone else later on. You show them by doing.

Mohamad R.



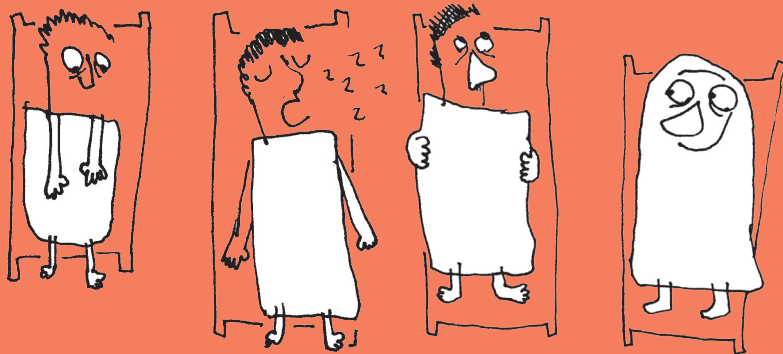
Everyone we talked to was really eager to contribute to their new community.

Do you know a way they could help?

There are 80 people in the camp, so you can't sleep. If you can't sleep you can't learn. We need better housing.

Kevin

and his brother are very friendly. We are drinking tea at the International Café. He was born in Nigeria, but had to move to Mali, then Libya, Italy, and Germany. "I have no power."



The government should help us. When a new person comes, the government should help teach them. Get them a ticket to see the city. Not everyone knows how to use money and pay for things you need, and that you need to have your own income.

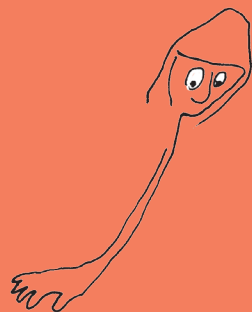
Kevin

is at the café to help translate for his brother and their friend.



What can you do to welcome refugees?

How can you help?



I'm from a small city in Northern Syria. Now I live in Cologne. My brother lives in Norway, my mother is in Turkey with my sister, and my other brother is still in Syria with my dad.

Anonymous



A German man asked where I was from. I said I'm a refugee from Iran. That day we talked, he asked why I come, what's your situation. After that we become good friends. Now I'm here without any family, not in the whole of Europe. I'm missing family, mother, sister, brother, friends. He asks me, why every time I see you, you're sad? I say I miss my family. He invite me to his house, I see they make a big party for me and all of the neighbors come. They made a circle around me and said we are your new family here.

Ebrahim

ENGLISH

SEE YOU TOMORROW
GOOD BYE
TAKE CARE
PEACE BE UPON YOU

ARABIC

ILA AL-LIQAA GHADAN
ILA AL-LIQAA
INTIBIH LI-NAFSAK
AL-SALAAM W
AALAikum

THANK YOU TO:

ALL OF OUR GENEROUS INTERVIEWEES,
WHO WE WON'T NAME TO PROTECT
THEIR PRIVACY.



JULIA HAARMAN & MATTHIAS MAYR AT
CAT COLOGNE FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

BORDERLESS TV & INTERNATIONAL CAFE

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MADE FOR CAT COLOGNE



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Die Oberbürgermeisterin
Kulturamt

RheinEnergie
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Ministerium für Familie, Kinder,
Jugend, Kultur und Sport
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen

