

**A SHORT GUIDE TO
ENVIRONMENTAL
VOLUNTEERING**

**AEGEAN ISLANDS
2019/2020**



INTRODUCTION

Recognising the impact of climate change on global displacement

It is common to talk about the conflict and violence that drive asylum seekers to seek safe passage to other countries. The Syrian Civil War is an example. This man-made, political and humanitarian catastrophe has displaced over 12 million people.

Yet worldwide, the proportion of people displaced by extreme weather events outweighs those displaced by conflict and violence. A report from 2009 by IOM found that in the previous year, 20 million people were displaced due to climatic events, versus 4.6 million due to conflict.

As humans continue to degrade and destroy our planet's natural resources, the impact of climate change on migration is only set to increase. Floods, droughts, rising sea levels, storms and heatwaves are all set to displace millions more. As these millions - possibly billions - of people are forced to migrate away from the most vulnerable locations, the likelihood of conflict increases too.

With estimates for the number of climate refugees by 2050 somewhere between 200 million and 1 billion, a report published in 2017 has already found a direct correlation between rising global temperatures and migration.

Investigating the impact of weather-shocks on a global scale as a cause for seeking asylum in the EU between 2000 and 2014, the report evidenced that increasing temperatures drive more people to leave their homes. Warming of 2.6C to 4.8C could see an additionally 660,000 asylum seekers coming to Europe by 2100.

As volunteers, we stand in solidarity with refugees. We are here to provide basic services and fill gaps. We offer a smile and try to show our common humanity. We openly profess a politics of equality and of global, human care.

But with clear links between climate change and displacement, it is also our responsibility to acknowledge the impact our lives have on the environment, to live responsibly as stewards of our planet.

Of course, addressing climate change goes beyond the small actions this resource suggests. The radical changes our world needs requires action to be taken on all levels of society.

But this resource is a short guide to make grassroots volunteering more sustainable. It helps to protect the world that protects us. It seeks to offer practical, sensible ways of embedding greater climate consciousness into volunteering with refugee communities in Greece.

FLIGHT-FREE TRAVEL

Getting to Greece with reduced CO2 emissions

When just **one short-haul flight** from Athens to Samos emits **more carbon than the total annual emissions of an average person from Somalia** or Uganda, finding an alternative to flying is an easy way to greatly reduce your carbon footprint.
(And if you really can't - at least **carbon compensate** your flight!)

ROUTE OVERVIEW

Italy (any port) - Patras (Greece) - Athens - Samos

Once you are in Italy (accessible by train and coach from across Europe) you have different choices for ports to take the ferry to Greece. Take whichever is the closest to you. From Italy, catch a ferry that goes to Patras and a coach or train from Patras to Athens.

ITALY TO GREECE

Ancona to Patras

There are ferries leaving from Ancona to Patras from Thursdays to Sundays (1-2 ferries). The ferry leaves on Thursdays at 13:30, all other days at 16:30. The duration of the ferry is about 25 hours.

Bari to Patras

There are ferries leaving every day from Bari to Patras until the end of December. In January and February, the ferries leave Thursdays to Mondays at 19.30.

Venice to Patras

Ferries from Venice to Patras leave on Wednesdays and Sundays at 12.00.

A one-way ticket costs between €60 and €80 (depending on the season and length of journey). If possible, buy your tickets in a ticket shop at the port rather than online - if you're lucky, it'll be cheaper!



TRAVEL IN GREECE

Patras to Athens

From Patras, take the bus to Athens. The bus station is a 20 minute-walk from the port - simply take a left when you exit the port. The buses from Patras leave almost every hour. A one-way ticket costs €20. The bus only takes 2.5 hours and on top of it, it's a beautiful ride across the Corinth canal! Enjoy the beautiful landscapes of Greece!

Athens to the Islands

Once you arrive in Athens, take the Metro (M1) to get to the port. Jump on the ferry, sleep, and you'll arrive in the Aegean! Ferry times from Athens (Piraeus) to the islands vary depending on the seasons. In summer, there's at least one every day, unless adverse weather delays the ferry's departure. If it doesn't leave on time, "*debirazi*"(1), just spend your day in Athens! It's a beautiful city.

