

QUARTERLY REPORT

April - June 2023



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1. Project Update

Statistics



April

In April, the Community Centre was open for the three weeks coinciding with Ramadan. We registered **40 new participants** at the Centre.

May

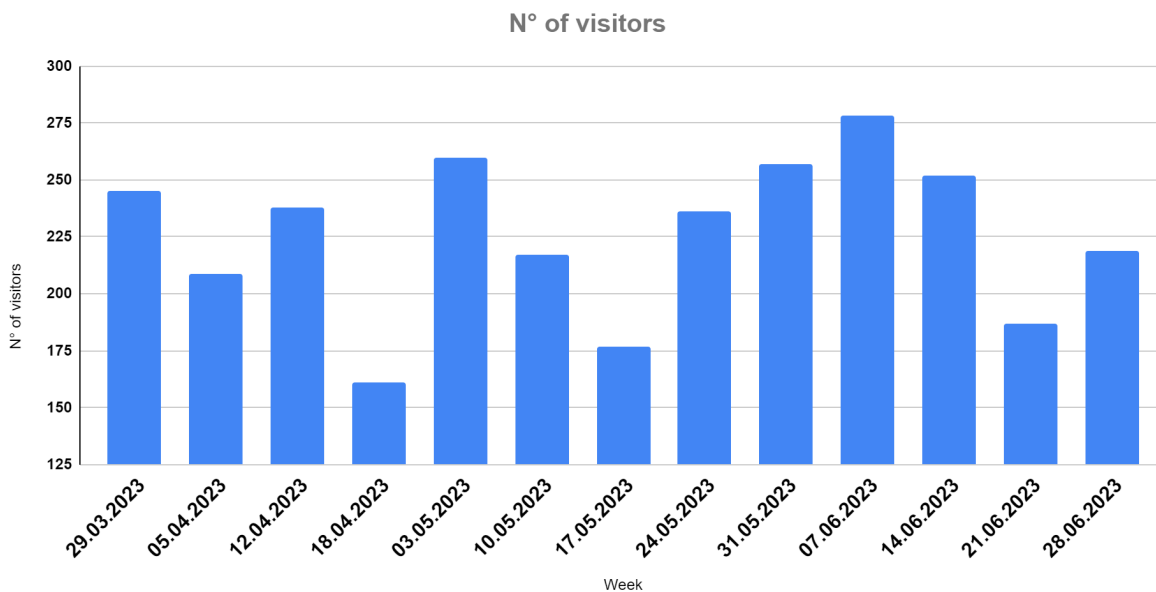
During the month of May, **60 of the 129 new participants registered** reside at Filippiada LTAS, located 60km away from the city of Ioannina.



June

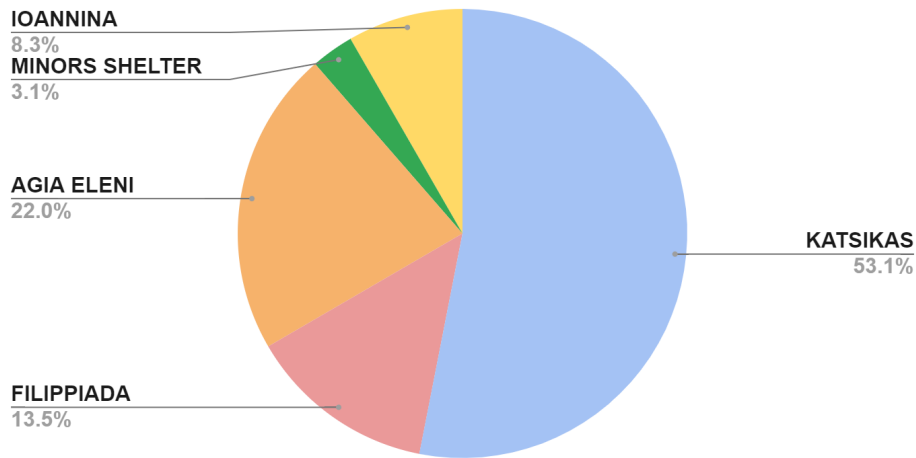


In June, the number of new participants registered increased due to recent transfers from the Aegean islands. Among the **138 new participants registered**, 75 reside in Katsikas LTAS and $\frac{2}{3}$ were men.



The graph above shows the number of visitors in the Centre each week from the beginning of April until the end of June 2023.

The participants visiting the Centre reside in the three Long-term Accommodation Sites (LTASs; i.e. camps) in the Epirus region, (Katsikas, Agia Eleni and Filippiada), the unaccompanied minors shelters that are located in the local area, or independently in the city of Ioannina. Some of our participants are also experiencing homelessness. The graph below shows a breakdown of the Centre's participants location from April to June 2023:



