



Comics and Stories as a platform for healing, empowerment and community engagement”

June 9, 2026 | Libraries, Communities, and Political
Challenges: European Perspectives on Civic Engagement

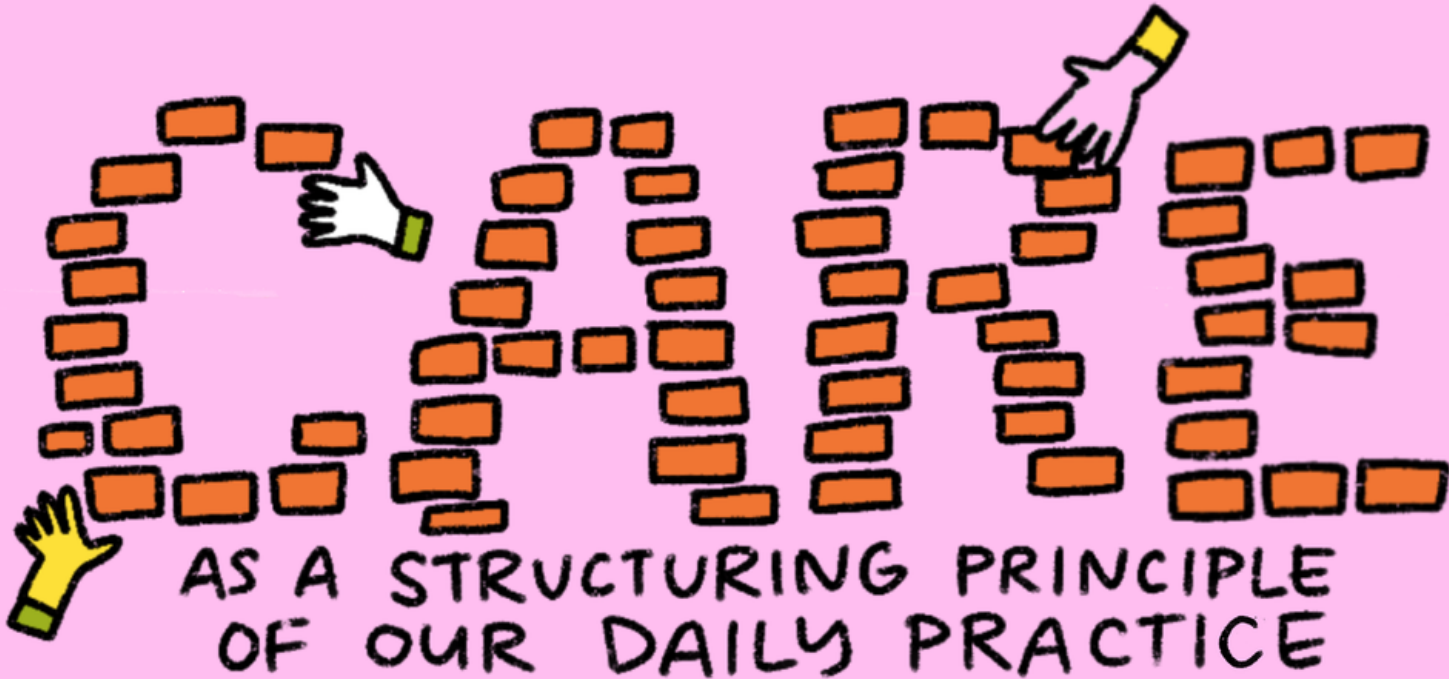
Presented by: Lida Tsene, PhD/ Founder Athens Comics Library

Libraries, stories and Comics as Care



LEADERSHIP WITH CARE

EMPATHY · PATIENCE · LISTENING · JOY · RESPECT · HUMANITY · ...



ATHENS COMICS
LIBRARY, GREECE

Libraries
for
Europe

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Why stories? Why care?

01

Care today extends far beyond the intimate sphere of family or healthcare. It has become a social and political concept that speaks to the ways communities sustain one another in times of uncertainty and change. Care involves attention, empathy, presence, and the recognition that individuals do not exist in isolation but within networks of mutual dependence.

02

At their core, libraries are public institutions built around a simple but powerful principle: that knowledge should be available to everyone. Yet the role of libraries extends beyond. They offer something that many contemporary urban environments struggle to provide: a space where people can simply exist without the pressure to consume, produce, or perform

03

Human beings understand the world through narratives. Stories help us interpret our experiences, connect with others, and imagine different futures. Stories do more than transmit knowledge. They hold emotional and social space.

04

Libraries serve as custodians of these narratives, preserving both collective memory and individual expression. Within their shelves, readers encounter voices from distant times and places, discovering perspectives that expand their understanding of the world.

