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*Welcome and thank you,
that you take the time to read our report.*

2024 ARIADNI

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2024 – in brief

This year brought many farewells to young and old, some of whom we had been welcoming as guests for over a year. We got to know each other and, above all, grew fonder of our EcoKids. These **farewells** were an emotional challenge for both sides. It was all the more rewarding that we had the **online** idea and were able to gradually implement it in the second half of the year. We have since visited some families (Germany, Switzerland) and experienced their new living conditions. We are still in contact with some via social media.

A major challenge was the necessary redesign of our women's program, as our morning instructor retired. The focus on sewing was successfully replaced by **a variety of other offerings**. Sewing still takes place on a smaller scale.

Financially, we were worried from quarter to quarter; the team bore the uncertainty. We appreciated every bit of support. Securing financing remained challenging.

A milestone in establishing a stable financial base was certainly the fact that we were able to finance a **minibus** solely through earmarked private donations and generous support from Solingen hilft e.V. This relieves our monthly budget by several hundred euros each month.

In 2024, we intensively supported: **female guests approximately 1,900; children – EcoKids approximately 1,300**; This means that on average **we spent about 30 euros per person** and were able to use it thanks to your support.

As organization "Ariadni Lesvos," we have been able to increase our visibility and build our reputation. Our guests come to us exclusively through word of mouth.

We are now known to most other organizations on the island. We collaborate with some of them on specific topics and maintain close contact.

We now have **access to the camp** through our environmental educator and are personally known to the camp manager. This is very helpful when security once again decides to require parents to accompany their children to our classes. This is an incredible violation of the camp residents' personal rights and a form of harassment toward the parents and us, which always causes immense disappointment and many tears among the children. **Personal, positive contact with the camp manager** is very helpful.

Our **environmental educator maintains contact with parents**, which helps parents better understand what and how we teach, how we organize things, and that we expect and depend on parents' commitment. It is a great honor for us that parents entrust their children to us!

While we still needed someone to translate in class until the middle of the year, our environmental educator has now learned enough Farsi/Persian – and the children can speak some English, some Greek and some Turkish – so that the content can be conveyed well with a mix of languages and a translation app.

There's still too much workload on too few shoulders. Due to the respective requirements, we've still not been able to secure funding from larger foundations. We're too small. To meet some of the requirements, we would need specialized staff – for statistics, glossy brochures, polished social media presences, etc. We don't want to spend money on that. We don't have the money either.

Our "style" is very personal – that's what sets us apart and that's what our guests really appreciate.

We are successful in the sense that our framework (house instead of container, stable team, small groups, away from the camp, our very consciously chosen activities and rules) achieves exactly what we want to offer and enables what people need and hardly get otherwise:

Respect, safety, relaxation, appreciation, mental and physical health, encounters on equal terms and equality! With each other! For each other!

**This is what we are committed to! This is what we are grateful for!
This is who we are! This is what we are proud of!**

Ariadni Lesvos (& Hoffnung leben e.V.) – Goals and Framework

Ariadni Lesvos has been operating as a **Greek organization** since **March 1, 2022**, and took over the activities on Lesvos from *Hoffnung leben eV* (since 2015). The organizations work closely together. (Page 20)

The **promotion of mental, emotional and physical health as well as personal and community strength and resilience** is the most important guideline (**MHPSS** – mental health, psycho-social support).

The activities aim to lift children and adults in camps and during uncertain waiting periods out of their mental and social malnutrition, as well as their enforced and perceived uselessness. Regardless of age, many suffer to a greater or lesser extent from 'boreout,' depression, self-aggression, and trauma caused by flight, camp accommodation, and a continued uncertainty about the future.

Meanwhile, many refugees in Germany are showing similar symptoms due to long waiting times, insufficient integration support, and lack of access to the labor market.

Our programs are aimed primarily at **refugee women and children**, but also at locals and island guests. People of all backgrounds are given the opportunity to get to know each other through shared experiences and communication. In doing so, they can overcome reservations and discover commonalities, complementarities, and enrichments.

The **reduction of the global causes of displacement** (environment, climate, wars, poverty, dictatorships, disenfranchisement and oppression of women) is taken into account wherever and whenever possible.

The **17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** serve as a good guide for us. (Page 21)



We believe that climate change, poverty, declining democracy and the other big issues of our time should bring people together, no matter where they come from. This is a key to finding and implementing solutions to the challenges of our time.

On Lesvos, a permanent three-person, friendly, and competent **team ensures** a safe and reliable environment that offers support and guidance. Volunteers provide support. The entire **board also works exclusively on a voluntary basis**.

Good conditions have been created to promote holistic health in the sense of the WHO, to provide education and to develop personal and collective resilience on a mental and psychological level in order to see challenges as shared and to find and implement solutions together.

For each other – With each other – Shaping a future together

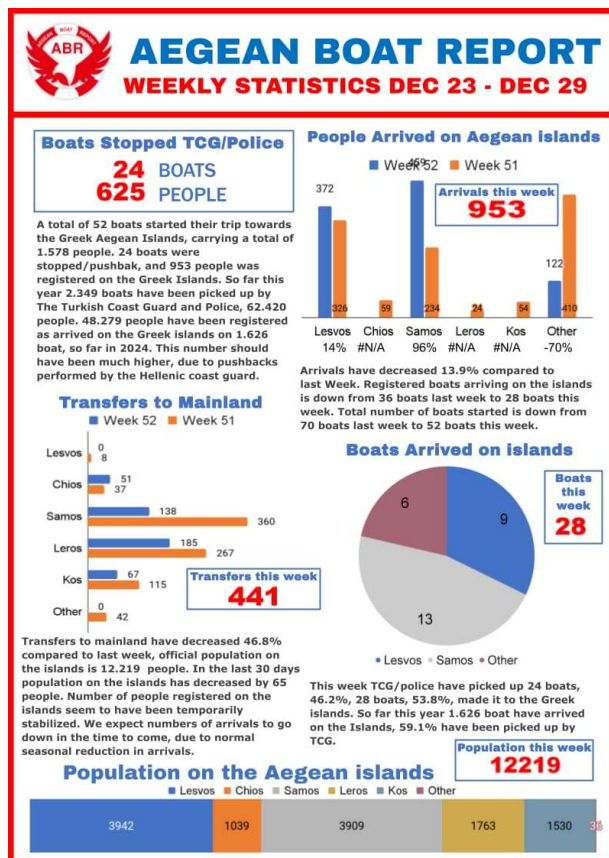


Ariadni Lesvos has been operating from its current, affordable premises since October 1, 2022. With its private, quiet, and relaxing atmosphere, **Ariadni House** provides a good framework for implementing its goals. The rooms are flooded with light, clearly structured, and clean, promoting rapid relaxation for guests. The house is deliberately located not within walking distance of the camp, but in a 'normal' residential area. This allows activities to take place undisturbed in the planned small, manageable groups. Guests register using a registration tool and are picked up from the camp and returned to the camp.

