

VOLUNTARY (INTER) ACTIONS

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Proiou Chariklia:

First, I would like to congratulate all the volunteers for the effort you make. Congratulations, so far it is awesome. Before I introduce the members of the musical theater group ERODIOS to you, I want to tell you first a few words about the FAST HEROES (XOPA HEROES) program 112. In the context of the educational program FAST HEROES, Face Arms Speech Time, and the emergency number 112, more than 20 volunteers have contributed unselfishly their time, their energy, their knowledge in order to prevent serious consequences of a stroke through toddlers' training. The volunteers of the program are undergraduate and postgraduate students, teachers, parents, health professionals and people who all have this common vision, which is to save lives.

And how do we save lives? We know that vascular stroke is the number one cause of disability in the world and one in four of us, of the people will have a stroke. At least one in his life. But many of our volunteers have become program ambassadors in their city, creating social networks and collaborations between the program FAST HEROES 112 and schools and other educational institutions. These people have awarded by ANGELS. In collaboration with ANGELS their award has been signed by the President of ANGELS for their volunteering and in May 2020-2021 our participation in (...) of the European federation of neurological organizations has been completed in the context of

which an award was classified for the participation of the volunteers we had in this program. In particular two persons who one you just met have played a big role ...

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Charoula excuse me, you speak a little bit fast. And we love Spyros so much. So, we want to take care of him. If you can, help him because it's difficult. There are many foreign words...

Proiou Chariklia:

Sorry Spyros, sorry to everyone but I'm excited and I'm talking quickly, I know. I'm glad to be here. In May of 2020-2021, as I said, we were awarded and I know that here Chrysanthi Manousaka is present who is in the RoDi and in FAST HEROES, as well as Dimitra Koniari from the music department who helped us in the program, too. I'm glad we have things in common.

I would like to tell you with great pleasure that the first application took place in 2019 at University of Macedonia with three children. Then with 66 children and now 37 countries worldwide put the program into action live or online. In Brazil, Portugal, the United Arab Emirates, Iceland, Canada, South Africa, I can't say all the countries, they are too many but worldwide over 326,000 children in approximately 2,500 schools have been trained with FAST HEROES and 8,000 teachers know the program and put it in practice now. Our goal is the 1 million children. To say about our homeland, in Greece 9,000 children, 300 schools and 800 teachers participate in the program for the moment, but we have the pleasure to tell you that just three days ago we got the approval by the Ministry of Education for the implementation of the program this year in all over Greece. We address pupils of primary education who study at the kindergartens, primary schools, and special schools as well as students of the secondary education all over Greece and we hope all Greece will be related to the program.

A short film was also recently made by the BBC Storyworks Commercial Productions where it came to Greece in addition to the other countries implementing the program and it shows the results of the program in the various countries where it was implemented. We will note it down later in the discussion at chat. For more information about the program, you can contact FAST HEROES 112 and we will gladly accept anyone who is interested in volunteering.

Fine, now I would like to introduce you to Mrs Spanidou Sofia, Mrs Stamouli Vassilia and Mrs Benazi Archontia. I wish I tell right the names. It is the music therapy

group ERODIOS and their subject concerns consensus as we have seen before in the video, and it was created in early 2021 in order to support RoDi and the festival team volunteers are volunteers who have to do with artistic works. I give you the framework to speak and I thank you very much. I hope not...

Stamouli Vasileia:

Good morning from us too. Thank you very much for the invitation to participate as a team. We are a musical theater group. We are a volunteer team, we are all volunteers. Our goal is to create a large inclusive group of people with and without disabilities within the festival. As Mrs. Proiou said, our team was created in 2021 and it is divided into different subgroups so that we can support the whole project. Sophia can tell us more about the actions of ERODIOS.

Spanidou Sophia:

Hello from me too. Good morning. As Vasileia said, our team was established in early 2021 and aims to create performances and events within the festival. Our team consists of members of the festival's volunteer team but also of graduates, undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as people from the art. To be able to function better, we have divided our team into subgroups. So, we have musicians, singers, actors, dancers, set designers, screenwriters, directors and technical support.

Let me tell you a few words about how we conceptualized our name ERODIOS. Inside it the word ERODIOS hides the word eros, ode and pomegranate. The heron is a bird. And throughout human history, birds have been able to inspire humans with their ability to fly. So, they motivate us to overcome all our earthly worries and get to know the spiritual realm. So, we also wanted to fly high, wherever we want, without anyone forbidding us. Eros ... Eros symbolizes intense desire or love and excessive devotion to something. The word ode... The word ode is an ancient lyric poem characterized by personal style and grandeur and expresses the thoughts of the poet. The pomegranate... The pomegranate symbolizes fertility and happiness, good luck, health, joy, abundance and love.

