



CAMPAIGN REPORT NORTHERN GREECE



2023

BACKGROUND



Our Northern Greece campaign represents a unique campaign, distinguished by its simultaneous operation in two key locations: Thessaloniki and Kavala. Across the northern region, the Greek government manages ten regular camps and two deportation camps, extending from Ioannina in the west to Xanthi near the Turkish border. The widespread nature of these camps reflects the urgency of the situation, as individuals strive to cross the Greek-Turkish land border, traversing northern Greece en route to Central Europe.

In this dynamic context, pushbacks have become a daily occurrence, extending beyond the Evros border river to the interior of the country. Reports from various organizations have shed light on "pushback chains," revealing a disturbing pattern where individuals apprehended in Serbia are subjected to violent and illegal pushbacks across multiple countries, ultimately ending up in Turkey. Concurrently, the pervasive criminalization of refugees and humanitarian aid workers further compounds the challenges faced in this region.

The compelling case of Homayoun Sabetara has garnered significant attention. Forced to drive a car provided to him during his escape from Iran via Turkey, he now faces the prospect of decades in prison. His daughter, residing in Germany, has initiated the FREE HOMAYUN campaign to raise awareness about his plight ahead of the trial. This campaign seeks to shed light on the broader issues surrounding the criminalization of refugees and the challenges faced by those providing humanitarian aid in the region.

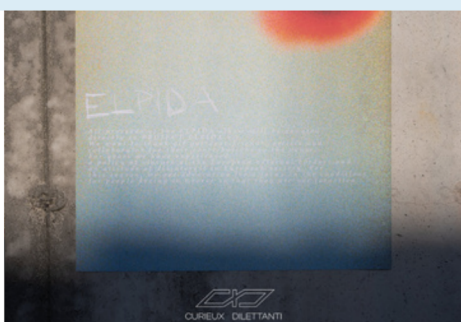


Rarely has the planning for a campaign been so chaotic and eventful. We had barely returned from Athens at the beginning of September when we started the #mykiezcares clothing collection campaign.

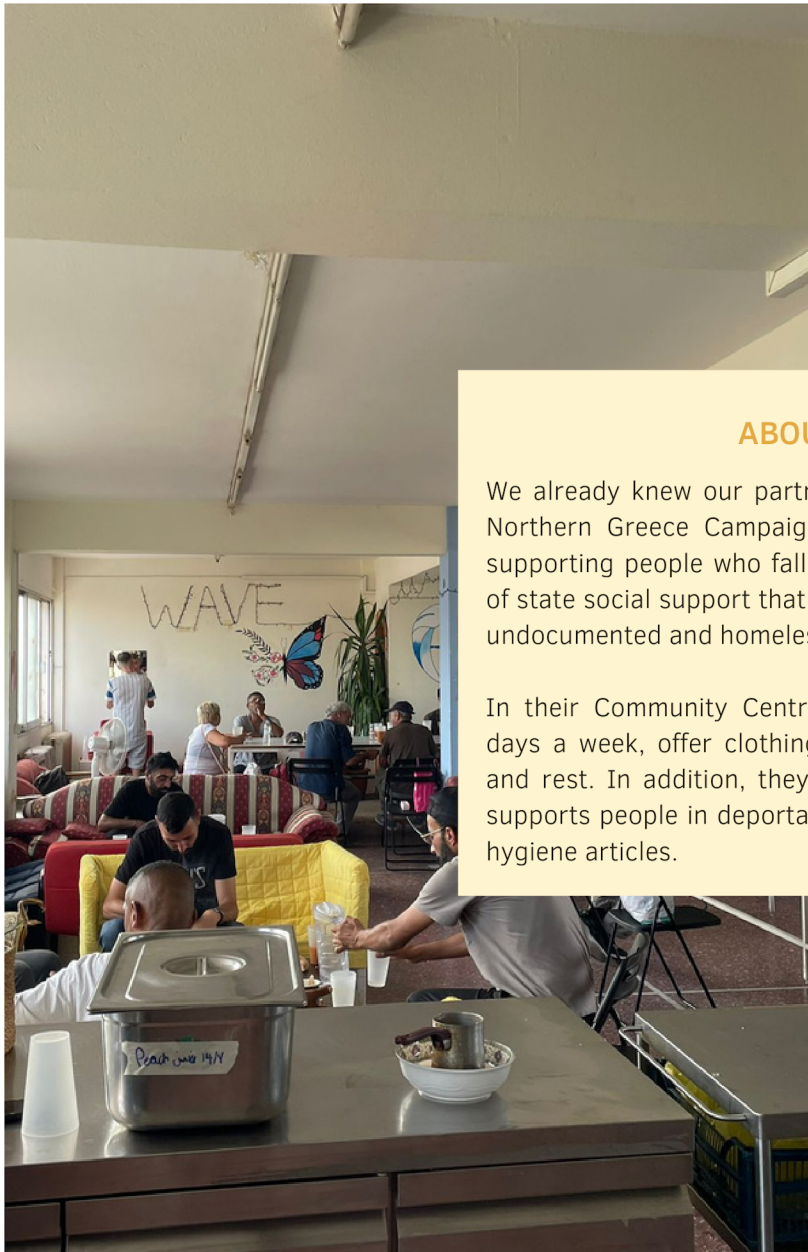
Together with Wir Packens An, LeaveNoOneBehind and ROSA-Rolling Safe Space, we were able to send several pallets of winter clothing to our partner organisations Wave and Khora. We continued with a new partnership with the Curieux Dilettanti collective, who named their first album after us and donated all the proceeds to us. On 14 October, we were invited to the release party at Disco Zwei in Mannheim and were able to present our work.

