



ANNUAL REPORT

2025

Embedding Civic Service in Place

*Youth-led climate action across communities,
institutions, and ecosystems*

ecogenia.org

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Building Greece's first Youth Climate Corps

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Foreword

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-FOUNDERS

A YEAR OF STAYING



Lia Papazoglou
Co-Founder, Ecogenia



Erika Spagakou
Co-Founder, Ecogenia

2025 was a year of staying.

In a context that often rewards rapid expansion, we chose to remain in place, and go deeper. Because what we are building cannot be rushed.

Embedding civic service in place means committing long enough for trust to form, for partnerships to mature, and for service to become part of how institutions and communities operate. It means showing up not as a temporary program, but as a consistent presence.

This year stretched us.

Working across schools, ecosystems, and public institutions required us to deliver in real time while building something more enduring beneath the surface.

And in that stretch, something became clear: when service is rooted in place, it begins to shift expectations. Institutions start to rely on it. Communities begin to see it as their own. Young people find a pathway to contribute meaningfully where they are.

What we now know is simple: lasting climate action begins with presence.

It begins when service takes root.

Yours in service,
Lia and Erika

Ecogenia at a Glance

BUILDING GREECE'S FIRST YOUTH CLIMATE CORPS

Ecogenia is a pioneering non-profit building Greece's first Youth Climate Corps.

Through **paid civic service**, we empower young people to lead local climate action, support vulnerable communities, and drive sustainable development.

Since **2021**, our growing movement has been **recognized nationally and internationally** for reimagining how civic service can build a more resilient and sustainable Greece.

With your support, we are creating a new generation of active climate citizens.



Youth in Action



Community Impact



Nature & Climate

Our Vision

A Generation of **Active Climate Citizens**

We envision a generation of young Greeks, active, informed, and united, leading the charge for a climate-resilient and sustainable Greece.

Our Mission

Mobilize Young People via **Civic Service Model**

Ecogenia exists to establish Greece's first national climate corps.

We mobilize youth to drive climate action, strengthen communities, and build a resilient green workforce for the future.

The Ecogenia Team

MEET THE ECOGENIA TEAM

Ecogenia's team is the operational core behind its civic service model, connecting youth development, climate action, and community needs in the field. In 2025, the team worked across program delivery, partnerships, communications, and organizational development to support Ecogenia's continued growth in Greece.



Erika Spagakou
Co-Founder



Lia Papazoglou
Co-Founder



Eleni Antoniadou
Program Coordinator



Vasilis Diamantopoulos
Program Coordinator



Stefanos Papadosifos
Operations Manager



Sophia Sioka
Program Assistant



Angelos Orfanidis
Communications Partner

The Civic Service Model

HOW ECOGENIA DELIVERS CLIMATE ACTION

Ecogenia's model is built on a simple but demanding idea: **young people are the front line of climate resilience**, and **civic service must be treated as urgent work responding to real needs**, in real places, with real institutional support.

This is what separates embedded civic service from short-term volunteering. Service that passes through a place leaves little behind. **Service that takes root changes the landscape.**



01 Recruit & Train

Youth aged 18–30 are selected through open calls.

An **intensive onboarding** covers field safety, environmental knowledge, and civic leadership.

Members receive a monthly stipend for their full-time service.



02 Embed in Place

Cohort members serve for several months in specific locations across Greece (e.g. schools in Chania, trails and kiosks on Mt. Olympus).

Their work is consequential: it **directly serves communities, ecosystems, and institutions**.



03 Work with Institutions

Every project is anchored in **formal agreements** with municipalities, forest services, and ministries.

Institutions **co-design activities**, share resources, and integrate Ecogenia into public operations to address a public need.



04 Build Lasting Systems

Field practice is documented and translated into policy advocacy, replicable handbooks, and volunteer strategies that outlast any individual cohort and **contribute to long-term civic infrastructure**.

WHY GREECE NEEDS CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Youth unemployment in Greece stands at 16% (Eurostat, 2024), while the country faces escalating climate impacts: wildfires, floods, and extreme heat that strain institutions already under pressure.

Ecogenia addresses both crises simultaneously, connecting young talent to urgent environmental needs through a model inspired by **AmeriCorps**, the **California Conservation Corps**, and **Unis-Cité**.

2025 at a Glance

KEY FIGURES, MILESTONES, AND GROWTH

In 2025, Ecogenia focused on **embedding civic service** in place through programs in schools, protected ecosystems, and local institutions.

