

THE POINT OF NO RETURN?

Introduction to the report

There are now over 110,000 registered refugees stranded in Greece and over 40,000 trapped on the Aegean Islands. 73,377 asylum seekers arrived seeking international protection in 2019. This is more than 2017 and 2018 combined. 2019 brought us face to face with a harsh reality: the human rights of asylum seekers are systematically violated in Greece. If Europe continues down this path, there will be no going back.

The New Democracy party was elected to govern Greece in September 2019 and has since then repeatedly proven itself either unwilling or unable to ethically and safely handle this humanitarian crisis. The new government is putting in place plans to incarcerate refugees in closed 'pre-removal detention centres' as a matter of national policy. Refugees can no longer get an AMKA (healthcare) number and therefore have no access to healthcare, even in emergencies. Children are denied vaccinations and therefore access to education.

Long-awaited transfers to the mainland are delayed, or never come to pass. When they do, they are not the solution: mainland camps are isolated, severely overcrowded and some have little to no basic facilities: shelter, showers and access to food. Police violently evicted housing squats throughout 2019. There are thousands of homeless refugees on the streets of Athens and Thessaloniki, with numbers growing every day.

Defiant in the face of these challenges and determined to meet the needs of our fellow humans, we have expanded our activities across Greece in 2019, working tirelessly to fill critical service gaps. Through the power of people and a common belief in humanity, we will continue to do so in 2020.



