

ecogenia

2023

Annual Report

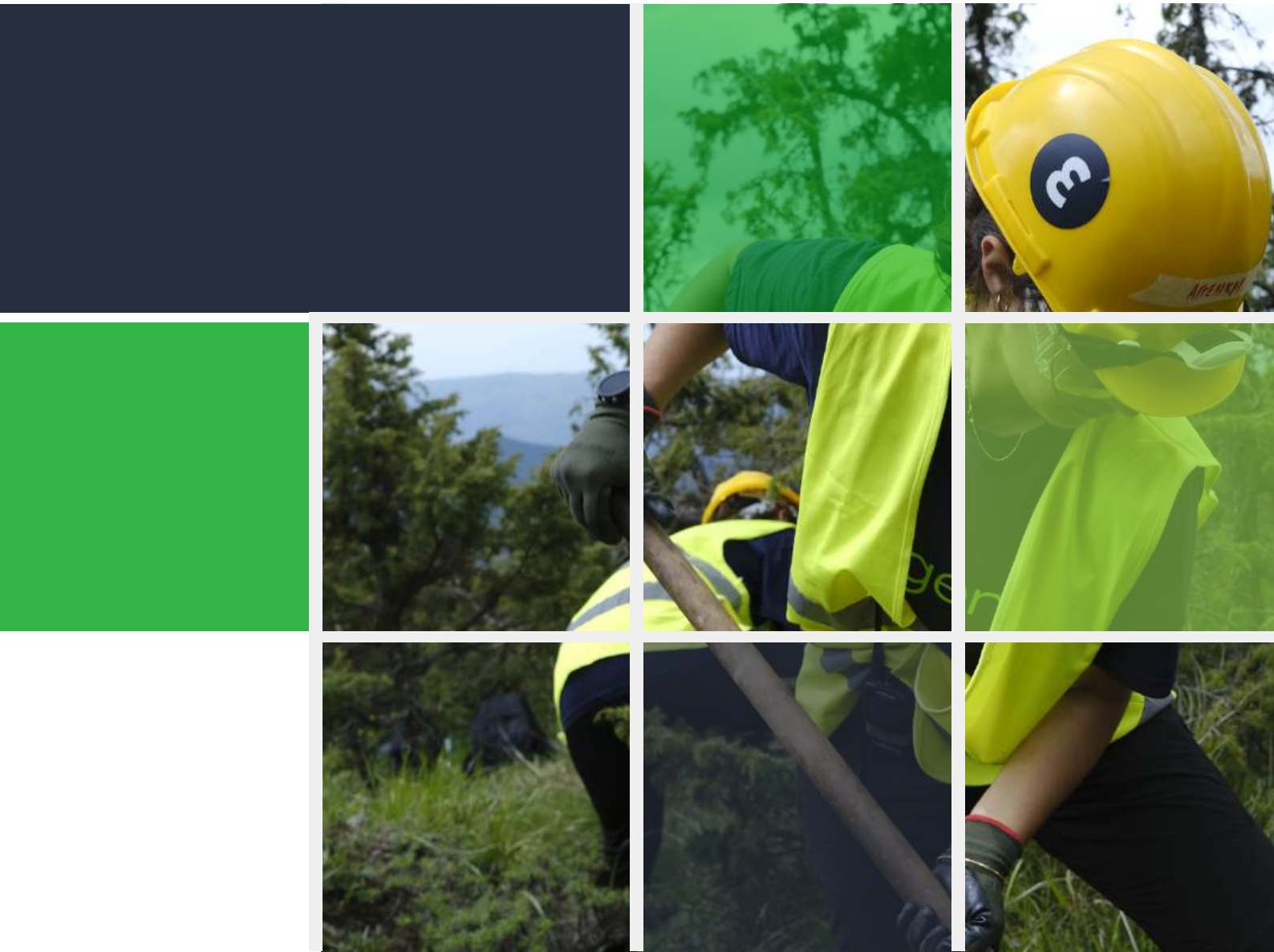


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Co-Founders' Note

Dear Ecogenia Community,

It is our pleasure to share with you our 2023 Annual Report. After a successful year of pilot projects in 2022, this year was our opportunity to refine and improve our program offering and long-term strategic plan.

One of the most significant moments for our team in 2023 was our five day team retreat. This is the first time our entire team was all together in person. With pro bono support from a professional coach, we participated in facilitated workshops to improve our team dynamic and dial in our collective approach to the work that lies ahead, as we work together to build a national youth climate corps for Greece.

This retreat recalibrated our work and grounded us as a team. We established Ecogenia's common values: Action, Collaboration, Service, Resilience, Optimism, Commitment, Equity. We also set out to create a more pervasive work culture and to improve our mission and vision, and by the end of the year we were able to land on something which now more accurately reflects Ecogenia's work. We are proud to present to you our new **mission**: mobilize young people to accelerate localized climate action through the civic service model; and **vision**: a generation of active climate citizens working together for a sustainable and resilient Greece.

We hope as you absorb the pages of this annual report, you will be as proud as we are of the progress we have made towards realizing our mission and vision for Greece.

As leaders of this growing organization, we are continuously humbled by the work ethic and commitment of our staff, our Board of Directors, and our advisors. Without their tireless efforts Ecogenia would not have been able to accomplish all of the impact we have highlighted here in this report.

And of course, we would be remiss if we did not give a special shout out to our 2023 cohort members. Their determination, resilience, curiosity and hard work truly challenged us to be better and helped catalyze our programmatic culture further.

Please join us in celebrating all that we accomplished in 2023 and understanding our biggest lessons , which pave the way for the scaling of our work going forward.

Yours in service,
Lia and Erika

Lia Papazoglou



Erika Spagakou



The Ecogenia Team

Meet the Ecogenia Team!

Below their profile, each team member shares a word to summarize what 2023 meant to them.



Ecogenia Staff Retreat

Ecogenia Team planting a tree during our 1st Staff Retreat in Litochoro.



LIA PAPAZOGLOU
CO-FOUNDER

COMMITMENT

While adapting to an evolving Greek landscape during an election year, we remained steadfast in our mission and vision and prioritized retaining and developing Ecogenia staff while also refining our program culture and offering for cohort members.



ERIKA SPAGAKOU
CO-FOUNDER

VISION

Amidst all the accomplishments, mistakes, unfolding opportunities, moments of doubt and lessons learned that 2023 presented to us, we remained driven by our vision of empowering youth and inspiring a much-needed behavioral shift towards climate action, solutions-orientation and serving the community. We hope this vision will take Greece by storm.

The Ecogenia Team

TEAM MEMBERS



ELENI ANTONIADOU

EDUCATION PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

INTEGRATION

Our programmes and the experience of the first years started to create a strong nucleus between Ecogenia's members, cohorts and supporters, thus creating a smooth path for the integration of the organization in Greek society.



