



# ANNUAL REPORT

September 2020 - August 2021



**FREE MOVEMENT**  
skateboarding in solidarity



# Contents

## **FMS Aims and Vision**

### **Overview of the year**

Operating Environment

Impact

Highlights of the Year

Developments at FMS

### **Insights from sessions**

Outreach sessions

Public sessions

## **Financial Breakdown**

### **Goals for 2022**

### **Message from Will Ascott**





**Through skateboarding, we support and promote the wellbeing, empowerment and social cohesion of youth in Athens.**

Together, we push for a welcoming and diverse Athenian skate scene and society.

## **Wellbeing**

Skateboarding is mindful exercise, in which focus is necessary to learn new tricks, championing physical and mental health.

## **Empowerment**

We create spaces in which womxn, people of colour, LGBTQI+ and other groups feel safe to develop their skills on and off the board.

## **Social Cohesion**

Through the supportive, communal act of skateboarding, diverse youth share more than just space and build community.



A person is holding a dark skateboard horizontally in front of their face, completely obscuring it. The person is wearing a black t-shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text is overlaid on the skateboard's surface.

Over the past year, despite 7 months spent in lockdown due to COVID-19, we delivered **129 Sessions**, in **7 different locations**, to **260 children, young people and even a few adults.**

**39%**

**Female  
Participation**

**28**

**Different  
nationalities and  
ethnic groups,  
living in Athens.**

# Operating Environment

**Coronavirus and Lockdown:** Coronavirus once again caused a lot of disruption to our activities. This year, we spent nearly 7 months in lockdown, which restricted our ability to deliver public sessions. We were however able to deliver private sessions at two Social Care Units on private grounds, because we were able to obtain the relevant governmental permits to travel to their shelters. Even then, we had many cancelled sessions caused by positive COVID-19 cases and quarantine protocols. Despite these restrictions, we are proud of the impact FMS has had over the past year and the direction of the organisation. As we come out of lockdown and reinstate our public sessions, we still take necessary precautions at sessions to minimise risks to our participants.

**Situation in Athens:** In a post COVID-19 world, Greece is experiencing complex economic and societal problems. Athens still has a lack of accessible and inclusive recreational activities and spaces, wellbeing services and social cohesion initiatives, especially spaces shared by young people of diverse backgrounds. These gaps have been exacerbated during COVID-19, where we are seeing the exclusion of unvaccinated people from all activities, without an understanding of the access problems for certain communities, like the undocumented. Additionally, lockdowns have worsened isolation, especially for those that were already marginalised, increasing poor mental health and wellbeing. Whilst the pandemic reduced funding and support given to social welfare and social cohesion initiatives, the relevance and need for the goals and service provided by FMS will remain.

**Skateboarding:** In Athens, and indeed worldwide, there has also been a noticeable increase in interest in skateboarding. During the lockdowns, for those with skateboards, it became an accessible and easy individual outdoor activity. Of course, its rise in popular culture and skateboarding joining the Olympics, has also played a role. FMS is working to make skateboarding accessible to the many and using it as a common activity to bring communities together and focus on wellbeing.

## Impact

260

Unique  
Participants

896

Total  
Attendees

62%

Return  
Participants

39%

Female  
Participation

28

Nationalities  
(including  
Ethnic Groups)

129

Total  
Sessions


7

Session  
Locations

### Insights over the past year:

- We had a 39% girl participation rate, an increase from the same period last year. We continue to work on increasing girl participation.
- 62% of new participants returned to sessions, with 25% of participants becoming regular attendees (having participated in more than 5 weekly sessions).
- Out of the 129 sessions delivered this year, in 7 different locations, 6 out of the 13 weekly sessions were public, accessible and inclusive for anyone to join in.
- Last year, in the same period, we had 380 participants, this was impacted drastically by a 3 month lockdown and the ending of camp sessions. Today our focus is for sessions to be developmental, improving long-term wellbeing, encouraging gender empowerment and to promote social cohesion and community, therefore long term and regular participation is important. Naturally this will reduce our annual number of participants, whilst hopefully increasing regular attendee participation. This fiscal year, we have had 260 participants, despite this years lockdown and restrictions, and having only begun public sessions again in June. We have regular attendees, and are working on increasing this now that we do not face restrictions. As we focus on the quality of sessions through our new curriculum, we expect to see regular attendance rise.



