

May 2018

Understanding Efforts to Address the Complex Experiences of Young, Male Refugees in Thessaloniki, Greece

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MAY 4, 2018 | GREECE PROJECT CENTER

LEARN ENGAGE EMPOWER

Understanding Efforts to Address the
Complex Experiences of Young, Male
Refugees in Thessaloniki, Greece

(Czuchra 2018)

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ABSTRACT

Greece has become the center of the largest humanitarian crisis in recent history, as refugees seek shelter and opportunity in Europe. Through conversations with NGOs, volunteers, and refugees in Thessaloniki, this project documented efforts to address the needs of a select and unserved population – young men. Young refugee men often do not meet the criteria of a “vulnerable population” and therefore do not receive specific services. We observed that many initiatives fail due to inconsistent engagement that is related to transience, lack of motivation, or the constant search for better opportunities. Efforts aiming to empower or collaborate with young male refugees are rare and difficult to establish, but are better at promoting integration and independence.



Acknowledgements

Throughout the completion of our IQP project, we had the privilege and honor to work with numerous individuals who have dedicated their work towards providing assistance and aid to the thousands of refugees living in Greece. From the people coordinating large NGOs to the volunteers brightening the lives of refugees one day at a time, the work you all do is truly remarkable. You have not only changed our perspectives on the world, but have energized our team to believe in the pursuit of humanitarian aid for all those who seek refuge from conflict and persecution. We cannot thank you enough for the work you do for others, as well as participating in our project. We want to acknowledge your efforts in contributing to our project and for lives of service you all exemplify.

We would first like to thank all the individuals who took the time out of their days to welcome our questions, willingly sharing their knowledge, and work with us. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge Kaitlyn Waters, Thomas Farines, Gretchen O'Leary, Molly McConnell, Foteini Kelektoglou, Eirini Karanikola, and representatives from Solidarity Now, Anatolia College, American Farm School, Intereuropean Human Aid Association, UNHCR, and the Municipality Task Force in Thessaloniki. Without these insightful interviews, the team would not have gained as deep of an understanding on the complex and fluctuating circumstances of the ongoing refugee crisis.

We have had the privilege to participate in programs to gain a better understanding of the refugee crisis in Greece. We would like to thank the members of the Urban Working Group for allowing us to attend and listen to your collaborative discussion about the current state of the refugee crisis. Also, we would like to thank Kaitlyn Waters for inviting us to help set up her photography exhibit "Through Our Eyes" and meet some of the refugee photographers. In addition, we would like to thank Thomas Farines for allowing us to participate in Aniko's Football for All program. These experiences have provided us with greater knowledge of refugee programming and experiences that we will never forget.

We would like to thank the American Farm School for their hospitality throughout the entirety of our time in Greece. The employees' kindness and resourcefulness made everyone feel comfortable and at home.

Acknowledgements

Thank you Professor Nicola Bulled and Robert Hersh for constantly guiding our work. You have committed so much time and effort into giving us continuous feedback and the motivation to keep moving forward when everything felt like it was going wrong. Through all of the difficulties we faced, you both continually guided us towards creative solutions and intriguing avenues to further our efforts. We would like to specifically acknowledge our advisor, Nicola Bulled, for her continued dedication to our project. Her tireless efforts to connect us with influential and knowledgeable individuals in Thessaloniki were essential in furthering the aims of the project, which would never have gotten off the ground in the initial few weeks without her. We appreciate the many sacrifices she had to make in order to take a hands on approach to our project, provide timely feedback, help us to grow as researchers, and much, much more. Nicola and Bob, we hope you consider yourselves as a part of our team, as our project could not have been realized without your participation.



MEET THE TEAM



ALEX CZUCHRA ABIGAIL DOYLE NIKKI LOISEAU JIMMY MCRAE

Alex: I'm from Dartmouth, MA, studying Biology & Biotechnology with a focus on infectious diseases. I plan to work towards a Ph.D in Virology, where I can work towards a career in rare virus research, hopefully contributing work towards future, potential cures. Outside of academics, I enjoy spending as much time as possible outdoors. I am an avid hiker and fisherman, always trying to split my time equally between the woods and the ocean, though usually the ocean wins. During my time in Greece, I have had the privilege to experience the culture and beauty of the country, with my favorite experience entailing a long hike up Mt. Spathi on the island of Crete. Within the scope of our project, I am eternally grateful for the encounters I have had through befriending refugees and receiving a glimpse into their lives. It has been truly a life changing experience that I hope to never forget.

Abigail: I'm from Kennebunk, ME, and I am majoring in biomedical engineering with a concentration in biomaterials and tissue engineering and a minor in philosophy. Outside of studying, I like reading, listening to music, going to the beach and painting. I've really enjoyed being in Greece for the past couple months. The food, culture, and people have elevated this experienced past what I thought it could be, and I am really grateful for the time I've spent here. I know I will keep these memories with me for the rest of my life!

Nikki: I was born and raised in Worcester, MA where I also decided to attend to college. At WPI, I am majoring in chemical engineering and intend to get a masters degree in Materials Processing Engineering. With my degree, I hope to work in the manufacturing industry. I would love to work in the color department, and I aspire to one day design a new color. Outside of school, I am a cheerleader and enjoy doing yoga and dancing as well. Greece has been the best experience of my life so far. I am in love with the beach and the water here is the bluest I have ever seen. Also, seeing Mt. Olympus across the water is incredibly beautiful. I know the views I have seen here are unforgettable.

Jimmy: I am from Woburn, MA and I am majoring in chemical engineering with a minor in materials science. I hope to lead an R&D team in the nanotechnology or photovoltaics industry. My hobbies include basketball, hiking, reading, and music. I've loved exploring this beautiful country, eating delicious food, and learning from and about the people both in and out of my project. Some of my favorite experiences here have been making new friends from all over the world, exploring Meteora, canyoning at Mount Olympus, attending the Urban Working Group meeting, and playing in a pick-up soccer league for refugees. Being at the forefront of Europe's refugee crisis has opened my eyes to the experiences and circumstances of all those affected. I know for sure that this experience will not leave me when I leave Greece and its effect on me as a person will be long lasting.

AUTHORSHIP

For each chapter of our report, each team member would handle writing one large section. After the initial write up, each team member would rotate to another member's section and revise it. These initial revisions covered grammar, clarity of ideas, proper sources and citations, and accurate content. Subsequently the writer and editor for each respective section would discuss revisions and either accept, decline, or adjust them. Once each section of the chapter was written and revised, one to two members would perform an overall read through of the entire chapter, focusing mainly on clarity of ideas, flow, grammar, making sure everything was covered and making sure there was no overlap. Two people would then go through in-text citations and make sure that all sources were in the bibliography without any unused sources. Finally, the document would be formatted in both a word document for easy editing by the advisors, as well as on Canva to create a more organized document with pictures.

Section	Main Contributors	Main Editors
Abstract	All Members	Alex and Jimmy
Introduction	All Members	All Members
Background	Alex & Abigail	Nikki & Jimmy
Methods	Nikki & Jimmy	Alex & Abigail
Findings	All Members	All Members
Conclusion	All Members	All Members
Formating	Nikki	Nikki

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in 2015, Greece found itself as the epicenter of the largest humanitarian crisis in recent history, with thousands upon thousands of refugees migrating into Greece on route to Northern European asylum nations. As Greece and the European Union's efforts to manage the crisis were pushed to their limits, a temporary patch was needed to mitigate the surges of asylum seekers into Europe. In March 2016, the countries of FYROM (Macedonia) and Bulgaria, who border Greece to the north, shut down their borders to refugee migration, preventing over 60,000 refugees from migrating through Greece. In addition, the EU-Turkey deal, a political agreement where all new Syrian arrivals would be deported to Turkey, was initiated. This deal further reduced the flow of refugees and migrants into Europe. Non-government organizations and volunteer groups flooded Greece, utilizing crisis funding from the UN Refugee Agency-UNHCR and European Civil Protections and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), as well as private donations, to provide necessary services and programs. As the situation has stabilized, most international NGOs have left Greece, with those remaining working hard to build capacity within the ministry and local organizations to establish and manage first- and second-line reception efforts, as well as integration and accommodation programs. Vulnerable populations, including single women, families, and pregnant mothers are prioritized, with specialized programs and services offered that address their unique needs. Syrian refugees are also prioritized over other migrants. Young, male, refugee and migrant populations, considered to be independent and self-sustaining, have few specialized programming to address their unique needs.

With a specific focus on young male refugees, this project aimed to learn about

refugee-related operations in Thessaloniki, engage with the often unserved young male refugee population, and collaboratively develop opportunities that had meaning and value to a small group of young refugee men. We accomplished this in three stages: Learn, Engage, and Empower. An overview is provided in Figure 1.

1. Learn about efforts to address refugee needs in Thessaloniki.
2. Engage and establish relationships with young, male refugees to better understand their individual experiences.
3. Understand empowerment programs by participating in activities and interviewing humanitarian agencies regarding their role in the refugee crisis, as well as their attitudes and efforts regarding empowerment programs.

We conducted 11 interviews and discussions with representatives from humanitarian organizations, as well as engaged with 10 refugees and migrants. In addition, we attended an Urban Working Group meeting, a collaboration of non-government organizations (NGOs), the municipality of Thessaloniki, and the UNHCR addressing the refugee crisis.

While learning about the current circumstances surrounding the refugee crisis in Thessaloniki, Greece, we gained a greater understanding of the stakeholder map of agencies, NGOs, and donors involved in humanitarian aid. This network of entities includes both national and international relief efforts, with those outside of Greece far outnumbering the local groups. There has also been a growing collaborative effort between NGOs and the municipality of Thessaloniki, where they have begun to work

in unison to tackle any new problems that arise and stay up to date on the ever-changing crisis. Most recently, the crisis has entered the post-emergency phase and developed a new focus of integration, causing many of the emergency relief donors to remove their funds and international NGOs with a focus on crisis management to leave.

Our engagements with refugees, NGOs, volunteer organizations, and individuals have revealed a number of efforts focused on refugee engagement within society. Specifically, these efforts focus on providing: housing accommodation, legal counseling, employment opportunities, language classes, opportunities for refugee volunteering, and interactions with the local community. The housing accommodation program is a collaboration between the UNHCR, NGOs, and the municipality of Thessaloniki to provide stable housing to refugees. PRAKSIS, Solidarity Now, Hellenic Red Cross, and ARSIS are the primary local NGOs working on the accommodation program with the UNHCR and the municipality. Solidarity Now and PRAKSIS additionally offer a host of legal, employment, and language opportunities to assist with refugee and migrant integration and engagement in society. These efforts inform refugees of their rights and aid with translations of legal documents, paperwork, and cases where rights have been violated. In addition, the InterEuropean Human Aid Association (IHA) has taken over the management of an established warehouse in the outskirts of the city, where volunteers from Europe help to organize and distribute clothing donations. Organizers hope to engage refugees in this process as well, allowing refugees and civilians an opportunity to work together, as well as developing marketable skills. Finally, the municipality of Thessaloniki has recently developed a refugee advisory board,

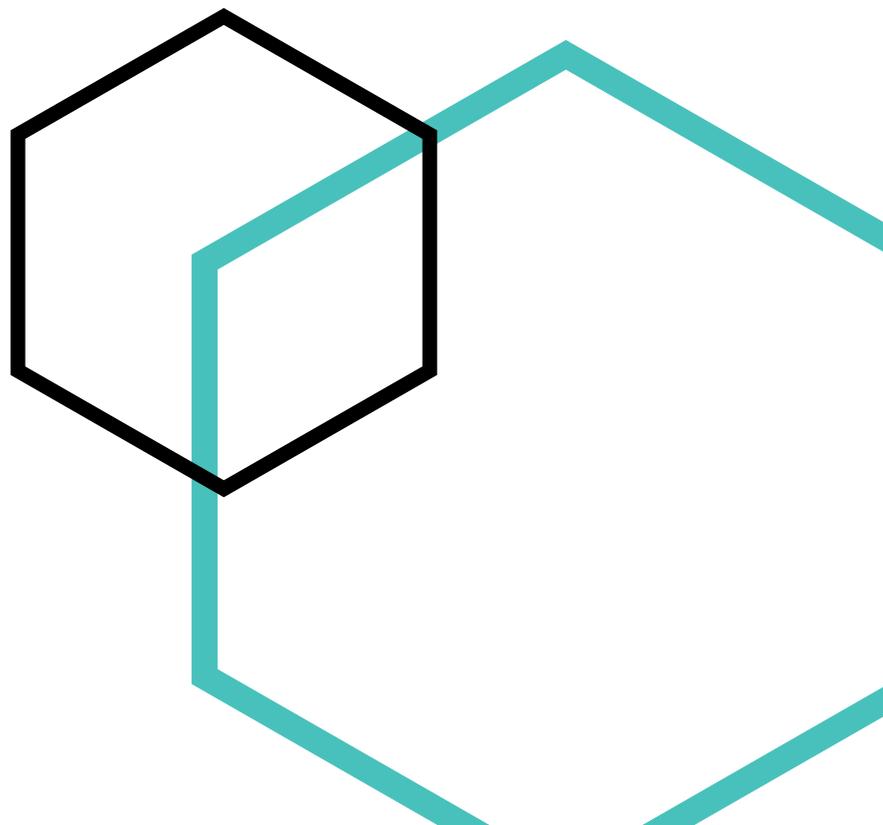
containing four refugees and migrants representing different nationalities. The intentions of this advisory board are to ensure that efforts are appropriately addressing the needs of asylum seekers, not just addressing their perceived needs.

We had intended to establish a collaborative program with young male refugees. While we wanted the efforts to be co-produced, we had developed some ideas that could be accomplished within our limited time frame, including the development of a digital story. We had difficulties initially identifying young male refugees interested in engaging with us, but through networks with NGOs we identified 10 young men who showed initial interest. We spent time getting to know each other through a shared meal and unstructured conversations. With each subsequent meeting, the group of interested individuals decreased. While interest was shown in the idea to develop a digital story, no new ideas were presented by the group. As we started to establish more structure in the meetings, interest and participation vanished. While connections were maintained through social media, we only have one additional conversation with one individual in the group.

Given the difficulties we faced in establishing a temporary program we felt would serve interesting and beneficial to a group who is often overlooked, we turned our attentions to exploring the efforts of others. Aniko, an NGO operating in Thessaloniki, has established three football (soccer) programs for refugees, exemplifying the benefits of empowerment programs. First, Aniko has established its own football club, Aniko FC, comprised of 30 refugees that train multiple times per week and have had success participating in local tournaments. Thomas Farines, the founder, aspires to

have Aniko FC players sign to local Greek football clubs. Additionally, Aniko created a Fans Match program, where fans from three local Greek football clubs play matches against refugee teams. Finally, the organization has established a Football for All program, offered for three hours one Sunday per month, for pickup football games. These efforts encourage community engagement and mutual understanding while also providing a healthy outlet and activity. The Greece Cash Alliance, which provides monthly stipends to eligible refugees, is also fostering greater self-reliance. While refugees remain economically dependent, the cash allows for some daily decisions to be made independently.

There are concerted, collaborative efforts ongoing in Northern Greece, aiming to provide humanitarian aid. However, even within these collaborative efforts, organizational and logistical issues persist. Humanitarian efforts in Northern Greece are faced with the challenge of trying to integrate refugees into a society where many do not want to stay, where funding is limited, and public interest is waning.



INTRODUCTION



FIGURE 1: MAJOR MIGRATION ROUTES TAKEN BEFORE FYROM AND BULGARIA BORDER CLOSURES (BBC 2016).

In 2011, the Syrian civil war and conflicts in surrounding regions started an influx of refugees into Greece that continues today (Chalabi 2013; Ferris & Kirişci 2016). Millions of people from the Middle East and Northern Africa have fled their homes in hope for a safer life (Ferris & Kirişci 2016). One of the major migration routes into Europe, particularly for individuals from Syria and Iraq, was through Greece and planned instead to transit through to other countries (Howden 2017). However, the closing of borders with Macedonia and Bulgaria in

March 2016 initiated a sudden halt of migration to Austria and Germany along what is termed “the Balkan Route” (see Figure 1) (Mohdin 2016; Christides et al 2016). Over 60,000 refugees found themselves unable to leave Greece legally. While Greece was making positive strides towards economic growth, it was still unable to fully support the varying needs of refugees and migrants (Smith 2017; Konstandaras 2017). Refugees were placed into semi-permanent camps, scattered across both the islands and mainland of Greece in an attempt to provide shelter and assistance (Kritikou & Myrillas 2015).

Although initially beneficial, the high numbers of migrants and refugees seeking assistance worsened camp conditions, forcing humanitarian aid entities to adapt (Kritikou & Myrillas 2015; Squires et al. 2016). Many efforts have been made to move away from these temporary conditions, to offer refugees and migrants more permanence.

Given its existing state of economic crisis, the Greek state was limited in its ability to fully address the needs of refugees during the onset of the crisis. As such, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) assisted in the administration of aid in the forms of health care, education, and shelter. UNICEF and the Northern Lights Aid organizations were some of the first and more prominent NGOs to establish education and living assistance to the refugees within Greece (UNICEF 2018; Northern Lights Aid 2018). PRAKSIS and Solidarity Now, both Greek organizations, have focused their efforts primarily on supporting vulnerable communities, taking on the shared responsibility of identifying and arranging longer-term housing opportunities outside the camps and providing language programs, legal assistance and other support services (PRAKSIS 2018; Solidarity Now 2016). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has made efforts to provide semi-permanent accommodations allowing refugees to have a sense of stability in their lives (Kingsley 2016b). As a result of limited capacity and funding, agencies have primarily focused their efforts on the most vulnerable populations, women and children. Consequently, few address the needs of young, male individuals (Krystalli et al. 2017).

