HELLENIC REPUBLIC

MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL SECRETARY OF RESEARCH

HELLENIC FOUNDATION OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects for the Support of Faculty Members and Researchers and the Procurement of high-cost Research Equipment

An extended synopsis of the Final Project Report

Project Title

SETTLING IN THE 'HUMANITARIAN CITY':

THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN ASYLUM SEEKERS, HUMANITARIAN ACTORS, AND LOCAL SOCIETY (IN LESVOS AND ATHENS)

Project Acronym

HUMANcITY

https://humancity.sah.aegean.gr

Project No

1767

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I. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

Human(c)ity had the following goals:

1. The study of humanitarian governance as a field of social/cultural mediation, interaction and negotiation between asylum seekers, private and public, individual and collective humanitarian actors and, finally, local communities.

2. The focus on three geographical areas with particular emphasis on the third one: a) a small settlement of first reception (Skala Sykamnias, Lesvos) b) a border town (Mytilene) on an island with a Reception and Identification Center (Lesvos) and c) the capital of Greece (Athens).

3. The documentation of transformations regarding the transition from the 'humanitarian village' to the 'humanitarian city.

4. The comparison of different types of settlement of incoming refugees and migrants – mainly camps, municipal or privately managed apartments, squatting of private or public spaces – and the investigation of the different impacts these have on asylum seekers, humanitarian actors and members of local communities.

5. The investigation of interaction in the humanitarian space and its social and political effects in relation to the dominant modes of sociality and the different forms of mediation (humanitarian organizations, ethno-cultural collectivities, and migrant networks).

II. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project was implemented through six Work Packages (WPs). These included two WPs on Lesvos, two on Athens, one on the interactive atlas, which included an inventory of the humanitarian landscape on Lesvos, and one on dissemination and publicity. The pandemic caused serious problems in the implementation of the research, especially as regards ethnographic fieldwork in Lesvos, and led to significant changes in methodology, the geographical shift of WP2 from Mytilene to Athens, and two extensions of the duration of the project. Also, during the project, it was necessary to replace the person in charge of Work Package 5 and to add new staff to the research team. Despite the obstacles all work packages proceeded and were completed according to the approved schedule. The successful implementation of the project was supported by the regular meetings (every two weeks) of the research group, which from one point onwards took place online, and the continuous cooperation of all members of the research team. Also important was the contribution of the members of the advisory committee who closely followed the progress of the project.

The implementation and conclusions of the project per WP are briefly presented below.

WORK PACKAGE 1: ENTRANCE - FIRST RECEPTION AND TRANSIT FACILITIES, SKALA SYKAMNIAS (LESVOS)

12.2019-10.2022

Picture n. 1: First reception camp ‘Platanos’ in Skala Sykamnias

The first work package (WP1) investigated, through the lens of mediation, aspects of the local formation of the humanitarian regime in the most important site of first reception, the border village of Skala Sykamnias in N. Lesvos. Some of these aspects had not been previously highlighted in the research of Evthymios Papataxiarchis, the Principal Investigator of Human(c)ity with long ethnographic experience in this place. At the critical juncture of the peak of the 'refugee crisis' in 2015-6 the demand for mediations of all kinds was enormous, both due to the liquidation of official, if limited, structures for the reception and management of mass migration flows and due to the equally massive arrival of professional humanitarian actors, volunteers, and activists from all over the world. This gave enormous comparative advantages to those who possessed key qualities—language and other communication skills, social capital, social networks, and other resources—to assume intermediary roles.

This specific work package utilized the long and in-depth knowledge of the specific village possessed by the PI and, through a combination of new interviews and ethnographic research, focused on specific cases of individuals, as well as informal and formal networks of humanitarian actors, with significant mediation action in the formation of the three camps that operated in Skala at the time: 'Platanos', 'Lighthouse', and ‘Stage 2’. At the same time, it explored other aspects of the formation of the 'humanitarian village' and, in particular, the transformations of

local identity that occurred and their importance for the implementation of a state project, the upgrading of 'solidarity to refugees' into a new patriotism and into a legitimizing factor of the then newly established humanitarian regime.

The focus on leading mediators of that period allowed the research to highlight the great scope that existed at the time for initiatives, movements, and improvisations. At the same time, it contributed to an understanding of the processes of production of a hybrid ideological space where, housed under the rubric of ‘humanism' but also in pragmatic terms, extremely heterogeneous ventures with diverse agendas meet and coexist. WP1 showed that the essentialist re-signification of Skala as a 'place of solidarity', a representation that overlooks the fissures and conflicts produced locally by the refugee situation, is the other side of the hierarchical subordination of the village to the humanitarian regime.