A young boy in a black helmet and gear is seen from behind, watching a peer on a skateboard at a skate park. The boy is wearing a black t-shirt, black elbow pads, and black knee pads. The peer is wearing an orange shirt and grey shorts, standing on a wooden ramp with a skateboard. The background shows a fenced-in skate park area with a blue fence and some greenery.

**‘You have to try, try and try again, then you can do it’**

- Boy, 11 years old, encouraging a peer to attempt dropping in

# Highlights

**New Sessions and Collaborations:** We begun 7 new skate sessions this year. Four delivered at two different Social Care Units, in collaboration with The Mum Institute. Two sessions at a basketball court in the Patisia neighbourhood, one public and one in collaboration with Safe Place International. Lastly, during the summer we deliver one weekly sessions at Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Park.

**Hannah Bailey Visit:** In May, Hannah Bailey, a photojournalist who often works with Skateistan, visited us in Athens for a week, while working on a project based on female skaters. She attended some of our sessions, and photographed some of our instructors as part of her project. In July, she featured FMS in National Geographic in a wonderful article [‘How skateboarders have reclaimed an abandoned Olympic Stadium in Athens’](#)

**Zoumboulakis Gallery x The Skate Room ‘Art on Boards’ Exhibition:** In June Zoumboulakis Gallery, in Kolonaki, hosted The Skate Room exhibition, which was postponed from last year. The ‘Art on Boards’ exhibition displayed the works of 17 greek artists created on the back of boards. This exhibition was in support of the work that FMS and The Mum Institute do at the Social Care Units. It was a great opportunity to promote our work to people who would not know of us otherwise, Moreover, the artwork sold, of which a percentage of the profits will be donated to FMS.





# Developments at FMS

**Developments in the Team:** This year, and especially due to COVID-19, there has been a shift to a locally run team. This began in September with the introduction of Denia N. and Constantina to the team, with the departure of Jack and Ruby, and then Zelia in the winter. Moreover, with the international volunteer scheme still on pause, we have built a instructor base locally, with Giannis K. joining the team as an instructor in September, Denia K. joining us in November, Marwane in April, and more recently Koger. This makes for a strong local team, great instructors and skaters, with roots in the Athenian and International skate scene. They consistently inspire our participants. Moreover, by shifting to a locally based team with links to the skate community we achieved one of our long term goals.

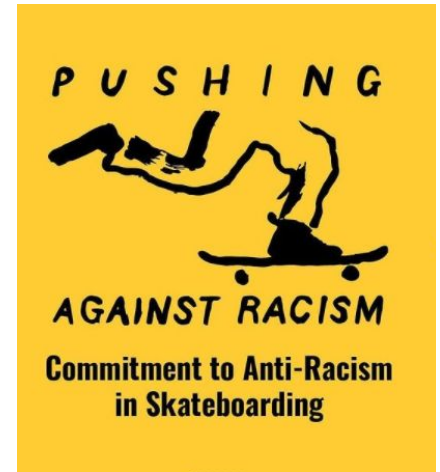
**Rebrand:** In April, during our 4th birthday we launched our rebrand. This followed on from revisiting and realigning our objectives as an organisation, it was time for new branding and a new website.

**ThinkBeyond Consultancy:** We received consulting from ThinkBeyond, through the Laureus Grant. It was great working with the team at ThinkBeyond, and greatly appreciate the advice, feedback and work they have been helping us with, specifically around messaging and fundraising.

**Pushing Against Racism:** We cosigned Pushing Against Racism, a commitment to anti-racism in skateboarding in May. Initiated by Goodpush, and signed by many other skateboarding organisations, it is a commitment to challenge racism and build equity in skateboarding. Complementing this the team completed an online Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training; we are continuously trying to better our practices. Trustee Keshini Mauree-Bain of Kick it Out is working on a further training for us.



**FREE MOVEMENT**  
skateboarding in solidarity



# Developments at FMS

**Equipment:** In July, we received 30 new decks from Clown Skateboards! Our participants were thrilled to test them out for the first time. We are extremely grateful to Clown Skateboards for their generosity.

