**Selides Magazine**

**1. CV**

I studied English Literature in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and I did my Master's in the University of Thessaly, where I am pursuing a PhD. I have taught English in public and private schools and Greek as a foreign language for many years. I have been teaching Greek on a voluntary basis in Steki Metanaston in Volos since 2010.

I have taught students from many countries, India, USA, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Albania, Ethonia, Russia, Slovakia, Mexico, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Hungary, Roumania, Congo, Mali, Korea, Germany, Dominican Republic, Great Britain, Morocco, Iran, Sweden and Turkey.

My first students in Steki Metanaston came from Afghanistan, that's how my love for the specific country and its civilization started. I love traveling and I have visited many countries in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. I really hope to visit Afghanistan one day.

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Marina Mogli is presenting us her book “Afghan Proverbs Illustrated” and explains how her chance meeting with Zellem became the cause of its creation. Through this book and her teaching at Steki Metanaston, she introduces to us the people and the culture of Afghanistan. We would like to thank her.

**Cooperation with Zellem**

We met with Zellem quite by chance 2 years ago, on Goodreads, an online book review website and forum. I had discovered Zellem's English-Dari book of Afghan proverbs and I had already been using Greek proverbs in my classroom at Steki Metanaston as a learning aid to facilitate understanding of the Greek language and culture. Zellem suggested that I translate the book and I happily accepted. We quickly found common ground in Afghan Proverbs as another way to promote education, literacy, language learning, and cross-cultural understanding. The result of our subsequent collaboration has become the new trilingual book [Εικονογραφημένες Παροιμίες από το Αφγανιστάν](http://www.afghansayings.com/%22%20%5Cl%20%22%21greek-dari/c1lfe) (‘Afghan Proverbs Illustrated’) in Greek, Dari and English. The book is now available worldwide in over 70 countries, and among many other uses, it will help integrate Afghan refugees and immigrants in Greece as part of a teaching curriculum. Proverbs are a very effective tool for integrating refugees and immigrants, as they help them learn the language of their host country in a fun and culturally significant way. The book can be a wonderful means to improve literacy and promote integration of Afghan refugees and immigrants in Greece.

Except for that, however, a book like that shows the similarities between Afghans and Greeks, in the way the two peoples approach life, something that Zellem's books of Afghan proverbs had already achieved in other countries and languages. Not only that, in the process of translating it I discovered how many equivalent Greek proverbs there were, which are still used to this day, of course.

100 percent of net proceeds from [Εικονογραφημένες Παροιμίες από το Αφγανιστάν](http://www.afghansayings.com/%22%20%5Cl%20%22%21greek-dari/c1lfe) go to support Afghan literacy programs. More information and recent media at [www.afghansayings.com](http://www.afghansayings.com/).

Όλα τα έσοδα από την πώληση της συλλογής υποστηρίζουν εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα στο Αφγανιστάν. Περισσότερες πληροφορίες και δημοσιεύσεις στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση [www.afghansayings.com.](http://www.afghansayings.com/)

**Relationships between Greece and Afghanistan, Afghan culture**

Afghanistan is a beautiful country with high mountains, cold winters, but valleys too. Its inhabitants belong to different ethnic groups, the Pashtun, the Hazara, the Uzbeks and the Tajiks. The cultural links between Greece and Afghanistan started a long time ago, at the time of Alexander the Great. His wife, Roxana, was Afghan. In addition, many Afghans even today consider themselves descendants of the Greeks and are proud of the monuments of the Greek civilization that can be found in their country.

Because of the war, many Afghans have started a long time ago to seek shelter in Western countries, Greece being among them. Until the Syrian crisis, Afghans were the biggest ethnic group of people who had entered Greece. Today, although due to the financial crisis many of them leave our country for other European countries, there is still a big Afghan community in Greece.

Afghan people are devout Muslims and religion plays a big part in their lives, without this necessarily meaning that they are not tolearant or that they do not respect other religions (as the proverb from the book goes “Jesus in his religion, and Moses to his”). Family is, as in Greece, especially important, and they live in extended families that are composed not only of the two spouces and their children, but also of grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles or aunts and cousins. Parents are those who decide who their children are going to marry and all marriages are arranged. Children respect their parents and elders a lot.

Afghans are a very proud people and unbelievably hospitable. Even if they have nothing to eat themselves, they will give the best food to their guests. Another Afghan characteristic, as an Afghan friends jokingly says, is that they eat bread with every meal. Additionally, they are patient and they remain strong in the face of adversity. They are mountain people, used to difficulties and obstacles. As the proverbs say, “even if a mountain is very high, it has a path to the top”.

Something that has to be mentioned is the desire of the young generation to be educated. Students may have class under a tree of in a tent when outside it is freezing cold or boiling hot, but they do not mind in order to get the education they crave for. Something equally impressive is that it is a whole nation literally in love with poetry. Even people who cannot read or write know whole poems of Rumi or Hafiz by heart. They generally adore poetry and they also like Greek poetry.

All these things remind me of Greece in another time in the past, which unfortunately does not exist anymore.