At the end of November, we were honoured as one of the three winning projects in the social category at the "Wir für morgen" awards ceremony. At the award ceremony in Frankfurt's Städel Museum, we were able to network with charitable projects from all over Germany.

The highlight of the fundraising campaign was ultimately the exhibition "They took away our voice" in Hangar1 in Hangar 4 at Tempelhof Airport. This exhibition, which was created as part of a photo project in Camp Diavata near Thessaloniki, impressively documents the reality of the artists as asylum seekers, but also as women. All of the photos were taken by the women themselves as part of this photo project and we are particularly delighted that three of the artists themselves were present at the vernissage alongside almost 160 invited guests. The exhibition was open from 1-16 December and more than 150 people in total visited.



CAMPAIGNING



ABOUT WAVE

We already knew our partner organisation Wave from the Northern Greece Campaign 2022. Wave has focused on supporting people who fall through the cracks of any kind of state social support that should exist (at least in theory): undocumented and homeless people.

In their Community Centre, they serve hot meals seven days a week, offer clothing or the opportunity to shower and rest. In addition, they are the only organisation that supports people in deportation detention with clothing and hygiene articles.



OUR SUPPORT

Once again this year, the main focus of our support was on sleeping bags and winter clothing. Thanks to the generous support of the Postcode Lottery, we were able to buy 40 sleeping bags, 50 jumpers, 25 winter jackets and 33 sets of thermal underwear locally. We were able to buy high-quality clothing from local wholesalers and small second-hand shops. This was particularly useful at the time, as there was hardly any winter clothing left in stock in Wave's free shop.