We have been able to build a **good neighborhood**, which is reflected, among other things, in the fact that good, used clothing and toys are often brought in for distribution.

Since December, Ariadni Lesvos and Hoffnung leben have been jointly offering **online classes** for refugees who are no longer on Lesvos but live in another European country. There is a **project for EdoKids** as well as one **for German classes for adults and young people**, as most have no or very little access to educational and integration opportunities for an extended period of time.

Situation in the camp and on the island (Focus: women and children)



The number of arrivals and the number of camp residents are sometimes rising and sometimes falling. With almost 4,000 people, the camp is overcrowded.

Since Lesvos, for example, is heavily patrolled by the coast guard and Frontex, the smugglers have resorted to smaller islands near the Greek coast without reception centers. It doesn't matter to them whether the islands are inhabited or uninhabited, and whether the refugees might die of thirst. The contract is essentially fulfilled once Greek-European territory is reached. Dead or alive makes no difference. Only after the many brutal, illegal pushbacks by the Greek coast guard – with the knowledge of the European Frontex – do they have to 'deliver' again without further payment.

Women, children and people from Afghanistan still make up the largest proportion of the camp.

Gradually, as expected, the number of people from Palestine, Jordan, Yemen, etc., and also from Iran, is increasing.

Why people from Iran are mostly rejected (except for women traveling alone) – it is similar in Germany – is not clear.

In mid-October, a young Afghan woman left for Switzerland, while her Iranian husband remains stuck on Lesvos after being repeatedly rejected. His wife

stayed with him for a long time but became increasingly depressed. Then the couple decided together that she, at least, should leave. Currently, his only options are the life-threatening and expensive choice of leaving the island illegally, either via the Balkan route or via Italy. The alternative is a new application for political asylum with an uncertain outcome or deportation.

His wife is one of those people who are essentially forced out of the camp as soon as their passport is issued. They are only tolerated in the camp for a short time afterward, regardless of whether it's overcrowded or not. Sooner or later, they'll be thrown out and end up on the street if they don't (yet) have the money for the tickets.

In the **island's capital, Mytilini**, refugees are a daily occurrence. There are no major problems between them and locals. The majority of locals oppose the opening of the closed Vastria camp. They call it a "prison for souls" and expect Europe to ensure fair distribution. Vastria is located approximately 35 km from the capital, amidst the largest contiguous forest on the island and in the North Aegean. High risk of forest fires. Far from the nearest village.

The camp was built illegally in a nature reserve, and its opening was banned by Greece's highest court. The only access and exit road is too narrow to evacuate up to 5,000 people in the highly likely event of a forest fire, and to accommodate enough fire engines. The water supply is also unreliable. There is neither water for those being housed nor to extinguish fires. The forest fire risk is extremely high, and a spreading, almost impossible-to-extinguish fire would only be a matter of time. Furthermore, the planned 5,000 inmates would be difficult to evacuate. Clearing and construction remain illegal.

Who cares? Our political representatives, who serve as role models, obviously don't.

Whether and when the camp will open despite everything remains open.



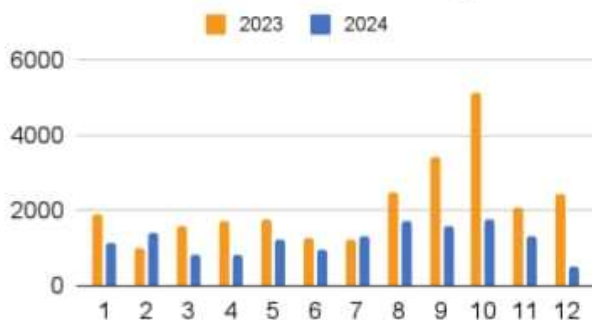


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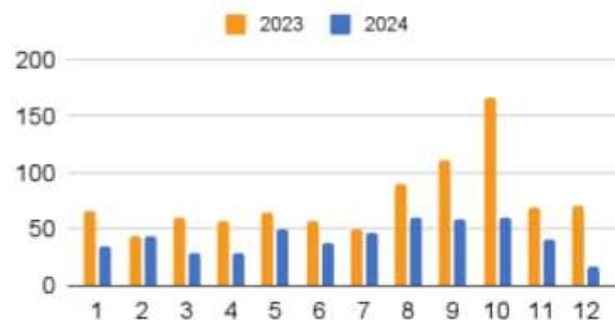
It is the legal right of men, women or children to enter a country with or without paperwork, if they intend to apply for asylum. Pushbacks are the illegal practice of a state preventing them from doing so by stopping them entering its territory, or forcing them back across a border or into the waters of another state. The Greek government has hugely increased illegal pushbacks of refugees since January 2020, with some victims stating they have been beaten by Greek officials before being forced back across borders, or into the sea.

Pushbacks - People



Total people 2024: **14.482**

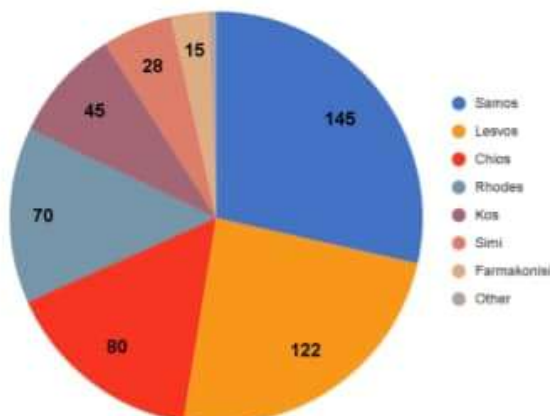
Pushback Cases



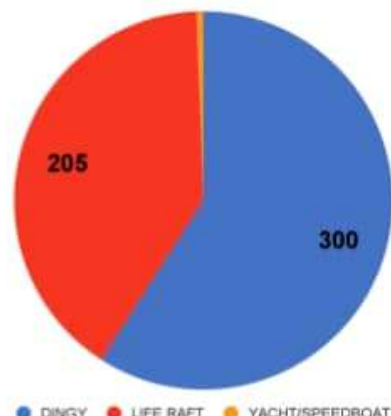
Total pushbacks 2024: **508**

In 2024 Aegean Boat Report have registered 508 pushback cases in the Aegean Sea, involving 14.482 children, women and men who tried to reach safety in Europe. 40.6%, 5.882 people, had already arrived on Greek territory, arrested, forced back to sea and left drifting in life rafts, illegally deported by the Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG), on orders from the Greek government, so far there has been no reaction from the EU on these illegal actions. 21.5% of all boats/rafts picked up by Turkish coast guard in 2024 had been pushed back by Greek authorities.

