Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Every day, we wait.
We wait for papers, for news, for something to change.
We wait to feel human again.
Sometimes it feels like time itself has stopped for us.

Yet even in that silence, there are small lights.
The smile of a volunteer,
the warmth of a friend,
the voice that says, "You are not forgotten."
Fenix is one of those lights reminding us that our stories matter,
that we are more than the labels the world gives us.

I want the world to know:
We did not come to take,
we came to live.
We came with love in our hearts,
and with faith that humanity is still alive.

My hope is simple
that one day, people will see refugees not as strangers,
but as brothers and sisters who have walked through fire,
and still choose kindness.



-**Irshad**, *Fenix Team member from Afghanistan*

# TABLE OF CONTENT


1. Foreword
2. About us
4. Impact in a nutshell
5. Project overview
6. Our clients
7. Our team
8. 2025 in pictures
9. Legal clinic
10. Impact quote
11. Safety for queer refugees
12. Support in practice
13. Strategic legal representation
14. Client quote
15. Advocacy
16. Highlights pictures
17. Capacity bridging
18. Impact Quote
19. Finances
20. Stay connected

# FOREWORD

In 2025, the protection crisis for people seeking safety in Greece deteriorated further. New laws and policies have made it even harder for people fleeing persecution, war and violence to be recognised as refugees and to rebuild their lives in safety.

Your support has allowed us to keep providing holistic legal aid through our Legal Clinic in the C.C.A.C. on Lesvos, as well as tailored legal counsel and legal representation on Lesvos and in Athens. Clients supported by our team are better able to advocate for their rights, which supports their access to justice and legal recognition.

We adopted our holistic approach to legal aid to our work with every client, and supported access to essential services, care, safe housing, education, integration support, LGBTQ+ community groups, trafficking support, and basic items. Taking care of the well-being of our clients is an integral part of each of our projects. For us, our clients are people, not mere legal cases.

This year, we worked with queer people, political activists, individuals from ethnic minorities, persecuted women, survivors of torture, survivors of trafficking and people escaping war in their pursuit of safety. We also advocacted to keep the situation of people on the move in Greece in public view at a time when it is often overlooked and forgotten.

In the following pages, we share the impact we were able to make in 2025. Our deepest gratitude to every person who has supported us along the way, and to every client who has trusted us.

On behalf of the Fenix team, thank you!



# ABOUT US

**Fenix believes in a world where every person can live in safety, freedom and digitnity, regardless who they are, where they come from, what they stand for, or who they love.**

## WHY DO WE EXIST?

Across the world, people are forced to flee persecution, violence, oppression and war. A small percentage of them reach Europe, in pursuit of protection and a life in safety, dignity and freedom. Upon arrival in Greece, they are met with systems that are designed to humiliate, disempower, mistrust and deny rights. This leads to wrongful rejections of claims to protection, leaving people trapped in situations of legal limbo, at risk of deportation to the country they fled from, and even imprisonment in Greece. Beyond violating people's rights, these systems assualt their dignity, which negatively impacts their well-being and further compounds the trauma of forced displacement. **In this context, our teams connect individual legal support and a fight for a structurally just and dignified asylum system.**



# FOR WHO DO WE EXIST?

Every person who seeks safety deserves holsitic and empowering support as they navigate their journey to safety. To ensure that we are making the most meaningful impact, we have set up our projects in a way that balances a wide reach for legal empowerment and more in depth, individualised support for those who the system has failed.

With our daily presence inside the camp on Lesvos, we ensure easy accessibility for the entire refugee population. Our outreach activities to new arrivals and follow-ups with those who already visited our services allows us to detect those who are in need of follow-up support - the single mother who needs custody over her child, the young man with early onset dementia, the minor who lost his brother on the journey, the torture survivor who was wrongfully rejected and the man who is not able to speak due to the trauma he survived.

We have specliased in the individualised, holistic accompaniment of LGBTQ+ individuals, who face many additional barriers and rights violations as they seek a safe place to be who they are.

We provide long term legal representation to those who have faced severe rights violations, in pursuit of justice for their cases and a life in safety.



