

# Action for Education

Quarterly Report  
July - September 2019

**ACTION FOR  
EDUCATION**

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[www.actionforeducation.co.uk/about](http://www.actionforeducation.co.uk/about)

# COLLABORATION IS THE FUTURE

## Introduction to the report

Between July and September, **over 35,000** people arrived in Greece - the highest number of arrivals since 2015. NGOs across the Greek Islands and the Mainland struggle together, in collaboration, to provide basic services to those seeking asylum. When refugees flee across the Aegean sea, they reach Greece and are immediately **confined**: their travel off the Aegean islands is **prohibited** and they must remain on the islands until their case is decided. Every single camp in the Aegean is **extremely over-capacity**; there are people sleeping under tarpaulins, under the stars, under the rain. Record high temperatures across Europe also reached Greece, where the lack of shelter and basic services results in abysmal conditions for asylum seekers. The lack of healthcare compounds this problem and has led to a **mental** and **physical** health crisis in the Aegean. Together with our students and with our community volunteers, we look this challenge in the eye.

Through experience, *Action for Education* has found that **learning** and **collaboration** are the most effective means of improving conditions for everyone. How we all respond to Greece's challenges will decide the future of Europe. We can choose to give up, to see that there is no solution because the problem is the policy. We can surrender to the **hostile environment** - which is its end goal. Or we can take a deep breath, we can look side to side at each other, and we can move forward - together - and be the Europe we want to see. We are Europe - we define it, and we embody it. We will live in the name of its values - of equality, of human rights, of freedom and of self expression and growth - and we will be there to show those who come to Europe seeking **freedom** and **safety** that those things are still there for them, even if that's only in our spaces.

As arrivals have increased, as the new Greek government tightens the noose around asylum seekers and the NGOs who work with them, *Action for Education* has grown in defiance. We now operate in **three locations**, across **six centres**, providing basic and non-formal education services to over 700 people. With teams of integrated **community** and **international** volunteers, numbering over 50, we are a **united front** that works every day, not just to teach English, but to build a culture of togetherness, cooperation, collaboration and acceptance. Support our work: **a peaceful future depends on it.**

# SITUATION ON THE ISLANDS

Despite last winter's transfers from the islands to the mainland, the summer saw a drastic rise in arrivals, with 10, 551 in September alone. Read that figure again. Its is staggering.

According to the Ministry of Citizen Protection - there are currently 3,765 asylum seekers on Chios island, and 6,040 on Samos island, leaving Samos' Vathy camp at over 900% over capacity.

## CHIOS

Between July and September, the population of asylum seekers on Chios island nearly doubled reaching 4000 by the end of September. The vast majority live in Vial camp, which has capacity for only 1,014 persons.

Over the last 2 years the number of asylum seekers on Chios was always far over camp capacity, but still stable. Increases over the summer mean that Chios can now stand shoulder to shoulder with Samos and Lesbos as a trap for the vulnerable, an open sore on the face of Europe.

Life in Vial camp is dire- the water supply of the camp (partially filled and provided by grassroots NGOs) is not nearly enough to maintain safe and healthy hygiene standards. Over two thirds of the people living there do not have access to decent shelter. They live in tents, in cardboard structures. These flood in the rain; they wash away. There is no transport between the city and the camp - except those busses provided by grassroots NGOs (including Action for Education). This means there is no way to reach a hospital.

These conditions deprive people of the basic human rights to life, safety and dignity. These conditions violate European values; they destroy lives.

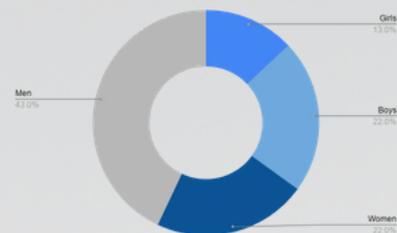
**SAMOS** Vathy camp sits on the slope of a hill, nestled - out of sight - in the trees surrounding Vathy town. Almost all of its residents live in makeshift shelters on the side of the hills. Over the summer, they contended with the wildlife, with the heat. The first September rains brought a new adversary: winter is coming, and every time the heavy rains come, the shelters wash away and people are left sleeping in the streets.

Within the camp, water provision is limited, bringing down hygiene - and therefore health - standards. Grassroots NGOs have begun clean water distribution, filling another dangerous gap left by the state.

Asylum interview dates on the island can be as far away as 2022, meaning people will have to live in these conditions for over two years.

