

04/11/20

A friend from Adelaide/Australia asked me to write a text for her sermon about 1. Thessalonians: "I remembered that you are living in Thessaloniki and that you are working with refugees."

I did.

I heard her sermon a few days later on their [church's podcast](#).

The same day she told me that a member of the church wanted to donate us 800 AUD for our work.

One week later we had 460€ for our work.

When I wrote a thank you-email, with pictures from last day before the second lockdown in Thessaloniki, I told her that even if I would know her, I would not have words for that. But a completely stranger, from whom I only know the name, who gets so involved in our work, sending us money and solidarity really overwhelmed me.



Sandy, who preached that Sunday morning and used my words, send me the money and I love it that her PayPal account has this signature:

"I acknowledge that the land on which I live and work is the traditional country of the Kurna people. I respect their spiritual relationship with their country and honour their elders both past and present for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of the living Kurna today. I commit myself to work alongside Aboriginal people for justice and reconciliation in this land."

That's the world I want to live in!

16/11/20

In the facebook memories I saw that we celebrated some years ago that day with some friends they met during their first years in Germany: people who helped as volunteers in camps, as I did. We became friends. My syrian friends in Germany. One moved away from Munich. One is studying at the university, the other at a school. Both are speaking excellent German.

Asked what has been the most difficult the last 5 years, they answered both independently that they did not expect that everything will take so much time until they can finally start to study. And that they did not expect that life in Germany is so difficult with expensive apartments, difficulty to find a place to study and to work for a little money compared to the high living costs.



But they made it both! 5 years after they arrived, after a long time in camps, they now have their lives. They still miss their families, whenever fights are going on in Syria, they are afraid for them. The young brother grows up without the one, the sister misses the other... separated families. „One day we will go together to your city“ I say. And I mean it.

Happy anniversary Nader and Muhannad! I am glad you made it 5 years ago!

Photo credits: Anna Alboth, July 2020

24/11/20

We are not all equal... These days in Greece we are only allowed to leave our houses for a few reasons and have to send



an sms or have a paper with us. Police is checking. Police stands in every corner where they know that refugees are coming along. And they check them. Ask them to pay a fine. Make them problems. I can walk along and they don't even look at me. I don't look greek, but I don't look like a refugee. That makes me different. That's why they don't check me... We are not all equal.

04/12/20

It was beautiful. And it was so sad.

The first time after 5 weeks we wanted to call a few refugees from our list of those 60-70 families we are supporting usually. We decided to call those with whom we can easily communicate, in order to tell them that we only can allow a few people to come. We don't have many items, only one person from us can be present, for the people it is difficult up to illegal to come during the lockdown and we cannot have many people the same time at the place.



In 3 languages we had that opening "Hello, I am Verena from Oikopolis. You remember? How are you in that difficult time?", followed by a brave "Oh, yes, thank you, everything is fine."

In the following chat and when they came later in the afternoon it turned out that they are struggling a lot: without money, without distributions, with the children the whole day at home without school and friends...

It was beautiful that we could give them some food, pampers, some toys, things for the children's recreation. And first of all some conversations.

Even though these families are not so close to us, we support them since a while and know about their families: The mother in Irak who got Covid19, the son with autism, the little girl who has to stay alone when the mother leaves, the health issues...

It was sad to realise that we could not do this support the last weeks and that the period ahead will not allow us to see them often.

This pandemic requires a lot from everyone.

11/12/20

There is that woman. She is deaf since her 2nd year of life after an accident. Once she came from Russia to Greece. I don't know how, I don't know when nor why.



We support her and her family with foodstuff, clothes and what she needs, I guess for a deaf migrant there is no work in a country in a deep economic crisis. Whenever we have something for her in a distribution, we send her an sms and then she comes. Always with blown kisses, always with some sweets. She never leaves without putting a cent or 2 in our donation box. We understand each other

without voice and even with our masks in front of our mouths. When she came today with this wonderful gift for us we made a little pantomime: "from my heart to yours" - and that's how I feel with her every time.

17/12/20

I mean, I am glad that some people, organisations and media care about the new camp in Lesbos. But what about the other Greek islands? Refugees without support in Athens, in Thessaloniki? What about the situation in Italy,



inhumanity in refugee camps and towards refugees in Denmark, Sweden, Germany? The eviction of the camps in Paris? In Dunkerque? Nightmarish situations in Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia? Europe is full of these stories. Please, people, organisations and media: care about it! Time is running for many individuals. People are suffering, dying, too many people in Europe are forgotten.

