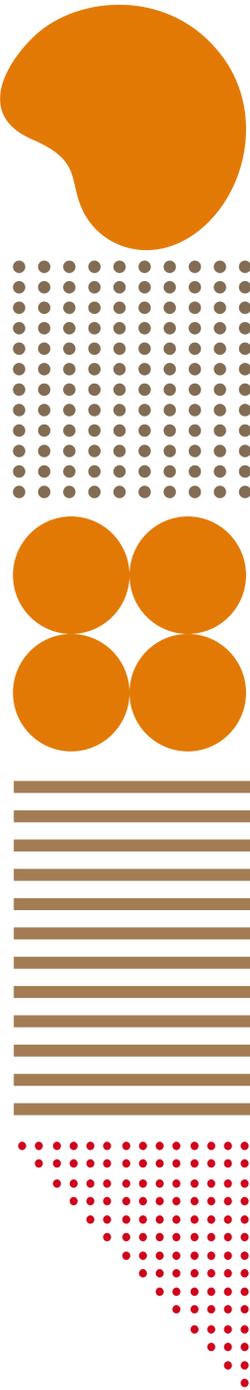


IRIDA WOMEN'S CENTER

ANNUAL REVIEW



2020

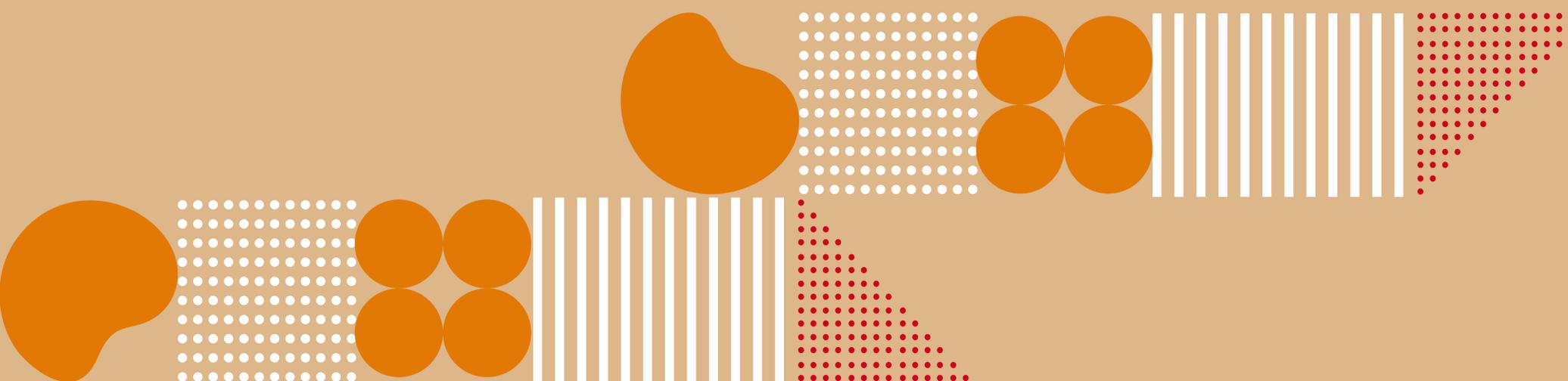
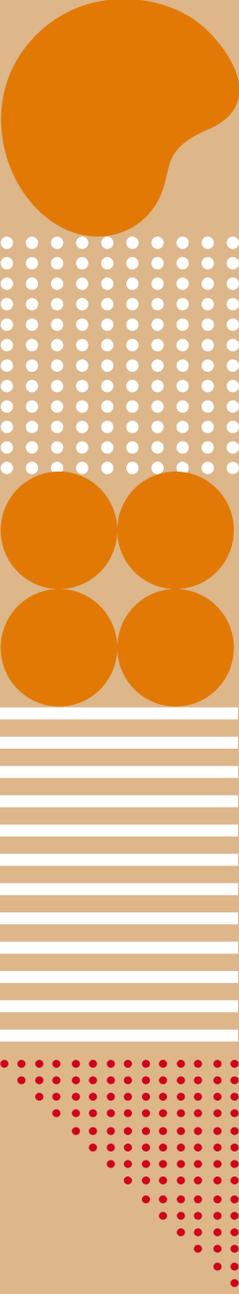
Prepared by: The Irida Team

