



**PAST, PRESENT
AND FUTURE**

FROM SUDAN AND SYRIA
TO LONDON WITH LOVE



WELCOME TO HOPETOWNS' CREATIVE WRITING PROJECT!

In this report, we are delighted to share with you a series of poems, short stories and memories from past, present and future.

These pieces were written by the Hopetowns refugee community in North West London in Winter and Spring 2019-2020, with the kind support from the Mayor of London and the Culture Seeds grant scheme.

Salma Kasmani, Robin Sivapalan and Samer Mustafa oversaw the project with our brilliant community members, and we are proud to present the outcomes in this report.

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We hope that you will enjoy reading!

Warmest regards,

The Hopetowns Community





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NOSTALGIC MEMORIES FROM THE PAST

MY HOMELAND SYRIA THROUGH MY FIVE SENSES

Every morning I have homemade fowl and drink coffee with Arabic sweets

I see a busy marketplace outside my house, where people go to work and children go to school.

There are beautiful trees and parked cars.

I kiss my mother's and father's hand every morning before going to work.

I hear the sounds of water from the pond, the flowers drink this water.

I also hear the sounds of birds signing in my garden.

I smell the scent of flowers from my balcony, beautiful roses, orange carrots, cloves and jasmines.

By Abu Michel



Photo credit: Gabriel Jimenez

SEVEN YEARS OLD

When I was young in Sudan, about 7 years old, I was in my family garden.

The garden had green grass, chickens and cows.

I took a baby chick because I wanted to play with her, so I put her inside a small white box.

The poor chick was so scared, she died.

I got into a lot of trouble with my mum that day!

By Sultan

HOME

My name is Marwa. I lived in Kasti. I lived with my family. I had three sisters. There is a large market in our city, and 10 mosques.

The White Nile was there.

There were many people in the big fish market. I would go to holiday every 6 months.

By Marwa



Photo credit: Duangphorn Wiriya

MY NAME IS ALI IBRAHIM

My name is Ali Ibrahim. I was born in South Darfur. I had a big family. My father was a teacher. My mother was a Doctor. We lived in a small village. I had three friends. We would go to play football every week. There were sheep. We had many popular games. We had a big house in the village. I visited my grandparents every month. My brother was working on the farm. There were two markets in the village.

By Ali Ibrahim



Photo credit: Ben White



TWO LOVELY PARENTS

I was born in Dale in Sudan, in 2009.

I have a small family. We lived in a village, called Fattaberno.

I didn't go to school. My village there had three shops. In my village we had different animals.

I had two lovely parents, my father and mother.

By Mohammed Saleh

WHERE I AM FROM

I was born in Sudan in 2001 in the village in Aljazeera. They were many shops and mosques. I am from a Big Family. We lived together in the same house. I started school in 2007 and left in 2014. There were a lot of primary schools and high schools in my village. I made many friends from my school. They were nice friends, kind and funny.

By Siddig

BEAUTIFUL FRIENDS

I was born in Khartoum in Sudan. It was nice there.

There was park and school

I had a big family

I had beautiful friends.

By Nwara



ABU KARSHULA

I used to live in the area of Abu Karshula.

We had a small house.

There were many mosques.

There was no school.

We had animals in the house living with us.

I used to help my family in the field.

The area had a small shopping centre.

By Hamed Abaker

ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO

I lived in Sudan in Aljazira in middle of Sudan.

I have a big family.

My Father is an electrical engineer.

My mother is a housewife.

My friends were interested in football.

I worked in the Faltco company for 5 years.

In my town there are lots of shops.

There are some mosques.

I would go to work by bus.

Sometimes I visited other places by bus.

Sometimes we visited the cinema.

There was always something to do.

By Elgzoli Maik

Photo credit: Adli Wahid

MEMORIES FROM HOME

I was enjoying four days of the week.
I was singing every day of the month.
I was listening to the news sometimes.
I was drinking coffee three times a day.
I was dancing every two weeks.
I played football every week.
There were trees in the village.
There, I had friends in the village.
And there were so many animals.
It was interesting.

By Abdul Karim

MY CHEVROLET

I used to have a Chevrolet back in Aleppo,
I would sometimes taxi people around in it.

One day a missile from a plane flew down
and hit my car.

Thankfully no one was hurt.

But that was the end of my business.

By Abu Michel

NAUGHTY KIDS

When I was a little boy in Sudan, I was very naughty at home.
My two brothers and sisters were naughty too.

I remember one day I took my mum's bag, clothes and shoes
and put them in the middle of the room.

When my mum came over and found all her stuff on the
floor in the middle of the room, she shouted a lot at me.

She was extremely angry!

She told me "If you do this again, I will tell your father as
well!"

She was just trying to scare me.

By Mohammad Sa'id

LATE FOR CLASS

When I was a young boy in Sudan, about 11 years old, I used to go to the mosque to learn the Quran every day. One day, I went to the mosque late and the teacher said to me "You were late!" and he was very angry and shouted at me and he said to me. "Go back home and bring your parents with you!"

When I went back home my father asked me "Why did you come back?"

I said to him "I went to the mosque late and the teacher said to me, you came late so bring your father."

My father asked me, "Why were you late?"

I replied, "I was playing with the kids on the road!"

By Ali Ibrahim

HAPPY TOGETHER

I was born in Sudan. I had a big family. We had a nice village. We were happy together. We used to work on the farm for three months of the year. My family lived on agriculture. I had many friends. At the weekend we would go to my Grandma's house.

By Somia

I REMEMBER MY MUM

Me and my friends were playing football around 9.30pm, I lost the ball because it was a dark place.

I was late going home, after that my mum was looking for me, she asked someone, "Have you seen my son?" They replied, "Yeh they are here – still playing football in the park".

Then my mum came straightaway and took me back home, she was very angry.