So, we, the musical-theatrical team of ERODIOS, we aspire through our works and our action to include all the above concepts. Inspired by the principles and values of the iRoDi Festival, we aim to create a large inclusive team, which will be driven by the love of the arts and the freedom of expression.

Unfortunately, the circumstances this year due to covid did not allow us to meet the members of the team live and create something bigger that we had in mind. But we managed with a lot of dedication and love for what we want, to make some online meetings. And in four months from March to June our team realized two online projects about what Mrs. Archontia Benazi will talk

Benazi Archontia:

Goodmorning from me. Our action, as Sofia said, started through online meetings from March until about June. We had two projects. The first had as its central theme the tale "Hansel and Gretel" and the second had as its theme "Color, animal and living environment". We asked the members of the group, who were divided into subgroups according to their capacity, to prepare something for this and the project was uploaded to the social media of the group. Our goal was to collaborate, to get the members to know each other and to gradually create some material for the rest of the world to get to know us. The material can be found on Facebook and Instagram. On Facebook we are in Greek capital letters ΕΡΩΔΙΟΣ and on Instagram erodios_team. As part of the festival, we decided to make a video to give the opportunity to all members to participate whether they are in Thessaloniki or remotely. And we hope you enjoyed the result. We hope that the next project can be done up close, to be even better.

Stamouli Vasileia:

It is something else that we would like to add, that in addition to the musical theater group ERODIOS there is also the orchestra of the festival RoDi Music Orchestra, which started from the first year of the festival and consists of volunteers, amateurs and professional musicians. The coordinator of the group is the special education musician Lena Karagiannidou. You can watch videos throughout the festival. This year we tried due to the circumstances to shoot our videos in advance in studios with our musicians and singers and in the facilities of KDAP MEA Prosvasi to Perea with the choir of people with disabilities, so that we can participate in the festival that carried out remotely. And, the videos and all the actions can be found on the social media of the volunteer groups and youtube but also on the festival site.

Rroiou Charikleia:

Congratulations on that. Mrs. Platsidou, do you have anything to add?

Platsidou Maria:

I am impressed by the many voluntary actions we have attended today, even briefly. I am very proud because many of these actions are related to our department. The girls you see here are graduates of our department. Charoula is a colleague. Many other persons who participated are graduates or students of the department and this thing makes me very proud. I would like to make a very brief suggestion to open the debate, but before that, I think there is another lady who would like to comment. Mrs. Lena Diamanti representing the Society of Help and Empowerment. Is Mrs. Diamanti here to tell us something about her team?

Diamanti Lena:

Good morning. Thank you very much. It is my great pleasure to attend the festival. The truth is that this is the first time I have watched your work. Today I represent an informal women's group, the SHE team, which deals with the empowerment of women in all forms of daily life, whether professional, family or social. We are currently implementing, we have planned and organized and now we are implementing an interactive program, a six-meeting workshop for visually impaired women, blind and sighted

Our goal is initially the self-knowledge on an individual and group level, the cooperation and empathy. I want to tell you that we have come in contact with the Panhellenic Association of the Blind. Our helper in the whole action is the team Zoi and the first results are excellent. More of course we, sighted women, have the biggest impact. The blind ladies who frame the action are great, they are very active and they have inspired us who see a lot and what is happening is impressive. The action goes very well. We want to continue. I just want to tell you a little bit about how we have implemented it. Through processes we have taken from the arts, theatrical play from the theater, music-kinetic education through dance and music and through coaching processes, we try to find ways of cooperation. All women, all people not just women, can achieve the same result regardless of where we start from or the paths we can choose either due to personal choices or due to social or other issues. So, we use the theatrical play. We use coaching processes, music and we manage to make empathy and collaboration a reality. We hope that when this workshop is completed we can do the same with other groups. With people who have motor disabilities or possibly deafness. We are in the process of designing such programs and looking for other groups or agencies that will be able to support our effort.

All effort is 100% voluntary. We found it very difficult to find space to house this action. Finally, another volunteer group helps us, because I finally think that we volunteers support and help each other. It is a group of voluntary civil protection, which we thank very much and we hope that next year we will be here at the festival with new actions to talk to you and with very good results from everything we organize. Thank you very much.

