



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Offene Arme e.V.**

Offene Arme e.V. is the registered name of our organization that is based in Germany and in 2018 registered as well in Greece. Before this, we were known as Chios Eastern Shore Response Team (CESRT).

To help you plan your trip, please find answers to some of the questions we are asked most frequently. We hope that this will be useful but if there is anything else that you think should be included, or helpful information that you can provide, please let us know!

If you are a returning volunteer, thank you for coming back! For all volunteers, please be aware the situation on the island is constantly changing. We are not working in Vial camp and we are not attending landings anymore. We are currently providing landing packs to the new arrivals, and we have a free shop which can be accessed by all Vial residents or any refugees staying in private accommodation all over the island. Other projects include: the Pop Up Shop for the Unaccompanied minors, the Hospital Transfers project, the Local's Shop project and Baby project.

Please be aware that we need to have at-least 5 volunteers working on the team at a time, and that if numbers fall below this we will have to suspend operations for a period of time.

### **TRAVEL**

You can travel to Chios either by plane or boat. The ferry terminal is located in the centre of Chios Town, and the airport is on the edge of town, both are about a 15-20 minute drive from the Offene Arme e.V Warehouse. We can pick you up after ORGANISING IN THE WHATS APP WELCOME GROUP.

There are regular daily flights from Athens, plus also (less frequently) from Thessaloniki. The ferries travel to and from Athens and also connect to other North Aegean Islands. All ferry companies offer overnight services on alternate days, to and from Piraeus Port in Athens.

Another (more complicated) option is to travel through Turkey. If you can manage to make your way to Cesme, there is a 40 minute ferry from Cesme to Chios that arrives at the Chios port. Besides requiring more connections, it requires that you carry your passport with you.

## FOR FLIGHTS TRY

- ❖ [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net)
- ❖ [www.olympicair.com](http://www.olympicair.com)
- ❖ [www.aegeanair.com](http://www.aegeanair.com)
- ❖ [www.opodo.co.uk](http://www.opodo.co.uk)

## FOR FERRIES TRY

- ❖ <https://www.directferries.co.uk/>
- ❖ [www.hellenicseaways.gr/en](http://www.hellenicseaways.gr/en)
- ❖ [www.bluestarferries.com/en/](http://www.bluestarferries.com/en/)

## ACCOMMODATION

The Warehouse is where we are working and have a meeting every morning at 8:30am (except Saturday and Sunday). The warehouse is located in Thimiana (Vagia 122, Kampos 82100).

In the summer (June – September) accommodation tends to book up quickly so please make sure you make your arrangements well in advance. Also, take into account that prices might be higher during this period.

The majority of volunteers choose to stay in or around Megas Limnionas, Agia Ermioni and Karfas, all of which are close to the Warehouse. Here you will most likely be in the best place for sharing cars or lifts, as well as socialising with the volunteer team after work. If you have a car and can be independent, Chios Town can also be a good alternative. Some options are given below.

Please note that all coordinators are subject to a two week trial period as a volunteer when they begin. During this time you will be required to find your own accommodation and the monthly stipend will begin at the end of this trial period.

- ❖ [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com)
- ❖ [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com)
- ❖ [www.chiosnet.gr/](http://www.chiosnet.gr/)

❖ [www.chios.gr](http://www.chios.gr)

### **SUNROOMS** ([www.chiossunrooms.gr](http://www.chiossunrooms.gr))

This guesthouse is run by Toula (Pothiti Kitromilidi), the Field Coordinator of Offene Arme e.V. It is a good option for first time or short-term volunteers, or anyone travelling alone, as lots of volunteers stay here and it is very sociable. There are en-suite studio rooms which can be booked for one person, or you can choose to share a room with other volunteers. Prices will differ depending on the season but are reduced for volunteers. For booking, contact Toula directly on WhatsApp, her number is +30 6932 631491 or via email on [pothitikit07@gmail.com](mailto:pothitikit07@gmail.com).

**ANNAS** (<https://www.anna-chiosrooms.gr/>) Telephone number: +30-22710-32445

This guesthouse is another favourite of our volunteers. It is only a 5 minute walk from Sunrooms and has a great outdoor terrace where we sometimes host BBQs. There are en-suite rooms. For booking, contact via email on [info@anna-chiosrooms.gr](mailto:info@anna-chiosrooms.gr)

Other option within a 5-minute walk from Sunrooms include:

**Platsa Studios - Agoda\_Platsa\_Studios** Telephone number:+30 22710-32527

### **POLICE CHECK**

Please note that before arriving you will be required to email over a valid police check from your home country. This is required because we work with vulnerable people. During your first week you will also be taken to the port police to be registered as a new volunteer; a further criminal record check will be done by the Greek port police.

### **CAR HIRE**

We have a people-carrying van which provides lifts for volunteers between their accommodation and our work sites, however it may still be useful to you to hire a car for more freedom of movement around the island outside of work hours.

There are numerous car hire agencies on Chios, so it is well worth asking around and comparing prices. We have an arrangement with Vassilakis Rent A Car, who offer us good rates. Nick Vassilakis can be contacted on [vassilakisnick@yahoo.com](mailto:vassilakisnick@yahoo.com) or +30 694 836 9550. Please mention you are working with Offene Arme.

