



Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection and Temporary Protection



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης & Ασύλου



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EMPLOYABILITY

“Welcome 2023” Career Days in Athens and Thessaloniki

Responding to the high demand for workforce from a variety of industries across Greece, along with the need to build strong foundations for a more inclusive and diversified labor market, HELIOS organized for a third consecutive year the Welcome 2023 Career Days in Athens and Thessaloniki. Both events aimed to link companies with potential job seekers among the migrant and refugee communities with a special twofold focus to empower women to access the labor market and raise awareness on the importance of equality, diversity, and no discrimination in the workplace. The two Welcome 2023 Career Days in Athens took place at Serafeio City of Athens. During the two days, 42 companies from multiple industries, such as hospitality, catering, logistics, and technology, had the chance to interview candidates, with 712 people participating in total. Company representatives attended multiple sessions and discussed on important issues, such as the legal rights

of migrants, beneficiaries of international and temporary protection, diversity in the workplace and the integration of women in the labor market. At the same time, job seekers had the opportunity to participate in parallel sessions related to their personal and professional development. The Career Day in Thessaloniki took place at Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF) HELEXPO and was attended by 178 people, including representatives of 17 companies from multiple sectors.

The Career Days in Athens were co-organized with the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR), the Migrant Integration Center (MIC) of the City of Athens, UNHCR, ActionAid, Caritas Hellas, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), International Rescue Committee (IRC), ITHACA, METAdrasi, Nostos and SolidarityNow, whereas the Career Day in Thessaloniki was exclusively organized by HELIOS.

INTEGRATION

Raising Awareness on International Women's Day in HELIOS ILCs

On the occasion of International Women's Day (IWD) 2023 "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality", three Group Info sessions took place in three HELIOS ILCs in Athens, Heraklion and Thessaloniki. A brief overview of the historical development of the IWD was presented, including inspiring women stories from around the world. Moving on, participants explored their creativity and expressed their thoughts, feelings and hopes in their drawings, sketches, writings, and collages.



SENSITIZATION

Welcoming Spring with a Spring Sustainability Workshop in Athens

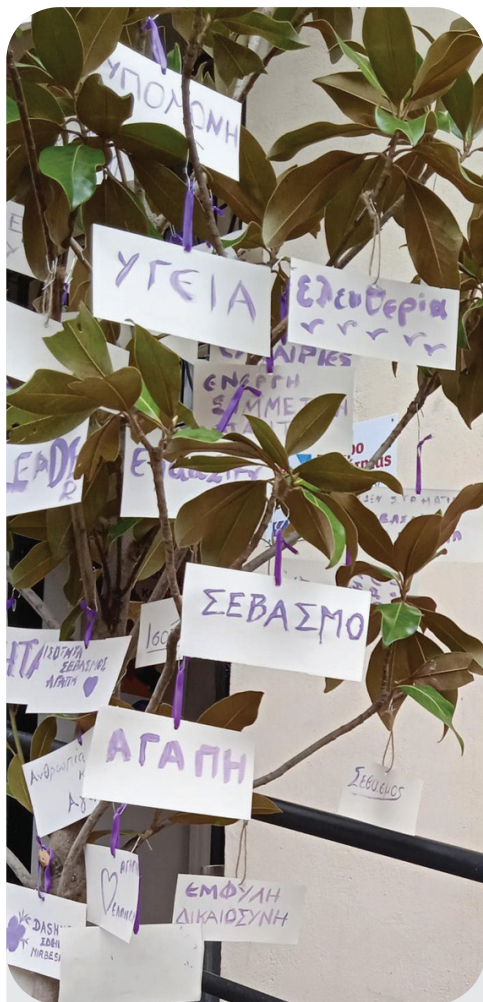
An open creative sustainability workshop was held by HELIOS at the Serafeio City of Athens in the framework of the 1st Athens Civil Society Festival. The purpose of the event was to engage audiences to create together with other people from diverse communities and gain knowledge concerning environmentally friendly sustainable ways of reusing clothes and fabrics, opening opportunities for an impactful contribution and environmental awareness. As a result of the capacity building opportunities for the Project's beneficiaries as well as for the wider community, the Spring Sustainability workshop was led by a former HELIOS beneficiary that along with two other women from the local and migrant community facilitated the conduction of the event by deploying their sewing skills, mastered in the course of a series of previous HELIOS workshops on Sustainable Fashion. Under their guidance, migrants, refugees, and locals created beautiful multicolored fabric flowers which were included in the spring wreath-making event organized by ACCMR and the Ukrainian Women's Union in Greece, thus giving a positive message for the sustainability of the environment and the harmonious coexistence of all people. The event was organized in the framework of IOM's wider collaboration with the ACCMR.