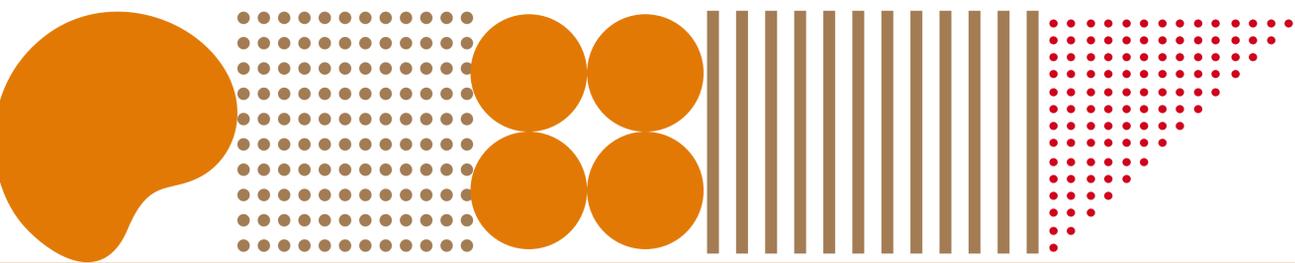
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Content

- A Year In Review
- Irida Women's Center
- Membership Growth & Community Profile
- Protection & Legal Counseling
- Programming & Activities
- Outreach and Emergency Response
- Financial Overview
- Rising Above 2020
- Acknowledgments





A Year in Review

In 2020 we experienced life-changing events. The world has been shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic, which introduced new, unprecedented normality.

Women have disproportionately been affected by the pandemic. Research has shown that lockdown restrictions reinforce severe gender inequalities, resulting in the biggest-ever leap backward for women's rights. The situation becomes more complicated for refugee, asylum-seeking, and migrant women and young girls who usually don't have access to sufficient networks to protect them in host countries. They may lack access to safe housing, sanitation, decent health care, valid information, and any form of education. Those conditions place refugee, asylum-seeking, and migrant women among the most vulnerable.

Furthermore, wider changes to the refugee context in Greece are creating additional challenges and difficulties for our community, in the heart of a global pandemic. Thousands of recognized refugees have been exiting the ESTIA housing system and cash support program. An increasing number of families with children and newborns have found themselves unable to secure safe housing and necessities like food, hygiene items, clothes, and medication. At the same time, limited capacity and support are offered to recognized refugees by the Helios Program. On many occasions, families end up sleeping rough and living in severe poverty with zero access to any supporting mechanisms.



However, despite the challenges, we have been committed to working tirelessly and passionately towards our vision of a world in which all women and their families have the right to survival, protection, and meaningful participation within strong and inclusive communities.

Together in partnership with our members, we strive to create a safe, equitable, more inclusive community by contributing to the empowerment of refugee and migrant women. We continue working to create a society that reflects Irida: a safe and participatory space, where women and young girls are empowered to become agents of change within their lives, families, and their communities.

Irida Women's Center

WHO WE ARE:

Irida is a safe, welcoming, participatory space where women have a voice, a sense of ownership, and the opportunity to receive information and support. At Irida, women have a chance to make social connections and build community; to bond, to develop, to thrive - all in an environment of safety, trust, and diversity.

Irida Women's Center exists for women of all nationalities and backgrounds; it offers safety and comfort, while also providing its members with direct resources to help heal trauma, as the large majority of our beneficiaries are refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking women, and their children. Through education, psycho-social support, and other community-building activities, our members feel empowered to actively participate in the programming of the center, take over key positions to the project, and most importantly, to find agency in their lives.

At the moment, more than 50% of our staff members are women with lived experience, while plenty of our activities are led by community members

WHAT WE DO:



PROTECTION



EMPOWERMENT



INCLUSION



INTEGRATION

IRIDA CENTER IN 2020

On March 16, a national lockdown was announced, leaving individuals with limited access to services and supports. Service providers across the private, public, and NGO sectors began to close or limit their support. Community centers were closed, with most services suspended, apart from providing online or telephone support.

To ensure our community members would remain safe and healthy, we took the hard yet necessary decision to close our physical space, following the national lockdown measures. We used to serve between 50 - 70 women and children on average, per day, while our work and services were based on physical presence and personal interaction.

However, as a small, local organization, we constantly try to maintain our flexibility as much as possible, adjusting our services to the current circumstances, responding to the needs of both the community we serve and the broader, local community.