Some of the findings of WP1 are presented in more detail in the paper titled: 'Village reborn in humanity: Mediation in the making of the humanitarian arena’, delivered at the workshop on mediation that took place in Mytilene in June 2022.

WORK PAGKAGE 2: SETTLEMENT - ATHENS, ELEONAS 'OPEN ACCOMMODATION FACILITY' AND ESTIA APARTMENTS

12.2019-10.2022

Picture n.2: A housing unit in the Eleonas Open Accommodation Camp in Athens

Work Package 2 (WP2), also through the lens of mediation, ethnographically investigated two official forms of settlement of asylum seekers in Athens, in the management of which the Municipality of Athens had a strong participation: (a) the Eleonas (Attica) 'Accommodation Facility for Third Country Nationals or Stateless Persons who have applied for international protection' and (b) the 'ESTIA' program, which concerned housing in apartments within the urban fabric.

In both of these forms of settlement mediation had an institutional character. Thus, this specific work package complemented WP4, which focused on mediation in the context of informal forms of settlement of asylum seekers in Athens. The two work packages together contributed to the study of mediation as an aspect of the governance of the 'humanitarian city'.

The study was implemented through a 13-month ethnographic research on the above two official settlements which, due to the pandemic, was largely carried out online. When conditions allowed, it was supplemented by fieldwork with the researcher's physical presence in the field. The ethnographic material includes 61 recorded conversations with representatives of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum, the Municipality of Athens, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the NGOs ARSIS and HUMAN RIGHTS 360 and, of course, with asylum seekers who resided in the two settlement schemes under investigation. It also includes informal conversations with people from the above places, which were either not considered feasible to record, or were recorded, but the informants did not consent to the material being deposited in the Archive of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in the Aegean (ARMCA) along with the rest.

With regard to the Facility of Eleonas, at the time of the field research, mediation, which under normal circumstances included elements of control and guardianship of the inhabitants of the structure, was carried out in a situation of extreme liminality in space and time that undermined relationships, roles and experiences. Two elements that were absolutely clear were the Facility's overcrowding and its understaffing. Asylum seekers were experiencing an extremely acute waiting situation and a dead-end living condition.

The process of mediation in the Facility of Eleonas was an 'official' process of professional relationship between humanitarian actors and asylum seekers directed 'from above'. As such, it was based on hierarchy and followed rules and frameworks that applied to both sides of the mediation. It included elements of protection and guardianship of asylum seekers, which, however, in the context of the pandemic, where all procedures were dysfunctional, had been withdrawn. It also involved the dimension of power and control over the lives of the beneficiaries that mediation gives to humanitarian actors. This is a particularly important issue that, to a large extent, is bypassed by formal forms of reception of asylum seekers. As well as the even more specific issue of the sense of need that mediators evoke in asylum seekers and refugees, which adds another dimension to the complex relationship of care and control in the context of international aid.

Divergences were observed among the views of the representatives of the different agencies involved in the management of the Facility and, of course, divergences between the views of the Ministry and those of the asylum seekers.

With regard to the ESTIA project, the research highlighted the urgent nature of the program, which oriented it exclusively towards short-term reception and housing that did not provide for a social integration process. It also highlighted gaps in the mediation process and marked differences among program workers in their uptake of UNHCR and Ministry guidelines for the reception and settlement of asylum seekers. All this created scope for personal initiative, which extended beyond the official guidelines, and aimed at supporting the socialization and integration of asylum seekers. However, at the same time, it also created serious dilemmas for the workers themselves.

The research focused on the importance of an innovative system of relations and mediation mechanism of the Municipality of Athens called the 'triplet', which relied on the collaboration of three people - a social scientist, an accommodation officer and an interpreter. Through the study of the triplet, which, it should be noted, has no counterpart in the international literature on humanitarian governance, dimensions of the ESTIA program emerged and were confirmed; these are developed in the more extensive WP2 report attached as a deliverable. The most important of them were the tensions and oppositions that arose during the process of reception and settlement of asylum seekers among the members of the working groups of the Municipality of Athens and, also, between the latter and the beneficiaries. These challenge the statutory objectives of the official operating instructions of the ESTIA program, while illuminating dimensions of the humanitarian regime of wider interest.

Finally, an element highlighted by the research which concerned both forms of settlement was the management of the termination of the beneficiaries' right to stay in them, by ARSIS and the Municipality of Athens as well as by their individual executives. The issue of evictions caused tremors in the mediation work of humanitarian professionals and led to significant restructuring and resignations.

