

Fostering Integration of Children and Youth on the Move through the Creation of an Urban Youth Center in Athens



Stella Tsitoura, Eleonora Goussiari

Network for Children's Rights

Network for Children's Rights



- The Network for Children's Rights is a non-profit organization founded in 2004 with the aim of drawing awareness to and intervening in problems relating to the rights of the child.
- Since its founding Network has successfully promoted children's rights, encouraged their socialization through educational, cultural and psychosocial activities and has supported them taking legal action where necessary.

Cross-cultural Youth Center

The Network Youth Center was established in September 2016.

Based in one of the most underprivileged areas of Athens,

“Youth Network” offers activities addressed to mixed groups of teenagers and youth, Greeks, migrants and refugees, who live in that area as well as in refugee camps and hosting houses and shelters. The center operates from Monday to Saturday, within the hours 09:00 – 20:00.

Cross-cultural Youth Center – Project Context

- The center of Athens is hostile for youth as there is a distinct lack of open and green spaces. Furthermore, there are few educational and recreational activities specifically created for the target group of youth 12 – 20, which would give young people a safer place to be rather than the streets. Available services are not always accessible due to the cost of transport, entrance fees, or lack of knowledge of the city outside the youth's immediate neighborhood.
- The creation of a Youth Center in Athens is meant to meet the identified needs of youth living in the unwelcome urban environment of Athens and in camps outside the urban setting. In this space the youth can feel comfort, as well as identify and develop the skills necessary to become empowered and independent citizens.

Needs Assessment

- The needs assessment conducted in camps outside the urban web of Athens by NCR, showed that youths living in camps are willing to visit Athens to attend Non Formal Education (NFE) as well as recreational activities, and that transportation and the lack of knowledge of service providers were the main constraints for them not to be involved in activities in Athens yet.
- The parents interviewed also showed a greater interest in the children attending activities in Athens instead of inside the camps. In fact, activities organized in Athens are viewed as more reliable and longer term.

Points of contact

Since there is no prospect at all of a state education for 15-17 years old adolescents and they are limited to informal teaching and training, the Network of Children's Rights organized many activities for them in order to **enhance the resilience, support them to regain faith to themselves and provide life meaning in their daily life**



Program targets

- Enhancement of dialogue inside the community and preparation of communication with outside world
- Information of adolescents about the social and cultural European and Greek way of life
- Their socialization and free expression through participation in meetings, talks and visits of a social, cultural and artistic nature with participation of Greeks
- The start of integration processes through communication and acquaintance with their Greek peers and mutual interest groups

Creative Activities 2017 - 2018



Activities of adolescents

- Edition of the newspaper “MIGRATORY BIRDS”



Activities of adolescents

- Daily sports activities
- Photography lessons
- Weekly outing programs to museums, theaters, cinemas, parks etc.
- Web-radio
- Tablets
- Cinema club
- Meeting with professionals (doctors, lawyers, students, journalists etc.)

- **Art lessons**



Creative Groups 2017 -2018

- Theater Group: 9 teenagers participated in the European Theater Festival Festizart 2018, that was held in Montpellier, France. They presented an interpretation of “Hamlet”.
- Stop - motion/Animation Workshop: Creation of a short film, with the title “Bird Song” from refugee teenagers. The film aired in Greek and european short film festivals.
- Playing with Photography: Urban exploration workshop through photography and video, for refugee children that reside out of Athens

