As summer ends, it is a good time to reflect on the past few months. The Nest kept its doors open through summer, continuing to welcome the families and even their older children as the school summer holiday period was also upon us. In Spain, we continued to develop and add more modules and lessons to ¡Ojalá!.

Whilst the situation in Greece is slowly falling off the radar in terms of international news, in August Takis Theodorikakos, Greece’s minister for public order, publicly announced that there had been 25,000 attempts made to cross the land border between Turkey and Greece. This number is three times more than the number of asylum seekers who have successfully made it into Greece in 2022; roughly 8,000 have made it this year. Last month, the Minister of Migration and Asylum, Notis Mitarachi announced a total number of 154,102 displaced people had unsuccessfully made it into the country, whilst at the same time denying the use of illegal pushbacks.

With approximately 1,000 lives lost already on the Atlantic route from Northern-West Africa to the Canary Islands, we are now in the midst of the toughest months of the year considered for sea arrivals, September to November. Last year, 80% of arrivals arrived during this month. Last quarter, 5984 sea arrivals were recorded into Spain; we are not even halfway through this quarter and there have been 4,167 sea arrivals recorded.

These numbers are just harrowing reminders that there are still vast numbers of people on the move coming to Europe, seeking a safer and better life. It is another reminder that Europe still needs to do more to ensure safe and legal passage for all those in need.

Melanie Liu
In the first half of 2022, the Greek asylum services registered 14,110 asylum applicants, 43% of them in the Attica region which includes the city of Athens. The largest group among the applicants are Afghans (26%), followed by Syrians (20%) and Bangladeshi (19%).

Finding work in Athens is an ongoing struggle for many people on the move, even if they have been granted international protection. Refugee Support Aegean published a report about the conditions they are facing in Athens. For many, the only option is to become "Cartoneros": they pick up cardboard from shops and recycling bins in the city, securing only a minimal income.

In Greece, many children still don’t have access to formal education. Even if they overcome the lack of transport between accommodation structures and schools and difficulties of getting the different vaccines that are mandatory for school children in Greece, they still face the obstacles of an understaffed school system and often a negative perception of displaced people among local communities.

In the middle of August, the Government started the evacuation of Eleonas Camp in Athens. Most of the residents refused the transfer to new camps, completely outside the city and far away from most of the services. There were a lot of tensions and fighting between police and refugees. Some organisations in solidarity with the refugees organised demonstrations.

Daniele Bisesti
In July, there were calls from the UN and the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, for both Spain and Morocco to independently investigate the second largest attempt to cross the only land border between the EU and Africa this year. The number of deaths and injuries recorded have been updated since our last report, with 37 dead and nearly 300 injured. As investigations by the State Attorney General and the Ombudsman are currently still underway, the Spanish government approved approximately €4 million worth of work to be executed at the border, to modernise and reinforce the border fence.

On 12th September, Caminando Fronteras Organisation announced that Moroccan gunfire was unleashed on a boat holding 35 people preparing to leave from the African coast to the Canary Islands. Claimed to be “warning shots”, the result was harrowing: one death, three severely injured and many left wounded, including two who were hit by a police car as they tried to escape the gunfire.

The month of August saw the death of 300 people leaving from the coast of Senegal, hoping to successfully cross the Atlantic route to the Canary Islands. In September, 200 arrived on the Canary Islands within 14 hours, reaching Lanzarote, Fuerteventura and Gran Canaria. Salvamento Maritimo rescued 3 of the boats in distress whilst 1 made it to shore successfully unsupported. The number of attempts to cross and the number of deaths are expected to rise due to calmer seas from September onwards as summer fades into autumn.

Melanie Liu
In August, many of our families left Greece after finally receiving their documents. This also meant that there was no longer a demand for German lessons. We still continue our English lessons 3 times a day for the families that continue to join The Nest as well as for the new families that we registered.

The Nest also hosted a visit from the With You Foundation and Ebi, a famous Iranian singer, in August. Ebi and his team spent a shift at The Nest, playing with the children and getting to know them as well as their families. We then shared cakes that they brought and ended the session on a musical note from the children with Ebi.

In September we welcomed back AMURTEL to restart the workshops with them. Mothers can learn about sexual and reproductive health through 5 one hour sessions, each focusing on a different topic such as female organs, the menstrual cycle or STDs. As our newly registered families start to come more regularly, we will run these workshops more often so all of them have a chance to attend if they want to.