67

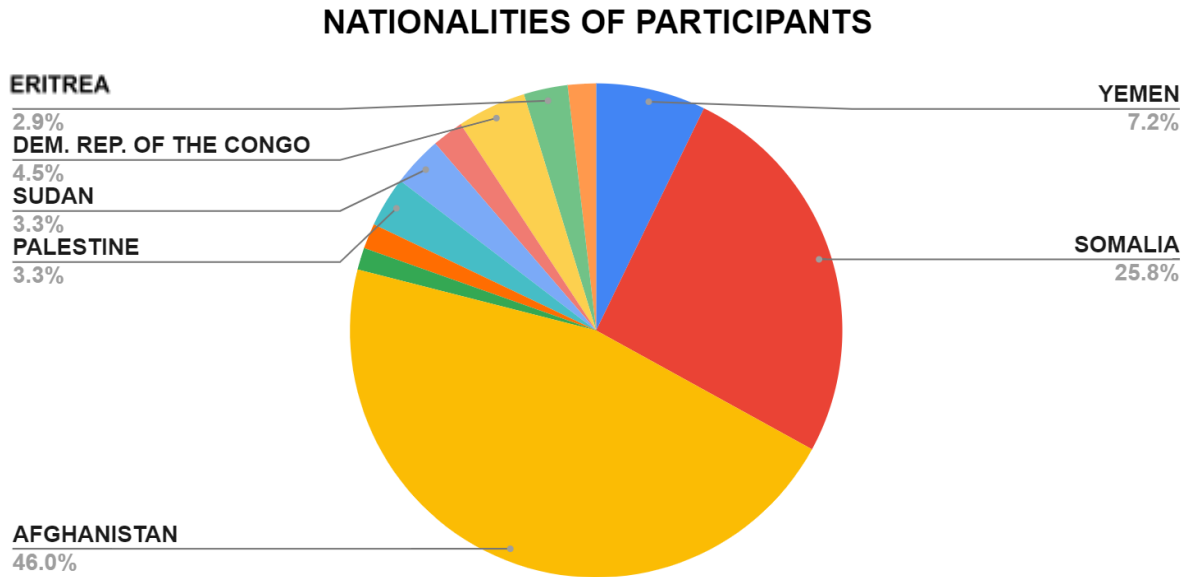
From April to June 2023, the Community Centre welcomed on average 67 participants daily. The highest number of participants recorded in one day was 98 people. Wednesdays and Saturdays remain the busiest days in the Centre.

The average age of the participants in the Centre was 21 years old. We welcomed many families with newborns and small children, as well as young women & men.

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In the Centre we welcome participants from over **30 different countries**:



The above shows the biggest groups of participants by their official nationality (as judged by the Greek state¹). Other countries of origin include Angola, Algeria, Cameroun, Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Ghana, Gambia, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Syria as well as stateless individuals.

¹ Note, the Greek state does not consider Kurdistan as a nationality, therefore within these statistics Kurdish people are being incorrectly identified as Iraqi, Syrian, Iranian or stateless.

Services Update

Free Clothing Shop

During the month of May we expanded the size of the Free Clothing Shop. This was accomplished by incorporating the storage area behind the shop into the shop. The reason behind this expansion was with participants in mind, namely to offer a broader range of choice, a more spacious area to shop in and to allow more natural light to enter the shop. Following the delivery of clothing, hygiene items and dry food from our partners InterEuropean Human Aid Association (IHA) at the end of May, we purchased extra rails and clothing hangers and utilised additional racks and boxes to incorporate the storage area into the shop. Feedback from participants has been very positive.

Before



Shop Expansion Day



Final Result



In May we added a hygiene section to the clothing store, which gave people the option to select shampoo, shower gel, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hair combs and deodorant, as well as towels and bedding. The hygiene section is now a permanent fixture in our Free Clothes Shop.



Distributions

- **Menstrual pads**

Each month we support 200 women with menstrual pads, with thanks to support from [Pads4Refugees](#).



- **Baby Pushchairs**

With thanks to Network Anthopia, we distributed five pushchairs, including one double pram, to families. These items are expensive and difficult to acquire for people on the move with limited means.

- **Diapers**

With thanks to [Carry the Future](#), as well as additional support from IHA, we have been able to support on average 68 babies per week with diapers. Each week we give one pack of 20-25 diapers for each baby.



- **Baby Carriers**

IHA donated 20 baby carriers to us, they are for babies approximately aged 0-6 months. So far we have distributed three of them to families with young babies.

Creative Atelier



The Creative Atelier is open everyday for people who would like to use the sewing machines, irons and knitting needles, to do projects, fix clothing and also to socialise together.

We have been running ad-hoc lessons on the basics of how to use the machines and how they can be set up. With the 'scrap' fabric we have in the atelier, people are welcome to come and experiment and gain confidence in using the machines.

Coffee Corner

The 'Coffee Corner' continues to be a popular area with free tea, coffee, milk, sugar and biscuits. Participants can come to rest on one of the many couches, access the WiFi of the Centre, charge their phones and play board and card games together. Speakers are available for participants to play their own music during the day, which can add a nice rhythm to the space.

Laundry Service

Due to the often inadequate clothes washing services for people living in the camps, our laundry service continues to function as normal. Each day we have the capacity to do up to 12 washes (hour-long) washes. We also have a drying machine and, when the weather is good, people can dry their clothes in the outside areas on the clothing horses. As of the end of June, more of the machines in Katsikas appeared to be functioning (apparently 5 machines for close to 1000 people), which is good news as ideally this is a service which should be provided in the LTASs and not grassroots organisations such as BAAS.

Computer Lab

The computer lab is used by participants for a variety of reasons, including creating CVs, setting up email accounts, applying for jobs, studying online, booking various appointments, playing games, listening to music and researching the news.