Athens Comics Library



No Direction Home-Stand Up



Comic Workshop on Healing



Baytna Hub

Our Practice

01

Engaging in arts and culture

02

Enabling 'Positive Social Contact'

03

Supporting Local Activities

04

Telling Human Stories

05

Community Lead

06

Trauma Sensitive

07

Identity Informed

LEADERSHIP WITH CARE

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LIDA TSENE
ATHENS COMICS
LIBRARY, GREECE

BAYTNA
(HOME in Arabic)

UNOFFICIAL
DAY CARE

FOR
REFUGEE
CHILDREN
AND CAREGIVERS



COMMUNITY
OF SHARED
VALUES

NAVIGATING
TRAUMA
& DISPLACEMENT

NOT EVERY STORY
NEEDS TO BE SHARED

I FOUND
MY VOICE
HERE

PRIVACY OVER
VISIBILITY,
TRUST OVER
CONTROL

FROM
BENEFICIARIES
TO CO-FACILITATORS

LEADERSHIP
SOMETIMES
MEANS
HOLDING SPACE
RATHER THAN
DIRECTING ACTION



CARE
AS A STRUCTURING PRINCIPLE
OF OUR DAILY PRACTICE

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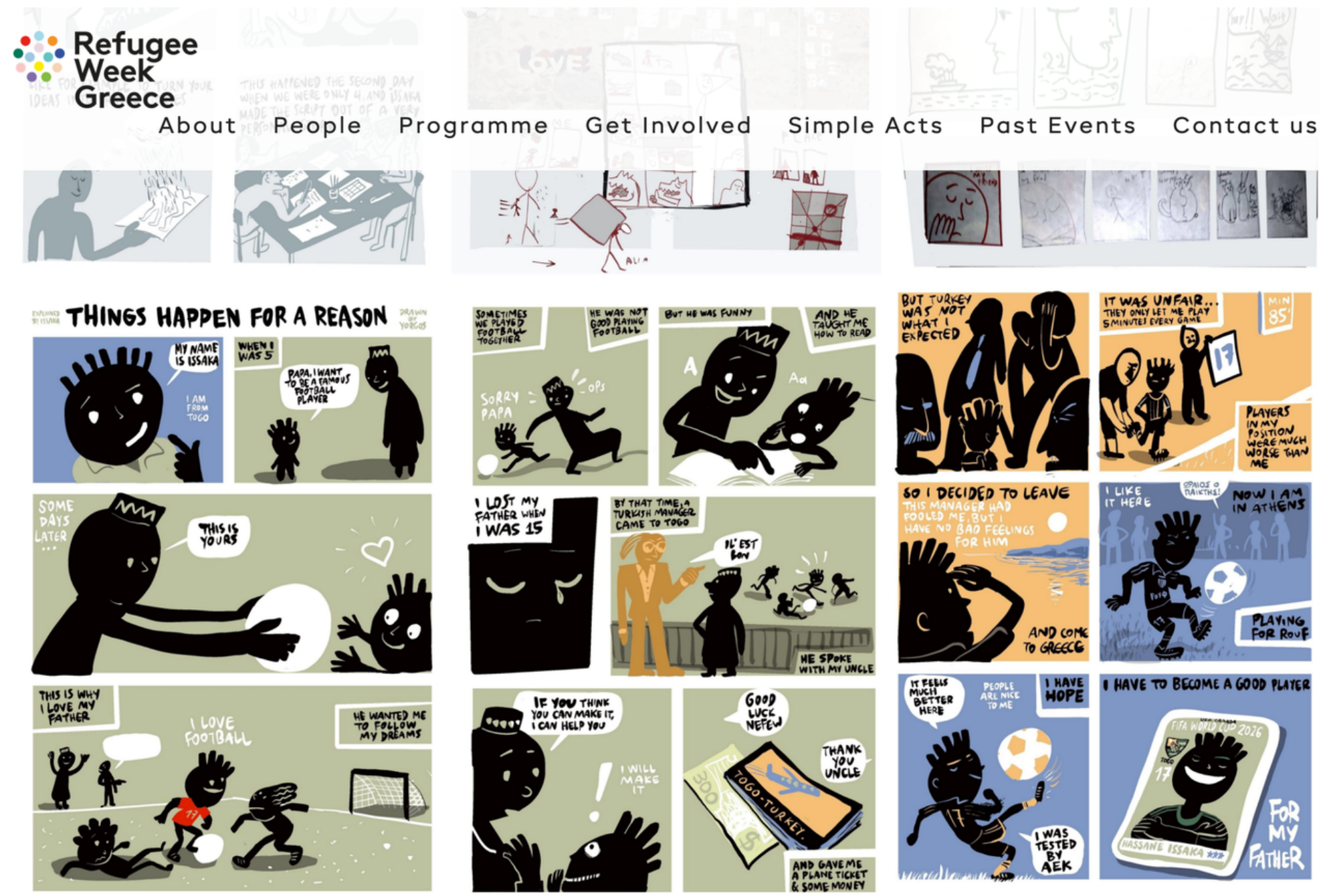
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**COMICS
AS A TOOL
FOR SOCIAL
INTERGRATION**

