



**Ariadni A.M.K.E. – Εκπαίδευση – Ενδυνάμωση – Περιβάλλον**

**Education – Empowerment – Environment**

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Tax number 996655078 Registration / GEMH number 162750542000

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# **Ariadni A.M.K.E.**

## *Ariadni Lesvos*



## **Annual Activity Report**

# **2022**



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## **Thanks to our partners**



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## **Ariadni Lesvos**

### **Ariadni is a new Greek organization founded March 1, 2022.**

The roots of the organization go back to 2006.

**Ursula Zednicek, founder and Managing Director of Ariadni Lesvos** visited Lesvos for the first time in 2006 and “fell in love” with the island. She dealt intensively with the history, the customs, the nature and the many unique sights. Over the years, she developed a deep bond with the country and its people and is familiar with the effects of the 2010 financial crisis, the 2015 refugee crisis and the 2020 corona crisis. Wherever possible, she tried to support what ultimately led to the creation of the **Ariadni** organization. The other two founding members are also very familiar with Lesvos and have lived there for over 10 years.

Already in the founding phase from December 2021 to the beginning of March 2022, the challenges were enormous and could only be mastered with the greatest commitment. Instead of taking in the self-organized refugee group “**MWH – Moria White Helmets**” as planned AFTER founding Ariadni, the emergency situation arose to take them over as early as the end of December.

In the founding phase, this was only possible with the help of the German association “**Hoffnung leben**”, which had also been indirectly active on Lesvos since the end of 2019.

After the founding, the cooperation agreements with our partners were soon made and at the same time all necessary orientations and adjustments of the organization, structure and reporting as well as the activities were adapted to current and local conditions.

Despite the very difficult circumstances and also one or the other impairment from Corona, the first activities have developed and stabilized.

On October 1st, Ariadni was finally able to move to suitable premises. From a temporary basement apartment into a suitable house that finally offers the spatial requirements for activities, administration and visits.



### **Our philosophy**

Ariadni Lesvos brings people of all backgrounds together and develops their common strengths through education and networking.

We believe that climate change, poverty, declining democracy, and the other major issues of our times should bring people together, no matter where they come from.

Only by bridging communities and working together can we find solutions and develop our collective resilience.

All of our activities always **include imparting general knowledge** about lifestyle and democracy, about opportunities and opportunities for development in **Europe**, human rights and legal rights and obligations that provide the framework for life in Europe. The focus here is Germany and of course Greece / Lesvos.

As we are increasingly suffering from the **consequences of climate change and environmental pollution** worldwide, and both are increasing the number of refugees, this is also addressed wherever possible. The recognition of personal responsibility as well as changes in behavior are encouraged.

Ariadni sees itself as an organization with a **holistic approach, taking into account the causes of flight and migration as well as opportunities for change** in all activities and for all those affected and involved.



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### **Women's project "Melina" – the heart of Ariadni**

**Our women's program is called Melina, named after Melina Mercouri, a famous Greek artist, politician and campaigner for women's rights.**

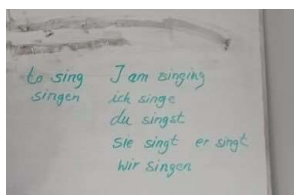
#### **Melina women's program**

offers undisturbed "**time out**" for various handicrafts and activities such as breakfast, cooking/baking and island excursions as well as traditional island crafts and much more. We want to give a chance to women and girls to recognize and to realize their needs, desires and rights.

We want to make it possible to experience that women can achieve more together – regardless of their origin. In a relaxed togetherness, surprising things can arise, such as dancing together to music from different countries ...

In addition to the practical benefits of handicrafts, we would also like to point out **the relaxing, connecting and sometimes even positive therapeutic effects** of needlework.

In order to be able to implement content and goals, we deliberately plan with small and manageable groups. At the moment, the **guests are mainly coming from the camp and are members of a self-organized women's group**. The plan is to also welcome locals and visitors.



**Depending on their needs and desires**, guests at Ariadni House can chat over tea and brunch, do laundry, mend and make clothes, use sewing machines, materials and utensils.

Since most of the guests indicate **Germany** as their destination country, German is practiced whenever possible. Environmental protection, sustainability, climate change and the rights and opportunities of women are also addressed.

We also focus on **upcycling used clothing** and e.g. sewing much needed long skirts and warm trousers or knitting and crocheting hats, scarves and gloves.