# IMPACT

# OUR IMPACT IN A NUTSHELL

**2,593**
**Total clients supported in 2025**

## LEGAL CLINIC

**2,526**
people received legal and protection support at our legal clinic.

## LEGAL AID AND REPRESENTATION

**67**
people supported through legal representation and tailored legal aid.

## CASES TAKEN TO HIGHEST COURTS

**13**
cases taken to court through strategic legal representation.

## CLIENTS WITH A POSTIVE DECISION

**82%**
of our clients we supported with legal preparation and represnentation received a positive asylum decision.

## CAPACITY BRIDGING

**430**
430 NGO workers and other actors reached through trainings.

## ADVOCACY

**33**
Advocacy reports and other efforts to push for a just asylum system in Greece and Europe.



# PROJECT OVERVIEW

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

### LEGAL CLINIC

Giving people the tools and confidence to self-advocate and claim their rights in the Greek asylum system.



### SAFETY FOR LGBTQ+ REFUGEES

Comprehensive legal support for people facing particular challenges on their journey for safety.



### STRATEGIC LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Representing clients in asylum process, before national and international courts and bodies.



## SYSTEMS CHANGE

### HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING AND ADVOCACY

Aplifying the experiences of people on the move to push for just asylum systems.



### CAPACITY BRIDING

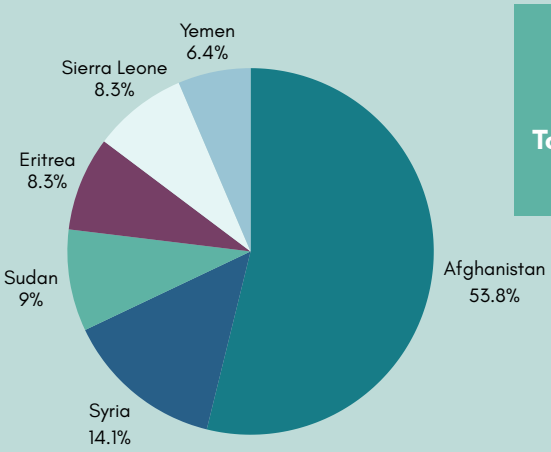
Training other actors on the asylum procedure and safeguarding, to encourage a rights based approach.





# OUR CLIENTS

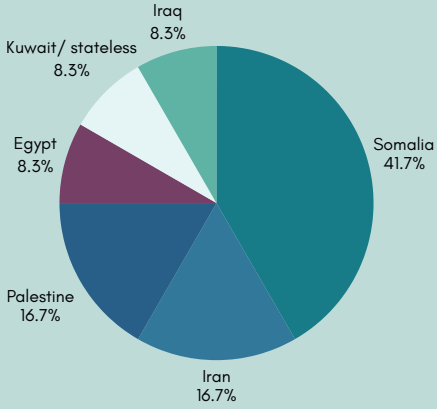
## TOP 6 NATIONALITIES



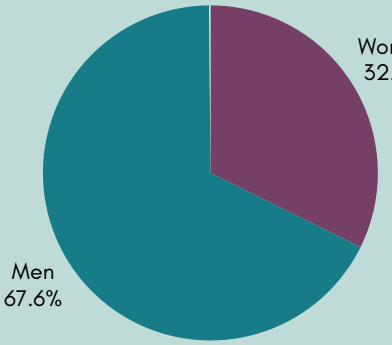

**2,593**

**Total clients supported in 2025**

## NEXT 6 NATIONALITIES




## GENDER




→ 0.1% Identify outside of the gender binary

## CLIENT EXPERIENCES AND VULNERABILITIES

People seeking protection arrive arrive with different backgrounds and experiences. Individuals who have survived or are being challenged by some of the below often face additional barriers to accessing their rights. Our depth legal work focusses on supporting these clients.



People with marginalised sexual orientation / gender identity



Survivors of violence, incl. gender based violence and torture



Survivors of trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery



People with health challenges, including mental health



Pregnant women and single mothers



People for whom safe (third) country concepts apply



# OUR TEAM

## YEAR ROUND TEAM



**HEAD OF PROGRAMS AND SOGIESC LEGAL EXPERT**
ABBY



**ATTORNEY AND HEAD OF LEGAL**
DIMITRA



**PROTECTION COORDINATOR AND SOGIESC CASE WORKER**
MIRIANA



**DIRECTOR**
MAAIKE

## MORE TEAM MEMBERS

We are incredibly grateful for everyone who has been part of our team throughout 2025, bringing their expertise, energy and passion to work with us toward justice for people who seek safety. Most of these team members worked pro-bono. Without these team members. impact described in this report would not have been possible.



