

Profile

Saltinistas is an informal citizen's group in Messolonghi, Greece.

This group focuses on community actions that aim to empower and enable citizens: motivation for action and participation in civic life.

By participating in such a group of citizens, we actually become part of the community.

What we do

What we do is the result of conversations about daily life in Messolonghi. Our actions usually focus either on showcasing challenges that require immediate solutions to improve daily life, or on how we can create new choices for our society.

We also try to showcase good practices that support us in becoming better individuals and improving our community (e.g., by recycling).

In our experience, **participation in a group or community supports:**

- ✓ Communication between people with common interests. People with common interests can easily set common goals and find a common path for achieving those goals.
- ✓ A culture of participation in civic life, contrary to the prevailing mentality of apathy: "what happens in the society/community is not my problem."
- ✓ Self-confidence to take initiative for the common good. By being part of a group and taking collective action, individuals gain confidence that things can change for the better.
- ✓ Participation in collective decision-making processes.
- ✓ Awareness of societal and community issues.

 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

"Don't stay in the problem – showcase its solution"

Let's talk about: a part that is called "Dasaki"

We wanted to showcase an abandoned green space, the "Park-Dasaki", in Messolonghi, so we took the following actions:

- We had conversations with the competent bodies.
- We used our hands! With the support of local businesses and the community itself, we collected paint and materials, and used our own hands to make the first step towards the solution of this problem. By doing this, we highlighted that with few resources we can change the park's image of abandonment.
- We also showcased a different way of action, outside the sphere of complaints and accusations, that often times bring the opposite results.
- We made a social call to action that focused on dreams instead of problems.

Motivating individuals in society can be difficult. People are constantly the target of ad campaigns or calls for protest, and many become indifferent or jaded. The likelihood of people rejecting a call to action because it resembles something they have already rejected in the past is high. A successful call to action is freshly presented. Such a practice can help foster team creativity as well.

"Prefeast" - Celebration - "Afterfeast"

A good "recipe" is to surround the main event with other smaller actions.

For example, in Messolonghi there is no movie theatre, only a cinema club that does screenings every Sunday in the poorly maintained cultural center. Participation in the screenings is minimal, approximately 30 people each week.

To promote the movie theater, we chose to combine the screening of a Spanish movie with Spanish cuisine and Spanish dancing. A girl from the community was studying in Spain, so our team got together and prepared traditional tapas and other recipes. Not only did our team bond as we prepared the event, but the theater was full, as 250 people attended the event and everyone had a wonderful experience. Through this action, we showcased the need for a lively cultural center. Using culture, food, art, activities involving children, we successfully got the community involved and interested. This was a first step for creating a stronger, more connected community.

So, in a city where everyone speaks about misery, we try, through actions, to showcase the beauty of our land and our community.