CARPE DIEM

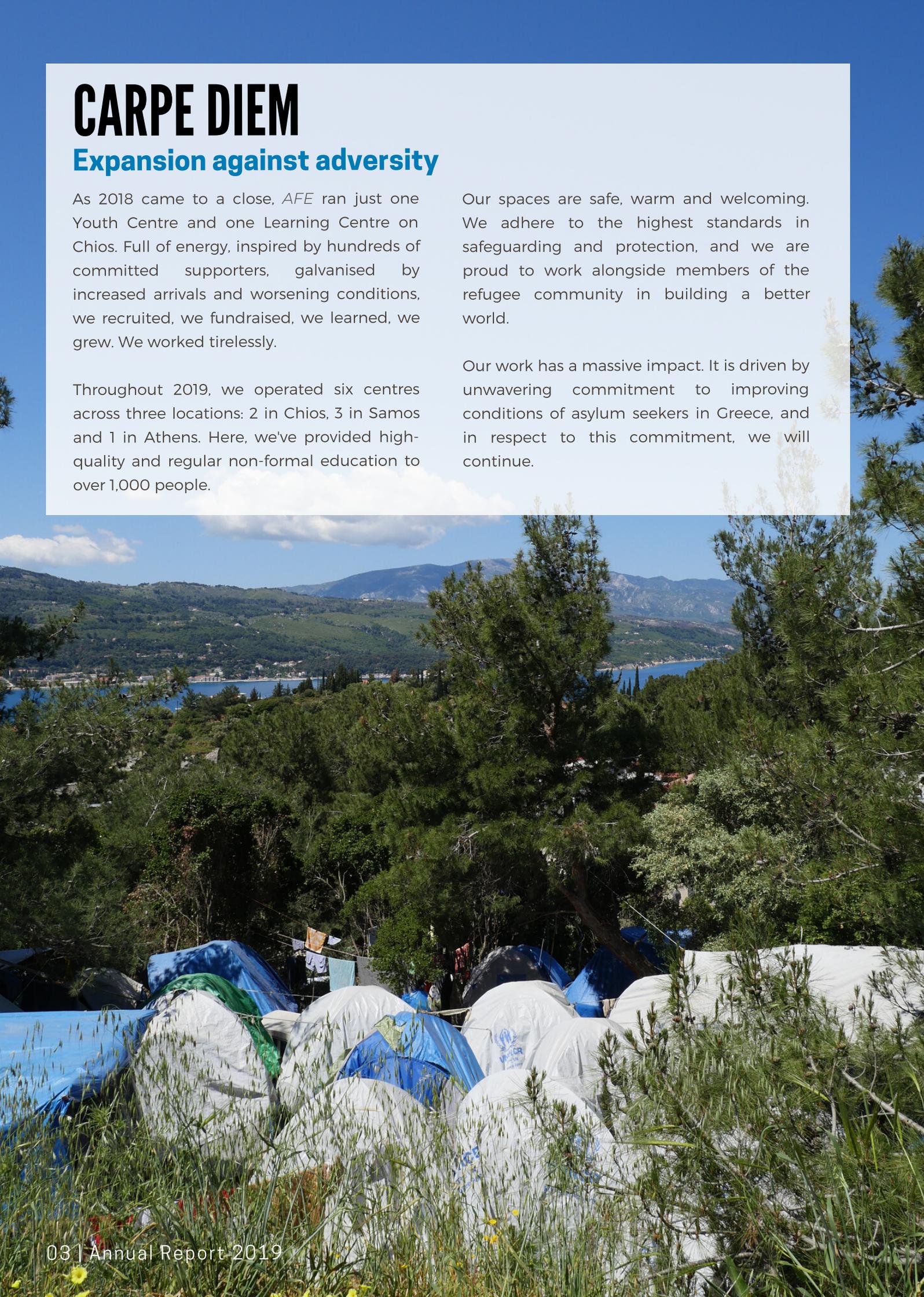
Expansion against adversity

As 2018 came to a close, *AFE* ran just one Youth Centre and one Learning Centre on Chios. Full of energy, inspired by hundreds of committed supporters, galvanised by increased arrivals and worsening conditions, we recruited, we fundraised, we learned, we grew. We worked tirelessly.

Throughout 2019, we operated six centres across three locations: 2 in Chios, 3 in Samos and 1 in Athens. Here, we've provided high-quality and regular non-formal education to over 1,000 people.

Our spaces are safe, warm and welcoming. We adhere to the highest standards in safeguarding and protection, and we are proud to work alongside members of the refugee community in building a better world.

Our work has a massive impact. It is driven by unwavering commitment to improving conditions of asylum seekers in Greece, and in respect to this commitment, we will continue.



A YEAR IN MILESTONES



MARCH

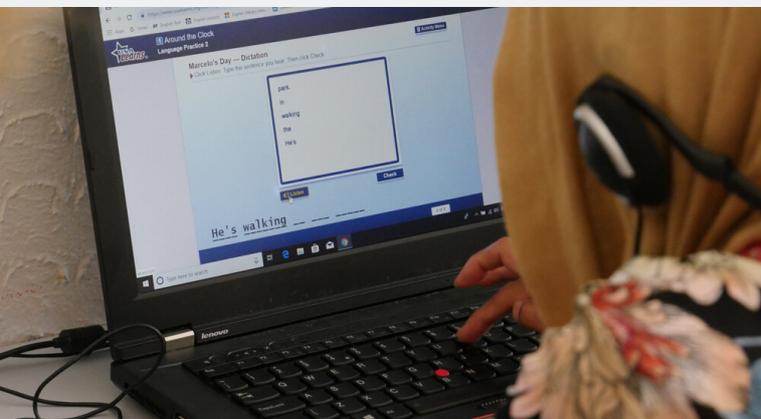
A FE BREAKS GROUND IN SAMOS

Throughout January and February, a team of volunteers worked to renovate an old restaurant into a school and community centre. The doors for the Banana House opened on March 11th.

APRIL

WELCOME TO THE NEST

In partnership with *PILA*, we operate 'The Nest', an early childhood development centre for children aged 2-7 and their parents. Every day, the children get a healthy snack and can play in a safe, calm and enriching environment, away from the dirt, violence and chaos of the camp.



JUNE

COMPUTER LAB LAUNCH

With the support of the *Zoe Education Trust* and *Help Refugees* over 100 visitors daily use the Samos Computer Lab to reach loved ones, watch videos or engage in online learning. It is an entirely community-run project, empowering asylum seekers working with us to provide education to the refugee community.

