



2021 Annual Report

Starfish Foundation

2021 was once again a year full of challenges and changes to the situation here on Lesbos. However, in the face of these difficulties we have managed to have another successful year providing support to refugees and locals in need on Lesbos. Below we have summarised the fantastic achievements from the 2021, thank you to all those who have contributed to each project.

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



Over **237 000** disposable masks and **104 000** cloth masks distributed from our #SafeHands stations.



545 attendances by **76** different students at English classes at OpenSpace.



Over **105** baby boxes distributed in both Mavrovouni camp and also some in Mytilene town.



1600 bus tickets were distributed to students coming to OpenSpace workshops.



Over **200** Shopper and Essential bags made in our sewing classes.



A total of **20** women and **10** children resident in our safe house were supported with their lives on Lesbos.



771 registered members of the Starfish Library and **455** books rented in the year.



584 tickets sold in our yearly raffle.

DIFFICULT START TO THE YEAR

The start of the year began in very challenging circumstances as Lesbos was under the nationwide lockdown in Greece which would last for 6 months. At this point we were only able to operate our projects in the Mavrovouni camp as OpenSpace activities were suspended. However, the restrictions gave us a pause from people using the building so that a team of volunteers and workers could revamp the whole building to adapt the entrance and facade, create the space for the Multilingual Library and reception on the ground floor, desk spaces, meeting rooms and sewing tailor studio on the first floor and ensuring our space is equipped for all classes, events and individuals using the co-working space.



SUMMER RESTART FOR OPENSOURCE PROJECTS

It was not until June 2021 that the easing of Greek Covid-19 restrictions finally allowed us to return to some semblance of normality with a return to our way of work in OpenSpace, for sewing, language, yoga, psychosocial support classes to restart. The summer also saw the expansion of our Multilingual Library with more books, coverage of languages most needed and also games. We quickly saw the benefit of the additional resources with increased engagement from the refugee community.



STARFISH PROJECTS

REGISTRATION WITH THE GREEK MINISTRY OF MIGRATION

In November 2021 we received the fantastic news that our application to register with the Greek Ministry of Migration was approved. This was a great moment as many months of hard work was put into our application. Since the opening of the Mavrovouni camp our work inside was supported by Euro Relief so we could deliver our projects under them. We are particularly grateful to them as it helped us continue our much needed projects in the camp.

#SafeHands

We continued our important work inside Mavrovouni camp providing facilities for handwashing with soap, new masks for adults and children and raising awareness about the importance of hand hygiene, especially in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. We feel this work has contributed to keeping Covid-19 rates low amongst residents of the camp. During 2021 we were supported by 90 resident volunteers at a time to help manage our stations by working half day shifts. In return we provided the volunteers with daily ready made food meals, grocery bags and Vodafone cards once per month and Lidl cards twice per month. We have also collaborated with LESVOS SOLIDARITY's passage bag project who take the surplus used cloth masks after they are washed by the Lava Project to produce their purses / wallets.



#Folia safehouse for single women and children

In April 2021 we took over management of #Folia, meaning nest in Greek, from Safe Place International and quickly assembled a team of caseworkers to support the inhabitants. Our work has provided them not only with accommodation outside the camp and safety for vulnerable single women, many with young children, but also a range of holistic support around physical, mental, legal, logistical support.



Multilingual Library

Our Library has been operational for a few years now and 2021 was another successful year. Our service now has over 6000 books in 15 languages and provides an important role for learning, entertainment and supports refugees to integrate in Europe. It operates from our community hub, OpenSpace, between 09:00 and 21:00 and a daily pop up mobile service inside Mavrovouni camp between 10:30 and 13:30. Our website <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/StarfishLibrary2>



Baby Boxes

Starfish Foundation is now into its fourth year of supporting new mothers in the refugee community with baby boxes for their newborns. These boxes, which also is a bed, contain essential items such as sleeping bags, warm clothing, sleepsuits, nappies, mattress, baby carrier, blankets and underwear for the mothers, additional hygiene products for baby and mother and soft toys. The project has helped mothers inside Mavrovouni camp and a few in Mytilene town to provide as comfortable as possible an experience caring for their newborns.



Bag For Everyone

The bagforeveryone project focuses on teaching people sewing skills and is delivered in partnership with the #educationeveryone team in Switzerland.

Sewing classes are held at our community hub, OpenSpace, which encourages those from the refugee and local Greek communities on Lesbos, to learn a practical skill that will support them in the future. Two tailors conduct the sewing classes, where they teach each student how to use industrial sewing machines. The students progress from learning basic sewing skills to advanced skills, such as the bagforeveryone shopper bag, which is then sold to support this project.



Everyone Deserves an Education

This project provided financial support to education initiatives on Lesbos for children under the age of 6. Different projects are supported included the Mikros Dounias intercultural learning community for local and refugee children of early childhood age, Art Bridges who work within the two Roma settlements on Lesbos to provide access to education, music lessons and extracurricular activities, and basic supplies, the Starfish Foundation Multilingual Library providing education material and opportunities for children, and Community Schools inside Mavrovouni refugee camp to supply materials to help them deliver their important work.



Breastfeeding Initiative

The end of 2021 marked one year since the launch of our Breastfeeding Initiative in collaboration with the midwives of Italian organisation MAM Beyond Borders. The initiative focuses on supporting pregnant women by organising and carrying out Antenatal, Postnatal, Female Hygiene and Sexual Reproductive Health sessions for women living in Mavrovouni refugee camp. The initiative encourages and promotes breastfeeding, and is led by a team of healthcare volunteers with previous experience in the field. Individual consultations are provided and services are adapted to help support the various needs of mothers.