Pushbacks By Area



Pushbacks By Craft Type



68.3%, of all pushback cases registered happened around Lesbos and Samos. 8.460 people have been pushed back at sea in 300 rubber boats, engines or petrol removed and left drifting, and in some cases even towed back to Turkish waters by HCG. In 205 registered cases, 5.882 people have been forced into a total of 327 life rafts, and left drifting in the Aegean Sea by the Hellenic Coast Guard, a systematic use of rescue equipment as a deportation tool. The Greek government categorically denies any involvement in these atrocities, but the evidence against the Greek government is overwhelming, there is no doubt who is responsible.

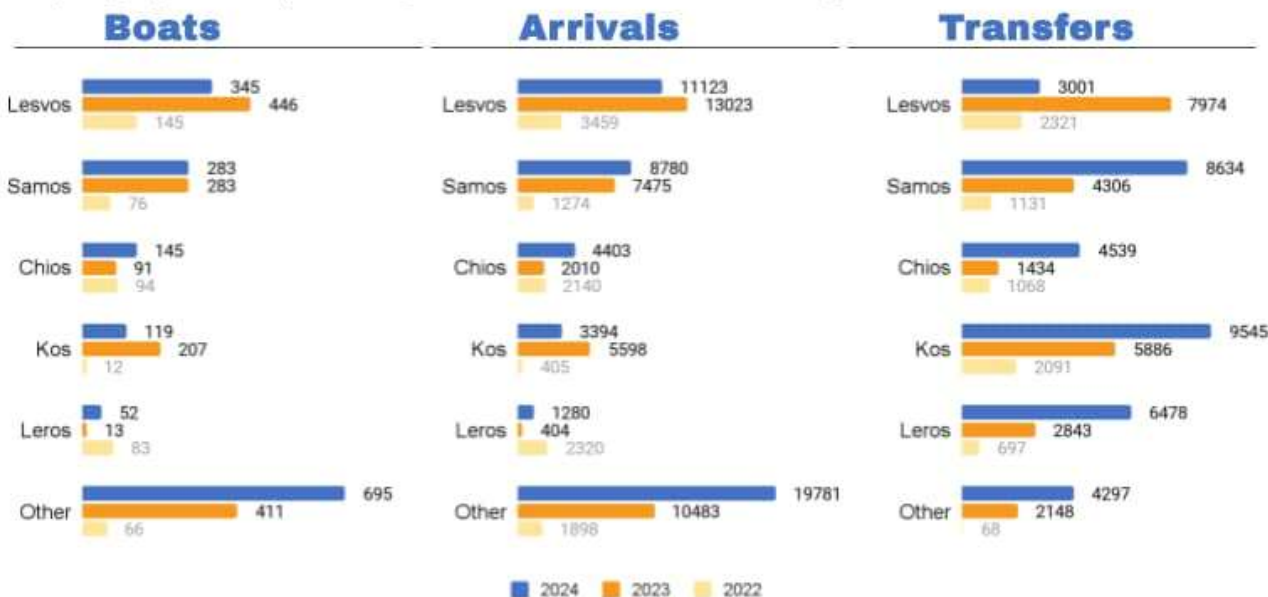


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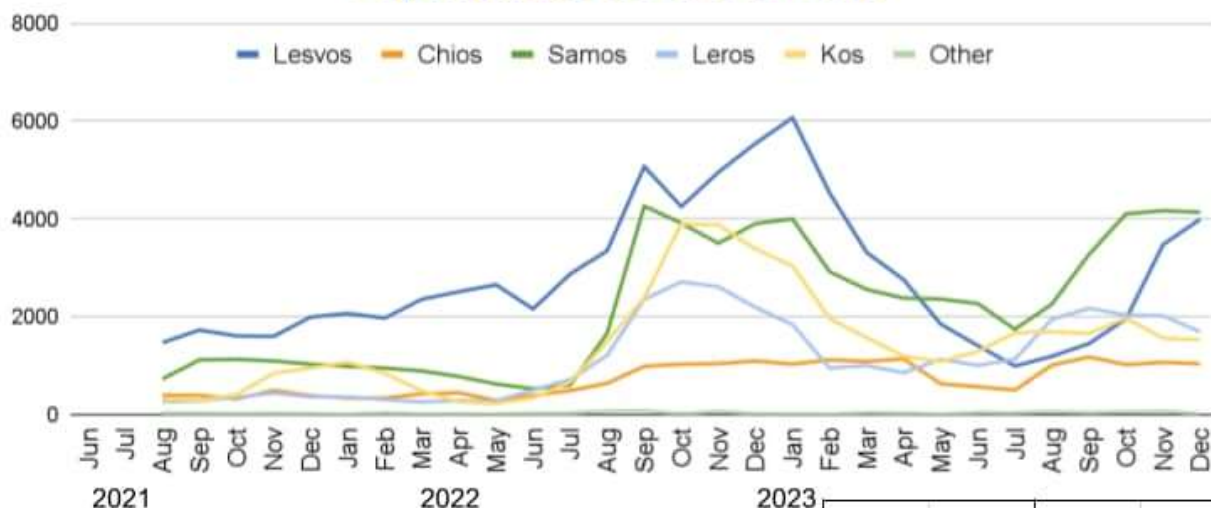
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Arrivals And Transfers By Island

In 2024 36.494 people were transported to mainland, from the Greek islands. Transfers have increased 48.4% compared to 2023, when 24.591 people were transported. In 2024 population on the Aegean islands has decreased 23.1%, from 16.139 to 12.407 people. The Greek government have prevented 14.482 people from applying for asylum on the Greek island in 2024, by illegal pushbacks, violating international laws and human rights on an industrial scale.



Population On Each Island



Official capacity on the islands is 14.156 people. Today's population is 1.749 people under max total capacity. In the end of 2023 total population was 16.139, one year later its 12.407, population has decreased by 3.732 people this last year on the Greek Islands.