In Chania and Mt. Olympus, young people delivered **climate education, environmental restoration, wildfire prevention, and community engagement** alongside municipalities and public agencies.

Field implementation also informed advocacy and institutional dialogue, advancing Ecogenia's work to establish civic service as **long-term civic infrastructure in Greece**.



IN PLACE



CHANIA, CRETE JAN – MAR

7

cohort
members

735

students
reached

2,484

service
hours

- Sustainability education in 10 schools
- Weekly workshops & student projects
- Coastal clean-up & community events
- Remote school outreach in Sfakia



MT. OLYMPUS, PIERIA JUN – SEP

12

cohort
members

7,200+

service
hours

27.5 km

trail work &
restoration

- Trail maintenance & new trail opening
- Wildfire prevention & buffer zone creation
- Info-kiosk, citizen science & volunteer engagement
- Visitors & community served across the season



WITH INSTITUTIONS



47

partner
organizations
engaged
(Olympus)



10

primary schools
engaged
(Chania)



3-YEAR MoU

with municipalities
(Chania & Dion-Olympus)

Formal partnerships
in place



FOREST SERVICE & NECCA

Active collaboration
on operations, data
& monitoring



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

Strategic partnership
for youth civic service
& climate resilience



VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Strategy launched
for year-round
community activation



BEYOND PLACE



**ERASMUS+
LOCAL(Y) PROJECT**
Toolkit for youth climate
action & non-formal
educators



EU CLIMATE PACT
Active engagement
in EU-level dialogue
& campaigns



6+

national
conferences
Sharing practice
& advocating change



**NATIONAL & EUROPEAN
NETWORKS**
Partnerships for peer learning,
advocacy & model promotion
across borders



€21,310

end-of-year campaign
Mobilizing support for
youth climate service

Civic Service in Education

Chania, Crete · January – March 2025

When Ecogenia first ran a climate education pilot in Chania in 2022, it reached 523 children across a handful of classrooms. Three years later, the 2025 program **returned with a fuller model**, more schools, and a clearer theory of change: young cohort members embedded in local classrooms month after month can meaningfully shift how children relate to their environment.

The **Local Green Heroes curriculum** reached 735 students across nine primary schools and 31 classrooms, with weekly facilitation by seven cohort members and one Team Leader over eight weeks of service. The program was co-designed with the **European Outdoor Education Hub** and formally supported by the **Municipality of Chania**.

Cohort members were trained and certified in **Basic Life Support** and as **Climate Fresk facilitators**.

A large-scale coastal clean-up on March 9, carried out in collaboration with **Save Your Hood**, mobilized students, parents, and local partners. The activity brought together 150 volunteers, collected 12,000 items of waste, and cleaned 2 km of coastline.

On March 18, the program was delivered at the remote primary school of Vouvas in Sfakia, extending access to a community with limited exposure to structured environmental education.

Key Partners:



ΔΗΜΟΣ ΧΑΝΙΩΝ
MUNICIPALITY OF
CHANIA · CRETE



Κοινοφελές Ίδρυμα
Ιωάννη Σ. Λάτση



TUI CARE
FOUNDATION



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ
ΜΠΟΔΟΣΑΚΗ



European Outdoor
Education Hub



ΠΡΑΚΤΟΡΕΣ
ΤΟΥ
ΠΑΛΗΝΤΗ



7

cohort members + 1 Team Lead

735

students reached

31

classrooms across 10 primary
schools

2,484

cumulative service hours

97.9%

teacher satisfaction - strong alignment with classroom needs

50

Educators engaged across the program



Trail Team



Community Engagement Team

Key Partners:



Civic Service in a Protected Ecosystem

Mt. Olympus, Pieria · June – September 2025

In 2025, the **Olympus 2025 Civic Service Project** reached a new level of ambition. For the first time, two distinct teams operated simultaneously across the national park.

- **The Trail Team**, funded by **The Hellenic Initiative Canada Foundation**, deployed eight cohort members on trail restoration, wildfire preparedness, and environmental monitoring.
- **The Community Engagement Team**, funded by the **Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)**, reopened the Litochoro Information Kiosk, closed since 2018, and anchored a program of citizen science, volunteer mobilization, and public education.

Together, **12 cohort members** and one international fellow delivered over 7,200 hours of civic service, under formal agreements with the Municipality of Dion-Olympus, the Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Pieria Forest Service.