DAMIANOS CHRYSOCHOIDIS

PROGRAM COORDINATOR &
STORYTELLING ASSOCIATE

LEGACY

2023, was my last year with the organization. For the past year, my main intention was trying to leave something behind me, something meaningful. Through a more than ample amount of collaborative and individual work, what 2023 left for Ecogenia couldn't be less than an appealing legacy. a roadmap to Ecogenia's scaled 2024 service project in Litochoro.



VASILIS DIAMANTOPOULOS

PROGRAM CONSULTANT

PERSEVERANCE

Through unwavering perseverance and patient dedication, the path toward achieving the goal becomes increasingly defined and attainable.

TEAM MEMBERS



MELINA DUNHAM

DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

EXPANSIVE

2023 was marked by how much we were able to accomplish as a small team with limited resources. We participated in key conversations and fora, gained recognition from significant outlets, and delivered quality programming. This is testament to our dedication as a team to continuously learn, improve, and adapt.



ANGELOS ORFANIDIS

COMMUNICATIONS
COORDINATOR

RESILIENT

In spite of all the obstacles at every turn, we never lost sight of the principles and components upon which we build, and we were able to evolve both personally and collectively, constantly aiming for a higher purpose and creating our programs in response to the demands of the times.



STEFANOS PAPANOSIFOS

PROGRAM MANAGER

EMPOWERMENT

In a year marked by significant challenges and opportunities, empowerment stood at the core of our efforts. For me, 2023 was about empowering our communities, our team, and the individuals we serve. Through our programs across Greece, we aimed to provide the tools and resources needed for sustainable growth and instill a sense of agency and confidence.

Ecogenia Working Board

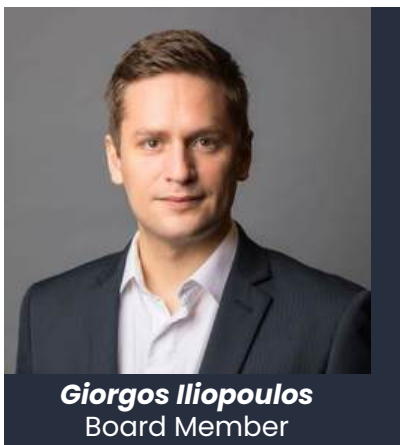
Statement from Marnie McGregor, Chair of Ecogenia's Working Board of Directors

Since Ecogenia's formal establishment in 2021, there have been many significant accomplishments. Highlights of the last year include launching a second service project in the small villages of Dorida, focusing on ecotourism, , and participating in an exchange mission with the California Conservation Corps in the U.S. In 2023, Ecogenia became a youth climate thought leader in Greece and globally, and was invited to contribute to high-profile national and global events such as the New York Times Athens Democracy Forum, the Economist Southeastern European Sustainability Summit.

Ecogenia is about youth taking the actions necessary to address the climate crisis. By providing employment opportunities and taking steps to empower the next generation, and by actively working to create a sustainable, prosperous future, Ecogenia and its cohort of young Greeks are taking and inspiring action. Our future leaders are the real changemakers, and they give me hope for a better tomorrow.



Marnie McGregor
Board Chair



Giorgos Iliopoulos
Board Member



Kostapanos Miliarexis
Board Member

Friends of Ecogenia Board

In Q4 2023, Ecogenia received confirmation of the establishment of Friends of Ecogenia, our 501c3 (non-profit) established in the United States to strengthen engagement from the Greek diaspora community. With this milestone, and support from the Ecogenia staff and Board in Greece, the Friends of Ecogenia Board of Directors was formally established.

Statement from Mary Cardaras, Chair of Friends of Ecogenia Board of Directors

While Ecogenia has engaged Greece in its environmental work from clearing trails, and educating youth to beginning its next project in Olympus focusing on fire prevention and preparedness, the Friends of Ecogenia Board, while fully supporting these efforts, is now working to engage the vast Greek diaspora. That diaspora is an untapped resource in climate advocacy and support.

According to the last estimate from the General Secretariat of Hellenes Abroad, there are more than 5,000,000 people of Greek origin that live outside of Greece in 140 countries around the world. Hundreds of thousands of them return to Greece every year to their ancestral homes or to vacation on islands putting pressure on infrastructures, natural environments, and resources. Garbage is a problem. Water is a problem. The strain on beaches and mountain regions is undeniable. The diaspora must join Ecogenia in preserving and protecting Greece from the pristine crystal blue seas that surround it to the mountain tops as high as Olympus. It was an idea that was marinating in 2023 and will become our focus in 2024 and beyond.

The diaspora has a stake in the sustainability of Greece, and it has the perfect partner in Ecogenia's youth climate corps. The Friends of Ecogenia Board is now fully established and operational and intends to help Ecogenia build and expand its own infrastructure in Greece while gathering the friends it needs abroad to help carry the load and to build.

Mary Cardaras
Board Chair



Elizabeth Hannon
Board Member



Kelsey Moore
Board Member



Volunteers



Ecogenia is humbled by the dedication and time given by so many volunteers who went above and beyond for our organization - they showed up to events, represented us in important spaces, contributed to research and writings, etc. We thank the following key people for all that they contributed to the success of our work in 2023.

Petros Apostolakis, Sam Athlan, Aphrodite Bouikidis, Eleni Dima, Phil Duzdabanian, Aggeliki Korda, Sophia Koumara, Patricia Lehman, Barbara Radmann, Filothei Raftopoulou, Derek Roedel, Giwrgos Stagakis, Jessica Wimer, Maria Zisi, Giannis Ramos.

In addition to these volunteers, we would like to thank our thematic advisors, including:

Anastasis Stamatis, Nikos Therapos, Konstantina Karydi, Andreas Stefanidis, Frosso Dimitrakopoulou, Triantafyllos Al. Bouchounas, Chris Gekas, Marie Trelu-Kane, Larry Notheis and the California Conservation Corps leadership team.

“As a volunteer at Ecogenia in Greece, I support sustainability and empower young people through civic engagement, training, and employment. This experience helps me gain valuable skills and make a meaningful impact on environmental and societal challenges, contributing to both a sustainable future and my personal growth. - **Sophia Koumara, Volunteer**

Our Supporters

Our work is made possible by the generosity and support of our donors. Thanks to the **over 250 individual donors** and the following foundations, corporations, and organizations whose contributions enabled our progress in 2023.



Firehouse Fund: **Cultivating Sparks**



Pro-bono & In-kind support

We are also grateful to the below partners, who provided pro-bono and in-kind support to our work in 2023. And a special thank you to **Samuel Athlan**, who facilitated and led our team retreat pro-bono.



Our Supporters



FIREHOUSE EVENT IN CALIFORNIA

Event hosted by our partner and supporter **Anne Germanacos** in San Francisco California with members of the Greek American Community to know better Ecogenia.



A DAY IN THE FIELD

Dimitris Georgakopoulos, President, Co-Founder of Helidoni Foundation spends a day in the field with the team in Dorida.



