End of Year Report: Our Thanks

Dear supporters,

As 2018 draws to an end, we’d like to take this opportunity to say thank you to our many friends and partners without whom our work would be impossible.

Firstly, our thanks to Be Aware and Share who have supported our continued work on Chios greatly this year. Action for Education took over the organisational management of the Chios project in early 2018 and it is thanks to their considerable financial support that this was made possible.

We’d also like to thank especially the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the Captain Stefanos Kollakis Foundation and Catch a Smile for their close partnerships with our work and huge support for what we are doing.

There are so many organisations we work with on a daily basis to whom we also wish to express our gratitude. These include Chios People’s Kitchen, who cook for our students every day, ensuring everyone receives a hot, nutritious meal. Thank you to Kostas and Jasper for their tireless work.

We also thank Action for Women, both for their cooperation with our programmes on Chios, but particularly in regards to our partnership on The Halcyon Days project in Athens. Their work with female asylum seekers is of paramount importance and we are very happy to be working closely with them to build the capacity and services they offer at their Women’s Centres.

On Chios, we work alongside other non-formal education actors: Metadrasí, the Imagine Centre and CESRT Language Centre. We thank them for their support and collaboration as we seek to meet the needs of as many asylum seekers as possible. Coordinating much of this is UNHCR, whose cooperation and confidence in our team ensures our services are as high a quality as possible.

Through our work in Greece, there are also businesses and individuals that show us considerable support. On Chios, thank you to Kahvaltí, The Grind, Blenders, Kubrick, Babble and Alios Tours. Further afield, thanks to Khalsa Aid and NCC Education for their generous provision of school stationary and craft materials. Also thanks to Book Aid International for their donations and the Rotary Club International for their support of project materials.

Thank you to all the volunteers and individual donors who have dedicated time and given money this year in the fight to uphold the right to education. Finally, thank you to all the participants and students who attend our centres.
Situation on the Islands

Summary

In these final months of 2018, the situation on the islands has deteriorated. Despite a high number of transfers to the mainland, a recent spike in arriving boats has returned numbers to previous levels. In the overcrowded camps of Vial (Chios), Vathy (Samos) and Moria (Lesvos), living conditions through winter are set to deteriorate further still.

In December alone, there have been over 300 arrivals onto Chios, bringing the annual number of arrivals this year to almost 3800. The slow rate of transfers to the mainland means the refugee population on Chios never matches the official capacity of 1300.

The situation is more shocking on other islands. Samos has received almost 1000 arrivals in December alone and a total of 8500 arrivals this year. This is despite the camp at Vathy having a smaller capacity that Vial Camp on Chios. On Samos, many more asylum seekers are forced to improvise shelters in the forests around the camp, exposed to severe weather, flooding and wild animals.

There are currently over 16,000 asylum seekers living on the Aegean islands. The rate of boat crossings has not diminished in 2018. Many boats are stopped daily by the Turkish Coast Guard, amounting to almost 40,000 attempted crossings by asylum seekers throughout the year.

In recent months, several thousand asylum seekers have been transferred into emergency accommodation on the mainland in preparation for winter weather, however, thousands are left to endure the bitter temperatures on the islands.

In October, formal schooling started for asylum seekers on Chios up to the age of 14. Non-formal education actors responded by reallocating age groups and demographics. On other islands, formal schooling has yet to begin. There remain no plans to integrate students over 14 living in the camps into formal education.
Best of 2018
Catch up on our standout moments this year

Working Groups
2018 saw the launch of our Working Groups, focusing on 3 key areas: social and emotional aspects of learning, community outreach and Chios Voices. Taking place fortnightly in a ‘more social setting’, these lively discussions have resulted in many brilliant new initiatives this year. Read more in QR February - April, pg.8; QR May - July, pg.8

World Refugee Day 2018
One of our favourite events this year was marking World Refugee Day in the central square of Chios. In collaboration with Doctors without Borders, as well as other local organisations, students attending our centres performed poetry and music, along with an exhibition of artwork from Chios Voices. Read more in QR May - July, pg.4

