



# Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection

Jan-Mar 2022  
Newsletter



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
Υπουργείο Μεταναστευσης & Ασύλου

## Sensitization news

### Children in Thessaloniki “Sailing to a new land”, learning about human rights

Students at Pilea-Chortiati Municipality primary school had the opportunity to learn about human rights in two sessions that were organized by HELIOS at their school's premises. The informative sessions focused on diversity, multiculturalism, and migration, to empower the children's solidarity and inclusion spirit, combating discriminatory behaviors based on country of origin, physical appearance, or other characteristics. The two HELIOS sessions were hosted in the Skills Development class of the school - an ongoing effort of the Greek Ministry of Education towards students' essential skills development - and the material utilized was that of the “Manual for Human Rights Education for Young People”, certified by the Council of Europe.



### “United we stand in supporting women's empowerment” in Thessaloniki

A 3-day workshop, under the title “United we stand in supporting women's empowerment” was organized in Thessaloniki by HELIOS in cooperation with Diotima NGO, YMCA and MDAT, at the premises of the YMCA, in the framework of the International Women's Day. Female HELIOS beneficiaries along with local women from Thessaloniki participated in the workshops, which aimed at empowering women towards combating gender-based violence (GBV), also addressing issues such as gender equality and human rights. Importantly, HELIOS beneficiaries had the opportunity to interact and exchange experiences with local women in a hospitable and inspiring environment.



### Meeting with the Social Services of the Neapoli-Sykies Municipality

Members of the 19 HELIOS beneficiary families in the Neapoli-Sykies Municipality visited in February the City Townhall, where representatives of local social service providers presented to them, all local services and programs available. The Head of the Social Services referred to the services offered by the Community Center, the School of Greek Language and other Actors as well as local activities such as voluntary blood donation and social community service. It was also stressed that all Municipality social services and structures are open to all refugees residing in the Municipality, and for as long as they remain in the area, aiming at their full and smooth integration into the society.



## Together towards Sustainable Fashion in Athens

An interactive workshop about Sustainable Fashion was organized in March by IOM in collaboration with Solidarity for Fashion youth initiative with HELIOS beneficiaries at the Serafio City of Athens. The workshop consisted of thematic team-building activities and explored the ways in which climate change mitigation can be achieved through sustainable practices within fashion. In relevance to the International Women Day, the contribution of women and girls around the world who are leading the charge on climate change was also highlighted and discussed.



## Raising awareness on Environmental Sustainability in Athens with We4ALL

An environmental awareness workshop was organized at the CRS-Caritas Hellas Athens ILC in February, by IOM in collaboration with We4All. 13 HELIOS beneficiaries participated in the activity and had the opportunity to discover various aspects of the climate change, and to learn about how we could all have a positive impact on the environment by changing our daily habits and acting towards a more sustainable way of living.

## Meeting with the newly appointed Deputy Mayor of Ioannina

A meeting was held between the newly appointed Deputy Mayor for Social Protection and Migration Policy, Mrs. Christina Kotsanti, and HELIOS MFP in Ioannina, in view of continuing and consolidating the excellent cooperation towards the successful integration of refugees in the region. The fruitful discussion evolved around the progress of HELIOS, key milestones and achievements, common activities carried and underway, and future goals and objectives. During the meeting it was stressed that the Municipality's collaboration with HELIOS project will continue and strengthen even further to facilitate the smooth and holistic long-term integration of the refugee population of Ioannina in the local community.



## “Around the World 2022” visit in Heraklion

HELIOS beneficiaries in Heraklion, visited the periodic exhibition titled “2022 Around the World” in the Odysseas Elytis Hall of the Social Space of A. & M. Kalokerinos Foundation, organized in collaboration with refugees and affiliates of the Social Space and curated by the Historical Museum of Crete. The exhibition was the outcome of an endeavor with the participation of amateur refugees and migrants that resulted in a fascinating cultural overview of festive traditions and symbolisms around the world.

## We break the prejudice and bias in Heraklion

IOM, HELIOS and Ploigos representatives participated in the event «Breaking Prejudice. Right to Equality, Right to Life» which was organized in the framework of the International Women's Day by Heraklion Municipality, the Municipal Committee for Equality of Heraklion and the Region of Crete and the Regional Committee for Gender Equality. The event aimed to highlight the need to combat discrimination, raise awareness of the local community against all forms of violence and empower each person to activate the will for personal and social development and creation. IOM actively contributed to the event by distributing awareness material against gender -based violence, while Ploigos created sketches of red shoes as a contribution to the relevant symbolic action.