One of the computers' was not working. A participant, who is a computer hardware engineer, identified the issue with the harddrive. We bought a replacement harddrive and he managed to install it, fixing the computer for the Centre.

Further, the scouts of Ioannina who are now volunteering part-time with us, as part of their required volunteering hours, as well as their interest in supporting people on the move, were able to troubleshoot various issues with the computers and our WiFi connection.

CV Workshop

Starting the month of May, the number of requests from participants for assistance in CV making rose. We conducted ad-hoc CV workshops for 8 participants this quarter, using a simple template on Canva, filling the different information needed in English. The people were applying for jobs in the services industry in the local area.

Printing Service

The printer & scanner offers a valuable service for participants to print, copy as well as scan their documents. Like all good things however, sometimes it can come into disrepair and requires our attention; as shown in the photo to the left. Fortunately, there are always people with skills willing to help, support and fix.



Education

Every Saturday, Loukia, our volunteer and an active member of the association, conducts informal Greek lessons with participants. Loukia is very adaptable, sometimes the lessons take place on a table in the main part of the centre, others in the small classroom, depending on the participants needs and desires.

Two evenings per week Statheis, a local professor, teaches Greek. In addition, Statheis gave Maya & Ben the opportunity to present the project to one of his classes at the university and to share with them the different ways in which students can get involved.



Socials

Until the end of Ramadan, no Socials were organised, as participants are quite tired while fasting and prefer to rest. In addition some people do not play games or play during Ramadan for religious reasons. Board games and other crafty and creative activities were still available during the day.

Since the start of May, board games and card games have been played all day long in the Centre with both adults and children.

In addition we have held a number of bingo evenings, with as many as 40 people playing along, with some special chocolatey prizes on offer!

We purchased some more games for the centre, including Uno cards, connect 4 and jenga. All have been very well enjoyed by our participants at the Centre. In the last three months, socials have included projecting football games, dance sessions, bracelet making, musical chairs and 'crafty' activities.



Legal Aid Clinic

After their last visit in March, two legal aid NGOs, Equal Legal Aid (ELA) and Mobile Info Team (MIT), returned to conduct legal aid clinics for participants at our Community Centre, as well as at Habibi.works, on 1 & 2 June. Both teams had private spaces within the Centre to have 20 to 30 minute appointments with participants who could ask questions regarding their asylum cases.

As there are no free legal aid organisations active in the Epirus region, participants' demand for appointments with ELA or MIT was high. In total, 24 personal appointments took place in the Centre, as well as a more general info session on the asylum procedure for 5 participants. Interpretation was available in Greek, French, Somali, Farsi and Arabic. ELA and MIT also work remotely and are able to follow up on the

participant's cases via WhatsApp after their visit to the Centre. This is an invaluable service, for people to be able to get clear information and potentially support for their individual case. The asylum system can be very confusing, levelled with inconsistencies, errors and a multitude of complications.

We are looking forward to their next legal aid clinics in our Community Centre later in the summer.

Kids Space

For our child friendly space, we were fortunate to receive a lot of toys and games, mainly donated by people from the local area, as well as from IHA and Attika Warehouse.

Garden

The garden is open outside of 'quiet hours', i.e. from 17:30 - 20:00, each day. Outside we play games such as badminton, volleyball and ping-pong.

On 20 June, after a rainy May we were finally able to set up the outside lounge, with some couches and sun sails. We also planted some flowers and vegetables, and repainted the outside wall, which helped to create a really nice atmosphere in the garden together with participants.



Changes to Service During Ramadan

During the month of Ramadan, we changed the opening hours from 14:00 - 19:00 to 15:00 - 21:00. During this month, it was noted that people were coming to the centre specifically to use the basic services (Free Clothes Shop and Washing Machines) and not staying at the Centre for as long as they had before or after Ramadan. Due to the lower attendance, no socials were scheduled, although games and crafts were available to participants. Two separate praying areas for women and for men were set up with Quarans.

Spring Cleaning Week

After Ramadan from 21 to 30 April, we closed the Centre in order to prepare the space for the summer month and to reorganise some of the areas. During this week, we were able to prepare the garden: weeding and planting some flowers and vegetables. We re-arranged some areas of the Centre to gain some space, created more storage spaces, and completed the 'summerisation' of the Free Clothes Shop, moving the remaining winter clothing items to storage.



Youth Festival - 22 June

On 22 June, the Youth Center of Epirus and the Scouts of Ioannina combined their powers for the organisation of the first Youth Festival in the city Centre of Ioannina. Well-known and local artists came to the festival to entertain the crowds while local organisations presented their work at the Festival through interactive workshops. Four of our team members joined the festival and helped collect essential items such as clothes, food items or electronic devices donated by locals attending the festival.

This event was also a great outreach opportunity. Our volunteers distributed BAAS business cards and talked with many students who are interested in helping us.

Material Donations

IHA

This quarter we received a very large donation of clothing, diapers, hygiene items, and dry food from [IHA](#). Their donations enabled our shop's aforementioned expansion and they will continue to support us into the future.



Network Anthropia

This quarter our partners [Network Anthropia](#) visited us and brought hijabs, women's underwear and more donated clothing. In addition, they connected us with one of our newest team members, Alexandra, who has been working as a social worker with people on the move for the last six years and recently moved back to Ioannina.