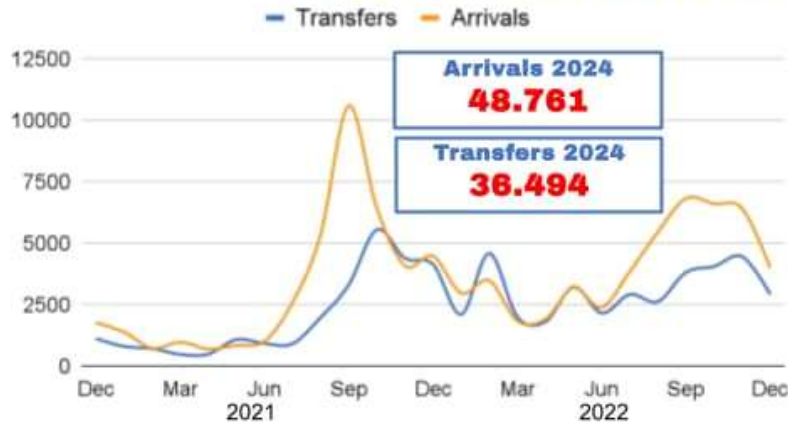
Lesvos	3996	Kos	1530
Samos	4139	Leros	1691
Chios	1037	Other	14



AEGEAN BOAT REPORT

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People Arrived On Aegean islands

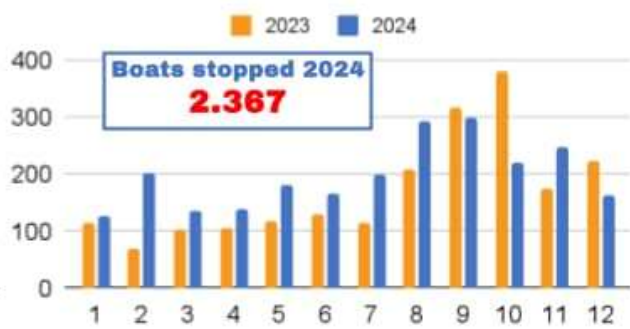


In 2024, people arriving has increased 25.1%, compared to 2023. 1.639 boats made it to the Greek islands, carrying 48.761 people. Boats arriving has increased 13% compared to 2023, when 1.451 boats arrived, carrying 38.993 people. 14.482 people has been illegally pushed back by Greek authorities.

Boats Arrived On The Islands



Boats Stopped By TCG/Police



Total arrivals has increased 13% compared to 2023, and 324% compared to 2022. 4.006 boats started their trip towards the Greek islands in 2024, carrying a total of 111.685 people. 1.639 boats made the trip, carrying a total of 48.761 people, the rest, 2.367 boats, 62.924 people, were picked up and arrested by the Turkish Coast guard and Police.

Total Numbers 2022/2023



In 2024 2.367 boats have been stopped on their way towards Greece, 62.924 people have been arrested. Boats arriving on the Greek island has been drastically reduced, due to illegal pushbacks by the Greek government, despite these efforts to prevent people from crossing, boats trying to cross has increased 13% in 2024, compared to 2023.

In addition to the trauma caused by the life-threatening escape, almost all refugee women also have to struggle with strong feelings of guilt.



Leaving parents behind and no longer being able to care for them.

Having to leave children behind because they 'belong' to the father and his family. But mostly: forcing children to face the life-threatening escape.

What it feels like to be afraid of death when crossing in an overcrowded dinghy ... and so do adults.

The inhumane living conditions in the camp...

Poor food, little education, uncertainty ...

Is there a choice, an alternative to fleeing? Is it better to stay at home?

How would you decide? When, under what circumstances, would you choose a life-threatening, expensive escape with an open outcome?

Apparently, the only hope left is for a good future in Europe – at least for the children.

While waiting and hoping, **Ariadni Lesvos** offers opportunities outside of the camp that prepare for life in Europe.

The very high demand for the women's and children's programs shows the great openness and existing interest among the respective groups.

The feedback from both women and children has been very positive. This is also reflected in the fact that the programs are fully booked and usually involve a waiting list.

Women and children would like to come as often as possible and recommend the offers to many of their friends in the camp.

In 2024, we supported and encouraged women and young girls with approximately 1,900 morning places and school children with approximately 1,300 learning places. This means that on average we have invested around 30 euros per person (all costs included!) and were able to use this thanks to your support.

Unfortunately, the 'hope for Europe/Germany' is at least dampened or even disappointed by reality, especially in Germany.

Poorly positioned for a future with the current challenges, Germany is no longer able to, for example, process the high number of applications for residency in a timely manner. Too few staff, too little digitalization. Furthermore, there is too little affordable housing (unfortunately, this has been the case for far too long for 'locals'), too few school places, too few opportunities for German language instruction, and too few opportunities for integration.



A very small proportion of refugees commit crimes. This, and the overall situation, unfortunately leads to increasing rejection among the population and, as a result, significantly fewer private donations.

The vast majority are desperate about the long waiting times and would like to learn German immediately, go to school, start an apprenticeship, gain qualifications in their own profession, and give something back to society through work. Reduce the German skills shortage! But unfortunately, they have little access to such support or to the job center. WHY?



Numerous potential specialists, children and adults, with great potential are waiting in the camps and would like to... Helpful solutions are not easy to find and implement.

Girl, 13, camp in Germany, participation in online lessons not possible because there is no Wi-Fi at the camp and no power outlets in the room.

"Hello teacher: How are you? Are you okay? I miss you. I wish I was in Greece, at least you can study and pass your lessons well. This place is really bad, families stay here for a year. I almost want to cry, teacher. There is no one. Not even one Afghan."

There are repeated reports from German camps that many Turkish, Ukrainian, and Arab people are there. Of course, everyone recognizes that Ukrainian people have significantly better conditions and support, and thanks to immediate assistance from the job center, they can get to work much faster than everyone else.

Ariadni Lesvos and Hoffnung leben want to do more together for the "former" refugees from Lesvos in the future. To this end, pilot projects for "more education" have been launched:

To the **EcoKids** after leaving Lesvos.

Online via Zoom and on a learning platform!

German lessons and other integrative information, conversations, discussions, and support to anyone interested after leaving Lesvos. **Online via Zoom!**

Stumbling blocks were identified, solutions and financing were sought :

- 1) No or poor **Wi-Fi** in the camps, no sockets in the rooms for charging.
- 2) Families with only one **smartphone** , for example, four children need to use to participate in EcoKids classes in a room where all family members live. A tablet would make things much easier.
- 3) Which **teaching materials** are needed and how much does it cost?
- 4) Where can we find the **money** for the solutions?
- 5) Who can **teach German** (Beginner, conversation, grammar not mandatory).

The male refugees ... unfortunately, some have become radicalised. Some! Even to the dismay of their own communities.

What particular, role-specific challenges do male refugees have to overcome? Young people traveling alone, **adult men, fathers** have been torn from the family environment that gave them support and direction. In general, the burden of responsibility on the shoulders of male refugees is enormous. Responsibility for those who fled with them. And at the same time for the part of the family that stayed behind. The "pressure to succeed" is extremely high. Often, the escape is supposed to bring improvement for the entire family.

Often, for example, those left behind need financial support or at least expect that the money raised by the extended family for the escape will be repaid. The challenges and difficulties in Europe are usually unknown and therefore rarely taken into account.

We are looking for: "Mature" **men** who, together with an interpreter, can offer **discussion groups for men**. Online. **Integrative support for young men and men** from the very beginning. Informal exchange that can develop. From information to integration.