END OF YEAR FUNDRAISING EVENT

Eleni Delagrammaticas, CSR Director of Raycap, points out the importance of diaspora support at the local level while also encouraging Ecogenia to cultivate this type of engagement.

TEAM RETREAT IN LITochoro

Samuel Athlan with the Ecogenia team during a hike on Mt. Olympus during Ecogenia's retreat focusing to team bonding communication.



Ecogenia's Program Impact

At Ecogenia, our commitment to youth development, sustainability and community empowerment drives our programmatic work. Through our innovative approach, using the civic service model and collaborative partnerships, we strive to address pressing environmental challenges while fostering social and economic development. We are dedicated to creating a more resilient and sustainable future for Greece with youth leading the way. Our 2023 program impact can be summarized in 5 big categories of work:

1. Service Projects
2. Alumni Network
3. Leadership Development
4. Program Development
5. European Projects

1 Service Projects

Cohort members and the service projects they execute are the heart of Ecogenia's work. In 2023, our cohort member team went back to the region of Dorida as a continuation of the ecotourism and trail building work we started there in 2022. While we are still demonstrating the civic service model, our service projects are only 2 months long - with the hope of increasing the service term to 6-12 months, as per the global best practice. **We have an entire impact report dedicated to the impact of our cohort team's work in Dorida, which you can find on our website [here](#).**



In addition to the report, you can find the impact highlights from our 2023 service project in Dorida below:



8

Cohort Members



1

Cohort Team Leader



2,426

Cumulative Hours Served



810

Cumulative Hours of Training



12.4 km

Trail Completed



25

Volunteers Engaged in 1 Volunteer Day



1

Public Square Maintained

2 Alumni Network

Ecogenia has always had the intention of creating long-term and ongoing ripple effects across our work, and we see our cohort member alumni as being critical to this effort. With a growing roster from three cohort teams, Ecogenia now has a group of 25 young people that we are proud to call **Ecogenia Alumni - or Eco-lumni!** In Q4 we launched our alumni network virtually and selected our 3 cohort member alumni leaders as President, Vice President and Secretary of the alumni group representing service projects from 2022 and 2023. Our staff and this cohort leadership team have big ambitions for the Eco-lumni network moving forward.

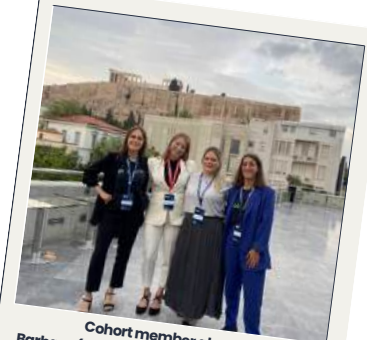
In addition to the formal establishment of the network, our Eco-lumni represented Ecogenia at various trainings, events, conferences, European projects, etc.



Filothai (Dorida 2022)
Representing Ecogenia at a WWF Training



Maria (Dorida 2023) and Filothai (Dorida 2022)
Volunteering with Save Your Hood



Cohort member alumni, Barbara (Dorida 2022) and Meliana (Dorida 2023), attending the 2023 ADF.



Areti (Chania 2022)
Delivering a workshop to Dorida 2023 cohort



4 Chania 2022 alumni
at a special event with Helidoni Foundation



3 Dorida 2022 alumni
providing a professional development day at Dorida 2022

3 Leadership Development

As an organization, we invested a lot of time and resources in leadership development for our team and for cohort members in 2023.

Ecogenia Staff Retreat

We started the year with a week-long staff retreat in Litochoro, to place ourselves in the region where we planned to develop our next pilot project (set to launch in April 2024). The retreat was facilitated on a pro bono basis from professional coach and consultant, **Samuel Athlan**.

This immersive experience allowed us the time and space to debrief from the prior year of pilot projects, create a roadmap for the year ahead, and create a united approach to how we will achieve our vision and mission in the short and long-term.



3 Leadership Development

California Conservation Corps Staff Training Exchange

2023 marked the year we started a partnership with the California Conservation Corps (CCC), the largest and oldest conservation corps in the USA. Through the generous support from the California Conservation Corps Foundation, 7 of our staff members and 1 advisor traveled to California to learn directly from the CCC in the field. Our team traveled to 2 CCC residential centers, 4 non-residential centers and shadowed CCC staff and teams in the field in 8 work sites. Read more about the experience in our linked blog posts:

- [A week with the C's: Thoughts and hopes from Ecogenia's California expedition](#)
- [Ecogenia team travels to California for training](#)

"This knowledge exchange trip was a tool for me to implement the best ideas and practices in the Greek landscape. We share the same values as the CCC – working with diverse communities, promoting social justice, equity and well-being is what we are trying to achieve back in Greece."

Angelos Orfanidis



3 Leadership Development

Cohort Member Team Leader Role

We used our second pilot service project in the region of Dorida as an opportunity to test out a leadership position within the cohort member roles. We created the Team Leader position to support Ecogenia staff in the management of the cohort team in the field and to act as a liaison between the cohort team and Ecogenia staff. With a growing network of alumni, and using the best practices from other civic service programs, we established a prerequisite for this position that the Team Leader must have participated as a cohort member in a previous Ecogenia project.

In this first time piloting this role, it was Vaggelis Issaris, a member of our inaugural Dorida cohort in 2022, that was selected through an internal application process to serve as Team Leader. We were very proud to see him grow in this capacity and gain confidence as a leader. As he expressed to us, the Team Leader training and experience allowed him to increase his organization and communication skills as well as boost his ability to lead, and work within, a team. You can read more about his initial experience that made him apply for the role [here](#).



Vaggelis Issaris
Team Leader, Dorida 2023



Vaggelis Issaris
with the rest of the team

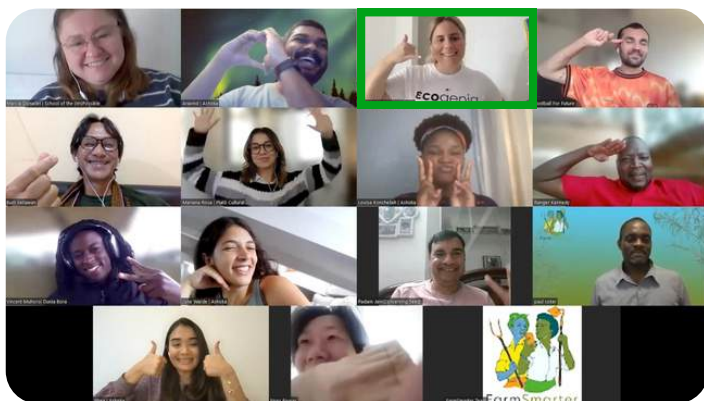


Vaggelis Issaris
in action

3 Leadership Development

Ashoka Green Changemakers

Ecogenia's Co-founder, Erika Spagakou, was selected as one of the **12 winners** of the **Ashoka Green Changemakers Challenge** in the Europe and Oceania regional group. This competition included the consideration of 400 applications from around the world, a round of peer reviews and three rounds of shortlisting. As a **winner**, Erika is now part of the global **Ashoka Green Changemakers network**.



