



Bashira Centre Lesvos

A Daycentre Specialised in Psychosocial Support for Displaced Women upon their Arrival in Europe

Background

Lesvos is the Greek island that has consistently been receiving the majority of estimated sea arrivals of displaced people and migrants since 2015. As a previously known island for its natural beauty, it has become the mirror of a country that has been unable to cope with the increase of immigration flows resulting to a system-wide strain. On Lesvos, it is evident that Greece is no longer expecting anything from its European counterparts except for some financial support coupled with a shielded admission that a prevention through deterrence policy is perceived as acceptable means for managing immigration flows.

In addition to the impact of Covid-19, displaced people on the island are affected by local developments such as the operation of a smaller camp, the termination of the urban accommodation programme and the implementation of fast-track decisions in the asylum process leading to a larger number of people outside the state-controlled financial and accommodation support programmes. Among those who fled their homes to escape violence and destitution, women are intensely marginalised, and it might not be surprising that humanitarian actors report an increase in mental health issues.

SAO Association on Lesvos

SAO Association has been providing support to single women, young mothers, sick and elderly women with a continued presence since 2017 when it first started the operation of the Bashira Centre in Mytilene. The needs of the clients are multifaceted and linked to the cycle of violence, exploitation and abuse endured before and during migration. The SAO programme aims to provide a point of connection where women can voice their concerns, share their experiences, and re-affirm their determination to build an independent and dignified life.

Thank you for your support!

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Donations in € . CH19 0070 0130 0091 1535 8

Positive coping mechanisms are created in an environment of mutual respect and understanding that fully embraces the identities of the women it assists and at the same time provides practical emergency assistance to its members and by extension their dependents and loved ones.

Focus of the Bashira Centre

The focus of the Bashira Centre on Lesbos is to support displaced women through a combination of practical and emotional support actions. The main aim is to work together with beneficiaries so that they can reaffirm their perception of self-worth and at the same time motivate them to undertake strenuous but essential actions for successful integration.

We provide access to information, assistance to rebuild a support network, psychosocial support and various community building services. Furthermore, we are in partnership with qualified organisations who focus in the areas of legal, health and vocational support.

Our services are offered in Farsi, Arabic, French, Greek and English.

Services and Activities

- **Psychosocial Services:** GBV support and trauma recovery in collaboration with ally organisations, domestic art and creative expression, specialised workshops
- **Pre-Inclusion Services:** individualised support and escort to public sector and health services both public and private, facilitation for the procurement of official documents, cultural exchange workshops, information and dissemination of legal, social, and other developments affecting displaced people, referrals to language and skill building classes
- **Practical support:** prescribed medication and hygiene items, supermarket coupons, monthly tickets for public transportation, sewing machines

Team

The Bashira team consists of a group of experienced and dedicated professional women. They are social scientists, educators, social workers, and translators who adhere to the principle of "Do no Harm"¹ and other IASC guidelines. Employment opportunities are extended to the community of displaced women as well as local and international professionals.

¹ Anderson, M. (2004). The „Do No Harm“ Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict: A Handbook. CDA Collaborative Learning Projects