

Activity Report December '22

ROSA creates a safe space for displaced women and children

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It gets cold.

In Greece, winter has arrived. While at the end of October the thermometer still displayed 27 degrees, it became colder from week to week afterwards.

The coldest month of the year in Athens and the surrounding area is January. We still spend two hours every day at the three different refugee shelters (Malakasa, Ritsona and Oinofyta). In addition to the three refugee camps, we park the truck and set up the tents to offer the women a place where they can sit together, exchange ideas and seek medical advice. The children have their own area in time, where they have toys and painting utensils and where they can romp around with each other or with the crew or simply read a book.

In each of the camps are very different conditions, different women and children, languages, stories and needs. The crew always tries to create a place in exchange with the women where it is possible to find a break from the depressing everyday life in the camp. With the help of translators Susan, Yalda and Fartuna, who actively support the ROSA Space, the crew can communicate with the women and children and constantly reflect and redesign the work. This cooperation is particularly important and highly valued. We are trying to organize conversations and meetings with the translators more often in order to enable a constant exchange about the needs of women and the offers of ROSA. This makes it clear which topics are desired for discussion groups and lectures. In recent months, the concrete wishes of the women resulted in workshops on self-defense, contraception, menstrual cycle and stress management. Outside of these workshops, everyone danced, knitted, crocheted and made jewelry together. The wish was expressed that they also cooked together and the desire for sandwiches was great. So a delicious snack was conjured with the help of a sandwichmaker.

A special highlight in recent months was the cooperation with Clowns Without Borders – Switzerland, an organization from Switzerland, which made the children laugh with their performance. The crew and the women were also magically attracted, because the performance filled the space with humor and positive energy. The commitment and emotional expressiveness of the artists was impressive.

Also on Christmas and New Year the Saferspace was built. There was a New Year meal together, to which both the crew and the women brought different delicacies and so was celebrated together.

In recent weeks, it has become increasingly difficult to design the ROSA Saferspace outside. Temperatures are falling and it gets dark earlier. The cold season also breaks

down and so it happens that part of the crew is out and the work at the camp and around becomes more exhausting and challenging. In the medical sector, there are more and more women and children who have cold symptoms and need to be treated. This offered a workshop on colds and the exchange of information on home remedies to treat simple cold symptoms. Together we are trying to find out which funds are easy to organize and lead to a rapid improvement. Unfortunately, the medical care within the camps is very poor and the crew has only limited possibilities. This creates new difficulties and challenges. Part of ROSA's medical work is to make referrals to appropriate practices, NGOs and hospitals. For this, networking is particularly important. Since the need for medical advice is particularly great in Camp Ritsona, a waiting list and appointments have been introduced in order to be able to work in a more structured way and to provide advice to several people.

In order to continue to offer women a warm retreat in the cold seasons, there should be a heated tent next to the truck. Through the fundraiser: "We collect for our winter tent" enough money was raised to finance a 20m2 inflatable and heatable tent. Through the cooperation with the organizations We pack it and the Hope Café in Athens, the tent could be brought to Athens and picked up there. It quickly became clear that due to the size, construction and technical possibilities, the tent had to be set up on the house in order to make sure that the construction runs smoothly in the Safer Space. It turned out that the electricity in the truck is not strong enough to inflate and heat the tent. To solve this problem, the truck must be converted. In the meantime, the Safer Space was moved to the truck, but the space capacities were limited and therefore it was not always possible to offer all women and children a place in the warm. We also brought blankets, hot water bottles and thick socks to the camps. Now we have organized a generator that will both set up the tent and make the heating system work. When we first set up the tent, the excitement was great, but everything went according to plan. In the meantime, the yellow tent has become an integral part of the Rosa Safer Space: in color it stands out directly, also attracting new women and children. Everyone is happy about a cozy, wind-sheltered room, where there is room for discussions over tea and coffee and joint workshops are organized. The previously very monotonous interior will be decorated together in the coming time and hung with colorful cloths, for example - Creativity is given free rein.

Currently, the crew gathers more information about the camps and tries to find out how people receive warm clothes, hot food and medical care and with which organizations cooperation would be important. Particular is the situation of the camp in Oinofyta, which has been closed for construction work for more than four weeks. Because of the closure, all those living there moved to nearby camps, especially the camp near Malakasa. So far, there is no concrete information on the extent to which Camp Oinofyta ever reopens and in what form this could happen. Just a few days ago, the crew now reached the assumptions that something similar can happen with the camp near Malakasa: several large coaches have already transported camp residents in camps to the Turkish or Albanian border. Further transports may also occur in the near future. It remains to be seen and the situation in the close exchange with the women, to adapt, but also note, to which further, especially psychological burden, these people here, are exposed again and again.

More and more women hear about ROSA and visit the ROSA Safer Space. The women who regularly come to ROSA inform other women in the camps about the Safer Space. Also through networking with other organizations, more women become aware of ROSA, come by and become part of the community. At the same time, the crew learns more about the needs of the women

and the circumstances in the camps every day and develops the project further on this knowledge base. Every six weeks an evaluation day takes place. The crew evaluates the last few weeks, deals with topics and problems and visions how the project should develop further. Through the donations as well as the support and close cooperation with all committed persons from Germany, it is possible that the project continues to grow and the ideas and wishes of women on the run can be integrated more and more into the planning.

Original:

<https://rolling-safespace.org/en/2023/02/02/rosa-creates-a-safe-space-for-displaced-women-and-children/>