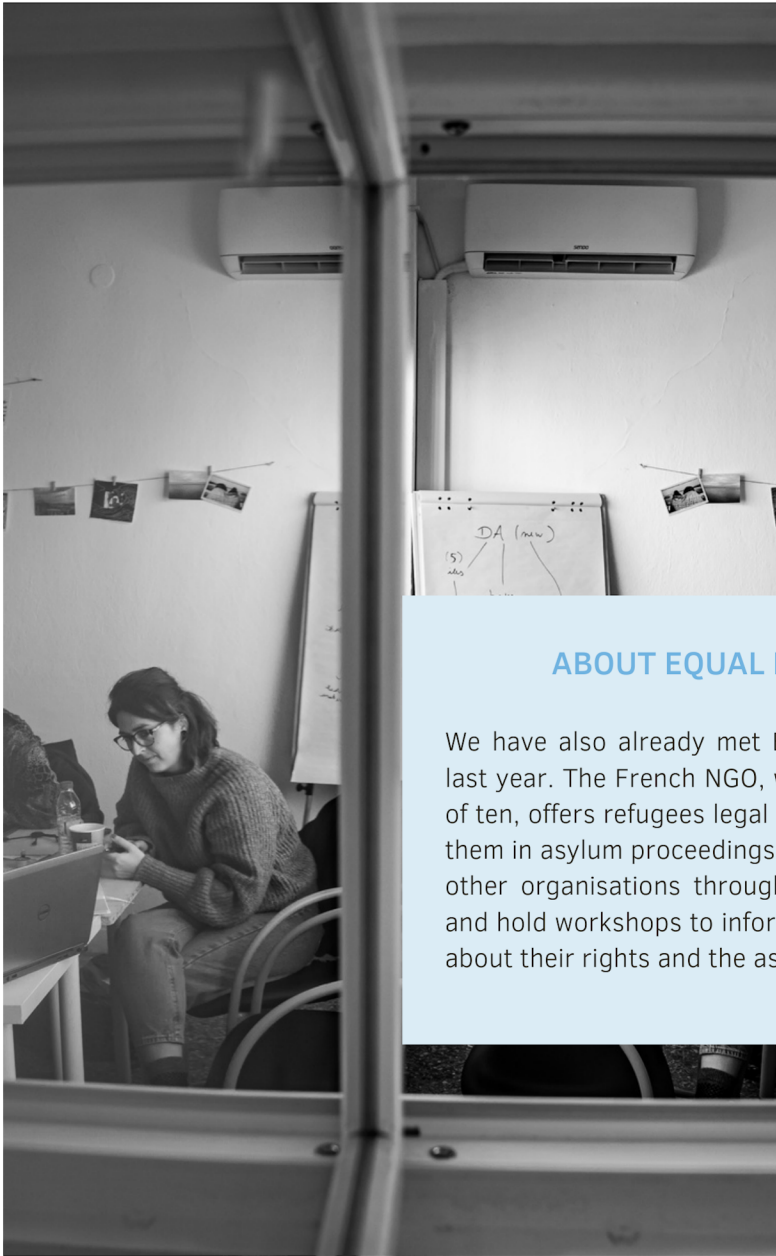
We were also able to buy several kilos of different types of nuts and dates at the traditional market in Thessaloniki, which are offered as nutritious snacks at the Community Centre. We were also able to equip the kitchen with a blender and the laundry service with drying racks.

On our day off, we had the opportunity to experience everyday life at the Community Centre for ourselves and help with chopping vegetables, washing up, cleaning and packing prison packs. We were particularly impressed by the fact that people in need can not only receive a meal, but can also pick up portions to take home for family members.



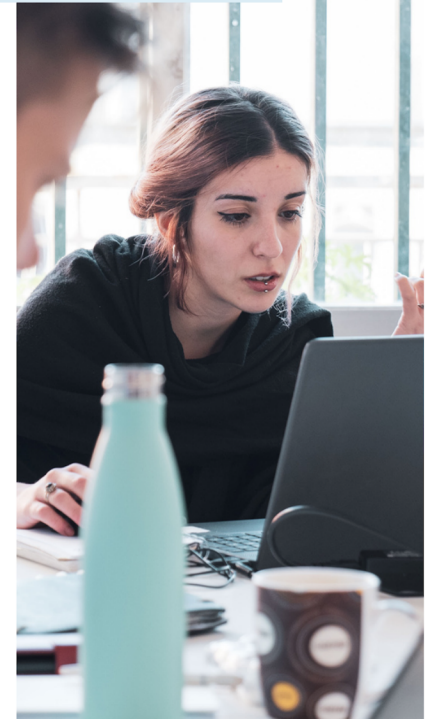
WAVE





ABOUT EQUAL LEGAL AID

We have also already met Equal Legal Aid (ELA) last year. The French NGO, which now has a team of ten, offers refugees legal advice and represents them in asylum proceedings. In addition, they visit other organisations throughout northern Greece and hold workshops to inform people on the move about their rights and the asylum process.



