

Measures developed by cities for migrants and refugees during the COVID-19. The case of Larissa.

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Chairman of the City Council





Larissa, a city of 200.000 inhabitants, is the capital of Thessaly situated in a rural area in Central Greece. Larisa, known from the ancient years, is located nearby the ancient Phthia, the home country of Achilles.

Larisa was also the city of Hippocrates and it's located just a few kilometers away from the Olympus Mountain, known as the residence of 12 Greek gods.

Larissa is a city where history meets the modern way of living. The First Ancient Theatre of Larissa situated in the centre of the city, consists a symbol of Democracy reminding the citizens of the importance to actively protect its basic principles .

<http://www.larissa-culturestories.gr/en/>



LARISSA LEARNING CITY

- Since 2015 Larissa – Learning City, as a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, is launching actions based on the humanitarian principles of Lifelong Learning aiming to foster the dialogue between city stakeholders and citizens, encourage partnerships, cultivate critical thinking and active citizenship, and integrate the education and training process in the social and cultural development of the city.
- A network of various entities and sectors has been created (70-member “Larissa – Learning City” committee under the auspices of the City Council.)
- The Municipality of Larissa provides support and care to vulnerable groups, including multi-cultural population (ROMA, refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants e.t.c) and the implementation of projects and side actions for their integration in the local society.



LARISSA AND REFUGEE CRISIS

After the closure of the Balkan route, and with the implementation of the Joint EU-Turkey Statement on 20 March 2016, some 80,000 people remained in Greece.

- ▶ A number of Greek municipalities, including Larissa, decided to contribute to the Greek government's efforts in providing accommodation places and services to asylum seekers.
- ▶ The Municipality of Larissa has been hosting a great number of refugees in a reception centre for asylum seekers in Koutsohero with about 1500 people capacity. From the very first moment of the refugee crisis outbreak, responded with sensitivity by activating all social structures and services in order to cover basic needs.