27.5 km trail work completed	34 acres wildfire buffer zones	71 volunteers mobilized
2,977 tourists served at kiosk	7,200+ hours of civic service	~1,500 biodiversity observations
13 trail hazards addressed		416 kg waste removed

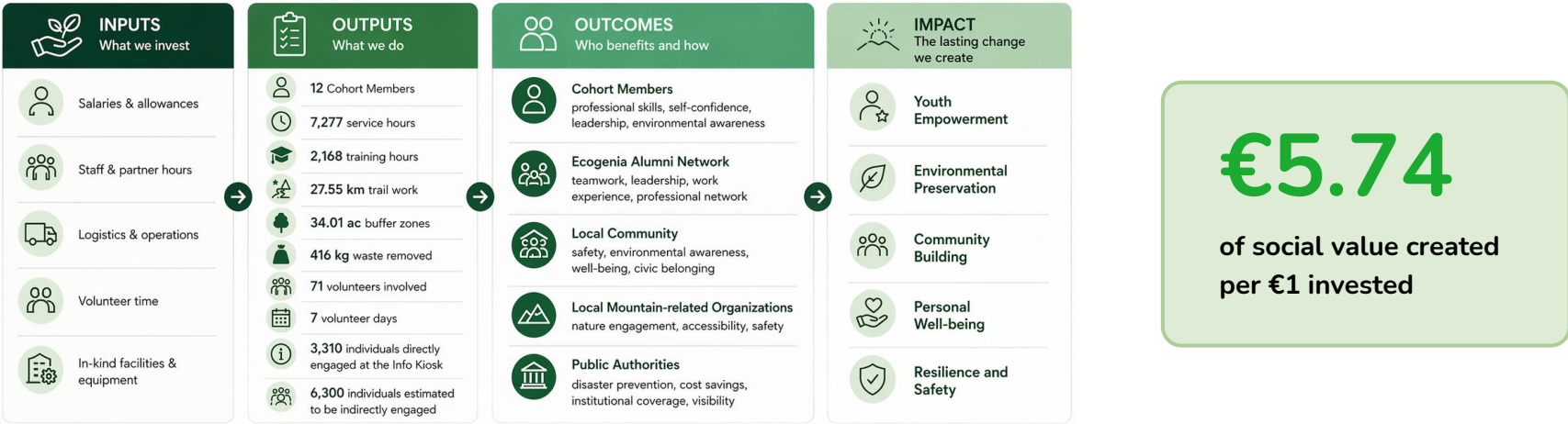
Social Return on Investment

IMPACT ANALYSIS

A **Social Return on Investment (SROI)** Analysis was conducted for the **second consecutive year** for the **Olympus Civic Service Program**. The SROI Analysis is an impact **evaluation analysis** based on the methodology in line with the principles of **Social Value International**. Its aim is to quantify social, environmental and economic value relative to resources invested. It translates stakeholder outcomes into monetary terms, making the full impact of a program visible alongside its financial cost.

From Activities to Impact

To understand how this value was created, the table maps the full pathway from program inputs to long-term impact. The table shows how, within the Olympus Civic Service Program 2025, **resources** were translated into concrete **activities**, how these generated measurable **outputs**, and how different stakeholder groups experienced **outcomes** that contributed to broader environmental and **social change**, making visible how **operational work translated into social value**.



The SROI analysis was conducted by DOTANK Plus and Dataphoria between August and September 2025. For the full Social Return on Investment Report, please access this [link](#).

Beyond Place

ADVOCACY & SYSTEMS WORK

Insights from Ecogenia's place-based civic service in Chania and Mt. Olympus informed national and European dialogue on youth-led climate action, civic service, and institutional resilience.

European Collaboration



- Erasmus+ **LOCALY** project reached its final phase
- **LOCALY Toolkit** developed for youth workers addressing local environmental challenges
- **Youth Bootcamp** and final multiplier event completed
- Active member of the **European Climate Pact**

National Dialogue



- Contribution to 6+ national conferences and forums,
- Participation in the **Economist Sustainability Summit**, the **Resilient Cities Conference**, and the **Youth Climate Diplomacy Forum**
- Participation in **YESVolunteer** and **INTERREG** initiatives advancing structured youth civic service in the Mediterranean

COMMUNITY & DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

Ecogenia's work expanded beyond project sites, activating diaspora communities and transnational partnerships supporting youth climate civic service.