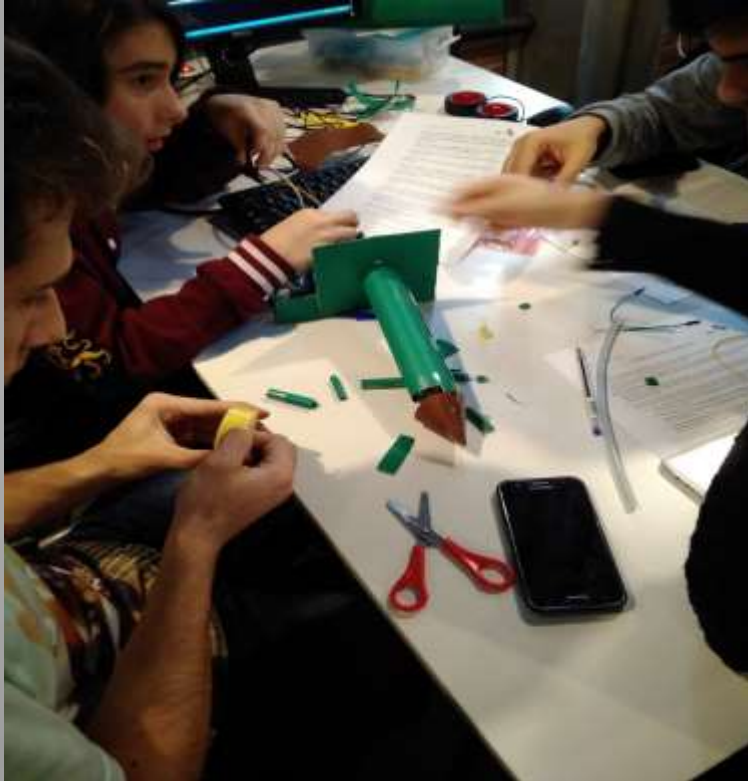
Creative Groups 2017 -2018

- STEM workshop: (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Introductory courses to Robotics and new applications of technology. Peer to peer learning methodology.
- Arts and Crafts workshop: Through different means, teenagers explore different artistic styles and learn how to use multiple materials
- Free movement, Skateboard Group, Chess group, Basketball group, Music Group

HAMLET



One-off projects





5238

60

The Youth Center also provides:

- A teenage Lending Library, with 2.500 titles, containing fiction, poetry, folk tales, dictionaries, films, board games, encyclopedias, teaching materials and free access to the internet.
- Psychosocial Support, including both individual and group counselling by a psychologist or social worker for teenagers and their parents.
- Educational and vocational guidance, with workshops aimed at helping young people make the right choices in regard to their education and employment, so that they can become independent members of the community with equal status.





The Youth Center beneficiaries

- Direct beneficiaries: Greeks, 2nd generation migrants and refugee teenagers and youth that reside in Athens center or in the camps
- Indirect beneficiaries: The teenagers' families, the direct neighbourhood and the locals
- More than 12 nationalities (Egypt, Ethiopia, Algeria, Albania, Afghanistan, Greece, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Honduras, Pakistan, Romania, Syria, Bulgaria etc.) 236 adolescents enrolled in weekly schedule of activities for 2017-2018 while more than 300 teenagers participated in the Summer Schedule of Activities.

Objective of the Network YC

- Creating a distinct social space for teenagers and youth
- Strengthening the "sense of belonging" in the neighborhood and community
- Foster integration for refugee children through participation to mutual activities with Greek peers
- Building relationships between teenagers and youth of different nationalities through collaborative workshops



Non – formal Education

Learning Lab

- Aims at the smooth integration of teenagers into the school community and their wider social and professional integration after completing compulsory education.
- The learning groups focus on developing social skills, through the suggestion of collaborative and peer to peer learning methods
- Specially formulated fast-track learning courses of Greek as a foreign language for non-Greek speakers

Non – formal Education

Creative Lab

- Aim at the **harmonious coexistence** of teenagers and young people living in the same neighborhood or going to the same school and bearing different cultural identities, speaking different languages and belonging to different social groups
- Designing actions to **enhance intercultural encounters** through mixed cultural / linguistic groups: with the use of multi-media, audio-visual media, bilingual / multilingual books, audio books, photos and videos

