

Better Days
ECO HUB



Project Profile - April, 2019



Who We Are

Better Days was established in 2015 in response to the influx of refugees arriving on Lesbos, Greece. We are an international team of humanitarian professionals united by a fierce determination to bring humanity, compassion, and sustainability into the delivery of humanitarian aid.

We launched EcoHub in 2017 to help relieve the crippling physical and mental health effects of stagnation, one of the biggest challenges facing the asylum-seeking population in Lesbos. Since then, our scope has expanded to the environmental well-being of the island itself and the open-source sharing of resources to facilitate greening of the humanitarian field and beyond.

EcoHub's headquarters are the gardens and greenhouse-classroom located on the grounds of the One Happy Family (OHF) community center. But EcoHub is much more than a site: it is a concept, an approach, and a philosophy - one that encourages environmental stewardship, regenerative practices, and symbiotic relationships.

Our Purpose




Our activities are designed to alleviate four self-identified primary concerns of local displaced populations: a lack of healthy food, a lack of mental health resources, a gap in ecological literacy, and a lack of employment opportunities. We address these needs with a holistic, multifaceted approach built

around virtuous cycles: between the health of the planet and those who call it home, between displaced and host communities, and between the actions of today and the future. EcoHub embodies our belief that humanitarian aid and environmental awareness are not just compatible, but mutually reinforcing, and that responders should focus on creating spaces and opportunities that nurture, inspire, and raise environmental consciousness.

It is a center for cross-cultural learning, food production, environmental remediation, and therapeutic practice. We aim to create a ripple effect: to demonstrate what green humanitarian aid can and should become, to challenge our peer organizations to see the broader impact of their operations, and to assist them in making positive environmental changes as well as practise more sustainable and environmentally aware programs. Our vision is to create a broad community of informed and inspired individuals and organizations that actively engage in sustainability and regenerative practices.





Project Timeline

2017

- May:** Project initiation: Thank you LUSH (lush.com)
- June-July:** Team building, needs assessment, site selection, partnership with OHF
- August:** Breaking ground: the garden is born
- September:** Permaculture and Natural Cosmetics courses begin
- October:** Environmental education begins at School of Peace

2018

- January:** Greenhouse-classroom construction completed
- February-December:** Completion of phase one and transition to OHF maintenance. Volunteers and community helpers support us in sustaining the project. The greenhouse is used by a multitude of actors and individuals for classroom space, medical and legal consultations, space for community and relaxation, and more. The garden shines through as a sustainable and healing environment offering connection to nature and one's self.

2019

- January:** Phase 2 project initiation. Second year of operations with funding from LUSH
- February:** Team building, garden renovation
- March:** Environmental education begins at School of Peace

“Our goal is to green the humanitarian field through regenerative and replicable actions in food production, waste management, horticulture therapy, education, and circular economy. We invite you to join us along this journey.”

Education



Many of our students have experienced significant trauma and are subjected to long periods of stagnation and uncertainty, which can lead to social degradation and lack of cognitive stimulation. Providing effective education is a challenge when students need much more than simple instruction and come with problems that can impede concentration and attainment. Better Days' answer to these challenges is a student-centered pedagogy that respects each individual's unique processes. Within EcoHub, the simple act of working

with the earth combines learning with healing, since it is a task that keeps us present, balances our energy, and brings us perspective.

Our participatory curriculum encourages experiential learning, where students learn by using their senses, being active, and engaging with others in a way that allows them to become the subjects of their own educational process and see nature as a live entity and an active stakeholder in whatever future they build for themselves. Dynamic delivery, group activities, and access to fun become the main methodologies to create a participatory and safe ecologically-centred learning environment with a carefully designed curriculum and lessons plans

Primary Learning Objectives:

- *Encourage ecological literacy:* foundational knowledge of life science and introduction to new concepts such as sustainability, upcycling, and regenerative systems.
- *Improve physical health:* informed access to fresh & healthier food choices, exercise, healthy eating habits, nutrition, medicinal herbs.
- *Improve psychosocial well-being:* access to a safe, calm and natural space; experience and basic understanding of ecotherapy.
- *Encourage waste management skills & knowledge:* encouraging waste reduction, reuse, and recycling; understanding of composting, recycling, greywater systems.





“The EcoHub is Better Days’ environmental headquarters. It focuses on the creation of human-centered spaces that nurture, inspire, and raise environmental awareness.”

Our goals...

- To improve physical and mental health
- Increase interest in and knowledge about the environment
- Encourage environmentally conscious behavior changes in individuals and organizations
- Increase skill levels
- Reduce waste on the island
- Increase economic opportunity

And how we aim to achieve them

- Environmental education for children and adults
- Garden creation
- Systems for waste reduction, creative reuse, and recycling
- Production of food and natural products for physical well being
- Opportunities for engagement with nature for mental well being
- Data collection and resource sharing

Our Team/Supporters



Better Days is a non-profit Swiss-Greek NGO. Founded in 2015 by an international team of passionate humanitarians from various backgrounds, Better Days designs spaces that promote healing and trauma relief and customizes educational programming to power integration, youth development, and a return to normalcy for displaced people in Greece. In the past three years, it has grown from an all-volunteer actor providing emergency relief to being one of the main providers of non-formal education for refugee children in Lesvos, working alongside local groups and international organizations such as UNICEF, LUSH, MediaPro & La Liga.

