

How and why we come together

Ethos and Pervolarides started working together in 2018, on social inclusion activities for the unaccompanied refugee teenagers that were living in Ethos protective accommodation. [Ethos project link](#) By the end of that summer we were joining our resources to support the implementation of the EU Food Relations program, and thinking of ways to combine our activities and develop our ability to offer support in a much more holistic manner. Since then, we are working together on a vision and approach that integrates the empowerment of the community with the cultivation of solidarity support networks and the inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable people.

For the second year we will continue together to maintain our community space and to facilitate solidarity and educational activities. We are also able to support between 5 to 10 vulnerable people with safe and dignifying accommodation (for up to 6 months) and to provide them access to the following:

- Public school and technical education system (EPAL)
- Language courses and individualised lessons (Greek, English, German)
- Psychological support and counselling from qualified psychotherapists
- Health care and medical services (Referral and accompaniment)
- Legal aid and assistance with asylum and governmental processes
- Access to social benefits, solidarity income and support services
- Educational/vocational training programmes and scholarships
- Employability counselling and job readiness workshops
- Links to employment services and work opportunities
- Links to community groups/spaces and solidarity networks
- Life skills courses / activities (i.e. economics, cooking, food processing, gardening, beekeeping)
- Communal experiences, sports, cultural events and social / cultural awareness
- Connection / referral to all relevant services, organisations and support networks

How do we connect and cooperate with similar projects in the area, with other groups and organisations around the city and with the city authorities and programs

Together as individuals and as a group, we are connected directly or indirectly to almost every single organisation and group that is active in the region of northern Greece, either through working groups, networks or by direct working connections that have formed over the past years. Ethos is participating in most coordination meetings organised by the municipality of Thessaloniki and the ones organised by the coordinator of the national migration authority (Ministry of Migration) and since 2018, we are part of the UNHCR initiated working groups for Protection, MHPSS and VOT support in northern Greece. We also maintain direct cooperation with Solidarity Now, ARSIS, OMNES, IRC, DRC, Red Cross, IHA, Filoxenia, OCC and can potentially connect with most long-term based international organisations and volunteer groups, through the existing regional and local coordination forums that we participate.

Pervolarides are further connected with most local grassroots movements in the area and cooperate with Oikopolis, Alkyone, Geitonia Svolou/Parko Tsepis, Domatio tis Geitonias, Naomi, Arogi Thessalonikis, Bioscoop, Peliti, Centre of natural farming in Edessa and many other likeminded initiatives. In 2019, Pervolarides have been invited by the municipality of Thessaloniki to join the URBACT working group, that works on the dissemination of good practices around urban food cultivation and the creation and maintenance of urban gardening projects. In the URBACT working group, we are working together with similar initiatives and organisations to develop a constitution that is intended to regulate the cultivation and operation of vegetable gardens on urban municipal land. This constitution will be shared with the Municipality of Thessaloniki and other similar municipalities as recommendations for their consideration and possible integration in their policy. It's worth mentioning that the development of these recommendations involve the exchange of knowledge and good practices with other European cities, such as Rome, Krakow, Vilnius and several more.

How do we mobilise volunteers and ensure the participation of the greater community

We can mobilise volunteers across all our activities and also we are able to coordinate their involvement and participation in similar initiatives, community based activities, organisations and partner groups. Concerning urban gardening, besides the students of the public school and the people who will become involve through our community network, we have organised the participation of 2 kindergarten schools. We are also planning to involve people from the neighbourhood as well as refugees from nearby accommodation schemes and unaccompanied minors living in the city shelters.

Furthermore, we can mobilise the greater community through our social media channels that have approx. 3.000 followers and when needed we can make announcements through mass media channels. Among these channels, Pervolarides 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.

Can we provide any form of formal qualification through our activities

At the moment, we can only provide support in the preparation for official state exams i.e. food handling and processing, which is a formal qualification required to work in kitchens and restaurants. Next year, one member of our group is expected to graduate as a cook trainer and we could potentially explore ways to provide formal certificates in cooking. Concerning our gardening activities, since they take place in a land that belongs to the municipality and managed by a public school, the students of the school will be cultivating together with us and they will have the opportunity to experiment, experience and learn new methods of food production. In their case, formal qualification might come as a result of the inspiration and motivation they will receive though their practice and participation in the gardening project.



Our sustainability plan and how will we cover the project related costs

We have secured our gardening project so far in relation to long-term access to the public school land, gardening tools, water pipes, plants etc. We are also able to cover some transport costs and to offer accommodation for our 2 volunteers from Germany. Progressively through our activities we continue to develop our capacity and to build trust within the greater community. This trust that grows and forms our community on the basis of solidarity and equality, is further reflected in all our partnerships and provides our strength and our safety in our way forward.

Keeping also in mind that the purpose of our community is to become empowered and self-sufficient within itself, we are training new people in both ecological cultivation and food processing as well as beekeeping and honey making. We are able to provide these workshops and trainings regularly and for free to different groups and communities. Depending on the resources we have available, we are working to expand and evolve this project in ways that can support our emerging community to progressively become self-sustained through food production and processing.

Foreseeable synergies or future partnerships

We not only wish to regenerate land and to reclaim food, but also to regenerate the social connections between people, by creating public spaces where all people can get together and share experiences through joined activities, get to know each other, express freely and cooperate on a horizontal way with each other. By bringing together our diverse skills and resources, we are able to co-create synergies and to grow together as a community and as a social support network.

Our community is a point of reference for social innovation and cooperation, a space where abilities, ideas and resources unite and form dynamic social actions and strong supportive relations; a ground that cultivates community integration and empowers people to come together in solidarity and to co-create resilient and self-reliant communities, where divisions and inequalities are healed through collective actions.

We nurture a democratic society where people join around their needs, skills and resources and collectively mobilise to overcome exclusion and discrimination and to co-create a dignified and peaceful living environment for themselves and their neighbours. By this means, we constantly seek to expand and we openly welcome all possible synergies and partnerships with likeminded groups and initiatives in the city and beyond. On this, we are only limited by time and the resources that would provide us the time to actively explore and engage in new partnerships.

You could read more about us on [Ethos website](#) and please follow our activities on Facebook: [@Ethosngo](#) & [Περβολάρηδες Θεσσαλονίκης-Pervolarides of Thessaloniki](#)