Without programs in place to present opportunities and to fill free time, refugees and migrants are often left with little to do. The struggling economic situation in Greece makes it difficult for refugees to find jobs, especially considering language barriers

(Strickland 2018). Furthermore, as the focus of many international humanitarian aid agencies is to address crisis situations, they present the provisions of shelter, food, and clothing in a manner that can often leave beneficiaries in a passive recipient role (Mammitzsch 2017). Given the stabilizing nature of the refugee crisis in Greece, it would presently be beneficial to develop efforts aimed to integrate refugees into Greek society that requires their active participation.

The aim of this project was to learn about refugee-related NGO operations in Thessaloniki, engage with the often unserved young, male refugee population, and collaboratively develop opportunities that had meaning and value to a small group of young refugee men. We accomplished these goals by interviewing NGO representatives and participating in collaborative NGO meetings, as well as conversing with volunteer groups, local Greeks, and male refugees. We also assisted and participated in programs for, with, and by refugees. Through these engagements we obtained insight into the complex circumstances influencing efforts to integrate refugees into the Thessaloniki society.

BACKGROUND

LEARN: Understanding the European refugee crisis in Greece

Throughout 2015, a record 65.3 million people were displaced from their homes due to conflict and persecution (UNHCR 2016b). During the first nine months of 2015, a wave of immigrants arrived on Europe's Mediterranean shores, many of them Syrians fleeing their country's ongoing civil war. As the civil war in Syria showed no signs of slowing down, neither did the massive refugee migration (Ferris & Kirişci 2016). Since then, approximately 13 million people have been displaced from Syria alone. Additionally, rising ISIS influence resulted in the displacement of about 3.2 million Iraqis from January 2014 to October 2015 (World Bank Group 2016). Furthermore, as documented by several journalists, the number of refugees and migrants continued to increase due to the diminishing stability in countries in Africa and the Middle East (Ferris & Kirişci 2016; Howden & Fotiadis 2017; Smith 2017).



Given its geographic position, Greece became the first point of entry for many refugees into Europe, with over two hundred men, women, and children arriving by land or sea every day throughout 2016 (Smith 2017). As indicated in interviews conducted by journalists, most refugees aimed to migrate through Greece to the more desirable European countries of Germany, Sweden, and Norway (Kingsley 2016a; Howden 2017; Squires 2016). Yet, with an increase of over 50 million refugees across the world, as compared to the 16.3 million in 2010, asylum seekers placed a heavy burden on host countries, particularly those in Eastern Europe (World Bank Group 2010; UNHCR 2016b). Consequently, in early 2016, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Bulgaria closed their borders with Greece to asylum travel (Kingsley 2016a). Unable to continue forward, and reluctant to return back, an estimated 60,000 refugees had little choice but to stay in Greece (Howden & Fotiadis 2017).

In March of 2016, Greece's role in the refugee crisis endured a rapid transformation, as the EU made a deal with Greece's neighboring country, Turkey, in order to find a temporary solution (Kingsley 2016a). The borders between Greece and the Balkans were already

sealed off by FYROM and Bulgaria. Therefore, Europe would no longer legally see any refugees through this route (Kingsley 2016b). According to a press release from the Council of the European Union (March 3, 2018), "All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey." Additionally, this allowed the EU to provide a sustainable support and integration platform to asylum seekers, without becoming overwhelmed. The European Commission (2017) stated that Turkey would receive approximately €5.2 billion over the course of several years to handle the influx of migrants. Migrant rights activists have questioned the legality of the deal the EU crafted, as EU policy states that they cannot turn away refugees in dire need (Kingsley 2016b). The deal also called for Syrian migrants to be processed before anyone else, a rule that keeps refugees from other nations waiting. According to *The Guardian* reporters Daniel Howden and Apostolis Fotiadis, this has fueled a growing nationalist sentiment in Greece, causing Greeks to harbor distrust for the EU (2017). Greece now has more refugees than they can support within their borders who will not be leaving anytime



OVER 60,000 REFUGEES STUCK WITHIN GREECE'S BORDERS
(GETTY IMAGES 2016)

soon (Kingsley 2016a). Struggling with the continuing ramifications of its own economic crisis, Greece was particularly unprepared to handle this massive spike in refugees crossing their borders. Greece's economic crisis began to unfold in 2008 with the collapse of Wall Street in New York, United States and continued with Greece's near bankruptcy in 2010. The country admitted to falsifying financial reports by stating minimized deficit numbers for years (Alderman et al. 2016) – more money was reportedly moving into the country than moving out of the country. As a result of austerity measures, enacted as part of the debt bailout package, Greece had to make considerable cuts to government programs (Kanter & Kitsantonis 2017). As stated by Shekhar Aiyar and colleagues (2016) of the International Monetary Fund, an organization overseeing international monetary systems, unemployment rates for Greek citizens hit rates of over 35%, stabilized now at 25% (Karantinos 2016; Kim 2015; Alderman et al. 2016). Prior to 2009, the unemployment rate for refugees and immigrants totaled 11%, but once the economy crashed these percentages soared to over 40% (Karantinos 2016; Aiyar et al. 2016). With national resources becoming increasingly scarce, the influx of refugees placed a further burden on the state and on Greek civilians. Furthermore, Aiyar et al. (2016) argue that refugees have found limited opportunities to prosper economically in Greece.

In an effort to assist Greece, the EU provided 803 million USD to address the needs of refugees (Howden & Fotiadis 2017). However, *The Guardian* journalists Daniel Howden and Apostolis Fotiadis (2017) estimate that refugees cost on average 14,000 USD to house in camps,

so this money from the EU offered little to address the full scope of the refugee crisis, particularly considering that refugees are now settling in Greece. The funds provided, both from the EU and other donors has been distributed both to the state and supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Presently, the wave of new refugees and migrants has slowed, and efforts are aimed at addressing needs associated with the provision of more permanent placement of refugees in Greece. The EU has directed all of their current funding to the Greek government, in a larger effort to establish a more permanent system for distributing aid and organizing housing accommodations instead of camps (Kingsley 2016b). In an effort to implement programs that develop self-efficacy, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has begun the Greece Cash Alliance program, providing financial support to refugee families through monthly stipends (Halais 2018). Other efforts to alleviate the struggles of long-term refugees in Greece continue. Larger NGOs may still receive funding through other sources, such as UNICEF and the Red Cross/Red Crescent, but those reliant on the EU no longer have a consistent source of money. By March 2017, most of the international NGOs operating in Greece to manage the crisis situation removed their services and volunteers (Pollak 2017; Trafford 2017; "Transitioning" 2017).

Beginning in 2015, hundreds of NGOs were on the front lines of the refugee crisis, acting as dynamic humanitarian aid partners to the local and national government assistance by filling in where the state could not (Howden & Fotiadis 2017). One of the prominent organizations in the refugee crisis is

PRAKSIS, an independent NGO which focuses on assisting vulnerable communities in Greece (PRAKSIS 2018; Foteini Kelechtsoglou, personal communication, March 21, 2018). During the initial surges of refugee arrivals, PRAKSIS aided in the entry, initial medical care, and processing of asylum applications for refugees. PRAKSIS also provided social workers, translators, and educators to facilitate the services that were being implemented in the refugee camps that were established throughout Greece.

As many of the camps in northern Greece have closed or consolidated, PRAKSIS and other NGOs, including Solidarity Now, with offices in Thessaloniki (the largest city in northern Greece and second largest in Greece) with offices in Thessaloniki (the largest city in northern Greece and second largest in Greece) have shifted services to include both identifying and managing the housing of refugees. Hundreds of apartments across Thessaloniki were rented out by the NGOs, and used to provide living accommodations to refugees within the city. The UNHCR is responsible for identifying refugees in need of housing and linking them to collaborating NGOs (Foteini Kelechtsoglou, personal communication, March 21, 2018). PRAKSIS maintains 100-150 units within the city of Thessaloniki and Solidarity Now manages over 350 units in Thessaloniki (Solidarity Now representative, personal communication, March 22, 2018). Additionally, for each refugee or family unit, the NGOs arrange for a translator and social worker to help the refugees with day-to-day needs. Beyond their accommodation programs, both PRAKSIS and Solidarity Now offer communications and legal centers designed to assist refugees with their

asylum applications (Solidarity Now representative, personal communication, March 22, 2018). Employment offices also assist refugees with curriculum vitae, resume, or job application development, interview skills, and job placement. Language classes are also offered, in addition to workshops in entrepreneurship and business laws in Greece. The aim of these services is to help integrate refugees into the Thessaloniki the Thessaloniki society.

While efforts globally, and in Greece, make concerted attempts to address the perceived needs of refugees, certain groups receive more attention than others. Female refugees, although significantly less likely to travel alone in support of their family, are generally still seen as a more vulnerable population. Nicholas Cotterill, Marta Welander, and Nusha Yonkova (2016), reporters for *Refugee Rights Europe*, an NGO focused on refugee research, completed a report concerning the specific violences and situations faced by women compared to men. Through interactions with 38 female refugees and 58 service providers across mainland Greece, they found that 88% of women did not know where to find contraception, 65.5% had experienced violence by men in the camps, and a growing majority of the women are mothers. Many NGOs and institutions have identified some of these reasons as the rationale for women being a more vulnerable population compared to the males.

ENGAGE: Analyzing efforts that address the needs of refugees



(Gouliamaki 2014)

Refugee crises are common throughout history and present in all areas of the world. Matthew Hodes (2017), professor of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, and his colleagues argue that Europe and North America currently serve as economically prosperous safe-havens, and as such the desired destinations of refugees escaping conflict and persecution in the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Asia. The financial attractiveness of Europe and North America are not just ideal for refugees. Migrants escaping poverty and other destitute circumstances also journey to these locations for a better life. Though potentially looking for similar opportunities by uprooting their lives and journeying elsewhere, *CNN* reporter Michael Martinez, states that according to the UN, refugees are distinguishable from migrants because they are forced to leave due to persecution or violence, while migrants choose to move (2015). Hence, the creation of the 1951 Refugee Convention which officially declares the following:

No Contracting State shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, (The Refugee Convention 1951, p. 30)

Thus, refugees can also be migrants, but migrants are not always refugees. Given the number of people currently seeking refuge in Europe and the implementation of the EU-Turkey Deal which arguably violates this 1951 Refugee Convention, Greece is faced with many challenges as a host. However, examples of smaller scale successes addressing the needs of refugees and even resettlement can provide guidance for service delivery.

Assimilation versus Integration:

Refugees arriving in a new host country often face a completely different culture with new languages, food, lifestyles, religions and much more. Functioning in this new society is influenced by the ability to either assimilate or integrate into the host society. The distinguishing feature between assimilation and integration involves how much of one’s personal identity is obscured or abandoned. Refugees and migrants who assimilate to a host society, essentially shed their culture of origin to fit seamlessly into the new culture (Cardiff University 2015). By contrast, refugees and migrants who integrate will add to their existing culture parts of the new culture, and by doing so are ideally seen as distinct but equal in their new society (Cardiff University 2015; O’Brien 2016).

A recent study performed by economist Mikkel Barslund (2017) and fellow scholars from the *Centre for European Policy Studies* in Brussels, explored the integration of Muslim Bosniak asylum seekers during the 1990s in various countries in Europe. The study evaluated unemployment rates, education opportunities, integration methods, and type of residency granted to refugees as measures of successful functioning relying on personal assessments of levels of integration. Table 1 displays the number of Bosnian refugees within each European country studied. Table 2 presents a comparison of the ways in which each country within the study addressed issues of employment, residency, and social integration.

Some countries, such as the Netherlands, offered additional services including language classes such that refugees could better communicate, obtain employment, and function within their new communities and provided refugees with equal access to welfare and social services

(Barslund et al. 2017). However, when asked, the refugees receiving these services expressed that they felt unable to openly display any of their own cultural identity in the Netherlands, since they were required to assimilate rather than integrate to be accepted and function within society.

Sociologist Maja Korac (2003) similarly assessed the integration of refugees into European societies. The study was conducted through in-depth interviews with 60 refugees in Amsterdam and Rome. In one of the interviews in Amsterdam a 35-year-old Bosnian refugee described his experience positively in regard to the availability of resources, but negatively in that he felt no personal connection with the community. By contrast, despite offering few resources, Korac’s 2003 study found that refugees in Italy felt freer to share their cultural identity. For example, a 29-year-old Bosnian man that had recently graduated from a university in Rome stated, “I feel at home in Rome,” (Korac 2003, p. 60) while only granted a temporary residence permit.

Table 1: Bosnian refugees in respective European countries

Country	Registered Refugees from Bosnia	% Host Population
Germany Austria	320,000	0.4
	86,500	1.1
Sweden	58,700	0.7
The Netherlands	22,000	0.1
Denmark	17,000	0.3

Table 2: Level of Assistance Offered Bosnian Refugees by Respective European Countries

Country	Type of Residency Granted	Education	Integration Methods	Financial Support
Germany	Temporary with forced repatriation once the Bosnian war ended.	Limited: refugees last in priority system; unlimited only after four years of employment or one year of training.	No or very limited access, due to their special status.	Social assistance similar to natives.
Austria	Initially temporary, implicitly converted into permanent residency right after the Dayton Agreement. No forced repatriation.	Limited until 1995, then unlimited. Access to education for children from time of arrival.	Language and vocational training as well as measures to promote social integration.	Funds for accommodation and small sums for pocket money
Sweden	Initially temporary residency. In June 1993, most Bosnian refugees were granted permanent residency.	Unrestricted labour market access since June 1993; unrestricted access to education.	Permanent residents automatically entitled to language and training courses; subsidized employment for refugees eased entry to labour markets.	Social assistance similar to natives.
The Netherlands	Initially temporary but most Bosnians received refugee status and thus permanent residency as early as 1993.	Little to no access to labour markets while asylum procedure ongoing. Full access to labour markets and education granted once refugee status was obtained.	Very few initially, with participation in language and integration courses on a voluntary basis first, then stricter later on.	Provisional accommodation initially; 445 Dutch Guilders monthly from social services; after 1993, full access to social security benefits
Denmark	Short-term temporary residency (six months, renewable) initially; converted into permanent asylum for most refugees throughout 1995.	Very limited: no initial labour market access, then subject to priority system. Full access only with asylum status granted in 1995; children exempt from regular school system until June 1994.	Very few initially; integration measures only introduced in 1995.	Only provisional accommodation in refugee camps initially; access to social assistance only from 1995.

Organized sports have historically helped refugees integrate within a foreign environment by creating a shared activity with locals, as Melanie Hall (2016), a *Telegraph* reporter, discusses in her article about asylum seekers participating in German cricket leagues. In Germany, refugees from Afghanistan have more than doubled the German Cricket Federation, increasing the 1,500 cricketers in 2012 to 4,000 in 2016. Where once there were only 70 teams registered, there are now 205 with half of the Under-19 team composed of refugees. An assessment of this development found that refugee participants feel happier and more integrated into society when playing in the cricket league, allowing them to adapt to life in Germany more quickly. Helen Womack and Gordon Welters

(2017), UNHCR reporters, describe that refugee players in the German cricket league SG Findorff, echo that cricket has provided them with the opportunity to make friends with both refugees and locals. Similar effects are evident in soccer leagues across the world, as discussed by Warren St. John (2007), journalist for *The New York Times*, who argues that the host and refugee community are brought together through consistent practice and training with American coaches, as well as social events such as pool parties. These refugee players found sports to be a healthy distraction from their new environment and served as a reminder of home.

Empathy Development:

Artistic expressions, such as theater productions and mural creation, have proved a useful opportunity for refugees to inform local communities of the challenges they face. For example, in describing the Daquq Theater Group, a refugee-created theater group started in the Iraqi refugee camp, Daquq, Mahmoud Al-Najjar and Gilgamesh Nabeel (2017), journalists for *USA Today* indicate that the group provides refugees with an opportunity to act out their own experiences while also relating to other refugees who have similar pasts. More importantly, these play productions help refugees feel like they are no longer being “ignored in their misery” (Al-Najjar & Nabeel 2017). Refugee theater programs continue in Germany, where the Exil Ensemble troupe, consisting mostly of refugees, travels through Germany performing plays conveying the refugee experience (Goldmann 2018). Based on personal monologues, the plays act both as an outlet for refugee actors to share their stories as well as an informative production for local audiences.

The creation of large art pieces like murals and the organization of art exhibits similarly contribute to empathy development and the incorporation of refugees in their new communities. A recent effort to generate empathy for refugees in communities throughout

Europe include an art program initiated by British artist Hannah Rose Thomas (Yaxley 2015). Using old and retired UNHCR tents as giant canvases for art pieces, refugees were encouraged to use the platform to express themselves through poetry, drawings, and memories of home. These canvases have since been displayed in Jordan, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland. This approach is a simple way to tell first-hand accounts of refugees around the world. In Amsterdam, the Temporary Museum utilizes an old-prison-turned-camp to display works of art created by refugees (Siegal 2017). While refugees use this as an opportunity to articulate their own experiences, local visitors simultaneously learn more about their new neighbors. Ideally, this increases both refugees’ feelings of acceptance in their new community and locals’ feelings of amicability. Analogous to the Temporary Museum in Amsterdam, is the Za’atari Project in Jordan, which involved the partnership of Syrian refugees and local Jordanian artists to create collaborative murals in both the refugee camps and the surrounding community (Artista 2017). In this case, art is used to both encourage collaboration and bring hope and acceptance to the hosting societies, as well as to provide an outlet to express the current experiences and desired futures of the Syrians.