Attika Human Support

At the end of June [Attika Human Support](#), who operate a warehouse based outside of Athens, sent two pallets of summer clothing, hijabs, diapers, hygiene items and games to us. These items helped to fill some of the gaps in our Free Clothing Shop and have boosted our diaper distribution capacity.

Local Visibility & Support

In the last quarter we put up a sign on our door in Greek, explaining that we accept donations of clothing, as well as other household items and children's toys. We have noticed an increase in the number of 'ad-hoc' donations coming from people from the

local area, with many people passing by the front of the centre talking with participants and team members alike, enquiring about what activities are happening in the space. The Centre is well known in the local area, as it has been operated by NGOs since 2016 and previous to that had been a kindergarten. Last, [Habibi.works](#), an NGO that we collaborate with, operating beside Katsikas LTAS, have also connected us with a woman who runs a café and donated several bags of items to us, and have redirected several local people who want to donate clothing items to us.

Plans for Second Quarter Vs Outcomes

→ Plan 1: Recruit up to three Community Volunteers to our team

Outcome: *1 Community Volunteer has been recruited.*

A few 'potential' community volunteers got full-time jobs. Others preferred to simply participate at the Centre, helping occasionally with cleaning, translation and feedback; which is also valuable for the project.

→ Plan 2: Ensure there is capacity to support up to 700 people from our Free Clothing Shop per month

Outcome: *On average 500 people have visited the Free Shop each month. In June we were able to expand the size of the shop, as shown in this report and in that month 650 different people accessed the shop. Large deliveries of supplies from IHA and Attika have enabled our shop to be well stocked and have meant that we now have hygiene items and bedding also available.*

→ Plan 3: Team stabilisation

Outcome:

Following a shortage of team members in April, since the beginning of June we have had four full-time volunteers (one community, two visiting and one local) as well as one part-time volunteer and our fundraising coordinator also working here in Ioannina, taking some shifts in the

Centre. In addition at the end of June the Scouts of Ioannina started to join our activities and have taken shifts in the Centre. This has enabled us to have more organised children's activities and increase the capacity of the shop, with two team members working the shop shift from 14:00 - 18:00 each opening day.

Plans for Third Quarter

→ Increase the number of Community Volunteers

Rational: To have more community involvement, to support the project, help people to develop their skills and teamwork and to diversify the points of view within the team. We have designed posters and continue to outreach by word of mouth. We also seek to have community volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds, if possible.

→ Outreach to local NGOs and authorities

Rational: Continuing efforts that we have made in the second quarter, where we have connected with the UAM shelters and Filippiada camp authorities, in order further to improve our local collaborations and to give us an opportunity to assess gaps and needs in the area, we look to open further dialogue with other larger NGOs, INGOs and CSOs, as well as LTAS authorities, in the local area. This is particularly important as many of the actors have changed in the last quarter and the Greek authorities have taken over more of the management of the LTASs from ASB (a German INGO that had been Site Management Support in the LTASs in the region).

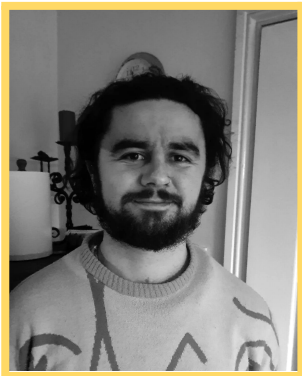
Quarterly Financial Statement

	Yearly Budget 2023	Monthly Budget 2023	Expenditure Quarter 2 2023
Total Running Costs Community Centre	46.380,00 €	3.865€	10.473,29 €
Centre Costs	27.600,00 €	2.300€	6.035,97 €
Services	16.200,00 €	1.350€	3.934,54 €
Transport	2.580,00 €	215€	502,78 €
Total Running Costs Team	43.224,00 €	3.602€	7.918,36 €
Coordination Costs	25.920,00 €	2.160€	4.200,00 €
Living costs	17.304,00 €	1.442€	3.718,36 €
Total One time Costs	12.360,00 €	X	1.111,59 €
Total	101.964,00 €	7.467€	18.503,24€

Total costs during this quarter were lower than the first quarter of this year as expected. This is the result of having a smaller volunteer team on the ground and therefore less capacity to run and develop some areas in the Centre. The project team also decided to stop the fabric distribution at the Centre, which drastically decreased our expenses for the Atelier for example.

2. Team Update

Coordination Team



Ben Anderson & Maya Kerbellec
Project Co-Coordinator

Jordan Gardener
Fundraising Coordinator

Jordan Gardener joined our team in Ioannina on 20 May as Fundraising coordinator. She is working from the Community Centre on BAAS' fundraising strategy and grant applications.

In mid-April the project team was also thrilled to welcome the President of Be Aware and Share, Saskia Kobelt, in Ioannina for a four day visit to meet the new coordinators and to see and experience the Community Centre.

Volunteer Team

Our team has expanded since the month of April. Luna, from France, joined the team in Ioannina on 22 April for three months. Followed by Marie for six weeks, and Alexandra, from Ioannina, who started volunteering with us on 13 June.

Although the team in Ioannina was very small during the months of April and May, we've had a lot of help from the participants themselves in the Centre, as well as occasional support from people who are volunteering with other organisations willing to help out on some days at the Centre.