21/12/20

I say „It have been only 8 families”

But when I am counting, these are 48 people.

Men, women and children. From Afghanistan, Irak, Syria.



Refugees with or without asylum. With or without a future. Without support, without money, with a lot of needs in the middle of a pandemic.

Today they came to take foodstuff, vegetables, fruits, toys, clothes.

We would like to thank everyone who brings us clothes, foodstuff or toys and who helps us at the solidarity activities at Oikopolis in any way. And I would like to thank the refugees who came today and who showed us again that every little piece you and we are doing has a value.

22/12/20

There was...

...the young girl/woman, 17 years old from Afghanistan. When I asked her how she is, she said... "well..." She has 3 younger siblings, has to translate everything for her parents, her Greek lessons just started before the lockdown and are now online which is not the same. "well", she said, "everywhere in the world people are infected and are dying of this virus. And I am so sad that I cannot help." She did not complain about her difficult life. She cares for others.



I brought a scarf today that I am not wearing anymore. She was so happy when I asked her if she want to have it (of course after she was looking for clothes for her siblings...). Her love made me so deeply happy.

There was...

... the Syrian father of 7. Seven children! I felt stupid when I asked him for the ages to get the boxes with the clothes ready. He started to answer "One is 2, the other 4, 5, 6, 7..." I stopped



him and brought him the boxes “Boys 2-4”, “Boys 4-7” and the same for girls. I always like it when father try to figure out which clothes the children could have. I mean... in his case, someone will wear it... But I told him that he can bring everything back that doesn't fit, that we will need it for other families. That was the moment when he showed me the bags that we are giving usually and ask the

people to bring them back the next time. Not many people are doing. He did.

There was...

...the mother of 3 children (10,12 and 7 months). She didn't speak very well English and her only Greek word was “thank you”, but this she said several times. She hold her baby when she was checking what to take from the foodstuff, the toys and games and the clothes. She really hold the baby. I don't see that very often, that closeness between



mother and baby in a good way. Obviously the baby felt loved and I loved it how it looked around and how it loved the Christmas tree. “I am the first time here”, she said, because the last times her husband came. He waited outside, they understood that too many people at one place is dangerous. I had to pack her more oranges and apples, because she took for 2 persons and not for 5. When she left, she said “ah, and... how.. hmm... aaa... Merry Christmas.”

23/12/20

Imagine you are living in a country with an incredible number of refugees and migrants. Imagine they don't have support and due to the economic situation they cannot find jobs to built a future for themselves and their kids and are living in very poor conditions, even in the streets. Imagine many locals in the same situation.



Imagine a pandemic making everything more difficult and giving the "conservative" government the opportunity to make their fascist laws. Imagine you try to support people, to live in solidarity every day. Imagine you are also afraid of the virus due to your own health condition, and tired from all the years, and are working every day to get items. Food. Bread. Pampers.

Shoes. Heaters. Medication. Money for the rent.

And imagine there are friends and a small organisation who are doing themselves unbelievable great work, who helped and saved you already so many times and who ask you one day before Christmas if you want them to transfer a lot of money for the solidarity activities.

...then a lonely pandemicish Christmas is brighten up

28/12/20

You get donations with tons of pasta or flour, tomato sauce, toothbrushes or shavers... and you think "How can we storage it?" or "This will last for years."

How many years am I doing that?

How many times have I been fooled?

...and then I stand some weeks or months later in front of empty shelves and cannot believe how many people need our help.



05/01/2021

I see the pictures, I read the articles from Lipa camp in Bosnia...
...how many people told me the last years that they will try to make it to Europe and got stuck somewhere... in Bosnia. Lost



years of their life, their money, their dignity, some of them literally their life.

It is not enough to evacuate Lipa camp! It is not enough to discuss the taking of these people in this desperate situation to European countries.

It is time to discuss finally the abolishment of the Dublin III law!

That is what brought these people in that camp, in that situation.
#humanitycrisis #tiredofrepeatingmyself

08/01/2021

I have been so happy. And the guys who helped also could feel it.

