

# LEARNING TO WALK OVER AGAIN



This is a photo-story about the efforts of Syrian refugee youth to hold on to life in the Nusaybin Refugee Camp, where they were temporarily settled after being forced to leave their homes due to the civil war in Syria.



## INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of Syrian Civil War, Turkey harbours approximately more than 3.5 million refugees from Syria, and increasingly from Iraq as well. This means that along with the direct neighbours of Iraq and Syria – Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey is now bearing most of the burden when it comes to absorbing and taking care of these refugees. Some of the refugees live in enclosed camps that are unfortunately largely inaccessible from the outside.

However, most of them are so-called urban refugees who now live in Mardin, near the Syrian border, as well as in just about every large city in Turkey. More than 500,000 refugees now live in Istanbul alone.

The Goethe-Institut Istanbul is conducting various projects that are especially designed to assist these refugees in their current precarious situation.

*“Learning to Walk, Over Again...”* is a series of images created during the Cultural Relief Program that is designed to support refugees of different ethnicities living in Turkish refugee camps near the Syrian border. The programme includes workshops and activities aimed on Trauma Therapy with social and performing arts such as “Stilt Workshop for Refugee kids in Mardin City”, “Train the Trainee program at the refugee camp in Nusaybin”, “Searching Traces: Dance Workshop”, “Music Therapy” at the refugee camp in Nusaybin, Turkey.

Getting prepared for the Stilt Workshop inside the refugee camp, Nusaybin, Turkey  
© Enis Yücel





IMAGE 1

Wooden Stilts. Maintenance and repairing of the wooden stilts is an important duty of the workshop participants as faulty stilt can cause serious injuries during the training or performance.

Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 2

Young adults walking to the training area inside the refugee camp where they will be practicing walking and performing on the stilts. Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 3

A young refugee boy running with hurry to catch the stilt training. Trainings inside the camp is a great opportunity for these kids to socialize and learn new things inside the routine in the camps.  
Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 4

A refugee boy helping his younger friend putting on his stilts before they start their stilt training.

Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 5

The training ground inside the camps is full of pebbles and small rocks thus creating risk incase of falling off the stilts. A refugee boy putting his protective knee cap before the training.

Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 6

Since there is no available closed training facility inside the camp, kids have to train outside under the scorching sun.

Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel





IMAGE 7

Training with the sticks before getting on the stilts is a part of muscle exercise but also getting familiar in handling/using the sticks helps to create choreography while on the high stilts during performance.

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IMAGE 8

Wolfgang; professional stilts instructor who is experienced in working on trauma therapy activities, teaching the key points of using other tools while also being on the stilts.

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IMAGE 9

Refugees working on improving their synchronization which will help them to put a perfect performance during the festivals they are aiming to participate. Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 10

Due to the extreme temperatures the participant refugees are brought to city with special permission where they can exercise in closed area.  
Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 11

Lead Instructor Wolfgang and his assistant Leo, showing refugee children the key figures when they have to perform on stilts.  
Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 12

Young local girls living in the border city Mardin also attending Stilt workshops together with Syrian refugee children. Being able to walk on the stilts is a new experience for them also.

Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 13

According to Wlolfgang, getting on a stilt and looking around from an elevated point is a part of trauma therapy and also an important step in gaining self-confidence after the traumatic experiences the refugees had during their time in Syrian Civil War.

Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel



IMAGE 14

Refugee children gathers before a Stilts show organized by instructors to cheer up the refugee kids in the camp.  
Nusaybin Refugee Camp, Mardin, Türkiye © Enis Yücel





IMAGE 15

Wolfgang and his assistant Leo, putting a show to cheer up the refugee children in the refugee camp, acting as The Dancing Storks.  
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## ENIS YÜCEL

## BIO

Enis Yücel is an international assignment & humanitarian photographer born in Istanbul, Turkey. Currently based in Kiev, Ukraine.

He has been doing humanitarian and social photography more than a decade, often focusing on capturing the human condition in the regions with humanitarian crises with the aim of reflecting their social and economical status and struggles to wider audiences.

He completed Steve McCurry's photography master class and received training from award-winning photographers such as David DuChemin, Sorin Onisor. He has involved in humanitarian projects with local and international NGOs such as Goethe-Institut, IHH - International Humanitarian Relief Foundation. He is also a contributing photographer to magazines, SilverKris Magazine, Destinations Magazine, Conde Nast, Bayer Chemicals, Singapore Airlines.

'Learning to Walk: Over Again' is a part of longer project about Syrian refugees, has been exhibited in Istanbul, Munich and Berlin in cooperation with LHS Munich Cultural Center, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and also published as a book as a part of Cultural Relief Program conducted by Goethe Institut.

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