

WFP International Evening: “Finding Strength in a Difficult Situation: Refugee Experiences Throughout History”

Oslo, Norway, 17. October 2015



By Marea Toresen

WFP Norway held an international evening with the intention of both building an empathetic understanding to the refugee situation as well as encouraging everyone to support the effort to help the current refugees from Syria. We had three speakers who shared their stories on what it is like to be a refugee.

The first speaker, Johanna Toresen, a young woman from Germany spoke of **her grandmother's experiences fleeing Eastern Germany during World War II**. Her grandmother left behind a detailed written account for future generations from which Johanna based her sharing.

Afterwards, Rana Abusamra, a young woman from Gaza, shared her experiences escaping from the war torn area and trying to settle in a new country. She stressed the importance of making refugees feel welcome because many of them want to work and give back to the country that has given them a second chance at life. Unfortunately, many feel rejected by both the authorities and the locals and as a result withdraw from society.

The last speaker, Fidan, a recent refugee from Afghanistan, shared his story of escaping the Taliban and his journey across Europe searching for a safe home for his wife and son.

Afterwards, Johanna sang a beautiful **song called “Paraiso” and lifted up the spirit in the room.**

As an international evening, the culinary theme of the evening was Asia and several cooks donated native dishes. There was food from Thailand, the Philippines, Korea, and Vietnam. We received 1400 NOK (about 152 **euro**) in donations towards WFP's efforts in helping the refugees. There were 33 participants, including 9 guests. Overall, it was a fascinating and enlightening evening with lots of great discussion afterwards over a delicious meal.