After a huge financial donation I ordered on Monday foodstuff. And today the shop delivered: rice, pasta, lentils, beans, chickpeas and sugar, but also "luxury articles" as tea, chocolate, cookies, shampoo, toothpaste, evaporated milk, salt and pepper.

We were smiling under our masks.

We were laughing out loud when we saw on one pallet two boxes vodka. "Did you order alcohol?" I have been asked. For a second I was wondering, but of course it turned out that the shop only used these boxes to fill them with the small things.

Today I realised again that we don't do the work we are doing for our egos. I realised how much we really want to support people in need. And how happy we are if we have beautiful things to give.

Priceless the faces of the people when I offered them some chocolate today!



08/01/2021

The difficult thing with distributions in the middle of a pandemic is that you need 4 hours for only 12 families.



The good thing is that you are alone with them and have the time really to be with them. When you give them the foodstuff, when they decide which fruits and vegetables they want and when they choose the clothes they need.

Everyone needs things. But everyone also needs care, attention and personal devotion.

In English, Greek and French I could give this attention today to the men, women and children who came to take food, clothes, pampers together with dignity, love and respect.

14/01/2021

Since so many years... and it is not getting better... organising foodstuff, pampers, clothes... bringing them from here to there... getting them from other people and other organisations... giving them to people in need... since so many years... and there is no light at the end of the tunnel...



...and even though we decided to do these distributions during the lockdown, there is no time nor space due to the measures to hang around together to share the tiredness and the questioning why and how much longer and...

22/01/2021

Well, no one said that it's always fun...

Today it was a f***ing exhausting, terrible, unpleasant distribution. I am thinking to make a poem or a song from the way I try on the phone to tell at what time a family should come



(important in times of a pandemic). I am sure after today that it is impossible to register more people who don't know more

than 2 words in English or Greek. I am sick of these women who are so unpolite, these men who have a gender problem. ...and first of all I feel bad that I feel and think that way. That I don't have the time and the patience to listen to gesticulating Arabic. That it looks at the clothes like a battlefield after each person. That "5 (3,4,9...) children" seems to be the excuse for everything.

We had so wonderful things to offer today. 3 of the 16 families said thank you...

"Tomorrow is another day" we say in Greek.

29/01/2021

We got the vegetables for the distribution and one guy helped to carry. He had his appointment for the distribution 15 minutes later. I thanked him for his help and what he replied meant so much to me:

"You help us, and of course I also help you then. You try to help so many people, try to help everyone. I thank you so much and I am glad that I could do something at least a bit."

This time I feel kind of overwhelmed with all the needs in front of me. This man gave me some hope.

02/02/2021

„How can we know if they are refugees or economic migrants?“ he asked me during the distribution of clothes. We don't know.





And we don't care. And I never will use these terms. Never. People are people and needs are needs. And solidarity is solidarity that doesn't stop at the papers who define your status.

03/02/2021

Yesterday we wrote a list about the solidarity activities we do to support refugees, migrants and locals. People in houses as well as homeless people. I got dizzy only while reading it. When I consider then how few people we are, I understand why I don't have the patience towards the people that I would like to have...



04/02/2021

I think one of our strengths is to start again and again from the beginning. Not to expect anything from the people who are coming to us. Trying to include them – at least in our community as long as it is not possible to include them in the Greek society, because

they are with their minds and heads already in another European country. But we try. As if we don't know that they will leave us. Like so many others left us. Not always for their best, but that's not up to us to judge.

We start again with the next ones. Stay in touch with the others, lose them, start again. And so on.

The children are never asked.

The have to go with their parents. From their home. To camps. To situations. To different countries. How many children do we see every day, every week. How many refugee children did I see the last years in Germany and Greece.



Tomorrow he will leave Greece. He speaks Greek now. He will start to learn another language. Going to a new country, a new school, hopefully to a future (which is uncertain).

"You managed that situation already 3 times", I remembered him, referring to the school changes the last couple of years.

We spoke a bit.

We had cake to celebrate the birthday of a friend, but it was a bit also a goodbye-cake for us. Last time sitting and eating together sweets.

We spoke about football. Well, he did.

We spoke about emotions, about fear. I said I start to tremble when I am afraid. I am reacting like this when I am very happy, he said. Look, now I am trembling.

We took his T-shirt that he wore when we were painting together out of the drawer. I drew him a firework on it and cut it out.

He let us some pictures and words on the Whiteboard.

