

## Report

I've been here for a month and a half and I'm just in the middle of my MBB experiences. It seems, however, that I will be here much longer.

Time passes very quickly, but it is also very intense. We never stop because we never stop thinking.

We see and hear many terrible things, things we could never have imagined, even when we see or hear the news every day.

We're dealing with a lot of homeless people. One of the most important activities we do is therefore working in the "Magazy", a place where these people can get clothes, blankets or some other basic things. The most important thing for the volunteers is not only to organize the distribution of clothes or to receive the donations, but above all to communicate with the refugees and help them to choose the right clothes or give them the correct information about places, where they can find more help. These offers of assistance also include our own organization. Although we do not have a place where the refugees can sleep, we offer lessons or a place where they can feel safe and relax - this is our so-called "Tea Time". Sometime during the day they come to us and just have a cup of coffee or tea and eat some cookies. Then they can experience a moment of "normality", feel safe and have the opportunity to talk to each other and also to us, the volunteers. Sometimes it can be difficult for the volunteers to have a long conversation with them, because many of them don't speak English or simply because they are so many of them (more than a hundred in the small space), so we never stop giving them drinks or something to eat, which is a really good sign.... it means that they feel liked and they trust us and then maybe later bring their families or friends with them.

Apart from the tea break, we offer courses or activities for the children (many of them do not go to school). These activities can be painting, playing or watching movies and the lessons can be either in languages (English, French and Greek) or we also teach mathematics - I am one of these teachers.

The difficult thing about teaching mathematics is that I teach a small group of children, but these children are all at a different level. In the same class I can have a person who doesn't even know how to write or pronounce the numbers and at the same time I can have a person who knows how to multiply numbers. So as a teacher, I have to teach them individually, with a whole group of other students around them.

Finally, JRS is connected in many partnerships with other organizations, which means that we also go to some of their activities, like those of Caritas or the Sisters of Mother Teresa (food for homeless people on the street).

Our routine as volunteers can be very simple, but also very hard at the same time. The reason for this is that it doesn't mean that we just give them some bread on the street, but that what we give them is the only food they will have all day. It is not only about teaching a new language, it is also about giving them the best way to get a voice and ask for help. And often it is only a short conversation, a smile or a friendly gesture that gives them the dignity they deserve.

We can't change their lives, but we can do something for them.

Barbará MBB- Volunteer in Athens