JULY

CHIOS HIGH SCHOOL

In partnership with the Greek NGO *METAdrasi*, we opened a centre for students aged 15-18 in July. We run classes in English, Greek, and offer creative, academic, vocational and project-based learning 6 days a week. This fills a critical gap in education services for teenagers living in Vial Camp.



ISLAND PRISONS

Situation updates from Samos and Chios

Conditions on the Aegean Islands are lethal. Two deadly fires broke out in camps this year: one in Lesbos killing two women and a child; the other in Samos, where parts of the camp burnt down in October. A lack of basic hygiene facilities and access to a clean water supply in Chios brought the outbreak of disease dangerously close. Tragically, two children were killed in motor vehicle accidents this year, on Lesbos and on Chios. The RICs (Reception and Identification Centres) continue to be dangerous, over-crowded and painful homes to over 40,000 asylum seekers.

The New Democracy government have not been able to respond humanely to increased arrivals. Asylum interview dates on the islands are now scheduled for as far away as 2022. The government's answer has been to plan for 'Closed Pre-Removal Detention Centres' on the islands and on the mainland, an attempt to lock up asylum seekers and control access to humanitarian aid and services. The islands' local communities violently reject these closed structures, and human rights organisations have warned against starting down a path of incarceration.

Island Demographics: Key Figures

23,128

Women and children living on the islands

15%

Percentage of children that are unaccompanied or separated

41,300

Total number of people living on the Aegean Islands



SAMOS REFUGEE CENTRES

In Samos, we continue to run three projects: the Banana House, The Nest and The Computer Lab. Throughout the year we have faced many challenges as the increased numbers of asylum seekers on the island have led to increased demand for services.

The Banana House

The Banana House is open 5 days a week from 10am to 7pm for students and open every Sunday for women in the morning and unaccompanied minors in the afternoon. Throughout the year, the space has been transformed by students into a vibrant, colourful and energetic place. Art, inside and outside of the space, has all been created by students and encapsulates the sense of ownership and homeliness that we want our students to feel.

In the last 2 months of 2019, the Banana House has added extra classes to increase capacity for students to learn English, French and German. All students are invited to use the space socially as well as for classes and there is food and hot drinks available for every student, every day. Students can shower in the centre, where soap, shampoo and clean towels are provided, as well as take up the opportunity to engage in optional projects such as art, movie projects or games.

Free WiFi and charger points are also available to students. This year the Banana House has held 3,570 English classes, alongside hundreds of other classes and workshops.

The Nest

Since opening its doors in April, in partnership with *The Pedagogical Institute of Los Angeles*, The Nest has welcomed 8,287 little visitors through its doors. Here we encourage children to play together in a safe and welcoming environment whilst parents have the chance to spend time with their children, to take some moments for themselves, or to attend language courses with our wonderful partners, *Glocal Roots*, at their neighbouring women's centre.

The Computer Lab

The Computer Lab, operated together with *Glocal Roots*, is open 6 days a week and run entirely by community volunteers who have experience working in the tech industry or running their own computer shops. Building on their experiences, The Lab offers two levels of computer literacy classes, a free internet cafe space, and the opportunity to join online learning courses. The space welcomes women each and every morning, offering an opportunity for women to hone their digital skills, or get started with courses, before our youth classes get underway in the afternoon.



Community Empowerment and Youth Leadership

Student empowerment, involvement in decision making and ownership of the programme have always been core values in Yugi, and this year our students have been given the chance to be increasingly involved in the delivery of our services.

Our Participant And Leader 'PAL' youth leadership programme allowed 15 of our students to access a traineeship programme in which they were provided coaching sessions in different aspects of youth work. Following this training period, they have joined as part of the Youth Centre staff, organising activities and supporting fellow participants. The enthusiasm, creativity and dedication of our PALs has helped to create an extremely positive environment in the Youth Centre where our students could rely on role models, providing better representation and a deeper understanding of their needs.