Good luck!

05/02/2021

There are kind people who ask nicely, and there are people who take whatever they can grab if you just turn around.

There are people who only speak a few words English or Greek but try in a loveable way to communicate that you forget that



you don't have a common language, and there are people who declare when we ask them if they speak English simply "arabic". And that's it.

My favourites today: Maryam, 2 weeks old and her quiet, polite and nice parents. 2 boys for whom I was juggling with mandarines and who had so much fun with it, before they ate them (and put, instructed by the mother, the peel in the

bin while I was in the other room). A young woman who asked about the organisation and who was amazed to hear that we are all volunteers, organising everything by donations, and who said from the deep of her heart thank you when she left, after we had a difficult start last week.

There are difficult people, really difficult people and situations. And there are nice people. Very kind people.

09/02/2021

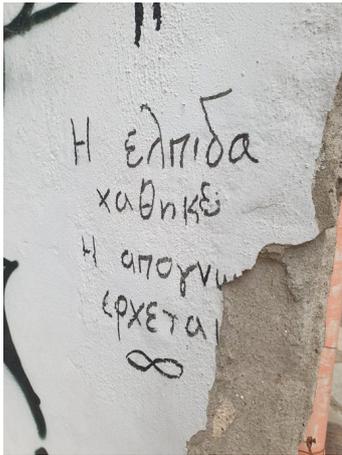
"I think I am tired since 2 years", she said. We know each other from a project where she worked as an interpreter before she changed to another organisation. I feel her. It was lovely to met her and we spoke about the refugee situation in Thessaloniki and how you cannot close your eyes when you have the skills to do anything to improve the life of these people. I was glad she told me that she doesn't take the



experiences, stories and needs in her weekend. And she was glad I told her that the 6 month old baby that slept today during the distribution will have now warm clothes. That it will not have shoes is something I try not to take in my further day.

10/02/2021

When I say „I cannot give her something, if I do, tomorrow we will have 5 and on Friday 50 families who ask for foodstuff” – am I just like the European Union with their deterrent politics?



When I say “If she doesn’t speak English or Greek we cannot help her at the moment.” – am I only lazy instead of doing more efforts to find a solution?

When I say “Why do they get one child by the other in this situation?” – am I only ignorant and arrogant?

Maybe I am just doing deterrent politics, maybe I am lazy and maybe I am ignorant.

...but I exist also. I also have my limits.

We have limits. Limits in our spare time, in donations and in energy. These days are rough. It is rough to say to someone that you cannot help him or her. To reject someone who shows you with her/his hands that she/he is hungry. To explain that you understood that she is pregnant but that she is not the first you see today with many children on the flee and that you cannot help.

But sometimes it is all we can do. All I can do.

13/02/2021

What about these little souls? Fleeing their country, living in another country, crossing borders with their parents. In darkness, in fear. Living in another country, listening to the sound of another language. Standing in lines with their parents to get some food, some clothes, some



something, sometimes only with the mother or the father. Sometimes with a relative because the parents decided to send one child to their longed-for country. Living without school, with fear and their experiences that don’t have any place in their daily life to be expressed. Living sometimes in the mud, in the snow, in the heat, in the streets, in camps, sometimes in cold houses, on a blanket on the ground. Sometimes organisations give them teddy bears and take pictures with their wide open eyes, happy if they can catch a smile.

These little souls.
These strong and needy children.
These little survivors at the beginning of their life.



14/02/2021

It's kind of like Europe is acting. And Greece. And many Dublin III countries: without a plan. "O... now we have thousands of refugees. We didn't see that come. We did not think about it when we saw the war in Syria, in Afghanistan,

the climate change, the inequality between "us" and "them", the disregard of human rights, the fights that we sometimes even supported with our weapons...."

Today people see the snow and suddenly they think of homeless people. "Do you have an idea what is happening with them?"

I have an idea and as we tried the last days to support them, we also will do the next days. And next summer. And next winter.

Seems like that's the plan: governments - and many people - don't care, we try to give the basics and as much humanity as possible.



19/02/2021

About today...

A mother with 2 boys, 14,15 years. After they chose fruits and took the foodstuff, I said to one of the boys, the one who came without jacket, that we should definitely find a jacket for him. For his age

we don't have many jackets, but like a miracle the first jacket I was looking for was perfect for him. I said in Arabic the word we

say also in Greek if someone got something new. Got his first (and last) smile.

