

GREECE

Implementing cooperation projects

Location

Lesvos

Programming period

2007 – 2013

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M19 –LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 75 600

RDP 64 260

Private 11 340

Project duration

2015 – 2015

Project promoter

Lesvos Local Development Agency

Contact

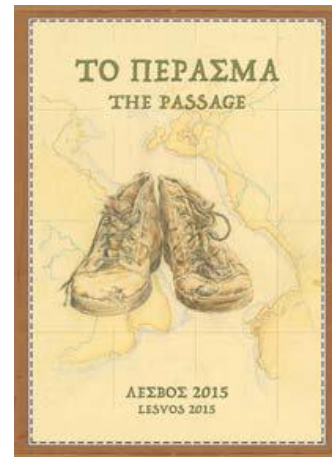
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An inter-territorial cooperation project between 11 LEADER Local Action Groups in Greece used culture as a tool to raise understanding of the unfolding migrant crisis.

Summary

January-October 2015, more than 250 000 refugees arrived on the island of Lesvos, which itself had a population of only 90000. Whilst local services came under strain and the tourism industry was seriously affected, an impressive local emergency response relied heavily on NGOs and islanders' solidarity.

To encourage understanding of the plight of the refugees and to promote solidarity, tolerance and humane responses to the crisis, the Lesvos Local Development Agency and 10 other Greek island LAGs organised the Greek Islands Spring Art festival which included a focus on using culture as a lever for sustainable development. The migrant crisis was a hot topic, recalling events from islanders' own ancestral history of displacement in 1922, leading to some powerful artistic responses.



Results

The Greek Island Art Spring festival in Lesvos attended by 145 artists and including a series of events, including a conference on 'culture as a lever for sustainable development'.

A series of highly sensitive works of art highlighting the human reality of the migrant crisis. Three albums of artwork were produced by the Lesvos Local Development Agency: a graphic novel titled 'The Seagulls', an album of artwork titled 'Insularity – Study in a Place' and an artwork album titled 'The Passage'.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Networking in times of crisis can generate new ideas, provide comfort and hope.
- ❑ Artistic responses can provide an opportunity to deal with difficult local development topics in sensitive ways, promoting dialogue and understanding.
- ❑ European crises that impact on local areas in different ways can be dependent on local responses to provide 'first response' emergency care as well as to ensure that solidarity and understanding is promoted within a local community under strain. LEADER Local Action Groups can be well placed to do this, but require appropriate resources to match the challenges they face.