# 36,582

Number of arrivals on the Aegean Islands since January 2019



Demographic breakdown of populations on the Aegean Islands.

The Samos camp is

# 900% overcapacity



Laura, Samos volunteer, with some of the children at the Nest.

# SITUATION IN ATHENS

Since the election of the New Democracy (Nea Dimokratia) government, we have seen a change in the stance towards refugees. The Asylum Service is no longer the responsibility of the Ministry of Migration. All matters relating to asylum are now under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Citizen Protection: the Police. Every squat in the city housing refugees has been violently evicted by police and the people living inside have either been: taken into detention and forced to apply for asylum; been deported back to their countries; made homeless in the streets; been bussed to overcrowded refugee camps with inadequate food and shelter.

The state has claimed that these evictions are an attempt to 'clean up' the Exarchia neighbourhood of Athens, infamous for anarchist anti-state activity, and to prevent organised crime and the abuse of illegal substances. However, these claims are rhetorical, used to obscure the intentional 'hostile environment' policy that Nea Dimokratia pursues: the vast majority of those evicted were families with young children, now forced out of the city into distant enclaves from which they cannot reach basic education, legal or health services, nor advocate for their rights. They have been marginalised, physically and politically, by this violent state policy.

In addition to the eviction of informal refugee squats, evictions from the UNHCR funded ESTIA housing programme continue. Cash cards - the only source on income for refugees who are denied the right, or do not have capacity, to work - are being cut on a rolling basis, and the alternative HELIOS programme functions in name only. The situation on the ground in Athens is critical - the numbers of homeless are increasing, the police presence is heavy handed, advocates, activist and members of the refugee community are being arrested. The winter is coming.

**Transfers from the islands coming in have nowhere to go - mainland camps are at capacity, people are living in squalor, in tents outside. A new camp has 'opened' in Corythos, but the people live there without proper food or shelter, and these conditions drive them back to the streets of Athens. Breaking point is coming. Winter is coming. People have nowhere to turn.**

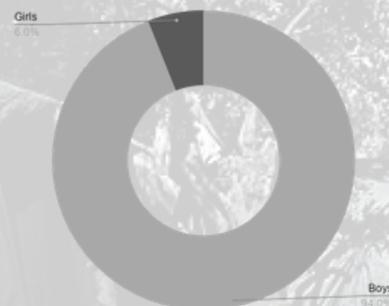
## SPOTLIGHT: UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

"Currently only 26% of UAC are in long term care... A significant number of UAC (27%) are homeless or living in informal/insecure housing"

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),  
9th August 2019.

# 3,868

The number of unaccompanied or separated children seeking international assistance in Greece.



Demographic breakdown of unaccompanied children: 94% boys and 6% girls.

# REFUGEE EDUCATION CHIOS

## An update from our projects

Services in Chios are at a critical point. The increased arrivals and lack of services on the island pose a serious threat to vulnerable people. The lack of education services, and safe spaces force young people into even more vulnerable positions. They turn to survival sex, to crime, to substance abuse. Our projects on Chios target 14-22 year olds, giving them places to escape to, places to grow from, places to have hope.