This can be for the guests' own needs or for distribution to those in need on the island.

The German association "Hoffnung leben" **started these activities at the end of 2019**.

As everywhere else, Corona caused numerous interruptions.

With the founding of Ariadni Lesvos, "**Hoffnung leben**" handed over all furniture and materials - especially large quantities of fabrics and wool as well as equipment such as spinning wheels, carding machines, sewing machines, needles, looms and much more.

With the **permanent employment of an Afghan woman living on Lesbos** and the move to the current premises, the activities have stabilized and the demand is constantly increasing, so that a waiting list is kept for many days. The same applies to the use of our – currently unfortunately only - washing machine.

The current **opening hours** are Tuesday to Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Our Greek driver takes care of the transfers between the camp and Ariadni House.

**Tuesday to Friday** we keep the groups smaller (about 6 people). We start with the daily breakfast accompanied by "practice German". On these days, our Afghan woman, a trained seamstress, supports the women in sewing and upcycling used clothing.

**On Saturdays** we only meet for a rich brunch for up to 18 people.

Voluntary work is possible and welcome.



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### **Breakfast – Brunch – Baking – Cooking**

Ariadni House offers a **pleasant, peaceful and clean environment**.  
Our kitchen is suitable for **cooking and baking together in small groups**.

We believe that working **together, sharing common interests** - especially in small groups - can overcome reservations and bring us closer together.

In a **relaxed atmosphere** it is easy to get to know one another and to talk about different ways of life, challenges, questions and perspectives.

It is **enriching** to learn more about the traditions of different countries and perhaps also to discover many similarities, many things that connect and complement each other.



**More than the culinary, joint action can arise.** Such as spontaneous dancing to a wide variety of music or the desire to go on excursions together.

In 2022 we were able to realize the **breakfast** offer for the women from the camp from Tuesday to Friday.  
We pay attention to **delicious and healthy ingredients** in order to support the health of the camp residents at least a little.

At the **Saturday brunch** we were able to welcome more guests from different countries.

**We would like to have more resources for 2023** to expand these offers to mixed groups and to be able to offer them at other times.

Voluntary work is possible and welcome.



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## **Excursions**

Lesvos is **Greece's third largest island** and fortunately has so far remained **untouched by mass tourism**. This enables guests to experience **traditional customs**, original music and dance and culinary delights.

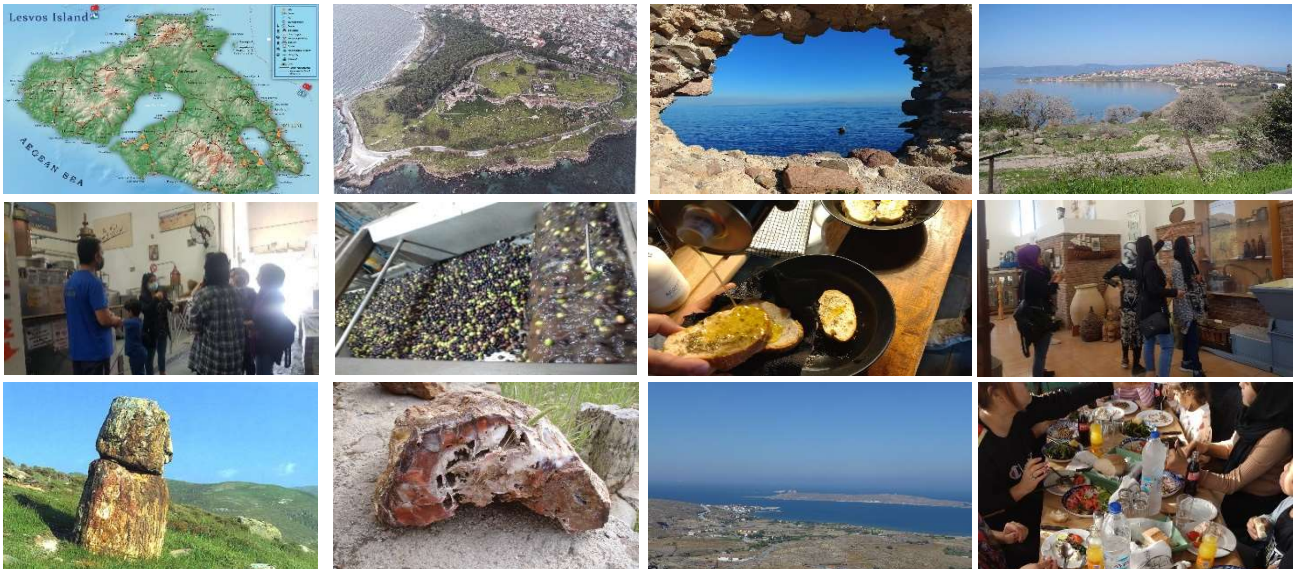
The proximity to Asia Minor and Turkey can also be experienced in music, dance and food. The mountainous island also has a lot to offer with varied landscape and breathtaking views. 11 million olive trees, extensive pine forests, a petrified forest, varied beaches and much more. Feta and ouzo are important local products that can be found all over the world.