Proiou Chariklia:

Mrs. Diamanti, at first, congratulations on this action. Empowering women, whatever it is, it is a perfect idea. I would just like to ask you if there is any confusion with the European SHE, the Schools for Help in Europe which is under the World Health Organization? And just not to be confused, because basically their action is to go to schools and recommend health issues to children. I happen to be on this team too and there just is no such confusion. That's why I'm informing you that there is a SHE, Schools for Help in Europe.

Diamanti Lena:

Thank you very much for your comment. Our team, I just did it briefly is Society for Help and Empowerment. Thank you very much for your comment. We will take this into account, so that there is no misunderstanding either in any announcement we make or in anything else.

Proiou Chariklia:

But congratulations, bravo. Is there anyone else who has questions? Maria?

Platsidou Maria:

I would say that you, Mrs. Diamanti, you can do it SHEM or whatever.

Diamanti Lena:

We will take it very seriously and there may be some change. After all, we are not as I told you, we do not have legal status at the moment. We are an informal group that the truth is that we have done a lot of actions while we women are together, who really, at least in the city of Thessaloniki, understand that they have a very significant impact. Thank you.

Platsidou Maria:

We have seen many voluntary initiatives today and many people who involved in volunteering. Let me remind you that volunteering can be about one person, the help one offers to a friend. It can concern a social whole. For example, a group of people with disabilities or it may concerns to a purpose, to make this festival what is primarily a voluntary event. Whatever it is, the question that arises in someone is why, what a pleasure all these people find to devote so much time and so much effort to a voluntary action.

There are several answers. I want to give you only one that comes from my own field of research, psychology. Recent research has shown that people who have a good time are happy with their lives but people who live for a purpose are blissful. Not only do they have a good time but they feel a deep satisfaction and pleasure from life, a bliss in the ancient Greek sense of the word. Why? Various research was done, which measured various pathological characteristics of these people and it was found that those who lived for a purpose had a meaning in their lives. Parenthesis. Volunteering can be such a purpose, such a meaning. So they were fortified against inflammation, their immune system was stronger, their psychic world was stronger. There are many other such findings that show that in the end what you offer in the form of a voluntary purpose, in the form of a service to society, is something that returns to you in various ways that concern both physical and mental and social health. So, to give a utilitarian tone to the voluntary actions, although they are not done for this purpose. But it is a motivation, which gives feedback and makes this action continue to exist.

Another thing I think about is how one can develop volunteering in younger people and in larger parts of our society, as it is known from statistics in Greece that the general population does not have very highly developed voluntary activities. So how can these be developed? I will say only thoughts, not a detailed analysis.

So I think the action starts with a perception and the perception for everyone is different. Some may start from a humanitarian, to be motivated by a humanitarian perception. Some from a Christian perception. Some from an ecological point of view. Motivation is important. Personally, what the Apostle Paul said in one of his letters, "You bear each other's burdens" expresses me very much. And it expresses me very much as a perception because it puts all people on the same level. There aren't people who have and offer to some who do not have. There are no strong people who give to the weak.

They are all equal people, members of a society that each bears the burden of the other, being aware that after a while the roles may be reversed and someone else may

bear my own burden, in prayer, in emotional help, in material help. Wherever there is a need and wherever someone can help.

A second thing that helps to develop volunteering, that is the kick-start, the external motivation. One needs to motivate others. We need some leaders. Some who will pull forward and take us back. I am proud of the work that Kartasidou has done with RoDi and all of you. I am proud of the work that Mrs. Proiou does for FAST HEROES and for all the volunteers they take with them for all these actions they take. So, we need someone who can pull forward, organize, set the standards. And a third thing we need are peer standards. That is, peers, friends, of the same level, let me say it. Peers. So to motivate each other, to become a group of friends, to imitate in the good sense and to compete, to compete in the good sense with each other in doing other things and to have a good time as we do it.

So, these were my thoughts on volunteering, which is an activity that sometimes takes time, energy and money but ultimately makes life worth living. And I suggest you, I urge the audience that is 109 people now, to formulate your ideas, your questions, your observations, your experiences. So, let's open it and see more of the 6 cameras-screens we see now. So, please, we would like to hear the audience.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, responsible of chat:

First let us inform you that in the chat there are links where you can find the actions of FAST HEROES. Beyond that, there is a comment from Mrs. Ketikidou that says "Warm congratulations on your work. Excellent effort with many possibilities "and we also have a question from Mrs. Konstantina Christianopoulou" Good morning. When and why did you start volunteering? », I imagine towards the girls of ERODIOS.

