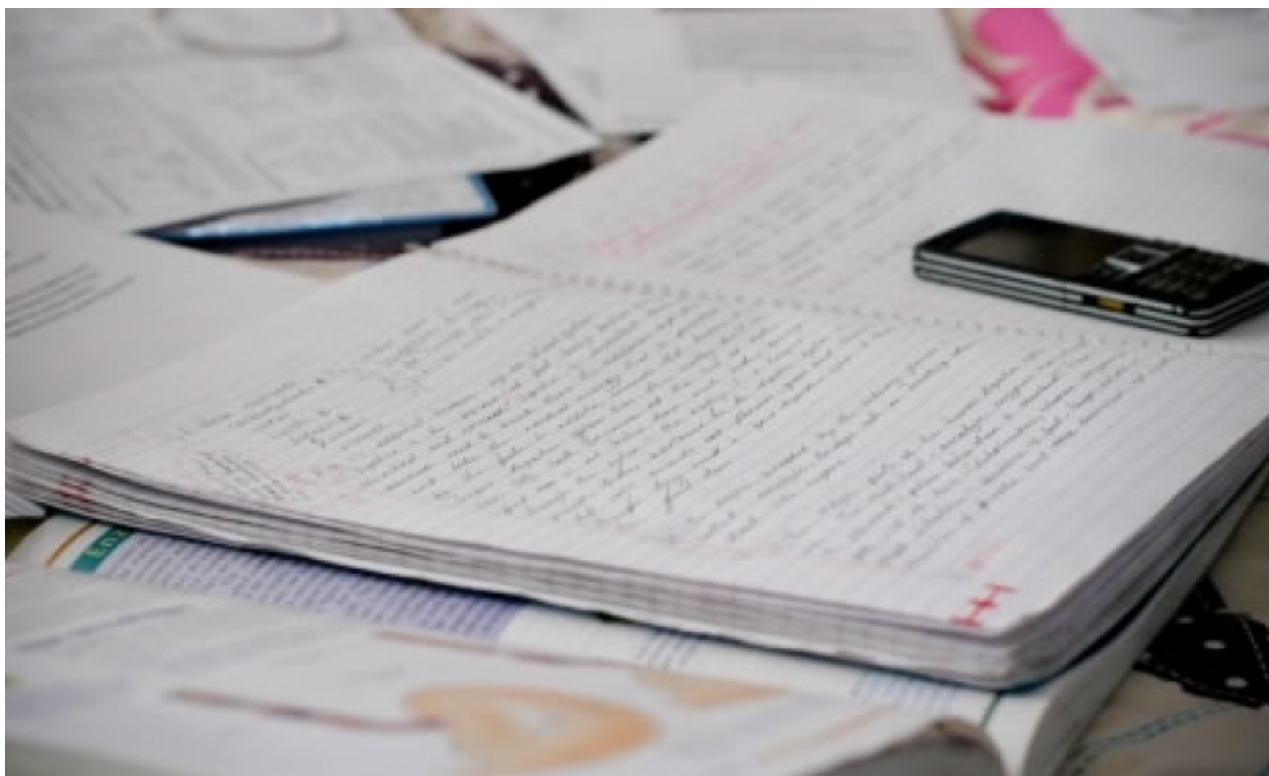


The importance of volunteering in refugee camps



07/24/2017 - 12:46



Many of us, volunteers, have travelled to refugee camps, some of us more than once, but yet they still need more hands. How is this possible?

