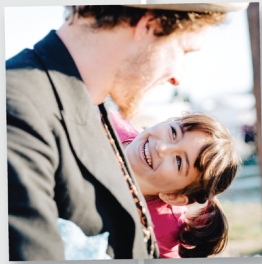




LSE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

2017: **The Child**



EDITORIAL

In every country in the world, there are children who suffer daily. Whether that may be as a result of starvation, poverty, forced migration, forced marriage, or discrimination, depression, and lack of love and attention, it remains indisputable that as part of the educated and privileged citizens that inhabit this world, we can and should be doing more to support those that are incapable of solely relying on themselves. This is why I decided to focus this year's LSESU Amnesty International Journal on the child.

The 'migrant crisis' is now entering its third year. Despite the facts and figures being regularly released about the plight of those fleeing conflict zones, and the haunting photographs accompanying these statistics, behind these mounds of information are raw and tragic human stories, often involving children. Article 6 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child decrees that every child has the right to life, survival, and development, and is ratified by nearly every single UN member state. Nevertheless, governments have made it incredibly difficult, and sometimes even impossible, for migrants to resettle and integrate into new countries. This is seen very clearly in the hostile reaction of some eastern European countries to the arrival of migrants, such as Hungary's building of a razor-wire fence in an attempt to keep them out. As highlighted by Magdalena Markiewicz in this issue, many of these migrants are children, arriving unaccompanied and terrified, burdened not only by the weight of their belongings, but also by their traumatic memories of war and suffering in their hometowns. In order for any positive change to occur, governments and publics must be willing to work together, along with civil society. But recent phenomena, such as the rise of populism across Europe, do not bode well for the future.

Consequently- to use an overworked saying- we must be the change we wish to see in the world. This is why we thought it was crucial to have a portion of the Journal dedicated to getting involved. I believe that it is not too radical to imagine a world without child poverty, child trafficking, child slavery, or child marriage. As you read this Journal and its stories, which draw attention to a wide range of children's issues, consider what could possibly be done to help those most vulnerable, powerless, and defenseless, the overwhelming majority of whom are between the ages of 0 and 18. I hope the contributions published here inspire you, enlighten you, and help you realize the extraordinary potential individuals possess to help relieve the pain of those whose lives are filled with hardships, sadness, and suffering.

Malak Azer

Editor-in-Chief

COVER DESIGNS

By Zoe Liu

FRONT COVER PHOTOS

By Katherine Needle

BACK COVER PHOTO

By Louise Bourgeois

EDITORIAL TEAM

MALAK MAURICE

Editor-in-Chief

Malak Azer is a second-year undergraduate at the LSE, studying Politics and International Relations. Her belief in the sanctity of human life, and her desire to help stop human rights abuses around the globe, led her to decide to edit this journal. Coming from Egypt, she is highly concerned about many human rights issues, especially exploring the complex problem of how human rights can be upheld in the face of state emergencies. In the future, she hopes to help tackle gender inequality, and is planning to focus her undergraduate thesis on feminist articulations during times of political turmoil in the Middle East.

ANUSHKA SISODIA

Editor

Anushka is a first year student at the LSE, studying Geography with Economics. Having been introduced to Amnesty in her secondary school, she went on to lead the society and is now a committee member at LSE. She has always believed in raising awareness and campaigning for human rights in order to give a voice to Those who may have been disempowered. She believes that the smallest of change we can make to someone's life is a great achievement and a step in the right direction.

ELLIE DEE

Editor

Ellie graduated from the University of Cambridge in 2016 with BA (Hons) in Law. She is currently studying for an MSc in Criminal Justice Policy at the LSE and has long-standing interests in human rights, advocacy and social work. She has worked with death penalty defence attorneys in Texas and charities promoting the employment of ex-offenders, and her Master's thesis is focused on the use of immigration detention as a political tool. She hopes that this edition of the Amnesty International Journal will encourage people to more seriously consider the complexities of the refugee crisis and the impact of our actions (or inactions) on the most vulnerable. feminist articulations during times of political turmoil in the Middle East.

MICHELLE DYONISIUS

Editor

Michelle Dyonisius is studying International Relations at LSE, and is currently in her first year. Coming from a developing country with an unfolding history of human rights abuses, she believes defending human right is crucial, and especially through allowing freedom of the press. Moreover, she hopes to

pursue a future career in a similar area, especially working with children and women who are often voiceless and coming from impoverished backgrounds, which is what prompted her to help edit this journal.

