



ninemillion.org

Tarlan Gasimov, 8, keeper

I was born here. My family has lived in Sumgayit since 1992.

I want to be a doctor.

nine million faces. nine million names.
nine million stories. nine million children
are refugees right now.

Help them play, let them learn.

SARIGAYA Baku, Azerbaijan

Do you know where Azerbaijan is? Look at a map. Find Iran and Iraq and look north. Do you see Chechnya next to it? Armenia? Do you remember those news clips of people streaming across borders into Armenia? If you don't, do a web search. Go back to 1988—type in Nagorno-Karabakh. Then type in Chechnya. How old were you in 1988? Wars in strange places don't stay in the headlines for long. Yet hundreds of thousands of people fled from both conflicts and became dislocated. Years later most of them are still waiting to go home.

One in eight people in Azerbaijan is a refugee, or “internally displaced.”

Trace your finger across a map of Azerbaijan. Go east to Baku, the capital. This is where 150,000 internally displaced people live. But they don't live in tents, or houses or camps. They live in abandoned buildings. This is where we are taking you.



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Marina Gazayeva, 13, defender

My family fled Grozny in 2001. I miss home because it used to be beautiful there. But I know it has been destroyed. There is nothing to go back to. I love math and literature. I want to become a doctor and move with my family to another country, such as Norway or Germany. Del Piero and the Italian national team are my favorites.

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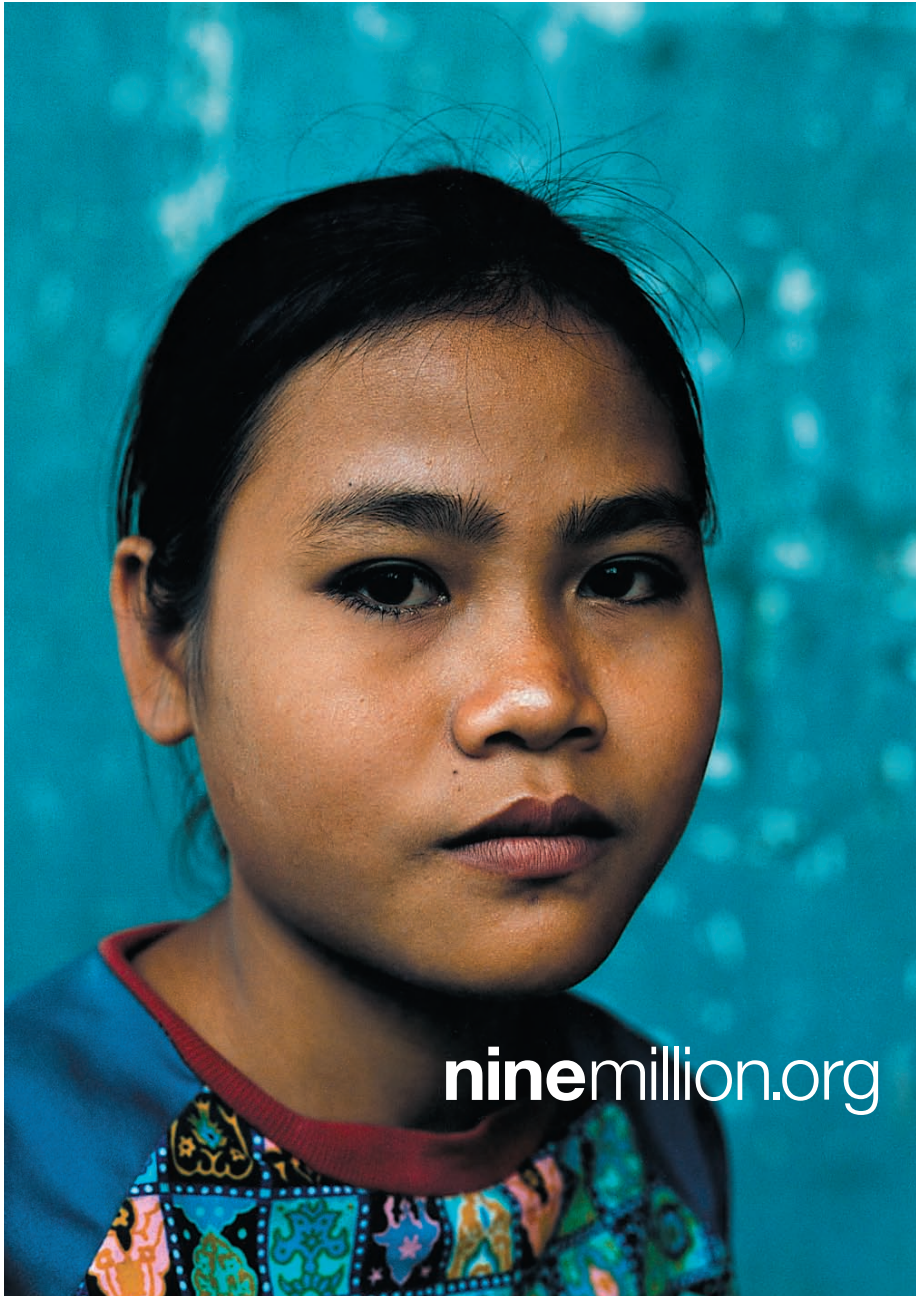
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Paw Lah Hay, 14, center attack

