

Annual Report 2023

Closed control access centers

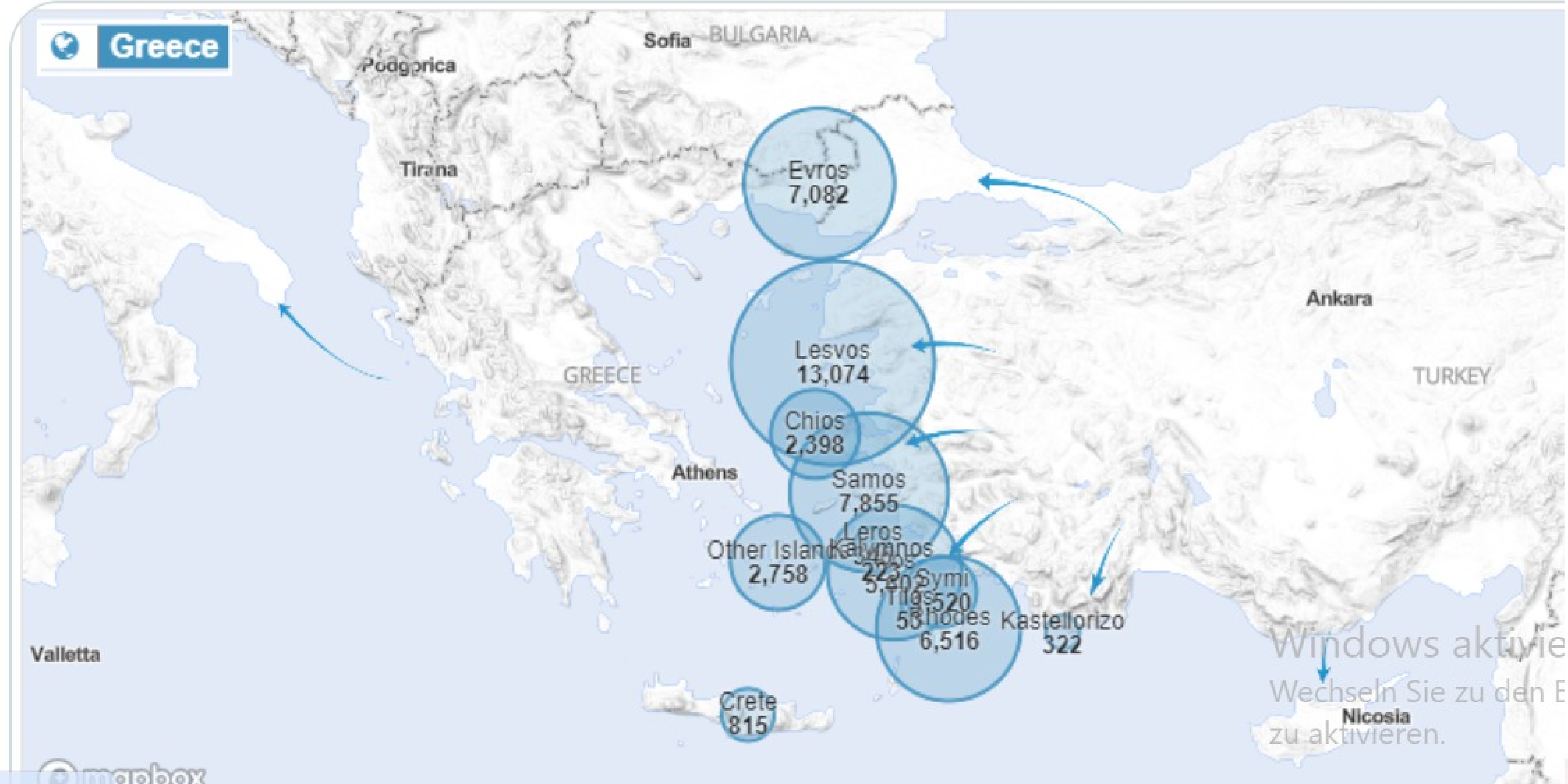
[#europeanwayoflife](#)



**ΥΠΟΣΤΗΡΙΞΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΝΤΑΞΗ
ΠΡΟΣΦΥΓΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΑΝΑΣΤΩΝ
ΑΜΚΕ ΛΕΣΒΟΥ**

Lesvos, 31.01.2024

Total arrivals in  for 2023 , 48,563 humans
Sea arrivals 41,481 & Land arrivals 7,082



Introduction

Another year in Lesbos went by. Arrivals have risen during the second half of 2023, leading up to 4000 people only arriving in September 2023 on Lesbos. Due to that reason and the ongoing no will of European governments to arrange proper living conditions for people arriving, the camp life has become once again an inhuman place to stay especially for those people that are seen as „outside of the procedure“ either with a rejected or recognised asylum claim there is no food provision and only improvised shelter opportunities. In December 2023 at least 600 people were sheltered in rubhalls (big tents), sharing with 150 persons inside each, no heating, no running water close, no electricity besides lamps available, often no floor or mattresses inside. Wash facilities and showers have no hot water, and are often broken. Many asylum seekers stay up to one year if not longer here as their asylum claims are rejected based on the „Turkey is a third safe country“-rule. Additionally refugees well integrated and having a residence permit in Greece, need to wait more than 6 months for renewal of their residence permit, leading to loosing their job, not being able to travel etc.