**Athens Skatepark:** This year, in collaboration with the Flux Laboratory, Athens Partnerships and the best skatepark designers in Greece, we submitted a proposal for the renovation of Koumoundourou Square into a skatepark and cultural space, to the Athens Municipality. Despite not yet receiving a clear answer, we are confident we will work with Athens Partnerships to successfully build a skatepark in central Athens, as this gap needs to be filled.

**FMS Blog Posts:** Since July, Co-Founder Ruby has been writing for the FMS website *Stories*. This blog explores various themes relating to FMS, our activities, the benefits of skateboarding and the skateboarding world. Our blog posts, especially those exploring the benefits of skateboarding are popular and drive people to our website. There have been posts exploring Skateboarding and Neuroscience, our collaboration with Safe Place International and Hannah Bailey's visit to Athens.







**‘I don’t want the lesson to finish’**

- Girl, 11 years old

**‘I have become very good at falling’**

- Girl, 19 years old

## Outreach Sessions (Social Care Units)



We began sessions in December at two Social Care Units under the Municipality of Athens, after being invited by The Mum Institute, after an introduction by The Skateroom. One of the children's shelters houses children aged 5 - 15 year olds of mixed gender and the other is for girls who are 14+ years old.

We began delivering 3 sessions a week for both shelters, and after high demand from younger children in one of the shelters, we added also a 4th session. From December 2020 to August 2021, we delivered the majority of our sessions at these shelters, 72 sessions to be exact. These sessions were able to continue during lockdown, as they are delivered privately on their grounds, we were able to obtain permits and it was considered low risk, as the children live together and the FMS team were being tested.

Regular attendance at these sessions since December has meant that our participants have progressed a lot. They are enjoying the challenges we set for them (quarter pipes, hippie jumps, ollies etc.) and we are able to get creative with the games we play. Most importantly we have been listening to what they enjoy and want to do. Our next challenge will be to find a way to introduce these children to a skatepark where they will be able to interact with others who skate.



## Outreach Sessions (Social Care Units) continued...

The older girls at the second shelter spent a lot of time in and out of lockdown due to positive cases, causing a lot of disruption to progression. However, these girls, many of whom have various physical and learning disabilities, were finding their feet on the boards. Few more advanced participants even managed to attempt ramps with the help of our instructors. The girls definitely showed more independence during sessions as time went on, which is something we really encourage.





## Public Sessions (Insights)

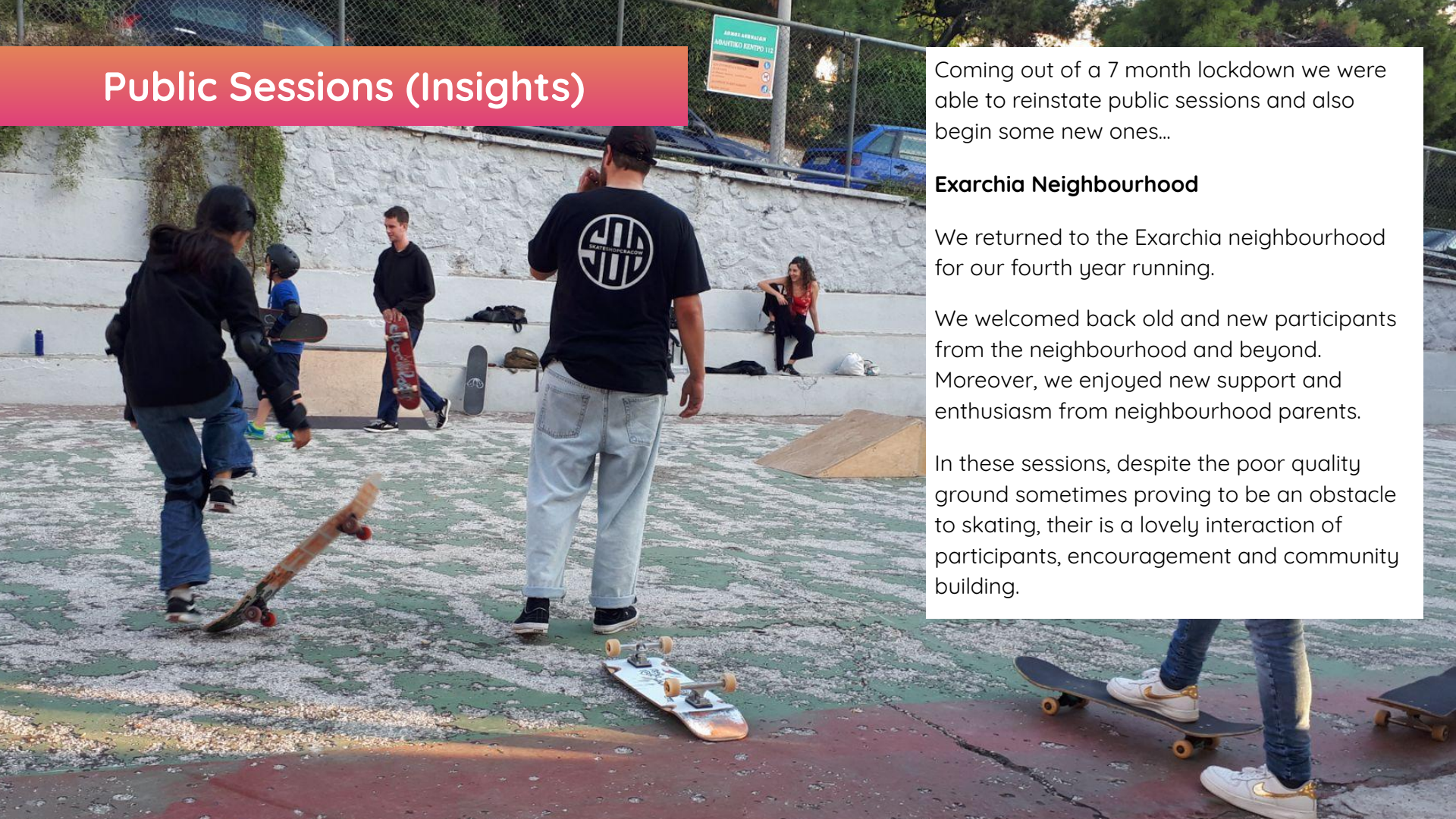
Coming out of a 7 month lockdown we were able to reinstate public sessions and also begin some new ones..