It is wonderful when you can say „Yes, which number do you need?“, when the people ask for pampers. And you say it because you know you have from every number enough. It is so wonderful to have what people need. And it is so hard to say since years “No, I am sorry, we don’t have”, because it is never enough.

A guy in sandals without socks. He came for the first time to the food distribution. Before I gave him the foodstuff I ask him for his shoe number and - unbelievable - we have his number. The (new!!) shoes make a funny sound when we were going into the kitchen to take the fruits from there. I tried to imitate the sound when he left. He left with food and dignity. And warm feet.

I gave her the tomato sauce and asked her to bring us the jar back, because we are running out of them... "We drink from this at home", she said. She asked me for glasses or cups. It is so difficult to find an apartment. It is almost impossible for refugees to pay it. And it is impossible for those who make it to get furniture and domestic items.



25/02/2021

"This is the life of a refugee every time in a place where there is no stability" he wrote. Normally Google translator english is hard to understand. This was clear. He was told today to pack his stuff because next week the family (a newborn, a boy with a disability and the girl

in primary school with the parents) has to move out. They have to change their apartment and will be transferred to a camp some 40 minutes from the city.

5 lifes in pieces. 5 lifes without stability. 5 lifes with a future?

26/02/2021

Some thoughts...

3 women came today with whom I could speak Greek. They did not understand the irony in the situation when I commended their Greek...

The families are since 4 months (like everyone of us) at home. They offered

games and toys have been taken enthusiastically... I hope the children will have some time without the smartphone...

"Which number do you need?, I ask when it comes to the pampers. I love this question these days, because at the moment we have every number and it is a better feeling to give than to say "sorry, at the moment we only have number 2 and 3"...

...Just some of my thoughts today at the distribution.



27/02/2021

Sometimes someone asks you for socks and you freak completely out.

It has nothing to do with the socks. It has to do with too many years with people in need, with too much work, with too many unbearable situations, with too many emotions and tension.

We figured that out the other day and it helps now to fetch back into reality when we are freaking out.

It is not about socks. It is about too long. About too much. And about too challenging.

03/03/2021

On my way home. At 8 in the evening. Two children and some bags and boxes on the pavement. Arabic speaking I think. I hope they did not have to leave their house today - as so many who end up in the streets, in a camp, in Athens at Victoria square...



I hope they just moved in and will sleep tonight in a bed - or at least under a roof.



05/03/2021

He tried to explain me with his ten words English how he had to leave his supported house with the 6 weeks old baby. He cannot explain what really happened, but I could see his despair, his hope and his strong will to find a solution for his family. I am speechless also, although I have more than 10 words English.

She speaks only Arabic, but I understood and then she showed me the pictures from the war in Syria and that she lost her son and her husband there. I tried to stop her when she showed me the bodies of them on her smartphone.

He told me about the friend, a young girl who had to stay with her husband 5 years in an apartment. He abused her and she tried to flee. Her family in Turkey forced her to come to them, smugglers took her out of the house this morning.

“Since 5 months no money, no cashcard, nothing.” – “Yes, I know” it’s all I reply every time. This is the situation of hundreds and thousands. And I hear it every day so often. And no one cares.

How was your Friday?

07/03/2021

"We gave money to a lawyer but then he said he cannot help us. He took our money but now we have to leave our house. And we don't have the passport we wanted and we played for."



"We are living in an apartment together with a morrocan family. They said they want to kill is. They smoke all the time, invite friends and have party do my children cannot sleep."

"I had to quit my job. The money wasn't enough anyhow. The owner did not give me papers, so it was black work. But then also he refused to give me a paper to show at a road check during this lockdown. Now I have no job again."

...not my responsibility. Nothing I can solve. But someone has to listen to them...



10/03/2021

The system of hope

Hope is an optimistic state of mind based on the expectation of a positive outcome. The opposite is hopelessness or despair. The person who has hope has also the will to go for something. Hope can be the engine of life.

...for many refugees in Greece the hope is Germany. The hope is in the order of: getting asylum – paying a lawyer to get the passport quicker - getting the passport – buying a ticket to Germany – living there a beautiful life – getting more family members from war zones to Germany. So far, so good. But what if there is an error in that system of hope?

