

# #6

**COMPLETE**

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## Page 1: Migration Crisis Response: Mobilization in MSF Associations and wider Civil Society Groups

### Q1 Name of Respondent

Emilia Skourla

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### Q2 Your Role in the Organization

Association Coordinator

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### Q3 Name of the City you focus on, in this questionnaire

Athens

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### Q4 What kind of MSF presence do you have in your city? **MSF Section and Association and Operations**

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## Page 2: Migration Crisis Response: Mobilization in MSF Associations and wider Civil Society Groups

### Q5 Were the MSF Association members in your city mobilized, around the migration crisis response?

**Yes,**  
Please name ways of mobilization within or outside MSF:  
Organisation of Open Associative Debates, Sharing via social media examples of good practice and need to support other initiatives, connecting with other MSF Associations, using the expertise of members to support Operations, responding to needs and requests of other Associations

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**Q6** Who did you cooperate,so as to mobilize your Associations around migration crisis response?

**Other MSF Associations** ,  
**MSF Executive** ,  
**MSF Operations** ,  
**Other Civil Society Groups, Initiatives** ,  
**Individual Members**

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**Q7** How were your members mobilized within MSF, from 2015-2018, around migration crisis response?

**Organisation and Participation at Associative Debates (make sure you provide more info below)**

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**Supported Relevant Motions at General Assemblies (make sure you provide more info below)**

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**Suggested to MSF activities with other groups and initiatives (make sure you provide more info below)**

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**Worked together with MSF Operations (make sure you provide more info below)**

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**Organisation and Participation at public events (make sure you provide more info below)**

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Please provide MORE info on the above and add any other type of activities that took place. Indicate also numbers (i.e. 3 associative debates,1 public event etc):

Organisation of 5 open awareness raising Associative Debates: 1) May 20, 2015: Open Debate with 100 participants, Athens, People on the Move. Migration in the Mediterranean area and the Balkans. 2) November 20, 2015, Athens, Open Debate with 100 participants: Refugee Crisis, Challenges and Dilemmas. 3) January 12, 2016, Athens, : Open Debate with 80 participants: "Even war has rules" Kunduz: Targeting medical care in conflict areas! Patients, doctors and hospitals in flames! 4) April 15, 2016: Open debate with 70 participants: Refugee response from MSF Operations, Search and Rescue program presentation. 5) May 13, 2016: Open Debate with 100 participants, Athens: Refugee crisis in Europe. How can we manage? Support of 2 Motions at General Assemblies (GA) and International General Assembly (IGA): 1. IGA, 2016, Barcelona, Motion on Migration supported by MSF Greece 2. GA, MSF Greece

2016: Motion on Migration: "We, the MSF Greece Association commit to taking proactive action: supporting constant, targeted and well-structured lobbying and advocacy activities in Greece to further the motion passed at the 5th International General Assembly in 2015. This will be specific to the Greek context, and in concert with the work of the MSF Gr Executive, MSF missions in Greece and other MSF Associations in Europe and worldwide. The MSF Greece Association delegates the work of designing and leading a strategy to a committee over the course of the next 12 months." 29-30 October 2015, Support organisation of Migration Workshop by MSF Greece /SOMA Topic: Europe cannot allow for the human cost of restrictive immigration policies to be ignored further, 50 participants. February -June 2016: 1 report, Document MSF-Greece & other sections' experience during operations in home countries in order to: 1. identify possible challenges & lessons learned 2. Initiate discussion on the way MSF operates in European home societies with MSF sections March 1, 2016: Call to Action Letter by MSF Greece President to MSF Boards/Associations Main Points: - How should our associations react in the host countries? How to handle any uneasy feelings and the situation that impact directly our home societies? - How to obtain a common vision as a movement and a long term strategy (whatever that is) for the refugee issue in Europe? - How are we going to manage to "connect the dots" of the populations on the move at the different places on earth where we operate by providing a similar analysis? March 18, 2016: Setting up of an Action Group from Association members on the refugee response. Main ideas: Collect examples of good practice of different initiatives, Share ideas, Link with other MSF Associations, Link/network with civil society organizations, Mobilize others and support the set up of an Action Group in Thessaloniki. Support the organisation of 3 Field Associative Debates, in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 around Migration Crisis Response, in Athens. Creation of a medical Working group with 7 Association members and linking them to the Operations, so as to provide specialized support. Responding to call for support to other initiatives: Collection of non food items in need for refugee camp in Malakassa;Preparation and delivery of First Aid workshop for a group of 15 teenagers from Elliniko camp. March 26 , 2017: Co- organisation with Greenpeace of a public awareness event with 1000 participants from 55 organisations. MSF Association participated with 100 members, under the motto: Life Before Borders.