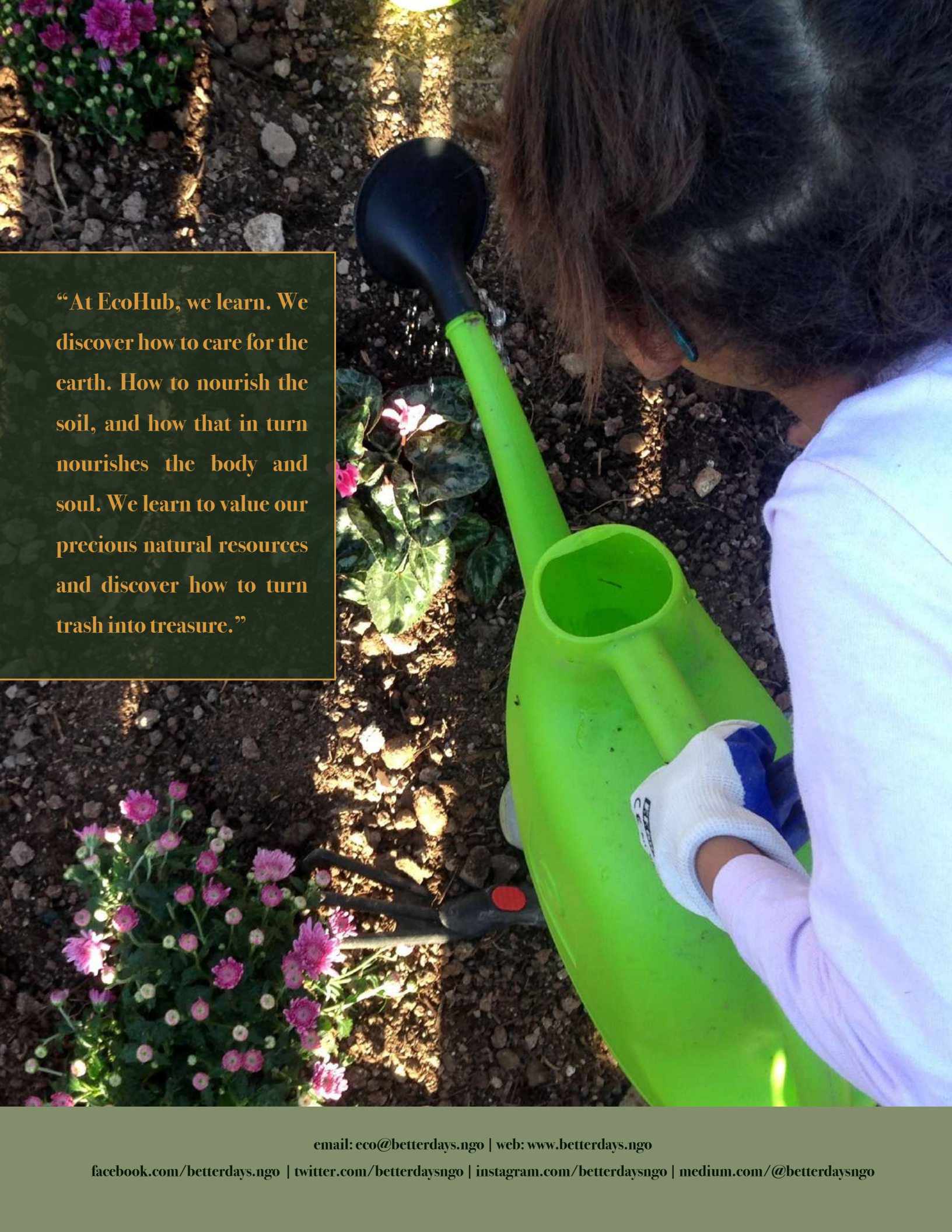


Lush Cosmetics is a handmade natural cosmetics manufacturer and retailer profoundly committed to ethical practices. Its Re:Fund spans across three interconnected areas: wildlife projects supported through rewilding and conservation, land and environmental projects to regenerate ecosystems through permaculture and agroecology, and humanity-driven projects supporting victims of displacement and disaster.



One Happy Family is a thriving community center on the Greek island of Lesvos. OHF's aim is to give a sense of dignity and self-determination back to the thousands of people stuck on the island by empowering them to not only access, but also offer programs and services. The center is not built and run FOR the people, but WITH the people, who are not only engaged in building and running the center, but also in envisioning and decision making. Among its field kitchen, its tailoring shop and barber, its gym, its women's center, its recording studio and its workshop, OHF facilitates independence, autonomy, and a sense of responsibility.

“At EcoHub, we share. We believe that pooling our knowledge and resources facilitates collective action, and that together, we are stronger and more effective.”

A high-angle photograph of a person with long brown hair, wearing a light purple long-sleeved shirt and white gardening gloves with blue accents, watering plants. They are holding a bright green watering can with a black spout. Water is being poured onto a cluster of pink flowers and green foliage. The ground is covered in dark brown soil and small grey rocks. Sunlight filters through the scene, creating dappled shadows. In the bottom left corner, there is a dark green rectangular box with a thin gold border containing a quote in gold text.

“At EcoHub, we learn. We discover how to care for the earth. How to nourish the soil, and how that in turn nourishes the body and soul. We learn to value our precious natural resources and discover how to turn trash into treasure.”

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