In May 2017, the organization Asklepeion (2017) helped create an art



(Artista 2017)

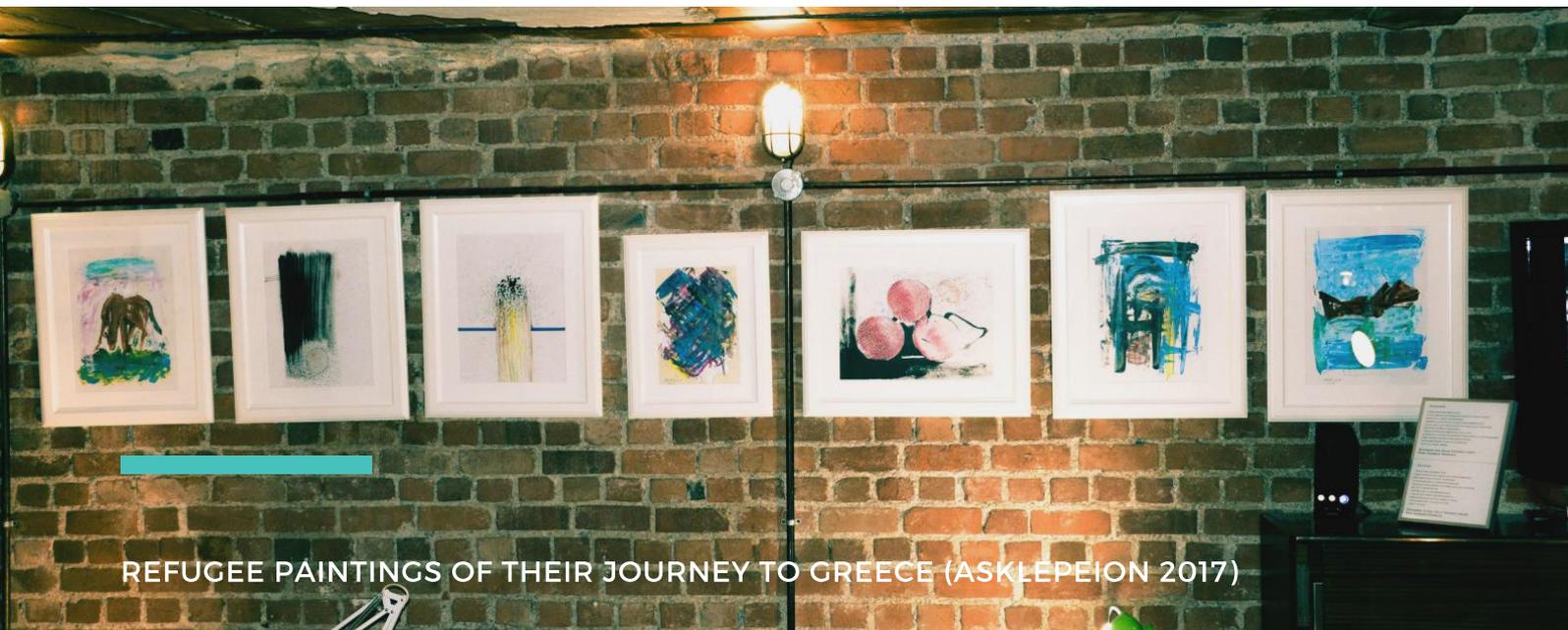
exhibit of refugees' work focusing on their journey to Europe from their home countries. Asklepeion initially created the exhibit in Thessaloniki, Greece, but it now travels to various countries throughout Europe. The exhibit, called "The Small Room With 101 Windows," consists of three different sections. The first section is a library of stories written by refugees who participated in the project. The second consists of paintings, and the third displays digital stories. Such a large exhibit allowed organizers to reach out to a large group of refugees offering an expressive platform to share stories. Additionally, the artistic nature of this project allowed refugees to express themselves through non-verbal means, which according to psychologist Cathy Malchiodi (2016), has the ability to help reduce the anxiety and stress of chaotic lives.

Empowerment:

Humanitarian responses are primarily focused on only addressing the biological needs of vulnerable populations. As discussed in a report by Refugee Economies Programme by researcher Evan Easton-Calabria and colleagues (2017), healthcare, food, and housing remain priorities in crisis situations. These needs are usually provided directly, with beneficiaries playing a passive role that

can result in the development of reliant and unmotivated recipients (Easton-Calabria et al. 2017).

In other cases, the self-reliance and motivation of refugees is pronounced. A report from the UNHCR (2003), Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) for Uganda Self Reliance Strategy, discusses efforts that have been made to empower refugees. Through the provision of plots of land for agriculture and/or home building, the Ugandan government and the UNHCR have worked together to grant refugees the freedom to move from their initial settlements and the ability to seek employment (Hattem 2017; Murphy 2017; Taylor et al. 2016). The development of well-established societies in Ugandan refugee camps following the 2003 DAR strategies suggests that self-reliance initiatives allow refugees to foster independence. In addition, the World Food Program's (WFP) refugee policies in Uganda focus strongly on providing for refugees with the intent of establishing stability, through the slow reduction of government aid. WFP provides full food assistance for refugees in their first three years, subsequent reductions in years four and five, and the expectation of full autonomy after year five (Taylor et al.



REFUGEE PAINTINGS OF THEIR JOURNEY TO GREECE (ASKLEPEION 2017)

2016). A successful micro-economy has developed, involving the production and sale of cooking charcoal by South-Sudanese refugees (Murphy 2017). This design follows a grounded approach in which NGO assistance takes into account refugee perspective and encourages refugee participation in the decision making so that refugees may slowly become independent. Continuing along these entrepreneurial lines, a radio station was constructed by refugees in a camp in order to spread messages within the camp, allow for, in addition to other things, the reunification of families (Betts, Bloom, Kapla &, Omata 2016). These examples show how, with the right policies in place, empowering refugees is possible.

Journalist Matt Alesevich (2018) writing for *Pacific Standard* visited the Skaramagas refugee camp which is the largest camp within Greece. Through interviews with refugees he found that many have created their own micro economies within the confines of their refuge. Many of the NGOs in other camps provide programs and activities, the likes of which have been described previously, but working, shopping, and playing are all facets of life that were missing. The refugees took it upon themselves to establish a camp economy and community that included a makeshift grocery store, arcade parlors, and barbershops. According to Alesevich (2018), opening these establishments often drained a refugee of his/her savings, but most, if not all indicated that they would do it again to return to a small sense of normalcy and control over their daily lives.

More often than not, these micro economics or camp communities do not last for a significant amount of time before being shut down by the organization operating the camp or from police raids (helprefugees 2016).



**SKARMAGAS REFUGEE CAMP
(ALESVICH 2018)**

According to an interview with Corinne Gray, co-lead of the UNHCR's innovation unit, hosted by Marcus Fairs (2016) of Dezeen, this strong-armed control by large entities is a result of the top-down approach being taken by many of the NGOs and governments handling refugee camps and aid. Dan Bulley (2014), professor of international relations, argues that the UNHCR maintains such strict control over their camp structures and communities to align with the top-down approach their experts have devised. This leaves little to no room for refugees to establish the community they desire and need in order to thrive. Instead, aid recipients are forced into the mold of a community designed by NGO employees. Bulley (2014) concludes that when refugees are not allowed to establish their own community, they lose out on a higher quality of life.

Examples of Successful Integration

Integrating Refugees into Australian School Systems:

Loshini Naidoo (2012), a professor of Education at the University of Western Sydney, conducted a study that analyzed the effectiveness of programs aimed to improve the academic success of students with refugee status. These students attended high school in three different regional areas within Sydney, Australia. Teachers and refugee students engaged in one-on-one interactions and received additional language courses. Curricula were adjusted to accommodate literacy levels while keeping students at the established grade level. In her assessment of this approach, Naidoo (2012) argued that it created an environment that encouraged development, deep thoughts, and a sense of independence. Furthermore, Naidoo (2012) discovered that through the relationships with their educators as well as Australian students, refugees' built connections within the community. This has encouraged integration into Australian society as well as created a sense of normalcy in their lives.



(RoadstoRefuge 2015)

Learning to Adapt in Croatia:

From 2015 to early 2016, approximately 800,000 refugees and migrants originating from the countries of Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq have entered Croatia seeking refuge (Maršanic, Franic, and Čurkovic 2017). Prior to the Croatian and Bosnian war of 1991-1995, there were not many mental health care programs in Croatia. However, many refugee children of the Bosnian war were severely affected by the traumatic event of uprooting their lives. Vlatka Boričević Maršanic, Tomislav Franic, and Katarina Dodig Čurkovic (2017), who are medical professors in Croatia, found through their research that Croatia established a permanent mental health system in response to learning about the serious mental health issues refugee children were suffering from in 1995. Some of these programs included family counseling, individual counseling, and mental health screenings in school. From the development of these programs and the experience gained by medical professionals, the study found that Croatia learned from the past and was much more prepared for when the refugee crisis began in 2015. In the time of crisis, protocols and programs are now continuously updated to adapt to the needs of the population.



(Evstafiev 1993)

Faisal, an Iraqi refugee adjusting to the US:

For Iraqi refugees in the US, religious leaders are proving a valuable asset. Through a variety of counseling approaches, Frederic Bemak, Rita Chung, and Paul Penderson (2002), professors of counseling and psychology, have been analyzing specific cases to help refugees integrate into society, detailed in their book *Counseling Refugees: A Psychosocial Approach to Innovative Multicultural Interventions*. In one case study discussed by Bemak, Chung, and Penderson (2002), Faisal, a 16-year-old Iraqi, male, refugee living in the US is struggling to transition into his new life. His father had been held captive back in Iraq, leaving his mother to provide for her five children and accompanying grandparents. Eventually, Faisal's father was discovered and brought to America, but suffered terribly from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which put a massive strain on Faisal. As the eldest male, he often took on the role of caring for his father and eventually needed to provide financially for his family. He attempted suicide after feeling immense pressure to support his family and still pursue his own interests. Bemak, Chung, and Penderson (2002) provided two avenues to help the family and Faisal heal. The first would be to help the family become more educated on the financial assistance offered to them, and the second would be to find a sheik, a well-respected religious member of a Muslim community, who specialized in mental health and victims of war. Bemak, Chung & Penderson (2002) concluded that their hopes would be for the family to become empowered, by accepting these recommendations and taking initiative by moving forward.

EMPOWER: Shortcomings of the humanitarian sector to address refugee integration in Greece

Defining Empowerment:

Empowerment does not have one singular definition. Instead, “to empower” constitutes a variety of interpretations and executions. The Refugee Empowerment Center (2018) based in Nebraska, USA, has a mission statement which relates empowerment to refugee self-sufficiency, gained via programs offered by the organization. In this case, the Refugee Empowerment Center offers opportunity to a vulnerable group that typically does not have social impact. However, refugee perspective and collaboration is excluded from the offered programs. Thus, refugees have access to resources that improve independence (like language classes) and ideally lead to integration through self-reliance. However, in these instances, refugees are still being given assets and not expressing control during the process. Conversely, at the Ampain Camp in Ghana, the UNHCR has partnered with refugees to work collaboratively to build and improve refugee shelters (UNHCR 2016a). Joining forces to work collectively towards a shared goal allows UNHCR to assist the refugees by providing material, and also allows the refugees to work alongside those that are providing a service as equals. In this example, refugees are asserting their agency by helping themselves and displaying control over the procedure and outcome of the project that is intended to assist a larger population of refugees.

As discussed, there are large and structured organizations in place, such as UNHCR, PRAKSIS, and Solidarity Now, which are able to provide housing, social services, medical care, and much more. Additionally, the Greece Cash Alliance provides financial support to refugee families through monthly stipends (Halais 2018). Upon arrival in Greece, refugees are able to receive these services. However, opportunities to take charge of their lives and exert a sense of independence are less encouraged. Refugees may have an apartment to live in and a stipend for food and other necessities, but opportunities to voice ideas are lacking and the connections and means to initiate such ideas are difficult to find.

Scholars of International Affairs, Roxanne Krystalli, Allyson Hawkins, and Kim Wilson (2017), conducted a study analyzing how gender affects refugee experiences through interviews with 109 male and female unaccompanied refugees (mostly from Afghanistan) in Greece, Denmark, Jordan, and Turkey. Despite interviewing an equal number of males and females, the study found a disproportionate number of unaccompanied young, male refugees, get significantly less access to aid assistance for male refugees. A majority of those interviewed claimed that the humanitarian aid sector favors families, women, and children, constantly pushing others, and especially men, to the back of the line.

Coordinator of the refugee programs for PRAKSIS, Foteini Kelektoglou, further elaborated on the commonality of unaccompanied refugee boys and young men in Thessaloniki, saying they can be seen as the hope and anchor for the rest of the family back home to one day provide enough so that the family can all be reunited in Europe (Foteini

Kelektoglou, personal communication, March 21, 2018). As described by reporter Gal Koplewitz for *Harvard Political Review* (2017), the Swedish NGO, Lighthouse Relief, along with other NGOs and volunteer organizations on the Greek island of Lesbos, noticed the initial lack of engagement with young male refugees as early as 2016. Part of the solution to improving the NGO relationship with this demographic was to offer English classes and resume workshops. However, as Lighthouse Relief Head of Communications Anna Tascha Larsson observed, attendance for such opportunities is low considering many of these young men come from Syria, a country that has been in a state of war for at least six years, and haven't attended school in a long time (Koplewitz 2017). An American fellow at the American Farm School, Gretchen O'Leary, who works with unaccompanied minor boys in the Thessaloniki PRAKSIS program, suggested that many of these boys traveled to Greece acting as the primary caretaker of their families, which is supported by the evidence of Krystalli, Hawkins, and Wilson (Gretchen O'Leary, personal communication, March 14, 2018). As potentially the eldest male of the family, O'Leary explained that many of the boys she works with are expected to find asylum and eventually employment in order to financially support their families remaining in their country of origin.

In addition to receiving fewer services, young male refugees are perceived negatively by many of the societies they are seeking refuge in. Scholars Jill Walker Rettberg and Radhika Gajjala (2015) of the University of Bergen, completed a study analyzing the perceptions of male refugees on Twitter by studying the hashtag #refugeesNOTwelcome. In their study of the presentation of refugees in

the media, they argue that male refugees are more subject to negative perspectives from the media and locals than female refugees. Rettberg and Gajjala (2015) further describe that masculinity is used against the male refugees in pictures depicting 'dangerous' individuals, excluding any images of female refugees or family units. Journalist Scott Jacobsen (2017), in an interview with Joana Aziz, a woman who grew up in both Lebanon and Syria, discussed how this portrayal of refugee men as dangerous and criminal in news sources may stem from the disapproval of a culture of male dominance and female passivity which is more common in the Middle East. Thus, there is less sympathy from the media to encourage others to assist refugee men specifically, as they are portrayed as undeserving of such help. Since the media is contradictory in that it both influences and reflects how the public feels, media representations exacerbate the stereotypical perception of refugees that is already evidentially limited and simultaneously reinforces this idea that a male refugee is like a violent thug.

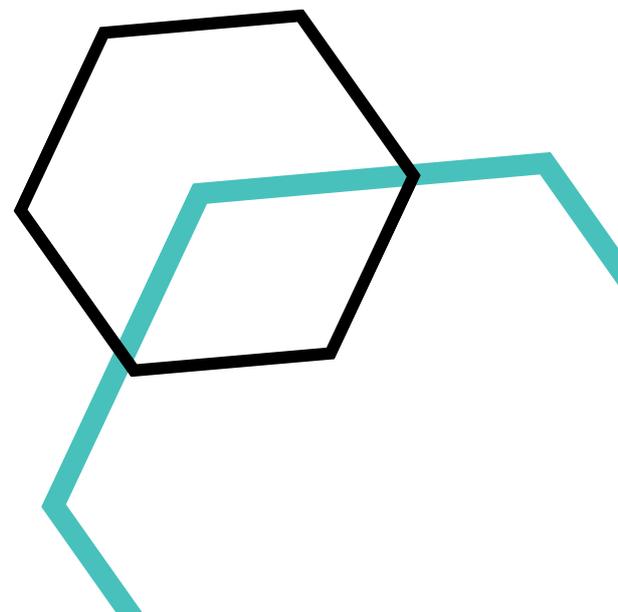
While young, male refugees are blamed for being perpetrators of sexual violence, scholars Freccero et al. (2017), in a literature review, argue that the position of these male refugees also makes them susceptible to becoming victims of sexual assault and trafficking. As described by reporters Arwa Damon, Barbara Arvanitidis, and Clayton Nagel (2017) in an article for *CNN*, many young men in Greece with no employment opportunities may turn to prostitution, selling themselves for as little as 2 euros. In a 2016 UNHCR (2017b) study conducted with 200 refugees in Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan, reported that refugee boys may have been subjected to sexual abuse and torture in their

home countries and/or in the camps of asylum countries at the hands of older men. Furthermore, the report indicates a “culture of silence” surrounding these accounts of sexual abuse, making the issue of refugee male sexual exploitation not only more difficult to address, but also a serious consideration that is presently unaddressed.

Refugees also face difficulties continuing their education in a new country. In a study conducted in Lebanon by Jocelyn DeJong et al. (2017) of the UNHCR, adolescent and adult, and male and female Syrian refugees were interviewed through focus groups to assess how their lives were disrupted during displacement. Study results indicated that the education of many young refugees who may have experienced turmoil in their home countries and spent years seeking safety and asylum in a new country with a different language, has been disrupted and consequently is minimal and limited. Despite ambitions and desires, war, famine, or political turmoil forces many young people to abandon their perceived life course. Therefore, it may take years or simply be financially or socially impossible to make up for the time of lost education. In another study by Jamil et al. (2016), 148 Iraqi refugees living in the United States were surveyed to determine the correlation between educational status and employability. The results showed that education influences the likelihood of becoming employed, and that social networks significantly influence identifying and acquiring a job, as friends and relatives provide the references needed when education and qualifications are lacking or different from the host country.

Given barriers to education or skill development and the advantages offered by networks that can vouch for a

person’s worth, formal programs provided to refugees, including language and skills training, can appear unnecessary to refugees desiring to be in other countries. Even highly educated refugees (30% of Syrian refugees have higher education degrees), are not involved in decision making and program delivery, left unable to communicate their ideas and professional opinions (Green 2017) and consequently become isolated and segregated from the host society. Refugees also face extreme instability spatially, physically, and emotionally (El-Shaarawi 2015). From both location-based and time-based perspectives, a sense of uncertainty makes their experience in their respective asylum countries challenging and burdensome (El-Shaarawi 2015; DeJong et al 2017). As noted by Nadia El-Shaarawi’s (2015) research with Iraqi refugees in Cairo, many view their position as temporary, holding onto desires to return home or to unite with family elsewhere. As people recognize that their situations are more permanent, they begin to alter their outlook. Programs that provide opportunities for the development of plans for a new future need to become more prominent and common for this purpose.