1000 school aged children are living in the Camp by the end of 2023 and only 200 have access to public education.

Due to the ongoing push back strategy, this year has been one of the deadliest since 2015 in Greece.

Thanks to all our supporters we are able to relief a bit of the pain the refugees go through while arriving in Europe. Proper shelter for (some) little children and their families, group support for LGBTIQ+, raise the voice of the unheard through a women's collective and a radio show and most important a weekdays daily available office to welcome and support everyone in need and help to orientate during their stay.

Alice Kleinschmidt, legal representative welcome office lesbos



Arrivals in Greece according to UNHCR

Previous years	*Sea arrivals	Land arrivals	**Dead and missing
2023	41,584	7,160	710
2022	12,758	6,022	343
2021	4,331	4,826	115
2020	9,714	5,982	105
2019	59,726	14,887	71
2018	32,494	18,014	187
2017	29,718	6,592	56
2016	173,450	3,784	441
2015	856,723	4,907	799
2014	41,038	2,280	405

Selected numbers 2023

41.584

Refugees arrived **via sea** to Greece in 2023 and were able to make an asylum claim

More than 13.000 of them came to Lesbos

0 €

Is the amount of money you get once you are a recognized refugee in Greece. There are no social benefits as in other countries, you have 30 days to leave the camp after the decision is issued

~25.000

Refugees were not able to make an asylum claim even though they had reached the Greek territory or Greek waters

It is said that they have been pushed back by Greek special forces and around 60.000 people have been stopped by the Turkish coast guard before reaching Greek waters

5667

Refugees are residing on Lesbos by end of December

90%

Of them reside in the new camp called "Mavrovuni" ↑

35%

Of them are children

95%

Of them come from violent crisis regions such as Afghanistan, Somalia, D.R. Congo, Sudan, Eritrea, Palestine, Syria, Iraq



3 years

Is the max. time that at least one family we know has spent in the camps of Lesbos due to asylum procedure limbo in 2023

Sources and more information:

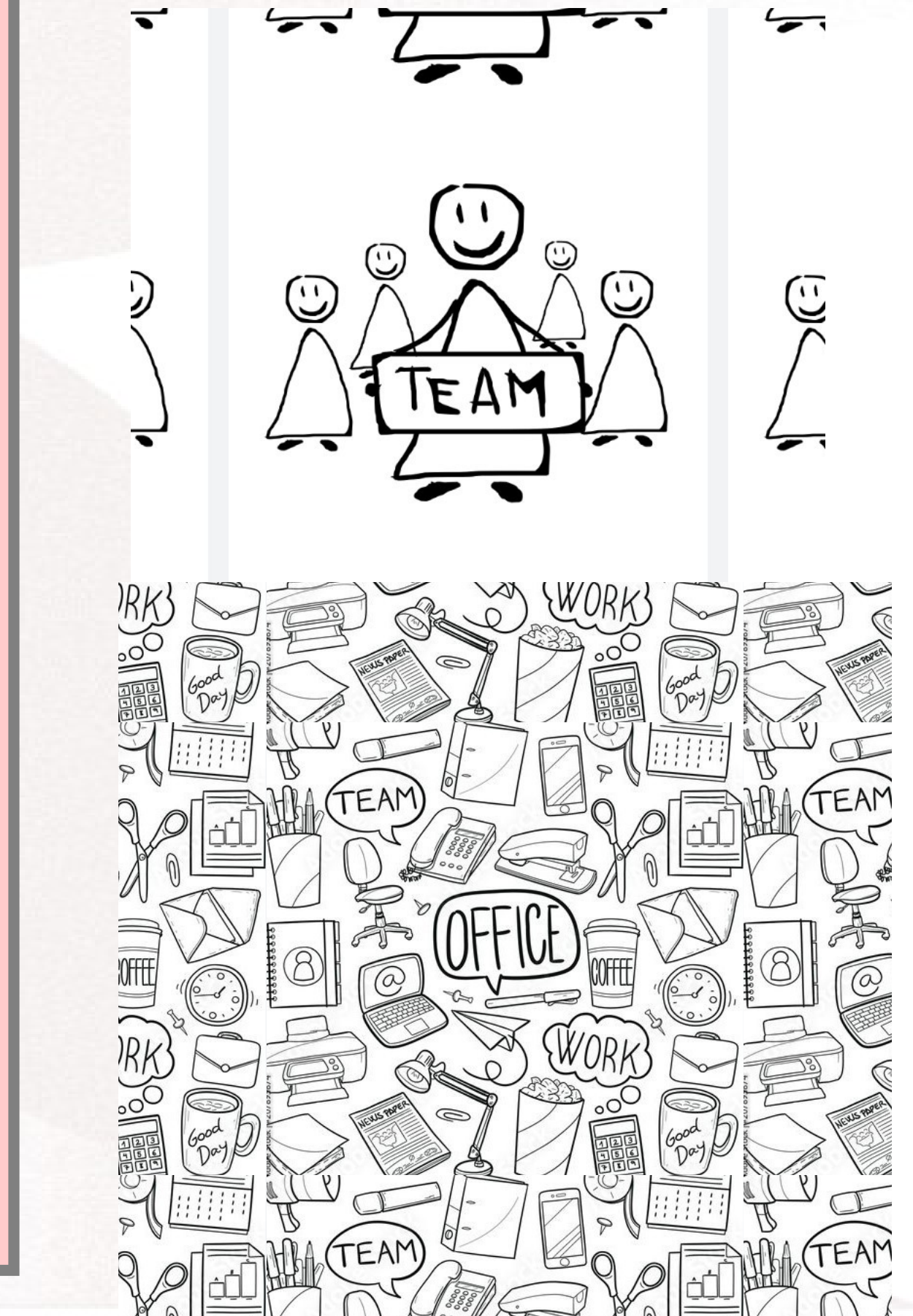
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>