The discussion groups would be about **exchanging ideas with "local" men and** getting to know and understand a different understanding of male roles (no longer just producer and breadwinner). Learning to understand the lives of women and men in Europe. Nowadays, a woman no longer has to marry to have children or to be "provided for." This also presents **new opportunities** for male refugees. In Germany, too, changing role distributions in the 1970s and 1980s led to great uncertainty. Back then, men turned to self-help groups. **Men help men**. This is a huge need for male refugees that is hardly being addressed.

Ariadni Lesvos & Hoffnung leben **We are looking for men who could take on such a service** (online or in person). More or less often, depending on our own resources. We are happy to organize it.

It is to be expected that this need will persist for some time, for example, for Afghan refugees. Many men are falling into depression because they find little support in Germany, for example, to quickly enter the job market.

The will to do so is usually there.

Ariadni Lesvos – many goodbyes ... but...



No other image could better symbolize **what moved the EcoKids, the adult guests and the entire Ariadni team most in the first half of the year .**

Intense encounters and intense farewells.

The two boys are EcoKids.

On the left is "A." He had to survive in camp for almost 1.5 years and was the 'longest' EcoKid. For almost a year, he came to class several times a week if possible. He turned 8 during this time, and for his birthday, he received cake 😊 and a serenade.

On the right is "E," 11 years old. He was our EcoKid for 5 months.

"A" found friends in the camp, again and again. And he had to say goodbye to them all – probably forever. Everyone arrived after him and was able to leave before him. Of course, he didn't understand that. No one on Lesbos finds any logic in the local asylum system. He, the 7-year-old, often asked "**why.**" The only answer he could get was that it had nothing to do with him.

The 8-year-old asked several times: "How do you feel now that Mohammad, Zahra, Abolfazl, Adina, or ... can leave the island?"

What a deep, heartfelt question for an 8-year-old: "How do you feel..."

We feel the same way. On the one hand, joy when someone can finally leave. And at the same time, it's a little heartbreaking, because it's usually a goodbye forever.

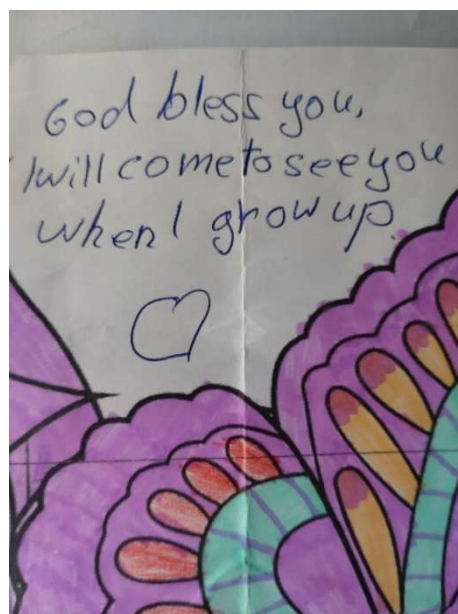
What does this do to children? To their ability to bond? To their trust in stable, reliable relationships.

"A" painted a picture as a farewell.

So many personal encounters that weren't superficial. This was possible and 'natural' because most of the guests had to endure many months, even a year and a half, on the island of Lesbos and were often guests at Ariadni's.

Time to learn to understand each other a little. Plenty of opportunities to impart helpful knowledge to the children and women for their future.

So it happens that these encounters become people-to-people encounters. Children who could be great-grandchildren, grandchildren. Women who could be daughters, granddaughters, sisters.



People – not Muslims, not refugees – or, as they are called these days: migrants, even irregular migrants. The guests at Ariadni are seen as people – without labels like Muslim, refugee, migrant... People with desires, with potential, with potential to enrich society. So many potential skilled workers among them. Electricians, carpenters, plumbers, teachers, kindergarten teachers, geriatric nurses, IT specialists, and so much more.

Farewells... but not always completely...

Contact with some children, women and families is maintained and – as described above – Hoffnung leben is testing further support together with Ariadni Lesbos in the two **online pilot projects** "EcoKids Europe" and "Learning German & Integration".

The pilot projects look promising. If the necessary funding is found, both projects can be offered regularly and opened to more people.

Melina – Creativity, Health, Education – Empowering Girls & Women



The women's program is called **Melina**, named after Melina Mercouri, a famous Greek artist, politician, and women's rights activist. Her life and actions can serve as an example for an expanded understanding of female roles.



The program for women and girls from the camp (**approximately 1,900 morning places in 2024**) changed fundamentally after the first quarter. This became necessary because the employed Afghan seamstress retired to start a family.

The second quarter was a time of searching for a suitable successor. Since a seamstress or experienced seamstress couldn't be found, the facility had to be redesigned. This was challenging, but successful. Ariadni guests now enjoy a **variety of creative and educational programs**.



As before, a maximum of 8* women and older girls can take part in the activities on the mornings from Tuesday to Friday or Saturday after a rich, delicious and healthy breakfast.

*14 at information events in cooperation with MSF (Doctors Without Borders) or LCL (Legal Center Lesbos).

There are usually long waiting lists, but more offers are not possible because financial resources do not allow it.



It's important to be in manageable groups, as this allows for good communication and ensures that all guests receive sufficient attention. The guests greatly appreciate this because they feel noticed, enjoy the clean and bright house, and find the restful peace they don't have at camp. **"It's so quiet and clean here."**

Since October 2024, there has been a woman in charge of the mornings again; she is supported by one volunteer whenever possible. Volunteers are welcome if they stay for at least 3-4 weeks. The longer the better, as the training period is approximately 1-2 weeks. Language barriers and the individual needs of the guests, as well as some creative techniques, make it desirable to have a team of two. Volunteers also bring new ideas and program suggestions, which are gladly considered whenever possible.

Creative activities enable quick **relaxation** and contribute to **recovery** and **healing**. Care is taken to ensure that the 'works' are needed in everyday life, as decorative items are not available either in the camp or on the onward journey. For example, the women and girls design clothing and tableware entirely individually, enjoy jewelry, or homemade soap or body butter, washcloths, or socks with a batik pattern...

Pilot projects 'more education':

In cooperation with **MSF** (Doctors Without Borders), topics such as **women's health**, education, gender-based violence and much more can be addressed on a regular basis.

The LCL (Legal Center Lesbos) provides information about the **legal situation of refugees** in Europe, which is unfortunately unknown to many. It's also worth mentioning the many illegal actions of European officials (now also German ones) – border guards, local caseworkers, and many more.



There's sufficient demand for **education** through **German courses**, as most choose to study in a German-speaking country. If so, then they should at least prepare for the language and hopefully be able to receive further support in the destination country, either on-site or online. Ariadni Lesbos & Hoffnung leben are currently in a **pilot phase for online instruction**, but

the material requirements are not yet covered and they still need more German-speaking **teachers**.

