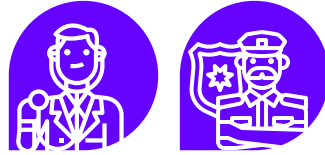




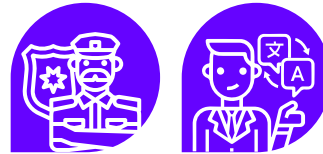
I DID NOT
KNOW THEN...
NOW I KNOW!

Arrival



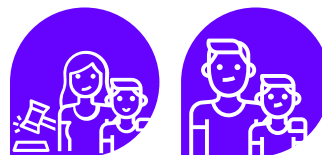
It was dark, we had been in the boat for hours. The boat started sinking. Someone must have called for help because the rescuers arrived. They took me out of the sea. When we got off the rescue boat there was the *police* and the *doctor* and ambulances. Those who were very ill were taken to hospital. I did not know what to do. I felt sick and needed to go to the toilet but I did not know how to say it. **I did not know then I had the right to see a doctor just as any other child in the country.**

Meeting the police



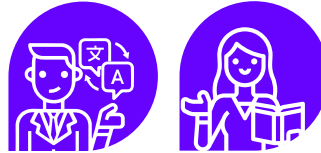
The *police* wanted to talk to me so they called a man to translate their questions, now I know he was an *interpreter*. I could not understand him well, he was from Morocco and I am from Egypt, he spoke a different language. At first he got my name and my age wrong but in the end he corrected it and the police understood I was under 18 years of age. Thanks to that, I did not have to see a doctor to assess my age based on my hand and wrist. If the interpreter speaks the same language as you, he will get the age right and you will not need to see a doctor. **I did not know then I had the right to speak my own language and have an interpreter who speaks the same language as me and not another one.**

International protection and a caring adult or family



I was placed in a reception centre for a couple of days. It is a place where migrant children who arrive without their families stay for the first few days after their arrival. For the first two nights I had no idea what was going to happen to me, I was scared. Would they send me back? Was I going to be put in jail? It was the first time I was in that country. **I did not know then that I was entitled to international protection** because I was an unaccompanied foreign child. They appointed a person to take care of me. He is called a *guardian*. I did not know I needed one. I had travelled on my own and I was able to look after myself. Some other children were sent to live with *families*. Not their families, but families who were happy to have them. **Now I know every child has the right to be cared for.**

In the second reception centre



Then I was taken to a house where unaccompanied migrant children stay until they are 18. It is called second reception centre. I understood what was going on there, because there were two *interpreters* who spoke my language. They translated for me so that I could understand the rules. There was one of the staff members, they call him an *educator*, and he was talking and talking, but I could not listen. I missed my family. One of the interpreters was a nice man, he knew the burden I had on my shoulders. He was a migrant himself. He tried to make things easier for me. He used a simple language so I could understand what was necessary without getting confused. **Now I know that adults can talk in a child-friendly language if they want to.**

Receiving support



When I was down or angry I turned to the interpreter because he could understand me. He told me I could see a lady and tell her about my feelings. She was a *psychologist*. **I did not know I could talk my fears and anger away. Now I know that a child with proper support can be stronger and face problems better.**

Going to school

The staff at the centre prepared a plan for me and we discussed it. I would study the language of the country and then take a certificate of junior high school.

I learned I had the right to attend school here too! I liked the idea of learning the language of the country and so I accepted. I got my junior school certificate and then went on and took the senior high school certificate. **I did not know I could be successful in school. Now I know that a child with education can become independent.**

Now I know



Now I work as an *interpreter*. I know how to help migrant children so that they are informed about their rights and they do not feel lost when they arrive on their own in a foreign country.

ChILLS



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