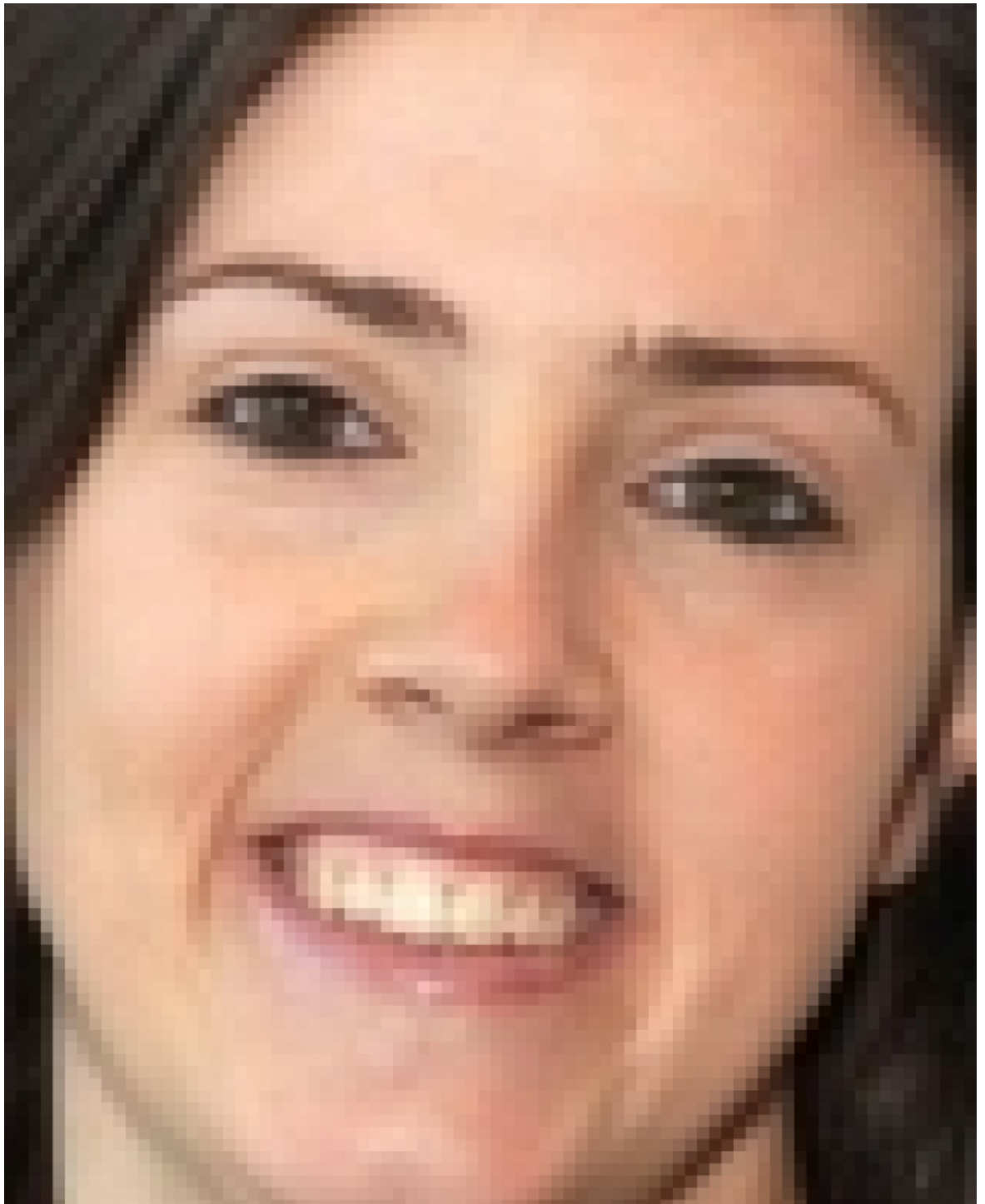
Eulàlia Millaret

Submitted by F Pere Tarrés on Mon, 07/24/2017 - 12:42

Description:

Lawyer. Volunteer at Lesbos refugee camps.

Vertical photo:



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Twitter: [@eulalia_89](#)



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Volunteering at a refugee camp is really a life-changing experience, but you don't fully realise this until you've left.

My first time in Lesvos was a life-changing experience. My initial hope to do my little bit was quickly thwarted by the magnitude of the tragedy. An overcrowded battle field, the terrible inhuman conditions and the many lives cut short so unfairly was far more than what I expected and the frustration at seeing there's not much one can do came flooding in. It's difficult to feel you're useful under these circumstances, and the little you are able to do seems totally insufficient and far from the real needs of the people who are barely living in these camps. Still, you're there and you do whatever you can. It's not after going through the whole experience that you really realize that that's what counts, and that it is necessary to do your little bit even if everything seems to be beyond our control.

Many of us, volunteers, have travelled to refugee camps, some of us more than once, but yet they still need more hands. How is this possible? Europe, which should have acted responsibly from the start, continues to not to act, hence becoming an accomplice of a true crime against humanity. By acting responsibly I mean not just make the situation worse by allocating resources to create real mercenary borders or outsourcing border controls under the umbrella of "Agreements" that are strikingly shameful, and hence boosting (un)organized people trafficking networks.

That is why there's such a need for volunteers: because of this political irresponsibility at all levels. Volunteering, in all its forms, has become essential, passing on the responsibility of taking action to people who should not feel responsible, but nevertheless do. Refugee camps are kept open hugely thanks to international volunteering, and this in my opinion is unacceptable.

Luckily, though, you can also discover a totally different dimension of volunteering: the strictly human side to it, not just the humanitarian side. Add to the strictly volunteering tasks the company and understanding, and that automatically gives you empathy, which is the immediate consequence of living with people in extreme situations.

Beyond any doubt, this is the most striking side and also the most enriching one; when you leave the camp is when you realise the impact, what is most important for you. Against all odds, in return you receive much more than you thought you could give. And this doesn't leave anyone feeling indifference.

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