

# OPEN SOCIETY IN GREECE

The Open Society Foundations, founded by George Soros, are one of the world's largest private funders of groups that support human rights, democracy and accountability—with an annual budget of over \$1 billion. Just under 10 percent of our funding goes to Europe.

The majority of this funding is directed towards supporting human rights and democratic participation in East and Central Europe and the Balkans. Open Society is also the largest private funder of efforts to support Europe's Roma communities.

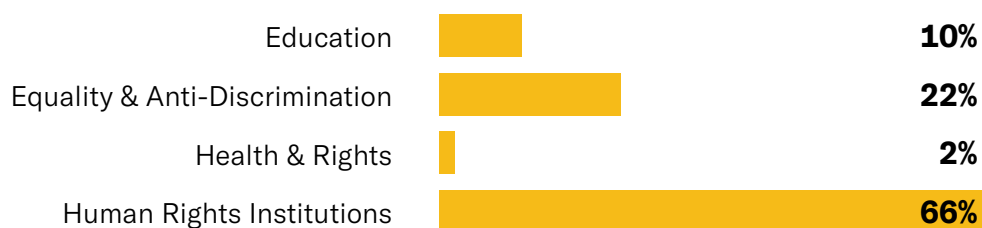
In Western Europe, where democratic traditions and civil society groups are well established, our work has largely involved helping local groups respond to rapidly evolving new challenges—from dealing with the social impact of economic austerity programs, to efforts to revitalize democratic participation, and to respond to the challenges of migration.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

We began working in Greece in 2013, with a focus on helping people most impacted by the severe austerity measures then in place. We funded the provision of legal aid, medical care, and employment service, and paid for heating oil for schools, orphanages and hospitals in Northern Greece during the winter months.

In 2015, we supported local groups in Greece, as they responded to the arrival of over 800,000 refugees fleeing conflict and poverty in the Middle East and Africa. Since then, Open Society Foundations' approach has been two-fold: to support Greek civil society to ensure that in these most difficult times, all voices are heard; and to ensure, working with local volunteer and humanitarian organizations, that refugee and migrant rights are upheld.

## GREECE: 2019 BUDGET BY SECTOR



Total grant budget in 2019:

**\$2M**

Total 2019 budget for Open Society Foundations:

**\$1,050M**

# 9 FACTS ABOUT GREECE

## AND THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

- 1** The Open Society Foundations generally funds no more than a third of any organization's budget, in order to ensure that they maintain their autonomy, and establish a sound financial basis for their operations.
- 2** The Open Society Foundations' funding of projects in Greece amounted to just over 2 percent of our total European budget for 2019.
- 3** In keeping with our mission to support open and transparent societies across the world, we support Vouliwatch, an online platform that engages Greek citizens with their elected officials and can hold them accountable.
- 4** In 2013, the Open Society Foundations founded SolidarityNow, an organization that provides services and support to both local communities and migrants and refugees in need. The organisation is now independent, with funding from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the European Commission, and others.
- 5** During the financial crisis, we ensured that people at risk had access to both primary health care and critical medicines through our support for Greek humanitarian organization, PRAKSIS, along with Medecins du Monde—Greece.
- 6** On the island of Lesbos, we have funded renovation and revitalization projects by the local Starfish Foundation in the village of Moria, as part of our broader effort to support communities most affected by migrant movements.
- 7** Working closely with the Municipality of Thessaloniki, Open Society Foundations are supporting Diadrasi, a childcare centre which will bring both Greek and refugee children together after school, to play and to learn, and to do their homework.
- 8** We supported the Center for Life and Positive Voice, which defend the rights of people in Greece who are living with HIV.
- 9** Open Society Foundations have also funded activities that address racist and homophobic violence, such as Colour Youth's Tell Us! Project.