<https://aegeanboatreport.com/>

Our team and resources 2023 – who we are

Our core team in 2023 consisted of 5 people

- Three receptionists / social consultants, one of them Farsi/English speaking and one of them Greek/English speaking and one Greek/English/Lingala speaking. All three were responsible for the Information Point at the Welcome Office – accompanying people to public services and trying to solve any issues coming up.
- One part time housing manager responsible for the housing project
- One coordinator responsible for the projects, advocacy, administration, fundraising, supplies, communication and supervision
- We rented a Welcome Office, until August with more than 200 squaremeters, that was open for other initiatives to be used, we had a clothes distribution there, plenty of meeting rooms, classrooms etc. , since September we moved to a smaller two room office, still other projects and initiatives share our offices, but we did not have clothes distributions anymore.
- Among the initiatives using our office space throughout the year are: Women in Solidarity House, LGBTIQ+ refugee solidarity group, UNHCR, VC Mytilini a radio show sponsored by Radio Helsinki (with two employees hired through us), the legal centre lesvos for outreach, and other migrant supporting teams.
- Of course within our work we share and care about the resources already on the island and we cooperate and communicate with many actors and individuals along the way for referrals
- End of August due to new arrivals, and more faster recognised refugees we saw a huge increase of people visiting our office for registering their documents to the local tax office – that for we needed to implement an appointment system with an extra person at the door + an extra case worker during September until December 2023 due to the bigger workload
- We transitioned from being a project of the subbranch borderline europe/lesvos to our own Greek AMKE (non profit organisation) under the name WELCOME OFFICE LESVOS



1 Welcome Office 2023

Our Welcome Office is situated very central in Mytilini close to the port. We offer information and counselling mainly in the areas of administrative support which means how to get a tax number, how to register at public services, how to open a bank account but also general information about the asylum procedures, how to get a job or rent an apartment. We help with translation of documents in Greek, we accompany to other offices for assisting or for referring to other organizations. We try to be a smiling information point. We are also an open space for other initiatives that do not have the means to rent their own space. (see self organized projects) – we are part of the integration working group on the island – and connected to many other organisation in order to inform about who does what and which services are available. Our office is open Mondays to Fridays 09:00 to 15:30. The space is the base where we coordinate all the other projects such as housing. See next two pages more about our beneficiaries what we did in 2023.