Spanidou Sophia:

Should I answer first girls? Nice. Hello again. For me the truth is that volunteering has started from a young age, from camps and various activities. At the university, Mrs. Kartasidou and I started together 9 years ago, I do not remember ever entering the postgraduate program. We started the MOUSSES, the Music Educational Ensemble, with meetings that we did every Sunday with volunteers, and we had children with disabilities in which we were basically trying to do social skills through music.

It was a wonderful action, with all the difficulties that a voluntary action has. Because volunteering is very nice, but it also has difficulties which can be in the time you have, it starts from there, in that many times those who participate may not take it so

seriously because they do not give some money so they come to a meeting and they are absent in another two three. So, when there is a team there it's a little difficult, as well as in actions that you want to do as a volunteer team and you need resources.

So, there are the difficulties in volunteering. But if with all the good mood and a team spirit and love for what you do, you find the solutions. We found a lot of solutions to our problems and we managed to move forward and after the MOUSES came RoDi. We were close for two very nice years, we did a lot of activities, we had a great time and we offered a lot to the children. I have participated in RoDi with a volunteer group as a dance teacher and we did a show on RoDi. Before covid there was this team but due to our pandemic it has pulled it all back, unfortunately.

Therefore, I would like to thank Mrs. Kartasidou for this opportunity that was given to me because we started as an undergraduate student and professor and we ended up like a family. Because volunteering as you work, you do not work exactly, I mean you try to offer, with those you work with you become a family because you all try together to find ideas, solutions to create. That's me. Thank you very much.

Proiou Chariklia:

Very interesting Mrs. Spanidou what you said and basically if I can say that what Mrs. Platsidou said, made me think a little about volunteering because I can say that I personally have been involved in volunteering since my student age and in essence what I understand from volunteering is that fills you. It fills you as a person and you really become a good citizen but a good person of yourself by doing something like that. But I never thought about it from the psychological point of view that Mrs. Platsidou always offers us, to see a little deeper what volunteering means and congratulations for that and Mrs. Spanidou. Well done. Do you want to say something, Mrs. Stamouli? Mrs. Benazi?

Benazi Archontia:

As Sophia said, we also started in our student years. I personally started out of curiosity because I was informed through a course by Mrs. Platsidou about a conference and I went for the experience to see what it is like to be a member of a group and then bit by bit with Mrs. Kartasidou we organized the festival from the beginning. And basically we became a family with the problems that every family has, with the very beautiful moments that every family has. And I think it's a way of life now. And that's very nice.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

I must take the floor a little. I must speak.

Proiou Chariklia:

Kartasidou.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

I can't. I try not to participate in the discussion today, but Maria knows me and Charoula knows me, too because we have all more or less invested in various voluntary activities. It is sadly disappointing even today, I do not know in other countries they are not absolutely one hundred percent sure of what is true, at least from my experience I have from Germany, there was no devaluation let's say, sorry to say so, but there is an underestimation of some voluntary actions because there is no better organized institutional framework.

I have said it many times and Maria and Charoula know that in the CVs abroad, the certificate from voluntary actions counts. The active involvement of a member counts, regardless of whether he is not an official member of a group but offers some services. We will hardly see it here and I think that needs to change. Various organizations that we work with want to involve volunteers and unfortunately, there is no institutional framework to cover them. Especially when they go to some structures that you have to do with a person, that is, you offer volunteering to the person, you do not offer him to go and make coffee for the secretary. That is, it has direct communication so it is very important that those who will accept the volunteer know the issues of safety. If something happens to them, if something happens to another person in his presence and unfortunately there is a lot of difficulty at least for some institutions I have spoken to. Some have found solutions. Some others do not, but each sector is under the supervision of another ministry, which ministry can translate a completely different legal framework from the other ministry, which can apply to both.

There are such difficulties and I think that the state should ensure both the level of offer of the volunteer, what he or she offers and how. She is not paid, Maria said it very well and she helped me in what she says, in the meaning of life, but she does not stop needing and not the negative criticism or the reward, always just to have a give and take. I do not know if I convey it correctly, to have equality, because volunteering as we have said and we try together with Barbara Vamvoura that we work together to have, has professional skills. Maria, who is very good in the field of adult education, is not that the

volunteer does not have skills or should not acquire skills or you should not train him. A very important part is their education.

