Action for Education
Quarterly Report
February - April 2018
Overview of the project

Dear Supporters,

Welcome to our first quarterly report of 2018, and what an exciting first part of the year it has been. We have welcomed many new teenagers and young adults into our school and youth centre, furthered our collaboration with other educational actors on the island and strived to develop stronger ties with the local community.

The first quarter of 2018 witnessed an increase in boat arrivals in the Aegean. In April alone 553 people arrived onto Chios Island making an official total of 1707 people in Chios split across Vial Reception & Identification Centre (RIC) and apartments. Subsequently, our services have been in huge demand and we are constantly registering new people to join both our learning centre and youth centre. In fact, over the past 4 months we have registered a total of 316 new participants including 75 women across both institutions and age groups. Not least to say, it has been a busy start to the year.

A particular highlight of this quarter has been the different collaborations we have developed with the local community. These have included bread making workshops with our local bread supplier, introductory lessons to Greek cuisine run by local chefs and excursions to museums to explore and understand the history of the Island. Such opportunities have proved to be important in building engagement with the local and wider community.

This all of course would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of our incredibly hard working volunteer team. Over the last three months, we have had 30 volunteers join us from over 10 different countries, all committed to providing quality educational, cultural and social non-formal education to those fleeing war and persecution.

As we enter the second quarter of this year, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our supporters who continue to stand by us and champion our vision and commitment to providing a safe space and essential education to refugee children and young adults arriving into Europe.

Best wishes,
The Action For Education Coordination Team
Update from the Island

Summary

In comparison with the same period last year, boat arrivals in the Aegean are up 33% and the number of people arriving in April was up 67.6%.

Whilst the majority of people have landed on Lesvos, Chios has also seen a sharp increase in the number of people arriving over the last months; in April alone 553 people arrived making an official total of 1707 people in Chios split across Vial and apartments. Transfers to the mainland continue, though the total population is in net increase.

The conditions on the island therefore continue to be overcrowded and of significant concern considering the official capacity of Vial remains at approximately 900. Attempts to expand the facilities of this RIC have been delayed and the installation of additional containers, which are supposed to relieve some pressure on the RIC and ensure that all persons in Vial have semi-structured accommodation, remains on hold. As a result, many of the new arrivals have been placed in already overcrowded containers or have been forced to sleep in makeshift shelters.

Some families and vulnerable persons continue to live in UNHCR-managed apartments, and those of school-age continue to be registered to attend local Greek schools, albeit with delays based on obtaining vaccination records and the organisation of transportation to/from school. However, this positive trend continues and the total number of students enrolled in the Greek system is on the rise.
Developing stronger ties with the local community

Efforts to develop our community outreach strategies have had successful results over the past quarter. Acknowledging the value of creating long-term relationships and fostering local partnerships and collaborations has led to a number of exciting opportunities.

In March, we set up a Working Group of volunteers invested in developing these links further. Some of the projects we have carried out in collaboration with locals have included:

- **Bread-baking workshops offered by Yiannis** — bread supplier to our school and Youth Centre, and who has offered workshops in typical Chios bread products. These sessions have been greatly valued by participants at the Youth Centre.

- **Greek Cooking Courses offered by Καφενές**. These sessions gave Youth Centre participants the opportunity of learning to cook typical Greek dishes, developing a range of culinary skills and sharing these with other participants in their youth centre group.

- **An Open Evening on 21st April 2018** gave the opportunity to invite other actors, neighbours and the island’s population to visit and learn about our project. A well-attended event, it was also a great opportunity to show off our new High School building.

- **Excursions and Museum trips**. We’ve organised and run a considerable number of trips to local museums and galleries over the past months. These opportunities to learn about the history and culture of Chios are also important ways of remaining visible and creating meaningful opportunities to engage with and work alongside the local community.
'Beyond ESL'
An Update from the High School

REGISTRATION
Joining our High School begins long before stepping inside the school. We’re proud to have established a consistent, collaborative and respected registration procedure that prioritises equal, simple and dignified access to our institutions. With multi-lingual publicity, established referral pathways and the promise of smiling and welcoming volunteers, we ensure students' first interaction with our project is always positive.

ESL PROGRAMME
English is at the heart of our High School, stemming from the motivation and learning aims of our students. We run English lessons at 5 levels, catering to a range of abilities and backgrounds, employing digital tools alongside traditional classroom methods. Central to our methodology is functional language acquisition and the creation of safe, engaging classrooms that break down barriers to education for vulnerable demographics.