POOL OF OVER 20 INTERPRETERS



**ANA**
ADVOCACY PROJECT



**ANTONELLA**
LEGAL OFFICER



**ARON**
ADVOCACY & LEGAL OFFICER



**ASTERIOS**
ATTORNEY



**DANIELLE**
LEGAL OFFICER



**DIMITRA**
SENIOR LEGAL OFFICER



**JOSEPHINE**
LEGAL OFFICER



**LILY**
LAWYER



**LUIZA**
LEGAL & PROTECTION OFFICER



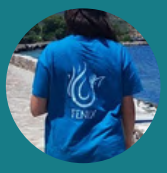
**MARINA**
LEGAL OFFICER



**MARISSA**
LEGAL OFFICER



**NOUR**
PROTECTION OFFICER



**SIMONE**
PSYCHOLOGIST



**THALIA**
LEGAL & PROGRAMS OFFICER


EUROPE
2025 IN PICTURES



# Individual support: Legal clinic

## Project rationale

The huge lack of information within the context of the Greek asylum system has adverse impact on people's physical and mental wellbeing, while at the same time forming a barrier for them to access basic services and legal recognition as refugees.

## Project goals and practice

Our Legal Clinic operates directly inside the Mavrovouni camp on Lesvos and operates with an open-door policy, allowing for accessibility for everyone who seeks asylum on the island. The Legal Clinic consists of two interconnected activities: group information sessions tailored to different steps of the procedure, and 1-1 support with drop-in questions about challenges people face, legal or non legal. Daily outreach activities ensure awareness of our service, reaching as many people as possible within the context of a fast-tracked asylum procedure. The overall goal of the project is to increase well-being and the chance of being recognised as refugees, through these four activities:

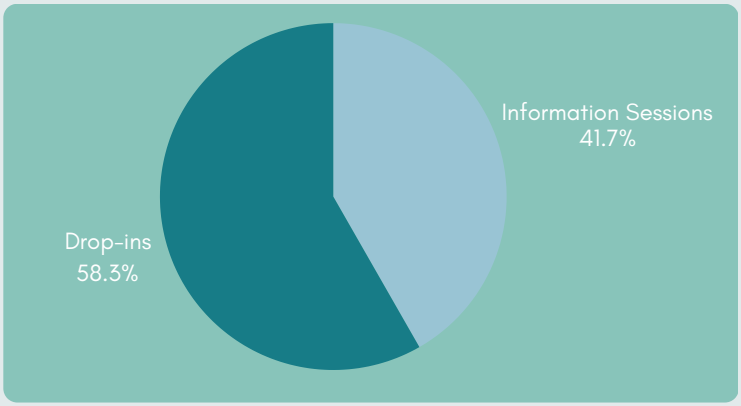
1. Use knowledge as a tool for empowerment, building people's confidence to advocate for their rights.
2. Help people feel more in control of their procedure, reducing stress and anxiety and improving mental health.
3. Reduce reliance on, and the spread of, harmful rumors by ensuring access to accurate information.
4. Improve wellbeing by connecting and accompanying people to essential services, including (mental) health support.

## Project Highlights

**2526** attendees

**38** nationalities

Main nationalities:
- Afghanistan
- Syria
- Sudan
- Eritrea
- Yemen
- Somalia
- Sierra Leone




**100%** felt more confident for their interview

**33%** visited after meeting us during our outreach



**I am always so stressed in camp, but whenever I come here (Fenix container) I feel relaxed and you always make me leave feeling calm inside and with a smile. You always help me and make me feel good again inside.**

***Yousif from Palestine***



# Individual support:
# Safety for queer refugees

## Project rationale

Persecution of people from the LGBTQ+ community is increasing at a rapid speed and across the world, forcing many to flee in search of a place where they can live freely and safely. When they arrive in Greece, they face particular challenges and barriers within their asylum procedure. These include harmful questioning, continued fear hiding in camps, particular medical needs, and the impact of years of violence, internalised stigma and trauma.