The Scouts of Ioannina, who had contacted us in April regarding volunteering at the Centre during the summer months, started helping us in the last days of June. They have been a great help fixing technical WiFi and computer issues, in addition to general volunteering at the centre and occasional Greek translations.



Community Volunteers

At the end of April, we welcomed Badr into the team as our first Community Volunteer. Badr has already made a wonderful contribution to our team, working in all areas, translating for us in three different languages and supporting outside the Centre by outreaching to people in Ioannina who might be interested in attending the Centre.

Other participants have expressed an interest in joining the team, although often people cannot commit, as they work full-time or have to take care of young children.

Challenges to Recruitment

In the beginning of April, due to a shortage of volunteers, the two project coordinators decided to keep the Centre open, with some areas closed for during the Free Clothing Shop opening hours. The project team received a lot of help from participants in the Center until more visiting volunteers arrived in Ioannina at the end of April.

In order to increase the number of volunteers that we have in the team, the minimum commitment time of volunteering was lowered from eight to six weeks. Further local efforts were also made to involve more people, including putting up 'Volunteer Call' posters around the city, as well as giving a presentation to a class at the University of Ioannina about the project, context and volunteering opportunities at the Centre.

3. Collaborations, Co-operations and Partnerships

Carry The Future - Diapers

Be Aware and Share started cooperating with Carry The Future in 2022, and the grant agreement was renewed for 2023. After communicating the numbers of pieces and sizes needed, Carry the Future redirects the order to the local company - Oikon Diapers in Ioannina, who directly delivers to us.



Equal Legal Aid

[ELA](#), an NGO based in Thessaloniki, provides legal support and information for people on the move. They offer free consultations, both in person and via WhatsApp, which is how most of our participants interact with them.

In addition they also publish reports about the legal conditions people on the move face in Greece.

Mobile Info Team

[MIT](#), also based in Thessaloniki and similarly to ELA, provide legal support and information for people on the move in person and via WhatsApp. They run a Facebook page where they update people on the move with any changes in asylum/ residency law, or its interpretation, which may affect people on the move, as well as providing general information, such as how to apply for asylum, residency, citizenship etc.

Last, MIT have a very strong advocacy department. They also conduct and support investigations, together with other NGOs, CSOs and journalists and have published numerous reports on the living conditions people on the move face in Greece, which can be found freely available on their website.

Scouts of Ioannina

The [Scouts of Ioannina](#) approached the coordination team during the month of May with the idea to support our team in the Community Centre during the summer months, after the exam period, in order to complete their hours of voluntary service, as part of their scouts programme. They started volunteering part-time at the end of June.

Pads 4 Refugees

Pads4Refugees started to support our Centre for the distribution of menstrual pads in April for 3 months. Approximately 200 different women attend the Centre each month, and all are able to get one pack of menstrual pads each month.

IHA

IHA operates a large warehouse in Thessaloniki, which provides NFIs and dry/ tinned food to most of the grassroots NGOs that operate in Northern Greece. They also run a community centre beside Lagadikia LTAS, which is approx. 30 minutes from Thessaloniki centre.

They are a wonderful partner to have, not only for their provision of donations, but also as they provide a link between numerous organisations, due to the fact that they work with so many different partners in Northern Greece. They are often the organisers of the bi-monthly Northern Greece Coordination meeting, a collective of grassroots organisations throughout the region, which the coordinators of BAAS attend online.

Attika Human Support Warehouse

[Attika Human Support](#) operate a warehouse outside of Athens. Similarly to IHA they provide NFIs & dry/tinned food for grassroots NGOs operating in Southern Greece, as well as on the Aegean islands. Thanks to their help, we have been able to source almost all of our Free Clothing Shop and distribution needs from within Greece.

Bach Flower with Tina

In the last 3 months, Tina has conducted 5 individual Bachflower sessions in the centre

and was also able to give a presentation about Bachflower remedies to the team. In addition to this service offered, Tina is also very helpful with providing contacts in the local area, having been working with and supporting people on the move in Greece since the mid-1990's in a range of capacities.

Network Anthropia

Our partners Network Anthropia have supported the community centre in so many different ways, from connecting BAAS with people & organisations locally, nationally and even internationally, to driving donations all the way from Attika warehouse to donating items.



Youth Centre of Epirus

The [Youth Centre of Epirus](#) is a housing and informal education project for Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs), here in Ioannina. We started a collaboration with them this quarter. Their premises are in Perama, a few kilometres outside of Ioannina. They would bring five or six UAMs to the centre one to two times per week, so that they can avail of the Free Clothes Shop and also discover the other services in the centre and connect with other participants. It is important for the UAMs to be able to leave the shelters to integrate and socialise, in a safe and calm environment.

RefugeeED

[RefugeeED](#) kindly donated two brand new speakers and headphones for the computer lab for the centre. These items will be helpful for our education programme as well as in the social space for playing music, watching & listening to sporting events as well as for presentations or over-the-phone translations, such as when ELA visited, they conducted a group legal information session with residents of Filippiada LTAC.

Camara Market / Τα Παιδιά του Κόσμου (The Children of the World)

[Τα Παιδιά του Κόσμου \(The Children of the World\)](#) is an NGO which specialises in organising different African & Cultural events and workshops throughout Greece.

The founders of this NGO also run [Camara Market](#) here in Ioannina, which is a multi-ethnic food store. Many participants of the Centre shop there for its wide range of products, as well as its sense of community.