Empowering Women through Art in Thessaloniki

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, HELIOS, in collaboration with the Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies and the Metropolitan Organization of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki (MOMus) and with the support of Diotima, organized a creative and interactive workshop for migrant, refugee and local women of Thessaloniki at the State Museum of Contemporary Art. The goal of the workshop was to create a safe space for all participants to express themselves and be empowered through interactive learning on art and drawing. Attendees, including HELIOS beneficiaries from Ukraine and Cameroon and students of the Municipal School of Greek Language of Neapoli-Sykies from Greece, Ukraine, Albania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, enjoyed a tailored, specialized tour of the museum, discussed the art pieces and participated in empowerment activities in pairs under the guidance of the museum's curators, in a calm spirit of sharing and caring creating the opportunity for exchanging views, having fun and collectively enjoying art.





Raising Awareness of “Women Stories” in Trikala Against Racism, Xenophobia and Gender Inequality

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, HELIOS in collaboration with the Migrants Integration Centre (MIC) of Trikala organized an event, namely “Women Stories”, addressed to refugee, migrant and local women, aiming at sending a strong message of acceptance and solidarity. The event focused on empowering women to share their ideas on education, active participation in community and economic life while encouraging them also to share their personal message against racism, xenophobia and gender inequalities on a potted tree that will be planted at the garden of the MIC. “Freedom, Love, Equality and Respect” became “the seeds of the tree” in this creative event in which women of Trikala united their voices towards tolerance and social cohesion.



Tackling Mobbing in the Workplace during a parallel Workshop in Thessaloniki “Welcome 2023” Career Day

During “Welcome 2023” Career Day at Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF) HELEXPO, organized in the framework of HELIOS towards empowering access to the labor market, a dedicated women’s workshop was carried by HELIOS in collaboration with Diotima, addressing the issue of mobbing and discrimination in the workplace. This interactive workshop was aiming at empowering women that are currently working or job searching, by enabling them to identify mobbing behaviors in the workplace and by presenting ways of coping with it. Migrant, refugee, and local women attendees had fruitful conversations on several workplace mobbing case scenarios related to incidents experienced and shared by participants, as well as on possible ways in which a victim of mobbing can react and defend herself in an effective manner to suppress this phenomenon.

Familiarization of Children with Human Rights in Kilkis

HELIOS and the Municipality of Kilkis co-organized two workshops at the premises of the 2nd and the 6th primary school of Kilkis, introducing young minors, aged 9-10 y.o., to the notion of Human Rights and inclusiveness through joyful activities. The activities were part of a broader effort to empower young students’ solidarity and inclusion spirit with the goal to enhance their skills on inclusivity and acceptance of diversity, focusing on migrants and refugees. The content of the first workshop was based on the “Manual for Human Rights Education for Young People, Compass and Compasito”, certified by the Council of Europe. Attending children, through games, interaction, and creativity, had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the existence of stereotypes – such as the notion of “boys do not cry” - and to be exposed to a procedure of questioning them. The second workshop, named “The Flower of Equality” invited children to “plant equality, friendship, peace and solidarity”, aiming at familiarizing them, in a substantial and profound way, with the meaning of equality and diversity.



Acquaintance with our World's Customs and Traditions in Larissa

Refugees, migrants, and locals in Larissa had the opportunity to learn about Easter customs and traditions of various countries during a dedicated two-day event organized by HELIOS in collaboration with SolidarityNow and the Community Center of the Municipality of Larissa. On the first day of the event at the local HELIOS ILC, participants learned about customs and traditions from Greece, Albania, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Romania, and Poland before creating relevant crafts such as

painted eggs, canvas bags and greeting cards. Through the sharing of their customs and traditions, participants identified commonalities and interacted in a joyful atmosphere of laughter and optimism before enjoying traditional dishes prepared by the Ukrainian beneficiaries. On the second day, participants visited the Easter Village in the central square of the city and took part in the various activities organized by the Municipality of Larissa, including candle making.