OpenSpace

It was another busy year at OpenSpace, our Community Hub in the heart of Mytilene. Many of our projects have benefited from using the space such as the delivery of group and individual Zoom language classes, our bi-weekly meeting with Folia safehouse residents, the center of our Library operation, Psychosocial support sessions for refugees, bagforeveryone sewing classes and more. The co-working space facilities have been used by a number of individuals as a work space whilst numerous organisations have used our space to run their own classes or internal development sessions.



Language Classes

We started 2021 delivering Greek and English lessons inside the new camp and provision of English classes at OpenSpace. Classes at our community Hub in Mytilene are available for all levels in group classes or one-to-one virtual classes and online teachers. It was great to partner up with REAL (Refugee Education and Learning) for the many online classes that took place over the year.



Winter Raffle

At the end of December we held another successful Winter Raffle where many wonderful supporters from around the world made donations to Starfish and gave themselves a chance of winning some fantastic prizes showcasing products from Lesvos. Anyone who donated €5 to Starfish between December 21st and January 1st 2021 was automatically entered into the draw to be in with the chance of winning some prizes showcasing Lesvos businesses and ranged from, candle gift sets, and handmade bags.

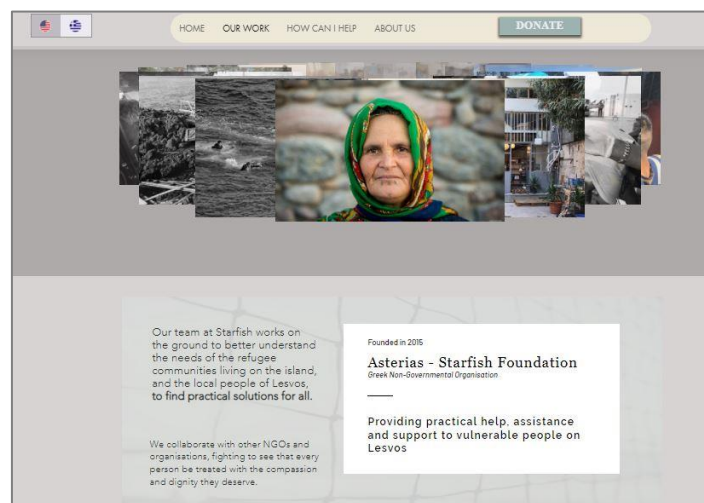


Support and Security for Lesvos NGOs

During 2021 we also delivered another exciting project assisting the development and sustainability of humanitarian organisations on Lesvos. This project saw local organisations here access financial and practical assistance in order to help them successfully apply for their registration with the Ministry of Migration. In addition, the project also provided free access to accountancy and legal support to help all the organisations going forward.

Our Website

We are aware about the importance of our image on Internet, and that promoting our work would help us attract more volunteers and partnerships. In 2021, we focused on redesigning our [Website](#). Now you would find the updates about our projects, the history of Starfish, our latest reports, and much more. We are still working on it, so keep an eye on the site!



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Throughout 2021 we once again received fantastic support from organisations and individuals who make our work possible. We wanted to take the opportunity to say thank you for the wonderful support, and also shed some light on some of the organisations who have contributed to our cause.

Hammer Forum Medical Aid for Children e.V - One of our major donors that has partnered up with Starfish. A relief organisation that has been providing medical care for children since 1991, supported Starfish again in 2021 with fantastic support to our Folia safehouse, safehands and baby boxes. Their generous support across these projects allows us to support many individuals from the refugee community.

EPIM - The European Programme for Integration and Migration was established to strengthen the role played by civil society in advocating for constructive approaches to migration in Europe. We were very thankful for the EPIMs support of Starfish in 2021 with a generous grant towards the SafeHands project, support for Starfish's chartered accountant and help with upgrading our safeguarding policy.

Foundation Open Society Institute (FOSI) - It continues to fund Starfish with grants and gave for both 'Support and Security for Lesbos NGOs' and 'Everyone Deserves an Education' projects

Solidaritetsforeningen Sjøstjerne - Our sister organisation in Norway has once again helped our work in 2021 with lovely fundraising work dedicated to the work we do here on the ground here on Lesbos

SH Individual donor - We would like to say a big thank you to SH who has been our largest individual donor since 2015 with incredible generosity and support through monthly donations.

JUST HUMAN E.V - The organisation Just Human is working with people throughout the city of Stuttgart, Germany, and supported Starfish throughout 2021 with contributions towards our office space (OpenSpace), baby box project and the breastfeeding initiative.

Mission Lifeline e.V - Is an organisation from Dresden, Germany, founded in 2016 which aims to rescue people at sea in the Mediterranean. They have contributed to the work of Starfish in 2021 with regular financial support to our Folia safehouse project.

Safe Place International - An organisation established in 2017 who has been providing basic needs, housing, and sustainability to LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants and have given us the Folia safe house property without any cost whilst they have also supported us by establishing a platform to receive donations with a 501c tax reduction.

The Starfish community - Finally, we would like to thank **YOU**, those who donated, fundraised, volunteered, followed or spread the message about our work providing dignity, compassion and humanity. The projects you have read in this report, and the support that Starfish provides to those in need, is only possible because of your generosity, and for that we are truly grateful.



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