Methods

The aim of this project was to learn about refugee-related NGO operations in Thessaloniki, engage with the often unserved young male refugee population, and collaboratively develop opportunities that had meaning and value to a small group of young refugee men. We accomplished this in three stages: Learn, Engage, and Empower. An overview is provided in Figure 2.

1. Learn about the roles that humanitarian agencies and volunteers have in the refugee crisis
2. Engage and establish relationships with young, male refugees to better understand their individual experiences.
3. Understand empowerment programs by participating in activities and interviewing humanitarian agencies regarding their role in the refugee crisis, as well as their attitudes and efforts regarding empowerment programs.

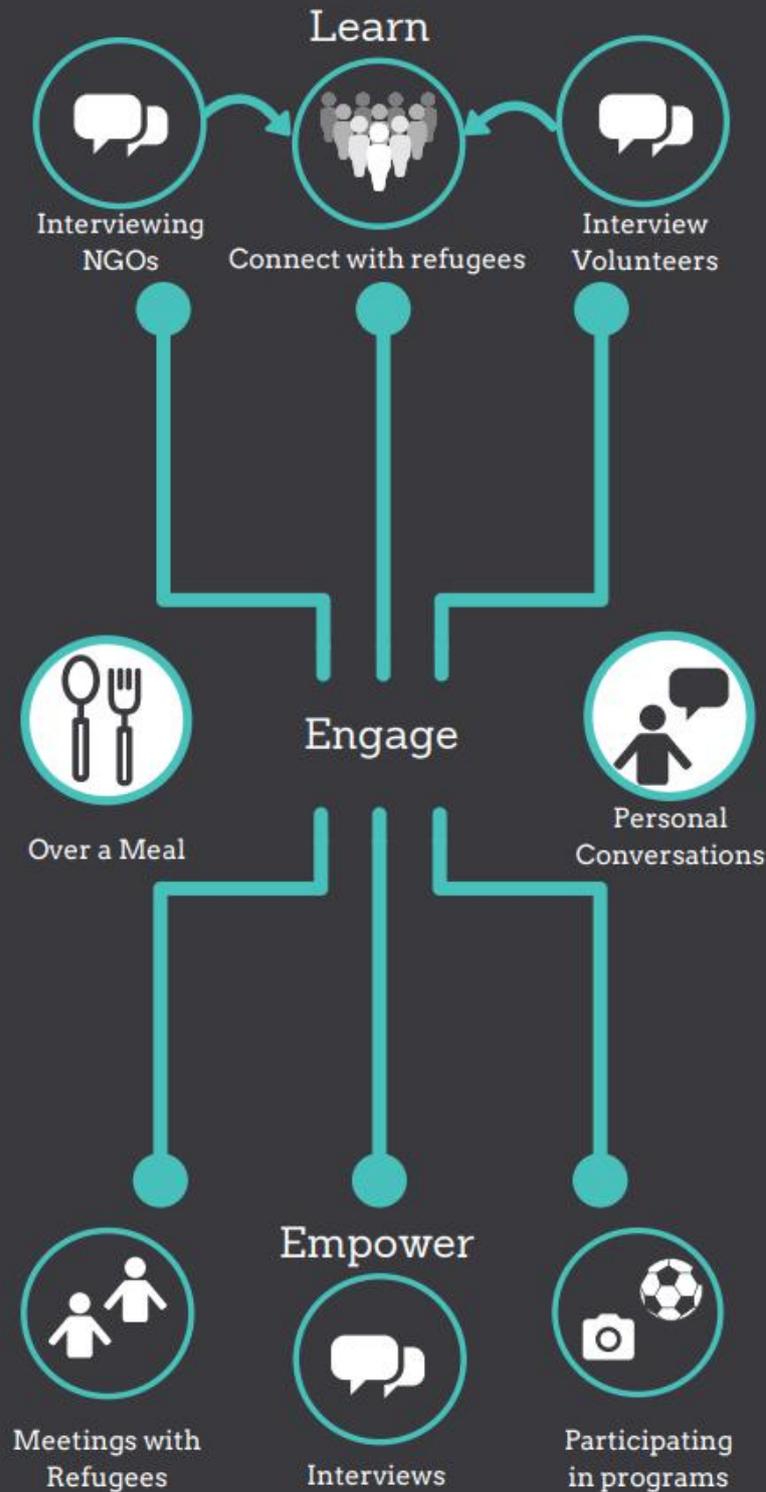


Figure 2: Visual representation of project timeline

LEARN: Develop an understanding of the humanitarian aid for refugees within Thessaloniki, Greece

We conducted semi-structured interviews with individuals that work or volunteer with refugees in Thessaloniki, Greece. The interviews took place at NGO offices and on the campuses of the AFS and the ACT. See Table 3 for more detailed information about the interviews.

The interviews were conducted in English, with a translator required for the meeting with PRAKSIS from Greek to English. The discussions were focused on exploring broad questions such as:



Table 3: Interviewed Organizations and Individuals with Respective Locations

Interviewee	Type (NGO, volunteer, etc.)	Location
AFS - From Camps to Campus	Employee	AFS
AFS Volunteers 1 & 2 for PRAKSIS	Volunteer	AFS
PRAKSIS	NGO	Day Home Reception Center
Solidarity Now	NGO	Blue Refugee Center
ACT - From Camps to Campus	Employee	ACT
AFS Volunteer 3 for PRAKSIS	Volunteer	AFS
Agricultural Expert	Industry Expert	AFS
IHA Representative	Manufacturing Engineer	IHA Warehouse, Thessaloniki
Thomas Farines	Aniko FC Coordinator	Coffee Shop
UNHCR Representative	UNHCR	UNHCR
Municipality Task Force Representatives	Municipality Task Force	Municipality Office Space

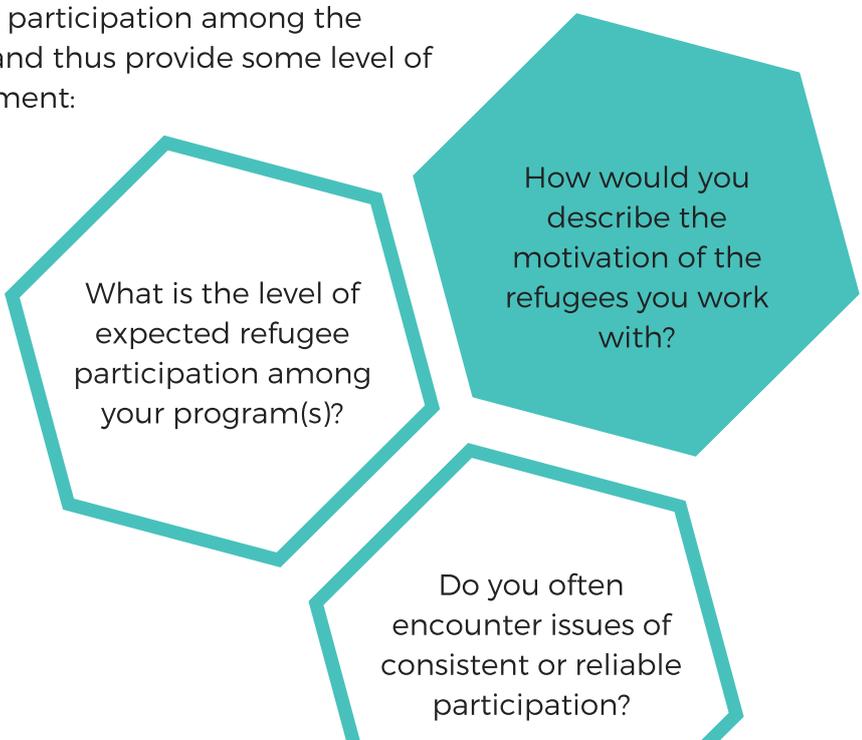
For a more detailed question list, see Appendices A-I.

We also interviewed an individual with expertise in agriculture (preferring to remain confidential), who assisted in an attempt to start a gardening program specifically for young male refugees living within the camps. This program planned to utilize empty land to educate refugees interested in gardening techniques with the aim of lowering their food costs, helping them learn new skills, and providing a continuous program to help support their family. This interview focused on his experiences with trying to establish the program. In addition, it addressed his personal opinions of how the NGOs

operate and of the motivation of young, male refugees. More information regarding this interview can be found in Appendix E.

Additionally, we attended an Urban Working Group meeting at the City Hall in Thessaloniki, during which representatives from various volunteer groups and NGOs operating in Thessaloniki were present to discuss updates and solutions to the refugee crisis. At the meeting, we reached out to several, new NGOs mentioned in Table 3 to inquire about their experiences involving the refugee crisis. Officials for both UNHCR and the Greek Municipality were also interviewed in order to develop a clearer insight towards the government's role in the crisis. Further interviews with volunteer groups like Intereuropean Human Aid Association were scheduled as well. During these subsequent interviews, questions focused on any issues the organizations may have encountered with the motivation and participation of refugees. The purpose of this was to understand why the refugees we were intending to work with stopped showing up despite expressing initial excitement. With the following questions we hoped to gain more insight on how NGOs and volunteer groups encourage consistent participation among the refugees, and thus provide some level of empowerment:

After the completion of all of the interviews with the various NGOs, volunteers, and administrators, the interviews with the AFS volunteers Gretchen and Molly, and PRAKSIS were transcribed. Copious notes were taken for the interviews where permission was not received to audio record. A detailed, thematic analysis of the transcripts or notes was subsequently performed to find overarching themes within all of the separate discussions. The technique utilized to find overarching themes, as described by Gordon Raymond (1992), first began with identifying important, descriptive codes from the interviews and assigning these codes an identification number. Next, the categories to place the codes into were created in the form of a table, with the vertical rows being the relevant themes of the project and the horizontal columns ranging from positive connotations to negative connotations. Once the fragments were sorted for all of the interviews, the overall and most important themes could be visualized and analyzed.



What is the level of expected refugee participation among your program(s)?

How would you describe the motivation of the refugees you work with?

Do you often encounter issues of consistent or reliable participation?

ENGAGE: Engage and establish relationships with young, male refugees to better understand their individual experiences.

During our first few weeks at Perrotis College, we befriended a Syrian refugee, identified using the pseudonym, Ali, who is taking part in the Education Unites: From Camps to Campus program at the AFS. We identify all refugees using pseudonyms in an effort to protect their identities. It was asked of several NGOs and Ali individually if they would be able to connect our team with young, male refugees within Thessaloniki, so we could extend an invitation to participate in our project. Through this network we were

able to extend invitations to participate in the project to a small cohort of refugees from Syria, Algeria, Sudan, Pakistan and Iraq. The connections made in order to be in contact with the refugees is outlined in Figure 3.

With the assistance of PRAKSIS representatives we connected with a group of young male refugees. Ali helped arrange a meeting with other refugees, identified using the pseudonyms -- Elias, Wassim, and Nizar -- who participated in the English program at the AFS's Education Unites: From Camps to Campus. This meeting was held at the Perrotis College - American Farm School. The location was convenient for everyone, since all were either living or studying there. In each meeting, we introduced ourselves and made acquaintances with one another.

In an effort to build rapport and open up lines of communication, we invited the refugees we had met to dinner at a restaurant in central Thessaloniki. Food is a representation of one's culture and is often presented in a social environment, therefore meals

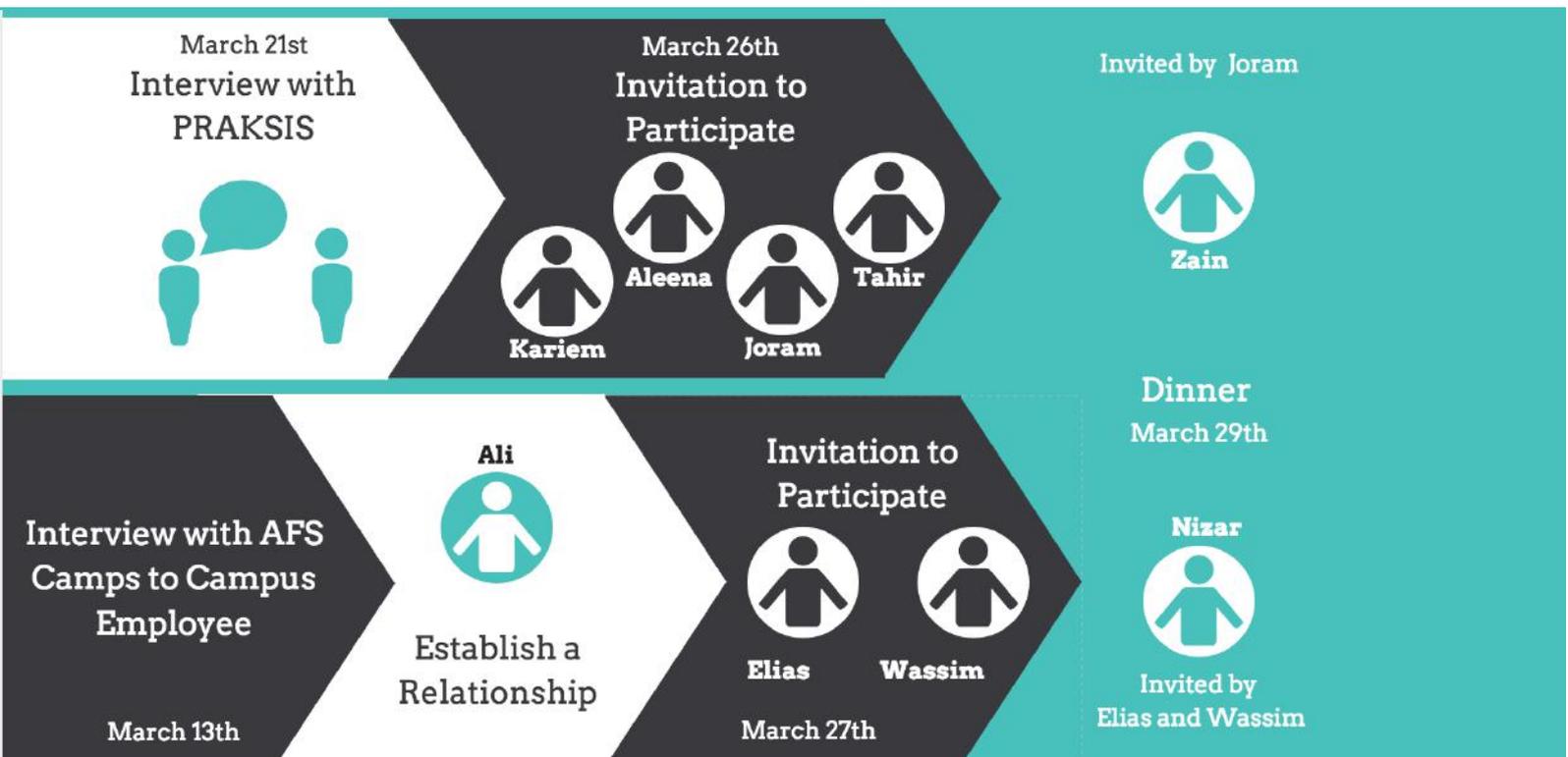


Figure 3: Efforts to Connect with a Group of Young, Male Refugees

are typically focused on the conversations across the table, as well as the food itself (Moffat, Mohammed & Newbold 2017). Two additional refugees attended dinner, invited by Joram, Wassim, and Elias. During the meal, we discussed movies, music, sports, and other topics of mutual interest. We shared a lot about our personal lives and heard a great deal about the difficulties these young men have endured. During dinner we tried to gauge interests in a collaborative project that aimed to provide a platform for presenting their individual (and collective stories) to residents of Thessaloniki. There was generally shared enthusiasm and efforts were made to begin a collaborative engagement, including establishing a Facebook group chat, and making plans for an initial working meeting.

In our initial working meeting we presented the idea of digital stories and photography. Those present appeared enthusiastic about the approach, and discussions continued about what types of

stories to tell and how they might present these. Ali, Elias, Wassim, and Nizar were eager to start discussing their stories and wanted to get started right away. We presented a strategy to develop the stories, including documenting a day in our lives through photography, and planned to meet again in a few days. Unfortunately, despite their enthusiasm, the group of young men never reengaged, and despite repeated attempts to connect with them and schedule meetings, we never saw them collectively again. Our initial intentions are presented in Appendix J, with ideas drawing heavily from STORYCENTER (2018).



DINNER AT NEO GALERIUS

EMPOWER: Understanding the motivation of refugees to participate in programs and how NGOs aim to reduce passivity in refugees

As our own efforts to empower a group of young male refugees did not play out as we had anticipated, we participated in other programs that aimed to empower young male refugees, through activities such as art and sports. After interviewing AFS fellow Kaitlyn Waters and learning about her work with PRAKSIS boys, the team assisted in setting up a photography

exhibit of the refugee boys' pictures taken over the extent of the program.

Additionally, we met with an NGO representative of Aniko who organized a soccer league where refugees, locals, and NGO workers play together. He invited us to participate in the Sunday pick-up soccer league, entitled Soccer for All. Here, there were about 40 total participants coming from Afghanistan, Iraq, Lithuania, Greece, the UK and the US. Teams of six were created and short ten-minute games were played on two fields.

Regarding our own efforts to empower, the lack of participation made it difficult to continue with our original plan. Joram, who was still willing to connect with us, was notified that we would be unable to proceed with the project due to the limited time remaining. Instead he was asked about his perspectives on this issue experienced during the project. Further discussion questioned the cause behind the lack of motivation and examined how the empowerment efforts were initially presented to the refugees. These secondary engagements focused additionally on people's experiences as refugees in Greece.