4246

Total visits to our social counselling desks



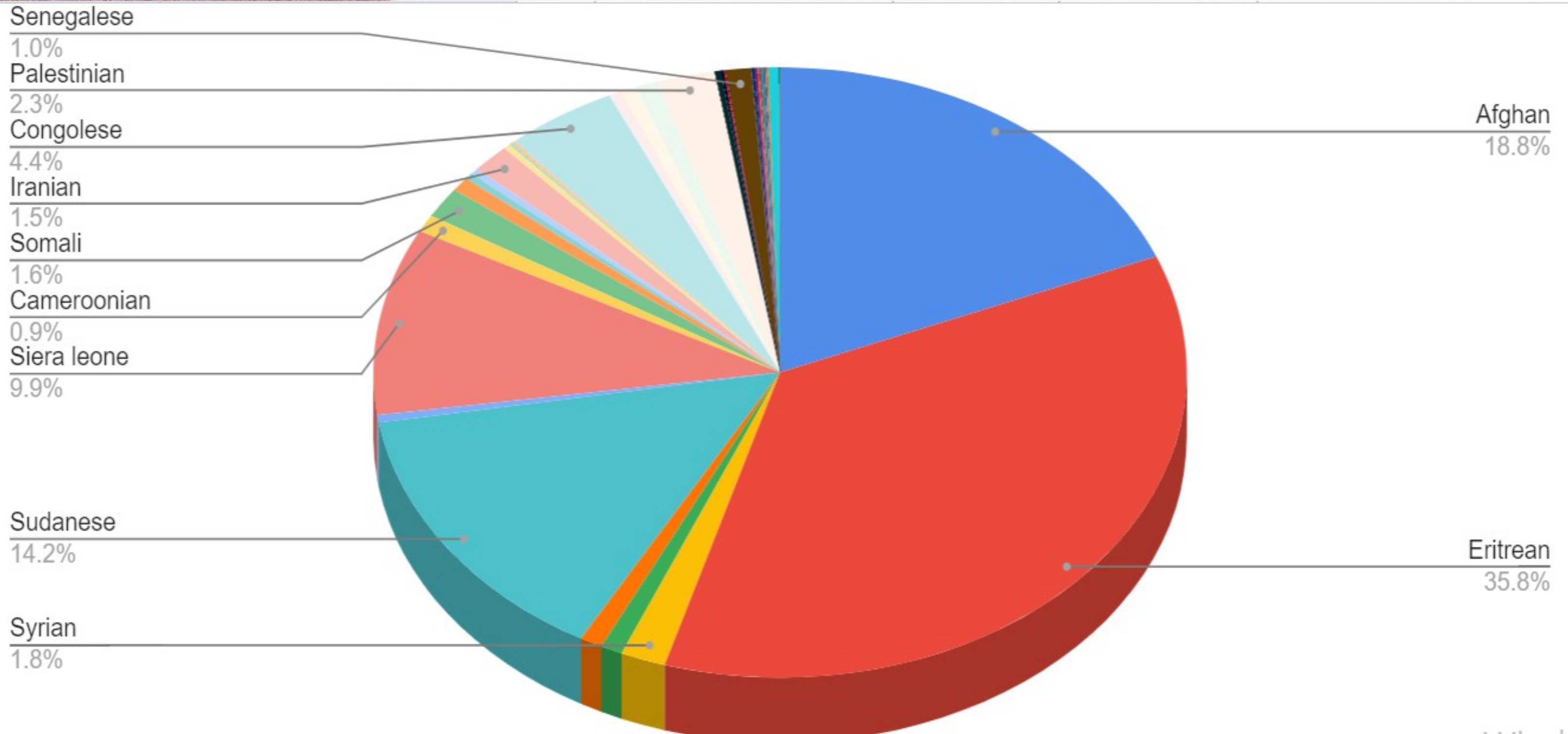
This is Lamprini, one of our social counsellors in 2023, holding up our main missions for the office, listen to the people try to support. And explain and refer ...

67.659 €

spent in 2023

mainly in salaries of 3-4 people in the office and rent and supplies such as ink, papers, water, electricity, etc.

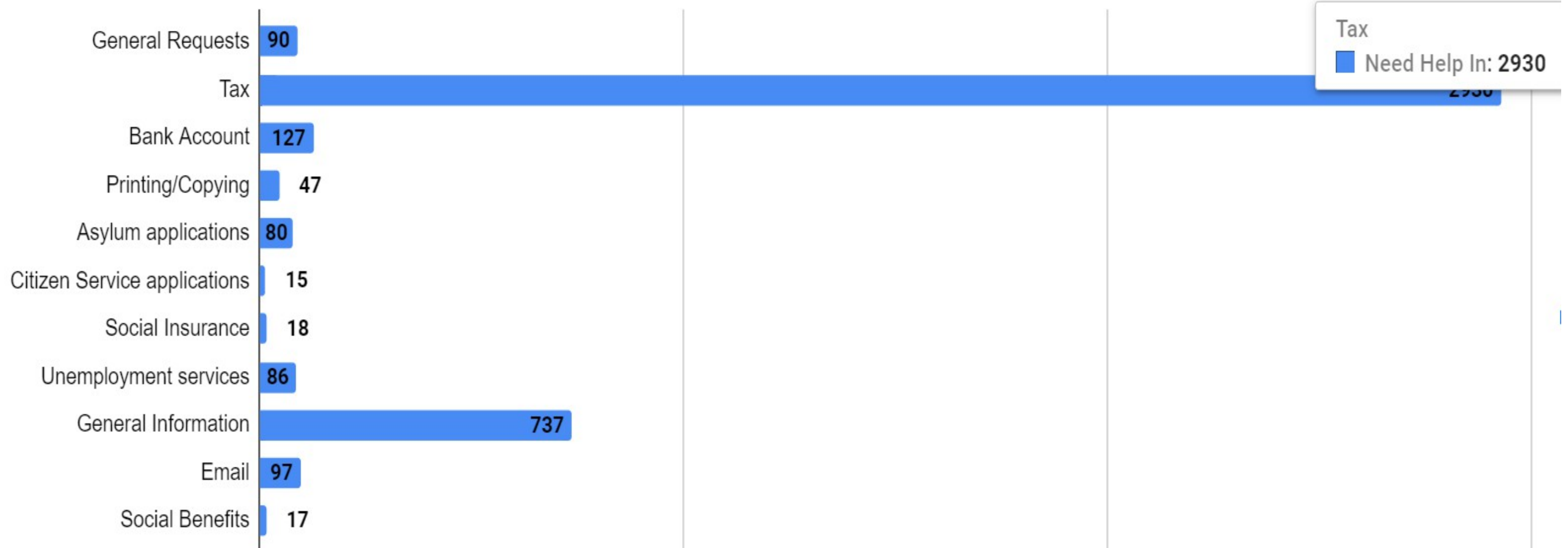
Nationalities of welcome office beneficiaries



1 Welcome Office 2023

Categories of what we supported with

Category



4246

Total visits to our social counselling desks

2 Housing

Our housing program is mainly meant for families with small children that have been more than 6 months already suffering the consequences of living inside the camp. Many of them with medical issues. By the **end of 2023 we are renting 13 apartments**, 11 for families, and two shared flats, one for single women and one for LGBTIQ community.

