



About us

Pervolarides of Thessaloniki is a diverse community formed by volunteers since 2013. To this day, we are growing and developing initiatives that support an increasing number of people who are struggling to survive and meet their basic needs, and who experience socioeconomic exclusion because of loss of income, homelessness or because they are classified as refugees and migrants. In the sad reality of crisis that Greece is experiencing the last decade, and in an environment where market economies regulate and degrade our daily life and our interpersonal relationships, we come together to form a community that generates an alternative paradigm of solidarity and social cooperation. We create a model of inclusion through social synergies and collective actions that reflect the needs of our community today and of the society we dream for our children.

Based on food and the relations that are formed throughout the food cycle (from seeding and cultivation, crop collection, processing and cooking, to reclaiming and re-processing food that would be wasted), we are stably running the following activities:

Community cooking, where we prepare food for homeless and people in need. Both locals and refugees come together to meet their neighbours, to cook and learn new recipes and to share their love for food and for helping others. Community cooking provides the foundation for social cooperation and solidarity.

Reclaiming food, where we collect products that are expiring or dry food in faulty packing that markets can't sell, as well as fruits, vegetables and fish that otherwise would be dumped. These products are processed, re-packed or cooked into hot meals that are distributed to homeless people and very poor families.

Re-processing fresh food into sauces, marmalade or compost and forming a "social cooperative chain" for the collection, re-processing and re-distribution of fresh food that otherwise would end up in the garbage. No food goes to waste – it is all shared to people and families that need it.

Solidarity olive collection, where every November, unemployed and volunteers come together to collect the yearly production from olive trees that are offered to our cause. We share the olives and olive oil with families that need it.

Urban gardening, where we grow food as well as share methods of food cultivation and processing of organic household waste into gardening compost and fertilizer. Through our urban gardens, we want to regenerate not just the depleted soil of our neighbourhoods, but also the community relations. Gardening enables us to plant the seeds for the "cultivation" of social synergies and collective actions.

Beekeeping, which is a traditionally cooperative process that teaches us how to work together with the bee populations to produce organic honey, while we support the natural regeneration process by nourishing nature's pollinators.

Connecting producers and consumers through a scheme which facilitates access to affordable, locally produced organic food while ensuring that producers are guaranteed an ongoing demand for their production at a fair price.

Employability and vocational inclusion through training activities and workshops (food cultivation, food processing, beekeeping, etc.) that support the development of vocational skills and the creation of employment possibilities.

Social networking between like-minded people and local groups with common concerns and interests as well as with communities beyond Greece, so we can support each other and share ideas, knowledge and good practices.

Our values

We act where social protection is missing and assist people in need by creating the ground for social mobilisation and cooperation through solidarity actions. We support inclusion and social empowerment by generating community relations, by mobilising unused resources and through the creation of synergies between people irrespective of their social and cultural background.

Our needs and our dreams unite us, no matter how we live and where we come from. We make no distinctions between people and there are no "beneficiaries". We believe that each individual brings their own, unique contribution, like water drops that come together to create rivers and seas. Our community is a point of reference for solidarity and social innovation, a space where needs, wasted resources and ideas are uniting people into dynamic and creative collective actions. Pervolarides is a meeting place for everyone who wants to offer their free time, talent and skills to the community and those in need.

Our actions

❖ **Community cooking:** Every Friday, a joined group of locals and refugees cook together and prepare between 60 to 100 portions of hot food that is distributed to homeless and very poor individuals and families. For 2018, we prepared and distributed around 4000 hot meals.





- ❖ **Reclaiming food:** For our cooking ingredients and for sauce, marmalade and pickles processing we rely on donations from markets, shops and from our network of volunteers. Their main contributions are beans, chickpeas, flour, rice, pasta, fresh vegetables and fruits. For 2018, we received an estimated quantity of 10 tons of food that would go wasted.