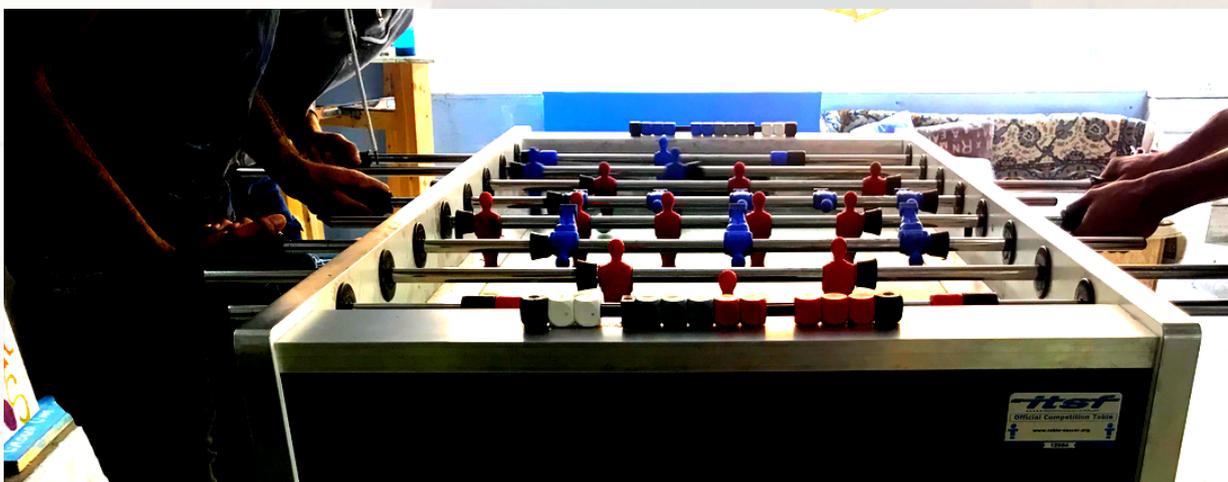
### LIMITED ACCESS; INCREASING HARDSHIP

Refugee Education Chios began providing non-formal education services over 3 years ago, for 6 - 22 year olds. Services for 6 - 14 year olds were suspended, with the promise that they would be enrolled in formal Greek schools, but by the end of September 2019, children who are legally eligible to attend Greek schools have not been enrolled. The authorities have yet to comment on the educational situation in Chios.

### INFORMAL EDUCATION AS A SOLUTION

This quarter has seen successful continuation of our partnership with the Greek NGO METAdrasi. In June we re-launched AFE's non-formal education programme for 15-18 year olds in METAdrasi's education centre and our combined efforts ensure that they have a comprehensive and safe space. Our combined efforts ensure that around 80 participants are given access to a schooling programme which includes Greek lessons, English lessons and an educational project, covering subjects like mathematics, geography, science etc. We have seen many successes since the beginning of the programme. Engagement is very high and consistent - participants place a high value on the space and on their education and they progress quickly through the levels.

The space offers not only education but safety, structure and fun and our students are clearly thriving in this environment. Our biggest challenge comes from the constantly rising numbers in Vial, which have lead to a drastic increase in registrations - our current waiting list has over 65 names and counting. With such a spike in numbers, we are now only catering for a small minority of our target demographic. In the challenging coming months we will strive alongside our partner METAdrasi to expand our reach to enable not the minority, but the majority, access to this vital service.



## YOUTH CENTRE UPDATE

Due to high numbers of arrivals over the summer, **the youth centre reached full capacity** and our groups have welcomed many new students into a space which helps them cope with the increasingly difficult conditions on Chios and in Vial camp. With such high turnover, on-boarding new members is a constant challenge, but we work together with our community volunteers to help them embrace the values of Jugi, and ensure smooth running for all of our beneficiaries. To strengthen the mottos and values of our youth centre - respect, tolerance, safety, freedom of choice and self worth - we have worked out projects with our students around three main topics for the months of July, August and September.

### TOPICS OF THE MONTH

#### Around the World

In July, our beneficiaries were given the chance to find out about new cultures and teach us about their own through various initiatives around art, food, sport and many others.

#### Teach Me

Throughout August, we put a strong emphasis on knowledge, learning and teaching soft skills. We were amazed by our participants' thirst for knowledge: not only did they want to learn something from every discipline, but they also hunger to teach others what they know.

#### Community

The values of community have always been central in Jugi. We share meals, moments of conviviality, do activities together. Yet, we sometimes need to define together what we expect from a community, each other and our environment, and this has been our priority in September.