**Q8** Where did the above activities take place?

**At an MSF venue** ,

**At a public space (i.e square, municipality building etc)** ,

**At a private space (i.e rented meeting room, building etc)**

,

Please specify other :

2 associative Debates were organised at the MSF venue (Xenias 15, Athens) and the rest were organised at a rented venue (NGO) at Monastiraki. The public awareness raising event with 100 participants was organised in an open space at the centre of Athens. The peaceful walk started in Monastiraki and ended at Syntagma Square via Areopagitou street.

**Q9** Where in the city (geographically), are the above mentioned spaces?

In relation to city center (specify how far/close from it)

**At the city centre and/or very close by the city centre**

In relation to where beneficiaries were based (specify how far/close to them)

**not close to the refugee camps**

**Q10** What was the average age group?

**35-44**

**Q11** Please provide some further information on duration and regularity of the average activities that took place (ie. Association members volunteering one day per week for a month to support with info sharing with migrants etc)

**Most activities were one off activities**

**Q12** What worked well? Identify at least 3 reasons, that according to your point of view led to success (i.e big attendance, strong media presence, follow up activities etc)

1. Events/Activities that included other initiatives, organisations etc were the most successful
2. Proximity to the center of the city
3. Inclusion of participants/members to the co-organisation of the event, or based on their own initiative

**Q13** What did NOT work well? Identify at least 3 reasons that according to your point of view, hindered a better result (i.e did not manage to develop synergies, members were not interested in activities we suggested etc)

1. There has not been a sustainable follow up, Most events, activities were ad hoc ones and there was no regularity
2. Our members were engaged in activities that other organisations developed but did not think to connect these initiatives with us.
3. There has not been a follow up and sustainability in events that involved partnerships and involved more people.

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**Q14** SHARE YOUR 3 MOST SUCCESSFUL mobilization examples: Example 1

Type and Topic of Activity (i.e open debate on migration response)	<b>Migration Workshop</b>
When did it take place? (month, year)	<b>April 2016</b>
How long did it last?	<b>1 day (from 09.00 - 17.00)</b>
Who was involved?	<b>MSF Greece, MSF Holland, MSF Belgium</b>
Provide a brief description on what was done	<b>The above mentioned associations took the initiative to invite to a workshop presidents, board members, association coordinators, International General Assembly representatives and association members involved in the migration crisis response to a workshop. The idea was to: a) explore and/or trigger an MSF positioning versus the EU and its member states concerted efforts to de-construct the right to protection (asylum) and b) to share experiences of associative actions/reflections seeking potential coordination through an association network in Europe (supportive to Operations)</b>
Where did it take place? (public or private space, how close to city centre/how close to migrants groups)	<b>In Brussels, at MSF Headquarters</b>
How many MSFers (i.e staff, friends of MSF) participated approximately?	<b>There were approximately 15 participants: the presidents from the organising associations and their association coordinators. Also, 3 representatives from the executive (migration humanitarian expert, Director of Operations and Task Force coordinator). There were also Board members and association coordinators from European mainly associations and from S. Africa</b>
How many people outside MSF participated approximately?	<b>none</b>
What worked well?	<b>The meeting was an initiative that tried to link several MSF Associations. It also tried to link to the Executive. It was an opportunity to share good practices. There has been a political decision to push for a follow up on the IGA migration motion of 2015</b>
What did not work well?	<b>There has not been sustainability in the follow up process, especially in terms of joint actions. There was an initial group set up both by political representatives as well as Association coordinators to follow the process but it was not sustained</b>