Until buying a ticket and arriving there, the first steps can work – even easier if there is already family in Germany.

Then errors can appear: People will live in a camp. Or don't get a place in a camp and have to stay in the streets. If the house where their family is living is payed by the government, only a certain number of people are allowed, so the family can lose the house when there are too many newcomers from Greece. The children have to learn again a new language and their souls are not made for this stress they already experienced in their little lives, so disorders can appear. With the passport from Greece they are not allowed to work. Languages classes are only payed for recognized refugees. Until they are recognized (if they are) it can take years in which work is not allowed and they are living in a camp (see above).

...there are always people for whom the system works. Some always are lucky. Refugees hear from them. They don't hear from the errors in the system. Whoever fails will not tell the others from the community. There is no transparency. No failing. Only the success ("I made it to Germany") of which the refugees who remain in Greece are envious.

And so the system remains intact. The system of hope.



18/03/2021

I never thought that juggling is one of the most important skills if you work with refugees. It's a door-opener for the children, you can do it with everything (apples, tomatoes, quinces, teddys, even with balls), you can fail, then the children can

help you to get the lost ball or whatever - and then you are in. As I've been today with a boy, 5 years old and very very sad. - What he forgot for some minutes while we invented a game with the ball I was juggling with before.

19/03/2021

„Madame, madame, baby, baby, food, pampers”...

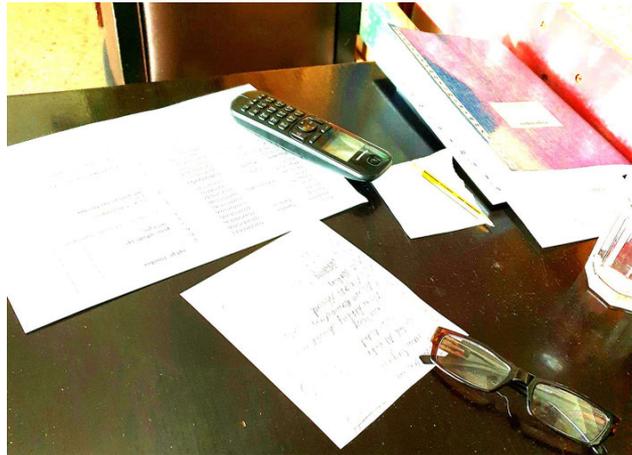
We write the names and the phone numbers.

We call them and make an appointment.

They don't come, blocking the place of someone else.

Why?

Tomorrow again from the beginning.



22/03/2021

Distribution

The little girl that was frozen, even more when the teddy bear gave her some kisses. I put it in her jacket and she get stuck with the bear face to face.

The woman who did not take the sanitary towels

because she expects her 5th child. "The men are the problem. They want more and more children. And me? I have the problems." She told me she is drinking soap, hoping she will get rid of the foetus.

A woman alone, passing by, asking for clothes. "This is for barbies" she commented the small numbers and we laughed. She comes from Persia, waiting since 2,5 years for her asylum decision alone in a camp. I packed her a bag with beautiful things to spoil her a bit.

The woman with an injury on her leg, trying brave to learn Greek. I gave her son the chocolate I distributed today and he went to the balcony, opened it and enjoyed a little piece. He looked like a normal 12 year old boy and not like a Kurdish refugee with a difficult life.

The guy who brought the empty jars in which I gave him the last time the jam. I always tell the people to bring them back. No one does. He did.

Only a few stories. Only a few people. From all these human beings around us.

24/03/2021

I try to understand him. Him who was begging, then screaming and then crying. He, who tries to get food for his family. He who has a son at hospital, who doesn't have money. Who doesn't speak enough Greek or English to tell his story, to explain his



situation and has to express it with his feelings. He who is so exhausted that he does not go away, sits down in front of our door and cries.

Try to understand us. Us, who are doing this since 6-7 years. Who heard so many stories, so many fates, We, who saw so many pictures and videos from boats in the Mediterranean, from bombs in Syria, dead bodies in different countries, from injured people. We, who try to support people but don't get support.

Today a man put his whole life and destiny in that bag with some foodstuff that we did not give him. His whole life seemed to depend on these few things we only can give during distribution times.

This situation is unbearable.

26/03/2021

I hear so many stories at the distributions 4 times the week. And in between, when people ask for the basic things.

They ring the bell - and then we are in the middle of their lives.