## CHIOS KEY FIGURES

# 3136

Number of individual visits to Jugi between July and September

# 56%

Increased number of visits compared to the previous quarter

# 200

Newly registered participants in Jugi



## Vist from Michelin star chef Merlin Labron-Johnson

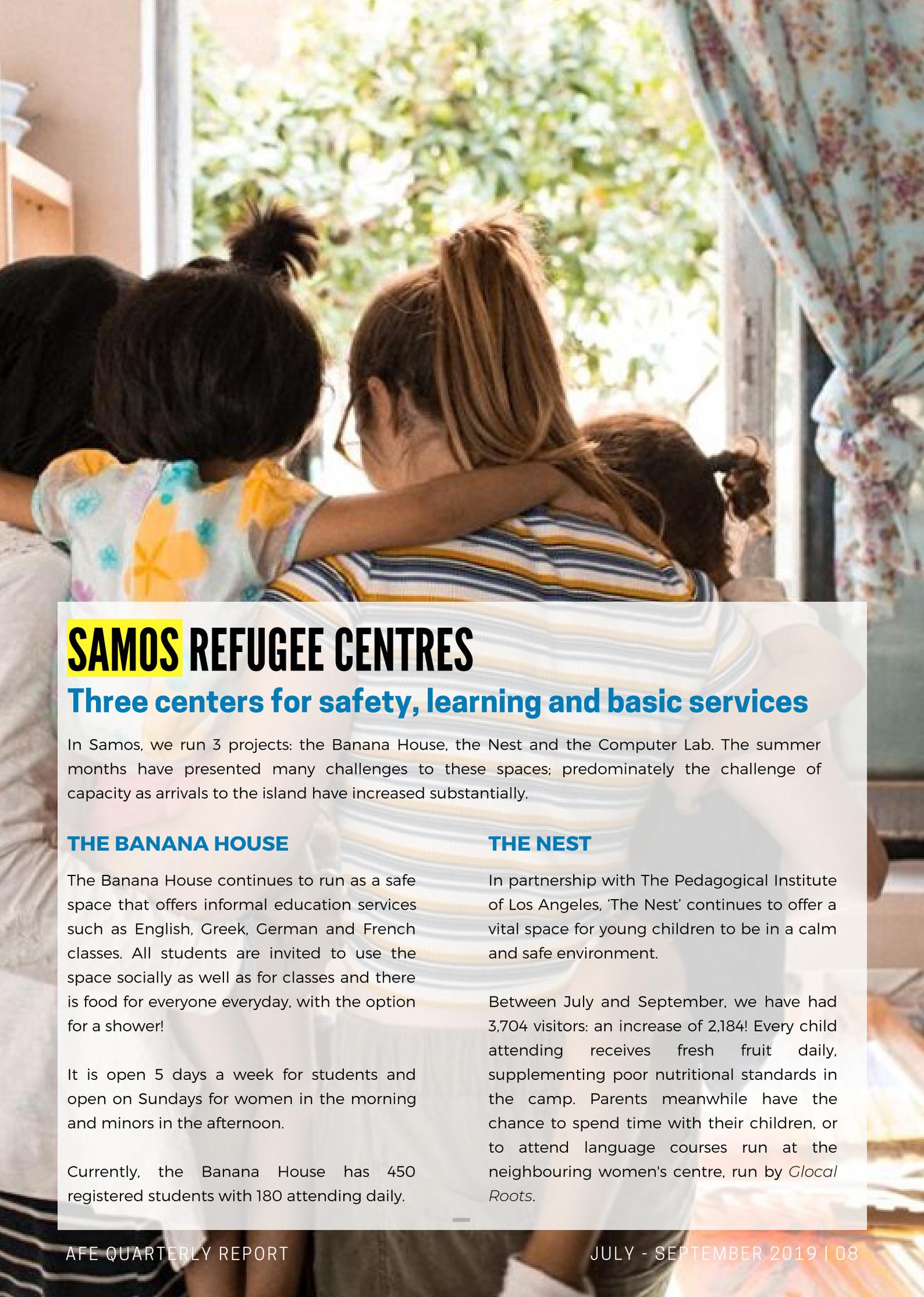
**In August, Jugi welcomed a Michelin-star chef.**

With concourse of our partners *Indigo* and *Help Refugees*, we were delighted to host the Michelin-star-chef: Merlin Labron-Johnson. During a week in August, Merlin ran a cooking workshop inside our youth centre. Our participants welcomed this with massive enthusiasm.

Many of them were delighted that recognised professionals would come, visit them, and take the time to teach them new techniques and skills. Many since have taken up cooking responsibilities within our centre and enjoy using their new skills and following recipes to cook for fellow participants.

Merlin himself has spoken highly of all of the helpers he has had during his time with us, and he admitted that he would happily hire most of them in some of his restaurants!

Thank you, Merlin!



# SAMOS REFUGEE CENTRES

## Three centers for safety, learning and basic services

In Samos, we run 3 projects: the Banana House, the Nest and the Computer Lab. The summer months have presented many challenges to these spaces; predominately the challenge of capacity as arrivals to the island have increased substantially.

### THE BANANA HOUSE

The Banana House continues to run as a safe space that offers informal education services such as English, Greek, German and French classes. All students are invited to use the space socially as well as for classes and there is food for everyone everyday, with the option for a shower!

It is open 5 days a week for students and open on Sundays for women in the morning and minors in the afternoon.

Currently, the Banana House has 450 registered students with 180 attending daily.

### THE NEST

In partnership with The Pedagogical Institute of Los Angeles, 'The Nest' continues to offer a vital space for young children to be in a calm and safe environment.