Diaspora Support

- **THI Canada Foundation** supported Olympus 2025 Trail Team
- Alkistis Montreal benefit event mobilized diaspora supporters
- End-of-Year Campaign raised **€21,310** from individual donors



International Exchange

- First international fellow from Canada hosted within the Olympus cohort
- Youth workshop exchange with Japanese youth implemented
- Cross-cultural learning integrated into program methodology



Media & Visibility

- **Columbia Sportswear** promotional partnership launched
- Interview with Co-Founder Erika Spagakou in **Makedonika Nea**
- **55 posts** and **351 stories** published across Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn

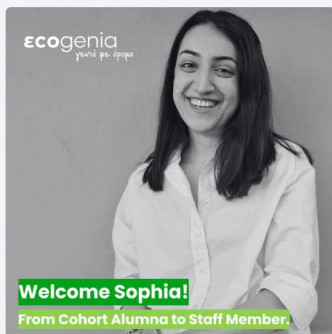


Building the Capacity to Stay Embedded

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

From Cohort Member to Core Team

Alumni-to-staff transition



Sophia Sioka completed a service placement with Ecogenia in 2024 and joined the permanent staff in March 2025, growing into the role of Programs Assistant. Her trajectory reflects Ecogenia's **pathway from participation to leadership**, showing how civic service builds skills, experience, and leadership opportunities for young people in climate action programmes.

Restoring Public Infrastructure

Reopened and reactivated key public infrastructure in Mt. Olumpus



Information Kiosk
(Litochoro) Reactivated



Golna Field Kiosk
Restored



Prionia Fire Lookout
Point Re-staffed

Community Engagement Team Formalized

A dedicated team operating in parallel with the Trail Team



Managed the **Info-Kiosk**, ran **BioBlitz citizen science events**, and coordinated volunteer activations, strengthening the social and ecological impact of civic service.



4 dedicated
team members



11 volunteer
activations



5 BioBlitz events



2,977 visitors served
at the Info-Kiosk

Volunteer Engagement Strategy

A long-term framework to sustain civic participation



Activation model



Coordination protocols



Community outreach approaches



Replication framework

Formalized with **Stavros Niarchos Foundation** support, distilling 3 years of operational learning into a replicable and adaptable framework.

Made Possible Together

SUPPORTERS, DONORS & PARTNERS

Ecogenia's 2025 work was made possible by the **donors, institutional partners, municipalities, local organizations, and operational collaborators** who supported program delivery, youth civic service, climate education, environmental restoration, and community engagement.

We extend **special thanks to all individual donors**, including contributors to the **2025 End of Year Campaign**, as well as the residents, volunteers, and local communities who welcomed, trusted, and supported Ecogenia's teams throughout the year.



Looking Ahead

SCALING PLACE-BASED CIVIC SERVICE IN 2026

Scaling can mean going deeper, strengthening what already works, formalizing what has already proven its value, and extending presence where the case for service has been made and accepted. In 2026, Ecogenia will build on the institutional relationships, operational infrastructure, and civic trust accumulated over four years of embedded work.



Year-Round Presence on Mt. Olympus

The Pieria Forest Service and NECCA have formally requested that Ecogenia **extend its kiosk and engagement model** to additional lookout stations across the national park. In 2026, the organization will pursue a **year-round operational presence** in Litochoro maintaining the Information Kiosk in off-season months.

This **transition from seasonal program to permanent infrastructure** is the clearest expression yet of what embedded civic service can become.



International & European Partnerships

The partnership with the **California Conservation Corps**, one of Ecogenia's founding reference models, will continue to develop as a channel for peer learning, shared practice, and international advocacy for civic service.

Having concluded the LOCALY Erasmus+ project at the end of 2025, Ecogenia will pursue **new European collaborations** that build on its established expertise in field-based service, non-formal education, and institutional advocacy for youth civic employment.



Expanding Across Greece

Building on the operational models established in Chania and Mt. Olympus, Ecogenia will **expand its place-based civic service model** into new regions across Greece.

Through new municipal partnerships and locally adapted project models, the organization will extend civic service **to communities facing environmental and social resilience challenges**.

This expansion forms part of Ecogenia's **Clinton Global Initiative Commitment to Action**, targeting five municipalities by 2027



Institutionalising Civic Service in Greece

In 2026, Ecogenia will strengthen its advocacy to position civic service as a **recognized pathway for youth employment and climate resilience** in Greece.

Building on field evidence and institutional partnerships, the organization will continue advancing **policy dialogue, operational frameworks, and public sector engagement** to support the long-term integration of civic service into national and local resilience systems.



Get in Touch

We'd love to hear from you!



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