Erika Spagakou pictured with the other 12 global changemaker finalists



Incubators & Accelerators

Prioritizing organizational viability and sound growth in these founding years, we continued to participate in incubators and accelerators. As a highlight, our Development Manager, Melina Dunham, represented Ecogenia in the **HIGGS Green and Sustainable Development Accelerator**, as part of the November 2022–July 2023 cohort. Additionally, Erika Spagakou, Co-founder, was one of the **top 3 winners** of the **Impact Hub Athens ClimAccelerator co-hosted with EIT Climate-KIC**, on April 28–29.



4 Program Development

With just one service project in 2023, our team was able to strategically direct resources to assessing our learnings from all three of our completed pilot projects, incorporating and refining our model, establishing focus groups to better inform our impact areas, and readjusting our strategic plan for the long-term success of our program development and evolution.

1-Year Post-Service Surveys

Our team administered a survey to all cohort members that participated in service projects in 2022 to assess the impact of our program one year later. We understand that a lot of our impact is qualitative and long-term, so assessment of how we leave our mark on cohort members is critical for us to better understand how this impact can create the desired ripple effect throughout local communities and Greek society.

Still in pilot phase, our cohort service projects are still short in duration (2-3 months), when the best practice for a transformational service project is 6 months at a minimum, and ideally 12 months in duration. Keeping this in mind when reading the data from our 1 year post-service surveys, there is a lot to be proud of even with a shorter service term during our pilot phase. Some notable data points from the survey are:

- **High Overall Satisfaction:** The majority of participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with their experience as cohort members of Ecogenia, with an average satisfaction rate of 84%.
- **Empowerment towards climate action:** All of the participants expressed they feel more empowered towards climate action with a rate of 100%.

“

And when asked, “Did your service project with Ecogenia change your personal trajectory and/or impact what you are currently doing”, a cohort member answered, **“I can say with certainty that it made me change to some extent the way I see life and the world, in terms of fellow human beings, solidarity and nature.”**

”

Another cohort member, when asked, “What would you say is the biggest thing you learned during your service term with Ecogenia?”, they answered:

“That even one person can bring about change, if only they try!”

4 Program Development

Disaster Management Focus Area & Service Project in Litochoro

Significant time and resources went into laying the groundwork for our next service pilot project, set to launch in April 2024 in Litochoro, nestled in the foothills of Mt. Olympus National Park.

Our team worked closely with the Municipality of Dion Olympus and the Secretariat of Forests in Pieria, in addition to identified local leaders, to secure a partnership with the California Conservation Corps and the U.S. Embassy for our 2024 service project.

Our team is eager to demonstrate the capacity building capabilities of young people in service work for a National Park and the relevant local and national stakeholders in the region invested in the management of the area.



Frontpage, Olympio Vima, August 23, 2023



Ecogenia team meeting with the Mayor of Municipality of Dion Olympus, Vangelis Geroliolos and Deputy Mayor for Development and Planning, Dimitris Patsiarikas regarding the Olympus 2024 Civic Service Program.



4 Program Development

Thematic Focus Groups



With the learnings from our initial pilot projects, and from our staff training exchange with the California Conservation Corps team, we created formal thematic focus groups to better inform our decision making and work in our impact focus areas.

Our goal was to identify strategic and diverse representation from across sectors who have expertise in our respective impact areas: ecotourism, with a focus on conservation efforts, and disaster management.

To that end, two advisory focus groups were established in 2023 with the aim of informing our program offering for our next pilot project, in addition to supporting our advocacy work. **You can read more about this in the advocacy section of this report.**



5 European Projects



nEU Citizenship

2023 marked the conclusion of a milestone project for Ecogenia. #nEUCitizenship, which was co-developed by Ecogenia and our partners at the [Youthmakers Hub](#) as part of an Erasmus+ grant, was our organization's first EU project funded by Erasmus+ and has become a key pillar of Ecogenia's active citizenship onboarding for our cohort members across all pilot projects so far!

We closed the project with an event in Thessaloniki entitled "The role of young citizens in Greece in today's European reality", which brought together youth, CSOs and members of the Parliament to discuss and workshop the role of youth in fostering civic engagement.



Salto Awards

And what better way to conclude the #nEUCitizenship project than to be the winner in the category "Participation in Democratic Life" at this year's [SALTO Awards](#)!

We are extremely proud of this accomplishment, and of our partnership with the amazing team of Youthmakers Hub that brought this flagship project to life!



Watch it here

European Grand Tour project

Another Erasmus+ project that has allowed Ecogenia to amplify its impact with ripple effects from Greece across the European Union, has been the "European Grand Tour". With the leadership of the [Collective for European Civic Service](#), Ecogenia has been working with various civic service organizations across Europe to promote the institutionalization of civic service at EU-wide level through the creation of a European civic service scheme.

The objective of the project is to mobilize youth across the EU in civic service and facilitate mobility opportunities across Member States to support European cohesion.

As part of this significant work, we are proud to have contributed to a Quality Guide for Volunteering, a Dissemination Guide for emerging civic service projects as well as a [documentary](#) showcasing the inspiring work of civic service organizations across Europe, which was directed and produced by Ecogenia's very own team member, Damianos Chrysochoidis.



Click Here to watch the Documentary

YEUF

With European elections coming up in 2024, Ecogenia is proud to be partnering with other CSOs across Europe to inspire more young people to take to the polls to exercise their voting rights and contribute to stronger democracy across the European Union.

Through the #YEUF project, "Youth Empowerment for Universal Franchise", Ecogenia is among the 15 organizations across the EU that have partnered to organize large and small scale awareness raising activities across the Union. The partners will achieve that by identifying and training "Change Makers" in each country, who will then go on to organize and host these activities.

Ecogenia's Change Makers are none other than four of its Alumni. The team, consisting of Areti Vlachodimou, Filothei Raftogianni, Philip Duzadabanian and Nikitas Karadakis-Agathidis, joined Co-founder Erika Spagakou in Aachen, Germany in May to complete the project's onboarding training and meet partners and ChangeMakers from other countries.



6 Program Partners

All of this important work would not have been possible without the support from our valued program partners. We thank them for their various contributions, ranging from mentoring our leadership team, facilitating training for cohort members and staff, co-designing curriculum, raising awareness about our recruitment efforts, etc. Thank you for your partnership.

**Alpochori
Cultural Center**



Strategic Partners



Advocacy

towards a National Youth Climate Corps

Advocacy is a central pillar of our work. Convening the right stakeholders and activating the right partnerships and networks is an important condition in paving the way for our program to be recognized and funded nationally.