Between July and September, we have had 3,704 visitors: an increase of 2,184! Every child attending receives fresh fruit daily, supplementing poor nutritional standards in the camp. Parents meanwhile have the chance to spend time with their children, or to attend language courses run at the neighbouring women's centre, run by *Glocal Roots*.

## THE COMPUTER LAB

Run entirely by community volunteers, the Computer Lab is a safe space for learning computer literacy and having free access to the internet. Every morning the lab is a female-only space, building computer literacy through classes, and every afternoon the Lab becomes our internet cafe, offering the chance to communicate with friends, learn new subjects and relax.

## MINORS YOUTH GROUP

Building on our work with Unaccompanied Children in Chios, we've opened a dedicated afternoon for unaccompanied and accompanied children living in the camp on Samos. Offering access to our Computer Lab, kitchen, showers and structuring the afternoon with assemblies, projects and a shared meal, this immensely popular afternoon every Sunday is an open door on the weekend, run by our welcoming team of international and community volunteers.

## WOMEN'S SUNDAYS

Recognising the need for women's safe spaces, we open the Banana House on Sunday mornings between 10:00 and 14.30 for women to come and shower, socialise and rest. We also have visiting medical teams to come and do workshops and provide advice.

Currently around 100 women attend with 30-50 children. Children below 7 are invited to attend the Nest for play whilst the mothers relax in the Banana House.

## SAMOS STUDENT VOICES

We asked three of our students what they liked about the Banana House in Samos and this what they said. Thanks guys for your kind words!

This place is very nice i liked and  
when i came here i learned alot English  
Thanks banana house , kamile ,

a <sup>place</sup> ~~person~~ that we can learn everything  
we are really apperietate from volunteers  
which they are very kind . i Ahmael , Tajik .

banana house is my second house  
banana house is a good oportuntaty  
for every asylum seeker .  
Abdul Qayum Forutan

# THE HALCYON DAYS PROJECT

## An update from Athens

Since our August break, we have expanded our workshop programme to include Music, Mathematics, Science Class, Gym Sessions, a Choir and Life Drawing! We have registered more than 90 students in September, with many of our continuing students graduating from their classes and moving up in the programme.

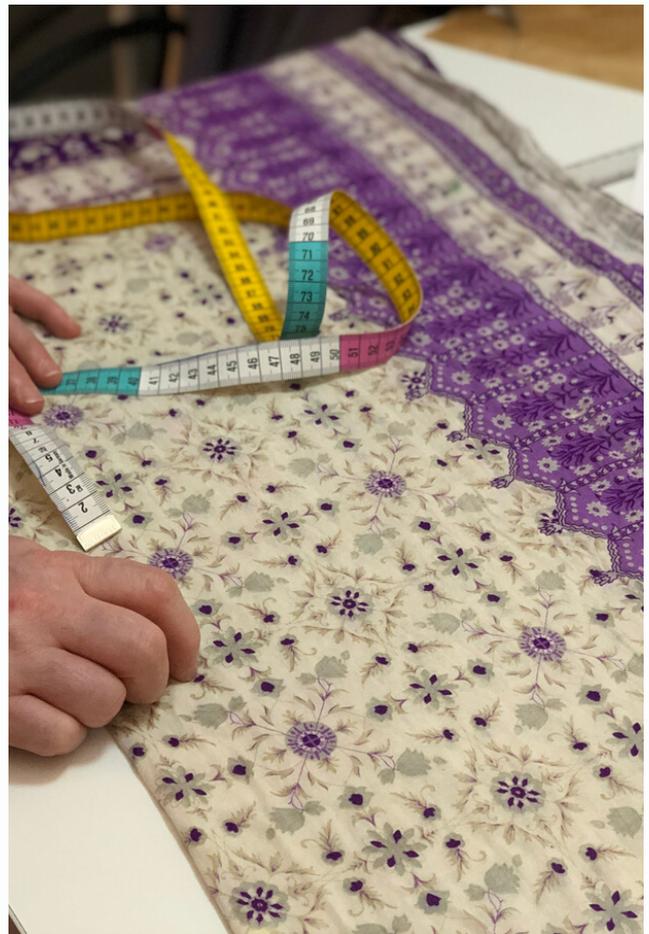
We are also thrilled to announce that as of October we will begin a teacher training programme, tailored to the needs of our participants, which will empower them to impart knowledge within our programmes and gain valuable work experience alongside us. We further aim to implement a youth leadership programme, particularly targeting the dynamic young women who attend our afternoon classes, equipping them with the skills and confidence they need to guide their peers into a sustainable future that works for everyone.