That is, a volunteer comes and you train him because it is another context. What knowledge does he have? Because in my classes I call various institutions, one institution came and basically there was a position of the volunteers that if one went to a place let's say to support, to offer volunteer work to a disabled person, it is good not to have special education knowledge, to be unwritten map. I'm sorry, but I personally do years of volunteering. If I am asked to volunteer, to offer my services in a place such as the mental health field, I should not know, for example, a patient's crisis, what it might mean and how to manage it. That is, it is not something you just have to want. You also need to have some social and communication knowledge and skills to be able to actively participate. It is very important to offer emotional security to both the one who offers and the one who accepts volunteering. Otherwise, I think that all the meaning is lost and as Maria said, then there is a mental deterioration from both them and it is a bit difficult. Sorry for the intervention, but I could not raise these issues, Mrs Proiou.

Proiou Chariklia:

No, very right and very nice. It really takes some degree to start volunteering, some skills but everyone has their skills and I think if the organization knows what kind of skills the people who work together have, we always find that framework. What I did not say is that when I was a student, I organized groups of people with brain damage, which people also saw as access within their professional space. They used it as a steppingstone to find a job. That is, they worked with us and gradually many of these people can now be said to be working and finding jobs and integrating into society in other ways. But volunteering always stays in them and that is so important.

You are right, if we compare Greece for example with England, that is where billions of euros fall to non-profit organizations and volunteers. I believe that this is starting to be built and Mrs. Kartasidou and RoDi and all of you here can create it. Together we can build it and reach a level where we will be proud of the volunteerism that exists in Greece in matters of disability mainly. Mrs. Platsidou, do you want to say something?

Platsidou Maria:

I want to say, but there is a question. A question that I would like to discuss first and then maybe I will say something too. Sorry I got the job.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, responsible of chat:

Sorry I was waiting for you to complete the question. There is continuity from Mrs. Christianopoulou. She says "Excellent work, congratulations" and the question that Mrs. Keramidioti Voula asks us is "Have you ever felt sad in any voluntary action? "If something happened that put you in a difficult position or you felt that you were being exploited." The girls from ERODIOS can also answer, of course, and anyone from the public who wants to can be placed who has worked voluntarily or has participated in some voluntary action.

Platsidou Maria:

I would like the girls to answer first and then to enrich the question a bit with my own question. Girls, when you feel that it's not going well, when you have felt that it's very difficult, what made you continue? Sophia and Archontia said before about families. We feel like family but sometimes the family malfunctions. You are still there. Why?

Stamouli Vasileia:

Ok, the truth is that we have been working with Sofia and MOUSES for so many years before the festival started and we are already 4 years after the festival and let us not forget that in general all groups consist of individuals and people and concern the human and personal relationships. It's very logical many times there are conflicts I will call it although I do not like this term or difficulties in terms of organization, communication between people and communication. Especially since for two years we have all been through a screen and a computer and we find it even more difficult to communicate and interact with others. There are certainly some difficult times, but I do not know what this driving force is, the lever that makes us continue and of course after the result that justifies us and makes us get this pleasure from all our actions.

Spanidou Sophia:

Let me complete. I have felt that I was being exploited through voluntary actions, not by RoDi and the MOUSES, and they believed that you are a volunteer after you said you will do it, you have to be there for whatever comes to our minds. You must do it, because you are a volunteer. So, many times this brings you to a difficult situation, that it spoils your peace because you say that I do it voluntarily, that I come here I offer time from my free time, there were phases in my life that I did not have much free time but I offered it and you think that what I do the children enjoy. Well, does the person in charge of volunteering appreciate that? That I'm here, that I'm here every time and why it can

push me to the limits, stress me out or make me feel bad about something I'm really doing in my heart and through my mood for an offer.

Yes, I have gotten into a difficult position and I have left voluntary actions because they no longer represented what we started to do and why we entered into these actions. Because many times something very nice starts voluntarily and calmly and in a very good mood. And then the people in charge start demanding more and more and start to see it a little more professionally and try maybe to make money and then after all this it starts to spoil a bit. The whole mood we had in the beginning spoil a little. Thank you very much.

Proiou Chariklia:

You talked a little bit about what gives happiness and pleasure through this whole context, but something that is missing, and I think the most important thing is that we gain knowledge and learn in life and learning from other lives, about what others around us are going through and we improve as human beings. Sometimes there may be some financial gain, there may be some gains. I know that in some groups we give financial support to some volunteers if we have money, but I think learning is the most important. That is, it is the best framework to learn and move forward with all the actions we have. I think there is a question in the chat. Do you want to say to us?