During the extreme conditions of the pandemic, Irida Women's Center remained connected with the community and continued supporting women effectively. **In a time period when many actors in the field were forced to limit or fully suspend their services, our team focused on new, creative strategies of keeping the women and their families safe, healthy, and out of any risk regarding their well-being.**

Although the world almost "paused" for a whole year, the needs of our community continued growing rapidly. Our team worked hard to find and cover gaps in the system where refugee, asylum-seeking, and migrant women and young girls were not supported by other actors in the field.

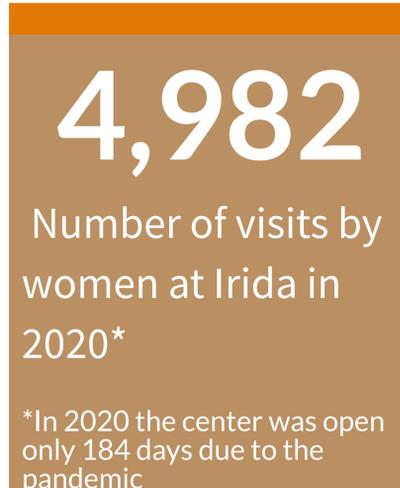
We adapted and expanded our protection services to respond to the current needs of our community, aiming to achieve the most positive impact on women's lives.

At the same time, we set online programming with language courses and other activities, launched a Facebook group exclusively for our community posting Covid-related updates, information, available resources of support, educational and entertaining material, and introduced a Youtube channel

However, despite the struggles, this year, we saw our project growing and our community blooming. In 2020, we took a step closer to one of our ultimate goals-seven skilled women from the community felt empowered and confident enough to take over key working positions in the project.

OUR IMPACT

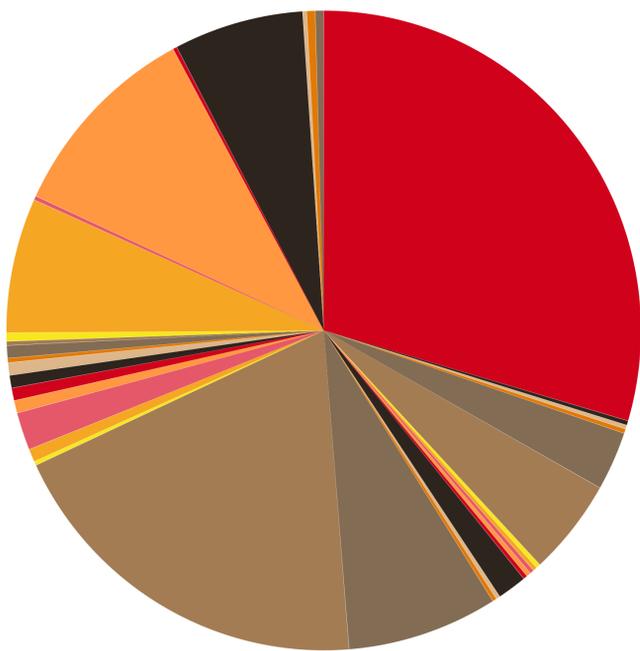
MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND COMMUNITY PROFILE



"Irida has changed my life so much that now I know how to appreciate people with different cultural backgrounds. It enables women from different nationalities, ethnicities, and tribes to unite and share their experiences, and challenges."