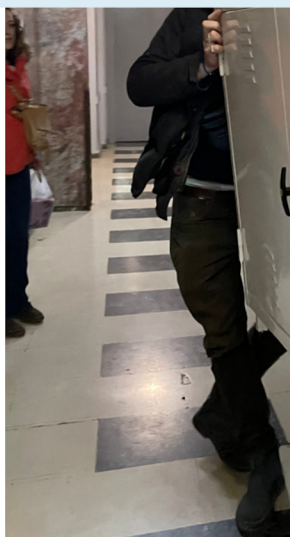
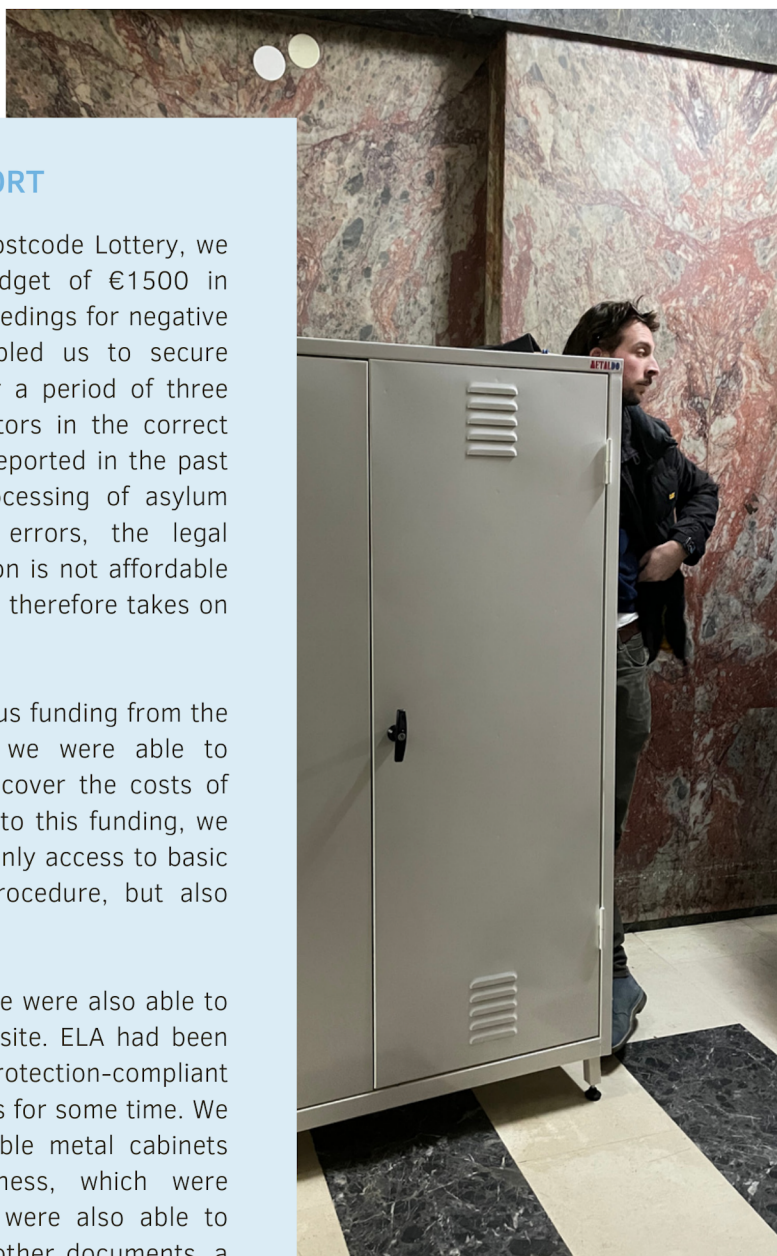
OUR SUPPORT

Together with the German Postcode Lottery, we were able to provide a budget of €1500 in October to fund appeal proceedings for negative asylum decisions. This enabled us to secure three such proceedings over a period of three months. The lack of translators in the correct language has already been reported in the past in the often inadequate processing of asylum applications. Despite such errors, the legal appeal against such a decision is not affordable for most asylum seekers. ELA therefore takes on such cases.

In addition, thanks to generous funding from the GLS Treuhand Foundation, we were able to provide a further €1500 to cover the costs of asylum proceedings. Thanks to this funding, we are now able to finance not only access to basic needs during the asylum procedure, but also access to asylum itself.

In addition to this support, we were also able to provide material support on site. ELA had been looking for a more data protection-compliant way to store client documents for some time. We were able to buy two lockable metal cabinets from a small family business, which were delivered the next day. We were also able to purchase a safe for storing other documents, a first aid kit and an audio speaker for online calls, all of which will contribute to the further professionalisation of the ELA office.