And here are some examples of the activities in pictures...



Bake

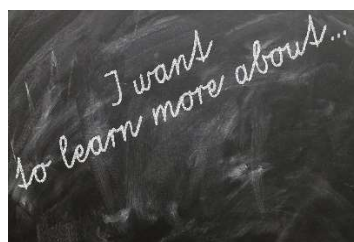
Batik



Body butter

knotting braiding macrame

Crochet



Jewelry

Talks about Europe

Educational trips



Porcelain painting

Soap

SPA



Tea blends

Tetra Pak

Painting textiles



Legal information

Women's health Women's rights

Environmental protection

Melina – Sustainability

Sustainability is important because environmental destruction creates more refugees!

Nothing should go to waste! That's why we sew things like children's clothing from short fabrics for distribution at the camp. We use our leftovers to make patchwork fabric for blankets or alter donated T-shirts or sweatpants in sizes 3-XL into sizes S, M, and L. We collaborate with **The Hope Project** for this, receiving plus-size items for alterations. We then return the clothing to The Hope Project for distribution.



Cotton bags are also sewn from the leftovers, in which, for example, **food** be given along (thanks to **Solingen hilft & Shower Power**).

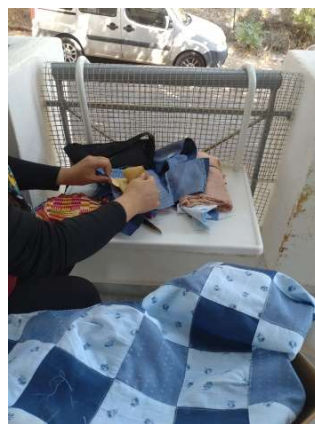
Each woman receives one of these bags on her first visit and is reminded to bring it back on her next visit to pick up more groceries.



Women can also customize cotton bags using either batik or textile printing and painting, making them their own unique creation. "Be happy" (see photo below)

We also ask that you bring egg containers with you to refill them.

The **problem of extreme environmental destruction caused by plastic** is explained.



The plan is to offer the **"EcoLesvos" educational program** to women as well, as women play a central role in the family system and can therefore act as effective multipliers. (Pilot project "More Education")

Financial support is needed to build these resources .

Melina – Let's talk about... Europe...

Mainly on Saturdays, the program “ **Let's talk about ...** ” offers around 14 women and teenage girls from different backgrounds the opportunity to meet, exchange ideas and get to know each other.

This offer is always fully booked and often involves a waiting list for the next appointment.



Guests connect and exchange ideas over a delicious, hearty brunch. Language barriers are bridged with the help of a translator whenever possible. Typically, there are one or two women with English skills among the guests.

Video clips, family photos, music and almost always dancing together are diverse ways of getting to know each other.

The women and girls quickly feel relaxed and forget their living conditions in the camp for a short time.

You feel like you are “**visiting friends**”.



These informal rounds provide good opportunities to discuss living conditions, opportunities and realities in Europe.



Refugees often have little idea of what awaits them in Europe and what their life might look like in a European country.

European women can expand and adapt their knowledge about living conditions, reasons for fleeing, life and culture in other countries.

Refugee women learn a lot about their future reality: democracy, rights, duties, customs, traditions, possibilities and opportunities, challenges and limitations.

The exchange of life stories of European women shows examples of different, **more diverse life plans** than those possible in many countries of origin - for example, that a woman can also live unmarried, independently and alone, as well as childless.

Unfortunately, this also includes the fact that women's rights still have to be fought for and defended here in Europe. Women can support each other, and each culture can complement and enrich the existing one.

The self-confidence of the girls and women is strengthened, they are encouraged to be more self-determined and self-confident and to learn English or the language of the target country during their time on Lesbos and to find out more about Europe.



The extremely stressful daily routine in the camp often makes this very difficult. It's too loud, too cramped, too unpredictable. New traumas are added to old ones. The daily worries are too great. Too little food, no privacy, barely any education for the children, constant financial worries, a lack of medical care. Degrading living conditions. Unpredictable and expensive asylum procedures.

Basically, it encourages and enables people to discover what they have in common and what they are different from.

For Ariadni Lesbos & Hoffnung leben it is important that diverse exchange takes place on an equal footing and that the refugees are not lectured one-sidedly.

For each other – With each other – Shaping a future together

EcoLesvos – EcoKids

Climate change and environmental destruction are resulting in more and more refugees.



Furthermore, Lesvos, **like the entire region, is particularly affected by the effects of climate change.** Environmental protection has so far been implemented very little in Greece, which is evident, for example, in the amount of waste and the lack of waste separation.

EcoLesvos is a long-term educational program with the aim of reducing **environmental pollution, especially plastic waste, and promoting more conscious use of resources such as water and energy.**

With the necessary approval from the Greek Ministry of Education, Ariadni, an environmental educator, taught a class at a **Greek elementary school in the first half of 2024.** Demand is higher from public schools. However, she is expected to do this free of charge for the school. Unfortunately, this is not possible for Ariadni at this time.

Since July 2023, this educational program has also been available to the children from the camp: "**EcoKids** ." This program **will provide approximately 1,300 learning places by 2024.**

This afternoon program has developed very well and is extremely popular with parents and children. It's a constant challenge for the environmental educator, as the classes are very diverse, the groups are constantly changing, and the children can only be taught for an average of three more months before they leave the island.



Ariadni Lesvos and Hoffnung leben are looking for further funding so that the children can continue to be educated as EcoKids Europe.



At this point, we'd like to once again thank the **Stiftung:do** for their support this year. We also thank the associated **company Edding** for the wonderful colored pencils.

The educational offerings at the camp remain minimal and include only a few subjects. Our EcoKids also complain about the limited educational opportunities and are losing at least one school year due to their flight.

The EcoKids generally arrive at school very hungry. Therefore, they are given plenty of food before the actual lessons begin. Plenty of fruit, vegetables, nuts, and dried fruit also contribute to a supply of healthy vitamins and minerals, which are essential for focused learning.

At the table, politeness and friendly interaction can also be practiced. Ariadni House, with its 'normal' living environment, encourages appropriate behavior: for example, using towels to dry hands instead of hastily shaking off the water, which is the only option in the camp.



The **EcoKids are extremely curious and eager to learn.** However, due primarily to their escape, the situation in the camp, and likely various traumas, they often exhibit deficits in concentration, discipline, knowledge, and stamina. Therefore, group size is limited to a maximum of 7-8 children.

Currently, there are children from Afghanistan who speak Farsi and sometimes Turkish and English. There are also a few children who speak only Uzbek, for example. The language barriers can be bridged: translation tools, translation by a class member, or online translation by our experienced translator, who now lives in Switzerland. Furthermore, the environmental educator has learned appropriate vocabulary over the months.