I have lived here since 1997. My mother died, so I live with my father and two older brothers and sisters. I want to live somewhere else with my family and stepmother some day. Ronaldo is my favorite football player. When I play, I want to win.

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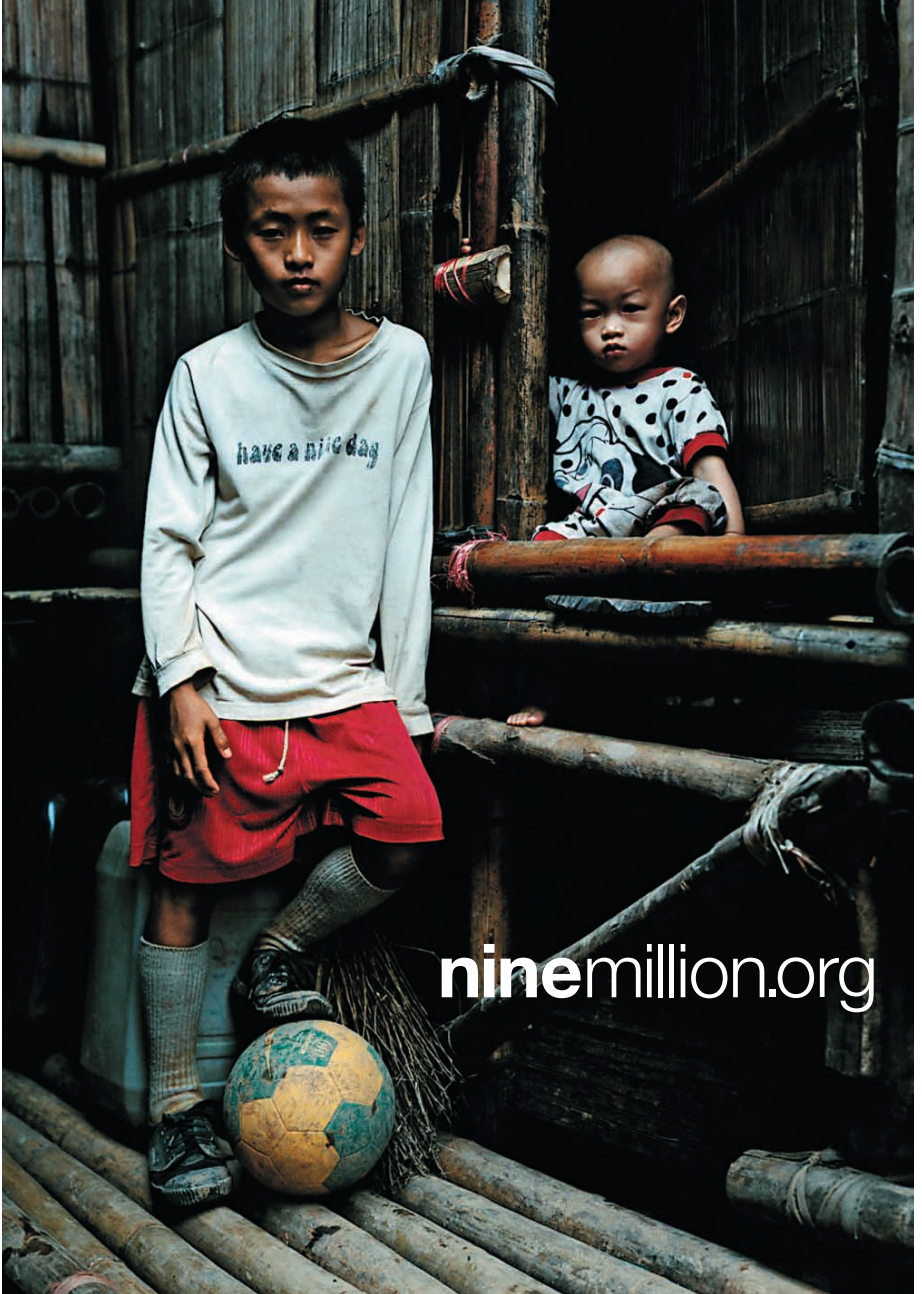
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THAM HIN Chatpawa, Thailand