With the help of our housing responsible colleague, we do not only provide an apartment but also a **food box** two times per week (through «No border kitchen» and Doro Blancke foundation), **monthly bus cards** (by us), manage the problems/ fix the damages in the houses, and where it needs referrals for **legal support** and **medical support**, follow up with other case workers from other organisations etc.

This year we provided housing for **26 families** ranking from 3 family members to 7 and one house for LGBTQ+ refugees with currently 5 adults and one child inside, and one single women shelter that is just starting end of 2023 with currently 3 single women inside. We supported 2 times a refugee family in need with two small children in paying their electricity bills and rent, because due to medical conditions, they were not able to survive on their own, after 4 years on Lesbos as recognized refugees.

The average of time families spent at our houses was 4,5 months. From 2 months up to 13. In every apartment we had at least one change through the year, when people were finally able to leave the island. Or some few found a job and were able to effort their own apartment.

Most of the families we support have one or more rejections on their asylum cases, and are that for not allowed to work or leave the island + are excluded from food provision in the camp. Nationalities of the families in housing in 2023 were: Afghans, Somalians, D.R. Congolese while in the shared flats for Lgbtiq persons and women we had people from: Sierra Leone, Haiti, Cameroon, D.R. Congo, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Iran and Somalia

For the end of 2023 we are thrilled to welcome three more partners to support our expanded housing program (from 6 to 13 houses this year!) Missione Lifeline, Hammer Forum, and mediterranean women´s fund – **thank you!**

148
individuals
supported in total

32
Women were
supported
with housing

76
Children were
supported
through our
housing
program

- **We provided apartments for 26 families**
- **And safe shelter for 3 single women 10 persons in the queer house.**

The children ages ranged from new born up teenagers, most of the children that we are hosting are below 6 years old.

In our waiting lists through the year were another 35 families + people that we did not even write down in the waiting list, because we did not want to give them false hopes.

47.510 €

Were spent for housing in 2023

#3 self organized projects and cooperations

Self Organized Projects and initiatives we have supported in 2023

This year we continued to support self-organized groups on the island – especially those who have no means to receive donations on their own. Many of these groups already work here for years and have made their living and struggling within the refugee community. We are very proud to be part of the struggle. The groups range from fighting for women rights, to giving out food to vulnerable people in the city, to educational activities, raising their voices and organizing free clothes markets, workshops, discussion rounds, movie screenings and whatever is need to support the many refugees stranded here without own resources. Especially important is to involve people on the move themselves that know better what is needed and how to distribute what. Every initiatives has different working models, but in common to work **together with** refugees not **for**. All of the self organized groups work on volunteer basis while the partner organisations have hired staff and we act as local partners.

If you wish more information about each and every partner group please see their social media:

WomenInSolidarityHouse (WISH):

<https://www.instagram.com/women.in.solidarity/>

NoBorderKitchenLesvos: <https://www.instagram.com/noborderkitchenlesvos/?hl=de>

The Boat Collective: https://www.instagram.com/theboat_collective/

LGBTIQ Solidarity Group Lesvos:

<https://www.instagram.com/lesvos.lgbtiq.solidarity/?ref=10&hl=en>

Moria White Helmets: <https://www.facebook.com/MoriaWhiteHelmets/>

Radio VC Mytilini in cooperation with Radio Helsinki:

<https://de.cba.media/podcast/vc-mytilini>

Borderviolence Monitoring Network (BVMN)

<https://borderviolence.eu/>

* on request each initiative can provide a annual report about their activities and of course in detail what was spent where

Women in Solidarity House	16.066 €
Lesvos LGBTIQ+ refugee solidarity	23.771 €
No Border Kitchen Lesvos	3.083 €
Moria White Helmets	10.311 €
Boat Theater Group	3.850 €

Partner Organisations 2023	expenses
Borderviolence Monitoring Network (BVMN)	5.131,50 €
Radio Helsinki – VC Mytilini	28.127 €

7
groups supported

33.258,5 €
Spent as implementing partners for partner organisations

57.081 €
Spent for self organized projects in 2023

#4 organisation -advocacy, networking, coordination

This part is on one hand the so called back office, organisational development, managing and coordinaion. Someone needs to do administration, fundraising, writing reports, connect to all actors, go to meetings, and then if there are things we cannot change on a local level, we need to speak out about it. In the past we were more concentrated on what to do here, but the situation has changed a lot, and there are many obstacles towards being able to supporting refugees, especially new arrivals. We started to be more active, giving interviews, writing articles, making podcasts, meeting politicians, journalists and students groups. This takes time and efforts, same as to run the accounting of an organisation, organise legal framework of our activities, working on the tax declarations, hiring people, organise office meetings, enable decision making about the support we give etc.