The environmental educator also has access to the camp, where she can meet with parents regularly to exchange information.

In the medium term, offers are also planned in Arabic and for adults.



The importance of education for girls and women is emphasized as often as possible. Fortunately, the EcoKids school is equally attended by girls and boys.

Through play, children learn more about planet Earth and that all people are part of the ecosystem. A positive emotional connection is established, thus strengthening motivation for behavioral change, for example, by taking trips into nature.

EcoKids T-shirts reinforce their sense of belonging and importance, no matter where they live. They are important everywhere – to everyone! That's something that is systematically taken away from them (and the adults). We're giving it back to them!

The children learn and practice ways to avoid waste, separate waste, recycle, and regenerate the environment. This also reduces the diffuse fears about the elusive threats of climate change and environmental destruction, which we all feel to a greater or lesser extent. We teach them that they are effective and capable of taking action.

The **children are particularly open and eager to learn** and implement new things, and they don't find excuses like adults often do. Instead, they happily 'educate' their entire family to do more for the environment and thus for the future.

The environmental educator has done an exceptionally good job of adapting the course material to the needs of the students. The frequent changes in group composition and the varying requirements are addressed with a modular system of playful elements, instructional videos, and adapted theoretical content.



In the interest of privacy, we do not show faces – we ask for your understanding.

Unfortunately, there are only limited opportunities for implementation in the camp.

However, what they learn serves as good preparation for moving to another European country, where many environmental protection regulations apply to everyday life. The children and families then already have prior knowledge that they can quickly put into practice.

After at least two months of regular **participation, both the children and the translators will receive a certificate** in German and English, which they hope will be useful.

The EcoKids offer **is a complete success**.

An online project called "EcoKids Europe" is currently being tested, in which children can participate after they leave the island.

A former "Island EcoKid" answers the question of what he misses most about Lesvos: **EcoKids!**

Why island trips – education and encounters

Lesvos is **Greece's third-largest island**, located near the Turkish coast of Asia Minor. It can be considered a unique holiday destination that has so far been spared from mass tourism. Nevertheless, tourism, along with ouzo, olive oil, and sheep's cheese Feta, is the most important source of income. The mountainous island has a unique variety of landscapes and breathtaking views to offer.



This year, **tourism** finally returned to the level of many years ago. This is largely thanks to Turkish tourists, who are now taking advantage of the lower prices on Lesvos for shopping during their visits.

Ariadni Lesvos sees itself as an organization whose activities are also accessible to locals, thus enabling a form of reconciliation with the situation. Locals can experience the **uninvited guests as fellow human beings** and not as a threat.

We show refugees that Greece isn't a prison camp, but rather has **many sights and beauties to offer**. They can also experience the famous **Greek hospitality**.



The excursions are **"bright spots"** for **manageable groups of approximately 16 guests**. Depending on the destination, the group consists entirely of women, sometimes women and children.

But the **EcoKids also** go on excursions.

Depending on the weather, there are excursions into nature or to outdoor attractions, such as the Petrified Forest, the Temple of Mesa, the Castle of Mythilini, or to museums such as the art exhibitions at the Teriade and Theophilos Museums, the Refugee Museum, or the Archaeological Museum. The island offers a wide range of options for combining beauty with education.

Groups of this manageable size are not perceived as threatening by islanders. Information about sights can be more easily conveyed and discussed in small groups, and contact between people of different backgrounds can be more easily facilitated. Experience beautiful and relaxing things together, learn something, chat, laugh, enjoy, and recover.

People's hunger is very clear: the hunger for (good) food, the hunger for variety, the hunger for education, the hunger for beauty.



"Why do you always take so many photos and videos?"
"Everything is so beautiful here! And there's nothing beautiful in the camp!"

The demand for the excursions is huge and there are always waiting lists.

Camp – Food Supply



It is well known that **camp food** neither provides the necessary calorie count nor sufficient healthy nutrients. The food is often spoiled and rarely tasty. Most people in camp show **symptoms of vitamin and mineral deficiencies**.

Only one food ration is distributed per day, and people have to wait in line for hours to receive it. This situation has remained unchanged for many months.



In addition, many refugees have limited resources to purchase and prepare food. The foods they are familiar with are often unavailable or inexpensive, and the options for preparing them are very limited.

Sometimes it's also observed that the essential healthy foods don't end up in the shopping basket. Therefore, we're planning to offer nutrition seminars for both the EcoKids and the women. Not only to learn how to identify healthy and essential foods, but also to understand that food choices have a significant impact on environmental protection.

Guests at Ariadni House are therefore extremely grateful for the opportunity to bring food with them. However, this demand can only be met if finances allow.

We would like to thank www.solingen-hilft.de and www.showerpower.eu for targeted support.



About every two weeks, our guests can **bake their own bread** and take the delicious products back to camp.

In addition, there are always delicious, plentiful, and healthy meals for the women in the morning and for the EcoKids in the afternoon. Thanks to www.hoffnung-leben-ev.org

There are no spatial, financial or human resources available for a more extensive and ongoing distribution of food and clothing.

Only the **daily distribution of food** can be managed organizationally and in terms of personnel, provided that financial resources allow the purchase of food.

Say thank you

We thank all those who supported the work of **Ariadni Lesvos** in 2024 through their financial support:

 www.hoffnung-leben-ev.org	 www.robert-betz.de	 www.showerpower.eu	 www.solingen-hilft.de
 www.stiftung-do.org	 many private individuals	 www.schafga.be	 Knitting teams Cadolzburg

Hoffnung leben provided **Ariadni Lesvos** with significant monthly support, meeting all of its needs. Without Hoffnung leben, Ariadni Lesvos wouldn't exist... but living with hope alone wouldn't work...

Robert Betz and his **Transformations GmbH** also supported **Ariadni Lesvos** in all of its needs. Robert has known the island of Lesvos for more than 20 years and is also active there with his seminars. We would also like to express our special thanks for his support in purchasing our minibus.

Shower Power helped **Ariadni Lesvos** monthly, primarily with food needs. This enables us to offer healthy, tasty, and nutritious meals for women and children. We deeply regret that Shower Power will cease its activities in 2025. You have provided significant, moral, and practical support to all the refugees here on Lesvos. Thank you and all the best!

Solingen hilft once again responded to our request for food donations. Every day, our guests can choose something they need: eggs, flour, oil, and much more. We would also like to thank you very much for your support in purchasing our minibus.

Stiftung:do has significantly supported the lessons for the **EcoKids Lesvos** and also thought about the necessary transfers by minibus. The company Edding (Mr. Edding founded the Stiftung:do) sent us a package with wonderful, high-quality paints for paper, porcelain and textiles. Colorful planet pictures, beautiful mugs, personalized T-shirts...

