

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



“Journeys to a New Life: Understanding the role of youth work in integrating young refugees in Europe”

Expert Seminar

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Faros – supporting unaccompanied adolescent refugees in Greece: A case study

Introduction

Unaccompanied adolescent refugees are one of the most vulnerable groups in Greek society. Adolescent refugees travelling alone in Europe is not a new phenomenon. However, a large increase in their numbers has been noticed since the latest refugee crisis began. These new arrivals add to the unaccompanied adolescents already present among the 57,000 refugees stranded in Greece. The new situation as a host, rather than a transit, country gives a new role in terms of integration and long-term services for adolescent refugees with the most pressing needs being in the areas of education and housing.

There is an increasing pressure on the asylum system, and the national agency in charge of assigning children and adolescents to suitable shelters currently has a waiting list of approximately 1.500 unaccompanied adolescents for whom there is no available place at the moment. As a result, most unaccompanied adolescent refugees therefore find themselves in one of the following three situations: being detained in closed centers for unaccompanied adolescent refugees on the islands, thereby experiencing the psychological distress of forced confinement; staying in open camps together with adults and families, which exposes them to potential abuse; or living on the streets alone, thus becoming extremely vulnerable to sexual exploitation, traffickers and other perils as they try to cover their own basic needs.

Background

The history of Faros dates back to 2012 where it started as an informal street work and football school project that aimed to identify unaccompanied adolescent refugees in Athens and provide them with psychosocial support and referrals to relevant organizations and authorities. In 2014 the work was formalized and Faros was established as a Greek NGO with the aim to support unaccompanied adolescent refugees in Athens. Today, the work is channeled through a drop-in center in central Athens which functions as a safe house with services for unaccompanied adolescent refugees, and an emergency shelter for unaccompanied adolescent refugees in Athens, which has the capacity to host 20 boys between 12-16 years.

The aim of Faros' work with unaccompanied adolescent refugees is:

- That unaccompanied adolescent refugees are provided information about risks and of their rights
- That unaccompanied adolescent refugees are provided with a safe environment where they can build trust to caregivers and develop healthy friendship with peers
- That unaccompanied adolescent refugees are engaged with pedagogical, non-formal educational, and recreational activities
- That unaccompanied adolescent refugees are helped to durable solutions through provision of social and legal support

Activities

Faros supports unaccompanied adolescents through the provision of the following activities:

- Social work support
- Legal support
- Mentorship program
- Street-work
- Non-formal educational classes in Greek, English, German, Business, Mathematics
- Awareness classes on rights, health, hygiene
- Vocational training in carpentry and tailoring
- Sports classes in football, volleyball and taekwondo
- Cultural exchange activities
- Research and advocacy