Samos: there are two ports in Samos. One is Vathy, that's where all the NGOs are and where you're going to volunteer, and there is Karlovasi (where no one is!). But especially in winter it's sometimes easier to find a ferry to Karlovasi rather than Vathy. From Karlovasi you can catch a bus or someone may be able to pick you up.

NOTES

(1) You just learnt a Greek word - *debirazi* = don't worry

(2) Remember! We are all here for the same reason: to help people. By doing this trip you help prevent more people having to flee their homes because of climate change. Take a friend with you to make this trip more fun.

(3) Remember to take a thick jumper and maybe a blanket with you on the ferry, it gets very cold - even in summer.

(4) These ferry times are subject to change. Please double check before travelling.

USEFUL LINKS

Ferry and Coach Websites

www.go-ferry.com
www.directferries.gr
www.flixbus.com
www.blablabus.com
www.patrasinfo.com

Facebook Groups (join!)

Information Point for Volunteers on Samos
Information Point for Greece Volunteers



WHEN IN GREECE...

10 easy ways to reduce your ecological footprint

Living and working on a grassroots project often involves **making a lot of changes** to your usual daily life. Make sure it's also an opportunity to **practise good environmental habits**. Here's our 10 top suggestions for individuals and NGOs!

FOR INDIVIDUALS

1 LOCAL MARKETS

Greece has an amazing range of foods, often available at local markets. With seasonal fruit and veg sold on the streets from vans, this is a perfect way to cut down on food milage, plastic packaging AND to support local producers.

2 SHOP ORGANIC, BIO & FAIRTRADE

Sometimes supermarkets are unavoidable. Greece has a number of big supermarket chains - one favourite is *AB Vassilopoulos* supermarket. They have a brilliant section of vegen alternatives, as well as a massive 'bio' and fairtrade range.

3 TAKE A KEEP CUP

Anyone who's spent time in Greece knows just how popular the take-away coffee is. Whether it's a *freddo espresso* or a warming *hot chocolate*, we recommend always bringing a reusable cup. A simple jam jar will suffice.

4 SAY 'NO!' TO PLASTIC BAGS!

Shops in Greece love to give you a plastic bag. With everything. Despite a recent law forcing larger stores to charge 4 cents for bags, some shops keep handing them out to customers. Join us in saying 'No!' to plastic bags!

5 LEAVING SO SOON?

If you haven't already planned your departure, then make sure that when you do you consider taking the ferry. Sail past the beautiful Greek islands, relax and reflect on your time, and reduce your carbon footprint too.

FOR ORGANISATIONS AND NGOS

6

EMPTY THAT BIN!

Welcoming visitors into centres and clinics also means producing lots of waste. But let's not make it worse than it needs be. Tell your team not to chuck out the bin bags every time they take out the trash. Re-use them instead! It'll save money too!

7

RECYCLING

All the island have pretty good recycling systems in place. Make sure there's a clear system in your centre or project. If not, why not set one up? It's a great tool for education too - and you can get everyone involved.

8

SET UP A WORKING GROUP

Is your team discussing the environmental impact of their operations? If not, why not set up a Sustainability or Environmental Working Group and invite any volunteers to come along. A perfect space for brainstorming creative ideas, generating resources and sharing best practices.