For the 140,000 refugees living in Thailand, it's both a safe haven and an uncertain prison. The refugees fled Myanmar as long as 20 years ago and sit, still waiting, for a dictatorship to crumble or another country to welcome them. Home is one of nine enclosed camps in the sweltering humidity and heat of western Thailand.

Living without enough food or water, not being allowed to work, confined to a camp for years on end. Waiting can eat away at your sanity. These refugees may stay here forever. If they're lucky, they'll be able to leave and work in Thailand one day. Or be granted refugee status in the USA to live a new life.

But to even begin to hope for something different than the camp, they need tools. They need education and they need hope. If a refugee child in this camp has no ability to write, how will they ever survive or thrive in the USA, or Norway, or Germany, or whichever country takes them in?



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Francisco Hseik, 12, front wing

I moved here with my family in 2000. My family is planning to move to the United States, but I would like to return to Myanmar some day. My favorite football player is Ronaldo. I like to play football because it makes me happy and strong.

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IMVEPI Arua, Uganda

Imagine that you have walked through the jungle, across the desert and the bush, mile after mile after mile, day after day in the heat. Imagine a life where fleeing with nothing is better than staying in the place you've always called home, where you know everyone, speak the language, understand the culture, go to school, or have a job.

Or imagine that you were just a baby on your mother's back when this happened, and today you are 15. All your life you have lived in a refugee camp with 23,000 other people. All your life you have only known one meal a day, a house made of sticks and old tarpaulin, and one water hole for the whole camp.

Imagine that you want to learn to read and write, because that is what hope tastes of. But there are only enough places for 5,500 children in seven schools, with only 72 teachers. Seventy-six children per teacher. No benches to sit on. No books to read. No paper to write on. You come to school hungry, having walked 4 miles to collect firewood for your mother before going to class.

Imagine. There are more than 200,000 refugees in Uganda. There are 1.6 million displaced people in Uganda. Some of them have lived this way for 18 years or more. Imagine that is you.



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Nance Viola, 12, mid-fielder

I have lived here my whole life. I came here from Morobo when I was just a baby. My mother left us when I was 7, so I live here now with my father and two brothers. I want to become a nurse. I love playing sports because it teaches me how to coach other people.

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