The results of the research are presented in more detail in the extensive report of WP2 as well as in the paper titled 'Mediating asylum seekers' accommodation in the ESTIA program in Athens', which was presented by the researcher at the workshop on mediation.

WORK PACKAGE 3: THE HUMANITARIAN LANDSCAPE OF LESVOS, A QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DOCUMENTATION

02.2021-10.2022

Picture n.3: Greek Coastguard and Frontex vessels in the Port of Mytilene

The new conditions that developed after the outbreak of the pandemic forced the readjustment of the methodology for recording and mapping the 'humanitarian landscape' of Lesvos. First, the impossibility of travel to and from the island, as well as of face-to-face interviews with humanitarian actors, were addressed by giving more emphasis to quantitative research methods. Thus, for most of the humanitarian landscape mapping it was decided to use an online questionnaire combined with an extensive survey of the organizations' websites and social networks, which was complemented by field research during visits to Lesvos when these became possible.

Secondly, the rapid developments that took place in the research field throughout 2020, because of both the change in government policy on asylum and migration and the imposition of measures to limit the pandemic, but also of important events, such as outbreak of xenophobic violence and the destruction by fire of the Moria Reception and Identification Center (RIC), forced the research team to readjust the recording periods.

After re-working the research design, two distinct recording periods were established (instead of the three originally planned): (a) the period before the new government’s change of asylum and migration policy and the outbreak of the pandemic - up to the beginning of 2020, and (b) the period from autumn 2020 onwards.

These two periods, which effectively concern the time before and after the outbreak of the pandemic, were chosen for comparative purposes, to highlight and outline the evolution and change of the humanitarian landscape on the island under these unprecedented conditions.

The results of the research present the humanitarian landscape of Lesvos in two time periods and at three different levels of recording and analysis:

1. Recording and presentation of quantitative data regarding the presence of asylum seekers on the island of Lesvos. At this level, the main change was the dramatic decrease in the population of asylum seekers on the island, from 21,622 in the beginning of 2020 to 1,470 in August 2022. This was a result of both the decrease in arrivals to Lesvos from 2020 onwards, and, on the other hand, of the increase in transports from Lesvos to the mainland camps.

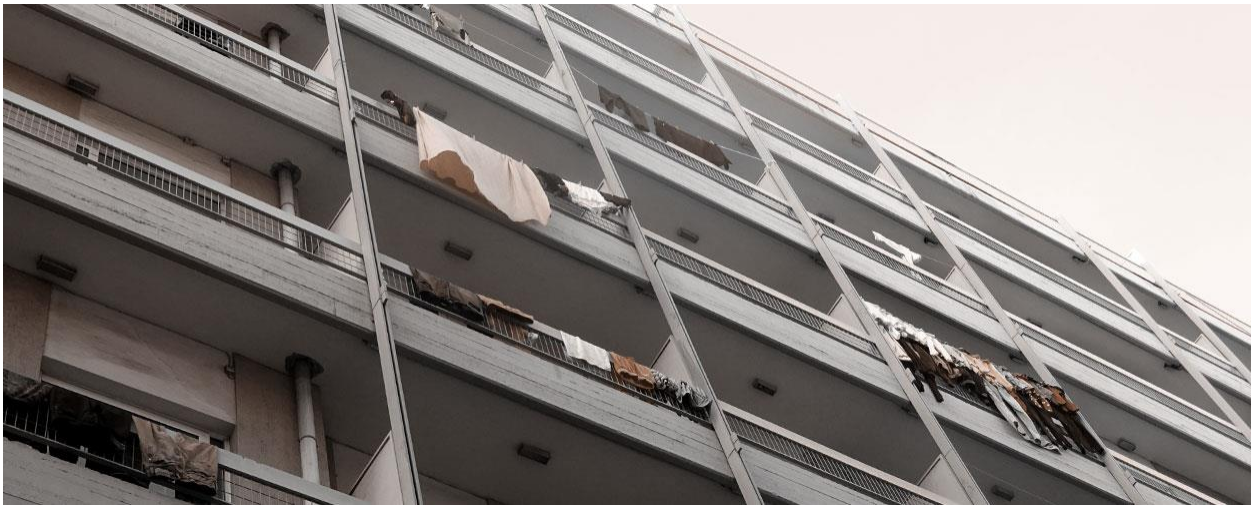
2. Qualitative and quantitative mapping of the actors who produce humanitarian work on the island. During the two periods of the survey, 102 humanitarian actors with a presence on the island of Lesvos were recorded: 9 of them were Greek state or European agencies/services or transnational organizations, 11 were large international organizations with a presence in various countries, 70 were small and medium non-governmental/not-for-profit organizations and 11 were informal groups/collectives. The majority, based on the number of their human resources, were small organizations with 10 or fewer people (38), while 18 were medium ones, up to 50 people, and only three (3) were large, with more than 50 people. Twenty-seven of the humanitarian collectives listed ceased their activities on the island after 2020.