We are very pleased to have found a way to directly finance ELA's legal work and to improve the equipment in their premises.

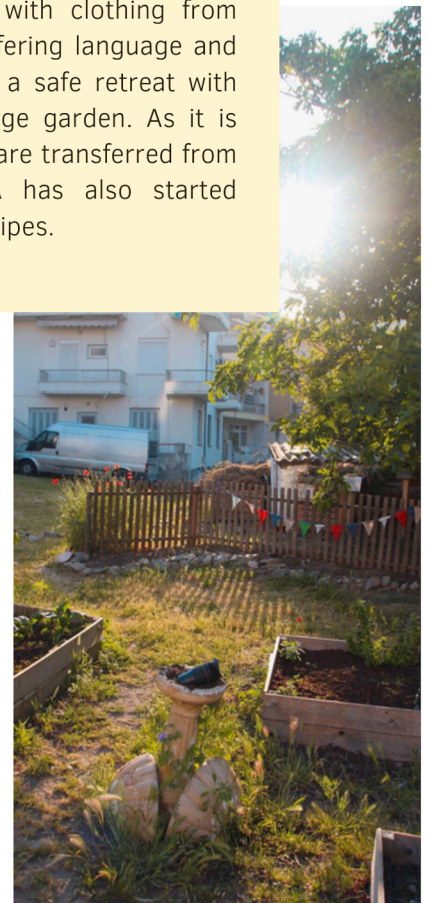
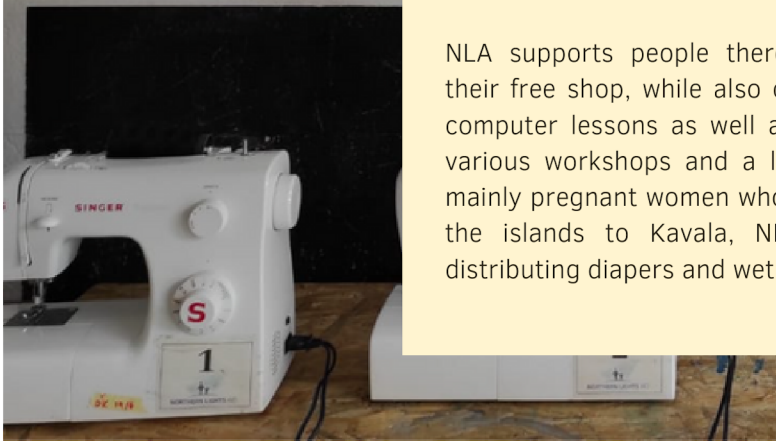




ABOUT NORTHERN LIGHTS AID

Northern Lights Aid (NLA) is the only organisation active in Kavala, a city of 80,000 inhabitants (around 2 hours' drive from Thessaloniki). The camp there has a capacity of 1,200 people, although like many others in Greece it is now overcrowded.

NLA supports people there with clothing from their free shop, while also offering language and computer lessons as well as a safe retreat with various workshops and a large garden. As it is mainly pregnant women who are transferred from the islands to Kavala, NLA has also started distributing diapers and wet wipes.



OUR SUPPORT

As many activities could only take place in a limited space in winter, NLA had been keen for months to create an outdoor area that could also be used in winter. We therefore made it possible to install covers along the marquee in front of the Free Shop. In combination with a heating mushroom, this now results in an almost enclosed outdoor area that invites you to linger. We were also able to buy seat cushions and small tables on site so that this area now resembles a traditional Greek café

In addition, we were able to take over the entire rent for the Free Shop and the Community Centre from NLA for two months in advance, which greatly reduces the financial burden on the organisation and gives it greater flexibility. We were also able to purchase table tennis and volleyball nets for the Community Centre, whereby the table tennis nets have already been used and the volleyball nets will be set up in the garden in the summer. We were also able to pay for the monthly football match on a local pitch for three months in advance and a projector for public viewing of football matches or film evenings.

In addition to all the support for NLA's community activities, it was also important to us not to ignore the distribution of food. Due to the persistently high prices for food in Greece, NLA has already had to make huge cutbacks there. People with two rejections of their asylum application who no longer have access to food in the camp were able to pick up basic food supplies beforehand. For the Christmas distribution, we were therefore able to buy 35kg/l of milk, flour, sugar, lentils, beans, rice and 70kg of pasta. In addition, there was 75 litres of sunflower oil, which was no longer part of the food packs in recent months due to inflation.