PROJECTS
As always, we compliment our daily ESL timetable with 1 hour of project-based learning, in which students are empowered to choose between a number of creative, academic and linguistic options. Over the months, volunteers and students have developed and delivered projects including salsa dancing, time-management, film-editing, German, chess, journalism, life-drawing, ukulele, geography and many more!

NEW SCHOOL BUILDING
In February, we moved into our new High School building. Decorated and prepared thanks to the effort and creativity of many volunteers, we’ve opened a modern, inviting and practical space for our classes. With 6 individualised classrooms, a relaxed social room, tech room and kitchen, it’s a perfect space to optimise our learning goals and curricula.
A safe space for teenagers and young adults
An Update from the Youth Centre

THE YOUTH CENTRE SPACES

The Youth Centre is an important and much loved space in the hearts of its participants and volunteers. Over the past quarter, we’ve adopted a registration policy that ensures an equal mix of nationalities, ages, backgrounds and characters across all our groups.

Through use of the daily structure and differentiated spaces, we’ve created opportunities for continual social and emotional development; through volunteer and youth-led assemblies, team-building games, cookery and a host of projects that invite participants to engage in skill-building, the past months have seen the Youth Centre flourish with activity.

In one very clear way, the Youth Centre has changed, as different groups have taken ownership of different wall spaces, repainting them to create more air and brightness, before adding a whole array of their own wall murals and designs.

TOPIC OF THE MONTH

This quarter we began with the topic “Together Against Violence”. We had discussions about different types of violence, gender roles in society and engaged the students to reflect and challenge themselves. This topic was followed by “Health” which our teenagers picked themselves and kept for two months. Trying to create more awareness around the importance of nutrition, we spent many assemblies discussing how to practically implement it into our cooking and our daily lives.

Volunteers spend a considerable time planning the assemblies to ensure they are engaging, fun and practical. For example, creating food pyramids, food tastings, guessing how much sugar is in drinks they consume etc. Through practical and visual assemblies, we are able to deliver the learning objective regardless of the language level.
Our quarter in numbers
Summary of Quantitative Data

Over the past 4 months we have registered a total of 316 new participants across our High School and Youth Centre.

REGISTRATION
Over the past 4 months we have registered a total of 316 new participants including 75 women across both institutions and age groups. We continue to try to maximise the number of days our participants can access our services by encouraging them to attend both our Youth Centre and High School. As such, many of our participants access non-formal education five times per week.

ATTENDANCE
In the High School we have observed an increase in regularity of attendance matched by an increase in the maximum daily attendance. In the Youth Centre we operated at maximum capacity throughout February and March and had over 25 people in one session and on average at least 70% of all registered participants attend their session each day.

In one week we have up to 223 people attending a minimum of one session in the High School and/or Youth Centre.
Programme Developments

Chios Voices

Chios Voices is our online creative platform for students. It publishes art, writing, music and reports from students and voices associated with our projects.

The past quarter has marked several important development for Chios Voices. In February, we celebrated its 1st birthday with the website’s relocation to its own dedicated site: www.chiosvoices.com. In the High School and Youth Centre, we’ve continued inviting and publishing creative work, and continued building links with international translators and artists.

Working Groups

Over the past quarter, we’ve established three volunteer-led working groups, aiming to add value and impact to the continuing development of the project:

- **Chios Voices Network** - This Working Group meets to discuss our online platform and develop our creative and educational network. We’ve explored ways of developing a student-led and edited platform, set up a ‘Wider Voices’ channel that invites a bigger community to contribute, and began plans for our ‘Chios Voices for Schools’ initiative. More information can be found on the website!

- **Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning** - Our SEAL Working Group meets to strengthen the non-formal aspects of our education programme. Through research, discussion and implementation of new systems, we’re making important changes to our approaches in the High School and Youth Centre.

- **Community Outreach** - Meeting fortnightly, this group establishes links with the local community, organises events, trips and opportunities for collective growth.

Partners

- **Be Aware and Share** Funding Partner
- **Action from Switzerland** Local Partner
- **Prism: The Gift Fund** Charity Partner
- **NCC Education** Education Partner
- **OneStopEnglish** ESL Partner
- **ESL Library** ESL Partner
- **MathsWatch** Education Partner

We continue to thank our partners for the valuable support they provide and their commitment to building bridges into education.

If you would like to discuss a possible partnership with us, please email our team.
Acknowledgements

Nicholas Millet
Martha Glover-Short
Solange Wuersten
Nuala Burton
Jacob Warn

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