Working with other initiatives takes as well a good amount of time of coordination and following up with 7 other groups.

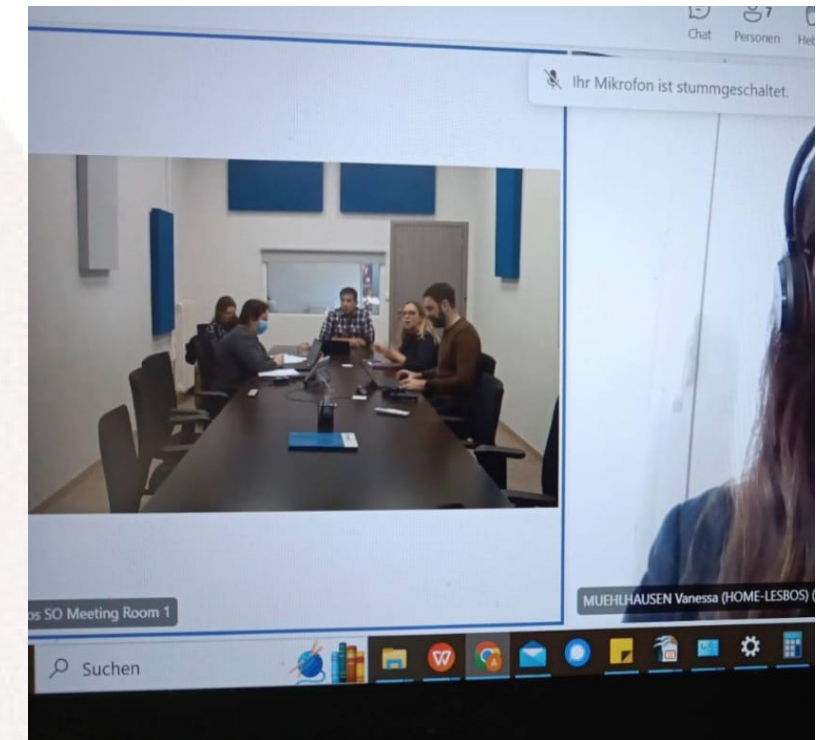
The costs include one full time coordinator's salary, payments to accountant, lawyer, insurances, bank fees, and coordination phone bills, petrol for transporting staff members and the financial audit.

Uncounted many meetings, phone calls, visits, online conferences as speaker etc.

(we will count for next years report)



Instagram post caption: Gefällt sabheinrich und weiteren Personen
janmalteandresen Weil viele von Euch gefragt haben: ich bin gerade auf der Rückreise von Lesbos, wo ich mir eines der vielen wunderbaren Projekte für das @wdr2
Es gibt noch mehr von janmalteandresen
App öffnen



31.593 €

Spent in 2023

#5 proti stassi - „first stop“

The project Proti Stassi evolved around an old cheese factory that we rented for the first reception of people arriving in the north shore of Lesbos in 2016. Since the political climate changed, actors like us, supporting the new arrivals, are not wanted if not criminalised by the authorities. Current access to the new arrivals is impossible. Since March 2020 we can only provide supplies for refugees through other groups or in our office. **Around 150 boxes**, we were able to give out to self-organized teams, other organisations that work in the camp and individuals that we provided with some bags for their needs or through our office distributions until August 2023.

By the end of 2023 our warehouse is completely empty. And we stopped renting it in 2024. There are other organisations that try to cover the distribution of clothes (Leave noone behind, Hope Project, No border Kitchen, Euro Relief etc.) So our former base in the north as well as the whole association of borderline lesbos came to an end. And we focus now on the welcome office, housing and self organized support in Mytilini, the capital of Lesbos. The clothes we had, were basically a stock from previous years, so we just emptied what we had and we had a smooth transition, hoping other organisations can cover the needs. Although end of 2023 there were almost no men clothes, no shoes for adults and few winterjackets available on the island for the camp residents.

5 transports organized to other projects for supporting with clothes (among them „because we carry“ and „Siniparksi“)

10 transports to our office until August 2023 with approx. 50 boxes given out

7 organisations visiting to take the last boxes of clothes and shoes to empty the warehouse