The long-term goal of our advocacy work is the creation of an administrative infrastructure for civic service at the national level. This would include an adapted labor framework so that youth participating in service projects can be compensated in social security and receive a service stipend. This adjustment would recognize the added value youth in civic service bring to the communities they serve, as well as their role in contributing to the country's sustainable development progress and climate agenda.

In 2023, Ecogenia made significant strides towards this long-term goal, by activating different advocacy channels, as detailed in the sections below:

Expert Validation:

Ecogenia has recognized the importance of sourcing expert knowledge in shaping effective strategies for our program development. Knowing this, our team curated a group of experts in two key impact areas of our program offering, **Ecotourism** and **Disaster Management**, to ensure our service projects and initiatives align with best practices and expert knowledge in Greece, across sectors. While these groups are in the nascent stage, in the long-term they will provide invaluable insights, guidance, and feedback to inform our program development and implementation, ensuring that our efforts are evidence-based and impactful. In addition to these focus groups, Ecogenia continues to consult our advisory network for key input, feedback and decision making.



This **promotional video** was a pro bono project contributed by **Damianos Chysochoidis** & **Giorgos Stagakis** to support our advocacy efforts



Stakeholder Cultivation & Networks

As part of our commitment to fostering cross-border collaboration and amplifying the impact of youth-led climate action, Ecogenia has actively engaged in global, EU, and national advocacy efforts.

- **At the global level**

As a top-ranking **winner** of the renowned **Ashoka 2023 Green Changemakers Challenge**, Erika Spagakou and Ecogenia are now a part of the global Ashoka network. This opportunity not only exposed Ecogenia to an impressive network of people and organizations who are making a difference on the ground, it also included intensive training on systems change, which is a further investment in our advocacy work.

Also, our organization had the unique opportunity to be represented at COP28 in Dubai, UAE in **December 2023**. Represented by our Co-founder, Erika Spagakou, as well as Ecogenia's Working Board Chair, Marnie McGregor. Our team was able to attend various side events and panel discussions with a focus on December 8, the day dedicated to Youth, Children, Skills and Education, which hosted the first ever Youth Stocktake.

- **At the regional level**

As part of the 2-year Erasmus+ project **Grand European Tour**, on March 29 Ecogenia participated in an important conference held at the European Parliament in Brussels. Hosted by the Collective for a European Civic Service, which Ecogenia is a Member of, "European Civic Mobility for All" aimed to advocate towards an "Erasmus of volunteers", whereby national civic service schemes would operate in parallel to the European Solidarity Corps to foster European youth mobility and cohesion. Co-founder, Erika Spagakou, represented Ecogenia among 19 partner-associations across Europe, and representatives of the national civic service agencies of various different countries, and addressed Members of the European Parliament on the Joint Declaration "Towards Youth Mobility and Youth Engagement for All". See Erika's remarks to EU Parliament here.

- **At the national level**

Our advocacy efforts at home continued steadfast, engaging various stakeholders including Municipalities and local governments as potential program partners to host Ecogenia service projects in the future, as well as national agencies to continue advocating for legislation to acknowledge civic service as a viable youth development strategy and vehicle.



Co-founder, **Erika Spagakou**, represented Ecogenia and the project "From California to Mt. Olympus" that is supported by the US Embassy in Athens at COP28. Here, at her meeting with the Greek Prime Minister's Special Envoy for the Ocean, Our Ocean Conference 2024 Coordinator, **Dr. Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou**

Special Events and Speaking Engagements

Ecogenia has been humbled by several spotlight moments to showcase our work on the national and global stage in 2023. Notable engagements include:



YES-Europe Annual Conference - April 2023

Stefanos Papadosifos, Program Manager, speaking about youth empowerment in sustainability to the Young Leaders in Energy and Sustainability (YES) Europe gathering in Athens.



ADF - Climate Change Hub - September 2023

The Ecogenia team attended a working breakfast hosted by our partners at the Climate Change Hub on the occasion of ADF 2023, that discussed the important topic of "The impact of "overtourism" and the climate crisis on the tourism product of Greece and the countries of Southern Europe".



The Athens Democracy Forum - September 2023

Co-founder, Lia Papazoglou, speaking at the opening evening of the Athens Democracy Forum. [See the full speech here.](#)



Youth, Sustainability, and Greece - October 2023

Lia Papazoglou, and Friends of Ecogenia's Board President, Mary Cardaras, participated in a panel discussion hosted by the East Mediterranean Business Cultural Alliance (EMBCA, Inc.) that discussed the challenges and real world innovative solutions to mobilize Hellenic youth to build a sustainable and resilient country.

Watch the full panel discussion [here.](#)

Special Events and Speaking Engagements



The 7th Economist Southeast Europe Summit - November 2023

Co-founder, Erika Spagakou, at a panel discussion exploring the youth's thoughts and actions on achieving sustainability. See Erika's remarks [here](#). The panel also featured Ecogenia's Working Board Chair, Marnie McGregor.



Thessaloniki Summit - November 2023

Lia Papazoglou represented Ecogenia during a panel discussion moderated by The Deputy Chief of Mission of the United States of America, Maria Olson. See full remarks [here](#).



Ecogenia co-hosts #GivingTuesday Event at The Demos Center - November 2023

In the context of #GivingTuesday, Ecogenia co-hosted a fireside chat with HALC and The Demos Center, that explored the topic of: How can the diaspora support climate resiliency in Greece? What role does civic engagement play? Read more about the event [here](#).



The Demos Center
Strengthening democracy through active citizenship

Ecogenia participates in the French Institute of Greece's First 'Festival of Science' - November 2023

Melina Dunham, Development Manager, was selected to represent the civil society perspective to the discussion of the future of water security in the context of climate change. More information about the event can be found [here](#).





News & Media



Reach

36,800k

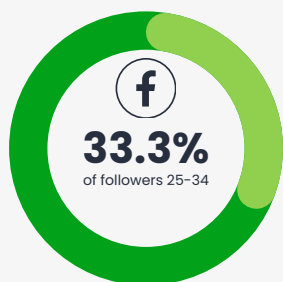
Facebook

Metrics

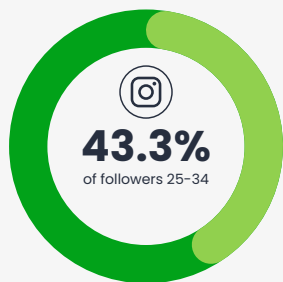
24,900k

Instagram

Age Group



Strongest Age Group 25-34



Strongest Age Group 25-34

Media Engagements



[The Greek Current Podcast](#)



[Olympus 2024 coverage](#)



[ADF remarks](#)



[Ecogenia's growing impact](#)



[Kathimerini article](#)



[Kathimerini's Women podcast](#)