Manousaka Chrysanthi, responsible of chat:

There is initially a position from another member of the ERODIOS team, Mrs. Katerina Niko who tells us, "As a small member of the ERODIOS volunteer team, I can say that the goal and the same process is what they give you push to continue. Even if there is some difficulty in collaborating or elsewhere, to want to offer and learn from the whole process is the most important courage. Congratulations to the whole team "and then Mrs. Maria...

Platsidou Maria:

Excuse me, Chrysanthi, before we go to the next question which I saw, I'd like to close this answer to the question. Archontia, do you want to add something?

Benazi Archontia:

I agree with the girls and what Mrs. Proiou said, that you learn very well and more yourself, through your socializing with others.

Platsidou Maria:

Well, I want to summarize two things. Motivation matters a lot. Believe what you do. When you stop believing what you do or when what you do does not agree with your beliefs, you can leave. The second thing, through your answers, is that there is an understanding that where there are people there can be problems. And the third thing is that I learn. Not only skills and knowledge, but I learn to manage difficulties, human relationships, professional relationships. Volunteering is a job, unpaid, but it is a job. That is, it has a job description, it has a description. When the jobs that ask me to do this description are gone, whether they are voluntary or professional I need to know, to see how I will manage this. That is, to develop a defense against the excessive demands of the employer, even if I am a volunteer. And on the other hand, because volunteering is a job, I have to be consistent with it. I cannot be there so I have nothing else to do, because the work is not done. I wanted to summarize this as the juice of everything I understood that you said.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, responsible of chat:

If you have completed Mrs. Platsidou, should I move on to the question? Nice. So Mrs. Maria Kirmanidou asks us "Can you tell us a few more words about the MOUSES?".

Spanidou Sophia:

Vasileia, can I answer? I will tell you a few words, if Mrs. Kartasidou can upload an e-mail in which you can if you want to be informed about the MOUSES and the actions that have been done. Let me tell you that MOUSES started about 8 years ago, I do not remember and our goal was basically to be able through music, through music education to create a group of children with disabilities. We worked with volunteers on various skills with children from simple ones like how they work in a group, how they behave, follow a pattern, follow an educational process. We did performances, we went to the theater, we did various actions. The children were very happy when they came to the program. And we hope that ending the whole difficult situation with the pandemic, we will be able to reactivate our actions because for the MOUSES the direct interaction with the children is a very basic element, in how they worked with us and how much the children had made progress through the program. We are very happy and proud of that. We did a very good job, on a very difficult day, on Sunday, a very difficult day for everyone. But our love and our stubbornness I think has had very good results and we hope to continue our actions again. If any of the girls from the program want to complete something.

Benazi Archontia:

I think you covered us, Sophia.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, responsible of chat:

If you want in the chat, MOUSES' Gmail and Facebook will be uploaded, as Sophia mentioned previously. There is another question from Mrs. Keramidioti "Is it considered important or even necessary to have a counseling department for volunteers in any field?". Mrs. Platsidou, I imagine you can answer, since it concerns counseling

Platsidou Maria:

I think girls are more able to answer and I will make the well-known summary at the end. Because you live it. You live it too.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

So, should I speak as a volunteer?

Platsidou Maria:

Of course. Why not?

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

As Barbara says, it is ours, we do whatever we want. We enter whenever we want. Well, I think so. This is what I said at the beginning, and I always emphasize it. As educators we are, a very important part, I emphasize keywords: emotional security. Maria knows very well the burn out, which someone gets as a professional and I think burn out can happen to a volunteer. I may be in the burn out phase, I will later ask Ms. Platsidou for advice soon. Because it turns out that the meaning of life can often conflict with various other external factors.

As you mentioned Maria, there are motivations. Fine, I have the inner motivations. But let us not forget the necessity that unfortunately or fortunately we all have for external motivations, which in this case are the people we are called to support, to cooperate but also other external motivations are needed that many times for ourselves, I do not know if the girls have felt it, they are invisible, and we cannot identify them. I mean, it's something I've felt, I cannot say I would like that, and maybe it's something that could be found in a counseling context when it's going to lose its meaning. When you are looking for an extra motivation or when you feel that you cannot, you don't want to, it is impossible

to continue. So, it is a very important part and to be able to solve, rather to manage, some conflict situations, because you have to do with people. They arise. These are the limits. That is, emotional security and boundaries I think are very crucial and to be able to be a volunteer and to emphasize that I have only women volunteers, I put this in parentheses because it is also very important and should be mentioned. Not that the boys are not interested. They may have a hard time managing it, I do not know. It is also a very important part at what age the boys decide and under what conditions, to get involved. Do you understand what I mean? As temperament, because temperamentally we are not all the same whether men or women, or whatever. So, I think it could be very important. I do not know if the girls have experienced something similar. I, counseling Mrs. Platsidou, we end the festival and then we can start from 11.