Over the last few months, we continued to run our monthly distribution of diapers and sanitary pads to the families in The Nest.

Kamilo
With almost five hundred new users in the last three months alone and over 26,000 lessons completed in the app in the same period, ¡Ojalá! has continued developing ever more strongly. In the past quarter, we have worked on improving the app and strengthening partnerships with some of our key collaborators, namely ProfedEle, who made the materials of ¡Ojalá! available for offline use and CobaltSign, who are working on improving the user experience of the app. The consistently high number of users and the continued support from our partners make us hopeful about carrying forward the opportunity for people on the move on the Canary Islands and across Spain to learn Spanish in a manner that is tailored to their needs.

Basil Roth
The big global upheavals of the past two or three years have certainly left their marks on grassroots NGOs working with refugees and asylum seekers in Greece. But there have also been challenges on a regional and national level that are increasingly limiting our work.

In 2019 the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum has introduced a registry, in which any non-governmental organisation working with migrants in Greece have to be registered. From the outset this was meant as a way to impede the work of those organisations and shrinking the space for civil society in an increasingly hostile political climate. Since introduced, the regulations for entering this registry have undergone numerous changes, seemingly in an attempt to make it more difficult to navigate the completely intransparent application process.

When the first wave of Covid hit southern Europe, Greece was very quick to introduce some of the strictest lockdown restrictions of any European country. Many of our programmes had to be suspended or run at limited capacity. Two and a half years later, most NGO services are running normally again, but the effects of the pandemic are undeniable. One of those effects is that the public attention has largely moved away from Greece, often to more domestic issues.

This was only exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. While many European countries mustered impressive resources to grapple with the arrival of hundreds of thousands fleeing Russia’s invasion, the struggles of refugees from outside Europe were sidelined even more.

To keep on providing essential services under these circumstances requires a great deal of stamina and creativity. In order to ensure the continuation of our programmes, we are soon going to open a new chapter in AFE’s history. Follow us on social media to find out more about this in the coming months.

*Basil Roth*
Saying goodbye to AFE after a year of personal and professional growth is not an easy thing to do. Summarising everything in 150 words is even harder, but I will try anyway!

The first thing I want to mention is how thankful I am for the human beings that I met here. Be it behind a table and a computer with the other coordinators or in front of a big pile of clay at the art corner of The Nest with the children and the volunteers, I had many great encounters and discussions. Human rights are about humans and access to education is a human right, so in that aspect AFE has more than succeeded.

On a professional level, being part of a small and dynamic organisation was also an amazing learning opportunity. I was the sole member of the communications team, with the amazing support of the other coordinators, and therefore I got to experience every side of the job and I loved (almost) every part of it! You may have noticed the new website, a few videos on social media, this and the previous Quarterly Reports published in the past year or other fun things that I had the chance to work on. I hope you liked it as much as I enjoyed doing it!

In the end, AFE offers educational services for people on the move, I think it also gives the same learning opportunities to international staff and volunteers, if not more.

Alix Joly
FINANCES & PARTNERS
Quarterly Breakdown

INCOMING FUNDS - 3rd Quarter
Over the past quarter, we received a total of €30,248.98, 77% of received funds were restricted funds, and 23% of funds were unrestricted. Restricted funding was limited to The Nest (Athens), ¡Ojalá! (Spain), and apartment funding (Athens).

Major funders:
1. WithYou Foundation e.V. (€10,000) - for The Nest
2. The Pedagogical Institute of Los Angeles (€7,033.92) - Partner
3. ZONTA club (€2,040) - Private donor

TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURE - 3rd Quarter
The expenses totalled €29,964.05, a 14% decrease from last quarter.

Across our projects, our partnerships with specialist educators, fantastic funders and local allies ensure we work towards shared goals with conviction and confidence.

MARLOW REFUGEE ACTION
Funding Partner

MIGRATION MITEINANDER
Project Partner

PROFEDEELE
Partner

forREFUGEES
Funding Partner

PHOENIX FOUNDATION e.V.
Funding Partner

PILAGlobal
Funding Partner

CARRY THE FUTURE
Funding Partner

For more information regarding our finances, please reach out to: info@actionforeducation.org