Sometimes I don't want to open the door. Want to protect myself against these stories.

But how can those who ring the bell protect themselves against all the adversities in their lives...



29/03/2021

Ein kurzer Bericht über anerkannte Geflüchtete in Thessaloniki / Griechenland (ZDF heute in Europa von heute).

<https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/heute-in-europa/anerkannt-und-trotzdem-obdachlos-100.html>



01/04/2021

She is 20 years old. She came to Greece four years ago. Her daughter is 3. "So she is born in Greece", I said. "No, in Switzerland" she replied. Aha.

She is a young Afghan woman with a beautiful smile even under the mask, her English is excellent and I heard a bit of her story: From Afghanistan to Turkey, from there to Greece and then to Switzerland.

She lived there two years, learned the language, made friends – and had to leave again, because Dublin III is not just on the paper, but is reality: Whoever gave its fingerprints in Greece will not get asylum in another European country.

Now she is back in Greece, she doesn't have support. She came to us to take clothes, another organization sent her, and from now on we will support her.

Where her husband is, if she has plans for the future and the name of her daughter I will learn hopefully tomorrow and in the next times when I will call her for the food distributions.



02/04/2021 - Good Friday

The woman who said to me “1 year Greece. How English?” to explain me that she could not learn how to communicate with non-arabic-speakers. I had to send her away. It would be impossible to call her to make an appointment.

The woman who doesn't understand me. She tries to explain

me something, but there is no way. She is frustrated.

The man who comes with 2 busses, almost 2 hours to take foodstuff.

The girl who did not go to school for a very long time during her way from Syria to Greece.

The man who asked for baby milk, but we don't have baby milk anymore.

All these people. That's Good Friday.

06/04/2021

A few weeks ago he and his family had to leave Thessaloniki and to go to a camp, a one hour drive from here. “I feel frustrated today”, he wrote the day before they left. I had given him a bag full of sweets and some toys for his kids and some “luxury products” (soap, a good shampoo etc.) for his wife. His English is very poor, so he uses a



translator and sent me a couple of hours after they arrived: “The situation is acceptable to some extend”. I think it was better to read it in the English translation of his Arabic instead of reading it in perfect English. I could imagine how “acceptable” it is. And the next day “we are fine in the beginning. It is difficult, but we are starting to overcome the difficulties with a little patience.” I could almost see how difficult life there is. His daughter cannot go to school, they have to raise the newborn baby there, and the son with a disability hopefully can cope with the situation.

Now they are waiting for their passports. As so many are doing. And then? I don't know. And I am not sure if he knows. Would be interesting how his answer through the translator would be...

Picture: From D. | View to the camp.

I feel frustrated today

I can imagine...
I am sending you the power
and energy you need
tomorrow.

Thank you very much for taking
part in our feelings

The situation is acceptable to
some extent

Hi Verena, we are fine in the
beginning. It is difficult, but we
are starting to overcome the
difficulties

With a little patience

07/04/2021

She came to ask why I did not call her again after she came twice for food stuff. Luckily one of our friends who speaks Arabic was there, so we figured very quick out that her number has been blocked. He explained her where she could go, tell his name and get a new sim card. She replied that she cannot do that to go to a shop to unknown men. That was the moment when I left the discussion.



One hour later he came and brought me her new number. He helped her to buy a new card for her phone and to install it. So lovable.



09/04/2021

A syrian mother with her 13 year old son. The son called to say that both have lesson and they will come 30 minutes later than their appointment that we had agreed yesterday. It was so polite.

A couple of weeks ago when they came for the distribution, we had chocolate and the son enjoyed the first piece at our balcony. Today we had biscuits and potato chips and he seemed to be happy about it.

The mother until last time always asked the son to translate, today I encouraged her to explain me by her own, and she managed it to tell me in Greek that the son had 8 hours school today and is tired.

They came in the kitchen, the mother took the fruits and vegetables, the apple compote we made and the bread, she put everything in her little trolley and we stood there to say goodbye.

Suddenly the boy came to me and hugged me. Strong. Long. Covid was only a second in my mind, and then I hugged him back.

A 13 year old boy.