Proiou Chariklia:

Can I add something? Before the girls say something, Mrs. Kartasidou? Congratulations on your work again and I know very well what it means to burn out in many ways. But I would like to say that something that happens, is created through these groups are also friendships and if you are missing something from these groups it is the friends you made through the group. Sometimes you do the work but you know that you can consult another volunteer for some help because he is your friend now and this piece of advice, let's say the horizontal, is very beautiful and we must not forget to forget it. We are very close to each other in volunteering. I see it in FAST HEROES. They both go out for ouzo and pick up the phone and try to empower each other and basically that's the best. I think it is the friendship that is created through all this. Maria you can summarize.

Platsidou Maria:

Girls what do you say, do you need counseling? By whom; How; That's all. I want to listen to you first. And in what dimensions the third. In which areas?

Stamouli Vasileia:

I believe that counseling is necessary for volunteers and indeed counseling often comes not from a necessarily specialist but from a friend. A volunteer who experiences the same situations together, you know the same elements, the same characteristics, you try to create something together, so basically, they motivate each other. One advises the other. It will tell you if you made a mistake somewhere, how we can correct it together or add another idea and I think it is a very important part beyond the work you offer, the

relationships and the understanding that exists between the team members. Maybe that's why before we even mentioned the term family. I think it can be used as an umbrella term and include all of that inside.

Benazi Archontia:

And I think that's ultimately what keeps us going. That is, it is what helps us when we feel we have nothing to offer. Just talking to another team member, we will remember again what our goals are, what we have achieved so far, what we want to achieve. So it definitely helps a lot.

Spanidou Sophia:

I will agree with the girls because it was also my team in ERODIOS. We worked very hard together as volunteers and there were times when, as Vasileia said, you said what I would do next, I do not know. You get stuck and say I have nothing else, I dried up. And one motivates and gives this help to the other, in the burn out that happens. Therefore, counseling is necessary, it is necessary. It is essential for a volunteer to know that if he has a problem within the group, if he has an insecurity, if he feels somewhere that something is bothering him, there is someone who will be able to help him and get him out of this impasse. It is very important whether he is a partner of the volunteer or someone who has the knowledge, some more knowledge on the part of counseling. A professional, who will also be a member of the team, ie not someone outside the team. It is very important.

For example, our team every time before we start an action, as we did the festival, we informed the volunteers, the new volunteers who came in, about what is the philosophy of the team, what we want to do, how we act, what we want from them. It is very important that a volunteer knows what I want, what this team wants from me. I am a dancer or actor. If someone comes and tells me I want you to do the technical part, I will have a hard time. That's why it's good to have someone who knows the potential of the team and to be able to address my concerns at any time and help me continue.

Platsidou Maria:

I think we got a very good idea of the need for counseling, both from peers and from leaders, the more experienced or the responsible, which means that the context in which we speak must be organized. There aren't all frameworks are so organized. This is a professionally organized framework. There aren't all so organized. Therefore, our

expectations must be commensurate with the organization of the framework. And we need to know this, and counseling can be about developing skills and knowledge that the newcomer does not have and that is called to get or emotional support throughout, no matter how old one is. Because we said, there is burn out, various conflicts, etc.

I want to give you an example as we talked about volunteering, about counseling, which happened to me in a context of completely unprofessional volunteering. I was in a refugee care organization. We prepared food for the refugees, who were mostly men, and hundreds of men came there. The space could hold about 300 to 400 people inside. We called young people to help because the work as you realize was too much. It was summer. So, a group of young women is coming, one of whom came a little later. To enter the building, she had to go through a road flooded by male refugees. They lined up to enter the building. So, she had to pass between them, and she was terrified, yellow because the men were about to eat her with their own eyes. It was summer and hot. The girl came wearing shorts, with a bodice and with very revealing mercy that the good God gave her richly to serve the male refugees. This. No comments. Of course, we tried to calm her down and tell her, not as moms or aunts but as partners, that for your own safety you should be dressed from here to below the knees. It's over.

This is to lighten the atmosphere a bit. If there are other questions...

Proiou Chariklia:

Let's hear below what happened. Did this girl get involved or does she continue?