## Project goals and practice

We have adapted our holistic legal aid service, together with our clients, to best support people who fled persecution based on their marginalised sexual orientation and gender identiy in accssing a life in safety. We combine four aspects:

**1** Prepare people to advocate for themselves in their interview, using visualisation, storytelling, and trama-informed methods.

**2** Create sessions that are spaces to explore queer identity and build tools to cope with traume and internalised stigma.

**3** Build networks of trust with medical and mental health providers, safe housing, and the local LGBTQ+ refugee network.

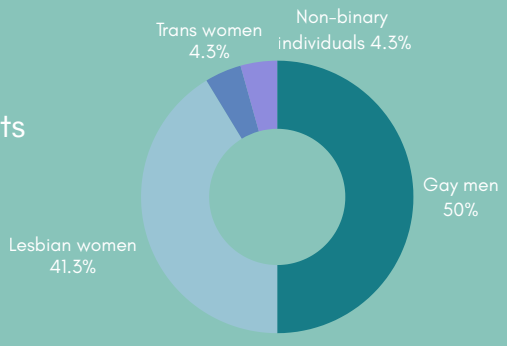
**4** Co-design training and advocacy for sensitive, inclusive services and awareness of the challenges queer refugees face.

## Project Highlights

**11** nationalities

Main nationalities:
- Sierra Leone
- Cameroon
- Guinea
- Gambia
- Yemen
- Ghana
- Iraq

**46** queer clients supported




**100%** accessed necessary medical and mental health care

**8** collaborative advocacy efforts, including conferences, publications and training

**76%** were recognised as refugees after their first asylum interview

# Client story

Lana is a 24-year-old woman from Sierra Leone. She was forced to flee due to persecution related to her sexual orientation.

When she arrived in neighboring Guinea, she was trafficked to Turkiye for sexual exploitation and faced months of sexual violence

She managed to escape her traffickers and reached Greece to find safety

She was referred to Fenix by an LGBTQ-refugee collective on Lesvos. We offered full case management, including interview preparation, referrals and protection support.

Fenix met with L. seven times to prepare her for her asylum interview, explaining the process, helping her share her traumatic story, reviewing possible questions and organising her documents. We also facilitated access to psychological support, medical assessments and evidence, trafficking-related protection and community support. We further ensured her vulnerabilities, overlooked during initial registration, were properly reassessed and recognised.

The client successfully completed her asylum interview, was granted refugee status, and is now settled in Greece.



# Individual support:
# Strategic legal representation

## Project rationale

Amid a deeply broken asylum system, individuals often face serious rights violations and procedural injustices that lead to rejections of their claims and limit their access to the care they have a right to. Only legal intervention can address**.** We represent clients throughout their asylum process, advocating for them at national and international courts and bodies to seek accountability and remedy for their situation.

## Project goals and practice

Our team of Greek attorneys support clients and build strong cases that not only support the indiviual, but also have the potential to set precedents that impact the system beyond a single case. They represent clients at all stages of their asylum procedure, but also in front of national and international courts, bodies and authorities. They collaborate with other actors to ensure care for the well-being of clients, and to support evidence building. The interconnected goals of this project are:

**1** Clients better understand their procedure, enabling them to take effective next steps.

**2** Clients' weelbeing is improved through access to health services and reduced stress and anxiety.

**3** Clients have increased access to their rights through legal interventions.

**4** Greater accountability and remedy for rights violations through strategic legal representation.

## Project Highlights

**21** clients represented by our Greek attorneys

**11** nationalities

Main nationalities:
- Sierra Leone
- Cameroon
- Guinea
- Gambia
- Yemen
- Ghana
- Iraq

**100%** accessed necessary medical and mental health care

**9** cases taken to Court to annual wrongful rejections

1 won, 8 pending

**4** cases taken to the European Court of Human Rights for justice

2 settled, 2 pending



**After we got support from Fenix, I was grateful for having them. All of them, they helped me a lot. And this was the thing that changed my life.**
***Habiba from Afghanistan***



# Systems change: Advocacy

## Project rationale

Attitudes towards people seeking asylum have hardened, and EU and Greek policies and practices keep adding barriers to the right to asylum. The resulting rights violations receive little attention, as the situation for asylum applicants has on the one hand been normalised, and on the other hand forgotten. Our work with clients on the frontline of asylum in the EU places us well to advocate for structural change. Amplifying the experiences of people on the move, we advocate for a more just asylum system in Greece and Europe at large.