**Q15 SHARE YOUR 3 MOST SUCCESSFUL mobilization examples: Example 2**

Type and Topic of Activity (i.e open debate on migration response)	<b>Workshop</b>
When did it take place? (month, year)	<b>2016</b>
How long did it last?	<b>3 hours</b>
Who was involved?	<b>Association Members, MSF Staff and refugees</b>
Provide a brief description on what was done	<b>A local NGO working with teenagers at Elliniko Refugee Camp, reached out to MSF Association and asked if we could deliver a first aid workshop for a group of teenage refugee girls from Afghanistan. Apart from the workshop the teenage girls were interested into getting more information on the medical professions. The group of 15-20 teenagers was invited to MSF Greece office and 3 medical Association members delivered the workshop</b>
Where did it take place? (public or private space, how close to city centre/how close to migrants groups)	<b>At MSF Greece Office, 15, Xenias str, Athens</b>
How many MSFers (i.e staff, friends of MSF) participated approximately?	<b>There were 5 Association members, 3 delivering the workshop and 2 more supporting the organisation</b>
How many people outside MSF participated approximately?	<b>Approximately 20 teenage refugee girls and 3 representatives from a local NGO</b>
What worked well?	<b>This was an initiative that connected our members with a refugee organisation and a refugee group. Our members were actively and directly involved</b>
What did not work well?	<b>The activity was not followed up, as it was a one-off activity</b>

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**Q16** SHARE YOUR 3 MOST SUCCESSFUL mobilization examples: Example 3

Type and Topic of Activity (i.e open debate on migration response)	<b>Public Awareness Event - Title: Break Free</b>
When did it take place? (month, year)	<b>March 26, 2017</b>
How long did it last?	<b>1 day (preparatory phase 1 month)</b>
Who was involved?	<b>55 local and international NGOs and grassroots organisations</b>
Provide a brief description on what was done	<b>Co-organisation with Greenpeace of a public awareness event with 1000 participants from 55 organisations. MSF Association participated with 100 members under the motto: Life Before Borders. The preparation lasted one month and it was the first time the MSF Association was participating in an activity with so many other actors involved. MSF was part of the organising team</b>
Where did it take place? (public or private space, how close to city centre/how close to migrants groups)	<b>At the historic center of Athens. The march started at Monastiraki and ended in Syntagma at Zappeio Megaron</b>
How many MSFers (i.e staff, friends of MSF) participated approximately?	<b>100</b>
How many people outside MSF participated approximately?	<b>900</b>
What worked well?	<b>The cooperation with the other organisations. The participation and interest of members was high</b>
What did not work well?	<b>There has not been a systematic follow up or a follow up event. MSF kept contact with bigger organisations but not with the grassroots ones.</b>

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<b>Q17</b> How did you get in touch with other migration crisis response groups and initiatives you related to or supported?	<b>They contacted us first and asked for specific support</b> , <b>Our Association members suggested</b> , <b>them</b> <b>A third party (i.e another organisation) introduced them to MSF</b>
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<b>Q18</b> Have there been groups you were interested in collaborating but did NOT reach that point?	<b>No</b>
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**Q19** HOW did you manage to make use of the offer, of other groups, people, wishing to mobilize with MSF because of the migration crisis?

**We linked them with our Association members and developed joint activities**

**We linked them to the Executive and/or MSF Operations**

**They provided us topics for our Associative Debates**

**Q20** In case you connected with other groups, outside MSF, did you maintain connections to them over time?

**Yes,**

In case you answered Yes, please specify how? In case you answered No, please specify why?:

We maintained contact mainly with bigger organisations (i.e. Greenpeace, ICRC) and less with smaller scale organisations. This happened because we have not foreseen activities that connect to others so much.

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**Q21** What kind of civil society groups, were mobilized in your city around migration crisis response?

