

TECHNOLOGICAL AND INTERCULTURAL SKILLS FOR YOUNG REFUGEES

LATRA, PEACEBUILDERS, LESBOS
GREECE



CATEGORIES

- A** Connecting activities & community events
- E** Joint local engagement for the common good

PRESENTER

Aris Papadopoulos, Managing Director

DESCRIPTION

PEACEBUILDERS is a series of workshops and direct actions at the intersection of education and intercultural dialogue, undertaken by children and youth in refugee camps of Lesbos, which are aimed at improving their community and living environment, leading both to their integration into society, as well as to the improvement of their well-being. The objective is to empower marginalised refugee children and youth to become not just actors in their lives, but directors of their futures.

MOTIVATION

The project aims to achieve:

- Alleviating the polarization and conflict amongst diverse refugee communities
- Sustaining and promoting the voice of refugees in the dialogue towards integration
- Providing an environment for intercultural dialogue leading to multicultural collaboration
- Accelerating the integration of vulnerable refugee children and youth in society
- Assisting in the peaceful coexistence of multicultural groups alongside local society

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

- Conflict among refugee communities
- Current Europe-wide challenge of integrating refugees
- Marginalization of the refugee community from public and civic life
- Polarization and mistrust between refugee and local communities
- Institutionalization of refugees due to their long-term stay in mass-accommodation centres, leading to extenuating trauma and self-exclusion

MORE DETAILS

PEACEBUILDERS is a creative and socially innovative peacebuilding project which assists in the integration of refugee children and youth, by cultivating creativity, digital inclusion, and sustainability, and by empowering refugees to manufacture open source products which convert waste in the camps into useful everyday items that improve the livelihood and the well-being of the community. PEACEBUILDERS reaches 1500 refugee children, youth, and unaccompanied minors that reside in remote, marginalized, and socially-excluded refugee camps in Lesvos. The project provides digital, technological, and creative skills that empower their transformation into change makers, shaping their own future, as well as that of their communities. PEACEBUILDERS advocate technological integration and employability, regardless of race, religion, or gender and inspires youth to use new technologies in order to address the challenges they face. PEACEBUILDERS assist in the social and cultural integration of refugee children and youth, by fostering a shared ethos of intercultural dialogue, peer-to-peer learning, and hands-on participation.

LPCs also play a role in advocating for minority rights and representing the wishes of the grass roots to decision-making bodies.

OUTCOMES

- **RELEVANT & CURRENT:** The project addresses relevant issues that affect all EU member states with projected increased future demand towards intercultural integration.
- **INTERCULTURAL COLLABORATION:** Works with a wide segment of the local refugee community in order to respond to current needs.
- **TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY:** Combats the adverse effects of exclusion and institutionalization and improves self-confidence and happiness levels.
- **FIELD OPERATION:** Community-driven learning inside camps and hospitality centres ensures that the project reaches the most hard-to-reach and vulnerable beneficiaries.
- **HUMAN-CENTERED APPROACH:** Intercultural civic engagement enables refugees to address the adversities their communities face and drive forward programme ownership.
- **INNOVATION:** Delivers innovative content through a hands-on methodology that has the capacity to reach and engage the most vulnerable refugees.
- In 2018, PEACEBUILDERS was awarded the Intercultural Achievement Recognition Award by the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

LESSONS LEARNED

- LATRA uses a bottom-up methodology in its PEACEBUILDER programme with the objective of empowering beneficiaries to create a cohesive and structured peer-to-peer network for guidance and support.
- LATRA employs a method of 'Continuous Feedback' where outcomes from the project are shared with the community in regular intervals for the purpose of producing an iterative evaluation loop which contributes to the action's agile adjustment to beneficiaries' needs.
- LATRA has created a system, where a multitude of diverse stakeholders (CSOs, NGOs, government authorities, formal and non-formal educational institutions) are involved and are encouraged to contribute throughout the project's lifetime.
- Refugee camps in Lesvos are subject to frequent changes in governance and regulations. States of emergency are declared often; this results in humanitarian efforts being prioritised at the expense of education and intercultural dialogue.
- 90% of refugees involved in LATRA's programs are fleeing war and persecution. The trauma experienced hinders their motivation and engagement. Consistent effort is required to compliment educational activities with trauma-orientated support.