THE TEAM ATTENDING A REFUGEE PHOTO EXHIBIT WITH KAITLYN WATERS

(Czuchra 2018)

Findings

LEARN: Understanding the European Refugee Crisis in Greece

A complex network of organizations and programs, primarily directed by international funding

As the refugee crisis enters its third year in Greece, the scope of the humanitarian efforts has begun to stabilize, where a collaborative network of stakeholders and volunteer organizations has formed (Urban Working Group, personal communication, April 18, 2018). Within the regions of Northern Greece and more specifically the city of Thessaloniki, this web of both local and international humanitarian aid consists of small volunteer groups all the way to the



(Czuchra 2018)

Municipality of Thessaloniki, with NGOs and donors filling unmet needs in between. By working together to problem solve and adapt to the fluctuating refugee crisis, these organizations and individuals have made concerted strides in facilitating the integration and provision of aid to the thousands of migrants and asylum seekers in Greece (PRAKSIS 2018; Solidarity Now 2016; Urban Working Group, personal communication, April 18, 2018; Municipality Task Force, personal communication, April 26, 2018). Recent developments have seen a large portion of the humanitarian sector leave Greece, as the crisis has moved past an emergency situation to one more focused on long-term integration (UNHCR Representative, personal communication, April 26, 2018; Municipality Task Force, personal communication, April 26, 2018; Petrakis 2018). Therefore, organizations and NGOs dependent on private, emergency response funding have seen their donors shift their objectives or lose interest (Municipality Task Force, April 26, 2018; IHA representative, personal communication, April 18, 2018). However, the NRC removed their services from the country because, “the EU began to redirect funds previously provided to INGOs such as NRC to the Greek authorities,” (Petrakis 2018). Local and permanently stationed organizations, like PRAKSIS and Solidarity Now, have shifted their trajectory from emergency response to a strategy of integration, as refugee transportation to European asylum nations has slowed significantly (UNHCR representative, April 26, 2018; Halais 2018; European Commission 2017; UNHCR 2017c). Though a goal of integration has become more of a focal point for these NGOs, Municipality Task Force Representatives discussed how these integration efforts, such as additional language courses or resume workshops outside the scope of funding directed

towards accomodation programs, need to be “slipped in” (personal communication, April 26, 2018) to existing programs in order to continue receiving funds from the EU and ECHO.

The entities that compose the network of stakeholders varies considerably, with no formalized chain of command or hierarchy beyond the EU, Greek government, and subsequent municipalities who have the primary responsibility of handling Greece’s refugee crisis (Urban Working Group, personal communication, April 18, 2018; Municipality Task Force, April 26, 2018). Our engagements with NGOs have helped to create a formalized stakeholder map in order to better visualize the connections between organizations. This diagram can be seen in Figure 4. The structure of this map was chosen to show the different echelons of policy and humanitarian aid management. The logic behind the sizes of the respective groupings represents the number of relevant bodies in the entity. For example, the EU is a singular body run by a small group of representatives, which is why it is displayed as a small circle in Figure 4, where the refugee circle is vast in comparison since there are thousands of them in Greece. Finally, the gold color signifies an international association with the group and the blue indicates the body is of Greek origin. The EU is the central locus of the map, as all decisions regarding the refugees crisis stem from the European Commission. Continuing outwards from the EU, lies the Greek government, which has a separate Ministry for Migration Policy aimed at creating new asylum policies and facilitating the adaptation of Greece to the ever changing crisis (Ministry of Migration Policy 2018). Beyond the epicenter of the Greek government in Athens, the local municipalities assume responsibility for the implementation and developing the plans.

tenforcement of the migration legislation and oversight of the regional issues. Local municipalities look after problems which require specialized attention and adaptation. These complications could include managing the aid for an unanticipated groups of new arrivals or handling spontaneous refugee protests. The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and UNHCR of the United Nations extend outward from the EU, acting as the main,

international funding branches. These funders do not influence the efforts of the EU or Greek governmental structure, as the international donors adjust their agenda to fit the decisions of governments. Henceforth, they are found to be spread outwards from the EU and shown to be influencing those reliant on their funding such as NGOs. NGOs, both large and small, national and international fill in with services and programs where needed, such as the widespread

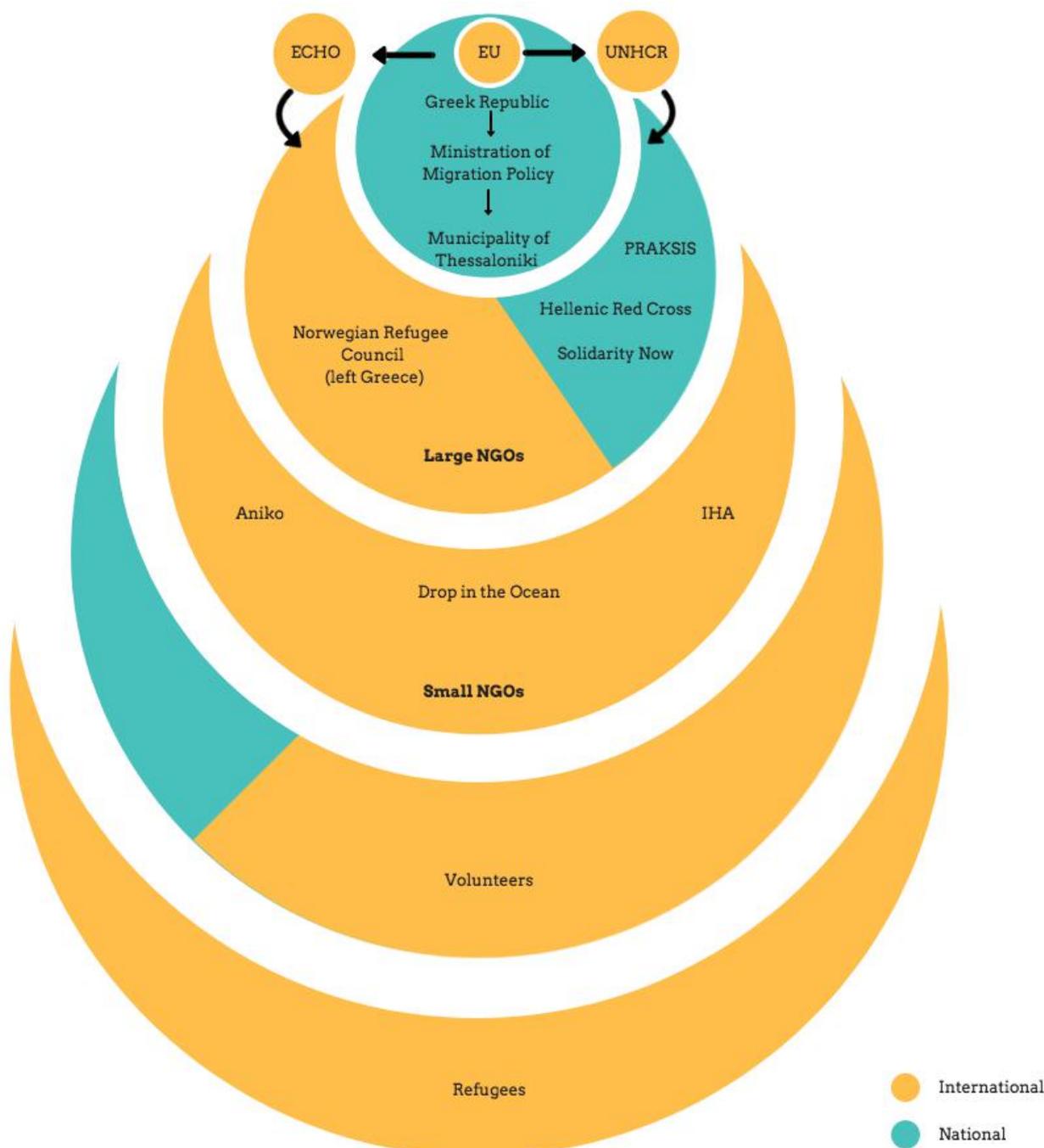


Figure 4: Stakeholder map

accommodation programs hosted by large NGOs (PRAKSIS 2018; Solidarity Now 2016; Foteini Kelektoglou, personal communication, March 21, 2018; Municipality Task Force, personal communication, April 26, 2018). Thousands of volunteers, mostly international, assist the NGOs and government to realize programs across Greece. Finally, the thousands upon thousands of refugees lie at the furthest reaches of the stakeholder network, as their desires and interests are rarely taken into consideration in regards to the creation of NGO programming and migration policy. During the phase of creation for a program, the thoughts of the refugees, who are the intended recipients, are not accounted for by the executives in the funding organizations developing the plans.

One notion we have heard throughout our communications and interactions suggests the relationship between funding sources and the focus of refugee aid might be more interconnected than first assumed (IHA representative, personal communication, April 18, 2018; Agricultural Expert, personal communication, April 12, 2018; Municipality Task Force, April 26, 2018). Individuals we have engaged with have offered the idea that organizations will mold their programs to fit the motivations and intentions of their donors, which include the UNHCR, ECHO, and private donors. This was not suggested to imply corruption or abuse of funds, but rather to show that NGOs must utilize their funds for specific programs required or proposed by the donors. For example, if the UNHCR was to change its mindset on a facet of refugee assistance, its beneficiaries would be obliged to follow its lead in order to still receive funding for the organizations. Aligning with the crisis moving past the “emergency” phase,

many international donors focused on responding to emergency situations have extricated their funding. Therefore, NGOs reliant on “emergency” funding have ceased their humanitarian efforts in Greece and left the country (“Transitioning” 2017). This circumstance is most often seen in regards to private funding outside of the large donors, as their donations are often directed toward particular humanitarian efforts adhering to the mission of the donors. Currently, the remaining organizations are expansive, Greek based, and primarily funded by UNHCR and ECHO, thus adopting the intentions of these more influential governing bodies (Municipality Task Force, personal communication, April 26, 2018; UNHCR Representative, personal communication, April 26, 2018).

Only a short while ago, the refugee crisis in Greece began a transition from emergency response to one more



consistent in terms of the numbers of arrivals and programs offered. As a result of the shift in management and funding, it was suggested through discussions with the UNHCR and several NGOs that the new focus is on integrating refugees and migrants within Greece, which aligns with the policies of the European Commission and the UNHCR itself (Urban Working Group, personal communication, April 18, 2018; IHA representative, personal communication, April 18, 2018; UNHCR Representative, personal communication, April 26, 2018; AFS Administrator, personal communication, March 13, 2018; Halais 2018; European Commission 2017; UNHCR 2017c). However, this is in contrast to the view expressed by a Municipality Task Force Representative, with extensive time spent working with different organizations in Greece, who stated that no funding from public donors was officially for integration programs despite the desperate need for it (Municipality Task Force Representative, personal communication, April 26, 2018). According to the NRC's public statement regarding their departure, they chose to leave Greece in response to ECHO's decision to fund integration efforts as a result of the "post-emergency" phase of the refugee crisis (Petrakis 2018). The NRC is in favor of integration efforts, but ECHO did not have a large enough budget to support this organization anymore. Interviews with the local NGOs such as PRAKSIS, Solidarity Now, and Aniko, revealed that their own shift in aid and support followed the downgrading of the crisis (Foteini Kelektoglou, personal communication, March 21, 2018, Solidarity Now representative, personal communication, March 22, 2018; Thomas Farines, personal communication, April 25, 2018). The initial refugee aid efforts of these three focused on emergency relief, with aid based throughout the islands and camps on the

mainland. Once the focus of the funding shifted towards integration, NGOs veered towards the integration strategies, such as accommodation programs, the Greece Cash Alliance, and various programs to be discussed in the sections to follow. According to the literature, recent examples, and our experiences, these transformations are consanguineous, with the NGOs appearing to feel obliged to "follow the money" and help the refugees whichever way they can to still have enough funding to operate at full capacity.

One the most prominent and newly funded programs at the forefront of refugee integration is known as the accommodation program (ESTIA 2017; Ozgunes 2017). This is a collaborative effort between the UNHCR, the Municipality of Thessaloniki, and NGOs (such as PRAKSIS, Solidarity Now, Hellenic Red Cross, and ARSIS) which places refugees without a permanent home in Northern Greece into a temporary apartment or shelter residence, which is paid in full for one year (PRAKSIS representative, personal communication, March 21, 2018). The Municipality locates the accommodation centers (apartments and shelters), while the UNHCR connects the individual, group, or family with the accommodation center. More recently, NGO representatives at the Urban Working Group meeting expressed they would work to locate apartments to be used as accommodation centers (Urban Working Group, personal communication, April 18, 2018). The NGOs are the managers of the apartments, almost like a traditional landlord, while also providing social, psychosocial, legal, and professional aid to those living in the accommodation center. As highlighted by a UNHCR representative, the accommodation program gives priority to vulnerable persons or groups (UNHCR

Representative, personal communication, April 26, 2018). Vulnerable groups include, but are not limited to, pregnant women, youth, elderly, single mother families, injured, and disabled. Regarding single males, the UNHCR explained that they are commonly placed into accommodations with other single men. This program has made incredible strides in providing refugees safe and comfortable housing, but it is struggling to adapt to the ever-growing number of new arrivals.

The Urban Working Group (UWG) consisting of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the UNHCR, and many local NGOs, meets once every two weeks to discuss the current state of the refugee crisis and humanitarian efforts. This provides a platform for communication and collaboration between all involved in the refugee crisis, except the refugees themselves. At the most recent meeting on April 18, 2018, everyone was updated on the current influx of refugees. On April 13, 2018 Costas Kantouris (2018), reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, wrote an article stating there were over a hundred refugees sleeping outside the police station in Thessaloniki, hoping to be arrested to receive the proper papers in order to register as asylum seekers within

Greece. Lengthy discussion followed on the topic of the newest arrivals, but also took into consideration the better weather and worsening conflict in Syria leading to more arrivals anticipated for the Summer. All of the dialogue suggested a new focus on putting pressure onto the Municipality of Thessaloniki to find new spaces for accommodating these arrivals.

Collaboration was shown during this discourse, as all attending members came to an agreement on the arguments being made. On a previous date, members of the UWG created a database of supplies and resources so that these individuals and future arrivals would receive the maximum amount of aid (Urban Working Group, personal communication, April 18, 2018). The creation of this database would allow a wide range of provisions to be distributed and reduce any overlap in the aid offered by the different NGOs. According to the Municipality Task Force (personal communication, April 26, 2018), this was created very quickly, indicating that NGOs are willing to collaborate with each other because of their shared overarching goal of improving the lives of refugees.



URBAN WORKING GROUP APRIL 18, 2018

Collaboration between many of the smaller entities focusing on improving the lives of refugees living within Greece have, and remain working to streamline processes and provide opportunities for refugees to experience a “normal” life once more. Though unsupported by the government, those working for these groups will keep working as long as they have the resources to do so. The IHA warehouse has a new collaboration with a Norwegian NGO called A Drop in the Ocean, an ambitious organization with a new focus on making refugee camps livable once more (A Drop in the Ocean 2018; IHA warehouse representative, personal communication, April 18, 2018). A particular operation of this organization in the Skaramangas camp outside of Athens includes the Drop Shop, where a currency has been created to sell clothing, food, and various items to refugees to do away with the concept of “free handouts.” As noted earlier, Bemak, Chung, and Penerson (2003) suggests removing this system of handouts will improve participation among Middle Eastern refugees and concurrently reduce the probability of imparting passivity in refugees. Paired with the Drop Shop is “The Drop App” that uses an SKU system to order materials from donation warehouses like IHA to keep the Drop Shop stocked. The IHA representative explained that the warehouse would be able to upload their collection of clothes and food to the app, allowing operators of the Drop Shop to order select items at the touch of a button (IHA warehouse representative, personal communication, April 18, 2018). Partnerships between these small NGOs are successfully filling the gaps in humanitarian aid left open by the larger organizations and government in Greece. The IHA Warehouse was able to provide the recent arrivals to Thessaloniki with blankets and food the first night

because their small size allows the IHA to operate independently and quickly. Adversely, the bureaucratic nature of larger NGOs results in less efficiency and rapid response in taking action (IHA warehouse representative, personal communication, April 18, 2018).

ENGAGE: Analyzing Efforts that Address the Needs of Refugees

Engagement programs are helpful to young, male refugees, but do not encourage independence and self-reliance

Conversations with various NGOs, volunteer groups, The Municipality Task Force, UNHCR, and individuals involved in the refugee crisis, often included discussions on the available programs that engage with refugees. We have found that engagement programs intend to provide temporary services to aid refugees in functioning and engaging in a society, thus are important in helping refugees adjust. This differs from empowerment in the sense that services are simply given as opposed to using programs to promote independence and self-reliance (UNHCR 2001). These programs include language

classes, employment training, legal counseling, volunteer opportunities, and artistic exhibits which foster engagements with each other and the community. Employment and language programs allow beneficiaries to better communicate and interact with society. Legal counseling helps the counselee better understand how they are able to engage in a society with laws different from what they are accustomed to, especially laws applying to their unique situation of being an asylum seeker. Volunteer opportunities are beneficial in a twofold manner; first, they provide activities and purpose to the volunteer which fosters engagements with the community and builds experience; and second; they benefit the mission of the organization, which in our experiences have been refugee support-based. Finally, engagements between refugees and the community, while not always fully participated in, help build an understanding between communities which is crucial for successful integration. All in all, engagement programs have a very important place in humanitarian aid efforts because they directly benefit participants and compliment empowerment programs. Engagement programs encourage interactions with the community and help improve the lives of beneficiaries. The language, legal, employment, volunteer, and artistic opportunities all help refugees engage and function in society. Engagement programs help establish the fundamental skills and abilities that are necessary to get the full potential out of empowerment initiatives.