Non-formal Education Programme

Last year, our non-formal education programme underwent an exciting structural change. Our provision of non-formal education for teenagers 15 to 18 years old has been transferred from our former Learning Centre in Chios, to a school space administered by our partner *METAdrasi* right by the camp of Vial.

Thanks to our collaboration in this space, 100 teenagers from the camp are now able to access a programme in which they now also receive access to Greek classes (provided by *METAdrasi*), whilst still receiving the same mix of English classes and project activities run by our dedicated volunteer teams.

This evolution has allowed us to build bridges with other local actors and NGOs, and to provide Greek classes on a systematic basis to all our beneficiaries.

THE HALCYON DAYS PROJECT

A fond farewell

Despite withdrawing from *The Halcyon Days* project at the end of 2019, from September to December the centre has been a lively, thriving hub. 130 students re-registered into courses, and 73 new students enrolled. We introduced new Mathematics and Science workshops, in which several of our new students, who were maths and science teachers in their home countries, felt empowered to learn this new terminology in English. It reminded them of the knowledge they could command and they were able to teach less advanced students, as well as support our own volunteers. Three days a week, we stayed open until 18:30, to offer additional Maths and Science workshops to our younger students who needed the support with their school work.

High gym fees and the intimidating public eye prevent many refugee women from getting regular exercise. Our bi-weekly gym workshops helped our students keep healthy and fit, in a safe and private space. We made sure to have morning and evening sessions so anyone could attend. Our students reached out further into the local community, too, collaborating with members of the public to form a refugee women's music group. Our first full-time local volunteer joined us and we added three Greek classes to our schedule. All these developments fuelled our incredible end of term party and exhibition on the 7th of December.

The party was a heartfelt, joyous and proud goodbye. On the 14th of December the Halcyon Days Project closed until further notice. In October, Action for Education opted to withdraw from implementing the non-formal education pillar of the Halcyon Days. We thank our partners, *Action for Women*, for this incredible opportunity for collaboration, and we hope they can resume activities in the space as soon as possible. We thank all the supporters, donors and former volunteers who have made this space possible. We thank all women of the Halcyon Days for being such vital, spirited and kind human beings; working together was a privilege.



>4,900

Hours of Language
Classes

500

Hours of Childcare
provided to mothers

600

Registrations since
December 2018

1,248

Visits during the month
of November alone!

SPOTLIGHT ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Vathy Camp in Flames, Samos

On the 14th October 2019, following violence between different ethnic groups in Samos' Camp, a fire destroyed 700 tents, forcing thousands to the streets.

Moved to immediate action, *AFE* assisted with the emergency response and opened its doors to hundreds of women and children. We initiated and spearheaded an inter-NGO fundraising campaign, raising €29,000 to provide emergency relief.

Normal services were suspended as volunteers worked through the night to keep the area clean and safe for people fleeing the burning camp. We collaborated with other NGOs to prepare and distribute food, tents and sleeping bags. We accompanied people left on the streets, accompanying them to shelter.



Extreme weather in Vial Camp, Chios

On November 24th, an extreme weather front hit Chios, drenching the 6,000 residents of Vial camp. Tents and cardboard structures in which thousands of refugees were living, were destroyed. The camp flooded with mud and sewage.

AFE supported residents by working collaboratively with other NGOs to collect the camp's waste and reduce the flow of sewage into residential part of the camp.

FINANCES

Quarterly Breakdown and Annual Report

We pride ourselves on ensuring we make every penny go as far as possible. As such, we work within strict budget lines and believe in a transparent approach to financial expenditure and management. You can view our annual financial reports on our website at www.actionforeducation.co.uk.

Incoming Funds: Last Quarter

Between October and December 2019, we received a total of **€105,289** in donations, a large portion of which (32%) dedicated towards the emergency relief efforts following the Samos Fire in early October.