Vial Events
Throughout the summer months, we hosted a series of events on the football field in Vial Camp. Our first event comprised children’s festival stalls followed by an inter-Yugi group football competition. Our second event was a community talent show, featuring some amazing artists from the ages of 6 to 60! Read more in QR August - October, pg.4

Excursions
This year we’ve been fortunate enough to take Youth Centre and High School participants on excursions around the island of Chios. Our first set of trips took over 100 participants to the Mastic Museum, the medieval village of Pyrgi and to the famous volcanic Black Beach. Later in the summer, we were ably guided by Alios Tours on an excursion to the caves at Olympi, another local Mastic village and finally to Agia Dynami beach. Read more in QR May - July, pg.4; QR August - October, pg.4

Teacher Training Course
This year we’ve launched our Teacher Training course, a programme allowing high-level students to develop teaching skills and acquire vocational training in a classroom setting. We’ve run two successful courses this year, in July and November, benefitting 17 individuals. Read more in QR May - July, pg.5; QR November - December, pg.7
FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN
The reasons behind our recent fundraising efforts

This Autumn, our teams in Greece were faced with a dilemma. For many months, we’d been awaiting the introduction of a government-run schools programme, ‘DYEP’, that would open classrooms for refugee children. This had been long in coming.

By mid-October, news finally came that the programme would start. Children up to the age of 14 living in Vial Camp began attending Greek schools in separate afternoon classes from 2pm to 6pm. There remain great challenges that local authorities must resolve around capacity, teacher availability, transport and timely registration, but it is a great step forward towards integration into state-run services.

Despite this positive development, there remains no plan to integrate teenagers and youth over 14. This effectively means that hundreds of asylum seekers with a right to education - with a right to make up for lost years of schooling - remain reliant on our services as non-formal education actors.

Our Youth Centre and Learning Centre remain essential in filling this gap, providing quality lessons, sensitive curricula and a safe, welcoming environment outside the camp.

With this mandate, we prepared to launch our fundraising campaign over November and December, to secure not just our programmes on Chios, but also our continued work in Athens. What is more, we wanted to look further afield, to re-evaluate the areas in which we work to ensure the greatest need is being met.

This meant re-analysing our spending in Chios and finding new ways of operating on less money than ever before. We’ve successfully achieved this and are now able to stretch our financial resources further and longer.

Meanwhile, we launched a big fundraising campaign that involved every single person in our volunteer teams in Greece. Through an inspiring group effort that involved many late night meetings, hackathons, and local and international events, we’ve been truly overwhelmed by the support from all corners of the globe, publicly fundraising just over £30,000.

Through talks and workshops at schools, raffle events, coffee mornings, hilarious personal fundraisers, birthday and seasonal gift-giving, pancake-making, bicycling, marathon-running, grant-giving and unsolicited, generous offers of support, together we’ve made sure that our education projects can continue next year.

The going has been tough, tiring and time-consuming, but our next months are secured. We still need a lot more to cover next year’s costs, but are confident that with the support of so many, we can reach our target.

Thank you to everyone who has stood with us in solidarity during this time.
Refugee Education Chios
An update from our projects

Over the last two months on Chios, the ‘High School’ and Youth Centre have continued providing the consistency and quality of service that hundreds of refugee youth appreciate every week.

As conditions have worsened and bad weather set in, the warmth of our spaces becomes all the more essential. The hot drinks we provide and heated classrooms are relief from ill-equipped tents and containers in the camp.

HIGH SCHOOL

In the High School, we opened a new group to replace our previous 12 - 14 year old group. After a period of trialing different models, we settled on running a women’s only group on Monday and Friday morning to offer a female-only space twice a week.

This ensures those unable to attend mixed classrooms have a dedicated time to attend school. Those women already attending other groups are given the option of accessing this group additionally to supplement their existing timetable.

On Friday mornings, we are running an informal drop-in morning for all students to access technology classes, music lessons and other extracurricular activities.