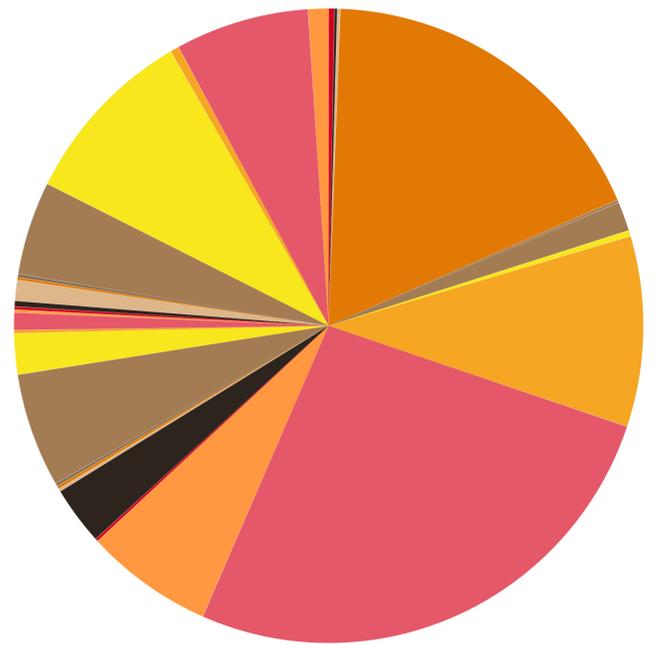
Zeinab S.-New Guinea

36 Nationalities Represented



- Afghanistan (29.57%) ■ Algeria (0.21%)
- Armenia (0.21%) ■ Australia (0.21%)
- Cameroon (2.98%)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (4.89%) ■ Eritrea (0.21%)
- Ethiopia (0.21%) ■ France (0.21%) ■ Georgia (0.21%)
- Ghana (0.21%) ■ Greece (1.49%) ■ Guinea (0.21%)
- India (0.21%) ■ Iran (7.66%) ■ Iraq (19.36%)
- Italy (0.21%) ■ Ivory Coast (0.64%) ■ Kuwait (1.91%)
- Morocco (0.64%) ■ Nigeria (0.64%) ■ Pakistan (0.64%)
- Palestine (0.64%) ■ Poland (0.21%) ■ Russia (0.64%)
- Serbia (0.21%) ■ Sierra Leone (0.43%)
- Somalia (6.81%) ■ Spain (0.21%) ■ Syria (10.21%)
- Tunisia (0.21%) ■ Turkey (6.6%) ■ USA (0.21%)
- Uganda (0.43%) ■ Yemen (0.43%)

31 Languages Represented



- Albanian (0.3%) ■ Amazigh (0.15%)
- Amharic (0.15%) ■ Arabic (17.91%)
- Armenian (0.15%) ■ Behdini (1.49%)
- Bulgarian (0.3%) ■ English (9.7%) ■ Farsi (26.42%)
- French (6.57%) ■ Georgian (0.15%)
- Greek (2.99%) ■ Hindi (0.15%)
- Hungarian (0.15%) ■ Italian (0.15%)
- Kurmanji (5.82%) ■ Lingala (2.09%)
- Malinke (0.15%) ■ Pashto (0.9%) ■ Polish (0.15%)
- Portugese (0.15%) ■ Punjabi (0.3%)
- Russian (1.04%) ■ Serbian (0.15%)
- Slovenian (0.15%) ■ Somali (4.78%)
- Sorani (9.25%) ■ Spanish (0.45%)
- Turkish (6.87%) ■ Urdu (1.04%)

OUR IMPACT

Protection Support & Services

Protection Intervention

Number of Interventions

Number of visits from women related to protection and legal counseling

1268

Provision of Information, Mediation, Referrals and Communication with partner organisations or public services

We ensured that our community members had access to valid information and were connected with appropriate services and actors

503

Purchase of Food & Urgent Necessities

As recognized refugees are only supported with accommodation and the cash support program for one month after receiving a positive decision, many members found themselves unable to provide necessities to their families. For cases of mothers with children, we ensured they would have access to food and other essential items like diapers, baby food, and items of personal hygiene.

229

Purchase of Medication

We provided medication in emergency situations or to community members who suffered from chronic illnesses and were not able to afford their medications.

75

Covering the Expenses for Essential Medical Appointments

We covered private medical appointments in the following cases: for women that did not have access to the public health system; in cases that the public sector could not cover their special needs, and in cases that there was an urgent medical situation

95

Supporting Pregnant Women

We offered additional support to pregnant women, covering medical examinations that were not available publically during the quarantine, and giving either bought or donated items in preparation for the birth.

43

Providing Safe Accommodation

For homeless women and children that were waiting to be entered into the accommodation program, we covered the gap until their accommodation is assigned. This year, we supported homeless pregnant women, women with newborn babies, and victims of SGBV.

27

Legal Counselling

The Registry Office of Attorneys has been closed since early March due to the pandemic. At the same time, there was a change to the Greek legislation regarding the asylum process. More and more women needed legal counseling and support, but they could not access it. Thus, we decided to include legal counseling as an integral part of our Protection Support.

479

OUR IMPACT

Protection Support & Services

Protection Intervention

Number of Interventions

Individual Psychological Support & Counselling

We offered individual sessions and support to our community members including stress management, parent counselling and life coaching.