YOOJIN SHIN

Editor

Yoojin Shin is a third-year undergraduate student studying Economics at the University of California, Berkeley, who has participated in a year-long pilot exchange program with the London School of Economics. As an aspiring development economist and a passionate writer, she has always been an advocate of human rights and empowerment through knowledge. She believes that written words have an incredible potential to tell powerful stories of human lives everywhere, which may exist across oceans and continents but are just as complex and human as those we choose to surround ourselves with. As such, she plans on continuing her role as the opinion writer for the Berkeley Political Review upon her return to California, and pursue further journalistic endeavors beyond her years as an undergraduate student.

ZOE LIU

Design Editor

Zoe is in her final year of studying LLB at LSE. She was born and grew up in the United Kingdom but her origins are in Hong Kong, where she plans to move in the future. She is also a Freelance Graphics Designer and has created and rebranded many of the societies at LSE, including creating the designs and website for the LSE Law Review, the website for LSESU Law Society, rebranding the LSESU Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Service Society by creating their website and founding a publication single-handedly, and designing the new LSE Amnesty International logo as well as this Journal and last year's Journal. She plans to become a solicitor in Hong Kong but hopes to continue designing in her spare time.

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IMPRISONED BY MY SKIN

By ZAHRA FAZAL

They say beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, That despite our differences we can live shoulder to shoulder, However as I crossed paths with a little girl named Ashura, I gradually realized that in reality, our world is much colder.

She played under the tree's shade, oblivious to the attention bestowed on her pale skin. Little did she know she would be the next victim of the trade, that this was the last time she could freely breathe air. For the aftermath of the many attempted break-ins, would send her life into a tailspin. With the shackles of fear and the price of her capture transforming her into a prisoner, trapped within the mystified albino skin'.

As a high school student studying the International Baccalaureate programme, the compulsory research paper, formally known as the 'Extended Essay', brought me out of my home and directed me towards the Ukerewe Island. Cocooned by Lake Victoria and a neighbour to the cities of Musoma and Mwanza, the Ukerewe Island has gained its reputation for being a safe haven for one of the most marginalized groups across the African continent. Nicknames such as 'Africa's Albino Island' has attracted many researchers, like myself, who are interested in understanding why Albinism has been constantly mystified as either a curse or a cure for HIV/AIDS in African culture.

Albinism is a genetic disorder caused by the inheritance of a recessive allele that results in a deficiency of melanin in the body. As a result, many people with albinism have a pale complexion and may suffer from skin cancer or visual impairment. Unfortunately, in many African countries, including Tanzania, myths surrounding albinism have led to mass mutilations of people with albinism, grave robberies and attempted kidnappings of children with albinism.

These myths include:

- Albinism is a curse
- PWA (People with albinism) are white ghosts, nicknamed 'zeruzeru sopesope' in Tanzania

- Having sexual intercourse with a woman with albinism cures HIV/AIDS
- The body parts of PWA act as charms for channeling good fortune (for example, miners bury their bones in gold mines while fishers weave fishing nets from the hair of PWA in order to secure successful ventures)
- The sacrifice of PWA can secure the success of a political campaign.

As a result of these myths, people with albinism have lived their lives in a state of



Figure 1.2. Asante Mariamu (Prevalence Rate)

constant anxiety. Parents think twice before sending their child with albinism to school, because in certain countries teachers have been convicted for attempting to sell children with albinism, while churches too have lost their sanctuary since some pastors have been involved in organizing killings of people with albinism.

The constant shadow hanging over the heads of Africans with albinism is exploited by those individuals intending to sell albino body parts to local witchdoctors. This trade offers a profitable fortune in the poverty stricken Tanzanian society, and has therefore forced many people with albinism to seek asylum in the Ukerewe Island. Serving as a safe haven, the island has the highest number of people with albinism in the world.



Fig. 1.1. Free Republic, David Lowe: Welcome to Albino Island (Lowe).

Travelling through the island in a three-wheeler, I interviewed many families that have members with albinism. However, it was the very last family that provided me with true insight into the numbing fear that characterizes the lives of those Africans with albinism. As I walked towards their mud house, which sat atop a hill, I could sense the tension in the atmosphere. Every step I took was carefully scrutinized by the women nearby, who whispered amongst themselves before sending their playing children away into the security of their homes.

Sensing their uneasiness, a tall, well-built man emerged from the shadows between the houses. He stood cross-armed, and uttered a

single word in the native Ukerewe language, after which all the women behind him froze, abandoning their utensils that cluttered to the ground as they silently rushed inside.

As I looked around, the compound was eerily empty, leaving only my guide, the intimidating man, and myself outside. Immediately, my guide- who was the head of the Ukerewe Island's Albinism Society- proceeded to introduce our arrival to the man in the native language. Receiving a nod of approval, I recited my basic questions and finally asked him whether or not he had a family member with albinism whom I could talk to. He signaled to the women in the house, peeping curiously through the windows, to bring out someone.