## Project goals and practice

We use a range of advocacy avenues, including raising awareness among the public, interventions to relevant law and policy makers, and by contribution to the production of knowledge and evidence. Alongside our individual casework, we ran surveys, interviews, and focus groups to center people's voices; raised awareness online; published reports based on our experience on the ground; put issues on authorities' agenda through letters and policy notes, and spoke with journalists, researchers, MEPs and NGOs. We worked closely with other stakeholders to combine our influence.

1. Increase awareness of rights violations among the general public.
2. The voices and experiences of people seeking asylum are centred in law and policy making.
3. Increase accountability for rights and procedural violations.
4. Law, policies and practices that respect the rights of people seeking asylum adopted.

## Project Highlights

**6** **We are active participants in 6 advocacy networks that help us amplify our work**

**30** **Efforts published, presented or sent**

**3** **Major advocacy events attended**

**1** **Documentary contributed to about refugees on Lesvos**



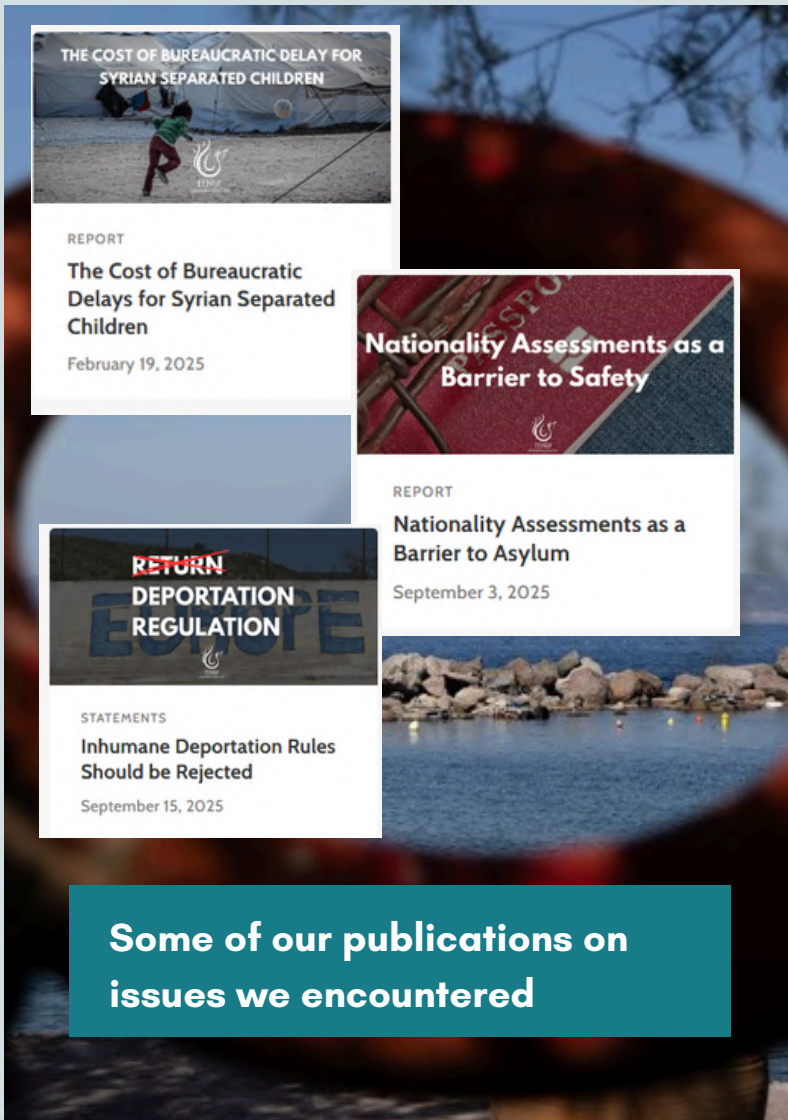

Working with an artist for a book about refugees



At a conference in London about the impact of the Pact



At a conference in Amsterdam about the Borders of Europe




Some of our publications on issues we encountered