In July they will run the 3rd annual African Cultural Festival in Ioannina over two days. The festival aims to bring people of all different backgrounds together, with live music, dance, food and fashion.

BAAS shall support the event by conducting children's activities and by covering the cost of the sound system.

4. Context Update

LTAS Statistics & Updates

Transfers

Transfers to the mainland of Greece from the Aegean islands²:

April	May	June	3 month Total
407	1069	909	2385

LTASs populations

As of the end of May 2023, across the three LTASs, where the majority of our participants reside, there were a total of 1 285 asylum seekers, according to government statistics³. This number however does not include people who reside in the LTASs who have received a 'final' decision on their asylum claim (i.e. positive or negative decision); therefore the actual population of the three sites is higher.

Location	Population ⁴	Capacity ⁵	Distance from the Centre	Type of accommodation
Katsikas LTAS	Between 800 and 1000 according to Habibi.works	1152	10 km	Iso-boxes (containers)
Agia Eleni LTAS	Less than 100 (according to participants)	462	4 km	Buildings, with most of the basic amenities

² [Aegean Boat Report Transfer Statistics](#)

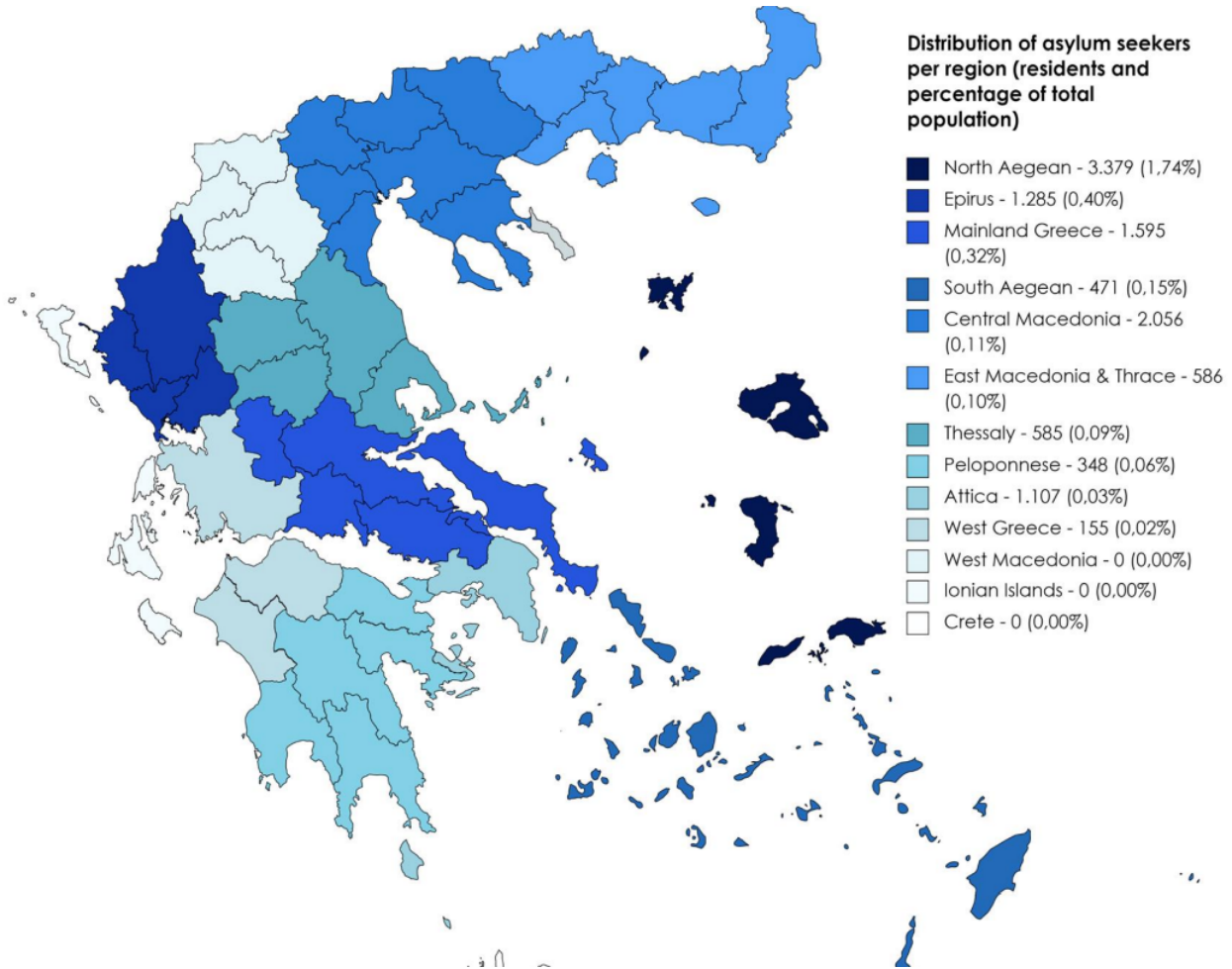
³ May 2023 Report from Ministry of Migration

https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Report_A_May-2023_International-Protection_NEW.pdf

⁴ Figures estimates from end of May 2023

⁵ All figures from [IOM](#) (March 2022)

				(toilets and showers) in communal spaces.
Filippiada LTAS	No information available.	737	60 km	Iso-boxes (containers)



Source: https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Report_A_May-2023_International-Protection_NEW.pdf

Transport from Filippiada LTAS & Additional Opening Hours

We continue to open on Friday mornings for people who live in Filippiada LTAS. The camp management organises a bus when people living there have appointments at the asylum office or hospital in Ioannina. The bus only has 20 seats.

