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IO1.A2: Collection of Good Practices

Athens Housing Collective for
LGBTQIA+ individuals by
Safe Place International

SAFE SPACES FOR LEARNING



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Athens Housing Collective for LGBTQIA+ individuals by Safe Place International

Short presentation of the project and Organisation

AHC is a housing and community-based project which aims to address the basic needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals and provide a holistic range of support services throughout the various stages of social integration.

Qualification for the program requires a person to be 18+ years old, part of the LGBTQIA+ community, holding valid documentation in Greece and must be open to sharing accommodation.

The program requires participation in Greek language lessons, LGBTQIA+ events, employability sessions, bi-monthly casework and communal participation in the Safe Place Community Center.

AHC provides housing for up to 1 year, with the aim of facilitating information transfer within a supportive context and enabling its members to gradually integrate into Greek society.

This means having a strong level of the Greek language, knowledge of the socio-cultural context of Greece and having all the relevant documentation needed for employment and appropriate housing. Prior to a member's completion of the program, there is a strong focus on facilitating the transition of the graduate to full autonomy and independence.

Safe Place International's primary mission is to support the dignity and self actualization of the most marginalized members of the global refugee community. They seek to significantly improve the opportunities, individual and collective life experiences of these community members.

They additionally aim to achieve their mission through two main avenues: direct aid initiatives and advocacy work. They strongly believe in a work model that promotes autonomy for their partners and community members while aggregating their resources to maximize their impact.

Highlighting the aspects that make this practice a good example of safe learning space

The very core of the AHC is to create a safe space where LGBTQIA+ members of the refugee and migrant communities in Greece can exist freely and expressive of their identities. The key feature of the project is its focus on adult education as a necessity towards empowerment and the creation of multiple spaces to learn. Additionally to the AHC spaces that host Greek language lessons, LGBTQIA+ events, employability sessions, bi-monthly casework and communal participation, the Safe Place International has created the Safe Place Community Center which offers language courses, job training, psychosocial workshops, hot meals, showers, and laundry facilities. The center is supported by trained staff of caseworkers, psychologists, and volunteers. Many of the community center members are part of the Athens Housing Collective project and many of those who are not, are on the Athens Housing



Collective waiting list. This is a result of a lack of housing solutions and safe housing for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Safe Place community center acts as a safe place for all migrant and refugee communities while enhancing a feeling of family, support, and inclusion.

Exploring cross-border transferability

The very concept of the project is based on the belief that communities create the spaces that are lacking while active engagement can foster safeties and inclusion.

The following video created by the AHC provides an insight on both the universal necessities handled and understanding the stand of the initiative:

<https://www.safeplaceinternational.org/athenshousingcollective>

Contacts and links for further reading

<https://www.safeplaceinternational.org/athenshousingcollective>

<https://www.safeplaceinternational.org/our-story>

<https://www.safeplaceinternational.org/video-library>