For motorbikes/mopeds:

N Kovas Rent A Moto - [www.rentamotochios.com](http://www.rentamotochios.com)

Rent A Car & Moto - [www.chiosrentacar.gr](http://www.chiosrentacar.gr)

There is also a local bus service between Megas Limnionas and Chios town.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The group communicates almost entirely by WhatsApp. We strongly recommend that you bring a smartphone so that you can make the most of your experience with us. You can only be on-call if you have WhatsApp and Google maps. You should arrange with your service provider to have sufficient internet data while abroad, or you can purchase a Greek SIM card locally in Chios from Vodafone, Wind or Cosmote.

## **SHOPS AND SERVICES**

Chios town has a number of banks with ATM machines, pharmacies, supermarkets and a post office, as well as lots of shops, restaurants and bars. There are also various big supermarkets and petrol stations located near the airport and en-route to the warehouse. Megas Limnionas and Karfas are seaside villages; both have a number of restaurants, small supermarkets and an ATM (at Karfas). Please note that in Greece you may be limited to the amount of cash you can withdraw each day. You should also bring some form of photographic ID (passport or driver's license), as it is a legal requirement to carry it at all times.

## **WHAT TO BRING/ WEAR**

Loose trousers and comfortable seasonal clothes and comfortable shoes. Clothing with zip pockets (for your phone and keys) are useful. Bring a small rucksack and/or a bum bag. You may want to bring some clothes you are happy to get dirty for specific projects.

## **SCHEDULE**

A meeting is held every morning (Monday to Friday) at the warehouse at 8.30 am. On your first morning (or as soon as is practical) you will be given a general induction of Offene Arme e.V, You will normally spend your first day in the warehouse. We have several inductions for the first days and you can work at the shop or distributions after your registration with the police.

Please let us know in advance on your application form if you have any specific skills or interests.

The working day is generally finished by 16:00pm Saturday and Sunday are a rest day for volunteers; you may wish to bear this in mind when making your travel arrangements.

## **MEALS**

Offene Arme doesn't offer any of the meals during working hours. We recommend that you bring your food to the Warehouse where you have a fridge and a microwave, as well as drinkable water. There is also a supermarket and many cafes around the warehouse that you can go to.

## **OUR ACTIVITIES**

### WAREHOUSE

The warehouse is our "home" and where all clothes and other stock for distribution are sorted and stored. Daily activities vary but there will always be things to do. Any new donations must be correctly sorted. If in doubt about which tasks are required or where specific items are located, the warehouse coordinator or other volunteers will be happy to assist you. Sorting is very important for the free shop – it ensures that restock is simple for the volunteers working at this project and that only the highest quality items are provided to our beneficiaries.

We also have a 'Local's Shop' which is open during the working day for local people to come and take clothes for free because we believe it is important to help everyone in need on the island, including the local community.

### FREE SHOP

We have a "free shop" which is located 3.1km from Vial Camp, which operates on an appointment basis and is available to all asylum seekers and refugees on Chios. A number of volunteers are required to run this shop – with roles including check-in, check-out, shop floor assistant, restock and others. We serve approximately 30 beneficiaries per day in this project, and have a very long waiting list for appointments. This project includes working in close proximity to camp residents and other at-risk people – which means that we take lots of precautions concerning COVID-19 and any other factors which may pose a threat to the community we serve.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Other activities are carried out by the team from time to time depending on the needs arising, and our abilities to respond to these needs at any given time (e.g. emergency distributions or providing temporary assistance with other humanitarian actors on the island). To stay up to date with our current projects, check our website to read more about them.

We support other organisations that help refugees by providing supplies to them, these include actors such as Metadrasis, SMH, Praxis and other smaller NGOs here in Chios.

Volunteers wishing to start a new project within Offene Arme e.V must speak first to the coordinators. The project must be financially sustainable and long term for the team.

## OFFENE ARME PRIORITY PYRAMID

This is our priority pyramid, showing the order of the most important projects we undertake. In times where we have limited funding we will activate this pyramid to be sure our resources are being used to successfully complete our highest priority tasks.

You will be informed which tasks are currently being prioritised during your time with Offene Arme and the team will work together to complete these projects.



## **HEALTH**

Please inform the team about any chronic diseases that you might have. If you have any emergency situation, the team will take you to the hospital. Usually, medical services aren't paid for in Greece, so you will only have to pay for medication.

Regarding mental health, the team views it as a priority so if you need any days off to keep your mental health it is always okay. Indigo, who we partner with, also offers many psychological resources that we will offer you once you arrive.

## **DONATIONS**

It is not mandatory to bring donated funds with you but all donations, however small, are hugely appreciated! You can either bring your donation in cash or you can send it by bank transfer to the following account:

**Account Name: Offene Arme e.V.**

**IBAN: DE63 5139 0000 0060 5797 09**

**BIC: VBMHDE5F**

**Bank: Volksbank Mittelhessen**

Or by PayPal - <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/offenearme>

If you want to bring donations with you such as clothes/toiletries etc please contact us nearer your arrival date so we can tell you what is needed at that time.

## **INTERESTING LINKS**

A few resources that you may wish to follow: Offene Arme e.V.

- ❖ [www.cesrt.org](http://www.cesrt.org)
- ❖ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/421759534684819/?fref=nf>
- ❖ <https://instagram.com/cesrt.offenearme?igshid=xjdmo7ci5bsc>
- ❖ <https://www.facebook.com/chiosest/>

UNHCR for current data or statistics about Chios and other areas:

- ❖ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>

Are You Syrious (refugee news)

- ❖ <https://www.facebook.com/areyousyrious/>
- ❖ <https://medium.com/are-you-syrious>