### Exarchia Neighbourhood

We returned to the Exarchia neighbourhood for our fourth year running.

We welcomed back old and new participants from the neighbourhood and beyond. Moreover, we enjoyed new support and enthusiasm from neighbourhood parents.

In these sessions, despite the poor quality ground sometimes proving to be an obstacle to skating, there is a lovely interaction of participants, encouragement and community building.



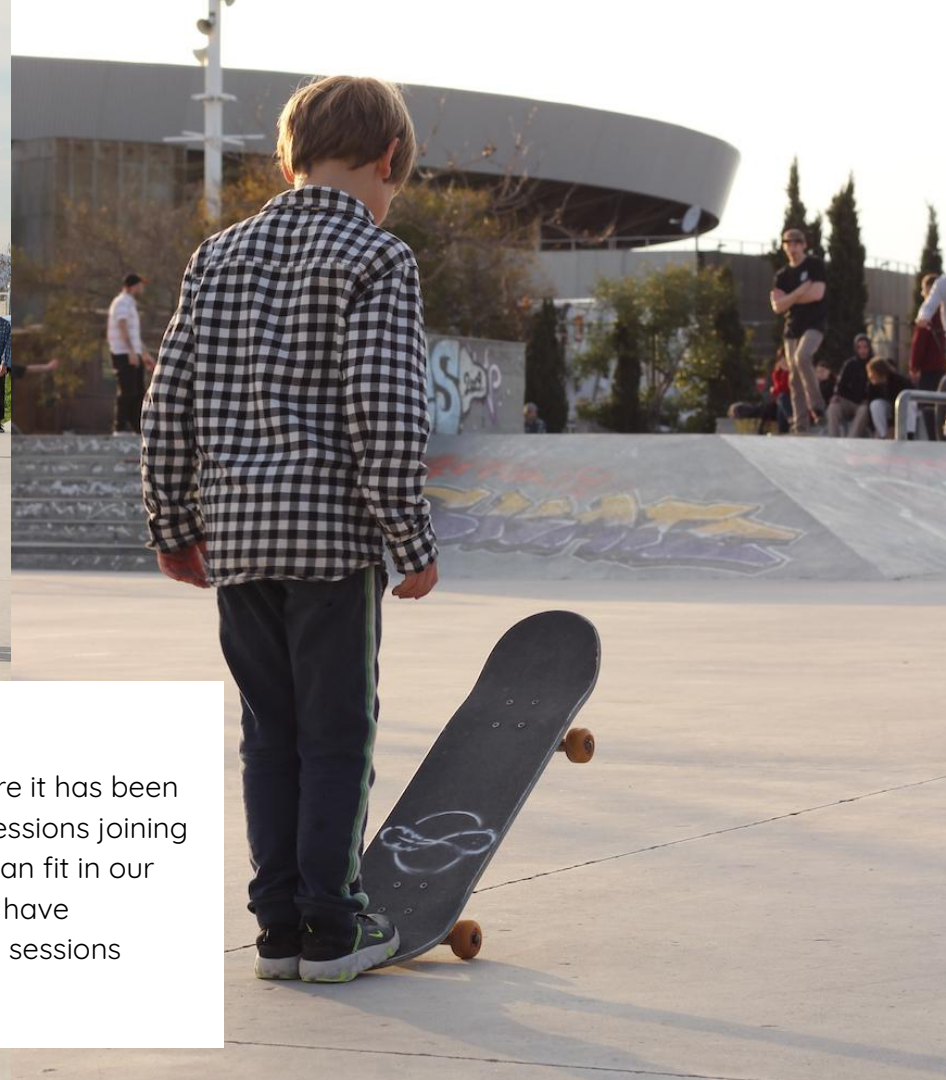


## Public Sessions (Insights)



### OAKA Skatepark

We returned to having our weekly presence at OAKA skatepark, where it has been great to see our more advanced and older participants from other sessions joining us, and attempting the ramps which are much larger than