9

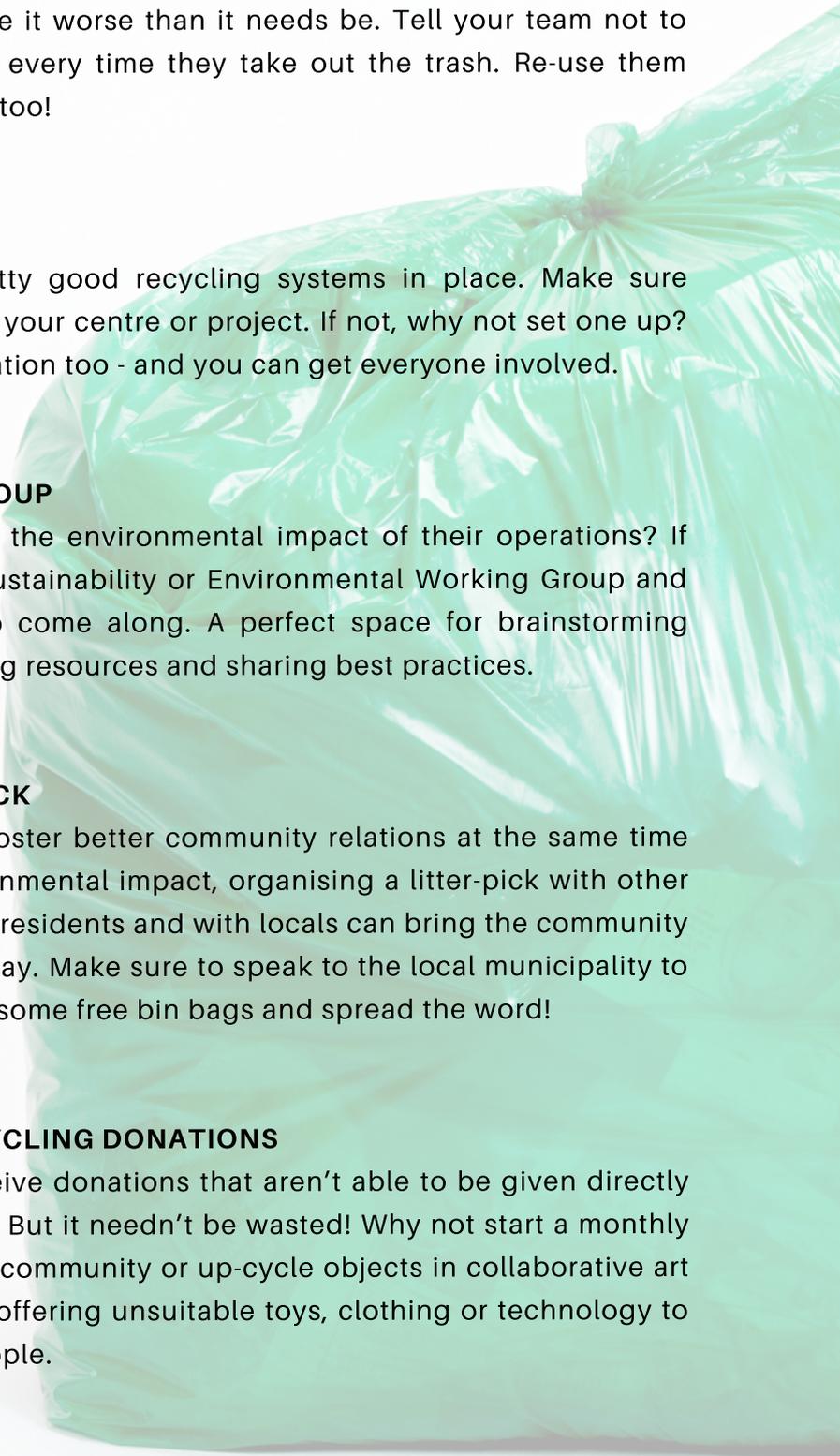
ORGANISE A LITTER-PICK

A great opportunity to foster better community relations at the same time as having a great environmental impact, organising a litter-pick with other organisations, the camp residents and with locals can bring the community together in a powerful way. Make sure to speak to the local municipality to receive permission, get some free bin bags and spread the word!

10

UP-CYCLING AND RECYCLING DONATIONS

Many organisations receive donations that aren't able to be given directly to refugee communities. But it needn't be wasted! Why not start a monthly flea market for the local community or up-cycle objects in collaborative art projects? Also consider offering unsuitable toys, clothing or technology to volunteers and local people.



LEARNING RESOURCES

Reports, articles and documentaries

MEDIA LIST

Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Assessing the Evidence

ed. Laczko & Aghazarm, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2019

https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migration_and_environment.pdf

'Asylum applications respond to temperature fluctuations'

Missirian & Schlenker, *Science* (journal), December 2017

<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/358/6370/1610.full.pdf>

'Devastating climate change could lead to 1m migrants a year entering EU by 2100'

Fiona Harvey, *The Guardian*, December 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/dec/21/devastating-climate-change-could-see-one-million-migrants-a-year-entering-eu-by-2100>

'How your flight emits as much CO2 as many people do in a year'

Niko Kommenda, *The Guardian*, July 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2019/jul/19/carbon-calculator-how-taking-one-flight-emits-as-much-as-many-people-do-in-a-year>

Human Flow

Ai Weiwei, *Documentary*, October 2017

www.humanflow.film

SOMETHING TO ADD?

If you want to add something to this resource, feel free to get in touch. Email: info@actionforeducation.co.uk