This enabled us to make the entire Christmas distribution possible. Finally, we are also very happy to be able to help with printer ink, as many people use the printer in the Community Centre to print out documents for their asylum procedures.



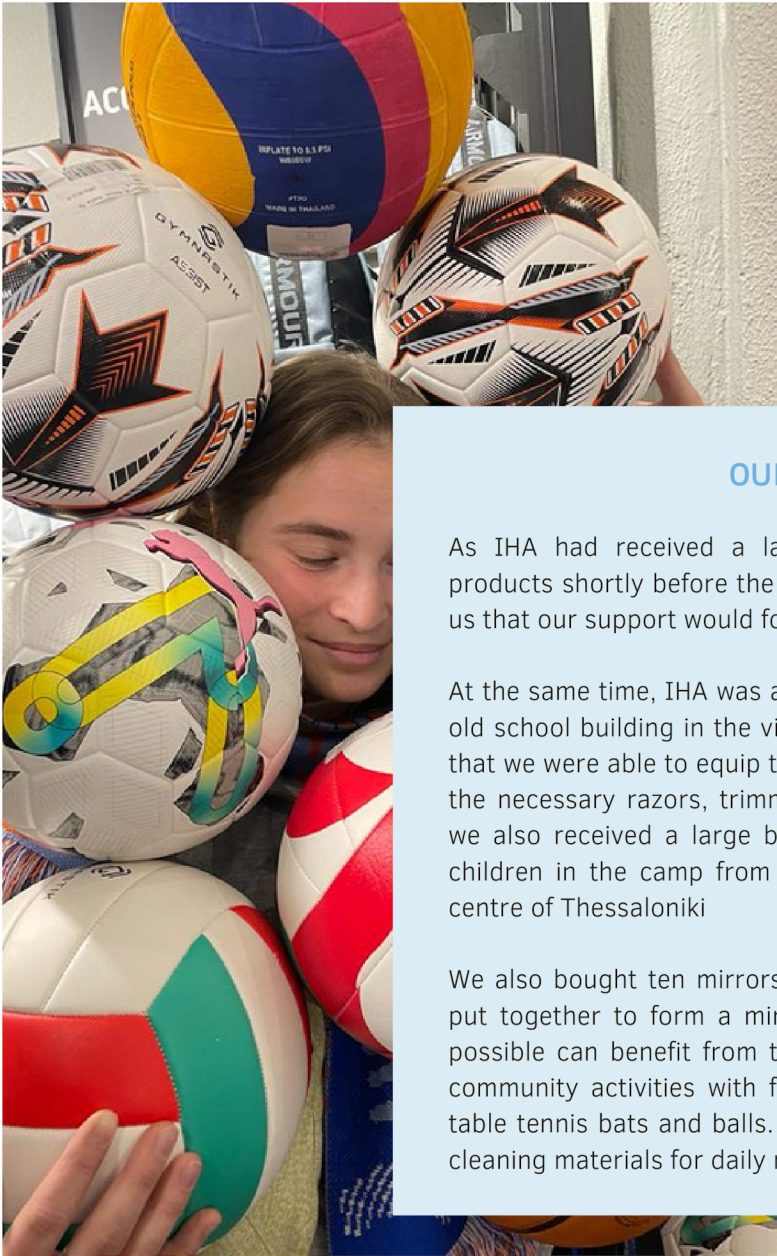
ABOUT IHA

Intereuropean Humanitarian Aid (IHA) is one of our two new partner organisations in this campaign. IHA has been active in two capacities since 2015.

Firstly, they have a warehouse from which they provide donations to organisations throughout northern Greece.

Secondly, they run a community centre near the Lagadikia camp in the eponymous village about 45 minutes from Thessaloniki. There they offer English and Greek lessons, sports activities and clothing and food distributions.





OUR SUPPORT

As IHA had received a large donation of food and hygiene products shortly before the start of the campaign, it was clear to us that our support would focus on community activities.

