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Greece / ART

## How the National Theatr Northern Greece is Maki Social Impact



The National Theatre of Northern Greece has adoptorward-thinking and dynamic approach to making impact. We explore how they are setting a new age

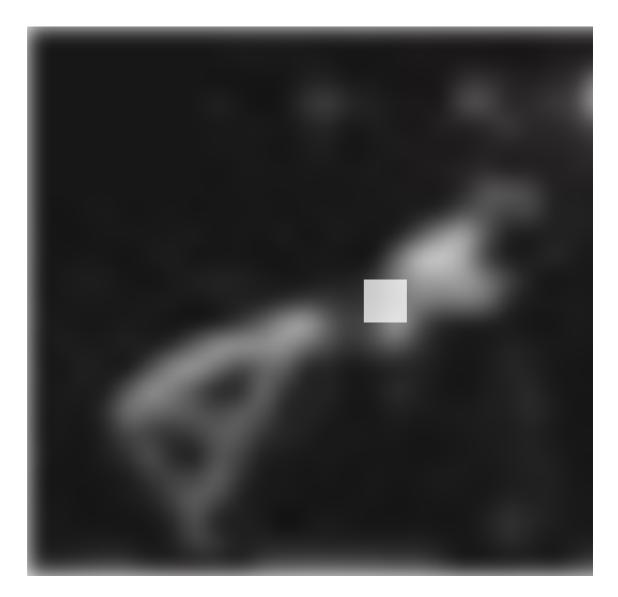
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Located in Thessaloniki, The National Theatre of Northern Greece (I founded in 1961 and is Greece's largest theatre. Since it opened, the active in both the cultural and social spheres. Today, the cultural ore consists of five theatre spaces, including two open-air theatres, and Greece and internationally.

This year has seen the cultural organisation take an increasingly act working with disenfranchised and vulnerable communities. Their ne on their long-standing commitment to social awareness and respon changing needs of the Greek community.

The most recent initiatives are the NTNG's work with refugees, which years ago, and the new workshops they run for young people with a workshops offer a mix of theatrical activities, improvisation, games a lessons. The intention is to increase confidence and creativity, and the people (aged 12-30) enjoy and embrace the endless possibilities that play affords. At a time when many young people in Greece face chast supporting those with disabilities is more important than ever. As Ko

supervisor of the workshops, explains: "I believe through this class, made theatre their own home and they realised that this place belomuch as to anyone."



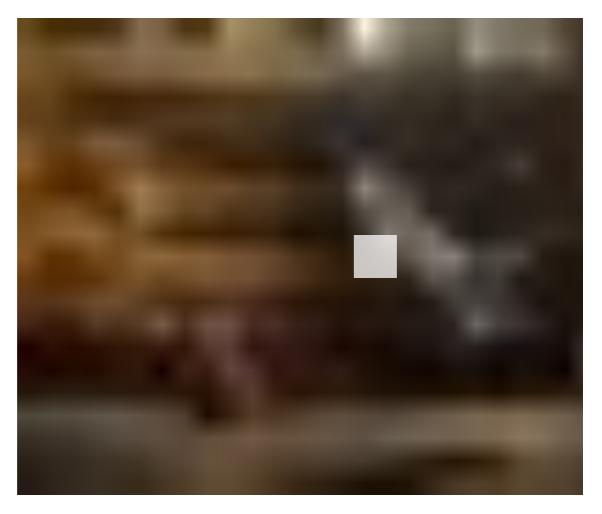
After the Campsite, a production by National Theatre of Northern Greece | © National Theatre

The same is true of the workshops the NTNG runs for refugees. This first theatre workshop by the NTNG for young people who live in reaccommodation centres in Thessaloniki. Seventeen children participal making of a new work, titled *After the Campsite*. The play focuses of ambitions of the children and teenagers within the community. Anothelicative initiative, the final work produced will be presented to the Theatre Festival "The Future of Europe" this June. Not only does the

provide a safe and nurturing space for young people to integrate in but also ensures increased exposure and support on an internation

"It was a sharing experience", says director Mihalis Sionas."In a sho we felt accepted by the children. We got to know each other, we bu group and a trustful environment, we shared stories, we shared our things that are important to us. We tried to enable the young refuge their strengths and express their dreams for the future."

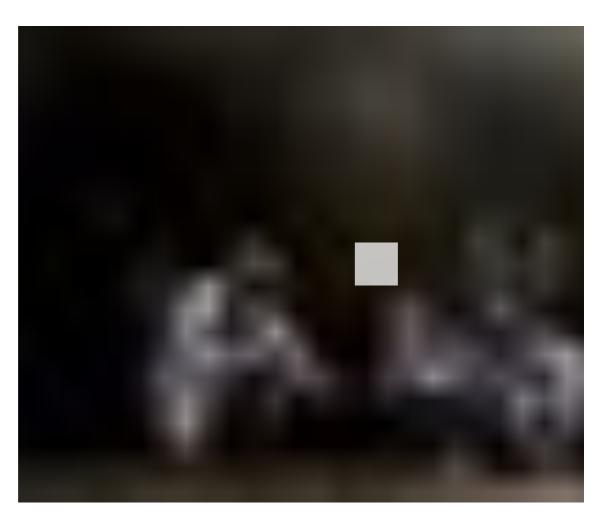
The positive effects of these workshops were apparent for all involv Stefania Zora states, "We all spoke a different language. Some of the a little bit Greek, some a little bit English. Despite our language dive somehow understand each other. Those differences helped to form communication rules."



After the Campsite | © National Theatre of Northern Greece

Alongside the workshops, the NTNG takes an active approach to in variety of open and inclusive social policies. These include fundame accessible ticket prices and proceeds of performances going to loc Recently, they have donated to Maria's Home (a single women's gu the Shelter for Abused Women of the Municipality of Thessaloniki. I collaborates with organisations such as the Greek Union for Alzhein Related Disorders, the KETHEA Rehabilitation Program, KAPI (a care elderly) and the Thessaloniki Centre for Recovery and Rehabilitation

For those outside Thessaloniki, the organisation conducts regional to villages around the region. This ensures that local communities can engage with culture in a way that they would not otherwise have the



After the Campsite | © National Theatre of Northern Greece

These initiatives happen alongside the dynamic productions that are

theatre throughout the year. Their productions are devised by Gree well as international writers.

Given the challenges faced by Greece, a commitment to fostering c inspiring the imagination is crucial to the cultural evolution of the na there has been much talk about Athens's cultural revival in the wake 14 last year, there has been less media attention on the transformaticultural institutions across Greece more widely.

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