3. Presentation of the social, spatial, and political differences caused by the development of humanitarian governance and by the presence of asylum seekers on the island, and their influences on the local society.

The dramatic reduction in the population of asylum seekers and their confinement in the Reception and Identification Center (RIC), both during the pandemic and to some extent afterwards, resulted in the corresponding reduction of the number of organizations and groups active on the island, but also the reduction of the activities and services offered by the humanitarian actors who remain on the island. At the same time, the geographical spread of the humanitarian landscape of the island changed. After 2021, only the RIC of Mavrovouni (Kara Tepe) and the transit camp (Quarantine) on the north coast of the island remained operative. The general reduction of humanitarian presence in Lesvos had an impact on the local community, limiting its reactions, which had started to take on violent dimensions after 2018 and had peaked at the beginning of 2020, just before the pandemic.

WORK PACKAGE 4: SETTLEMENT, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS NETWORKS IN ATHENS

12.2019-10.2022



Picture n.4: The façade of the City Plaza building, an informal accommodation unit for asylum seekers in Athens

Work Package 4 (WP4) explored informal types of social mediation in the settlement process of asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Pakistan in Athens utilising a comparative perspective. Two key types of mediation that contributed to the settlement process were studied: the ethnocultural networks of asylum seekers and the informal types of humanitarian governance that specialized in housing and work. The research focused on the level of everyday practices and examined the impact these two types of mediation have on refugee asylum seekers and local communities. Specifically, on the basis of ethnographic fieldwork, five cases were studied: a) a mixed type ad hoc voluntary group, b) a 'solidarity' group, c) a non-governmental organization (NGO), d) an Association of Afghan migrants and e) a group of newly arrived Pakistani asylum seekers.

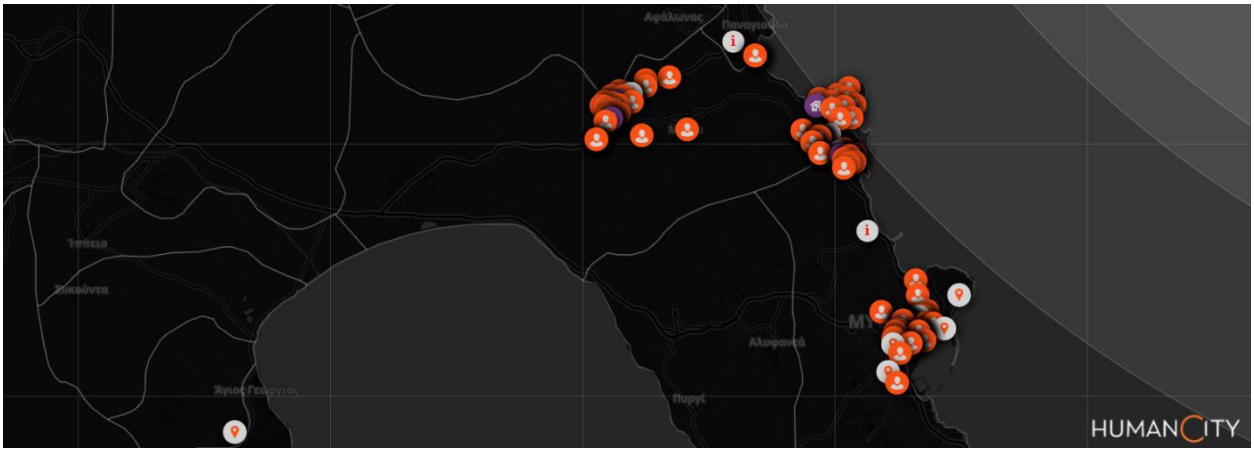
Through the analysis of the two types of mediation and the comparison of the five cases, with reference points the relations between asylum seekers and 'supporters' and the practices of mediation, it was observed that collective mediation took different forms and involved different characteristics. All cases were based on different cultural backgrounds, which revealed and determined the motives and purposes of the actors as well as the quality and forms of mediation. In addition, it was found that the five cases referred to different types of dependencies and hierarchical relationships between asylum seekers and humanitarian actors, and in this sense allowed for an exploration of the meaning of the concepts of 'protection', 'guardianship', 'patronage' and 'autonomy'. Relationships between asylum seekers and humanitarian actors appear to be discontinuous compared to relationships acquired within homo-ethnocultural networks which have continuity.