## Combating Elimination of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Livadeia

3 Focus Group Discussions were organized in Livadeia on the topic of the elimination of gender-based violence. The first 2 discussions were conducted with young local women from Livadeia. The participants discussed upon the different forms of gender-based violence, the socio-economic factors that influence power dynamics, and the mechanisms that are in place in Greece to report such incidents. All participants, seemed to agree that gender equality is still not achieved and emphasized that there is a prominent need to focus on prevention, by addressing the root causes of violence and by empowering women in becoming financially independent and self-confident. The 3rd discussion was conducted with professionals from

the Counseling Center for Women and the Women's Shelter of Lamia. Participants have long experience working with women and young girls of different socio-economic backgrounds, and recognize that power, social and cultural norms, structural weaknesses, and personal experiences sustain gender inequality and gender-based violence. To better address the root causes of violence and support the victims, the competent actors collaborate with other services but still recognize that there is space to raise awareness within the communities, especially those in remote areas, to end tolerance against any form of violence and educate the population from the early years of school.



## Supporting Livadeia Municipality towards long term integration

Under the general scope of IOM's support to the Municipality of Livadeia on initiatives that concern the long-term integration of refugees, IOM together HELIOS' implementing partner, KEDHL, attended a workshop in relation to "IncluCities", a European program that facilitates knowledge exchange between mentor and mentee European cities and builds local capacities towards the better delivery of integration policies. The "Transfer of Knowledge" workshop, organized by Fuenlabrada (mentor city) and Livadeia (mentee city) Municipalities, focused on activities previously organized in Livadeia that actively engaged the local and migrant communities in cultural exchange experiences, facilitating social interaction and integration.

# Promoting social cohesion through education in Karditsa

An online workshop on the “Value of Education in the Integration process and the Aftermath of School Dropout”, was co-organized in Karditsa by IOM, the Development Agency of Karditsa (ANKA) and the local Coordinator for Refugees’ Education in the framework

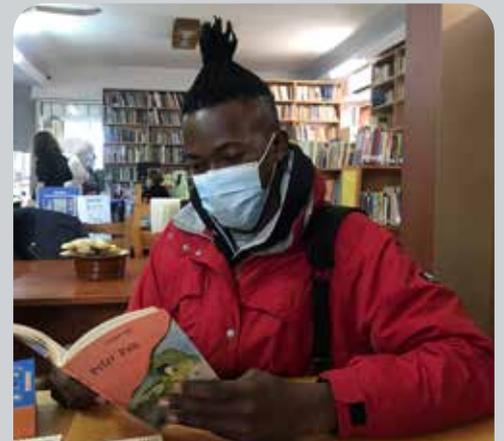
of the Local Education Working Group activities. The workshop was attended by 25 people, including educators and headmasters from the schools in the area and parents of refugee children registered in the schools (benefitting from HELIOS and ESTIA projects). The most significant

outcome was the creation for the first time of an open space, where educators and parents had the opportunity to a productive discussion, expressing their concerns and seeking together for solutions that would benefit the learning process of their children.



## Familiarizing with the Greek tax system in Karditsa

HELIOS and ESTIA beneficiaries attended an info session organized by IOM and the Development Agency of Karditsa (ANKA) in the latter’s premises, led by an experienced Accountant. Beneficiaries were informed about the Greek tax system, citizens’ obligations according to their involvement in economic life, the purpose of tax returns submission and the possibility of claiming social benefits following this obligation. A fruitful discussion addressed beneficiaries’ questions on the subject, while a general interest was expressed for similar future sessions.



## New Lending Library at Karditsa ILC

An open lending library is now available at the HELIOS ILC in Karditsa, following a book donation by Book Aid International to our partner, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). 50 books of literature, self-improvement, empowerment, and cooking have created another friendly corner at the ILC and allow beneficiaries and staff members to enjoy a good reading, broaden their knowledge, and exchange views and perspectives on common readings!



## An inclusive environment for women in Larissa through Art

A two-day collaborative workshop was organized by IOM for local and refugee women residing in Larissa on the occasion of International Women Day. The workshop, named "We are Reflected in our Art", took place at Ilihtida Art Gallery with the support of the Municipal Gender Equality Committee and in collaboration with DHKEL and the Shelter for Victims of GBV. Attendees interacted and created together handmade art crafts, which they then exchanged between them in an environment of affection and solidarity.

## Margarites Exhibition visit in Larissa on Women's Day

On International Women's Day, HELIOS Beneficiaries in Larissa enjoyed a curated visit to the Municipal Gallery Museum I. Katsigras, along with ESTIA beneficiaries and the women of the Shelter of GBV of the Municipality of Larissa. During the visit, which was also facilitated by our partner DRC, attendees enjoyed a guided tour of the «MARGARITES» exhibition, dedicated to pioneer artist Thalia Karravia, including creations of 13 artists inspired by her work. The artworks depict the timeless struggle of women for equal rights, liberation, and social emancipation.