those we can fit in our van. We also welcome new participants at these sessions, many who have expressed an intimidation they feel at the skatepark. Moreover, these sessions continue to be great for engaging with the local skate scene.



# ‘I want to be a skate instructor’

- Girl 9 years old, when asked what she would like to be when she is older

# ‘Today was perfect!’

- Boy, 14 years old

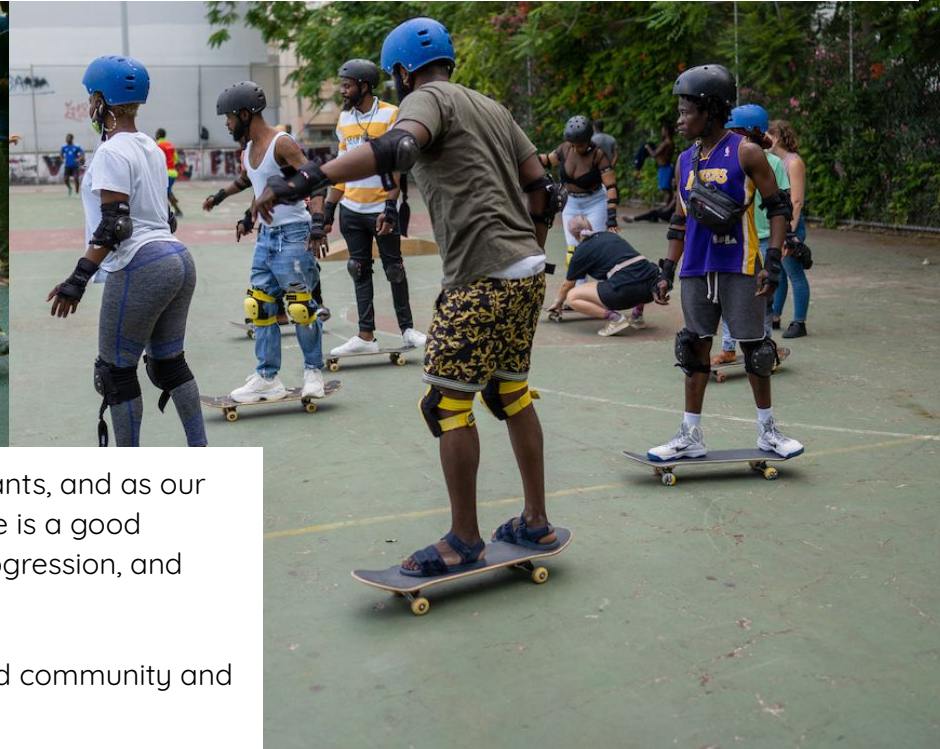




## New Public Sessions (Insights)

### Patisia Neighbourhood/ Safe Place International


This session began as a session in collaboration with Safe Place International Community Center, in a public space. Due to the interest of the neighbourhood it quickly became one of our most popular public sessions.