Regarding the comparison of the ethno-cultural networks of Afghan and Pakistani asylum seekers, they are characterized by significant differences and particularities between them. For the two groups, the settlement paths showed some peculiarities. As far as Afghan asylum seekers are concerned, there is no historically rooted community in Athens with sufficient economic activities to absorb them into their own labor market, unlike the Pakistanis. For Afghan asylum seekers, several other factors play a key role, such as the online communities in which they participate and the friendly networks they build in Greece, mainly with humanitarian actors (activists, ‘solidarians’), as opposed to Pakistani asylum seekers who show a tendency to remaining 'entrapped' in their homo-ethnocultural relations.

The research clearly showed that Afghan asylum seekers interact and gain more direct relationships with humanitarian actors than Pakistani asylum seekers. The fact that Afghans become part of the humanitarian regime, either as 'beneficiaries' or as professionals, unlike Pakistanis who invest in their co-ethnic networks, does not necessarily mean that the humanitarian regime itself excludes or favors one community over another based on national criteria. But since humanitarian status is linked to 'refugee' status, it appears that low refugee status determination rates for Pakistanis are a determining factor for humanitarian actors not investing in supporting them as asylum seekers.

WORK PACKAGE 5 – DYNAMIC INTERACTIVE ATLAS

05.2021-10.2022



Picture n.5: The Dynamic Interactive Atlas of the 'humanitarian landscape" of Lesvos

Work Package 5 (WP5) consisted of the analysis of the record resulting from the qualitative and quantitative mapping of the humanitarian landscape of Lesvos (carried out in the context of WP3) and the presentation of the material as a geographical visualization in the form of a Dynamic Interactive Atlas (DIA) of the island (with an emphasis on the city of Mytilene and the village of Skala Sykamnias).

The work of WP5 started in June 2021, with the replacement of a researcher who left the project. The team was joined by a new colleague, specializing in graphic design, with the aim of assisting in the visual processing of the DIA. The two new members of the WP5 research team systematically collaborated with WP3 researchers as well as with the rest of the project researchers in order to construct the Atlas (https://humancity.sah.aegean.gr/InteractiveAtlas/) and to create the project webpage (humancity@sah.aegean.gr), housed under the Observatory of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in the Aegean website.

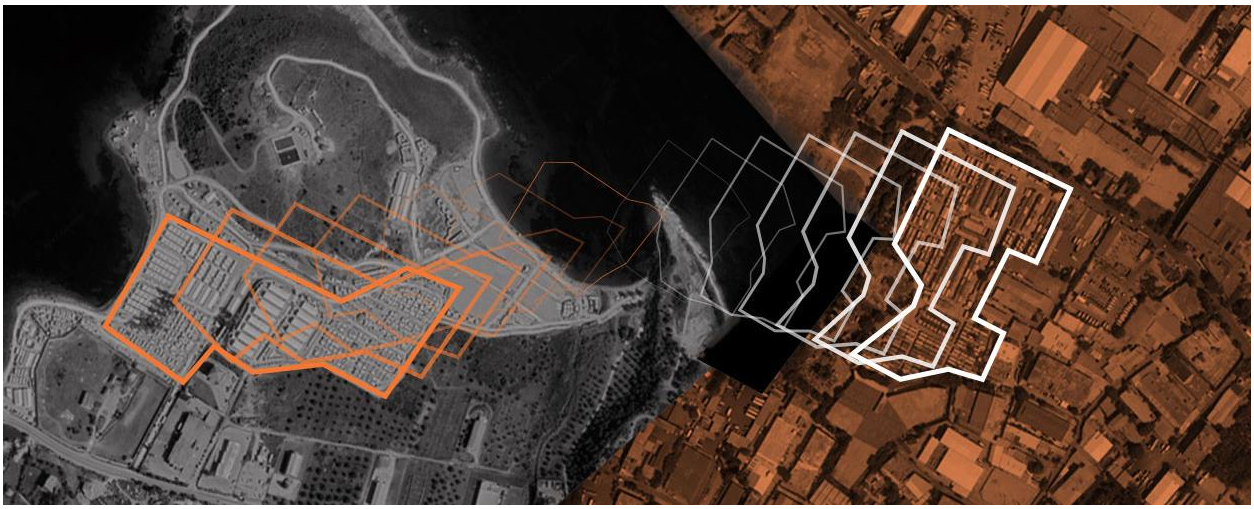
The interactive atlas of the Human(c)ity research project is an original and so far unique tool for visualizing both spatial and temporal information on the refugee crisis taking place on the island of Lesvos. The data presented was collected through an online survey, questionnaires and information recorded on the webpages of the relevant agencies and organizations, as well as on-site fieldwork in the context of WP3 (2020 – 2022). The atlas is addressed to the academic community of researchers working on migration, to humanitarian actors as well as to the wider public. It is user friendly, providing a full explanation of the tools at hand.