THESSALY

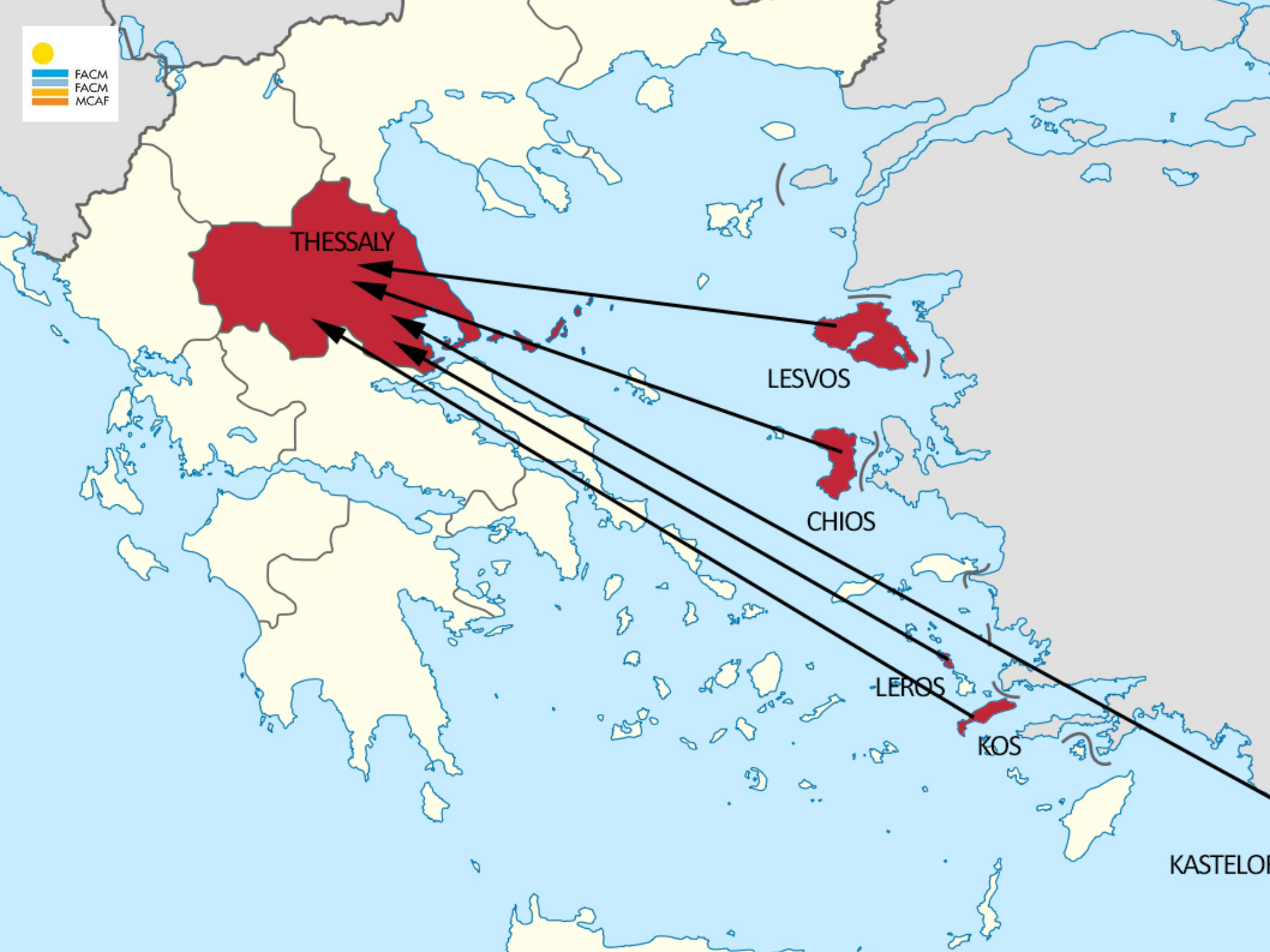
LESVOS

CHIOS

LEROS

KOS

KASTELO



KOUTSOHERO camp



ESTIA PROJECT



This Accommodation Scheme (ESTIA) provides rented housing to vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees in Greece. Urban accommodation provides better access to services, including education and health. People are additionally supported by social workers and interpreters who help them access medical services, employment, language courses and recreational activities. Since 2017 Larissa has about 420 refugees and asylum seekers **in 90 apartments**. 90% of them were Syrian



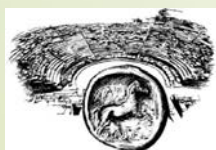
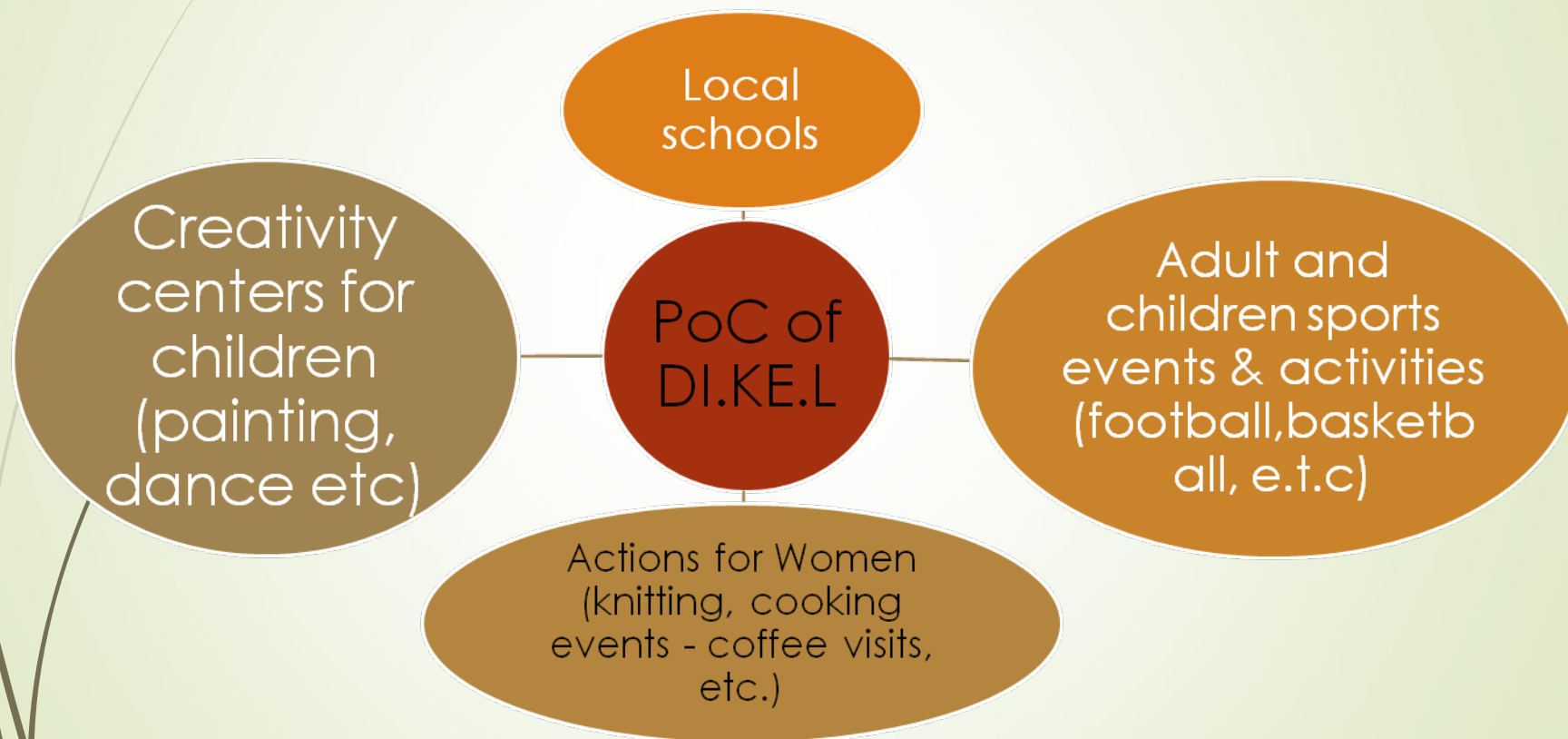