35

Financial Support regarding Communication

We purchased phone credit and data for homeless women and those who need it for safety or psychological reasons.

30

Financial Support regarding Safe Transportation

We provided transportation for women who would otherwise be unable to access important appointments or services, due to health conditions or particular vulnerabilities.

34

Provision of donated items

We sourced donated items where possible in order to keep down costs.

75

Emergency Response on specific gaps in the Protection System

We covered urgent situations which were not able to be covered by other organizations, for example, funerals.

9

Escort to services

We accompanied women who were not able to, or it was not safe for them to travel or attend appointments by themselves.

35

Covering the Expenses for Private Legal Support

We covered the expenses of legal private appointments for cases that could not find their path to justice through non-profit legal actors. For example, we covered the legal expenses of family law cases.

7

OUR IMPACT

PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES

The unprecedented health crisis impacted highly on our programming. Throughout 2020 our physical space had been open for only 184 days.

When the first wave of the pandemic broke, we quickly adjusted our programming based on the new conditions and current needs. Our primary goals were to remain in touch with our community, establish a connection outside their intimate environment and ensure their access to learning opportunities.

During summer, we were able to reopen our physical space, launching new, in-person classes and activities in a safe and socially-distanced way.

AT A GLANCE



1111 activities held in 2020



117 women completed our language programming



217 classes led by women from the community



41 one-to-one sessions of job counseling and CV-making



Despite the challenges, we never stopped working for the benefit of our community. This year's programming included:

- English & Greek classes
- Literacy Classes for Farsi and French
- Computer lessons
- One-to-one sessions of job counseling and CV-making
- Arts & Crafts sessions
- Sewing classes
- Cooking
- Beauty and Personal Care
- Cultural Walks
- Baytna Sessions for mother and babies

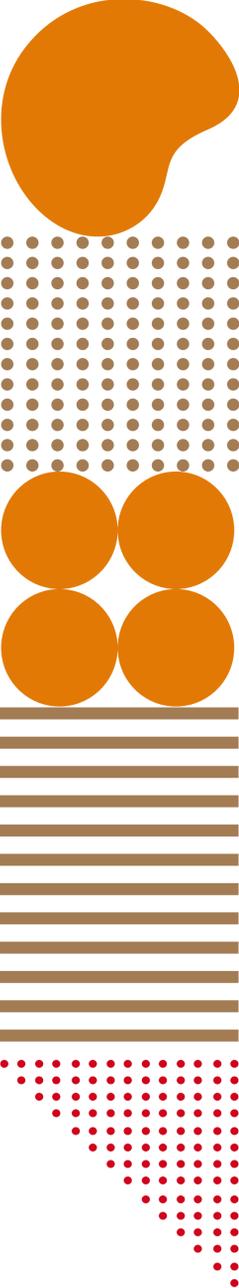
Through our activities we aim to debunk the false narrative of vulnerable or refugee women being "victims and receivers". We celebrate the inherent skills and contributions of our community. We harness the dynamic of cultural diversity that undeniably leads to innovation, creation and positive change. In 2020, women from our community proposed and led:

- 40 sewing classes
- 33 ABC classes
- 27 Farsi literacy classes
- 25 Drawing classes
- 20 Beauty and Personal Care sessions
- 11 Cooking
- 6 French Literacy Classes
- 5 Computer Lessons