These sessions have a lot of enthusiasm and draw the most participants, and as our weekly presence remains, more and more young people come. There is a good dynamic between regular participants, who have showed a lot of progression, and new participants trying skateboarding for the first time.

At these sessions we have really felt welcomed by the neighbourhood community and look forward to organising further activities there.



A public skateboarding session in Patisia. In the foreground, a young girl in a pink shirt and grey helmet stands with her skateboard. In the center, a boy in a yellow shirt and black helmet is performing a trick on a wooden ramp. Other children and adults are scattered around the skate park, some on skateboards. The background features a building with graffiti, including the word 'ALBA' and 'FASCISM'.

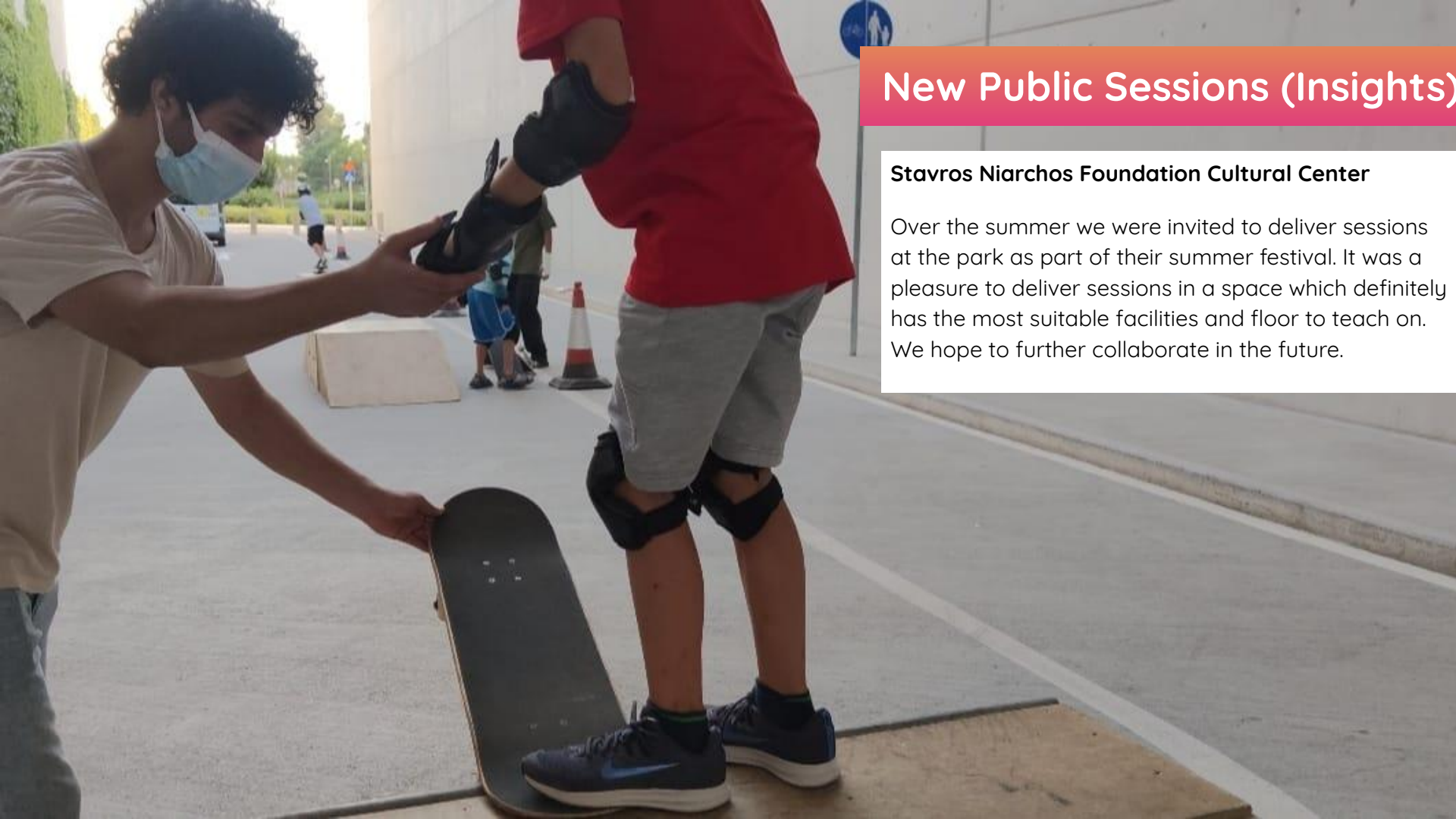
‘This is so good, it is really hard for me to take her to activities, everything is far and I do not have the time’