Our other school groups have many new faces after a series of major transfers of students to the mainland. This affected our numbers in mid-November, but after continuous registration, all groups have since reached capacity once again.

Did you know?
€30 pays for Youth Centre participants to cook a hot meal in our kitchen.
actionforeducation.co.uk/donate
YOUTH CENTRE

In the Youth Centre, groups discussed themes of love, sexuality and identity throughout November, exploring and sharing ideas in our daily assemblies. In December, our topic of the month became ‘Winter Festivals’, an opportunity to discuss celebrations such as Hanukkah and Christmas, as well as a chance to cook seasonal dishes and participate in craft projects.

TEACHER TRAINING

Throughout November, we ran our second teacher training programme. After revising the programme following an initial course in July, we rolled out a longer, less intensive course for 9 participants. These participants, with intermediate-advanced levels of English, benefited from workshops delivered by our experienced teacher team, but also from the peer-to-peer support of others. With a focus on personal reflection, classroom observations and hands-on practices, this newly graduated cohort of student-teachers is already in the classroom teaching and supporting with our language lessons.

FUNDRAISING

Outside the institutions, our teams have been involved in pushing our fundraising campaign locally, running coffee events and raffle nights at local establishments. Recent volunteers have also produced a series of ‘made in Chios’ products to raise money for the campaign. These include a newly-printed book of work from Chios Voices, a t-shirt and set of greetings cards.

All in all, it’s been a very busy two months as strategic decision making and a fundraising campaign have taken every spare moment of time!

TEAM NOTES

Thank you to all the volunteers who have worked with us over the past months. It’s been a period of some particularly varied work.

In other news, we’re very happy to announce that Phoebe Blades and Antoine Guittin will be taking over as coordinators from January on Chios.

Finally, our Chios project has a new email address where you can message them directly: chios@actionforeducation.co.uk.
The Halcyon Days Centre
An update from Athens

In summer 2018, Action for Education opened the educational element of the Halcyon Days project in Athens. The Halcyon Days Project is the fruit of a partnership between Action for Education and Action for Women, as we have teamed up together to provide a woman-only space that caters directly to the needs of female asylum seekers here in Athens, Greece.

It is a sanctuary for learning that creates social connections and empowers women in building essential skills for further education and employment.

Our participants also have access to a wide array of services implemented by our partners Action for Women including legal, psychological services as well as a livelihood scheme.

Action for Education leads the education arm of the project. Since the opening, our non formal education programme has registered over 120 women aged 14 years and above for computer, Greek and various levels of English classes, running five days a week.

Our committed team of coordinators and trained ESL teachers create learning pathways sensitive to individual needs. In particular, we provide morning childcare so as to give mothers the opportunity to attend class.

After only a few months in operation, we have already begun to see our students learn and better their lives and those of their families. In the new year, the Halcyon Days Centre will continue to support girls to rebuild their lives, to foster previous skills and develop new ones all while breaking down gender barriers.

Did you know?
€40 pays for hot drinks for all students in the Youth Centre and school
actionforeducation.co.uk/donate
Our Year In Numbers

Summary of Quantitative Data

Over the past 12 months we have registered a total of **741 new participants** in Chios and **180 new participants** in Athens.

Over the past 12 months we have registered a total of **741 new participants** across both institutions in Chios. In the past two months alone, we’ve registered 76 new participants.

In our Youth Centre, we’ve provided over 11,000 hot meals, cooked by participants every session. There have been 20,868 visits to our centres on Chios, 11,712 to the High School and 9,156 to the Youth Centre.

In Athens, since opening, we have registered 180 new participants for the programme. There are currently 48 women on the waiting list for different reasons.

The age of participants ranges from 13 - 70 and the average age of participants is 34. A clear majority of participants come from Afghanistan though because people present the information based on what is written on their legal documents there are some nationalities underrepresented e.g. Kurdish.

- **23,702** visits to our centres in Chios and Athens (January - December 2018)
- **4992** hours of English lessons given (January - December 2018)
- **1021** new participants registered throughout 2018
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