Organizations such as PRAKSIS and Solidarity Now have made efforts to provide programs to encourage engagements and integration. Employment programs such as CV

development classes available at PRAKSIS Accommodations Program office, are a common and necessary step towards integration (PRAKSIS Accommodation Programs office, personal communication, March 21, 2018). Developing a proper CV will improve the refugee's ability to market their skills. Thus, when they develop new skills and new experiences, they're knowledgeable on how to represent this to employers, which in turn opens up new opportunities. Solidarity Now has a language program which offers classes in English, Greek, German, French, Spanish, Italian, and Dutch with a range of competency levels (Solidarity Now representatives, personal communication, March 22, 2018; Solidarity Now 2017). According to representatives of Solidarity Now, they provide classes for all of these languages with the understanding that most refugees do not want to remain in Greece but would rather continue on elsewhere in Europe. Therefore, these language classes better prepare refugees for their future interactions. PRAKSIS and Solidarity Now both offer legal services for refugees and migrants. These services help refugees better understand their legal rights and circumstances that is vital to integrating into a community. Solidarity Now's Blue Refugee Center has a room dedicated for Skype calls between refugees and legal counselors (Solidarity Now meeting, personal communication, March 22, 2018). This allows for more readily available legal counseling, so that in-person meetings are not the only avenue of legal support. PRAKSIS similarly has Legal Aid Centers which offer free legal counseling to any vulnerable or excluded group, not just refugees (PRAKSIS n.d; Legal Aid Centers n.d.). According to PRAKSIS, these services are "advisory in nature," and provide "prompt and accurate information" regarding

“fundamental rights and freedoms” (PRAKSIS n.d.; Legal Aid Centers n.d.). Additionally, they offer support in cases where the client’s rights have been violated by “bodies and institutions of public administration.” These engagement programs improve one’s interactions with the community and develop the fundamental skills that can make empowerment programs.

Within the past month, the NGO, Help Refugees, transitioned management of their warehouse located thirty minutes outside of Thessaloniki to the InterEuropean Human Aid Association (IHA) (IHA warehouse representative, personal communication, April 18, 2018). The IHA warehouse collects, sorts, and distributes clothing and food donations to refugee camps in Northern Greece.

Additionally, it will provide emergency food, clothing, and blanket provisions when necessary. For example, when a new wave of refugees and migrants arrived in Greece in mid-April 2018, the IHA warehouse provided blankets and food to the refugees waiting outside the police station who did not have any shelter. The IHA hopes to streamline the sorting process to be able to provide donations to refugee camps faster. However, this requires a lot of volunteer hours to sort the massive amount of clothing and food they receive. The IHA warehouse representative expressed an idea for a refugee engagement opportunity, where he envisions refugees volunteering a few hours multiple times a week to the warehouse’s sorting efforts (IHA Warehouse representative, personal



IHA warehouse April 18, 2018

(Loiseau 2018)

communication, April 18, 2018). This will not only speed up the sorting process, but provide refugees with a meaningful activity they can participate in. These used clothes then get sent to refugees and refugee camps to be distributed. Therefore the efforts of the volunteer directly benefit a cause they are close to. A second volunteer experience we encountered was with Joram, who volunteers two full days a week as an interpreter for Arabic-speaking refugees and migrants. Joram expressed appreciation for this work because it affects people of a similar background to him (Joram, personal communication, March & April 2018). As the IHA Warehouse representative expressed, volunteer programs such as these are excellent engagement examples because they benefit the volunteers through direct and meaningful interactions with others in the community (IHA Warehouse representative, personal communication, April 18, 2018). The IHA Warehouse representative relayed the messages of past refugee volunteers who expressed that their language and interaction skills improved while volunteering because of the engagements with people of different backgrounds. Additionally, this builds Joram's experiences which can open up employment opportunities. As a friend of Kaitlyn Waters has expressed to her, some refugees that know multiple languages may be hired by different organizations such as the UN or Solidarity Now as translators and interpreters (Kaitlyn Waters, personal communication, April, 2018; Solidarity Now, personal communication, March 22, 2018). This highlights the importance of engagement programs because although they do not necessarily empower, they can, in many cases, compliment empowerment initiatives.

Artistic projects offer a unique level of engagement between refugees and the

host society. Photography exhibits like the one organized by PRAKSIS volunteer and American Farm School Fellow, Kaitlyn Waters, as well as the "Journey into the Life of Yazidis in Greece," sponsored by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), work with individuals to offer opportunities to connect with the local community. Waters worked with a group of unaccompanied refugee boys between the ages of 15 and 17 to photograph the city "through their eyes" (Kaitlyn Waters, personal communication, March 22, 2018). Though provided with some guidelines and the cameras, the boys were free to take pictures of whatever they wanted to. At the end of the program, the photographs were professionally printed and displayed in an exhibit at the children's library at Aristotle University in downtown Thessaloniki for a week. The IOM photography exhibit, located at the Thessaloniki University of Sheffield International Faculty, CITY College, used photography to display the otherwise misunderstood and historically persecuted population of Yazidis, who are a population not open to outsiders largely living in Iraq, Syria, and Turkey (The University of Sheffield, 2018). As the information brochure distributed at the exhibit explained, the nature of their religion has resulted in a label of "devil-worshippers" by outsiders and commonly led to persecution. Both exhibits allowed participants to discourage public stereotypes projected onto them by supplying insights into their relatively unknown lives. In Canada, an art exhibit of paintings, drawings, and photographs created by refugees is similarly meant to "combat stereotypes placed upon immigrants and refugees" (Rodriguez 2017). Thus, the likelihood of integration and acceptance by the locals may be improved. The UNHCR-sponsored "Life through the eye of the other" exhibit in Thessaloniki additionally used film and

photography to create an environment of collaboration between Greek locals and refugees from Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan (UNHCR 2018). With the assistance of film students at Anatolia College in Thessaloniki, the collaborative efforts to create visuals of each other's lives was turned into a documentary and displayed at the Municipal Art Gallery of Larissa -- G.I. Katsigras Museum. This cross-cultural activity is similar to the Za'atari Project in Jordan, which recruits local Jordanian artists to partner with Syrian refugees in the creation of collaborative murals throughout the local community (Artista 2017). In both examples, refugee participants have an opportunity to engage with the community through the display of their stories, change local perceptions, and increase their opportunities for successful integration.

A more comprehensive view of the engagement efforts of the humanitarian sector in Thessaloniki requires looking at the views and circumstances of the young, male refugees specifically. Our experiences working with a few young men during the project helped to contextualize their experiences as refugees in Greece and how they view the activities intended for them. As explained previously in the Methods: Engage section, a large portion of the cohort of refugees lost interest in the project after several meetings, even after expressing great enthusiasm for working alongside us. After reflecting on the outcome of this engagement attempt, we identified several reasons for our initial digital storytelling project not coming to fruition. The scope was quite narrow, focusing on sharing an account of their experience as refugees in Thessaloniki. A true empowerment strategy should encourage creativity with the idea for the project coming from the refugees. By presenting the project as only an opportunity to

create a digital story, the appearance for choice and individuality was constrained. Variation only existed in the stories to be told and the visuals used to depict them. The project never quite offered the refugees the cornerstone of an empowerment program: freedom of choice and independence. Farines (personal communication, April 25, 2018) communicated to us the importance of understanding the interests of refugees, taking these into consideration when facilitating the creation of a program. "Not everyone is interested in your ideas," Farines told us (personal communication, April 25, 2018). Upon analyzing our own work, it would have been better to incorporate the interests of Nizar, Elias, and Wassim. Due to the short seven-week timeline and the lack of a structured schedule in the refugees' lives, there was not enough time for them to brainstorm completely on their own. Thus implementing the digital storytelling project, which did not fully take into account their interests (football, instagram, socializing), was pursued in order to have enough time to complete it.

This overarching lack of interest seen throughout our efforts to provide an opportunity for empowerment are also sentiments shared by other engagement activities in Thessaloniki and Greece. By attending "Through Our Eyes," a refugee photography exhibit, Waters acquainted us with her difficulties in maintaining consistent participation (Kaitlyn Waters, personal communication, April 18, 2018). Waters explained that about 6 to 7 of the boys routinely came to take photos during the scheduled event times, representing a small portion of all the boys who participated irregularly throughout the five-week program. More often than not, refugees would attend her event only once, never showing up again. The exhibit was never meant to be established as a

self-sustaining program, so a consistent population of participants was not deemed necessary. However, fluctuating participation among the boys is reflective of our experiences during our own project. Additionally, because Waters's program was a predetermined photography project, there was never an opportunity to learn the interests of the majority of the boys just as our project failed to do.

Problems with consistent participation were also part of the film initiative, "Life Through the Eyes of Another," by the UNHCR in partnership with Aristotle University in Greece (UNHCR Representative, personal communication, April 26, 2018). The film project initially had 30 refugees participating. Over time, the project witnessed this total dwindle down to 10 active members. The UNHCR representative could only speculate as to why so many left the initiative, but cited reasons such as a lack of interest, better opportunities arising, and a hesitation of refugees to be documented, and pointed out that inconsistent participation should be expected. Such sentiments accepting the transient nature of refugee participation in activities and programming were supported by the

Municipality Task Force and Farines (Municipality Task Force, personal communication, April 26, 2018; Thomas Farines, personal communication, April 25, 2018).

While there is an important place for engagement programs, they oftentimes are created without input from the refugees themselves and result in the creation of programs that may be less applicable to the majority of refugees. By excluding refugees from the creation process, engagement programs still place refugees in the role of receiver rather than collaborator, limiting the facilitation of independence and self-reliance. As the UNHCR representative discussed, after a while, some of the refugees she has interacted with have expressed the desire to take life matters into their own hands and be able to make their own decisions (UNHCR representative, personal communication, April 26, 2018). Engagement programs help develop connections between both refugee and Greek communities.



EMPOWER: Current Efforts of the Humanitarian Sector to Address Refugee Integration in Greece

While still limited in scope, empowerment programs foster independence and self-reliance

Through our investigation into the various NGOs, volunteer groups, and individuals working closely with refugees, it became evident that, though limited and difficult to find, there are available programs which offer opportunities for empowerment in Thessaloniki. An empowerment program, as defined by the UNHCR in *A Practical Guide to Empowerment*, is “a process through which women and men in disadvantaged positions increase their access to knowledge, resources, and decision-making power, and raise their awareness of participation in their communities, in order to reach a level of control over their own environment,” (UNHCR 2001, p. 3). This is different from an engagement program, since the vulnerable group can develop and grow their own capacity, awareness, and self-reliance through participation in an empowerment program. Empowering programs are crucial to encouraging independence,

self-reliance, and eventual integration for refugees struggling to incorporate themselves into the local community. The following programs are all, to differing degrees, examples of empowerment programs.

The NGO Aniko, offers three different football programs including Aniko FC sessions, Football For All matches, and Fan Matches. The FC sessions are specific to young, male refugees, occur three times a week, are very demanding, and require consistent participation. Aniko FC project leader, Thomas Farines explained to us that he treats his team as if it was any other European football academy, as the men do not get any special treatment for being refugees (Thomas Farines, personal communication, April 25, 2018). If a player misses 3 sessions without warning Farines, he is removed from the program. Though the FC sessions certainly involve engagement with the participants, the program is empowering because it demands relatively consistent participation and dedication. Farines explained why the dedication he seeks is imperative, as it encourages refugees to rebuild structure in their lives around the football practice schedule and dedication towards seeing the team excel (Thomas Farines, personal communication, April 25, 2018). He described their latest efforts participating in football tournaments where the men left victorious both times. The reward of winning, Farines described, instills dedication into the refugees to keep improving and working together, but this can only be accomplished as a team who stays together. The Football for All matches are more relaxed, casual, and, as indicated by the name, open to all interested parties. Fan Matches look to build relationships between refugees and Greek locals through a unifying love of football. Thessaloniki currently has three professional soccer teams interested in

assisting refugees, so the fans of these teams play against refugees in the program. As described by Farines, the purpose of the NGO is to encourage both integration and guided discovery (the application of skills learned in the program to life) through an outlet that is generally of interest to the maximum number of people (Thomas Farines, personal communication, April 25, 2018). The universality of football ideally encourages these goals of NGOs as it requires following a schedule, respecting rules, and motivation, all of which are often lacking in the passive life of a refugee stuck in legal and political limbo. Farines aptly explained the necessity of these lessons for the first step of successful integration into a structured society with regulations and expectations demanding his players reach these expectations. During our own participation in Football for All, Farines' hope seemed to be coming true, with over 40 young, men in attendance, more than 6 different languages being spoken, yet only one activity being shared by all with smiles and laughs.

Though a popular program among refugees with about thirty young, men at every Aniko FC Session and between 40-200 refugees at every Football For All Match, Farines did relay experiences of fluctuating participation. He related this wavering attendance to a lack of motivation, the level of interest (Pakistanis usually prefer cricket over football), and the appearance of new opportunities, such as university or employment. Expanding on this, Farines elucidated that such an absence of motivation is potentially encouraged by the system of passivity instilled into the lifestyle of refugees. As suggested by Bemak, Chung, and Penderson (2003), Farines, and elaborated on by our experiences, refugees in Greece have

become accustomed to a particular lifestyle of free aid from NGOs, which has created a sense of passivity that becomes difficult to break out of.

The UNHCR also encourages empowerment by providing financial support to all registered refugees in camps and accommodations through the Greece Cash Alliance. While this does provide a sense of freedom, the recipients are still dependent on the aid. Depending on the size of the family and the presence of catering within some new, government run camps, the amount of cash provided per month ranges from 90 euros to 550 euros (UNHCR Greece 2018). Table 4 below outlines the specific finances allotted for different family situations. These monetary values intend to parallel the average local income so as to reduce any negative feelings from Greeks suffering financially during the economic crisis. UNHCR Communications and Public Relations Officer discussed the benefits of this program beyond the obvious monetary gain, saying receivers also profit from the dignity, self-reliance, and independence allowed through the Cash Alliance (UNHCR Representative, personal communication, April 26, 2018). She explained further how the refugees receiving aid expressed their appreciation for the freedom the Cash Alliance offered. Instead of receiving necessities based on the UNHCR agenda, individuals can instead choose what they want to buy and when they want to do so. This attitude makes the transition for integration into society easier, as refugees exhibit self-governance and begin to step away from their dependence on NGO assistance. With this program, UNHCR utilizes the grounded approach of assistance, incorporating refugee opinions into the distribution of the assistance. Therefore, refugees are given a choice and are not just accepting aid without any control over how it is used.

Table 4: UNHCR Cash Alliance Program Distribution (UNHCR 2017a)



WHERE MEALS ARE PROVIDED

THE FOLLOWING TABLE GIVES THE AMOUNTS OF CASH ASSISTANCE WHERE MEALS **ARE** PROVIDED:

FAMILY SIZE	AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE
Individual over 18 years	90 EUR
A couple, or a parent and child	140 EUR
A family of three	190 EUR
A family of four	240 EUR
A family of five	290 EUR
A family of six	310 EUR
A family of seven or more	330 EUR



WHERE MEALS ARE NOT PROVIDED

THE FOLLOWING TABLE GIVES THE AMOUNTS OF CASH ASSISTANCE WHERE MEALS **ARE NOT** PROVIDED:

FAMILY SIZE	AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE
Individual over 18 years	150 EUR
A couple, or a parent and child	280 EUR
A family of three	340 EUR
A family of four	400 EUR
A family of five	450 EUR
A family of six	500 EUR
A family of seven or more	550 EUR

A similar effort, created by the United States Embassy in Greece, is the Education Unites: From Camps to Campus program (The US Embassy and Consulate in Greece 2017; AFS Administrator, personal communication, March 13, 2018; ACT Administration, personal communication, March 22, 2018). Through a collaborative effort with the Anatolia College - American College of Thessaloniki, Deree - American College of Greece, and the Perrotis College - American Farm School, 200 positions were made available for two, fully funded classes per semester for the 2017-2018 academic year. The program provides eligible refugees with the opportunity to participate in English language classes, plus bachelor's classes if their English and academic levels are sufficient. With the focuses of the universities varying, students were placed into programs based on their prior histories and vocational aptitudes. For example, refugees with agricultural skills or previous employment on farms may enroll in a course titled "Agricultural Economics" at the Perrotis College. Those needing to develop their English language capacity could enroll in specialized language classes aimed at improving English language proficiency rapidly. Ultimately, the program aims to provide structure, routine, a sense of normalcy, and skill development. Unfortunately, not all of the 200 positions are filled even though there is funding to accommodate full enrollment. This program requires those who apply to have passed the B2 examination.

Unfortunately, this prevents many potential beneficiaries from participating. While it is a successful program, there are still education needs within the refugee population to be addressed, especially regarding those who do not have the necessary English level.

In a recent development, four refugees of different nationalities in Thessaloniki joined the Advisory Council for the Municipality in Thessaloniki. This was in an effort to include refugee voices and sentiments in the decision-making process of refugee aid in Thessaloniki. A representative of the Municipality Task Force encouraged these efforts, stating that the benefits of including refugee voices needs to be seen by both the refugee and local communities (Municipality Task Force, personal communication, April 26, 2018). These four refugees now have a platform to discuss and potentially influence the outcome of refugee-related decisions. Though this small number cannot accurately represent the 60,000 refugees in Greece who currently do not have a voice, it is a stepping stone working towards replacing a situation of passivity to one of empowerment among the refugee population. While this initiative has taken a while to be implemented and four representatives cannot possibly encompass the entire refugee population, their inclusion in an advisory council is a optimistic start at including refugee voices.

The benefits of an empowerment program continue beyond the program's duration, like in the case of Education Unites: From Camps to Campus, or the program itself does not have a time limit, like the advisory council.

Conclusion

After meeting with many NGOs and individuals who provide humanitarian aid in the refugee crisis, it was suggested that there are concerted efforts through many different avenues throughout Northern Greece to provide aid and the development of empowerment programs. Many of the newer programs learned about provide refugees with the necessary resources to function in a new and unfamiliar country, while working towards full integration. There are even a select few programs utilizing funding to not only address biological needs, but also to promote independence and self-reliance through empowerment programs. Aniko is making strides to integrate refugee men into Greek football clubs, making the necessary connections with locals. Even if a refugee did not want to remain in Greece, the NGOs did not cast the migrant away, but still gave all of their effort towards helping them while in Greece. Solidarity Now even offers language classes for popular destinations for migrants in Northern Europe, choosing to assist refugees in any way they possibly can (Solidarity Now representative, personal communication, March 22, 2018).