- Mum of a neighbourhood child in Patisia public session

‘Would you like to go skate together one day?’

- 15 year old female participant to 16 year old female participant at a public session





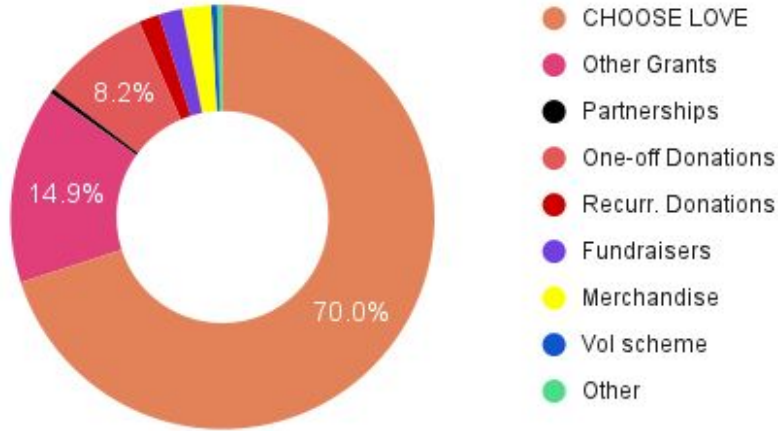
## New Public Sessions (Insights)

### **Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center**

Over the summer we were invited to deliver sessions at the park as part of their summer festival. It was a pleasure to deliver sessions in a space which definitely has the most suitable facilities and floor to teach on. We hope to further collaborate in the future.

## Income

September 2020 - August 2021



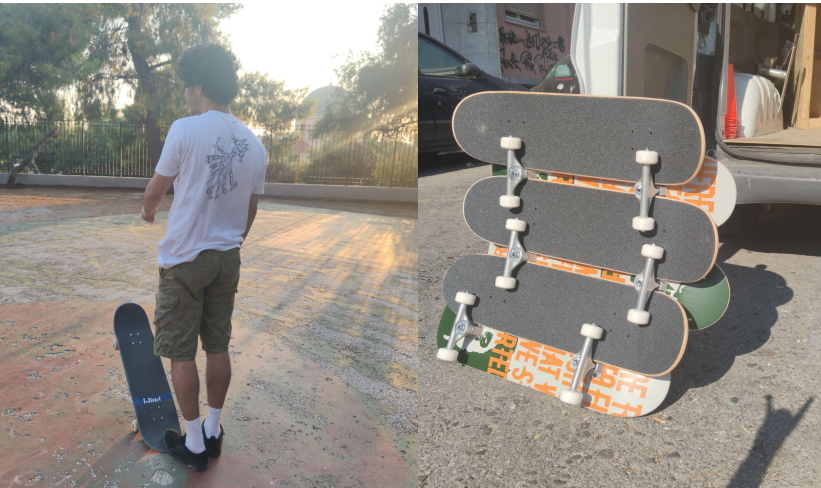
## Financial Breakdown (Income)

It is thanks to the generous support of so many that allows FMS to do the work that it does. The graph shows the monetary income that FMS received between September 2020 and August 2021 (our fiscal year).

This year we continued to receive support from Choose Love, Laureus Sport for Good and The Skateroom. We also concentrated on alternative funding channels, making improvements in our online fundraising, individual giving and merchandise.

FMS also generously received a lot of in kind donations (not represented in this information). These donations came mostly in skateboarding equipment. Notably by Clown Skateboards and Decathlon Skateboarding.