In total, **61.5%** came from **private donors** and **35%** through **grants**. **2.7%** was received via **corporate** donations.

Major Grants (October - December 2019):

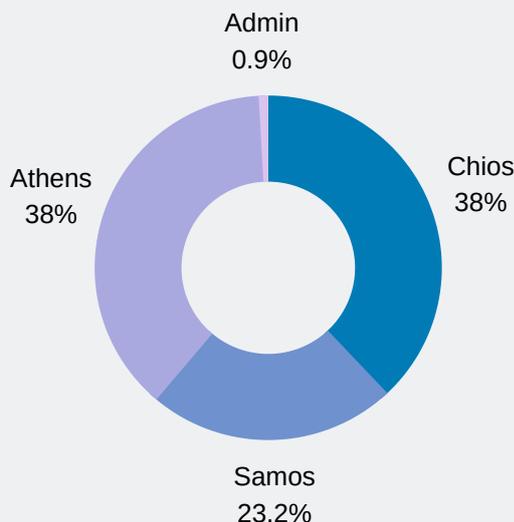
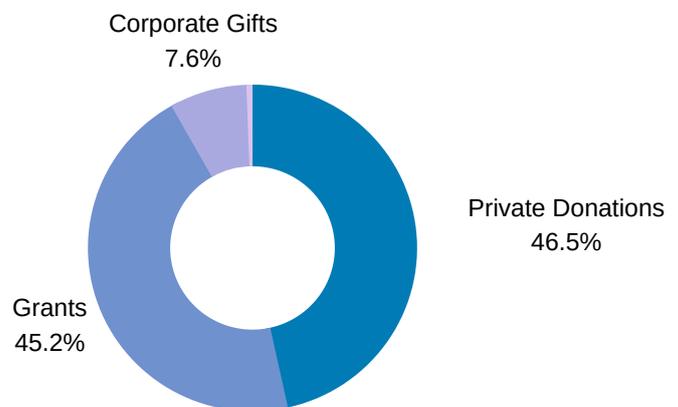
Help Refugees: €13,683

Be Aware and Share: €10,613

Captain Stefanos Foundation: €2,970

2019 Incoming Funds

Throughout 2019, we received **€262,688** in donations towards our work in Greece, **46%** of which came from private donations and **45%** from grants.



2019 Expenditure by location

Between our 3 project locations on Samos, Chios and Athens, our programmes cost a total of €230,958. Of this, €70,205 was spent on the Banana House, Nest and Computer Lab projects in Samos, €23,619 on our Halcyon Days project in Athens, and €113,824 on the Youth Centre and High School on Chios. €2,977 was spent on administrative, legal and accountancy costs.

Further Reports

For our full financial report, released early February 2020, please see our website or email us directly. Our 2 year (2018 - 2019) Impact Report is now available, also on our website.

WORKING TOGETHER

A thank you to our partners & supporters

Running our services across three locations requires the support and collaboration of many people. We would like to say thank you to all of our partners for their support and solidarity!



PRISM THE GIFT FUND

AFE UK's Collective Fund Administrator



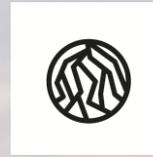
HUMANITY NOW

Funding Partner



THE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES

Implementing Partner, Samos



GLOCAL ROOTS

Implementing Partner, Samos



HELP REFUGEES

Funding Partner



ASSIST

Implementing Partner, Chios



DONATE 4 REFUGEES

Funding Partner



INDIGO VOLUNTEERS

Recruitment Partner



BE AWARE AND SHARE

Funding Partner



METADRASI

Implementing Partner, Chios



ACTION FOR WOMEN

Implementing Partner



ATTICA GROUP

Logistics Partner



ONE STOP ENGLISH

Education Partner



THEIR WORLD

Funding Partner



SCHOOL BUS PROJECT

Implementing Partner



ZOE EDUCATION TRUST

Funding Partner

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