Schafga.be and the **Cadolzburg knitting team** encourage many women, and some men, to knit for a good cause. There's love and compassion in the needles. Thank you very much.

Many **private donors** have remained loyal to us despite the many crises and frightening developments, or have joined us for the first time. Their donations benefit many women and children, who greatly appreciate it! We would also like to thank you very much for your support in purchasing our minibus. Buying an essential minibus saves us some 100 euros per month.

Thanks to all of you, we can do what is helpful TOGETHER!

History – Hoffnung leben e.V. and Ariadni Lesvos

For a better understanding, we briefly describe the origins and history of the organization **Ariadni Lesvos**, which emerged from the German organization **Hoffnung leben**.

Ursula Zednicek, the founder of both organizations, has been visiting the island of Lesvos privately since 2006. Immediately after her first visit, a special fascination and connection became apparent, which motivated her to spend at least all her vacations and overtime hours on the island until her retirement.

Ursula Zednicek is deeply involved with the country and its people, history and culture, which deepened the spontaneous feeling of connection.

In 2015, Ursula Zednicek immediately became active during her stays in June and August/September, finding increasing and strong support from her private circle. Friends living on Lesvos took over during her time in Germany.

In 2015, the expectation was that the situation would end after a few months and not continue until today. No one could have imagined how severe and persistent it would become.

In 2019, the German association "Hoffnung leben" was founded to better meet the need for first aid on Lesvos. Since it had become clear during the founding phase that the flow of refugees would not end, the statutes were deliberately designed to enable sustainable aid with the intention of creating forward-looking opportunities for encounters between locals and refugees. To overcome reservations and find common ground, so that the future can be shaped together. On Lesvos, but also with corresponding activities in Germany.



Hoffnung leben should be active both in Germany and on Lesvos.

In 2020, Corona came and prevented the establishment of contacts and good networking in **Germany**, and as a result, the first events and activities were not possible.

Contacts, a network, activities, and premises were already available on **Lesvos**. Demand and need were very high. Activities on Lesvos, of course, also had to adapt to the coronavirus regulations, but more was always possible on the island than in Germany. As a result, **Hoffnung leben** / Ursula Zednicek was primarily active on Lesvos.

Between 2016 and 2020, the political and social situation in the EU and on the overburdened island of Lesvos changed drastically. Xenophobia and, on Lesvos, reservations about foreign organizations increased noticeably. In Greece, a requirement was introduced that foreign associations had to obtain Greek registration. In practice, this was no longer feasible in the heated atmosphere of 2020 and beyond.

Hoffnung leben continued to work on Lesvos during the Corona period.



The search for suitable cooperation partners on Lesvos was unsuccessful. Therefore, **the Greek association Ariadni Lesvos** was founded **in 2022**. Similar goals, largely the same statutes, non-profit status, and the acceptance of donation receipts by the German tax office enable the strong connection with **Hoffnung leben**. As a small association, **Hoffnung leben** has no employees. All work is done entirely on a voluntary basis; administrative costs were approximately 2.5% in 2023.

www.hoffnung-leben-ev.org

www.instagram.com/hoffnunglebens/

www.facebook.com/hoffnungleben-ev

Ariadni Lesvos implements common goals, but is an **independent, Greek association**.

More sustainability, fewer refugees

The topic has now reached almost all companies, offices and organizations, and the implementation of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals is being given increasing importance.

For **Ariadni Lesvos** and for the organisation **Hoffnung leben**, the “17 SDG GOALS” are part of the DNA, so to speak.

BECAUSE the grievances behind the 17 goals are major causes of flight.

All of our opportunities for action are needed and even the smallest initiatives should not be underestimated.

Ariadni Lesvos and **Hoffnung leben** contribute to these goals wherever and however possible, in accordance with our statutes. See below.

Below are examples from **Ariadni Lesvos**.



1) Ending poverty in all its forms, everywhere.

Ariadni Lesvos works with employees from various countries who are paid fairly and thus able to support themselves.

2) End hunger, achieve food security and better nutrition , and promote sustainable agriculture.

Ariadni offers plentiful, healthy, and delicious food. Salads and fruits, dried fruits, and nuts are included. As often and as extensively as possible, we also facilitate individual shopping for people in particular need in the camp, providing food packages and shopping vouchers.

3) Ensuring a healthy life for all people of all ages and promoting their well-being.

At Ariadni House, **Ariadni** maintains high hygiene standards and promotes the well-being of its guests with all its services in a safe, peaceful, and beautiful environment.

What may seem like 'just' sewing, laundry, handicrafts, breakfast/brunch, or an excursion is so much more. It's about human dignity, a small piece of self-determination, doing things yourself, satisfying the hunger for beauty, being noticed... In technical jargon, this is called MHPSS = mental health and psychosocial support. Health in the broadest sense according to the WHO definition.

4) Ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

*The **Ariadni** Eco Lesvos education program imparts knowledge and practical skills in environmental protection, sustainability, resource conservation, and more.
Education for everyday life. Education for the future.*

5) Achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls.

***Ariadni Lesvos** informs and inspires female refugees to reflect on their aspirations and the new opportunities they face in Europe. The "Let's talk about..." program offers an opportunity for questions and answers, as well as information about customs and traditions, laws, opportunities, and challenges in Europe. Ariadni Lesvos encourages and empowers girls and women.*

6) Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

-/-

7) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

-/-

8) sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

***Ariadni Lesvos** takes great care to ensure that its employees maintain healthy working hours and do not neglect recreation. Empowerment and continued learning are encouraged. Work content is designed collaboratively, enabling as much personal responsibility as possible. Ariadni Lesvos seeks happy and satisfied employees who can then provide the best possible support to our guests.
Ariadni Lesvos would very much like to offer long-term employment contracts. However, this also depends on long-term, predictable financial support, which is not yet available to the desired extent. This is particularly regrettable because demand and need for all services are very high.*

9) Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and support innovation.

-/-

10) Reduce inequality within and between countries.

-/-

11) Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

-/-

12) Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.

***Ariadni Lesvos**, with its Eco Lesvos program, educates about environmental and climate issues in schools and at Ariadni House as part of the "Let's talk about..." program. This also promotes understanding of the many causes of displacement. Practical options for behavior change are taught. Examples include cloth bags instead of plastic bags, and much more.*

13) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, recognizing that the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) is the central international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

***Ariadni Lesvos** – Eco Lesvos Programs*

14) Conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

***Ariadni Lesvos** – Eco Lesvos Programs*

15) Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

***Ariadni Lesvos** – Eco Lesvos Programs*

16) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

***Ariadni's** activities are open to everyone: refugees, locals, and island guests, regardless of origin.*

17) Strengthen implementation resources and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.