Choose Love (Help Refugees)	51,866.94
Other Grants	11,061.03
Partnerships	289.08
One-off Donations	6,108.91
Recurr. Donations	1,183.46
Fundraisers	1,304.75
Merchandise	1,647.99
Volunteer Scheme	326.00
Other	309.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,098.14</b>







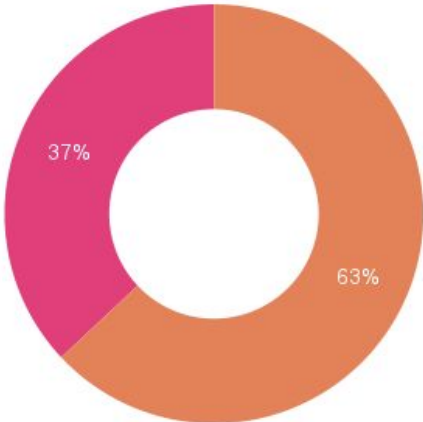
# Financial Breakdown (Expenses)

100% of our income is spent on FMS activities, in order to deliver quality and reliable sessions for young Athenians.

Admin and fundraising costs cover necessary team working hours and fundraising costs needed for the operation of the charity, and the quality and sustainability of our activities.

## Expenses

September 2020 - August 2021



● Sessions	
● Admin (including Fundraising)	
Van Costs	3,712.772,
Stipends	33,725.67
Session	1,345.19
Equipment	
Staff Welfare	3,108.48
Fundraising	3,228.72
Programmes	1,620.12
COVID-19 Costs	8,968.49
Vol Scheme	408.92
Other	190.69
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,319.05</b>

## Goals 2022

**Sessions:** More public sessions focused on social cohesion and community development. Moreover, we will work on more opportunities to introduce participants at outreach sessions to sessions in public spaces, focused on bringing people together.

**Flexible curriculum:** Focused on the development of participants, not just progression in skating, but learning life skills, working on positive mental wellbeing and community building. This will come from Concrete Jungle Foundation's Edu-Skate curriculum, using the self-determination theory.

**Expansion and Project Development:** A skate park and community space for FMS sessions, expanding our activities and ensuring greater impact. This may happen in collaboration with the municipality, publicly or privately, and necessitates becoming a Greek legal entity.

**Fundraising diversification:** We will always aim to improve and diversify our funding, to ensure greater financial security for our activities.







# Message from FMS Co-Founder Will Ascott...

In a year that has thrown more than a few challenges our way, I have seen an incredible level of resilience in our team and participants. I'm honestly overwhelmed with pride and feel lucky to have been a part of it.

We have seen many new participants from different backgrounds - expanding our output into new neighbourhoods and social care units. We have learnt about the problems faced by young people who were rehomed by the state in the social care units. We have worked closely and consistently with Roma youth who attend our public sessions. Our new sessional instructor communicates perfectly in Kurdish with an otherwise socially isolated family. People from these communities, girls and women, LGBTQI+, those with disabilities and young Greeks in low income areas all live unique problems. However, we've seen people from all of these groups coexist and thrive in our sessions, building community through skateboarding.

Getting the full team together after sessions last week, I battled to contain my gushy co-founder feeling of pride looking around the table. Our fully local team have had to adapt to a constantly changing environment to do all we can to meet the current needs of our community through skateboarding. The team show up every day with enthusiasm and energy, being the consistent trustworthy adults, positive role models and rippin' skaters our young people love to see.

During the second COVID-19 lockdown, whilst continuing to run sessions where safe to do so, we laid the groundwork for growth later in the year. From our rebrand, to new collaborations, from a successful fundraising campaign, to refining and developing policies on safeguarding and EDI, our organisation has grown greatly and we cannot thank enough those who have supported us.

From these foundations, I am optimistic about our future. We will be focussing diligently on keeping session quality high, whilst growing the number of sessions we do across the city. Although there's still a mountain to climb, I feel that we are in good shape to get a community space built. Our growing network of supporters helps us feel emboldened in this more than they know.

Whatever else happens, I am certain that we will maintain quality youth engagement for young Athenians who need it most. Adapting and growing thanks to a wonderful team. We'll be here, building community, on and off the board.



# Get in touch:

**E-mail:** [info@freemovementskateboarding.com](mailto:info@freemovementskateboarding.com)

**Website:** [www.freemovementskateboarding.com](http://www.freemovementskateboarding.com)

**Insta:** [@freemovement\\_\\_sb](https://www.instagram.com/freemovement__sb)