## WORKSHOPS

Our structured language courses are supplemented and enriched by an integrated portfolio of workshops, specially crafted to empower and enable participants to take an active role in facilitating peer-to-peer education. Since the contents depends on our volunteers and participants' skill base, these workshops are many and diverse.

We've taken a step in the STEM direction at the Halcyon Days this term. Our students - many of whom were Maths and Science teachers in the past - have a keen interest in the sciences and are thrilled to participate in - and teach! - our new Science and Maths classes. They are moving on - as they learn the English terminology - from being students to teachers, in classes where older women with a background in STEM are working to help younger women learn their science and maths for school, complete their homework, and carry out research for the future.

Students produced the second Halcyon Days Podcast this month - on Equality and Women's rights - where they interviewed volunteers from our fellow NGO 'Free Movement Skateboarding' and the male participants of *Velos* youth centre. Keep you're eyes on our Facebook page, we will be sharing it soon!





# FUNDRAISING SPOTLIGHT

## EMERGENCY APPEAL

€25,000 RAISED!

Action for Education ran a - successful! - €25,000 emergency fundraising appeal this summer. The power and support of our volunteer team, past and present, enables us to continue the vital work that we do. Former volunteers, coordinators, friends, family and strangers supported our Greece based team by hosting events, running, drinking, singing and walking for Education! The whole AFE community participated in this one, and we want to share a warm and heartfelt thank you - without you we cannot stay open, and so we owe it to you all.

## QUIZ FOR EDUCATION

On Tuesday 20th August, current and former AFE volunteers from across the UK got together to put on *QUIZ FOR EDUCATION!*, a fundraising Quiz night. The amazing Thenga Café in Kings Cross (London) kindly provided the venue and snacks. The quiz had three rounds spanning science, general knowledge and feminism (of course!) and the lucky winners were ... Quizbet! The night also included one of the greatest raffles we have ever seen. Prizes included first class train travel, theatre tickets, a night in a 5 star B&B and free ice cream! The night was full of fun and laughter and we had so many attendees that four of the quiz teams had to sit on the floor! The keynote of the event was a passionate speech about the vital work of AFE on the Greek Aegean Islands. The event team raised a grand total of £2,500, which will go towards maintaining AFE's crucial presence in Greece. Rebecca Morton also hosted two quizzes, one in Vienna on September 8th and one in Edinburgh on September 13th which raised over £1300 combined! Thanks to St Ninian's Comely Bank for hosting and contributing generously!

£3,800 RAISED!





# FUNDRAISING SPOTLIGHT

## WALK FOR EDUCATION

"In solidarity with "people on the move" we walked 10 miles (16km) daily. We were joined by a dozen people who walked, ran and cycled various distances. In total, it was more than 1000 miles between us and over €380 raised."

Weronika in Kraków and Mariusz, in Edinburgh.