Briefing of Candidate Members of the MRIC in Ioannina

HELIOS, in collaboration with the Municipality of Ioannina, and with the support of the Intercultural Integration Center of the Municipality "Academia", organized an informational meeting regarding the participation of migrants and refugees in the MRIC (Migrants and Refugees Integration Council) of Ioannina. Migrant and refugee attendees during the meeting, which took place in the Municipal Council Hall, had the opportunity to learn about the role of the Council towards their integration into the local community and the importance of the active participation of the Council members. The Mayor, Mr. Papageorgiou, emphasized the main task of the Council to record and investigate challenges faced by migrants and refugees living in Ioannina in terms of their inclusion in the local community and their contact with the public authorities, as well as the importance of maintaining social cohesion and participation in the city's commons.



Encouraging Participation in MRIC in Katerini - "Your Participation is Your Voice"

HELIOS, recognizing the importance and necessity of the Migrants and Refugees Integration Council (MRIC) in Katerini, co-organized with the Municipality of Katerini and Perichoresis NGO, a dedicated event in the HELIOS ILC, encouraging participation in the Council among the local, migrant and refugee communities. Attendees, also including HELIOS beneficiaries, had the opportunity to learn more about the consulting role and mandate of the MRIC, and were acquainted with the procedures and rules of its operation. "Your participation is your voice" was the main message addressed to participants by the representative of the Municipality of Katerini, explaining also the options of active participation in the Council. The event was part of an active dialogue that HELIOS has established towards the inclusion and integration of migrants.



Seeing “the World as an Open Studio” in Thessaloniki

Students at the HELIOS ILC in Thessaloniki run by SolidarityNow, accompanied by their teachers, enjoyed a visit to the MOMus Museum of Photography that was organized by IOM's aforementioned partner for the HELIOS project. The specialized staff of the museum guided the children through the photography exhibition by Christos Dikaiakos, namely “The World as an open studio”, which takes place in the context of the 8th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art. The exhibition content touches on many topical issues, such as the protection of the environment from economic and technological development and the forced movements of Canada's indigenous populations. The children actively participated in the discussion that followed on the issues presented through the lens of Christos Dikaiakos and had the chance to further absorb their experience and unwind during a walk that followed along Thessaloniki port.



Fostering Understanding through History in Athens

Beneficiaries of the Athens HELIOS ILC run by the Greek Council of Refugees (GCR) had the opportunity to learn more about Ancient Greece heritage in a tailored specialized educational tour of the Acropolis which was organized by GCR. Following the tour which was carried by a professional tour guide with the help of interpreters, participants created their own photo collage expressing their thoughts and feelings evoked by their understanding of Greek heritage and culture.



Discovering Easter Traditions in Thessaloniki

HELIOS beneficiaries of the project's ILC run by SolidarityNow in Thessaloniki, came together, and created traditional Ukrainian sweet buttery Easter cake “Paska” as well as other customary Easter delicacies from different parts of the world. Participants shared between them customs and traditions of their home countries, interacted in a joyful atmosphere, and exchanged wishes in all participants' mother language. The event was organized by SolidarityNow.

Acquainted with “Real People with Captivating Stories” in Crete

IOM's partner for the HELIOS project in Crete - Ploigos, co-organized with students of the University of Crete a creative and interactive educational workshop, namely “The Human Library - Real people with Captivating Stories”. The activity took place at the University of Crete as part of the course “Interculturality and Counseling in Secondary Education”. During the workshop, migrant and refugee Interpreters working in the HELIOS project were practically transformed into “living books” with the purpose to tell their own real personal story. Participating students chose their “book”/ Interpreter and, through questions they asked the latter “protagonist of the book”, unfolded the respective story.



Sharing of HELIOS Beneficiaries' Integration Stories

In the two dedicated videos created in the framework of HELIOS and publicized in selected media, the stories of HELIOS beneficiaries Inna, Alla and Eugenio and their families were unfolded, highlighting their integration into the Greek society and how HELIOS is enabling and assisting this process. A year ago, Inna and her 2.5-year-old daughter's lives changed radically as the two were forced to flee Ukraine and seek protection in Greece. The family stayed together and managed through the HELIOS project to create a new life. During the same time, Alla and Evgenios,

along with their two daughters Katia and Annia, left Ukraine and managed to create a new life in Greece, learning the Greek language and integrating into the Greek society through HELIOS. As Alla puts it, “Projects like HELIOS help a lot in learning the language. They give confidence in the future. When you start to understand people, you are not so afraid anymore. I am very glad that I am learning the Greek language because it is not only about the knowledge of the language, but also about understanding the culture of the Greek people”.

