

# OBJECTIVE 03

To support reconciliation, dialogue, closer relationship and trust between the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities

# MAKING THE GHOST AIRPORT OF THE DIVIDED CAPITAL VISIBLE

## ANNA PRODROMOU AND SAMİ ÖZUSLU



Photo Credit: Kanal SIM



### THIS ACTION INVOLVED

Production of DVD copies of the "Ghost Airport of the Divided Capital" documentary and their island-wide dissemination to schools, universities, and colleges.

Six documentary screenings and panel discussions held in Cyprus and the UK, from October 2016 to May 2017.

Documentary's promotion via social media, leaflets, banners and posters.

### ABOUT SAMİ ÖZUSLU AND ANNA PRODROMOU

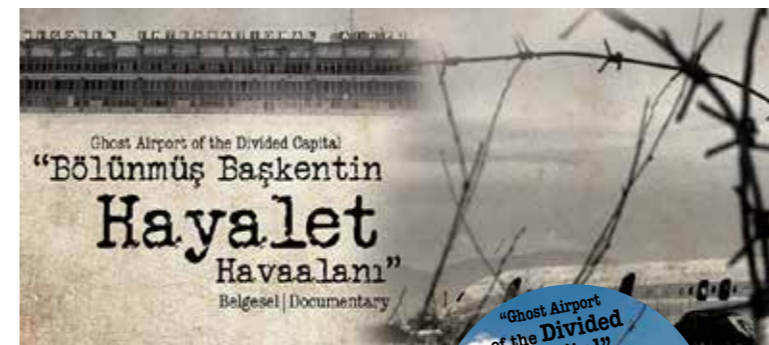
The producer of the documentary, Sami Özusu, is a journalist. He met Anna Prodromou, a communication consultant, when he was planning to share the forgotten story of the Nicosia International Airport with the wider public. Their successful cooperation paved the way for thousands of Cypriots, island-wide and abroad, to remember the story of the now-deserted airport.

### STORY OF THE ACTION

The action was developed to strengthen the relationships between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities by reminding them of their shared history through the documentary "Ghost Airport of the Divided Capital".

Anna Prodromou and Sami Özusu wanted to present the Nicosia International Airport as an important reminder of the shared Cypriot history. In fact, it was the only international airport but now it is the remaining of what happened in 1974: a potent symbol of the island's division. They wanted to capture the forgotten stories of this time witness, bring them back to life and share them with the population.

Through the Grow Civic action, copies of the documentary were produced and donated to schools, universities and colleges in Cyprus. It was promoted through social media campaigns, traditional media coverage and cross-promotional partnerships with Join2Media, Cypriots' Voice, Famagusta Our City, Famagusta Initiative. Moreover, Anna Prodromou and Sami Özusu organized one screening in London targeting Cypriots who emigrated. The five screenings across Cyprus were followed by discussions.



"The audience had a very strong emotional response to the screenings; it even brought some of them to tears. One of the most significant memories I have is from the screenings at Chateau Status in the buffer zone. Captain Adamos Marneros, who had landed the last airplane at the Nicosia International Airport just a few hours after the outbreak of war in 1974, came to speak to the audience. He was not able to share his story in the documentary himself, but his story was one of the most intense parts. He came, watched and shared his thoughts with participants. It was so valuable. To our surprise, we discovered that Cypriot youth had no idea about these shared memories. They had no idea that there is an airport at the heart of the divided capital."

Sami Özusu

### RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The action provided access to information on the shared Cypriot history. It helped break down barriers and enabled mutual understanding between the two communities. The action itself was designed as an advocacy tool for disseminating the Cypriot shared memory and creating a safe space to recall those emotional times.

"Throughout the screenings we had many different reactions from the audience. Younger viewers were excited and intrigued by seeing an era that they've only heard about. On the contrary, people who lived through the conflict and visited the functioning airport were more emotional and nostalgic. The post-screening discussions with the film director and myself were the highlights of the action, focusing on questions about the future use of the airport, as well as the future of Cyprus in general."

Anna Prodromou

According to Anna Prodromou, the action reminded Cypriots, through a humane and non-political approach of the problems in Cyprus and the challenges that need to be faced to change the status quo. It engaged a wide range of representatives from Cyprus and inspired them to take action and promote civic participation and activism.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Although the joint screenings have concluded, the documentary is still reaching a wider audience through different media channels and events. Sami and Anna allowed Cypriots to learn about a moment in history where Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots worked together. Both believe that building peace and breaking down barriers can be achieved by bringing people from the two communities together. Spending time together in a shared location can reinforce the humanity of "the other side" and initiate a dialogue built on the memories of a peaceful past. This journey continues for them.



Photo Credit: Civic Space

TO FIND MORE ABOUT THE ACTION

samiozusu@hotmail.com  
civicspacesivilalan



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