In the beginning of May, the coordination had a successful exchange with the camp management of Filippiada. They communicated about the days the bus from Filippiada to Ioannina was running. During the months of May until mid-June, at least 20 participants from Filippiada made it to the Centre on Friday mornings. With ASB leaving, it is unclear if this free bus service will continue.

News Updates

The Death of Fatmata in North Macedonia

On the 19 April, Fatmata, a woman from Sierra Leone, was shot dead by police in North Macedonia, just after the border with Greece. Fatmata had been living in Agia Eleni LTAS with her husband and their young baby. Following a rejection of their asylum claim in Greece, they decided with few other options available to them, as so many others before them have had to do, to try to find safety elsewhere. Her death is a sad incident which is a **direct result** of the harsh border policies of the European Union. This horrific incident is being investigated by North Macedonian authorities, with the Young Macedonian Lawyers Association (YMLA) supporting her husband Abu Bakar. Second Tree, an NGO that operates in Ioannina that Fatmata was particularly connected with, is also supporting the case directly and is raising awareness about the case together with their other organisations with the campaign #JusticeForFatmata, which helped to have the case be discussed in the European Parliament⁶. We are horrified by the death of Fatmata, who was a regular participant at the Centre. We continue to offer our support to her husband, Abu Bakar, in the form of clothing for him and his young baby, as Second Tree team members move back and forth between Ioannina and North Macedonia.

Further details of the incident and case can be found at the following links:

[Second tree Fatmata Justice](#) ; [Beyond Numbers: Confronting Europe's Broken Border System](#) ;

Pylos Shipwreck: Possibly More Than 600 Dead

Between 13 & 14 June, *The Adriana*, a ship which had departed from Toburk, Libya believed to be carrying over 700 people seeking safety, sank. Only 104 people survived. To date, 82 people have been confirmed to have died as a result of the shipwreck,

⁶ [The case of Fatmata, a 23-year-old woman from Sierra Leone who was shot dead at the border between Greece and North Macedonia | E-001631/2023 | European Parliament](#)

although the actual figure is assuredly, sadly, much higher. Unfortunately, in the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea, there are countless shipwrecks and deaths of people trying to seek safety and asylum in Europe. This incident is horrific beyond comprehension and has resulted in, possibly, the highest number of deaths in a single incident since 2015. However, it must also be remembered that this is far from an isolated incident. People die at the external and internal borders of Europe every week.

For the shipwreck itself there are investigations being conducted by the NGO [Forensis](#)⁷, in conjunction with [ARD](#), [Wearesolomon](#) and [The Guardian](#) as well as an internal investigation by the Hellenic Coast Guard into their conduct during the rescue operation, which in turn has been heavily criticised by human rights groups, Civil Society Organisations and NGOs, as well as Greek & European politicians and journalists.

Further reading:

- [Investigation Suggests Hellenic CoastGuard are responsible for sinking - The Guardian](#)
- [Survivors: 'Greek coastguard was next to us when boat capsized' | Migration News | Al Jazeera](#)
- [The Pylos Shipwreck ← Forensis](#)

Asylum Service 'Alkyoni' System Down

*"Starting the 5th of May [and continuing to the end of June]... most of the operations of Greek asylum authorities, under the umbrella of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, were halted due to an upgrade of the Asylum Service's database. During this period, no registration of asylum claims, renewal of asylum seeker cards, and issuance of residence permits, travel documents or other necessary documentation were possible. As of today, it is still not possible to apply for appointments for first instance asylum claims or subsequent applications."*⁸

⁷ "we are an interdisciplinary team of researchers with expertise in spatial and visual investigation, time-based 3D reconstruction, cartographic platforms, and open source investigation. We produce evidence for presentation in national and international courts, human rights forums, parliamentary inquiries, truth commissions and people's tribunals."

<https://counter-investigations.org/about/association>

⁸ Quote from a statement by Mobile Info Team <https://www.mobileinfoteam.org/alkyoni>

This has had a significant impact on people trying to make appointments with the asylum service. This is far from the first time that there has been technical or non-technical issues with the asylum service.

New EU Migration Pact

The latest EU pact on migration, in practical terms, will make it easier for countries to use the concept of 'safe third country', such as how Greece considers Turkey to be 'a safe third country' for people fleeing from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria. A full breakdown of what it could mean for people-on-the-move can be found here: [Editorial: Migration Pact Agreement Point by Point | European Council on Refugees and Exiles \(ECRE\)](#)

'Pushbacks'

In the first six months of this year, on the Aegean Sea alone, at least 9,256 people were reportedly 'pushed-back' to Turkey.⁹ Data for 'push-backs' on the land border with Turkey is more difficult to come by, in part due to lack of civilian access to the border region, harsh detention/ imprisonment conditions in Turkey, as well as the criminalisation of activists on both sides of the border. Undoubtedly there have been hundreds if not thousands of people 'pushed-back' over the land border this year. [BVMN](#) collects testimonies from people on the move about their experiences of 'pushbacks' throughout the Balkans and reports that hundreds of people are affected by 'push-backs' each month.