# Systems change: Capacity bridging

## Project rationale

For years, NGOs and other civil society actors have been offering essential services for people who seek asylum. Our work is embedded in those support networks, which inspired our wish to bridge the diverse capacities and expertise across sectors. We believe that every actor can provide stronger services when better able to place them in the wider context of refugee protection. At the same time, legal services can be improved by deepened knowledge on health, trauma and first aid. Therefore, our project does not just send knowledge, it also aims to receive knowledge from others.

## Project goals and practice

Through our Capacity Bridging Programme, we bring together different sectors and areas of expertise to strengthen the services available to people seeking protection. We share our legal knowledge while learning from the experiences and expertise of others. By working and learning together, we aim to promote access to rights-based, high-quality and inclusive services:

1. Service providers understand the refugee protection context they work in.
2. Cautious provision of documentation that supports the individuals' asylum case
3. Ensure a rights based and inclusive approach to service provision across sectors
4. Dispelling rumors that can harm decision- making and case outcomes

## Project Highlights

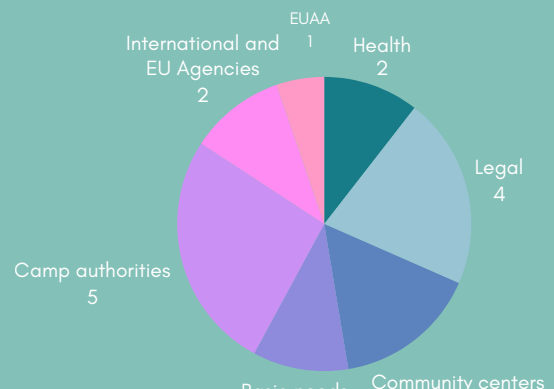
**27** trainings provided

- The asylum procedure
- Medical evidence
- Safeguarding
- SOGIESC claims

**94%** of attendees feel like they can provide better services

**430** people received training in total

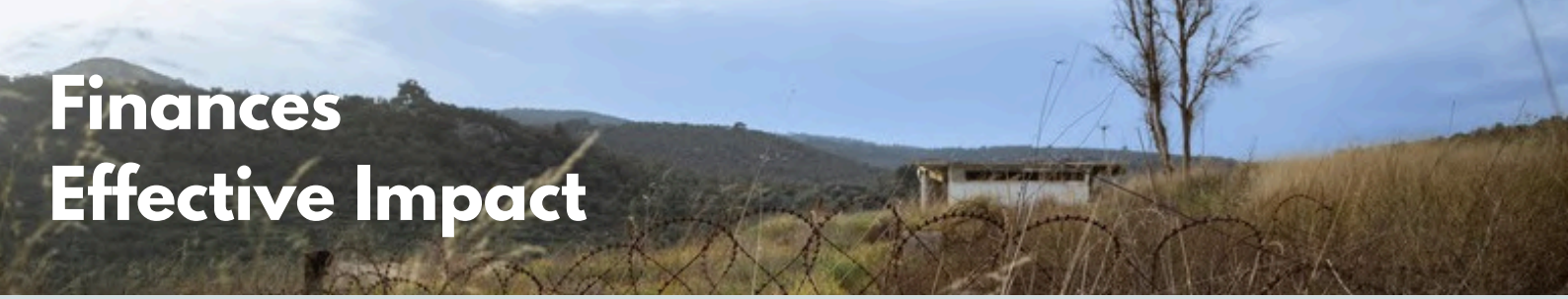
**7** Different sectors reached





**It has been really helpful to understand what people go through before they see me. It is going to change how I start my appointment and my approach in general.**

