How non-formal education by NGOs changes the life of migrants and refugees in Greece:

The case of the multilingual library We Need Books*

W E
N E E D
B O O K S

Inclusion, Interculturalism, Education
Build an inclusive community, spark imagination, and empower refugees and migrants.

ABOUT US

We Need Books is an Athens based NGO that believes that multicultural spaces and books serve several important functions that can be of great benefit to all layers of the population of the city, including marginalised and vulnerable populations such as migrants and refugees.

Acting on this belief, We Need Books has created Greece's first multilingual library, a unique space in which social inclusion, interculturalism and education are actively promoted.

WE NEED BOOKS

Where

- **Schisto Library and CRS Library**
- **Book & Play:**
- From October 2018 to May 2019 We Need Books participated in the Municipality of Athens' pilot programme [Polis 2](#). During this time we operated a multilingual library in Plateia Theatrou, one of the city's most run down areas. It was entirely run by volunteers and through the various cultural events it organised it brought together people of all backgrounds. It offered a collection of over 3,500 books in over 14 languages for children and adults, creative workshops for children ages 2 – 17 and language lessons in Greek, English and German.

- **We Need Books Multilingual Library / Multicultural Center:** This is our new, and hopefully permanent, home! In 7 Evias St., in the vibrant and diverse area of Kypseli, we opened Athens' first multilingual library. With an ever growing collection of over 14,000 books in over 25 languages, a children's library, a beautiful little garden and a friendly atmosphere we aim to make our library the place where neighbours, locals, migrants, refugees, visitors, children, students, pensioners come to read, have a conversation, work or participate in the various language lessons, artistic workshops and cultural activities we organise.

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what

- Collection (14000 books – 28 langs)
- Welcoming space to read (60 p)
- Setting up libraries
- Language lessons
- Language café
- Free Little Library
- Educational activities
- Adopt a book
- Bazaars
- Exhibitions & book presentations
- Speaking @ art events
- Partnerships
- Donations*

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What is non formal education

On education…

- Voluntary
- Active participation + ownership
- Group/context as source of learning
- Learner centered
- Experiential learning
- Holistic
- Value based
- Confidentiality

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Non formal education

- **Lessons (by volunteer teachers*)**

Adults	Language	Country of origin
47	Beginner's Greek	Syria, Iran, Algeria, Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine, Egypt, Germany, Spain, Ghana, Afghanistan, Congo, Nepal
8	German	Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria
8	Greek B1	Ukraine, Lithuania, Bulgaria
7	Spanish	Greek
4	English	Albania, Syria, Egypt
10	Practice (language café)	Greek, English, Spanish
Minors	Language	Country of origin
13	English	Turkey, Algeria, Syria, Afghanistan
3	Greek	Afghanistan

- **Educational activities**
- Mobile library
- Story telling (in many languages)
- Of monsters and books
- Origami, stencil workshops
- Old books into new objects
- Philosophy for children
- Bilingual creative workshops
- Musical workshops

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Lessons from non formal education

- Education is a global religion + Pull not Push, Charles Leadbeater, Education Innovation in the slum, TEDSalon London 2010
- Non formal education for asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants is not a choice. Non formal education shall not substitute for formal education.
- People want to learn in a safe environment
- Networking with the neighbourhood is both the context and part of the learning
- People will learn if treated equally and with care
- Non formal education is a two-way street
- People will volunteer if they find meaning and a structured target
- Cooperation makes non formal education better
- People will learn if they are taken into account into the design of the educational programme they are to follow
- People will learn if they feel their trainers respect and value their input

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more lessons…

- We need stable structures and stable people and a depth of time for equal relations to develop, and lasting relations that will lead to social inclusion

- Our model has samples of success, which will show better in the future (taking into account how difficult this year has been), similar initiatives would have more of an impact collectively, than short term actions / structures

- That the procedure accelerates and it has more chances of success through activities that interest local and non locals equally, such as sports, arts, education

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educators

- **Georgia Fountoulaki**

- Georgia has international experience, a strong academic background and a genuine interest in intercultural education.
  She is specialized in European Civilization, the History of Immigration, and Language Education for Refugees and Migrants.

- She researches issues related to intercultural education, educational material design, identity, culture and migration.

- **Vivi Loulo**

- Vivi studied Social Anthropology in Athens and has a background in working with toddlers and preschoolers who have experienced homelessness.

- She has a passion for helping young individuals build skills, raise self-esteem and develop personal qualities.

- She is thrilled to have the opportunity to promote literacy and reading to young children and to continue supporting the youth.

In stock for the future

- Bodossakis Foundation – Active Citizens' Fund – middle EEA grant

- **We Need Books**
  Partnered with: Norsensus Mediaforum*

  CHARMMS: Challenging stereotypes: empowerment of youth in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and media professionals through workshops on the use of tools and innovative storytelling techniques for implementation against discrimination towards refugees and migrants in the Greek media

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Thank you*