There are excellent examples of collaborative efforts, such as the Urban Working Group and the IHA warehouse's collaboration with A Drop in the Ocean, however organizational and logistical issues still persist. It would be more beneficial if NGOs were to pursue collaborative efforts among each other. Refugees may benefit more from NGOs adopting empowerment strategies into their programming, as each organization has particular specialties that may be able to complement one another. Adopting empowerment strategies will help refugees take more action into their lives, instead of being passive receivers of aid. As NGOs in Northern Greece are faced with the uphill climb of trying to integrate refugees into a society where the majority of refugees do not want to stay, working together may provide the jump start to help refugees find their place in Greece, especially with the recent wave of new asylum seekers.



Personal Reflections

Alex Czuchra:

Working with refugees in Thessaloniki, although a short experience, has been extremely fulfilling and eye opening for myself. The project began with a struggle to identify a cohort of young men to collaborate with, but our team persevered through this process and found six men who were interested and motivated to create something powerful that could be shared with the local community and beyond if possible. Collaborator I especially reinforced the thought that this project was something he had been looking for his entire time in Greece. When he opened up about his experiences and what he wanted to share, I felt honored. It was a surreal experience that only certain people have the opportunity to experience. I will likely never again have the chance to hear about a refugee's migration from Syria, the reasons why he left, and how he endured horrible conditions and and forms of abuse in a refugee camp. I do not mean to sound like I enjoyed hearing about horrible things, but rather I absolutely admired this man's

persistence and ridiculously strong desire to continue his migration through all the adversity he had faced. I was thrilled to help him share his story. I also had the privilege to gain a friendship with Collaborator A, as he lived in the residence hall with us at the AFS making it easy to see him on a regular basis. We would conversate about hip hop, American culture, his outlook on life, and the English language. The most rewarding experience of this project happened to occur on a random night where A asked me to help him with his English writing homework. We spent a few hours writing his essays together, where I was able to help teach him about punctuation, sentence structure, and even a few new words! Ironically, words could not describe the feeling I had when I saw his face light up with joy when he could finally spell "exercise" without messing it up. The night continued with us learning American slang terms by watching hip hop music videos with the subtitle on. Here we spent an hour or so rapping together to learn a few more words. These experiences exceeded my expectations for what our project could offer me.

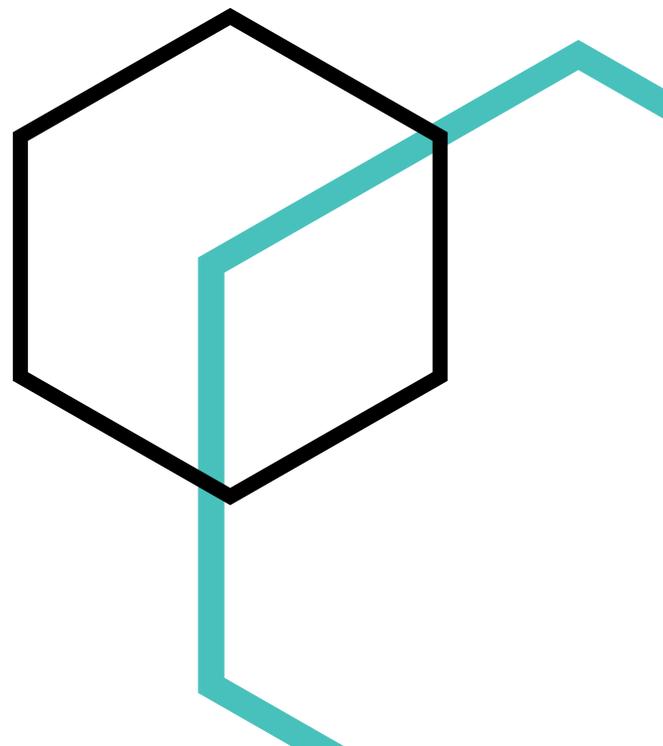
Over the course of the project, many of the collaborators stop coming to our meeting and we lost communication with them as a whole. This was extremely disheartening to not only the project, but to myself as I felt that a personal connection had been made and just forgotten. Upon some personal reflection though, I lost a lot of these selfish feelings and tried to put these events in a greater context. Refugees have gone through struggles I cannot even fathom, and they

survived them with giant hopes and dreams for the future. Along their journey, many of them were berated by reporters, journalists, and documentary crews asking for a taste of their journey to publicise it. They are also all 18-20 years old and removed from their home, friends, and school. There is no or limited structure to their life. I can begin to understand why they struggle to show up to meetings on time or not at all. It's something drastically different to their lives that we were asking of them. Also, what was in our project for them? An opportunity to tell a short 2-minute story to a local community that they are a transient member of. If I had to put myself into their shoes, I can legitimize their reactions and disappearance as well. In the grand scheme of life, our project was not offering them anything beneficial that would help them on their journey, what they truly needed. It was a great disappointment to not bring the project to fruition. I am not upset though, as I have had the most incredible, personal experiences of my life so far that make my trifles look like pebbles in the road. I will never forget the men I have met and the lessons I have learned from them. I hope their dreams are realized and they can return to a life of normalcy one day.

Abigail Doyle:

Upon arriving in Thessaloniki and after setting up meetings with various NGOs, it became clear that consistent and reliable participation is not common or even expected from refugees working with the different NGOs. Getting in contact with refugees and then convincing them to show up to meetings for our project was difficult, and the results disheartening. We were experiencing the difficulties and frustrations typical of NGO employees who feel they have a beneficial program,

something to fill the otherwise unscheduled and empty days of refugees, but no interested participants. During our first meeting with a group of PRAKSIS refugees, it became abundantly clear that refugee participation in programs such as ours, that focus on their own motivation and empowerment, is a rarity. As the number of PRAKSIS refugees expected to meet with us went from ten to four to one, it was obvious getting an interested group was going to be difficult. When the group of three young men showed up late to the first meeting, didn't show up at the second meeting, and then stopped acknowledging our messages by the third meeting, I began to question the value of our project. If these men would rather stay out late and skip meetings for more sleep, why are we even bothering to try and collaborate with them to have their voices heard? Why should we be so motivated to empower them when the reality is they're content doing nothing but take pictures all day and party all night? Maybe they think their stories aren't over, so they'll tell it when they've settled in some ideal country that isn't Greece. Maybe having refugee status doesn't change the fact that they're young men with enormous amounts of time to do with what they please.



Nikki Loiseau:

When first meeting the refugees, I felt really passionate about the work that I was about to participate in. After doing so much research and presenting our project proposal in Worcester, Massachusetts, I was ready to delve in and make a difference. I knew that this project would change my perspective of the refugee crisis, but I did not anticipate this. The first night that we had dinner with all of them was quite an experience for me. I sat next to Collaborator H who did not speak much English, but I was able to learn a lot about him. He was showing me pictures of him working in Iraq as a chef and a butler at a hotel. Then very casually in the same conversation he showed me pictures of his sister and mother and then proceeded to talk about how they had died in a car bomb. Personally, I am more of a reserved individual and don't share a lot about my personal life, so it meant a lot to me that he felt comfortable sharing that with me. I was really disappointed when he didn't show up to any more of our meetings because I want to learn more about him. I was kind of surprised how much they were just like us. The media and almost all of the research that I have done portrays refugees as victims and living in terrible conditions, but they are really resilient to their situation. Despite moving to a whole new country on their own they are still able to have friends and create fun memories. I love studying abroad, however I have noticed myself missing home semi-frequently and I know that I wouldn't be doing nearly as well if I didn't know that my family was safe at home and I will see them in just a short few weeks.

Moving on further with the project, it was disappointing to see that not a lot of people showed up to our first meeting and the ones who did were an hour late. The food that we made for them was cold and

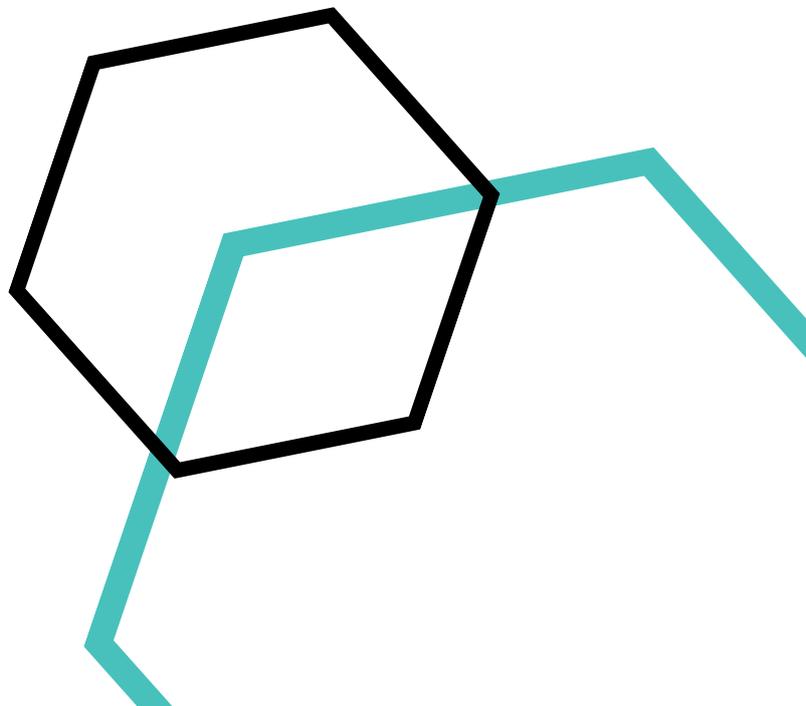
they didn't take any, which I expect was also a cultural thing. However, they seemed so excited to start working with us and came up with the idea to do a digital story on their own about how they became friends. After this meeting I was so motivated to get to work and was looking forward to doing research on the softwares that we could use to make the digital stories. At our next meeting though, they never showed up because they were too hungover. This was really disappointing to me, but I also wasn't nervous and thought that they just had a rough night and that we would see them again. But we didn't. I hoped for so much more during this project because I wanted to make a difference in their lives. I anticipated that I would have much more time with them and that they would somehow change the way I viewed the world around me. I know that this is a bit dramatic, but its how I felt. I wanted to be able to help them more, but that's not what they're looking for and that's something that I think that we have to respect. This project is not about us working on it but the refugees that we worked with, if it was more beneficial for them to not talk about their experiences with us and avoid the cameras and interviews that they have been bombarded with in the past then maybe we did some good by doing nothing at all.

Jimmy McRae:

At the beginning of our time in Greece, I felt that we had set out an ample amount of work for ourselves to do in our preparatory phase and had little traction to get started. I believed we had great ideas and would get to know fascinating people of extremely diverse backgrounds. But at first, we did not have a group of refugees to collaborate with, nor were we sure of what our sponsor's role would be in our project. I had some unsureness at first, as we did not have any training or experience with these situations. But, little by little, and meeting by meeting we started to make progress. A few days in, I was able to sit down and get coffee with Ishmael. This was the most engaging and eye-opening conversation I have had on this trip. He shared so much about his ideologies, beliefs, experiences, and dreams, some of which were completely new to me. The following week we were able meet with two of the largest NGOs addressing the refugee crisis in Greece, PRAKSIS and Solidarity Now. They seemed to like our ideas and from here on I was feeling a lot better. Stepping back to see where we were at this point, I was genuinely proud that our group was able to organize meetings with such prominent and influential organizations with little reputation and few connections besides those our advisor, Professor Bulled, was able to develop.

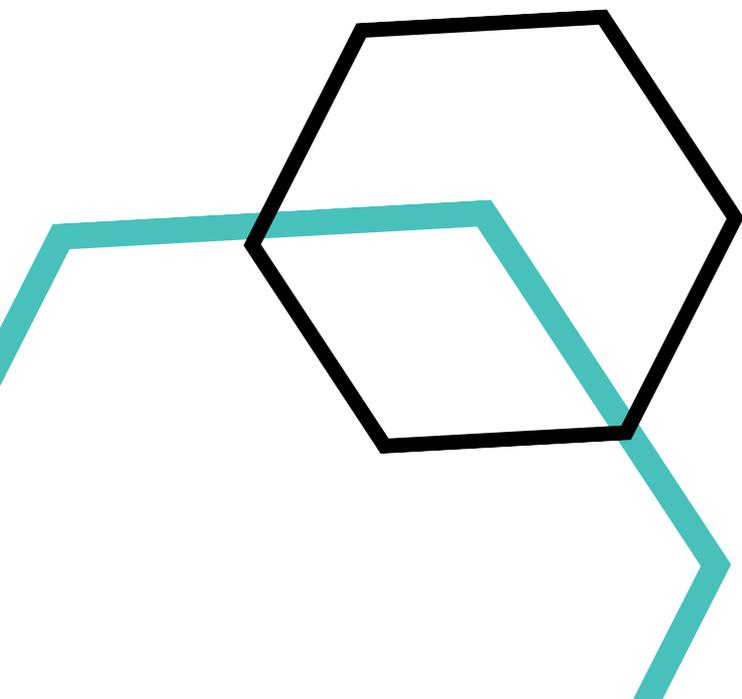
The most insightful realization I've had in Greece is just how complicated the situation is from all perspectives. I've gotten the sense from many of the refugees we've spoken to that they have no desire to be in Greece. However, with border closures in FYROM and Bulgaria, it is extremely difficult, risky, and costly to leave. Within the Greek community, opinions vary

drastically. I've had conversations with people sympathetic to refugee crisis. But I've also had conversations with those who see the refugees as an unmanageable burden on an already struggling economy. Participation in our initial ideas dwindled, leaving me confused. It appeared to me that our collaborators were ready to get going right away, having come up with their own story ideas. Therefore, their waning participation following the first week caused me a lot of confusion. This was exacerbated by their lack of communication. There was a sense of frustration at the refugees' lack of participation and communication, which I can understand. However, I do not feel it to the extent others do. These people live in vastly different worlds than we do, with different timelines, cultures, languages, priorities, mental states, and so on. Yes, we were trying to offer them something which they could direct the outcome of, but they may not have embraced it to the extent that we intended and hoped. I am frustrated with the lack of communication because it is unclear on our end what they are thinking. We decided that from here on we would just hang out with whoever was



interested so we could chat and learn their perspectives. The discovery that our message was miscommunicated through PRAKSIS in a telephone-esque manner frustrated me. It helped clarify in my mind why some didn't participate, but I wish something could have been done about it earlier. One of my favorite experiences on the entire trip was the Aniko pick-up football league. People from all over the world with extremely different backgrounds were all together playing a sport. Everyone was the same and who you were didn't seem to matter. Everyone I met was friendly and happy to be there. One memorable quote from the person running this league was when he said, "there are so many different languages here today. Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, Kurdish, Greek, English. But here we only speak one language, and that is football" (Aniko pick-up football league organizer, personal communication, April 22 2018). While I am extremely sympathetic to the humanitarian aid efforts, I think more should be done to encourage refugees to support themselves, through the grounded approach, as opposed to directly providing for needs. Of course, health care (both physical and mental) are extremely important resources.

But I believe that programs should be in place that don't just provide for the needs of refugees, but allow them to offer their own skills, knowledge, and experiences. With such contrasting views it is difficult to get anything in motion, especially when there is a lack of organization and coherence among NGO efforts. I sensed this frustration and desperation from the small NGOs at the Urban Working Group meeting at the lack of initiative from the government. They are the hands-on workers that provide aid and support for refugee arrivals and they were about to be hit with another serious situation while the municipality struggled to get anything going. I am very grateful for this experience and deeply appreciate all the people I've met and conversations I have had.



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Appendix A: Interviews with American Farm School Stakeholders

Informed Consent Script:

We are a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are hosting interviews with NGO officials, volunteers, and employees on the refugee crisis and the experiences of the refugees. The goal of this research aims to assist young, male refugees in creating a long-term activity to provide an opportunity of empowerment for their futures. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Please remember that your answer will remain confidential, unless you have given permission otherwise. No names or identifying information will appear in any of the project reports or publication unless consent is given. We all greatly appreciate your participation in our research. A copy of our results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the project.

Contact: grecerefugees@wpi.edu

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
Director of the Department of Student Life at AFS: Director of From Camps to Campus Program	March 13, 2018 9:00 am AFS	All team members Professor Bulled

- What is the American Farm School's involvement in the refugee crisis currently?
- Could you elaborate more on the Camps to Campus program offered at AFS?
- What is the typical schedule or experience of those participating in the Camps to Campus program?
- Do you know of any other programs or individuals working with refugees on campus who we may be able to speak to further?
- Would it be possible to meet with the refugee students on campus?

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
AFS Fellow: Gretchen O'Leary AFS Fellow: Molly Mcconnell	March 14, 2018 2:15 pm AFS Library	All team members

- Can you give us some background information on your experiences and role with PRAKSIS? On the program you are participating in at PRAKSIS?
- From your interactions with the PRAKSIS boys you work with, what does the daily life look like for young, male refugees in Thessaloniki?
- Could you describe the differences or struggles that young, male refugees specifically face that may be different from anything a female refugee is exposed to?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to build a trusting relationship with the young, male refugees?
- What are your thoughts on long-term engagement strategies (such as organized sports, workshops, art exhibits, etc) between Greeks and young male refugees?
- Would you be able to put us in contact with anyone at PRAKSIS or elsewhere that may be able to help us?
- Would you be able to put us in count with Kaitlyn? We would love to understand more about her photography program as we were looking into similar ideas.

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
Director of the Department of Student Life at AFS: Director of From Camps to Campus Program	March 13, 2018 9:00 am AFS	All team members Professor Bulled

- Can you give us some background information on your experiences and role with PRAKSIS? On the program you are participating in at PRAKSIS?
- Can you elaborate on the photography class you are involved in? What was the initial idea or goal behind this activity?
- From your interactions with the PRAKSIS boys you work with, what does the daily life look like for young, male refugees in Thessaloniki?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to build a trusting relationship with the young, male refugees?
- What are your thoughts on a digital storytelling program in collaboration with young, male refugees?