The atlas represents an integrated information system which consists of three subsystems: (i) a geobase where spatial or non-spatial data are registered, stored, updated and processed, (ii) an online geographic information system (GIS) through a user-friendly web browser, and (iii) a subsystem for processing and entering new information by members of the research team.

The web atlas (webGIS) was developed using HTML, CSS, Javascript and PHP as a server-side programming language. The software is all open source, with essential libraries such as bootstrap, jQuery, Ajax, and a, client-side mapping API, Leaflet. The mapping application is designed with tools and features common to web pages and is therefore easy to understand by web-savvy users. The user-atlas interface provides features such as, switching between background layers and thematic layers, as well as zooming in and out. The left screen of the atlas includes a toolbox with user information and data presentation capabilities and consists of 4 tabs (home, data collection, timelines, user guide).

Along with the atlas, an online cartographic application was produced for the members of the research team, which provides possibilities for entering new geo-data and editing the existing ones, aiming at the continuous updating of the content.

WORK PACKAGE 6 – PROJECT COORDINATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS 12.2019-10.2022



Picture n.6: From the Human(ci)ty website

The object of Work Package 6 (WP6) was the coordination of the research project and the dissemination of project results to any interested party, such as asylum seekers, humanitarian actors, civil society, local communities, academia and, finally, the wider public.

The scientific coordinator Evthymios Papataxiarchis and the researcher Marica Rombou-Levidi were responsible, respectively, for the scientific and administrative coordination of the project.

Therefore, they managed the process of modifying the research content and methodology and monitored the progress of the project throughout its duration.

They scheduled research team meetings on a fortnightly basis. They organized and supervised the introductory phase of the research which focused on team bonding, reviewing the existing literature and redefining the research content and methodology to match the pandemic conditions. They implemented Research Workshop I (end of July 2020), which summarized the three dimensions mentioned above. They then closely followed the main research phase for each work package, and organized Research Seminars I and II (January and February 2021). In these, presentations were made of the ongoing research in the individual WPs.

In June 2021 they convened Research Workshop II, dedicated exclusively to the design and methodology of the Dynamic Interactive Atlas which was in its initial development phase at the time. They systematically monitored and supervised the construction of the Dynamic Interactive Atlas (https://refugeeobservatory.aegean.gr/HUMANcITY/InteractiveAtlas) as well as the project website (https://humancity@sah.aegean.gr).

Finally, they ensured that the research team was equipped with digital recorders, cameras, a laptop computer, and hard drives, which assisted in conducting the research and processing the

ethnographic material. Finally, they took the necessary actions to fully implement all WP deliverables and milestones set in WP6.

In terms of dissemination, the organization of the planned International Workshop, held in collaboration with the Admigov (Horizon 2020) program, in Mytilene in June 2022 on the topic of 'Mediation in Migration Governance' should be highlighted. In addition, actions are currently being taken so that the papers presented at the Meeting, further edited by the authors, are published in a special issue of a peer-reviewed scientific journal or in a special volume in the English language.

III. DISSEMINATION AND PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES

The dissemination and publicity actions which were implemented within the framework of the Huma(c)ity project are the following:

1. Creation of a website (https://humancity.sah.aegean.gr) in which the project is presented as a whole, as well as the individual research conducted in its context. The page is linked to the corresponding page of the Observatory of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the Aegean (https://refugeeobservatory.aegean.gr) for the extraction of ethnographic material deposited in the Oral History Archive as well as for interactive navigation in the Dynamic Interactive Atlas. Also, on the website there are references to the existing publications of researchers participating in the project, which are thematically related to it.

2. Publication on the project website of all the research reports of the research team. Also posting postdoctoral researcher Pafsanias Karathanasis' ethnographic text on Moria (Lesvos) (https://refugeeobservatory.aegean.gr/sites/default/files/Karathanasis.Moria_.CampCity.2020.pdf.), which is based on his visit there in June 2020 as part of Human(c)ity research.

3. Inclusion in the Archive of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in the Aegean (http://archive-refugeeobservatory.ekt.gr/refugeeobservatory/) 108 recorded conversations/interviews with informants connected to the individual research carried out in the project Work Packages, in the form of either audio files or transcriptions. This medium gives access to the research material to a relatively wide and diverse audience. However, steps have been taken to protect the anonymity and personal data of individuals who did not wish their information to be made public.