I remember my mum.

By Khalifah

Photo credit: Ekrem Osmanoglu

HAIKUS FROM HOME

Port Sudan is great.
Small markets, fish, meat and veg.
Hot fish, sweet coffee.

By Sami Mohamed

My first memory
Is shared and therefore doubled:
A baby sister!

By Liam

I took a big bus.
The village has high mountains.
White sheep and black cows.

By Somia

Photo credit: Antonino Visalli

JOURNEYS

MY WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

One day my whole world turned upside down and from there my crazy life started, because from then everything has been going downwards. There are times when I ended up homeless with no food.

I did not know where to go; we started moving from one place to another. I felt like I lost my mind and moved from one country to another, everywhere I went I faced crazy people like the police and politicians.

They took me to prisons and detention centres; I travelled through 5 countries, 6 police stations, 7 detention centres and eventually I ended up in the United Kingdom.

I didn't know what to do, even still – to this day – I do not know what I am doing.

By Mohammad Abdallah

SAHARA HAIKU

Through the Sahara.
Tough times. Sun was burning. Ouch.
Massive black mountains.

By Mohamed Said

BLESSED HAIKU

I went for Umrah.
Sweet zam zam water.
Prayed in Al Masjid.

By Kola

PAST AND PRESENT TENSE

WHAT IS MY NAME?

What is my name?

Who am I?

Where did I come from?

I was born in the middle of nowhere, some people call it a village but I call it a little paradise because there are so many things and so many places like mountains, forests, rivers and many wild animals and farms.

A lot of fields with different kinds of fruits that belong to no one but belong to everyone around there.

I used to jump in the trees like a little monkey, I was an extremely happy little boy but suddenly everything blurred and I found myself somewhere – I don't know where.

Can someone explain to me where I am?

By Mohammad Abdallah

LIFE IN THE UK

I went to the zoo.
Elephants, lions and me.
They said Boo! I ran.

By everyone

Birds allowed outside
We watch through bolted windows
Earth's balancing act.

By Liam

Football is my life.
Al Hilal winning the match.
The stadium is great.

By Hafiz

It's raining a lot.
Last night I was so tired.
I was so busy.

By Nagat

LONDON LIFE

I live in London, in the mornings I see a lot of street lights and a lot of transport like trains and taxis, people also use bikes for transport too.

My house is not far from the train station, it's very busy all day, lots of people use the train because it's faster than the buses. It comes near my house, so it's very noisy.

On the weekends I sometimes go to visit my friend and make some Sudanese food, I like the library to go to read and use the internet, and do exercise in the gym.

I went to Big Ben and The London Eye, the first time I saw the London eye I thought it was BIG. I went inside and it's beautiful. I've seen a lot of London and I'm very happy.

There are a lot of universities and colleges here, when I came to London my English was very bad but now it's better than before. I want to go to College to study English more.

I go to Hopetowns English Class every Sunday, it's a very good class and the teachers are very good, and the staff are nice and friendly.

In London there is free health care, this is very nice. There are GP's, Hospitals and Ambulances and the staff are friendly. Healthcare is good.

In the future I want to improve my language and study more. Try and be good at everything.

Thank you to all the staff and teachers at Hopetowns class.

By Mohamed Sami

Photo credit: Moutaman Kamal

I FEEL LIKE SOMEONE ELSE

When I first came to London, I didn't speak any English, because I didn't finish studying at school. I started college to learn the English language.

When I started college, I couldn't talk with the students because my English wasn't good and they spoke well. I started ESOL from beginner's level and now I am on Entry 2.

In college the students are so funny because we all make a lot of mistakes but they are friendly. After two years, my English is better and I understand when people are talking.

I feel like someone else when people are talking and alone because I don't speak English and I don't know anyone here.

In London there is a smell that is different from my country, and a lot of types of drugs and alcohol.

I hope I get a good education and a job in the future.

By Siddig

LIFE IN WIGAN

When I first came to the U.K. I first came to Wigan, I saw a new city. I was very happy, this was how I had dreams that the U.K. should be.

I saw lots of parks and libraries, I felt good spending time with my friends, joking and going out together to night clubs, going for coffee, watching T.V. and playing football. Fun times.

I really liked this city, because they were my kind of people, all mixed nationalities and there weren't any problems.

For my future I had to change my city and move to London because I looked for a job in Wigan but there was no work for me.

By Gazzafi

Photo credit: Erik Hathaway

HOPEFUL FUTURE

UNTIL MY DREAMS COME TRUE

Life over here is safe and that makes me feel confident to continue my dreams until they come true.

There are opportunities to study here, you can study whatever you would like to study and you can be successful as well, if you work hard, nothing is impossible.

In the UK you have the freedom to practice your religion and your culture as well.

I continue my dreams until they come true.

By Mohammad Sa'id

I LIVE ON PLANET EARTH

I live on planet earth
I've been here since my birth
There are loads of houses and trees
There are many animals and bees
There are loads of people
In a big, big town
And the birds in the sky
Are looking down

By Mohamed, 6 years old

EARTH POEM

There are lots of animals and above in the sky
there are lots of stars, like the sun.

Earth is where we all live.

Lots and lots of countries and continents.

There are people, cars
in a beautiful down town.

Lots of angels looking down on us.

There are trees, bees.

Humans are all the same.

By Nagat, 8 years old

HOPE

Photo credit: Ron Smith

HOPETOWNS NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Hopetowns is a volunteer-powered initiative, which is dependent on the generosity of donors to cover our minimal running costs.

- **TO SUPPORT HOPETOWNS**, please consider making a donation via our Just Giving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/supporthopetowns>

- **TO VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME**, please contact Samer: ssamerag64saf@gmail.com stating 'Hopetowns Volunteering' in the email subject.