**NGOs from different focus areas (i.e environmental, cultural, health etc)**

**Neighborhood Initiatives**

**Charities**

**Municipality related associations**

**Volunteers**

**Q22** What type of activities did the above mentioned groups develop? (i.e awareness raising, distribution of items needed, other)

Distribution of items needed (food + NFIs); organisation of free education courses taught by volunteers (Greek and immigrants) to immigrants and refugees; organisation of demonstrations and awareness raising using social media, organization of events/debates, offer seminars to train organizations on: how to be effective leaders in times of crisis, the importance of cooperation among NGOs and how to maximize impact with existing resources. Other initiatives assist with the integration of migrants/refugees in the host community: Melissa (a network of migrant women in Greece, promoting empowerment, communication and active citizenship) has created an integration pathway for women including the following: literacy courses, psychosocial support, art workshops, information and awareness (Human Rights), Advocacy, Capacity building sessions, self-care sessions. Moreover, self-organised squats have been created that offer accommodation to refugees and a solidarity space (i.e. City Plaza). Another NGO provides nutritious supplemental food to refugee residents of Camp in Chalkida, Greece (Rits Cafe) & instituted the Project School Lunch to provide over 100 refugee children aged 5 to 15 with nutritious bag lunches for Greek public school. Another activity was the organisation and set up of food communities that use food as a tool of empowerment, of growth, of connectivity, and lastly, as a form of earning potential (self-organised food community like Options Food Lab + Khora's Kitchen). Other self-organised collective of individuals (co-operative foundation)/community center like Khora) that offer: free food, shower facilities, weekly legal advice, film screenings, various craftwork workshops, music nights, bi-weekly workshops for teachers to improve their teaching practices. Set up of an educational collective that connects teachers, resources, and ideas with various groups in and around Athens to facilitate language classes for refugees. Other NGO & Volunteer Groups in the islands provided assistance to people rescued by the coast guard in Lesvos and coordinated clothing distribution in the camps, provided food at hot spots and provided urgently needed supplies to refugee camps in mainland Greece. At Municipal level, the Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR) was established which aims at the efficient coordination between the municipal authorities and stakeholders operating within the city, such as national and international NGOs, international organizations, and migrant and refugee community groups.

**Q23** Share the 3 most successful examples of mobilization of other civil society groups: EXAMPLE 1

Type and Topic of Activity

**Melissa Network: Melissa is a network for migrant and refugee women living in Greece. It aims to promote empowerment and active citizenship, and to build a bridge of communication with the host society. Founded in 2014 with the direct involvement of migrant women leader, it has over 300 members from 45 countries. The three main strands of action are networking, capacity building and advocacy. Melissa has attempted to move from humanitarian aid to integration. With this in mind, it created ALEF: an integration pathway project for refugee women and girls. The title is the root of the alpha, a letter common in various alphabets including Arabic, Farsi, Greek and English and stands for the first steps in a new place, for what brings us together and connects us all.**

When did it take place? (month, year)

**the project kicked off on June 2016**

How long did it last?

**on-going**

Who was involved?

Melissa members (who are also community leaders from other organisations) and various experts (for instance academics). Alef project has originally received support from Mercy Corps and the Municipality of Athens. Youth-led initiatives are also encouraged and supported, so that the young women actively promote social change. Also, long-term migrant women are actively involved in the project, acting as mediators and sharing their own experience of integration. Therefore, many activities are co-organised by refugees themselves (especially when refugees come up with an interesting idea etc).