*A huge thank you and well to all of those involved in the Walk for Education!*

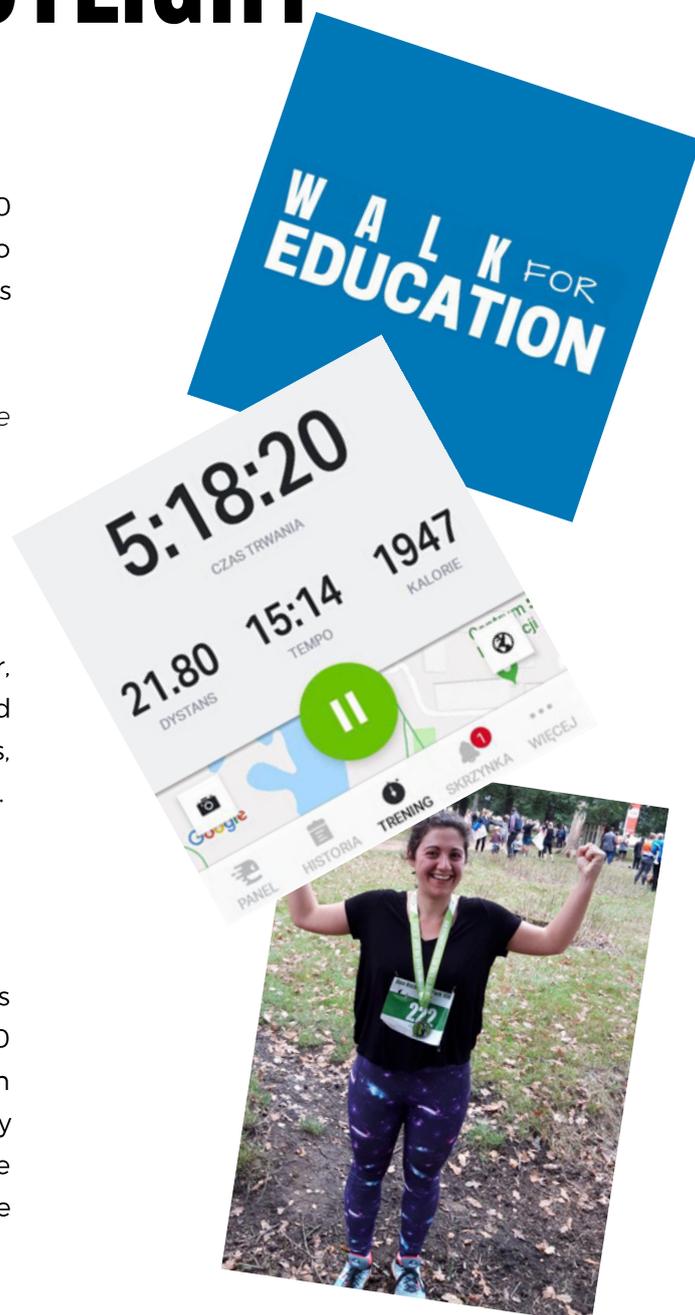
## RUN FOR EDUCATION

On the 5th October, Tanya Barth, former Chios volunteer, dusted off her trainers to #runforeducation in Richmond Park, London. She ran 10K in 57 minutes 31 seconds, managed to avoid the deer, and has raised £1196 so far.

*Well done, Tanya!*

## CHIOS CAMP TO CITY WALK

As part of the crowd funding campaign, the team in Chios walked the long route from the Vial Camp to the City: 10 kilometers. During the walk the team was live on Facebook to demonstrate how long the walk is. Everyday the people trapped in Vial are forced to walk this distance to reach town - the team felt it was important to share that experience.



# IN NUMBERS

## Quantitative Analysis of our work

This quarter has seen the continued development and expansion in capacity through our service provision. We have increased our capacity for participants and also for food and shower provision.

On Chios, we've registered 200 new participants over the past quarter. Across July, August and September we had a total of 3136 visits to Jugi, making an average of 1045 visits each month.

In our kitchens on Chios and Samos, we continue to cook meals every day for participants. We've produced 15,720 hot meals since July, with an average cost per meal of 0.80 cents. We also give out snacks such as apples at the Nest in Samos and bread and jam in Chios. A total of 3,258 snacks were given out in Chios and 3,704 apples in Samos over the last three months.

On Samos, a team of 25 community volunteers and 10 international volunteers delivered over 2,000 hours of education, with most receiving over 40 hours of classes and 100 hours of centre time.

In work hours, our team of 50+ volunteers have freely contributed the equivalent of €270,000 worth of labour (based on an hourly wage of €10). Working with such strong volunteer teams enables us to keep our operating costs low, whilst maintaining a high standard in project delivery.

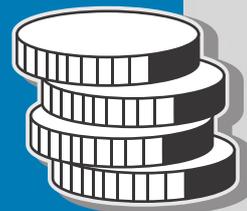
**15,856**

Hot meals served to our students since July 2019.



**€0.80**

Average cost per hot meal (July- September 2019)



**200+**

extra spaces created for beneficiaries in our projects (July- September 2019)



**ACTION FOR EDUCATION**

## SUPPORT OUR WORK?

[www.actionforeducation.co.uk/donate](http://www.actionforeducation.co.uk/donate)

# FINANCES

## QUARTERLY OVERVIEW OF SPENDING

We pride ourselves on ensuring every euro goes as far as possible. As such, our budget lines are tight, focusing on covering core programme costs and eliminating overheads as far as possible. Just 1% of donations are spent on administration.