At the same time, IHA was about to move to larger premises (the old school building in the village). We are therefore very pleased that we were able to equip the Barber & Beauty workshop with all the necessary razors, trimmers, scissors and make-up and that we also received a large bag full of clips and hair ties for the children in the camp from the very friendly shop owner in the centre of Thessaloniki

We also bought ten mirrors for the new premises, which will be put together to form a mirror wall so that as many people as possible can benefit from this offer. We were able to equip the community activities with footballs, basketballs, volleyballs and table tennis bats and balls. We were also able to buy coffee and cleaning materials for daily needs.

IHA



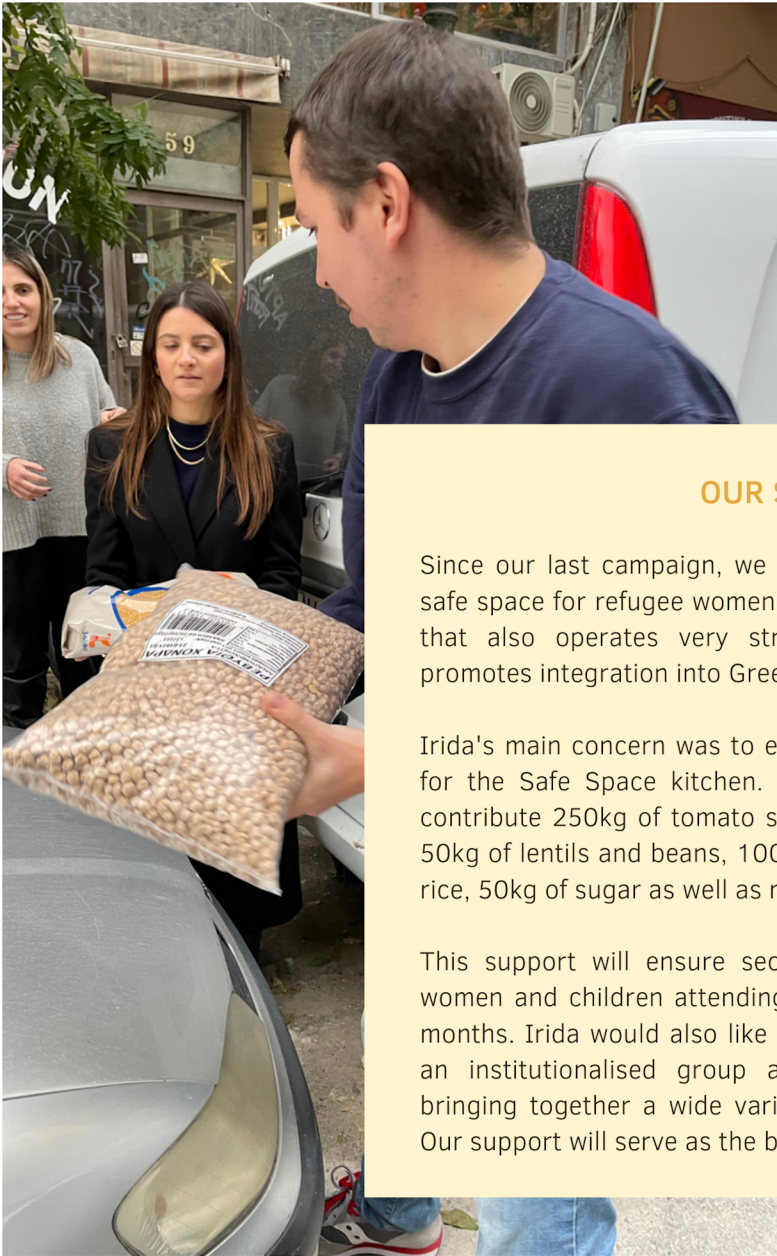


ABOUT IRIDA

Irida is a Greek organisation that runs a large safe space for refugee women in Thessaloniki, complete with childcare. This safe space also houses a professional psychologist and a lawyer who the women can consult at any time. As part of the language lessons offered there, the women can also acquire state-recognised English certificates. There is an entire floor for childcare, a retreat room and a communal kitchen.

IRIDA





OUR SUPPORT

Since our last campaign, we have also been keen to support a safe space for refugee women. In Irida, we found an organisation that also operates very strongly with local structures and promotes integration into Greek society.