2.659 €
Spent in 2023

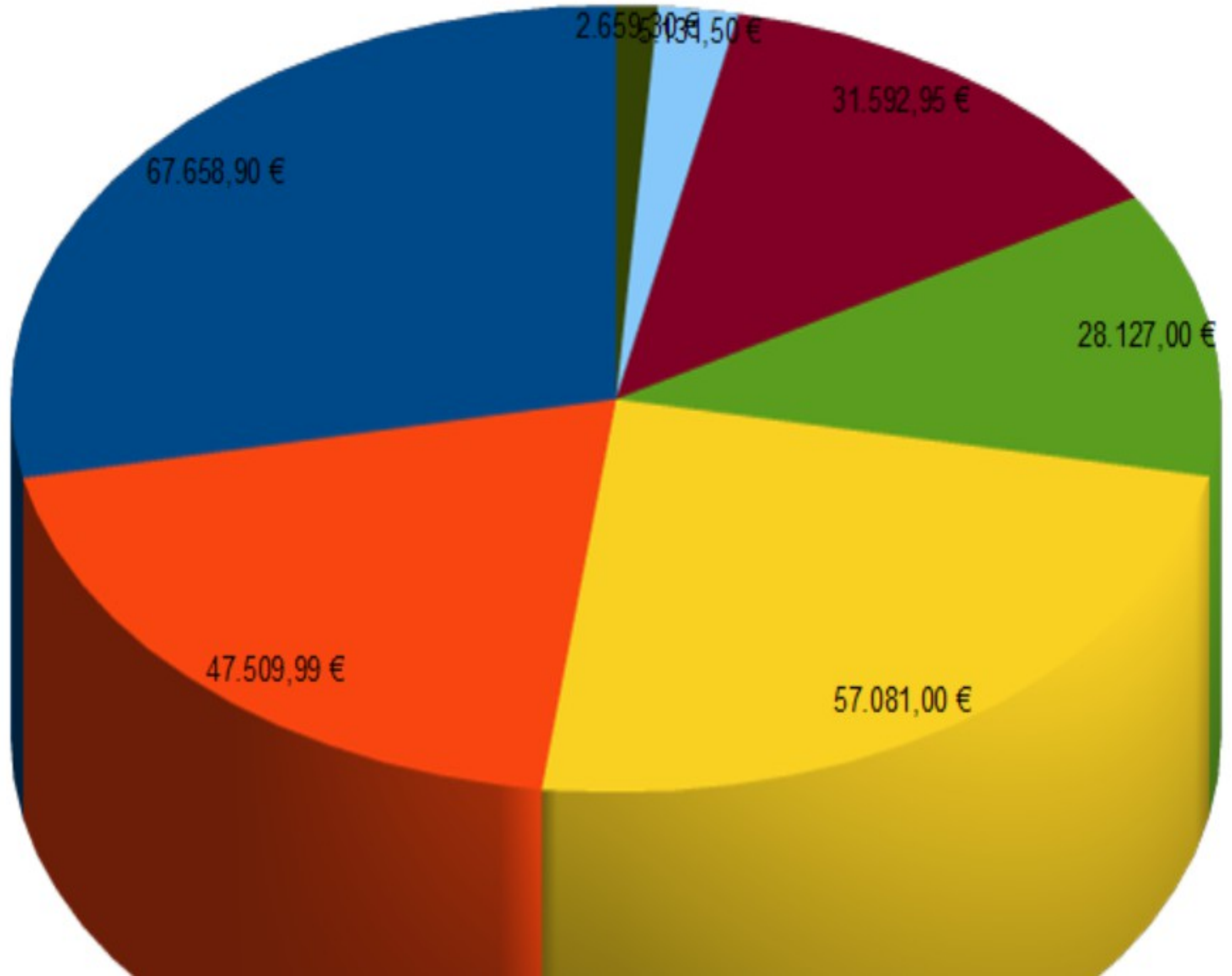
Finances– Income and Expenses by projects

INCOME	2023
1. Kerk in Actie, NL	55.000 €
2. Medico International, DE	45.000 €
3. Freundeskr. f. Kinder in Not e.V, DE	34.000 €
4. Radio Helsinki,AU	29.447 €
5. Ursula-Wandres-Stiftung, DE	10.000 €
6. Mare Liberum e. V, DE	7.150 €
7. Wadi e.V, DE	7.090 €
8. Mediterranean Women´s Fund, FR	5.000 €
9. Hammer Forum, DE	3.000 €
10. Rigardu e.V, DE	3.125 €
11. Lush Retail limited, UK	2.241 €
12. Mission Lifeline e.V, DE	2.000 €
13. Euro Relief Hellas, GR	2.000 €
14. other organisations below 2000 Euro donations	5.884 €
15. Private Donation	19.761 €
Gesamt	230.698 €

Expenses by project	In Euro
1. Welcome Office	67.658,90 €
2. Housing	47.509,99 €
3. Self Organized	57.081,00 €
4. Coordination/Admin/Advocacy	31.592,95 €
5. Radio Helsinki Cooperation	28.127,00 €
6. BVMN	5.131,50 €
7. Proti Stassi	2.659,30 €
Gesamt	239.760,64 €

Finances – Expenses by projects

WELCOME OFFICE	67.658,90 €
HOUSING	47.509,99 €
SELF Organized	57.081,00 €
Radio VC Mytilini	28.127,00 €
Organizational Costs	31.592,95 €
BVMN	5.131,50 €
Proti Stassi	2.659,30 €
GESAMT	239.760,64 €



- WELCOME OFFICE
- HOUSING
- SELF Organized
- Radio VC Mytilini
- Organizational Costs
- BVMN
- Proti Stassi