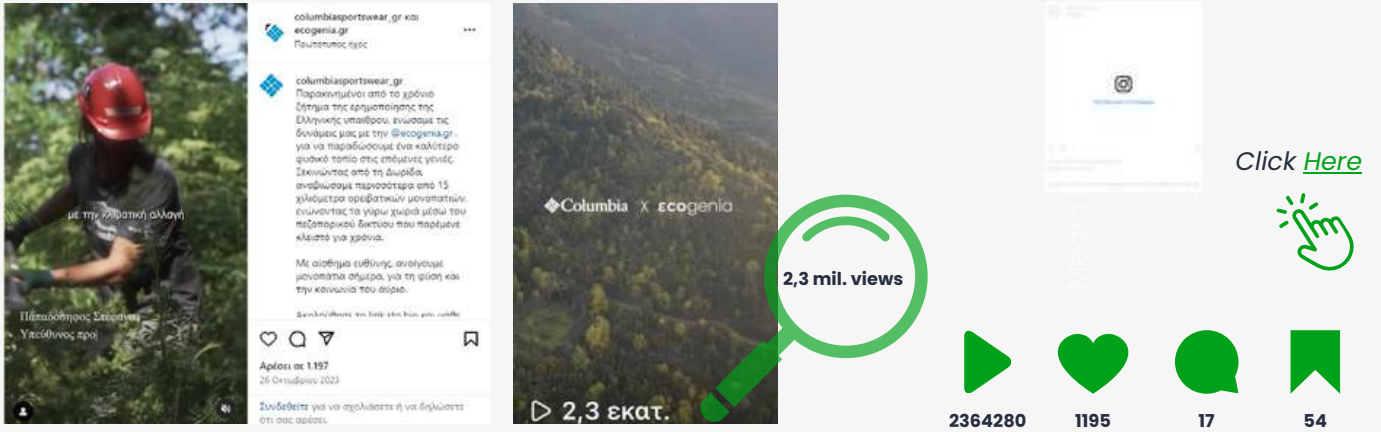


Click on the active links



News & Media

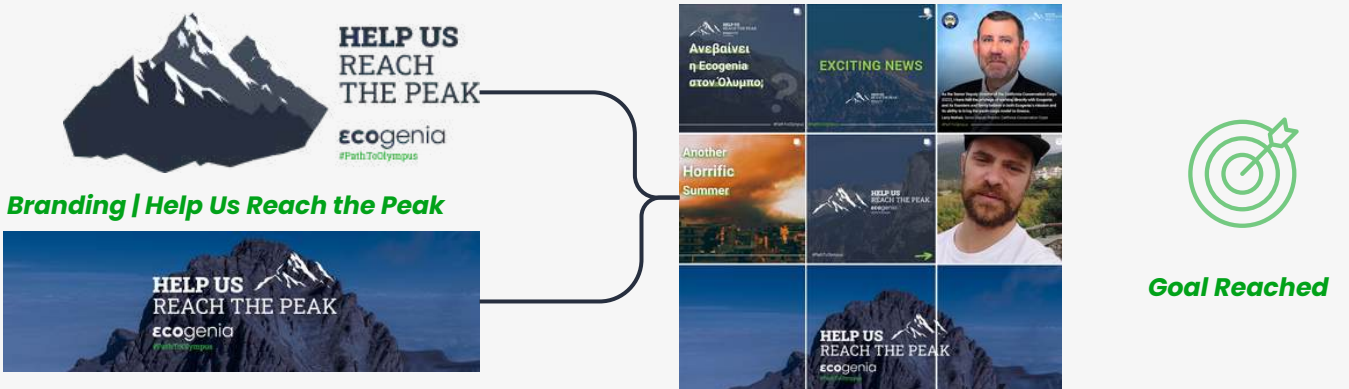
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EoY campaign



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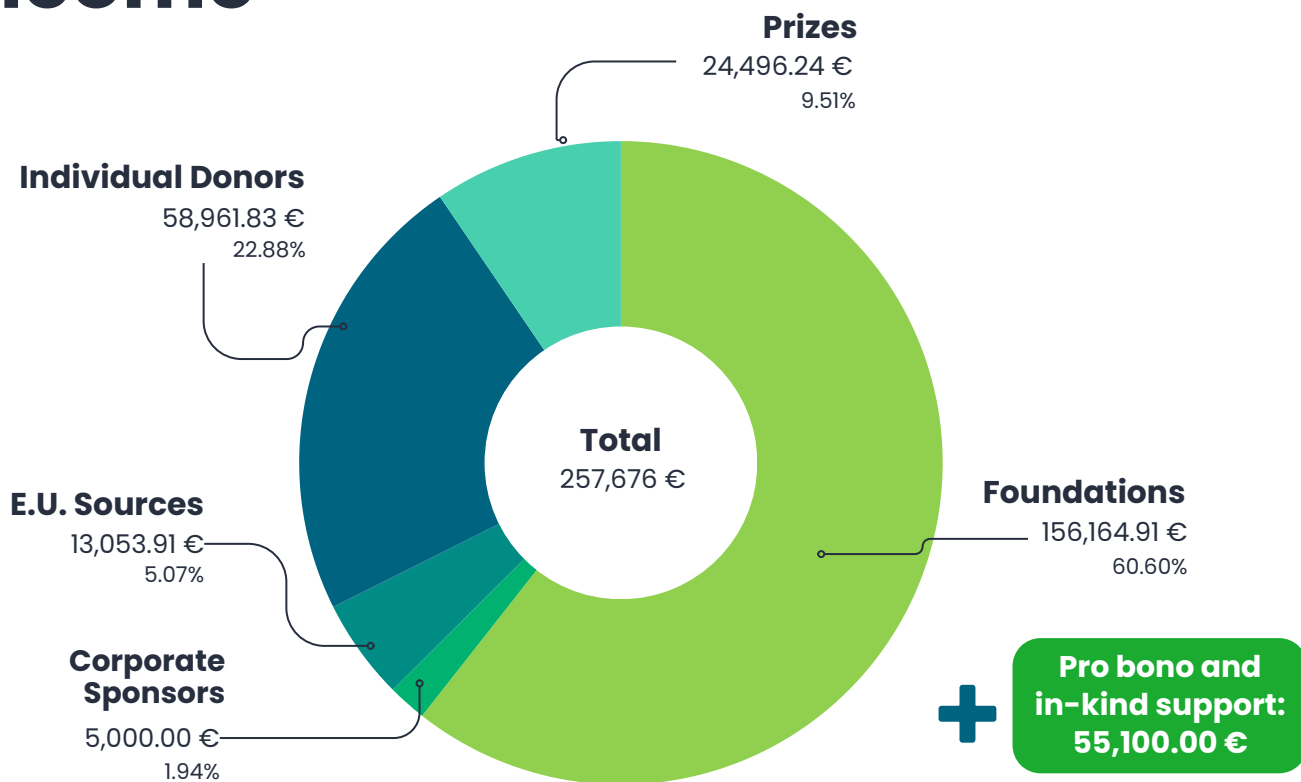
Goal Reached