With **interesting excursions**, we work to break down mutual reservations.

**Refugees see** – finally – the **beautiful sides** of the island and the locals.

At the same time, the locals are **happy about the interest** of the “unwanted” guests.

**Vacationers are also very welcome in these activities.**



Our excursions **are extremely popular and are already fully booked shortly after the announcement**, even if we can use the possibility for a 2nd minibus.

Our Greek teacher and our local driver usually take care of the organizational and content-related preparation. We translate anything worth knowing into English and make it available in good time to a guest who speaks Farsi or English, for example, in order **to make the information accessible to all guests**. We attach great importance to **informing about typical island things, history, nature and culture**.

Each excursion ends with an **extensive tasting in a tavern**.

It is not uncommon for the **innkeepers to join the table**.

A great enrichment and full of success.

The excursion program was launched by “Hoffnung leben” already in 2019.

**With the appropriate resources, we would like to expand this offer in 2023.**

Voluntary work is possible and welcome.



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## **Languages**

Language lessons are taught by native speakers with teaching experience.

Courses are available for beginners and advanced and are open to everyone on the island.

The objective is, for example, preparation for A1 level and practicing everyday communication.

We also offer casual **conversation practice** with native speakers e.g. for Greek, English, German

Lessons and conversation practice at Ariadni House deal with **environmental issues, but also with issues such as democracy, life in Europe, human rights** (especially women, children, minorities).

Here, people of all backgrounds learn new things together, which can be very useful for shaping their future.

**Women** in particular from Afghanistan and other countries where learning is forbidden for them are happy about this free opportunity to learn in small groups and at their own pace.



The German association "Hoffnung leben" **started these activities mid of 2021.**

As everywhere else, Corona caused numerous interruptions.

The lessons take place in small groups and can **follow the individual level of knowledge** of the participants.

**Our responsible for the Melina project** is also a participant in the lessons.

In addition to the languages, she has the opportunity to acquire the relevant knowledge, e.g. about EU law, women's rights, environmental protection, sustainability.

This means that she can act as a multiplier for our guests and furthermore translate the relevant content on excursions.

In 2022 it was not (yet) possible to offer continuous classes.

The teaching **of content such as sustainability and life in Europe** is gradually being developed and expanded. In this way, we are developing a language course that is tailored to the content mentioned and creating a unique selling point.

Again, the possible progress depends on the available resources.

Most refugees would like to build a life in Germany once they have been recognized. In order to prepare for this, we are planning **German courses in preparation for A1 level** as well as **courses for literacy** in German.

Voluntary work is possible and welcome.



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### Traditional Crafts Lesvos

#### Workshops of Tradition

The raw material sheep's wool is currently ending up unused in the garbage, but **could – again – be used in a variety of ecological and sensible ways.**

The 'worst' quality for **horticulture** e.g. for fertilization and water-saving soil cover.

The 'medium' quality in **house construction**, e.g. for building insulation.

The 'good' quality for the production of **home and clothing textiles** and much more.

For this purpose, the wool quality could be considered more in breeding.

**Wool fat is even used in medical fields.**

At **Ariadni House** we deal with **cleaning, carding, natural dyeing, felting and spinning.**

There is also the possibility of **weaving, knitting, crochet** and much more.

Making **olive oil soap** was also a traditional craft on Lesvos and can be learned in small batches for home use.

In order to revive the old, traditional craft of **"felting"**, our partner organization Hoffnung Leben organizes free felting workshops on Lesvos.

In addition to the practical benefits of handcrafts, we would also like to point out the **relaxing, connecting** and sometimes even positive therapeutic effects of needlework.

In a relaxing and connecting sense, we **regularly offer the opportunity to do handcrafts together with wool and fabrics** – for our own use or people in need ... gladly accompanied by music, stories, a few snacks and drinks.