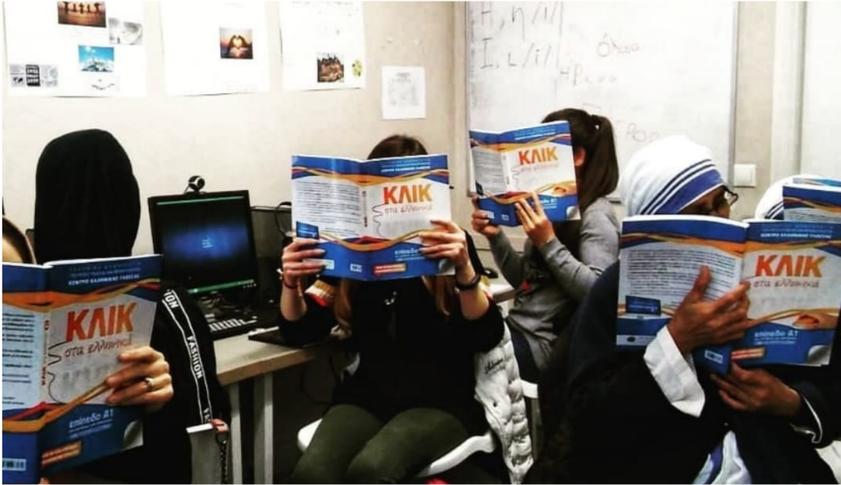


OUR IMPACT

PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES



English & Greek Courses



"When I came to Irida Center, I could not speak English. Now, I am speaking English. I am an interpreter, I am translating for someone else. Irida has been my main hope. Because of Irida, I learnt English. My biggest dream was to find a job. And with Irida's support, I found a job and then I found myself." **Rozh B., 19 years old, Kurdistan - Iraq.** She is the breadwinner of her family

"I think I have improved through the classes. I feel so happy that I can write my name and basic information about myself and my family. I can also read a little bit. I come to the class and I feel that I can achieve something. I don't stay at home doing nothing. I want to learn more!" **Fatima N., 55 years old, Afghanistan**

She attends Farsi Literacy classes which are led by a volunteer community member.

Farsi Literacy Classes



One-to-one job counseling



"I can say that Irida is not like other organizations. They do not just do their job as employees, but help and support you like a family. I attended many individual CV sessions until I found my current job. I gained useful skills that I can transfer to any environment. I learned how to write my CV; search for jobs; match my skills with the right job opportunities; gain the impressions in an job interview. All these things are very helpful for my future career and I would not have learnt them, if it was not Irida". **Zahra S., 18 years old, Syria.** She is currently working as a translator for IOM

"The truth is that I want to help people as much as I can. I feel happy and useful that I offer my skills to help others in need. As Irida supports my family during those difficult times, I want to give a hand to others." **Berivan D., 35 years old, Iraq.** She is a mother of four and her family is currently exiting the house and cash support program.

The Cooking Project



OUR IMPACT

OUTREACH AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Although our main focus is to protect, empower and support women and young girls, we always stand in solidarity with all people who need any kind of help and support, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, religion, and gender.

* Supporting residents in Pre-Removal Centers

Living conditions in pre-removal centers are inhumane. People detained in such centers are deprived of their basic human rights and often experience life-threatening situations.



January 2020

Tavros Pre-Removal Center

Non-Food Items for
200 residents



June 2020

Paranesti Pre-Removal Center

Hygiene Items &
Clothes for 500
residents



September 2020

Xanthi Pre-Removal Center

Non-Food Items for
250 residents



November 2020

Xanthi Pre-Removal Center

Non-Food Items &
Clothes for
250 residents

* Responding to needs of the local community

We always try to remain an active actor as part of the local community, responding to their current needs and emergencies.



Night Shelter for Homeless in the
Municipality of Thessaloniki

March 2020
Dry Food Stock & Non-Food Items



EKKA: National Center of
Social Solidarity & Support

April 2020
Food Support with Fresh & Dry Items
for a week



Diotima Center

March & April 2020
Financial Support to Cover the food and
medical needs 2 GBV survivors who
were under emergency accomodation



To Mov

June 2020
Covering the legal expenses
for a rape trial in favor of the
victim

* Emergency Response during the Covid-19 pandemic

During the pandemic, we worked tirelessly and passionately to support our community, the broader, local community and fellow actors on the field.



March 2020

Hospital of Kastoria

Donation of a
carrier/patient bed and a
professional oxymeter



May 2020

Wave

Provision of fresh & dry food
items for the daily cooking for
people who sleep rough



June 2020

Wave

Provision of fresh & dry food
items for the daily cooking for
people who sleep rough



June 2020

Koutchohero Camp

Emergency food support
for 1500 people

THE COOKING PROJECT



From April 2020 to January 2021 the women of our community cooked thousands of hot meals for people who sleep rough to support our fellow organization "Wave".

ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS



Within a year we joined and supported 13 advocacy campaigns

Financial Overview*

FUNDING INCOME

Total: € **383,846.26**

**CHOOSE
LOVE**

CHOOSE LOVE

366,394.26 euros

refugee
trauma
initiative

REFUGEE TRAUMA INITIATIVE

11,154.00 euros



CROWDFUNDING

3,351.00 euros



PRIVATE DONORS

2,347.00 euros



UNITED SOCIETIES OF BALKANS

600 euros

COSTS AND EXPENSES

Functioning & Admin Expenses

Salaries:	237,475.38 €
Building and Fixed Costs:	39,883.22 €
Administrative Costs:	4,870.63 €
Safety:	1,907.52 €
Media, Fundraising, Capacity Building	1,621.36 €
TOTAL:	285,758.11 €

Program Implementation Costs

Protection :	30,352.73 €
Outreach Interventions:	30,937.58 €
Programming & Activities:	6,422.94 €
TOTAL:	67,713.25 €

*Please note that the above financial overview exclusively concerns income funds and expenses for transactions and activities held in 2020, and it is not an account statement of the last year.

Rising above 2020

Despite the upcoming challenges that we may face within the following year, we commit to remaining loyal to our mission and values, working hard to improve and enrich our services and supports, responding to the current needs and changes both of the community we serve and the broader, local community.



FUTURE PRIORITIES

Looking into the future, we identify four main priorities that will be important milestones for our work:

- **Integration through employment**

Employability becomes increasingly important for Irida's future programming. Individualized CV sessions, information on where to search for jobs, and training on Labor Rights in Greece were the initial steps to cultivate women's entrepreneurship skills. We envision that more refugee and migrant women will be able to establish their own or collective businesses, generating income for themselves in order to support their families and communities.

- **Provide women with Certificate for Greek Language**

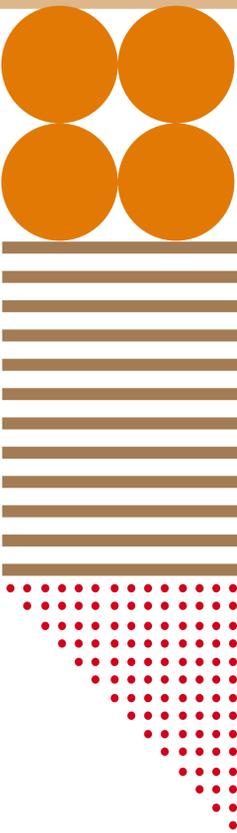
There is a gap in education for women. Many women and girls lack learning opportunities, which creates further challenges for them to access safe living conditions, job opportunities, and decision-making positions. Starting from 2021, we aim to teach the material required to participate in the Examination for the Certificate of Competency in Greek, granted by the Center of Greek Language. As a result, women will have the opportunity to learn Greek and certify their knowledge. Such certification can be a very positive asset for job-seeking in the Greek labor market.

- **More community members will take over key positions to the project**

Our team currently consists of more than 50% of women with lived experience as an asylum seeker/refugee. Our goal is to gradually increase that number in order to offer more refugee and migrant women employability opportunities. Our ultimate goal is to see our project growing and blooming while more and more women with lived experience will feel confident and empowered enough to use their skills and take over significant aspects of the project.

- **Continue providing emergency response and standing in solidarity with people in need**

Irida Women's Center commits to continuing to provide emergency response to people in need, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, religion, or background. We aim to set a stable outreach program focusing on providing non-food items, products of personal hygiene, and medication to people detained in pre-removal centers in Greece.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Irida Center is a product of tiny and not-so-tiny acts of love and solidarity.

We could not achieve much without the incredible and continuous support of our donors who trusted us and embraced our vision and mission. Our community is more than grateful for your solidarity and generosity. Special thanks to Choose Love who have been by our side since our very first days, advocating profoundly for the benefit of our members.

Furthermore, we would like to thank our fellow partner-organizations who joined forces with us, fighting for a more fair, equal, and inclusive community.

Moreover, we would like to give a loud shoutout to all the amazing volunteers for being so dedicated and donating time and skills to empower refuge, asylum-seeking, and migrant women.

Last but not least, the Irida team would like to thank everyone who contributed to creating this report including the amazing women of the Irida community.

Our team commits to continuing to work tirelessly and passionately to protect, support, and empower all women regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, religion, or background.



We can assure you that every small action of love and solidarity is powerful. Every little bit of help goes a long way! Because research shows that when you invest in women, you don't invest simply in individuals. It sends ripples throughout entire families and communities. It multiplies. Be part of the multiplier effect! Be part of Irida!



Irida Women's Center

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Thank you all for your contributions!

Looking forward to new journeys!

*With Love,
The Irida Team*