Με χρηματοδότηση της
Πολιτικής Προστασίας και
Ανθρωπιστικής Βοήθειας της
Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Actions for social integration and support, education and recreational activities



ΔΗΜΟΣ ΛΑΡΙΣΑΙΩΝ
MUNICIPALITY OF LARISSA

ΔΗΚΕΛ
ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΗ ΛΑΡΙΣΣΑΣ



LARISSA
LEARNING CITY

Footballnet F.C. Barcelona



ACTIONS on social exclusion



Larissa and COVID-19

- ▶ The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced many challenges and changes to everyone's daily routine with the vulnerable groups affected the most.
- ▶ Refugees living in the town of Larissa and those living in the refugee camp at Koutsochero belong to the vulnerable groups that are in need to be supported in a daily basis. Our priority was to ensure that informing the refugees is a critical part of the designing against the COVID-19.
- ▶ Many volunteers, organisations of "Larissa – Learning City" designed actions like making masks for vulnerable groups.



Masks for all



To ensure that the beneficiaries of “ESTIA” program are properly informed and get the best of support we established:

- ▶ A two-line 24-hour CALL CENTRE were interpreters answer the beneficiaries' questions and provide support.
- ▶ Informing about safety measures they should take for COVID-19 through SMS and distributions of printed material with instructions from major health institutions.
- ▶ Door to door distributions of cleaning materials (chlorine, soaps etc.), antiseptic fluids, sanitation gloves and masks.
- ▶ Daily communication through video calling made by social workers and visits of screening staff to check and cover needs.
- ▶ Constant communication with the doctors responsible the beneficiaries healthcare and distributions of pharmaceuticals to those in need.



KOUTSOCHERO CAMP:

- ▶ Even though Municipality of Larissa is member of a coordination committee mainly composed of NGOs, Municipality not played a key-role during the outbreak of the virus. The ministry of emigration manage Koutsohero camp. But in collaboration with the onsite actors, we tried to inform all refugees and emigrants of the site and secure that all safety measures have been taken, such as proper distancing, sanitation materials, hygiene kits, etc.
- ▶ A different situation/ no measures and closed community

In relation to the Education of refugee children

Refugee parents were given the opportunity to enroll in the Panhellenic School Network through translated instructions in their mother tongues.

In cases where this was not possible, the registrations were made **by the teachers** of the school units themselves and so the students gained **access to the platforms** of asynchronous distance education by approaching the **educational material** posted by the teachers whether **in open lessons** or **in school blogs**

- ▶ **However,** Refugee students, especially in camp, do **NOT** have **access** to computers, laptops, printers or internet connections so that they can effectively communicate remotely.



Καλώς ήρθατε στην ψηφιακή μας τάξη!


Εδώ θα βρείτε αρκετές εκπαιδευτικές δραστηριότητες που θα σας θυμίζουν όλα όσα κάναμε στο σχολείο και θα σας βοηθήσουν να περάσετε όμορφα το χρόνο σας για όσο δάστημα 'Μένουμε σπίτι'.

Welcome to our class!!

د؟ آمد خوش ما کلاس به

صفنا في بكم مرحبا

Bienvenue dans notre classe

الحرف (كبير وصغير)	اسم الحرف	التلفظ	مثل
Α, α	άλφα	/a/ ^أ أد	αεροπλάνο /aeropláno/ طائرة 
Β, β	βήτα	/v/- βίδιο نوفمبر	βιβλίο /viniótio/ كتاب 
Γ, γ	γάμα	/γ/ ^ع عذ	γάτα /gáta/ قطعة 
		/j/ ^ح ياسمين	γιαγιά /jazá/ جدة 

Α, α: تلفظ بشكل مختلف عندما تكون قبل /h/ أو /f/ و بشكل آخر عندما تكون قبل /k/, /g/, /d/ حرف ساكن
Β, β: تلفظ بشكل مختلف عندما تكون قبل /h/ أو /f/ و بشكل آخر عندما تكون قبل /k/, /g/, /d/ حرف ساكن

After 2 months Difficulties...

- Different approach to hygiene and medical procedures appear in disbelief regarding Greek medical system
- A big number of the population does not wish to integrate and treating Greece as a transit country, a temporary place before their final destination
- Xenophobia and Racism
- Problems in Camp – common fate with ROMA (quarantine for 3500 ROMA and 1500 refugees in the same time)

Main questions and priorities

The issue of refugees and other multicultural groups has been managed in Larissa region in a fairly progressive way by local society and with synergies. But with Covid-19 we understand that we have no time.

Main questions:

- How to communicate across cultures?
- How to integrate cultural closed communities?

A big priority for survival...