Other Media References

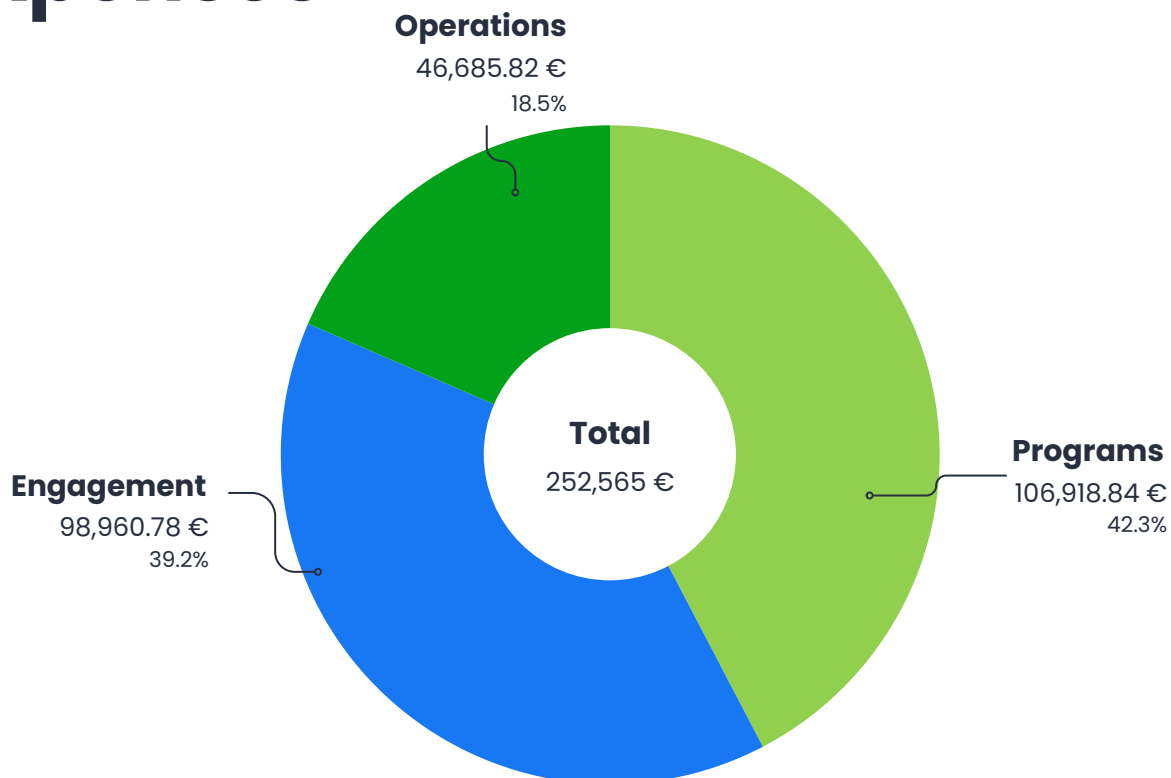
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- [Ecogenia: Mobilizing youth for a Greek national climate corps](#)
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- [Thessaloniki Summit | Lia Papazoglou](#)
- [Πού είναι η κοινωνία των πολιτών;](#)
- [nEU Citizenship: Ο ρόλος του νέου πολίτη στην Ελλάδα στη σημερινή Ευρωπαϊκή πραγματικότητα](#)
- [Live Radio by SNFCC Youth Council | Lia Papazoglou](#)
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- [Women: Ελληνίδες της διασποράς εμπνέουν ενεργούς πολίτες για το κλίμα](#)
- [Erika Spagakou, co-founder, Ecogenia, at the Economist Impact's Seventh Sustainability Summit for SE Europe and the Mediterranean #econsustainability](#)
- [Ecogenia: Προγράμματα κοινωνικής προσφοράς με το βλέμμα στην βιωσιμότητα και την αειφορία](#)
- [Ecogenia: Ετήσια Αναφορά 2022 - CSRNews.gr](#)
- [Η Ecogenia συνεχίζει τις δράσεις σε όλη την Ελλάδα](#)
- [Συνάντηση μελών της AMKE Ecogenia με τη Διοίκηση του Δήμου Δίου-Ολύμπου](#)

Financial Overview

Income



Expenses



Lessons learned

At Ecogenia, we recognize the immense value of pilot projects as invaluable learning opportunities, made possible through collaborative partnerships.

These partnerships have been instrumental in providing diverse perspectives, resources, and support throughout our pilot process.

Together, we have navigated challenges, celebrated successes, and gleaned valuable insights that inform our approach to addressing community needs while also providing a valuable youth development program for cohort members in their service work.

Embracing the lessons learned from these pilot endeavors not only enhances our program effectiveness but also strengthens our relationships and fosters a culture of collective learning and growth.

Our biggest learnings can be summarized as follows:

- **Redefining our Service Work**
- **Identifying and Pursuing Innovative Funding Models**
- **Sourcing Partnerships and Prospective Projects**
- **Improving Organization Transparency and Governance**



1 Redefining our Service Work



In an effort to become more clear in our messaging, we are redefining how we communicate our work. Our main program offering is Ecogenia’s service projects, which are designed using the civic service model and provide a structured youth development program for young adults 18–30 years old to serve a local community’s needs.

Previously, we referred to our programming by highlighting the impact area it addressed, e.g. our “education program” or our “ecotourism program.” Instead, we now refer to these as our focus areas for impact. Moving forward, that will inform the way we frame our work, specifically as service projects focusing on a particular impact area.

Our next service project, for example, will take place in Litchoro between April–July 2024, and will focus on ecotourism and disaster management efforts for the local community. We are excited about this reframing as it puts the emphasis on the civic service project, which is our unique offering to Greece.

Our pilot years have been an important testing period for us to better understand this offering and how to communicate it. We are committed to a continuous feedback loop from our cohort members, key partners, and our staff as we learn and grow as an organization.



2 Identifying and Pursuing Innovative Funding Models



As we continue to refine what our model for scaling in Greece looks like, the Ecogenia leadership team found great inspiration from the California Conservation Corps funding model, which leverages significant funding from the State government in addition to so-called “fee-for-service” funding through their local partnerships (the “fee-for-service” model provides an outsourcing-like framework for stakeholders to engage teams of the CCC to serve specific community needs for a fee).

Working alongside our Board, and key partners like the CCC, our team is committed to securing a funding structure that will promote long-term viability and scaling for Ecogenia, similar to what the CCC has established.

In addition, we are also engaging with Greek stakeholders, and absorbing lessons and examples from the EU context to that end. You can read more about our plans for this in the *Looking Ahead* section below. In addition to this structure, we have a better understanding of the important role the Greek diaspora will serve for our organization. In 2023 we established our own 501c3 (non-profit), Friends of Ecogenia, and in the upcoming year we will build out engagement opportunities for the diaspora ranging from ambassador opportunities, Board membership, etc.



