

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Selects METAdrasi, A Frontline Refugee Organization, as 2019 Recipient of \$2 Million Humanitarian Prize



Selia Sehioti, manager of METAdrasi's guardianship team, plays with Fatma, age 10, who is living at METAdrasi's Transit Accommodation Facility for Unaccompanied Minors in Samos, Greece. The Transit Accommodation Facility was created to minimize and ideally eliminate the time spent by minors in detention centers.

METAdrasi – Action for Migration and Development to receive world's largest annual humanitarian award for its innovative approach to welcoming refugees and protecting unaccompanied children.

[Los Angeles, CA] August 19, 2019 – The **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation** announced today that the Greek NGO **METAdrasi – Action for Migration and Development** is the 2019 recipient of the **Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize**. A distinguished panel of jurors selected METAdrasi, whose mission is to support the reception and integration of refugees and migrants with consistency, compassion, and the flexibility to adjust to needs as they emerge.

UNHCR estimates that over 80,000 refugees and migrants are “trapped” in Greece, of which over 4,100 are unaccompanied children. In 2009, **Lora Pappa** founded METAdrasi, to fill crucial gaps in the delivery of basic humanitarian services to refugees, migrants and unaccompanied children. METAdrasi has developed a host of pioneering programs—primarily focused on interpretation, protection and education—to support the needs of unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups entering Greece. The organization’s first key programs included professionalizing the role of interpreters who provide vital communication for refugees and migrants throughout the asylum process; and training escort teams to provide safe passage for unaccompanied children to accommodation facilities. METAdrasi has since expanded its services to include legal support, certification of victims of torture, education, integration, and a comprehensive safety net to protect unaccompanied minors. To date, METAdrasi has conducted over 1,400,000 interpreting sessions and has supported more than 12,000 unaccompanied children.

“The jury’s selection of METAdrasi as the recipient of the 2019 Hilton Humanitarian Prize speaks to both a global humanitarian crisis and the power of local organizations to use their personal experiences and knowledge to develop innovative solutions to complex problems,” said **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation President and CEO, Peter Laugharn**. “METAdrasi is a remarkable example of a nimble organization that leads the charge in areas where essential services are lacking. Their belief that migrants and refugees are a valuable part of our shared future and our shared humanity, embodies the spirit of the Prize and the work of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.”

As the reception of refugees remains one of the greatest issues facing the world, METAdrasi is rooted in the belief that refugees and migrants should be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve, empowered to exercise their rights to services, and provided protection when seeking asylum. METAdrasi will receive \$2 million in unrestricted funding, joining the list of 23 previous organizations that have received the Hilton Humanitarian Prize including, most recently, SHOFCO, icddr,b, the Task Force for Global Health and Landesa.

“We are so grateful to receive the 2019 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize at a time when urgent needs regarding the refugee situation continue to emerge,” said **Lora Pappa, founder, president and CEO of METAdrasi**. “This Prize reaffirms the spirit of solidarity which is shared by so many citizens in Europe, in the United States and beyond. It means that the international community is paying attention to the magnitude and the gravity of the complex humanitarian challenges that emerge from the management of mixed refugee flows. It recognizes the work of the grassroots, everyday efforts which are being taken to tackle those issues with innovation and practicality.”

METAdrasi will be honored at this year’s **Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Symposium and Prize Ceremony**, which will take place at [The Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles on Friday, Oct. 18, 2019](#). The theme of this year’s symposium is “The Future of Humanitarian Action: Seeking Higher Ground.” The daylong conference will bring together thought leaders and humanitarians from around the globe to explore the issues and opportunities that must be addressed to meet the most pressing humanitarian crises of today and tomorrow. Featured speakers include: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, author of “Americana,” “Half of a Yellow Sun,” and “Purple Hibiscus;” Christiana Figueres, founding partner, Global Optimism and former executive secretary of the UN Climate Convention (2010-2016); Sister Joan Chittister, American Benedictine nun, theologian and author of “The Time Is Now;” Patrisse Cullors, co-founder, Black Lives Matter Global Network; and Tyler Hicks, Pulitzer Prize-winning staff photographer of The New York Times, among others.

Each year, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation reviews nominations from notable nonprofits throughout the world, and an independent, international panel of distinguished jurors makes the final selection after a rigorous vetting process. The following individuals served on the 2019 [Hilton Humanitarian Prize jury](#): [Sir Fazle Hasan Abed](#); [Gro Brundtland, M.D., M.P.H.](#); [Leymah Gbowee](#); [Hawley Hilton McAuliffe](#); [Mark Rosenberg, M.D., M.P.P.](#); [Zainab Salbi](#); [Ann M.](#)

[Veneman](#). Nominations for the 2020 Hilton Humanitarian Prize will be accepted until Oct. 1, 2019, and should be submitted through the [Hilton Foundation website](#).

About METAdrasi

METAdrasi – Action for Migration and Development was founded in December 2009, with the mission to cover crucial gaps in the reception and integration of refugees and migrants in Greece. METAdrasi is determined to uphold and protect the fundamental human rights of all those displaced and persecuted through innovative interventions. METAdrasi is the only NGO that retains a permanent frontline presence in all key entry points in Greece, focusing on four main axes of activities: interpretation, protection of unaccompanied children, protection of other vulnerable groups, and education and integration. For more information, please visit www.metadrasi.org

About the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation was created in 1944 by international business pioneer Conrad N. Hilton, who founded Hilton Hotels and left his fortune to help individuals throughout the world living in poverty and experiencing disadvantage. The Foundation invests in 11 program areas, including providing access to safe water, supporting transition age foster youth, ending chronic homelessness, hospitality workforce development, disaster relief and recovery, helping young children affected by HIV and AIDS, and supporting the work of Catholic sisters. From its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1.8 billion in grants, distributing \$112.5 million in the U.S. and around the world in 2018. The Foundation's current assets are approximately \$2.8 billion. For more information, please visit www.hiltonfoundation.org