### INCOMING FUNDS

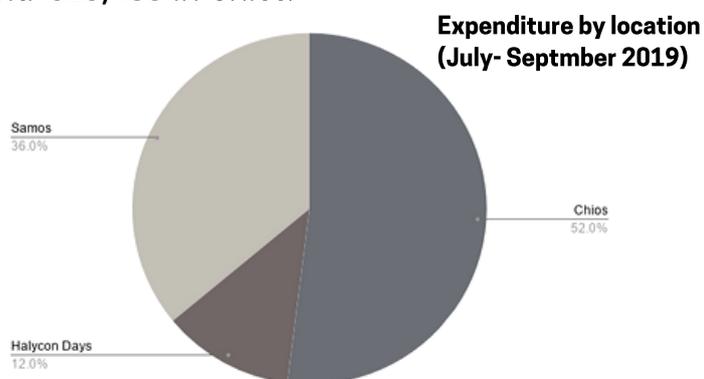
Over the past quarter, we received a total of **€64,300** in donations, 45% came from individual private donors, with the remaining 55% from granting organisations and trusts.

#### Major donors (July- September 2019):

1. Help Refugees (€15,588)
2. Be Aware and Share (€10,883)
3. Glocal Roots (€3,034)
4. Lush (€2,794)
5. Captain Stefanos Kollakis Family (€2,700)

### PROJECT EXPENDITURE

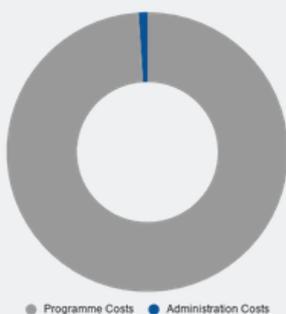
Over the past quarter, we remained within our budget lines, spending €1,505 less than planned. **€16,852** was spent on Samos projects, **€5732** on the Halcyon Days project and **€25,435** in Chios.



### EXPENDITURE BY THEME

Across our projects, we spent **17% on infrastructure**, including utilities & centre rent and **21% on food costs** for participants, cooking over 12,000 meals with an average meal cost of just €0.80. We spent **4% on education costs**, such as teaching materials and **24% on transportation**. Transportation remains one of our largest costs, primarily due to the continued need for a school bus on Chios. We spent **34% on volunteer costs**, comprising volunteer insurance, rent and utilities for our 5 volunteer apartments, and covering moderate expenses for 10 long-term coordinators.

### A FE EFFICACY



### The 2020 Finance Strategy

Our **ambitious plan** for the next quarter is to achieve greater financial stability in our work by ensuring 6 months in reserve funding for all our projects. This will allow for greater focus in our day-to-day project work, aid long-term strategy planning, and offer us greater flexibility in responding rapidly to emerging issues.

To achieve this, our target for December 2019 is **€148,000**. To discuss supporting us in our **2020 Strategy**, contact [jacob@actionforeducation.co.uk](mailto:jacob@actionforeducation.co.uk).

# WE DON'T DO THIS ALONE

## 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!



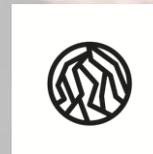
**ACTION FOR WOMEN**  
Implementing Partner, Athens



**HUMANITY NOW**  
Funding Partner



**PRISM THE GIFT FUND**  
AFE UK's Collective Fund Administrator



**GLOCAL ROOTS**  
Implementing Partner, Samos



**THE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES**  
Implementing Partner, Samos



**VEREIN FAIR**  
Major Donor



**HELP REFUGEES**  
Funding Partner



**INDIGO VOLUNTEERS**  
Recruitment Partner



**DONATE 4 REFUGEES**  
Funding Partner



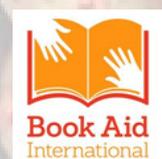
**METADRASI**  
Implementing Partner, Chios



**BE AWARE AND SHARE**  
Funding Partner



**ATTICA GROUP**  
Logistics Partner



**BOOK AID**  
Education Partner



**ZOE EDUCATION TRUST**  
Funding Partner



**ONE STOP ENGLISH**  
Education Partner

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There is a range of valuable sources to stay better informed about the ongoing situations across Greece.

**GrassRoots** - a new humanitarian magazine by Action for Education  
[www.actionforeducation.co.uk/grassroots](http://www.actionforeducation.co.uk/grassroots)

**Are You Syrious?** - a daily news digest for volunteers and refugees  
[www.medium.com/@AreYouSyrious](http://www.medium.com/@AreYouSyrious)

**Aegean Boat Report** - daily updates on arrivals into Greece by sea  
*Facebook: Aegean Boat Report*

**UNHCR** - stats and reports related to Mediterranean migration  
*Google: UNHCR Mediterranean*

**Chios Voices** - Action for Education's student creative platform  
[www.chiosvoices.com](http://www.chiosvoices.com)