239.761 €
Spent in total

Finances –Expenses by categories

CATEGORY	Amount
Staff Salaries (including cooperating partners)	107.869,44 €
Rent +electricity, water and telephone and internet bills and heating petrol (several appartments, office, warehouse)	56.355,07€
Food (in form of organized weekly distributions of vouchers, or food bags)	27.550,36€
Transport /Mobility (monthly buscards, ferry or flight tickets leaving the island, car fees, petrol for transporting ppl/supplies)	18.786,23€
Direct supplies for refugees (passport fees, non food items, material for workshops, phone charge, clothes, diapers, supermarket bills)	15.450,15€
Insurances/Accounting/legal fees/audit	8.122,45€
Supplies for office and activities	4.987,87€
Bank fees	638,80€
GESAMT	€239.761

239.761 €

Spent in total

* A MORE DETAILED FINANCIAL REPORT WILL BE AVAILABLE
ONCE THE TAX DECLARATION IS DUE IN April 2024

Photo Gallery



THANKS TO ALL OUR
SUPPORTERS for making this
happening and possible!

♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡

Photo Gallery

Welcome Office 2023



alte 1
alte 2
alte 3

Photo Gallery

Camp life

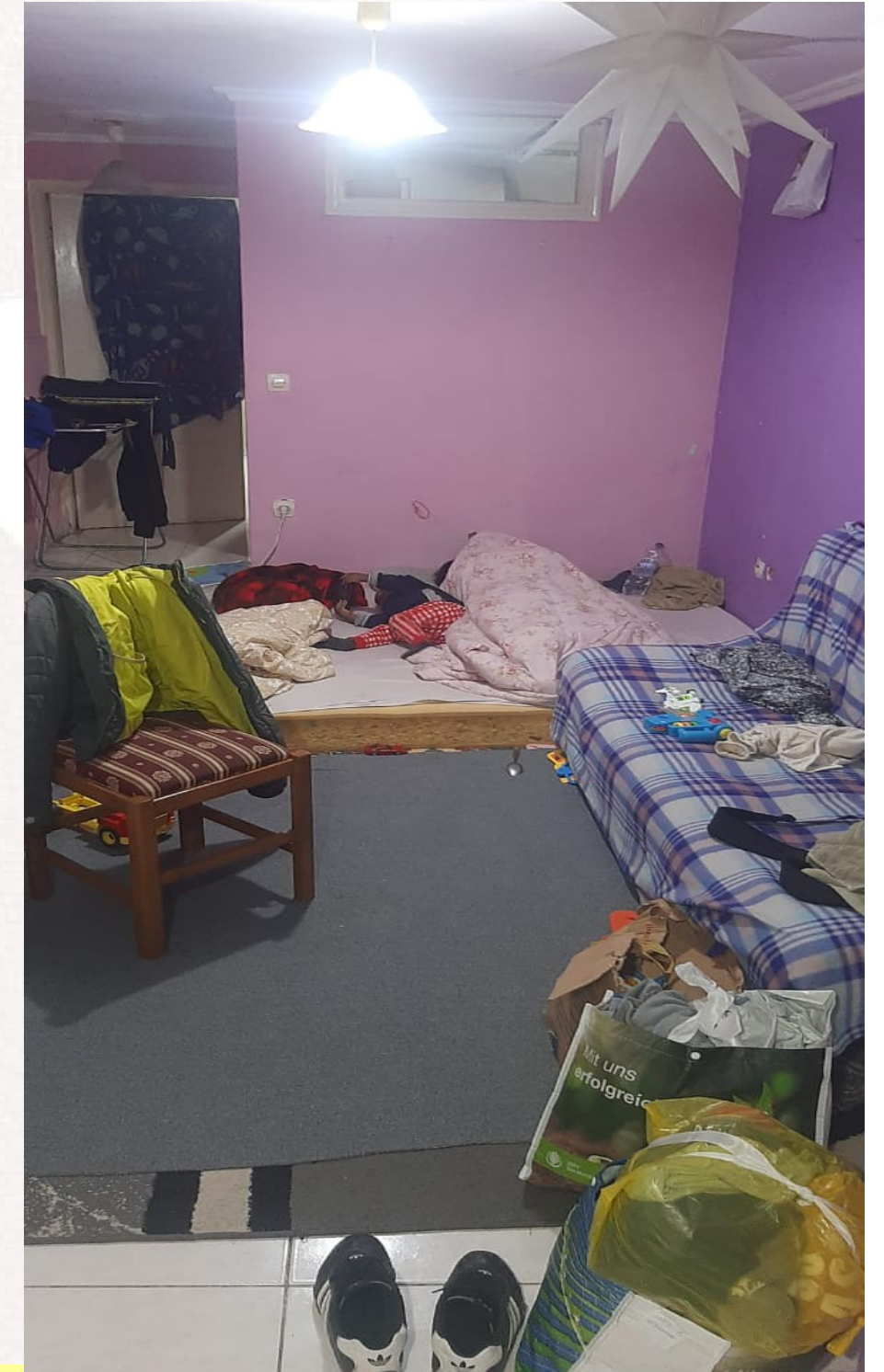


now_you_see_me_moria
Lesvos, Greece



Photo Gallery

vs. our apartments



<https://welcomeofficelesvos.org/>