

Best practices Greece



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1. Zaatar

Zaatar is a registered non-profit organization in Greece, set up to help refugees in Athens, with a focus on single women, mothers with children, and LGBTs. In other words, their mission is to provide a safe space for refugees to rest, learn, feel empowered and grow. They accomplish this by, among other activities:

- Providing services for refugees, with a particular focus on women (and their children), unaccompanied minors, refugees who identify as LGBT, and prisoners.
- Educational programming in fundamental subjects such as languages and computer skills
- Activities to enhance health and wellbeing (for example yoga, health and first aid workshops, crafts, dancing).
- Providing vocational training opportunities to help adult refugees gain work and to foster their integration within Greek and westernized societies more generally.
- Offering shelter to up to 20 women and children in the Orange House, and, where possible, finding housing within homes and apartments for vulnerable refugees without adequate shelter.

Background

From the period from 2015 to 2016, Greece experienced an unprecedented influx of migrants and refugees fleeing war and deprivation in their home countries in the Middle East and south Asia, or in search of a better and safer life in the EU. The closure of the border between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece in early March 2016 left thousands of refugees and migrants stranded in Greece – often without adequate accommodation, healthcare, and access to education, with about 60 percent of them being women and children and 40 percent men.

Aims and Objectives

The Orange House (within the Orange House Project) acts as a shelter (providing housing and food) for refugee women and their children, and as a community day center that welcomes over 200 people a day to do their laundry, take a shower, get a hot meal, get legal advice and to interact with others.

Recipients/Target group

Single women, mothers with children, and LGBTs refugees

Content and availability

The Orange House opened in May 2016 in the Exarcheia area of Athens. Our vision is to provide:

- Housing for refugees, with a current focus on single women and mothers and their children.
- Support for unaccompanied minors and people from the LGBT community.
- A variety of classes and activities for the local refugee and migrant community.
- A safe space for refugees to relax and meet people.
- Individual support for vulnerable individuals, with referrals to other organisations as needed
- Additional services for residents and visitors, including laundry, a showering facility for women and children, and a lunch program that runs from Mondays to Saturdays.
- Professional services including lawyers, social workers and psychologists with interpreters from a major Greek NGO attend Zaatar twice a month, and medical practitioners from a major Greek NGO attend Zaatar once a week.

In their website (<http://zaatarngo.org/news/>), they constantly post news about the Orange House project, with different activities they undertake in the house.

2. Greek Council for Refugees

The Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) is a Non- Governmental Organization, which has been active since 1989 in the field of asylum and human rights in Greece. It was founded by Charis Brisimi and another 20 of her co-citizens aiming to defend the rights of refugees in Greece. The Greek Council for Refugees, along with partner organizations from Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Ireland, Greece and coordinated by AidLearn, Portugal, launched the RefugeesIN project, whose actions resulting in the RefugeesIN learning Package aims to encourage intercultural dialogue, to combat discrimination against refugees and promote their social inclusion.

Background

Now that we are living through a humanitarian calamity of historic proportions with individuals facing complex and painful processes in their adaptive pathways to European societies, these organisations believe films can and should more often convey successful stories of refugees' social inclusion in their newly adopted homeland. But is it really so?

Have the negative social beliefs surrounding refugees been replaced by those of social inclusion more in tune with developments in multicultural societies? Are the achievements of former well-included refugees into EU societies, where they live today, sufficiently or prominently displayed enough, highlighting a central modelling role, that newcomers' can aspire to?

Aims and objectives

RefugeesIN offers an innovative cinema-based Package to professional staff working with refugees for use in their activity.

Cinema is used as a tool for breaching stereotypes and portraying actual and inspiring life stories of well-included former refugees and having a modelling role for the newcomers' social inclusion.

- RefugeesIN Package (with Brochure, Film Catalogue, Course and Guide) is prepared and a pilot course is conducted where refugees themselves shoot short documentaries on real life stories of social inclusion.

Target group

The project, its results and outputs are primarily meant for adult educators of refugees, adult education providers, staff and civil society organisations, experts on adult education and social inclusion and experts on European film.

The project is also meant to raise public awareness about cohesive and inclusive societies, the role of film in fostering representations of social inclusion and about how refugee communities can be embraced as part of an overall societal inclusion process.

Content/availability

The RefugeesIN project is currently being implemented. The RefugeesIN whole learning package (with Brochure, Film Catalogue, Course and Guide) will be published here by July 2018. All in all, the project has already published a Brochure that consists on:

- 26 real-life stories of successful European inclusion of former refugees showing their qualities to help inspire new refugees as they transition into their new homes and societies across Europe.

In addition, the project has also published the Film Catalogue, with films that portrays and illustrates successful stories of social inclusion of refugees/asylum seekers.

- The Film Catalogue consists of 12 feature length films selected by individual partner focus groups showing fictional and true stories from a diverse European cinematography perspective and 12 short documentaries generated within the RefugeesIN Course.

All these products are freely accessible through the projects website:

<https://www.refugeesinproject.eu/en/pack.html>

3. Faros

Faros (<http://www.faros.org.gr/>) is a Christian non-profit organization that provides care and humanitarian support to unaccompanied refugee children and youth, as well as refugee families with children in Athens, Greece. In our work, we are committed to

professionalism, accountability, and transparency. Faros is supported by individuals, institutional donors, foundations, as well as local and international church communities.

Background

Faros started from a single observation. In 2011, our co-founder, Patricia Kirk, noticed a 14-year old, unaccompanied, Afghan boy sleeping alone in one of Athens' public parks. "His face had a lifeless expression. He was utterly invisible," she recalls. Patricia had already spent months researching child protection in Southern Europe and was deeply moved, realizing that there was a lack of outreach and protection services for unaccompanied children.

She decided to act together with co-founder Dan Biswas and through our local partner, the Presbyterian Church of Exarchia, and with support from International Aid Services and Danish church communities Faros was established in 2014.

Faros' name translates to 'lighthouse' in Greek: a sign that one is nearing a safe haven. "The dream was to start a place where refugee children could find a caring environment and professional help, discover their worth, and find hope for the future", Patricia says.

Aims and Objectives

At Faros, they combine protection services with a holistic approach that enables unaccompanied children and youth to find and cultivate their skills and talents.

The approach is three-fold.

- First, their team is on the streets of Athens to find and support unaccompanied children.
- Second, they provide them with a protected environment and comprehensive support system in their drop-in centre and shelter.
- Third, they strive to empower children to move from being passive survivors to active individuals, mainly through non-formal education and mentoring.

In addition, they care for refugee mothers and families with children. At their family center in central Athens, they provide access to psychosocial support, information, and workshops that will enable them to integrate better into society. They aim to contribute to a more efficient child protection system in Athens, by conducting independent research, bringing best practices, and partnering with experts around the world.

Recipients/Target group

Mainly unaccompanied children and youth refugees

Content and availability

The drop-in centre is open on all week days, and it is located in the centre of Athens, close to areas with many refugees. The purpose of the centre is to protect unaccompanied children and youth from harm, and to provide them with support and activities that will give them hope in their situation.



The Faros centre offers food, informal education, vocational training, and recreational and sports activities. Their staff of social workers, psychologists, lawyers, and cultural mediators – as well as numerous volunteers – provides supportive and specialized care to each child.