



# Factsheet Bashira Centre on Lesbos

## DAY CENTRE FOR DISPLACED SINGLE WOMEN AND MOTHERS

### Background

Since the EU-Turkey deal came into effect in March 2016 thousands of people have been trapped on the Greek islands, with little chance of being admitted to other European countries. The feeling of entrapment, elongated duration of stay and constant threat of deportation intensifies traumas of war, violence and the life-threatening journey undertaken to travel to Europe. Camp conditions including the absence of protection measures means that lone women, single mothers, pregnant and older women are particularly at risk. The exacerbation of physical and mental health problems combined with lack of educational or vocational opportunities, further hinders the possibility of independence and integration with the host community. Meanwhile, boats continue arriving and Lesbos remains the epicentre of the “Aegean route”.

### SAO Association on Lesbos

On Lesbos SAO specifically supports displaced single women and mothers. Since 2017 SAO operates a

day centre called “Bashira Centre”. Bashira provides **emergency aid and protection** for new arrivals and **sustainability and social inclusion\*** activities for women trapped on the island for a long time. The Centre is a safe space located in Mytilene, the capital of the island Lesbos.

Bashira Centre focuses on especially vulnerable cases of women and mothers and uses a registration system due to the centre’s capacity. This registry adapts to the changing circumstances and demographics of the beneficiaries, makes sure that as many women as possible benefit from the services tailored to their needs. The majority of Bashira’s registries are single asylum-seeking women living in Sections C and D (for single women and single parents respectively) of Moria refugee camp.

### Services and activities

- Provision of safe space to facilitate recuperation and recovery
- Access to information via qualified partner organisations including: legal advice, psychosocial support and targeted medical interventions
- Empowerment, community building and inclusion\* activities
- Assistance with paperwork and public services including accompaniment

\*We consciously use the term “inclusion” to show that we strive for more than integration. Integration expects performance only from the incoming human. Inclusion relies on reciprocity

- Psychosocial interventions individually and via groups
- Emergency distribution of basic items: hygiene products, nappies, baby clothes etc.
- Opportunity to shower and tend to personal body hygiene in a dignified environment (possibility to lock the door)
- Option to mend or alter clothes using sewing machines
- Workshops and arts and crafts programme
- Excursions and events outside Bashira including (example of past events): swimming, sports, cultural visits and walks.

### Team

Bashira Centre's team consists of a group of experienced and dedicated local and international women.

The Program Manager is assisted by a small team of permanent employees, translators and volunteers, with a minimum commitment of one month.

Administration and fundraising for Bashira Centre are operated via the SAO headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland.

### House Callisto

In close range to the Bashira Centre, House Callisto locates the accommodation facilities for the volunteers.

### Facts and figures

Around **700** women are registered;  
resulting in approximately **1000** visits per month  
**5** employees and **4** volunteers  
(about **25** volunteers yearly)  
Annual budget **2019**, including House Callisto:  
**CHF 300'000.–** (€ 270'000.–)

### Legal

As a non-for-profit organization SAO Association is not obliged to pay taxes. Book-keeping is conducted according to the GAAP FER 21 system.

The Bashira Centre is supported by DEZA the Swiss Federal Agency for Development and Cooperation.

---

## DONATIONS

Please  
support  
our efforts.

### Recipient:

Verein SAO, Badenerstrasse 21, CH-8004 Zürich  
Zürcher Kantonalbank ZKB, CH-8010 Zürich  
BIC/Swift code: ZKBKCHZZ80A

**Donations in Euros:** IBAN CH19 0070 0130 0091 1535 8

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR DONATIONS!**