Provide a brief description on what was done

Alef aims to bring young refugee women out of the camps and provide them with a basic navigation tool for the new life in a new place. It is based on a holistic approach to integration, providing a full cycle of activities. The current version of this integration pathway which is based on a holistic approach is based on 7 key strands of activities: 1) Literacy Program (including Greek, English and other languages) 2) Psycho-social support (the biggest component of the project including for instance drama therapy which surpasses the barriers of language and therefore the beneficiary is not only a passive recipient but is an agent of change because they decided what tools they want to take from this project) 3) Skills and creativity (e.g. music, visual arts, poetry, digital filmmaking) 4) information on their rights (i.e. Human rights) 5) Advocacy work 6) Capacity building (i.e. skills that can be used within the Community and be able to capitalize on other existing skills. An example would be peace building and conflict resolution) 7) self-care and childcare With the closing of the borders in March 2016, Melissa decided to re-orientate its focus of activities to an integration model, as it was becoming clearer that most of the refugees/migrants would stay to Greece and won't make it to their final destinations. Therefore, it was the first integration activity to take place in Greece, which had a holistic approach (education, community and capacity building). At Melissa, the 'term' refugee and immigrant is suspended because Melissa wants to be an open and flexible model and stay open to new ideas! Melissa believes that integration starts from the moment refugees/immigrants begin to offer to the host community (even before they reach labour market). It is important to cultivate this mentality to people.

Where did it take place? (public or private space, how close to city center/how close to migrants groups)

**It takes place at Melissa's premises, which are located at central Athens, right next to Victoria Square, which is the main hub for refugees & migrants who are newcomers to Athens.**

How many people participated approximately?

**The project has become very popular with long waiting lists, with a daily turnover of 150+ women participants and 30+ children and a total number of 400+ direct beneficiaries, since its inception. Melissa Network's innovative approach to integration has been selected among best practices in Europe by Filia Stiftung and UN Women, and presented at the United Nations Refugee Summit (2016).**

What worked well?

**It started as a pilot idea and it proved to be a successful project. Many women who frequented at Melissa Network as beneficiaries are now actively involved in the organisation's activities and are ready to help and support other women on the basis of their experience (they take action not only recipients of assistance). This can be considered as a significant accomplishment. Moreover, the creation of a solid network which keeps on growing and in which women can feel a keen sense of community is very impact-full. It allows women to gain their independence by undertaking an empowerment path. The community based approach has proved to be vital: the project was not planned at an office, disconnected by the community. If a project is successful, then the beneficiaries will go back to their communities and serve as multipliers. Women become representatives of their communities. More specifically: a successful element of Alef Project were the mixed classes (i.e. for both Farsi and Arabic speakers) for all modules (all 7 strands). Although this model was much more expensive, slow and complicated (for instance there was a much more increased need for intercultural mediators), it ended up being a successful model because within these classes, the participants practiced co-existence and it was built on a holistic approach. It was based on a "layer learning process". It was not solely an educational class but it was firmly connected with psychosocial support.**

What did NOT work well?

The key challenges are the following: 1) Funding from donors is usually short-term and this doesn't allow to plan an adequate long-term strategy which will ensure the expansion of the project and its continuity. As a result, there is no capitalisation of the positive outcomes. 2) There is need for a detailed reporting which is a time consuming exercise which requires many working hours by a dedicated person/employee 3) During the implementation of the project loads of material and data is being produced, which needs to be adequately processed internally, so that Melissa can provide accurate data to the various foundations, academic institutions and journalists that are visiting the network to either conduct a study, write a paper or an article and thus avoid the reproduction of false data. However, this means that Melissa needs to secure the necessary funds for this internal position which will elaborate and process the data.

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**Q24** Share the 3 most successful examples of mobilization of other civil society groups: EXAMPLE 2