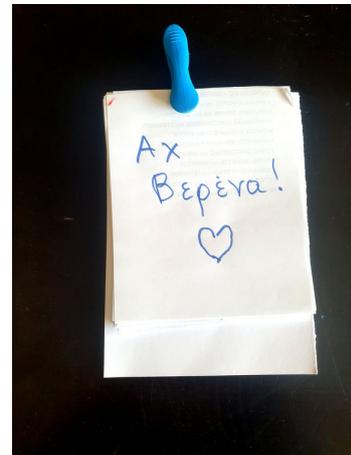
Loved by his mother. And deeply thankful for our little help.

11/04/2021

I had to cancel the appointments for tomorrow's clothes distribution. Some conversations...

- Hello, I have to cancel your appointment tomorrow.
- I coming?
- No coming. Covid.
- Ok. No coming.

- You cancel only my appointment or for the others also?
- What do you think?
- Maybe also the others...?!



I am sad that we cannot support the people as much as we want due to the pandemic.

I am relieved that there are a few days without distributions and these phone calls.



9/04/2021

We are cooperating with many organisations. The other day I had a call from one, concerning an Afghan family that get support from them and now also from us. I had to say that we don't have distributions this week.

She was so sympathetic, telling me so many good things about our work. „You are the only ones in the city who are supporting not only women, or homeless, or minors, but everyone and with everything. I really appreciate your work and I thank you so much.“

We are volunteers. Often enough employees from other organisations asks us to do their work.

This call was very necessary and beautiful.

09/05/2021

Wondering since yesterday what I am feeling... from 11 families that we called for the distribution (locals, refugees, migrants who came to register with the words "we don't have food, we don't have money") only 5 appeared.

Wondering what I am feeling.

"I am disappointed", I said. I am, because we are so glad if we get something special (f.e. eggs yesterday, milk and yeast on Friday).

I am also a bit angry, because we could have called 5 other families. (If they would have answered our call and / or if they would have understood us in Greek or English).

I am sad because I know there are so many people in our city that need the basics to survive and we cannot reach them.

Wondering since yesterday what I am feeling... and which consequences to take.



14/05/2021

I should be more selfless... but it made me glad when the woman who came for the first time said "thank you so much for your help."

We don't hear that very often, I shouldn't expect it and I don't.

But it was good.

He speaks only a few words English, he is struggling every time to find words, but I understood that his 15 years old daughter is since Monday at the hospital and that this has been the reason he could not come on Monday for his clothes appointment. I saw his worry in his eyes, but also the thankfulness when he explained me which examinations the ("good!") doctors did. I



Actually they evicted the camp and brought people in other camps.

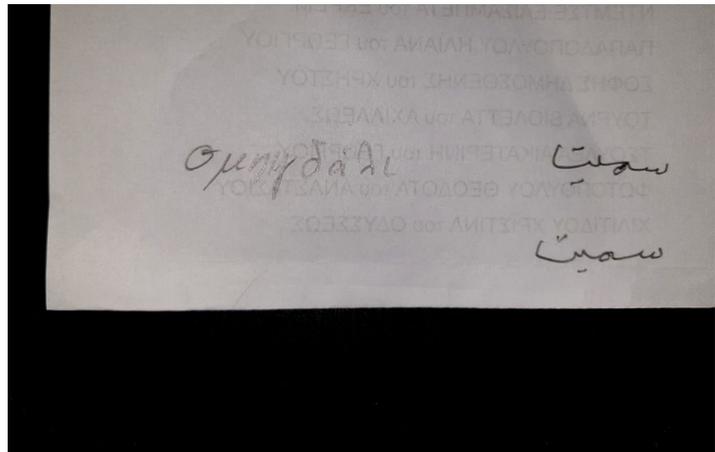
Today the fences are built around several camps all over Greece. Asylum seekers

and recognised refugees are living under difficult conditions. Five years after the eviction of Idomeni camp we still have to support people to cover their basic needs because neither the country nor Europe want to find a humane solution. 5 years. Will this ever end?

Picture: Idomeni camp, 20/05/2016

28/05/2021

When I am calling the families to make the appointments for the distribution I always have to remember how it is for me to make an appointment f.e. with a doctor. With a bad phone connection and with words I hear the first time...



...but at least I think I can expect from them to learn the time in Greek or English.

01/06/2021

"Refugee Cityscape", a project with GCR (Greek Refugee Council) | Oct. 2020 - May 2021

Here you can watch the final video (in Greek): <https://youtu.be/e-vALInI0K0>