Platsidou Maria:

No, she did not come again. But I don't know if it was her experience that suspended her or the fact that it is not an easy job to give time to volunteering.

Proiou Chariklia:

Yes, yes I think that's something. Every non-profit organization, every volunteer, every organization that creates volunteer groups for anything has some specifications that we must respect. But even there we go to the issue of trust. If you trust the organization then you feel this comfort and I think the trust needs to be mutual in all these cases, so you can believe that what I do is worth it and I continue because I trust the context. If this trust is lost, as Sophia said "I was no longer interested in continuing", that is, strange things start to happen and inside you understand your heart to say, this chapter of my life is over. Well done Maria thanks for sharing it.

Platsidou Maria:

Yes, there must be consistency, as if you were going to a job. That is, the specific organization had a video that the volunteers had to watch ahead and that even prepared them for the dress code. Because these people, the refugees, come from Muslim countries and their wives are taught to be dressed differently. So just out of respect for the people we serve we have to keep some pretexts. That's what the rules of the organization say. So, when you go without seeing anything, it shows a lack of professional consistency. Then this is not very good.

However, to go back, counseling is indeed the task of the organization. It is the responsibility of the organization and the recipient of the counseling, whether someone is a volunteer or a professional, he/she is placed accordingly. He accepts it, assimilates it to 100%, to 80%, to 20% or he does not know how to press. What to do.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

So, Mrs. Platsidou, you will take over the consulting of our team.

Platsidou Maria:

Starting with the leaders. Gladly.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Open invitation and challenge.

Platsidou Maria:

With pleasure. Why not?

Proiou Chariklia:

Are there any other questions?

Manousaka Chrysanthi, responsible of chat:

There aren't other posts or questions on chat.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

So, we can close...

Proiou Chariklia:

Thank you, Mrs. Manousaka who read the chat and transferred the questions of the audience. We would like to thank Mrs. Platsidou and the whole team and all those who have contributed to this remarkable effort. And thank you for today. Congratulations on your volunteering as I said and for all the effort you make. If you want to say one last thing, Mrs. Platsidou or Mrs. Kartasidou.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

I have already talked enough. Mrs. Platsidou...

Platsidou Maria:

We'd like to thank Mr. Spyros Kouzelis who does the interpretation and the show must go on girls. Stay strong in everything.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, responsible of chat:

Sorry. Yes, there is a hand raised by Mrs. Jenal Hussein who would like to speak.

Jenal Hussein:

Good morning. I apologize, I was not prepared so I do not open the camera. I would like to congratulate warmly the whole team on this organization. As a former student of both Mrs. Platsidou and Kartasidou, I am very excited. Unfortunately, this is the first time I have watched RoDi. In the previous activities I had taken part as a student, but so more formally that I had the joy and honor to organize an action, it was the first time. I'm excited. Sometimes, to sum up what has been said about volunteering, I would like to add that sometimes the workplace is also very important for volunteers. How it is promoted, I can say.

Platsidou Maria:

Jenal, we lost you oy have you finished?

Jenal Hussein:

I think I was talking but I was not heard. So maybe there needs to be more information in every workplace. Unfortunately, we are in Greece, so we have to deal with everything that follows. We are a little behind in this part. Many thanks to all and all the colleagues who worked together and the students and I wish everyone good luck.

Platsidou Maria:

We also thank Jenal. I'm glad to hear from you again. I just wanted to say a little something, that we certainly do not have the level of recognition of volunteering in Greece as abroad, but this is slowly starting to change. Let's say in the letters of recommendation we give to our students for postgraduate studies or for work, we always mention their voluntary actions. These are mentioned. Also, some other institutions, not public, but private accept and recognize the voluntary participation of people, for example at mental health services, to talk about my own space. Unfortunately, this is not recognized by the private sector because they typically need proof from, say, pension funds, which means that there must be a contract. It is something that I hope will accelerate this change in the recognition of volunteering in the future. Of course, volunteering will always be voluntary. It will never replace work experience. That is not the goal. This.

Proiou Chariklia:

Nice. And with that we will close and go to celebrate today because it is the day of volunteering and I think it started very nicely. Goodbye.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, responsible of chat:

If you allow me, sorry, there are two last comments. From Mr. Kyriakidis who congratulates us all and from Mrs. Manou who says congratulations and good luck.

Proiou Chariklia:

Nice. With these we will close. All the best and good rest Spyros. Goodbye.

Benazi Archontia:

Goodbye.

Spanidou Sophia:

Thank you very much.