4. Publication of the Interactive Dynamic Atlas on the website of the Observatory of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in the Aegean (https://refugeeobservatory.aegean.gr/HUMANcITY/InteractiveAtlas), as well as on the website of the Human(c)ity project (https://humancity.sah.aegean.gr/InteractiveAtlas/). The specifications of the project website, created as part of the upgrade of the Observatory's webpage, are more limited than those of the Observatory, and, therefore, the two pages are directly linked.

5. Inclusion on the project website of the questionnaire on which the WP3 survey was based.

6. Organization of an International Workshop in Mytilene, June 8-10, 2022. Posting the program of the meeting on the project website and the Observatory webpage. Also posting of the presentations made by members of the research team in this workshop on the project website.

The texts resulting from the scientific meeting are being edited for publication in a collective volume or a foreign language journal.

Pictures n.7 and 8: International Workshop, University of the Aegean, Mytilene, June 2022.

IV. IMPACT

The output and overall impact of Human(c)ity concerns three major areas: a) scientific research of the immigrant and refugee phenomenon, b) informing of public opinion and, in particular, those who specialize professionally in this field, and c) policy implementation.

First, in terms of content, Human(c)ity shows the enormous importance of mediation undertaken by humanitarian actors, both in the early "chaotic" phase of the refugee crisis and in later phases of more orderly management. The systematic understanding of the special weight of mediation in the management of the refugee and migration phenomenon is an important precondition for the formulation of policies that will seek the most effective treatment of any problems arising from the meeting of such culturally heterogeneous actors. In any case, Human(c)ity contributes to greater awareness of the need for systematic preparation and training of humanitarian actors in the 'tasks' of mediation.

Second, the empirical research on innovative official policies and informal interventions in the housing of asylum seekers allows for a critical evaluation of their effects for all actors concerned and for the improvement of applied policies. At the same time, the research allows for a better understanding of these experiments 'from below' and 'from within'.

Thirdly, the use of mediation as a perspective contributes to a more level-headed, empirically grounded, simultaneously critical and iconoclastic, approach to the refugee phenomenon. It offers an approach that does not get caught up in the political-ideological agendas that dominate public debate on the 'refugee problem', nor does it get conflated with relevant normative designs for the organization of humanitarian action. At the same time, it contributes to the critical revision of the dominant 'vocabulary' for understanding and representing the refugee phenomenon.

Fourth, the creation of the Interactive Dynamic Atlas together with the documented mapping of the humanitarian field of Mytilene are an important step in providing valid information about the refugee phenomenon in the Aegean area. At the same time, these databases enhance the operation of the Observatory of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the Aegean webpage, which is gradually establishing itself as a leading reference for research, and the dissemination of scientific knowledge and valid information about refugees.

Fifth, the impact of Human(c)ity is also a function of the degree of diffusion and dissemination of research results. The important international meeting held with great success in Mytilene in June 2022, the operation of the program webpage with the corresponding research reports, and the publication of scientific articles based on Human(c)ity research are important steps in increasing the outreach and impact of the project.

Finally, the research employed almost exclusively young researchers, while a significant part of the research team were women.

V. ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES AND PRESENTATIONS

Synopsis of the papers presented at the International Workshop on 'Mediation in Migration Governance', which took place in Mytilene in June 2022, and especially in the first session, which was exclusively dedicated to Human(c)ity.

WORK PACKAGE 1

Evthymios Papataxiarchis (with Alexandra Zavou), Village reborn in humanity: Mediation in the making of the humanitarian arena.

This paper discusses the effects of humanitarianization in a small border community in N. Lesvos that became the gate into Europe for hundreds of thousands of displaced travelers during the so called 'European refugee crisis'. It particularly analyzes the impact that the establishment and functioning of the assemblage of humanitarian structures, mechanisms and practices had on the locality through the angle of mediation and a focus on the role of intermediate actors who made important contributions in the local establishment of the humanitarian regime.

The humanitarianization of the locality is analyzed as a complex process that produces transformations on three levels. First in space, with the establishment of camps, offices, and

other spatial structures for humanitarians and asylum seekers only, and the making of a new humanitarian spatiality, the 'humanitarian village'. Second, in meanings, with the transformation of the locality's identity as a traditional agricultural and tourist idyl into a topos of 'solidarity'. And third, in social relations, with the rise of new networks between the different categories of actors and the opening of the locality to a global audience through a sequence of honors, ritual visits and other celebratory acts.

The paper shows that the direction that humanitarianization eventually took was not given but it was decided on the way, through contestation and negotiation between a great diversity of actors and, particularly, between unofficial and official networks of mediation, and that mediators played a key role in this creative process, particularly through reconfiguring established meanings. It also shows that in the course of humanitarianization official networks of mediation took the upper hand thus making possible the hierarchical encompassment of the locality by the powerful humanitarian regime.