The German association "Hoffnung leben" **started these activities end of 2019.**

The first goal was to find what **the local wool could be used for.**

In 2019 we collected sheep's wool from garbage dumps and **Afghan farmers** helped us to clean the wool.

Cleaned and carded, the better quality can be felted and spun into coarser textiles.

The wool is usually too coarse for clothing.

As everywhere, Corona caused numerous interruptions.

In 2021, we offered workshops for felting. **Refugee women and children and locals showed great interest.**

Another **felting course** is being planned for 2023 (and yearly), as well as **wool processing** (washing, carding, spinning), **weaving and the production of olive oil soap.** All materials and equipment are available.

We would be happy to receive **voluntary offers from experienced craftswomen.**





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## **Environment program**

Lesvos is an island in the Aegean Sea off the Turkish coast that, **like the entire region, is particularly hard hit by the effects of climate change**. Clean drinking water is becoming less available, summers are getting hotter and drier, and ecosystems on and around the island are suffering from the endless amounts of waste. So, it's high time to do something about it!

**All our activities** – especially our **project “Green Mythelini” (GM)** consider the topic in different ways.

GM is a long-term environmental program with the **aim of reducing environmental pollution, especially plastic waste, and at the same time promoting a more conscious use of resources such as water and energy through youth education initiatives**.

The first building block is the development and implementation of a **curriculum for school children** that enables **behavioral changes towards a more environmentally conscious lifestyle**.

If this is successful with children and young people, we can also indirectly reach adult family members, for example. Furthermore, this project is working on building infrastructure that is required for recycling activities e.g. in schools, the university, in Ariadni House or interested companies.



After several months of preparation, in September 2022 we started the **Green Mythelini (GM) pilot project** in 5 local schools. It is the first educational program in schools with this content.

There are mainly **Greek but also Albanian students** in different **age groups between 6 and 18 years**. There are around **235 apprentices** in total.

Children from the camp receive their school lessons within the camp, to which we have not yet had access.

In the first phase, the focus was on the topic **"Plastic, separate collection, waste avoidance"**.

The practical and beautifully designed **collection containers were made at the camp by a team from the Moria White Helmets**.

Each class has 5 girls or boys who take turns for handling the collection bins for the plastic bottles, which are later taken to the recycling center by Ariadni. Other topics are **"water"** and **"electricity"**.

Learning also takes place, for example, through games according to the age groups. There is also **"Homework"**: turn off the lights at home, take shorter or less frequent showers, close the windows and much more.

The first months of the **pilot project are currently being evaluated** and recorded in a detailed report, and the learning units are being revised accordingly. Then the next steps can be planned according to possible resources and demands.

Schools, kindergartens and businesses have already **expressed great interest**.



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### Support of self-organized groups in the camp MWH – Star School – self-organized women group

We support self-organized refugee groups because we strongly believe that **refugees should not be seen only as people in need.** They want to help themselves and each other. THIS gives **dignity, independence and reduces the risk of mental illness.** Ariadni is **partner, because non-formal refugee self-organizations need an NGO that assists** them with logistics from outside the camp.

**Moria White Helmets** are one of the few refugee self-organizations in Greece, founded in 2020.

They play a crucial role inside the camp in Lesvos and offer a wide range of programs and services for their fellow camp residents.

**Programs / activities:** Barber for men and boys, Beauty salon for women and girls, informal education (native languages, culture of the countries of origin, etc.) for children and adults, facility management such as garbage collection, separating plastic bottles for the recycling, workshop for many kinds of repairs, electricity supply.



**The Star School** was a small refugee self-organization for **informal education** inside the camp. Star School started already in 2020 inside a tent of a young educated Afghan who wanted to share his knowledge with others. Right after founding Ariadni we supported them till they closed in October 2022 because all teacher left to other countries. **They also used Ariadni facilities for a "girl's day" and asked our transfer for excursions.**



**Informal women's group** – The members of this large, predominantly Afghan group **support each other with information** of all kinds and **use many existing offers, whether in the camp or outside.** Since late summer 2022, many are **guests at Ariadni for breakfast and handcraft, take part in excursions or get clothes with the support of our transport.**

We are happy to encourage women to find solutions themselves and to prepare for a freer and more self-determined life and **will keep supporting.** The number of women wanting to join Ariadni activities is increasing. With more resources, we could offer more.