When the door opened, his daughter who had albinism walked out. I was awe-struck! She was very beautiful. Seven-year-old Ashura's soulful green eyes revealed the innocence of her childhood, whilst her whitish braids framed her face, almost like a heavenly tiara. Despite her shy smile, she displayed maturity beyond her years as she explained to me why she was under constant supervision of her protective father: "I must be careful; I must inform everyone at home where I go because there are bad men out there".

It was then that Ashura's father explained to me that he initially treated me with suspicion due to the many attempted kidnappings of his seven-year-old daughter. He recounted numerous times where he had discovered men from the neighborhood trying to lure little Ashura out by leaving chocolate at her window. During one of those times, a kidnapper had actually attempted to break into their home in the middle of the night, but fortunately the noise woke Ashura's father up who then proceeded to chase the man away and reported the incident to the police. Ashura has not returned to school after the incident, since her parents fear the worst. After all, there have been many occurrences where girls with albinism have been raped or have had their limbs amputated.

As Ashura's father began opening up, I couldn't help but perceive his heartbreak, evident from the look of agony etched deep within his eyes, as he told me that despite wanting to provide his daughter with an empowering education, he ultimately

couldn't gamble with her life. He spoke of the constant fear that accompanies his family during every moment, recounting how even when he is away at work, he constantly takes breaks to call Arusha at home, instructing his wife to give his daughter the phone in order for him to hear her voice himself and thus feel assured that she is safe. He says that this extreme behaviour is necessary, given that there have been too many cases where family members themselves sell albino children for large sums of money. It is a risk he is not willing to take with Arusha, in his words with "my precious flesh and blood".

Despite his intimidating persona, I could sense how deeply vulnerable he was, like a wounded lion trying to protect his little cub from a predatory world; a world where having a genetic mutation lamentably means endless fear and shame for yourself and your loved ones. It makes one wonder why being a different color is such a great crime that would warrant robbing children of their education, happiness, self-esteem, and innocence.

Having spent three hours with Ashura's family, I can't help but feel deeply concerned. Will Ashura live to see her next birthday? Will she graduate from high school? Or will she remain a prisoner of her mystified albino skin? The answers to these questions are currently regrettably unknown. Nevertheless, I believe that if every society unites against the mystification of albinism by supporting the rights of people with albinism, we can join forces with local NGOs to demand change. Only then can we hope to achieve the humanization of Africa's albinos.

To get involved in interventions against human rights abuses of those with albinism visit: www.standingvoice.org



Figure 1.2. Asante Mariamu (Prevalence Rate)

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13 PAPER AIRPLANES

By UROOBA AHMED

In the middle of chaos, anguish and terror, one living thousands of miles away from the site of pain wonders how they can contribute to ending or at least easing the pain of those living through it. Like any other teenager stressed with the current situation of the chaotic world, I started looking for options to help my Syrian brothers and sisters in these trying circumstances. One of my friends shared a post on Facebook about an organization recruiting volunteers to teach English to Syrians settled at refugee camps in different countries. Finally! Finally, I had found what I was looking for. For many Syrians, passing the TOEFL and IELTS English exams is mandatory for either pursuing secondary education or qualifying for jobs. Unfortunately, as the Syrian education infrastructure crumbles, the chance to learn English for college-aged students is rapidly diminishing. Therefore, Paper Airplanes stepped in, which distinguishes itself from others by offering a free tutoring programme. Even though other tutoring programs for these exams exist, many of them are quite expensive and less accommodating to the specific needs of refugees and vulnerable student populations. Through our tutoring programme, Syrian students are matched with a tutor who holds a one-on-one session once a week over Skype for two fifteen-week sessions, as well as one eight-week summer session. Not only does the programme assist students to prepare for their IELTS or TOEFL exams, but also creates lasting friendships between the Syrian students and their tutors.

I have been assigned a student, Mohammad, who is currently living in Turkey with his family. Mohammad is a freshman at university and is eager to learn English to improve his command over the language. He is a very hard-working student and actively participates in conversations. Through his well-informed questions and

willingness to learn, I believe Mohammad has the capability to accomplish all that he wants to. Interacting with Mohammad makes me think about all those children who are still stranded in Syria and are deprived of their right to education.

Being associated with Paper Airplanes as a tutor has been an incredibly humbling experience. Mohammad's strength and unwavering commitment towards his goals has made me optimistic about mine and I now believe that with sheer determination and courage one can achieve everything.

GETTING INVOLVED



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