Erika Spagakou and Lia Papazoglou meet with California Conservation Corps leadership team and their strategic partner from San Luis Obsibo to learn more about their innovative fee for service funding model.



3 Sourcing Partnerships & Prospective Projects



Ecogenia’s vision has always been to scale our work across the country. After several pilot projects, we are in an exciting stage where prospective partners are proactively reaching out to us to understand how they can host an Ecogenia youth service team to support their local needs and goals.

To streamline the process and ensure accessibility for all interested parties, we are developing an online platform on our website. This platform will serve as a conduit for stakeholders, including mayors, organizations, and community groups, to submit their requests for hosting cohort members in their community to implement service projects that will address their local needs.

This initiative reflects our dedication to expanding our reach, nurturing partnerships, and responding effectively to the growing interest in collaborating with Ecogenia.

By establishing this transparent and user-friendly pathway, we aim to demonstrate our commitment to community engagement while facilitating the process for interested stakeholders to connect with us and showcase our expanding pipeline of impactful projects.



4 Improving Organization Transparency & Governance



Ecogenia is committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency and governance as we strive to fulfill our mission effectively. Central to this commitment is the development in 2023 of our Board of Directors, who play a pivotal role in guiding our organizational decisions and practices in compliance with regulatory standards and requirements mandated for Civil Society Organizations in Greece.

Our Board of Directors will be instrumental in implementing various initiatives aimed at bolstering transparency and governance within Ecogenia. This includes the introduction of 360-degree reviews for Ecogenia leadership, enabling comprehensive feedback loops to enhance leadership effectiveness and organizational performance. Additionally, our Board will be actively involved in evaluating and refining our strategic plan, ensuring alignment with our mission and responsiveness to evolving challenges and opportunities. This proactive approach underscores our commitment and dedication to maintaining the trust and confidence of our stakeholders.

Additionally, Ecogenia is dedicated to improving our financial reporting practices. We recognize the importance of providing detailed financial information to the public, thereby fostering transparency and accountability. As part of this effort, we will enhance the level of detail available on our website, offering stakeholders comprehensive insights into our financial performance and management of resources.

Ecogenia aims to exemplify the values of accountability, integrity, and transparency, reaffirming our commitment to being a trustworthy and responsible steward of our mission and resources.



Looking Ahead

As we reflect on our achievements and milestones in the past year, Ecogenia is eager to set its sights on the promising opportunities that lie ahead. In the coming year, we are excited to embark on several initiatives that will not only further our mission but also strengthen our impact on the environment and communities we serve.

Advancing Our Partnership with the California Conservation Corps (CCC)

Building upon our staff exchange with the California Conservation Corps in 2023, Ecogenia is looking forward to hosting a CCC youth crew and members of their executive team in Greece in 2024. The CCC crew will work alongside our own cohort team during our next pilot project. Based in the foothills of Mt. Olympus, the first National Park in Greece, this exchange will demonstrate the capabilities of youth teams mobilized in civic service and its transformative potential for local communities. We aim to demonstrate how this type of work can be applied to support local conservation, ecotourism, and disaster management and provide a Sustainable forest management model that can scale nationally.

Securing Partnerships for Scaling

Collaboration is a key value for Ecogenia, and we are proud to embark on new partnerships with like-minded institutions, in addition to expanding existing ones. Our multi-year partnership with the U.S Embassy will support aspects of our youth exchange with the CCC, in addition to supporting our first green skills and career fair in the fall of 2024 and our development of a comprehensive toolkit designed for municipal leadership to effectively engage with Ecogenia to mobilize young people in civic service in their community. This toolkit will be a first big step towards meaningful scaling across the country, as we work towards becoming a national program.

Driving Policy Advocacy

As we strive to scale our impact to become a national youth climate corps, Ecogenia recognizes the critical importance of engaging with national stakeholders and policymakers to create the administrative infrastructure that will recognize civic service as a viable youth development and climate action vehicle. In the upcoming year, we will actively collaborate with key decision-makers to advocate for bold policy measures that align with our mission and enable us to amplify our reach and effectiveness, incl. incorporating civic service stipends in national labor law.

Looking Ahead

Fostering the Eco-lumni Network

Recognizing the immense potential of our alumni, or as we fondly refer to them, Eco-lumni, Ecogenia is committed to nurturing a vibrant network of change-makers. We envision our Eco-lumni as catalysts for transformative action across Greek society, serving as ambassadors of climate action in their communities and carrying forward the ethos of active climate citizenship. We also see the network as a space to foster service learning opportunities and life-long green skills development.

Measuring Impact through SROI

Understanding the tangible effects of our work is paramount to our commitment to accountability and continuous improvement. In 2024, Ecogenia will undertake a project to develop a Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework to comprehensively assess and quantify our impact on local communities. This important work is in collaboration with our valued partners at Dataphoria and DOTank+. This endeavor will not only provide valuable insights but also guide our strategic direction and resource allocation in the years to come.

Implementing a New European Erasmus+ Project - LOCALY

In the same spirit of collaboration, we are thrilled to begin a new multi-year partnership with the Goethe Institute and three other partners from Italy, Spain, and Germany to demonstrate how youth organizations can play a greater role in advancing environmental education. The LOCALY (Local Capacity and Awareness of Life for Youth) Erasmus+ Project will result in an innovative toolkit containing learning materials specifically adapted to the needs of youth organizations, and that will lead young people through a process of exploration and reflection, problem identification, solution development, community-based implementation, evaluation and presentation.

Preparing for 2nd Service Project in Chania

With a commitment from the John S. Latsis Foundation, we will implement our second pilot service project in Chania, with a focus on educating youth on active climate citizenship in Chania public schools and youth organizations on the island. The upcoming year we will refine our original curriculum, incorporating learnings from the LOCALY project and secure the relevant partnerships in order to start the project in January 2025.

As we look forward to the opportunities and challenges that await us, Ecogenia remains steadfast in its dedication to promoting environmental stewardship, empowering youth, and catalyzing positive change. Together, we will continue to innovate, collaborate, and inspire, as we strive towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all.



Join us



As we stand at the threshold of a critical decade for climate action, Greece has witnessed unprecedented challenges, with devastating floods and wildfires underscoring the urgent need for transformative approaches to disaster management. Now is the time for action. Together, we have the opportunity to catalyze resilience efforts and empower youth climate leadership through civic service.

We call upon all stakeholders – *policy-makers, funders, civil society organizations, media, and Greece’s eager diaspora* – to join us in this vital mission. Let us forge partnerships that amplify our impact and propel us toward a sustainable future. **Together, we can build a national climate corps, harnessing the energy and innovation of youth to tackle climate challenges head-on.**

Join us in shaping a resilient Greece and a healthier planet. Together, we can make a difference that reverberates far beyond our borders. Together, we can turn challenges into opportunities and pave the way for a more resilient Greece. The time for action is now.





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