Type and Topic of Activity	<b>Migrants Sunday School (Kyriakatiko Scholeio Metanaston):</b> The Migrants Sunday School is a volunteer initiative led by Greek and migrant volunteers. It offers free Greek language classes (lately German and English classes have been added) to migrants and refugees. Language is a valuable tool for the everyday life, integration and claiming their rights.
When did it take place? (month, year)	The initiative was created back in 2004
How long did it last?	on-going
Who was involved?	Greek and immigrant volunteer teachers, legal support team and volunteers who support financially the initiative (the School is not a state actor and is not part of the formal education structure).
Provide a brief description on what was done	The classes take place every weekend and apart from Greek language courses, English and German have been added to the taught languages. In addition to the language courses, there is also a legal team which supports the immigrants and refugees. Finally, since its inception, the school is a very active part of the movement for the rights of migrants and refugees, against racism and xenophobia and is participating actively in the Movement called: "Expel racism". The team of volunteers is composed of: teachers, students who study language at University and any other volunteers who wants to support this effort. Each school year is divided in 2 semesters of classes: the 1st one lasts from October to February and the 2nd one from March to June. Classes take place between 11 am to 8pm at night.
Where did it take place? (public or private space, how close to city center/how close to migrants groups)	The School operates at Kolonos, a neighbourhood of Athens, closeby the city center. This neighbourhood is quite degraded where a big number of refugees and immigrants can afford to live.
How many people participated approximately?	n/a
What worked well?	It is an important initiative that contributes greatly to the integration and socialization of immigrants and refugees- which will affect their future. The will of both teachers and students has led to the long term success of this initiative for over 14 years now.
What did NOT work well?	The greatest difficulty that most students face, is not only the difficulty in learning a new language such as Greek or English but the fact that most of them are illiterate and have managed to attend school only for 2-3 years back in their home countries.

**Q25** Share the 3 most successful examples of mobilization of other civil society groups: EXAMPLE 3

Type and Topic of Activity	<b>City Plaza: On April 2016, activists and refugees took over an abandoned hotel in the center of Athens, previously called “City Plaza”, and turned it into an Accommodation Centre for Refugees. This is a self-organisation and solidarity project initiated by the Solidarity Initiative to Economic and Political Refugees. Originally, it became home of around 400 refugees. Over the next year, City Plaza grew into the best known of over a dozen squats that house refugees.</b>
When did it take place? (month, year)	<b>since April 2016</b>
How long did it last?	<b>on-going (2 years now)</b>
Who was involved?	<b>This initiative started by volunteers (Greeks and expats) and refugees. City Plaza is an entirely voluntary effort without any paid staff or public. It is funded by volunteers, solidarity groups and individual donations. The OCP (MSF Operational Center Paris) in Athens, supported the City Plaza Team by providing them on a regular basis specific material required for the operation of their projects.</b>
Provide a brief description on what was done	<b>City Plaza emerged as a direct response of the solidarity movement in the aftermath of the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016. The idea and aim of the Solidarity Initiative to Economic and Political Refugees, was to transform the abandoned hotel into a Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space, as a safe alternative to the deplorable conditions of the existing refugee camps and hot spots. Since then the solidarity initiative has provided free and decent housing to refugees, irrespective of their nationality and residence status. These people are housed in the hotel’s 120 rooms, 350-400 persons at a time, a third of whom are children. Most of the work to maintain City Plaza is done, and decisions made, by its residents, who come from a dozen countries and abide by a behavior code that has zero tolerance for sexism, racism or abuse (locals, refugees and international volunteers). City Plaza, apart from housing refugees in need, it provides for: free meals at its kitchen/cafeteria, a medical center that operates in the building, language teaching classes, as well as for a women’s space and a playground space for children.</b>
Where did it take place? (public or private space, how close to city center/how close to migrants groups)	<b>At the city of Athens, very close by the city center, in a neighborhood were loads of refugees and immigrants nowadays live (Acharnon street)</b>
How many people participated approximately?	<b>Over 1700 refugees</b>

What worked well?

Refugees have been able to live in a safe space, with privacy in a community of open participation and common decision making, which has had a very positive impact on their lives. A sense of connection has been created among the diaspora community City Plaza's ex-residents, now living in many different European cities, who keep in contact each other and with Athens. It is a fully collaborative initiative based on an urban setting with easy access to all city centre facilities. City Plaza has established a crowdfunding system and decisions are taken collectively on how to run the project and where to invest funding. City Plaza was one of the first groups to assist and organize the enrollment of refugee children to Greek formal education system.

What did NOT work well?

n/a

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**Q26** According to above data, please share with us via "we transfer" (<https://wetransfer.com/>) any relevant material you may have (i.e topics of debates, reports, photos, articles, other. List them below.

no

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