Irida's main concern was to ensure long-term support with food for the Safe Space kitchen. For this reason, we were able to contribute 250kg of tomato sauce, 30kg of salt, 50 litres of oil, 50kg of lentils and beans, 100kg of flour, 60kg of pasta, 50kg of rice, 50kg of sugar as well as muesli bars, honey and bread.

This support will ensure secure access to hot meals for the women and children attending the Safe Space over the next six months. Irida would also like to introduce communal cooking as an institutionalised group activity from the start of 2024, bringing together a wide variety of people, recipes and dishes. Our support will serve as the basis for this.

IRIDA



EXPENSES PER PARTNER ORGANISATION



3735,73€



3297,29€



3086,94€



1001,49€



971,51€



TRAVEL EXPENSES



1109,79€

FINANCES

DONATIONS RAISED

FUNDRAISING

6392,96€

POSTCODE-LOTTERIE

5309,79€

GLS TREUHAND

1500,00€

TOTAL


13202,75€

THANKS TO YOUR DONATIONS WE WERE ABLE TO BUY THESE PRODUCTS*

* ALL CENT AMOUNTS HAVE BEEN ROUNDED ON THIS PAGE ROUNDED FOR A BETTER OVERVIEW



Winter Clothing	1589,-
Groceries	822,-
Sleeping Bags	600,-
Car Battery	100,-
Plants	84,-
Paint	55,-
Kitchen Equipment	47,-
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	3297,-



Costs for Asylum Appeals	3000,-
Storage Units	500,-
Conference Speaker	150,-
Safe	54,-
First Aid Kit	31,-
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	3735,-

► Barber-Material & Make-Up	459,-
► Coffee, mirror, cleaning utensils	350,-
► Sports equipment	163,-
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	972,-



FINANCING

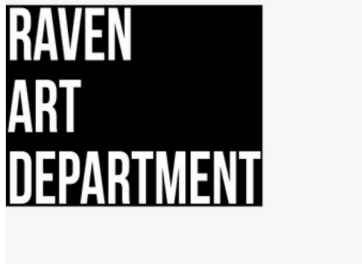


Winter Activities	800,-
Rent	800,-
Groceries	464,-
Centre supplies	214,-
Heaters	210,-
Sports equipment & Football pitch rent	194,-
Tables and Cushions	170,-
Projector	94,-
Gas container	82,-
Shaver	59,-
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	3087,-

• Groceries for meals	725,-
• Groceries for breakfast & snacks	276,-
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	1001,-



PARTNERS



WERK 2



OUR SUPPORTERS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the supporters who have supported us throughout this campaign. None of this would have been possible without you!

A big thank you goes to the German Postcode Lottery for funding our campaigns last year with a total of €15,000 and the follow-up funding for 2024.

We would also like to thank our musical partners from Sing dela Sing, Jakey and RapK, at whose concerts in Berlin and Leipzig we were able to be present with information stands. A very special thank you to Werk2 in Leipzig, where we have been allowed to present ourselves and set up our information stand at various concerts and readings since September.

We would also like to thank Circolo Fotografico Palmarino for providing the photos for our exhibition "They took away our voice". We would like to thank Hangar1 for the location and the Raven Art Department for setting up the exhibition, many thanks for their efforts and many hours of work. Together with Lenou Scarf, we released a Soli scarf in December, which sold out within a few days. Thank you for the design and the trusting collaboration.

Finally, a big shout-out to our friends from Curieux Dilettanti, who not only named their first album "Elpida" after us, but also donated all the proceeds from the album and the release party to us. We are looking forward to everything that is yet to come!

AND NOW - WHAT'S NEXT IN 2024?

The year 2023 was the most successful in the history of Project ELPIDA. At the same time, it was another low point from a migration policy perspective. The reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) legitimises the practices that the Greek government has been carrying out for some time, even on paper.

For us, this means that we need to campaign even more resolutely against "Fortress Europe" and continue to fight to ensure that people in search of a safe life in Europe are not equated with criminals. At the same time, we want to demonstrate solidarity even more effectively and to an even greater extent together with our partner organisations. For us, this means that we will work even harder to obtain funding, cooperate even more closely with our partners and become even more involved in demonstrations and events.

Our participation in the Berlin Half Marathon in April 2024 has already been confirmed, where we will try to raise €8848 with almost 50 runners. Our motto for 2024 is: ELPIDA stands for hope!