In May The New York Times¹⁰ published video evidence of yet another violent 'pushback' by the Hellenic Coast Guard. In spite of all of the documentation and

⁹ According to Aegean Boat Reports Data here:

https://lookerstudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/1CiKR1_R7-1UbMHKhZzE_Ji_cvqF7xlfH/page/A5Q0

¹⁰ [Video Shows Greece Abandoning Migrants at Sea - The New York Times](#) ; [Pushbacks Continues Unhindered in Greece Despite Warnings from Brussels](#)

publications of these horrific acts and violations of international law - which have become *de facto* policy since March 2020, there appears to be almost no legal pressure being put on the Greek authorities. These *de facto* policies deny people the right to try to claim asylum and almost always violate the principle of non-refoulement.

Further Reading:

- [Joint Letter Calling for Mechanism on HR violations at borders - English - Amnesty International](#)

Low Recognition Rate of Afghan & Somali Asylum Seekers

Most of the participants of the Centre originate from Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen. In spite of the fact Somalia is ranked as the 8th most unsafe country in the world and Afghanistan as the most unsafe country in the world, asylum seekers from these countries face relatively low recognition rate (rate of receiving refugee status or subsidiary protection)¹¹.

Country/ Country of Origin	Global Peace Index Rank	Asylum Recognition Rate in Greece for First 5 months of 2023 ^{12,13}
Somalia	8 th	58 %
Afghanistan	1 st	53 %
Yemen	2 nd	95 %

The reason that the asylum authorities offer for the relatively low acceptance for people from Afghanistan and Somalia is that the Greek government decreed Turkiye to be a 'safe third country'¹⁴ for people originating from these countries, as well as Syria,

¹¹ [Most Dangerous Countries in the World 2023 - Wisevoter](#)

¹² [Ministry of Migration May 2023 International Applications Report - Appendix A](#)

¹³ [Ministry of Migration May 2023 International Applications Report](#)

¹⁴ [Asylum in Report Report "Safe Third Country"](#)

Bangladesh and Pakistan¹⁵ (Turkiye has not accepted returns from Greece since May 2020, amid ongoing political hostilities between the two nations). This means the burden for people from these countries when applying for asylum is first to prove why Turkiye, a country of transition, is unsafe for them. This is routinely not made clear by the asylum service for people when they arrive and have their first asylum interview and leads to close to half of cases being deemed as 'inadmissible'. For comparison, asylum seekers originating from Yemen, a country deemed the second most unsafe country in the world behind Afghanistan, have had a recognition rate of over 95% this year - their cases are solely based on why they left Yemen.

¹⁵ Turkiye itself is ranked as the 19th most unsafe country in the world. It is well documented why the country is unsafe for nationals of the five countries of origin.

5. Outlook

Perspectives for the third quarter of 2023

Project & Team Outlook:

★ Visiting Volunteers During the Summer

While recruitment has been an issue over the past few months, based on our current recruitment schedule, our team is looking like it will be near to capacity in the next quarter.

★ Break-Dancing Workshops

This July a break-dance teacher will come and volunteer with us at the centre for four weeks. They will teach breakdancing classes in the Centre with participants and plan to choreograph a performance.

★ New Barber Shop Space

Upon request from many participants, we will create a new barber shop space in the centre. We plan to have it as an open space, with a daily sign-up sheet, where people can cut their own hair. We are also open to the possibility of having a volunteer barber at certain hours during the week./

★ Re-start Language Classes

In the next quarter we will renew efforts to restart language classes for adults in the Centre, depending on the needs and requests from participants we have capacity to run Greek, English, French and German classes.

★ Co♥respondences

In the next quarter we will collaborate with the [Co♥respondences](#) project. This project was set up in 2020, following the Moria fires, to initially connect children who were living on Lesbos with children from different parts of the world, by

exchanging letters. We will receive letters from children from different parts of the world and, with the children who come to the centre, respond to the letters with words, drawings and different crafts.

★ Europe Must Act Training

In the next quarter the two project coordinators will do a training with Europe Must Act (EMA), a CSO advocating for the rights of people on the move and highlighting violations of these rights. The training is centred on how to conduct interviews and gather testimonies from people on the move, which EMA could then process and use for their advocacy efforts and to share the stories of people on the move in Ioannina.

Risks Outlook:

- **Balcony Overlooking Garden**

The Centre is on the ground floor of a four-story high building, with balconies overlooking the garden. The roof of the balcony on the top floor has structural issues, meaning parts of it could fall into our garden space. Currently with our landlord and the landlord of this floor we are trying to figure out how this issue can be resolved. In the meantime, we have closed off the garden space to participants, due to this risk.

- **Rejected Asylum Claims**

As mentioned in the Context & News section of this report, a lot of participants have been receiving rejections on their asylum claim, which, among other things, means that they lose their financial support from the state. From an organisational perspective it is a possibility that needs could change to more basic things, such as uncooked food. Receiving a rejection on an asylum claim can seriously harm a person's well-being and mental state, and can both directly (lack of financial/ food support) and indirectly affect a person or child's physical state.

The next quarterly report will be available from 21 October 2023.