



The seamstress from Aleppo.

Twice a week, Wafaa wears her self-handmade face mask, walks along the empty streets of Florence and goes to work into a tailor shop. She was hired for few months by a local cooperative, and her tasks include repairing doctors' coats, nurses' uniforms and other textile employed in the hospitals of the city. She has been working during the lockdown, making her small contribution in this difficult moment: "I am not afraid to go out, I am happy to help the community".

Wafaa is one of the Syrian refugees welcomed in Italy through the Humanitarian Corridors project. She arrived almost one year ago, with her husband and three young guys, from Lebanon. They have been living there for several years in a refugee's camp with other relatives, struggling to survive and maintain the dignity, after their outflow from Aleppo. Wafaa used to do small jobs as tailor to support the family economy, even her 11-years-old child was exploited in hardest tasks for his early age. When the opportunity to leave Beirut arises, they packed up their dreams, hope and worries, and flew to Florence to begin a new experience together: "This city is so similar to Aleppo, we feel at home".

Wafaa is a graceful and distinguished woman, always in perfect style with her self-handmade dress and scarf combined. She tries to speak a shy Italian while preparing the traditional Syrian coffee to welcome us, she loves welcome people in her house: biscuits, fruits and sweets are always served, and if we are in a rush, she wraps the meal in a bag and invites to take it away. Her smile and calmness hide a time of sacrifice and sufferance, the adaptation and integration into a new country is a long process, and in some case challenging. The fulfilment of her family dreams to live peacefully, to study and work, is her strong motivation to go ahead.

She was not troubled about covid-19 emergency and soon she adapted to the new routine during the lockdown: "you know, we are Muslims and we have faith in God's will. If we are doomed to be infected by the virus, we will face it. Thanks to the support of Oxfam team, we feel safe". Rather, her thoughts go to the loves one left at home: her daughter became mom for the second time and she's still living in a refugee's camp, while her father get stuck alone in a small apartment in Aleppo, with whom she has rare phone contact. Wafaa and her family concern about Syrian people struggling the atrocity of the civil war: "they have no more strength to cry out their sufferance", so they are grateful to have the opportunity to start living again.

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