## Partners around Greece united with IOM towards women empowerment

In the framework of the International Women's Day, IOM Implementing Partners for the HELIOS project organized a series of activities in HELIOS ILCs and other venues, towards raising awareness and promoting gender equality. We are proud of the collective effort which included for example: a session organized by KEDHL in Livadeia whereby HELIOS beneficiaries learned about the role and contribution of influential women in our societies; Ploigos in Crete publishing inspiring success stories of female HELIOS beneficiaries empowered through education; Caritas Athens preparing a slide with creations, drawings and thoughts of e-learning students dedicated to Women's Day; a series of implementing partners having their photos taken with the key messages of IOM's broader IWD campaign!

# Employability news



## Welcome Hospitality Career Week

The Hospitality Career Week WELCOME was organized in February in Athens and Thessaloniki and hosted a digital conference in cooperation with ACCMR Livelihoods Committee, aiming at strengthening the communication channel between candidates of migrant and refugee background and the

Hospitality Industry in Greece, for potential employment. On the first day's in vivo event at the Serafeio Centre in Athens, 200 candidates had the chance to interact and interview with 23 companies while, in the second day's digital conference, 300 attendees were informed by professionals

on skills required for the different work positions available in the Hospitality industry and how the human resources managers consider the CVs they receive. Finally, on the third day at the Katsanio stadium in Thessaloniki 150 candidates met and interviewed with 12 companies.



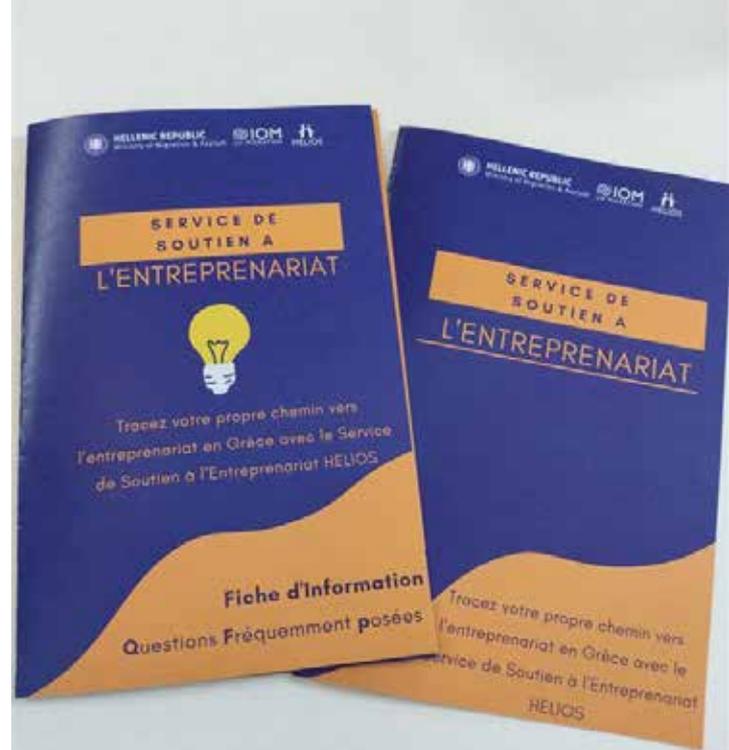
## Field Visit to a fish production and process company

15 HELIOS beneficiaries visited the production unit of a fish process company in Mandra in Attiki in February, accompanied by Job Counsellors, toured the premises, were acquainted with the nature of available job positions and were interviewed by the company's Senior HR Manager. During the visit beneficiaries were informed on the technical aspects of the job vacancies – shifts, transportation, hours and salary – and discussed related employment issues with the employer.



## Special sessions on Employability, Job offers and Work rights and obligations

In the frame of the Job Clubs organized by the Job Counsellors in the ILCs in Athens and Thessaloniki, special sessions whereby beneficiaries discussed their general employability-related experience with HELIOS Job Counsellors, focusing more on their rights and obligations as employees and on watchouts when accepting a job offer. Topics such as job contracts, how to understand their content and employees' obligations towards their employer were covered as part of the discussion, which was found to be especially useful for attending beneficiaries.



## Entrepreneurship Info Desks now in the ILCs

Increasing focus is placed on Entrepreneurship by the HELIOS Employability Component. As of last month, HELIOS beneficiaries can get informed and explore potential opportunities at Entrepreneurship-specific Information Desks that have been piloted in the ILCs. Beneficiaries can refer to these information desks and discuss related opportunities with Job Counsellors, while digital info desks are also available in different languages for those that cannot visit an ILC.

# EDUCATION NEWS



## Join the conversation at our Conversation Cafes!

With the ultimate objective of enriching their education journey in an interactive way, HELIOS Beneficiaries, get together and, practice their social skills and their Greek, along with their educators, in an ongoing series of Conversation

café sessions covering different topics. In March, on the occasion of International Women's Day, 8 (7 physical and 1 online) Conversation cafés were held in 8 ILCs in Athens, Tripoli and Leivadia, in which

46 beneficiaries and 16 educators shared personal stories related to influential women in their lives and engaged in productive dialogues about gender equality and the elimination of discrimination.