



PHOTO BY BEVIS FUSHA

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

CONTRIBUTED CHILDREN FROM DIBRA:

IVA XHELILI • SAMUEL LUSHA • ISMETE DOCI • IGLI GAZIDEDE • SIDORELA HORESHKA • AMBLA TRUPJA • LORENA ALIA • BLEDI MUJA
AMINA CORJA • SONJA HOXHA • MEGIANA SELISHTA • MELISA VOJKA • ANDRINA QOKA

Birth

Iva is 17 years old. She was born and raised in Peshkopi. “When I was born, everyone cried, except my grandmother, because they wanted me to be a boy. I was the fourth daughter in the family. After a while, Iva’s mother gave birth to another child, Iva’s brother. “When my brother was born, everyone started to appreciate me, as I was the girl that “opened the door” for a boy in the family”. Iva wants to be an excellent volleyball player. She plays in Peshkopia’s local team.



Name

“ My name is Ismete.
I am 15 years old.
My parents told me
that it was my
uncle’s son who had
chosen my name.”
When Ismete was
younger she used to
cry, because she
didn’t like her name
at all. Even today she
doesn’t like it too
much.



First birthday

Samuel is 13 years old and was born in Tomin village. “I am the third child in the family. I have two older sisters that take care of me all the time. My parents told me that my first birthday was a big party”. According to Samuel his sisters’ birthdays are never celebrated. “My mother told me that girls were destined for another family”, adds the 13 year old.



Superstitions

In Peshkopi, the elderly still believe in the power of the “evil eye” and other superstitions. Often, when children cry or don’t speak, they bring them near a river or a water mill. Mothers believe that the sound of water can calm them down.



Central evening

At the end of each year the best students are invited to a celebration event. Usually there are more girls than boys, because girls have higher grades.



School

Lorena is 16 years old. She is one of the best students in her class. "When I get a 10 in school my parents don't say a word, but when I get a 9, they scold me terribly. They always compare me with others. Parents often do not appreciate our achievements."



Mistakes

Amina is 18 years old. She has three older sisters and a younger brother. “Mom always criticises me for my brother’s mistakes, even if I am not with him”. “Our brother is the youngest and he gets spoilt,” - says Amina. The mistakes are more tolerated for boys than girls. Parents tell their daughters that they “will bring shame on their parents if they make mistakes at their husbands’ house”.



Engagements / marriages

Sonja is 13 years old and lives in the municipality of Tomin. She says that her friend got engaged when she just turned 15. Everything was arranged by others. "The parents removed her from school. She could not finish the ninth grade. I haven't seen her for a year. Her fiancé is living abroad. My friend lives with her fiancé's parents. She cries all the time," – ends Sonja. There are dozens of girls aged 15 forced to get married by their parents.



High School

Many engaged girls are forced to leave school because their parents or future husbands do not allow them to pursue education. Sidorela tells us that engaged girls go to school accompanied by their father or their fiancé. This makes them feel bad in front of their peers or teachers.



Freedom

Megi is 13 years old and Melisa is 14. "We live in Brezhdan, a village near Peshkopi. When our brothers go to Peshkopi and return late people do not say anything. But for us, girls, it is the opposite. Even when we come to World Vision activities and they end later, people start talking. Boys can return home in the evening, girls no. There is prejudice against girls if they go out or if they are not good students.



Domestic violence

Igli is 15 years old. He tells us that many parents use violence against their children. His friend Laze, 15, is often beaten by his father. Laze often fights with other children in his class or neighborhood, following his father's model. Lately, the father forbid Laze to go to school as he needs him to work and provide for his family.



Violence in schools

Andrina is 11 years old. She tells us that violence in schools does not only appear among students but teachers can be violent as well. "The teachers often hit us, they pull our ears. They justify themselves by saying that our parents have given them permission to do so". "The 11-year-old says that the children of directors or parents working in the municipality are treated differently. It makes us feel very bad."



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