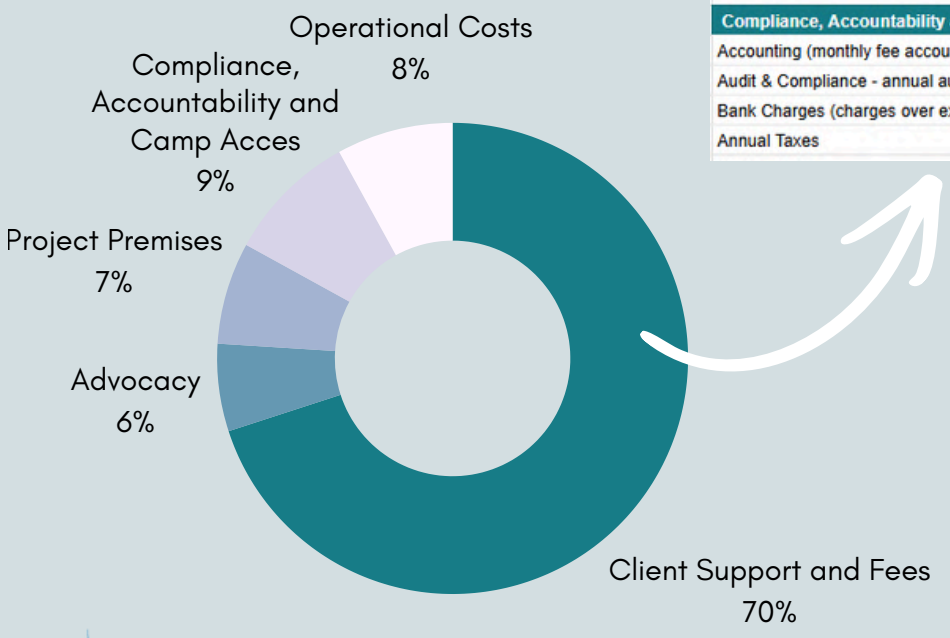
*Doctor at partner NGO*



# Finances
# Effective Impact

We extend our warmest thanks to our donors and to everyone who has supported our work, whether through financial contributions, by sharing their expertise, by helping us advocate for change, or by joining our team. We also thank all the organizations that have placed their trust in us through our partnerships. And, above all, we thank the people we support - those who place their trust in us and inspire us every day to keep working toward a world where every person can live in safety and freedom.

| |
|---|
| **Client Support and Fees** |
| Legal fees, medical appointments, food and non-food items, public transport tickets) |
| Service provision (legal, protection and mental health team) |
| **Advocacy** |
| Advocacy team |
| Conferences (all costs covered by the organisers) |
| **Project Premises** |
| Mytilini and Athens Offices (Rent, Utilties and supplies) |
| Camp spaces (flyers, legal prints, CD's, tea & coffee, container improvements and repairs, visibility) |
| **Operational Costs** |
| Operations team (fundraising, HR, adminstration and operations) |
| Databases, communication and software |
| Team Care and Training |
| Mobility (car, public transport card, fuel, flights between Athens and Lesvos) |
| **Compliance, Accountability and Camp Access** |
| Accounting (monthly fee accountant, accounting and reporting software) |
| Audit & Compliance - annual audits, ISO certification, Safety Officer |
| Bank Charges (charges over expenses and donations) |
| Annual Taxes |




UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

CHOOSE LOVE

HELLA stichting

HELPING HANDS FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE :do stiftung

TOGETHER RISING

SOLIDARITEE

forRefugees

LAWYERS AGAINST POVERTY

a+G Armut und Gesundheit in Deutschland e.V.

STELP

* please contact us at info@fenixaid.org for more financial information

Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid
Amanda Lucia Munoz de Toro Alimonda

FENIX HUMANITARIAN LEGAL AID
ΚΕΝΤΡ.. ΛΕΩΦ. ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΑΣ 14 ΤΚ:10682 ΑΘΗΝΑ
ΥΠΟΚ.. Αγίου Θεράποντος 5 ΤΚ 81131 Μυτιλήνη
ΑΦΜ 996959897 ΔΟΥ ΙΓ' ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

# THANK YOU

**Together for a world in which every person can live in safety, freedom and dignity.**

@fenixlegalaid

@FenixAid

https://www.fenixaid.org

newsletter subscription