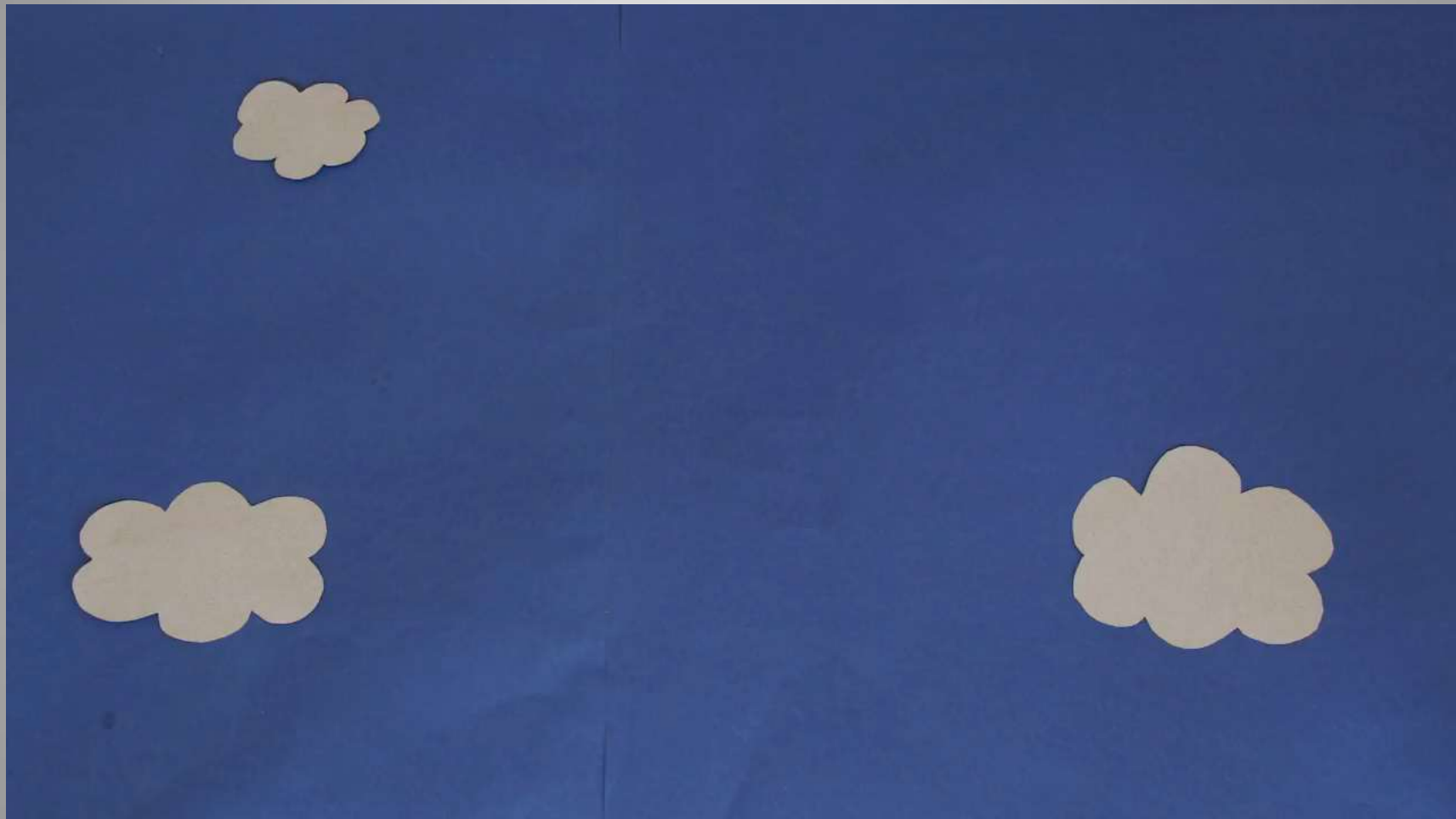












Thank you very much! Σας ευχαριστούμε!
شكرا جزيلا! بهت بهت شكريه. وخیلی ممنون.