Thank you again for allowing us to host this interview with you. If you decide that no identifying information about this interview is included in our final project, we can arrange that. We thank you again for helping advance the research of this project and we will be sure to send you a copy once complete.

Appendix B: Interview with PRAKSIS

Informed Consent Script:

We are a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are hosting interviews with NGO officials, volunteers, and employees on the refugee crisis and the experiences of the refugees. The goal of this research aims to assist young, male refugees in creating a long-term activity to provide an opportunity of empowerment for their futures. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Please remember that your answer will remain confidential, unless you have given permission otherwise. No names or identifying information will appear in any of the project reports or publication unless consent is given. We all greatly appreciate your participation in our research. A copy of our results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the project.

Contact: grecerefugees@wpi.edu

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
PRAKSIS Coordinator: Eirini Karanikola PRAKSIS Coordinator: Foteini Kelektivoglou	March 21, 2018 12:00 pm PRAKSIS Office	All team members Professor Bulled

- Would you be able to tell us more about the role PRAKSIS has taken during the refugee crisis?
- How have you seen the role of NGOs change recently within Greece? How has this affected the refugees who need NGO support?
- Could you tell us about the refugees you work with?
- What is the disparity between male and female refugees? Are there any struggles that male refugees specifically face?
- How does the motivation or attitude of a refugee affect his success in your programs?
- What experiences does the organization have working with male refugees from 18-24?
- Could you explain in detail the specific program you provide to young, male refugees in the age range previously mentioned?
- What happens to the refugees who age out of the teenage programs?
- Would these men be interested in participating in a empowerment program with us?
- Would you be able to put us in contact with those interested?

Thank you again for allowing us to host this interview with you. If you decide that no identifying information about this interview is included in our final project, we can arrange that. We thank you again for helping advance the research of this project and we will be sure to send you a copy once complete.

Appendix C: Interview with Solidarity Now

Informed Consent Script:

We are a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are hosting interviews with NGO officials, volunteers, and employees on the refugee crisis and the experiences of the refugees. The goal of this research aims to assist young, male refugees in creating a long-term activity to provide an opportunity of empowerment for their futures. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Please remember that your answer will remain confidential, unless you have given permission otherwise. No names or identifying information will appear in any of the project reports or publication unless consent is given. We all greatly appreciate your participation in our research. A copy of our results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the project.

Contact: grecerefugees@wpi.edu

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
Solidarity Now Coordinators: Domniki Georgopoulou & Iyad Ladaa	March 22, 2018 9:30 am Solidarity Now Blu Dot Center	All team members Professor Bulled Professor Hersh

- Would you be able to tell us more about the role Solidarity now has taken during the refugee crisis? Especially within the Thessaloniki Solidarity Center.
- How have you seen the role of NGOs change recently within Greece? How has this affected the refugees who need NGO support?
- Could you tell us about the refugees that you work with?
- What can you tell us about the disparity between male and female refugees? Are there any struggles that male refugees specifically face?
- How does the motivation or attitude of a refugee affect his success in your programs?
- What experiences does the organization have working with male refugees from 18-24?
- Could you explain in detail the specific programs you provide to young, male refugees in this age range?
- What happens to the refugees who leave your programs?
- Could you elaborate more on the programs that Solidarity Now runs to help youths find employment?
- How does Solidarity Now collaborate with other NGOs or organizations to run programs and activities? How do you go about setting these collaborations up?
- Would it be possible for us to meet with some of the young male refugees you work with to set up future collaborations?

Thank you again for allowing us to host this interview with you. If you decide that no identifying information about this interview is included in our final project, we can arrange that. We thank you again for helping advance the research of this project and we will be sure to send you a copy once complete.

Appendix D: Interview with Anatolia College

Informed Consent Script:

We are a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are hosting interviews with NGO officials, volunteers, and employees on the refugee crisis and the experiences of the refugees. The goal of this research aims to assist young, male refugees in creating a long-term activity to provide an opportunity of empowerment for their futures. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Please remember that your answer will remain confidential, unless you have given permission otherwise. No names or identifying information will appear in any of the project reports or publication unless consent is given. We all greatly appreciate your participation in our research. A copy of our results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the project.

Contact: grecerefugees@wpi.edu

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
Coordinator of the Education Unites Program at ACT	March 22, 2018 3:00 pm Anatolia College	All team members Professor Bulled Professor Hersh

- Could you give us some background on the programs and work that the college does with refugees?
- Is the Education Unites Program similar to the Camps to Campus program at Perrotis College?
- Could you tell us about the refugees that you work with? How does the motivation or attitude of a refugee affect his success in your programs?
- What experiences does the organization have working with male refugees from 18-24?
- Could you explain in detail the specific programs you provide to young, male refugees in this age range?
- Would you be able to put us in contact with the refugees in your programs so that we may collaborate with them throughout our project?

Thank you again for allowing us to host this interview with you. If you decide that no identifying information about this interview is included in our final project, we can arrange that. We thank you again for helping advance the research of this project and we will be sure to send you a copy once complete.

Appendix E: Interview with Individual with Expertise in Agriculture

Informed Consent Script:

We are a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are hosting interviews with NGO officials, volunteers, and employees on the refugee crisis and the experiences of the refugees. The goal of this research aims to assist young, male refugees in creating a long-term activity to provide an opportunity of empowerment for their futures. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Please remember that your answer will remain confidential, unless you have given permission otherwise. No names or identifying information will appear in any of the project reports or publication unless consent is given. We all greatly appreciate your participation in our research. A copy of our results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the project.

Contact: greecerefugees@wpi.edu

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
Agriculture Expert	April 11, 2018 10:00 am Perrotis College	All team members

- Could you give us a background of your experiences working with refugee programs?
- What obstacles did you encounter when trying to establish a program in the camps?
- What have you noticed about young male refugees living within the camps?
- Can you explain any interactions that you have had with refugees in the camps?

Thank you again for allowing us to host this interview with you. If you decide that no identifying information about this interview is included in our final project, we can arrange that. We thank you again for helping advance the research of this project and we will be sure to send you a copy once complete.

Appendix F: Interview with Intereuropean Human Aid Association Representative at Warehouse

Informed Consent Script:

We are a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are hosting interviews with NGO officials, volunteers, and employees on the refugee crisis and the experiences of the refugees. The goal of this research aims to assist young, male refugees in creating a long-term activity to provide an opportunity of empowerment for their futures. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Please remember that your answer will remain confidential, unless you have given permission otherwise. No names or identifying information will appear in any of the project reports or publication unless consent is given. We all greatly appreciate your participation in our research. A copy of our results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the project.

Contact: grecerefugees@wpi.edu

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
Manufacture Engineer at IHA Warehouse, Thessaloniki	April 18, 2018 4:00 pm Thessaloniki	All team members

- Fluctuation in the numbers of new arrivals coming to Greece
- Improving and streamlining the logistics of the warehouse
- Transition of warehouse from Help Refugees control to IHA control
- Refugee volunteers working with Greek volunteers

Thank you again for allowing us to host this interview with you. If you decide that no identifying information about this interview is included in our final project, we can arrange that. We thank you again for helping advance the research of this project and we will be sure to send you a copy once complete.

Appendix G: Interview with Aniko FC Coordinator

Informed Consent Script:

We are a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are hosting interviews with NGO officials, volunteers, and employees on the refugee crisis and the experiences of the refugees. The goal of this research aims to assist young, male refugees in creating a long-term activity to provide an opportunity of empowerment for their futures. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Please remember that your answer will remain confidential, unless you have given permission otherwise. No names or identifying information will appear in any of the project reports or publication unless consent is given. We all greatly appreciate your participation in our research. A copy of our results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the project.

Contact: greecerefugees@wpi.edu

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
Thomas Farines	April 25, 2018 12:00 pm Thessaloniki	All team members

- Would you be able to tell us the story on how you started this program?
- Why do you think this program has been so successful? What does football mean to people?
- How have you found the experience working mostly with young, male refugees here in Greece?
- How consistent is participation? Do you notice any influence from gender, age, or family status on individual participation?
- Where do you see this program headed in the future?

Thank you again for allowing us to host this interview with you. If you decide that no identifying information about this interview is included in our final project, we can arrange that. We thank you again for helping advance the research of this project and we will be sure to send you a copy once complete.

Appendix H: Interview with UNHCR Representative

Informed Consent Script:

We are a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are hosting interviews with NGO officials, volunteers, and employees on the refugee crisis and the experiences of the refugees. The goal of this research aims to assist young, male refugees in creating a long-term activity to provide an opportunity of empowerment for their futures. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Please remember that your answer will remain confidential, unless you have given permission otherwise. No names or identifying information will appear in any of the project reports or publication unless consent is given. We all greatly appreciate your participation in our research. A copy of our results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the project.

Contact: greecerefugees@wpi.edu

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
UNHCR, Communications and Public Relations Officer	April 26, 2018 12:30 pm UNHCR Office	All team members Professor Bulled

- What has been the UNHCR's role in the refugee crisis in Greece & Thessaloniki specifically? How has it changed from 2015 when it began to present day?
- What is the UNHCR's relationship with the Greek government and the Thessaloniki government?
- Do you have any experience with the Urban Working Group Meetings?
- What is the UNHCR's relationship with NGOs (both big and small) in Northern Greece and Thessaloniki?
- What differences do you see between small and large NGOs and their willingness to collaborate?
- Could you elaborate on your experiences working with the various NGOs in Thessaloniki? Has their view of the UNHCR shifted since the beginning?
- What are the UNHCR's future plans to address refugee crisis?
- What are your thoughts on bottom-up approach versus top-down approach?

Thank you again for allowing us to host this interview with you. If you decide that no identifying information about this interview is included in our final project, we can arrange that. We thank you again for helping advance the research of this project and we will be sure to send you a copy once complete.

Appendix I: Interview with Municipality Task Force

Informed Consent Script:

We are a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are hosting interviews with NGO officials, volunteers, and employees on the refugee crisis and the experiences of the refugees. The goal of this research aims to assist young, male refugees in creating a long-term activity to provide an opportunity of empowerment for their futures. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Please remember that your answer will remain confidential, unless you have given permission otherwise. No names or identifying information will appear in any of the project reports or publication unless consent is given. We all greatly appreciate your participation in our research. A copy of our results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the project.

Contact: greecerefugees@wpi.edu

Interviewee(s)	Date/Time/Place	Participants Present
Two Members of the Municipality Task Force	April 26, 2018 3:00 pm Task Force Office	All team members Professor Bulled

- How has the municipality handled the refugee crisis from 2015 until present day? What are the major changes you have seen?
- Could you elaborate on your relationship with the UNHCR?
- Could you describe the differences between any collaborations you have with large NGOs and smaller NGOs?
- With the recent influx of refugees, how is the municipality planning on addressing these problems? What efforts have been made so far?
Where is the municipality planning to go with the accommodation programs in the city?
- What initiatives are in place to address the refugee crisis?
- How do you think the municipality can improve their efforts in the future?
- Can you describe what role you have taken in assisting the refugee crisis?
- What are your thoughts on the Urban Working Group? Has it been an effective collaboration?
- Have you noticed more collaboration with small NGOs? Are larger ones willing to participate in the meetings?

Thank you again for allowing us to host this interview with you. If you decide that no identifying information about this interview is included in our final project, we can arrange that. We thank you again for helping advance the research of this project and we will be sure to send you a copy once complete.

Appendix J: Meeting Outlines

Program Calendar:

Monday 4/2	Tuesday 4/3	Wednesday 4/4 1st Meeting 11:00am - 2:00pm	Thursday 4/5	Friday 4/6
Monday 4/9	Tuesday 4/10	Wednesday 4/11 2nd Meeting 11:00am - 2:00pm	Thursday 4/12	Friday 4/13 3rd Meeting 11:00am - 2:00pm
Monday 4/16 4th Meeting 11:00am - 2:00pm	Tuesday 4/17	Wednesday 4/18 5th Meeting 11:00am - 2:00pm	Thursday 4/19	Friday 4/20
Monday 4/23 6th Meeting 11:00am - 2:00pm	Tuesday 4/24	Wednesday 4/25 7th Meeting 11:00am - 2:00pm	Thursday 4/26	Friday 4/27

Individual Meeting Outlines:

Week 1: Engagement: Wednesday 4/4: Meeting 1

Objectives:

- Build rapport between the refugees to be able to feel comfortable sharing stories with one another
- Build rapport with ourselves and the refugees so they feel comfortable around us in the meetings and sharing what they would like to share

Outline:

- 11:00-11:20 Bring in an American breakfast and have casual conversation, ask about their weekend etc.
- 11:20-11:40 Go back over the aims and goals of what we would like to accomplish as a team. Show examples of digital storytelling. Get consent.
- 11:40-12:00 Have a conversation about if they would like it to be showcased after or if that would restrict their thoughts and work that they could produce.
- 12:00-12:20 Personal item sharing -- all bring in an item, or song, or picture to share with the group. Split into pairs. Given set of questions to ask each other:
Why did you pick this item?
What does this item remind you of?
How did you get this item?
One person comes up with a verbal story for their partner and vice versa
- 12:20-12:40 Come back together as a big group and share the stories with questions
- 12:40-1:00 Schedule with them the times and days they will be able to meet attend. Suggest doing a photography exercise in the days between meetings:
Take a collection of photographs documenting your day to share at the next meeting.
- 1:00-2:00 Explore the city together. Get food. Hangout.

Week 2: Learning: Wednesday 4/11: Meeting 2

Objectives:

- Begin creating simple stories
- Get more comfortable sharing with each other in the group

Outline:

- 11:00-11:20 Introduce storytelling through method of their choice (digital, photography, art, poem, etc.)
- 11:20-11:40 Share our prompts & stories to provide examples. We want to have them develop a basic understanding of what a story will look like.
- 11:40-12:00 Individual or collaborative brainstorm & research the media they would like to use.
- 12:00-12:20 Introduce 6-word story exercise. Use it as a method to start developing larger story
- 12:20-12:40 Perform 6-word story exercise. Hand out printed forms
- 12:40-1:00 Share our stories with partners and discuss the exercise. Larger Group Discussion. What was helpful? What wasn't?
- 1:00-2:00 Start developing stories further between meetings. Use 6-word stories as a baseline. Continue taking photographs.

6-Word Story Exercise

This is a very effective writing exercise created by Glenn Hutchinson, a writing instructor at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte. It illustrates how you don't necessarily need a lot of time to tell a powerful story. To do the exercise, have participants break off into pairs and do numbers 1 & 2. Then have a few of the pairs share their opinions before the full group. Then, individually participants can do # 3 & 4, share with their partners and then those who want to can share before the full group.

1) Read the following 6 word stories:

"For sale: baby shoes, never worn." - Ernest Hemingway

"Longed for him. Got him. Shit." - Margaret Atwood

"Well, I thought it was funny." —Stephen Colbert

"Revenge is living well, without you." —Joyce Carol Oates

2) Choose one of the stories. Discuss it with your partner. What do you think happened?

3) Make a list of important moments in your life.

4) Choose one moment. Write down six words that tell that story.

1

2

3

4

5

6

6-word story exercise adopted from Storyology: Digital Storytelling By Immigrants and Refugees.

Friday 4/13: Meeting 3

Objectives:

- Explore the city together
- Learn each other's perspectives of Thessaloniki

Outline:

- 11:00-2:00 Meet at Ano Poli, get lunch and hang out

Monday 4/16 : Meeting 4

Objectives:

- Introduce art to the stories
- Continue developing the final story to present

Outline:

- 11:00-11:20 Refresh ideas through drawing exercises. Draw the beginning, middle, and end of the story that you want to tell, it can be doodles and very simple drawings. This is to just be able to get their thoughts on paper to begin outlining stories so they can begin outlining their stories.
- 11:20-11:40 Pair up and have the other person guess their story/ create a story through their drawings. Discuss together in the group what story they have created and what the actual story is from the original person who wrote it
- 12:00- 12:40 Write a draft of stories
- 12:40-1:00 Introduce and explain photo-elicitation
- 1:00-2:00 Take/bring-in photos/pictures for photo-elicitation next meeting
Take a picture of a place or thing in Thessaloniki that is important to you?
Take a picture of something in Thessaloniki that reminds you of home?
Show us a picture from home or your past that is important to you?

Week 3: Visualization: Wednesday 4/18: Meeting 5

Objectives:

- Revise and finalize stories to tell
- Determine what art form the story will take and what materials are needed to reach this ideal

Outline:

- 11:00-11:20 Photo-elicitation discussion
- 11:20-11:40 Revise 1st draft of story. Collaboration between refugees or individually
- 11:40-12:00 2nd draft of story/create final script
- 12:00-12:20 Finalize stories
- 12:20-12:40 Discuss which type of medium they want to use. We should make a powerpoint/presentation of various forms that have been used. Any specific materials they may want which we would need to get.
- 12:40-1:00 Research music that they would want in the background of their stories. Recap & prepare for final week of creating
- 1:00-2:00 Determine how story will be visualized and determine the final materials needed to create that.

Monday 4/23: Meeting 6

Objectives:

- Start creating the art that is paired with the story
- Collect the digital storytelling pieces

Outline:

- 11:00-11:20 Record audio of narratives
- 11:20-11:40 Compile everything needed. Finalize choice of music and images included in final videos
- 11:40-12:40 Free time to create visualization; painting, drawing, etc.
- 12:40-1:00 Free time to create visualization; painting, drawing, etc. Review everything. Remind them Wednesday is the last scheduled day
- 1:00-2:00 Free time to continue working on project or go do something in the city

Wednesday 4/25: Meeting 6

Objectives:

- Finish creating the art pieces paired with stories
- Finalize everything, including the display/exhibit

Outline:

- 11:00-12:20 Free time to create visualization; painting, drawing, etc.
- 12:20-12:40 Talk about the display:
Finalize time, date, & location
Discuss how it should be set up
- 12:40-1:00 Final reflections, discussions, suggestions, anything else
- 1:00-2:00 Free time to continue working on project or go do something in the city