WORK PACKAGE 2

Marica Rombou-Levidi, Mediating asylum seekers' accommodation in the ESTIA program in Athens

The presentation of the researcher who was responsible for WP2 discusses the complex mediating process of asylum seekers' settlement in apartments in Athens by focusing on the EU funded accommodation program ESTIA and its implementation by the Municipality of Athens. Drawing on ethnographic research carried out between June 2020 and July 2021, the researcher discusses aspects of mediation that concern the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees offices in Greece, who designed the entire program in 2015-2016 and coordinated it until 2020, the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, who has contributed to the coordination of ESTIA from an early phase until today and, finally, the Municipality of Athens, who has been a major implementing partner of the program in the city of Athens. The presentation focuses on a particular operational system employed by the municipality, the so-called system of the 'triplet', which constitutes an elaborate framework of mediation that links the migrants with both the local and central authorities. It argues that despite internal regulations and safeguards that were issued successively by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum aiming to guarantee a smooth settlement process for all parties involved in ESTIA, and despite the efforts of the municipality to apply these regulations in practice, the triplet is imbued by tensions and contradictions that undermine constitutional intentions, while, at the same time, further shaping the notion of mediation in the context of migration governance.

WORK PACKAGE 3 (together with WORK PACKAGE 5)

Pafsanias Karathanasis and Kelly Avanidou, The 'humanitarian town': An overview of the humanitarian scene in Mytilene (Lesvos)

The research in Mytilene and the island Lesvos attempts an extensive mapping of the '*humanitarian field*' on the island in two different time periods using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. In other words, the research has been carried out through both ethnographic fieldwork on the island, in three different research visits, and extensive online research on the webpages and social media pages of the different actors that produce humanitarian work, as well as an online survey that was circulated among the humanitarian actors we have mapped.

Thus, the research is focused on gathering, analyzing, and presenting the *"humanitarian landscape" of Lesvo*s in its multiple dimensions, and at different times, and the results are being recorded in a dynamic interactive atlas of the island.

WORK PACKAGE 4

Ervin Shehu, Informal practices of mediation in the process of asylum seekers' settlement in Athens

The paper addresses the mediating social factors that affect the settlement process of asylum seekers in Athens. In particular, it focuses on informal types of mediation in relation to securing housing and integration into the labor market and investigates through a comparative ethnographic approach the analysis of two types of mediation. The first is related to the mediating role played by an Afghan association in the process of settlement. In this context, reception, forms of mediation, and relationships developing between newly arrived asylum seekers and their already settled former compatriots are taken into account. The second focuses on a 'solidarity' group, consisting of people belonging ideologically to the Left and identified as 'solidarians'. Analysis of the relations between asylum seekers and the local community is a key issue in these two types of mediation. The paper argues that these two types involve different logics and mediating practices, depending on the cultural background that informs them.

WORK PACKAGE 6

Evthymios Papataxiarchis, Mediation and brokerage in humanitarian action and migration governance: Key research issues.

This paper elaborates a theoretical framework on mediation and brokerage in humanitarian settings and more generally in migration. It is inspired by my long-term ethnographic experience on the humanitarian management of the 'refugee crisis' in the Aegean islands and based on the review of the relevant literature on mediation in anthropology and the social sciences. The paper argues in support of the critical rethinking of these analytical concepts, which have been normatively devalued in an earlier literature, and their application in these new conditions of the electronic revolution, deterritorialization, globalization and rapid change. The employment of mediation and brokerage in our ethnographic work can be very productive in approaching in a dynamic, processual way humanitarian management and humanitarian governance. It particularly allows the ethnographic grasp of particularly salient features of humanitarian action

in the context of the recent ‘European refugee crisis’, such as the wide spread of initiatives of different kinds and the multifarious production of connections and networks.

The paper suggests approaching humanitarian action in a broad way that includes relief, protection in its multiple dimensions (medical care, legal protection, accommodation) and integration. In this regard mediation and brokerage in the humanitarian field can be analyzed into alternative typologies on the basis of the following criteria: the form of mediating activity, the humanitarian field in which mediation is exercised, the agent of mediation and the logic of mediation (that refers to the motives as stated by the mediators themselves). From the above perspective, the paper also suggests giving greater attention to certain key aspects of mediation/brokerage. These include the agency and the motives of intermediators in humanitarian initiatives, the brokerage chains and assemblages that are formed in the course of humanitarian activity, and the translation of official humanitarian norms and models in local contexts.