- ❖ **Beekeeping:** So far we have trained 10 people in the art of beekeeping and the construction of bee-homes, although we face practical issues such as not having easy access to land and a vehicle to move the beehives.



- ❖ **Social synergies and collective actions:** During 2018 we facilitated several cleaning events and garbage removal in our nearby forest. We also organized 10 community feasts, where locals and refugees cooked and ate together, planted seeds and created an urban garden with composting for our food waste.



- ❖ **Solidarity and social cooperation:** During the summer of 2019, we began to organise the collection of clothes and baby items for very poor families living in refugee camps.



We continuously mobilise the community to help individuals and families with urgent needs and facilitate connections between people in need and people that can offer support. For example, during May 2019 we assisted an extremely poor family in Triandria to connect with a professional plumber who repaired a water damage in their house with no cost to the family.



Another recent initiative of our community is a call for collection of seed and the creation of seed bombs for seeding infertile lands, which generated a massive response from the general public and created a ripple effect across Greece, with various groups establishing collection points in many different areas including Athens. Also recently we have been given access to a piece of land in Filiro (a suburban area of Thessaloniki) where we are starting cultivation of herbs and vegetables, and hoping to create a training ground for permaculture and agroecological methods of food production.



Since December 2016 we have been running a social space and community meeting place in the area of Toumpa, which is also the base for our cooking and food processing activities. Over the years we are seeing our community expanding and becoming stronger and more diverse. At the moment we have exceeded 2700 followers in our Facebook group, with active engagement both from the local and the refugee community. Our seed bombs initiative has more than 100.000 views, 500 shares and ongoing communication with people across Greece. Our call for clothes and baby items has more than 150 shares, and within the first week 25 people offered items and practical support.

Our network

We are building strong relations and cooperation with many initiatives in Greece such as Viome, Oikopolis, Bioscoop, Geitonia Svolou/Parko Tsepis, Naomi, Filoxenia, Centre of natural farming in Edessa, Perichoresis, Alkyone day centre, Omnes, Red Cross MFC, Communism Sociocultural Centre, Open Cultural Centre and the network for volunteer coordination in northern Greece. We are also part of the URBACT working group (led by the municipality of Thessaloniki and funded by Erasmus) that targets the dissemination of good practices around urban food cultivation and the creation and maintenance of urban gardening projects.

As part of our networking with like-minded projects outside Greece, we visited Berlin and Nurnberg in May 2018 where we got in contact with various initiatives and interviewed by [Radio Z](#) from Nurnberg. We were also invited by ATTAC and local grassroots movements to present and participate in discussions in Berlin, Frankfurt, Cologne, Freiburg, Marburg, Ludwigshafen and Darmstadt. We have participated in Documenta 2018 in Kassel, ZKU Berlin, Martha café Nuremberg and public events such as Greenwave festival and the International De-growth day in Thessaloniki. At the same time, we have been part of 2 documentary films for “[Antidrastirio](#)” in [ET3](#) national TV, several articles of “[ΑΠΕ-ΜΠΕ](#)”, “[Makedonia](#)” and “[Parallaxi](#)” and also interviewed for the German media [JungeWelt](#) and “[Neos Kosmos](#)” newspaper from Melbourne. In Germany, we have also connected with Projekthaus Potsdam, Madia, Freiland, Quartierstreff Staudenhof, Rechenzentrum, Pastuerstraße housing project and Gartencoop in Freiburg.

Our activities have been partially financed by [SoliOli](#), Respect for Greece, Griechenlandhilfe, Lush and from limited contributions by our volunteers and various grassroots organisations in Germany that organised fundraising events and crowdfunding. Besides this, we have no stable funding and we are struggling on a monthly basis to maintain our social space and to cover the running costs and the logistics needs of our activities.

You can find us and follow us on

[Facebook / Περβολάρηδες Θεσσαλονίκης-Pervolarides of Thessaloniki](#)

and also contact us directly at

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