

A house is not a home

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The story of Omar Hammad Ali, researcher at FBK's Micro Nano Facility, is the ideal emblem to celebrate International Refugee Day, and to underline the Foundation's commitment to the defense and enhancement of human capital from even the most sadly known corners of the planet.

Omar is a guy of few words, one of those people who prefer results, even small ones, to big speeches. Because behind every little conquest there is a spirit of sacrifice that can be an example to ourselves and to others.

Born in Damascus to a Palestinian father and Lebanese mother, Omar graduated in Radiation Physics in Syria. In 2015 he won a call to attend a master's degree in Trieste, which was followed by a doctorate in Turin and finally landed in the FBK Micro Nano Facility in 2019. "The 3 T (Trieste, Turin and Trento)," likes to remember Omar, with a smile that says a lot about the bond he has had and keeps with these three cities.

Although he grew up in Syria, Omar reluctantly has known refugee status literally since he was born. He has no Syrian, Palestinian, or Lebanese citizenship, much less Italian. "I'm trying to find my own identity," Omar says bluntly. "I have Palestine in my heart and I love Syria, but I hope to find my identity in Italy, for myself and especially for my children."

In his eyes you can read not only sincerity, but also the lively hope that this legitimacy will one day no longer be a theme to reflect on, but an unshakable certainty, on which to base that same life that Omar is trying to build for himself and his family. "I decided to apply for Italian citizenship," he explains, "because I like Italy and because I need recognition that also allows me to travel, and to return to visit my family."

The story of Omar is a noteworthy example on the occasion of International Refugee Day, which FBK also wishes to celebrate through numbers that recall the Foundation's openness, commitment and sensitivity towards international human capital. Out of over 600 employees, doctoral students and temporary workers, more than 100 come from foreign countries, with Iran, India and China in the lead. Although representing a minority in FBK, for the Foundation the status of Refugee can be a stamp on a document or a multiple choice question, but not a limit, an encumbrance or an instrumental spectrum behind which to prevent choices based on merit.

On a day that sees us reflect carefully on who we are, who we could be and who we want to be, we are also invited to evaluate our civil, social and professional duty to enhance human skills and knowledge.

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