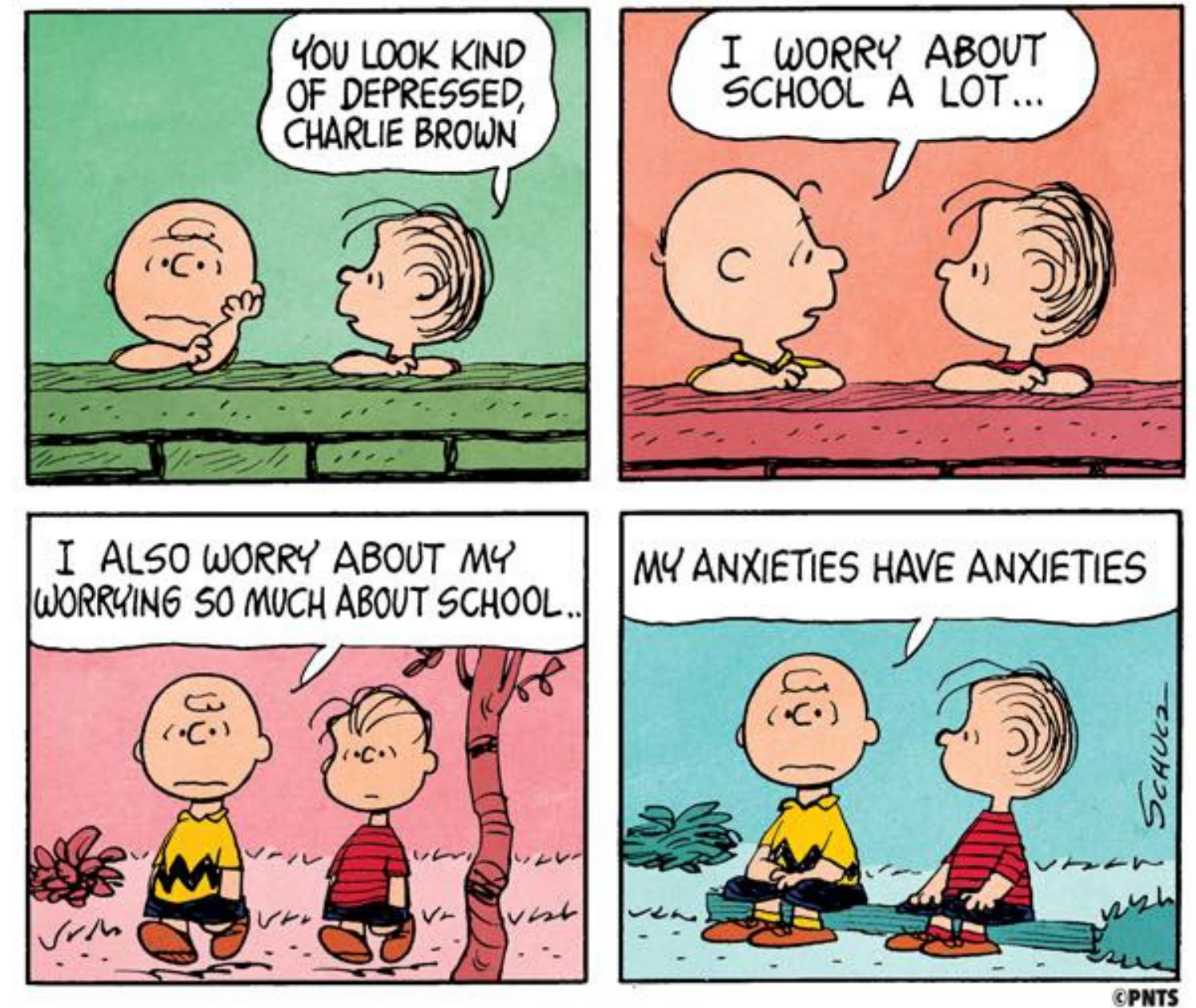
THE BONDS (BOOSTER THE EMOTIONAL
DIMENSION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR
IMMIGRANT MOTHERS AND CHILDREN) MODEL





To advance libraries as centers for healing and social cohesion, a multifaceted approach is imperative. Essential steps encompass promoting inclusivity and diverse programming, cultivating collaborative alliances, integrating mental health support, encouraging artistic expression and cultural engagement, embracing digital access and virtual interaction, establishing community-centric spaces, empowering librarians, and advocating for funding and support.

Through the adoption of these strategies and a steadfast recognition of the enduring worth of libraries as vital community assets, libraries will continue to enrich lives, ignite intellectual curiosity, and fortify the social fabric. As they evolve and embrace their role as epicenters of community life, libraries are poised to play a pivotal role in fostering healing, inclusivity, and social cohesion for individuals and communities across Europe.



Thank you for listening!

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