

## Alli Opsi: Training Camp for people with spinal injuries

All over the country and Cyprus, Greece Thessaloniki, Greece



Georgia Fyka



Year Founded:  
2007

**Organization type:**

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Project Stage:

Established

**Budget:**

\$10,000 - \$50,000

Website:

<http://www.alli-opsi.gr/>

**Twitter:**

<https://twitter.com/AlliOpsi>

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/AlliOpsi>

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### Project Summary

#### Elevator Pitch

**Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.**

The Training Camp is a project designed for people with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) who use wheelchair. The goal is to train the participants to obtain higher level of autonomy through peer support. Trainers with disabilities train people with disabilities in everyday skills and try customized sports

**WHAT IF - Inspiration: Write one sentence that describes a way that your project dares to ask, "WHAT IF?"**

What if there were affordable care centers where people with spinal injury could explore their limits, learn how to be autonomous, then share that knowledge and become active citizens?

#### About Project

**Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?**

Greece has a lack of specialized rehabilitation and post-rehabilitation services for people with SCI. Most issues are not managed during their rehabilitation. As a result they are not aware of their potential abilities, their needs while effective rehabilitation approaches are not being implemented. In addition, there is a need for constant adaptation to up to date rehabilitation techniques and devices that allow people with SCI remain functional

**Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!**

For 14 days trainers with SCI stay in the same rooms with the participants and cooperate closely in finding ways to better serve their daily needs (i.e. mobility, transfers, dress up, wheelchair handling). Afternoon activities include customized sports activities (swimming, horse riding, sports track, diving, and more). Evening activities include lectures and discussions on topics around people with SCI, such as sex, bladder and intestine management. "Alli Opsi" also trains healthcare personnel on specialized personal assistance for people with SCI and provides 24hrs support during the camp. Our ambition is to encourage the trainees to apply the acquired knowledge in their daily lives and on the same time see new trainers emerge among them

Impact: How does it Work

**Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.**

Peer support is the core of our camps, trainers are people with SCI and act as role models for the trainees. This is the story of Thanasis, 34 yrs old, Businessman: I learned about A.O. in 2007. One volunteer noticed that sb else was pushing my wheelchair. It's known that a person with paraplegia can be fully independent. He invited me to join the 1st Training Camp. From 1999 when I had an accident until 2007 I wasn't autonomous and I didn't know I could be. I decided to join. I learned how to move from/to the wheelchair, to dress up, to use the toilet, do sports, exercise. It is the most important thing I've done since my injury. I joined more camps and after 4 yrs of training and participation I had the honor to become a trainer myself

**Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.**

The basic approach is peer support; many trainees eventually become trainers. Since 2007 A.O. has completed 7 Camps at Kolindros, Loutraki, Kavala. One camp was specially designed for people with quadriplegia. There have been about 160 participations (people with SCI). 90 healthcare professionals have been trained on personal assistance for people with SCI. This is very important due to the lack of such training in Greece. The participants come from all over Greece: Athens, Thessaloniki, Kavala, Ptolemaida, Trikala, Patra, Aigio, Pyrgos, Crete, Larissa etc and Cyprus. A.O. is the 1st to introduce wheelchair rugby in Greece the only team sport for people with quadriplegia. An academic study regarding the benefits of our training camps will be presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Spinal Cord Society, the most important event regarding Spinal Cord issues

**Spread Strategies: Moving forward, what are the main strategies for scaling impact?**

The full impact is reflected on the study that will be presented at the conference (available upon request). It highlights the necessity of implementing such programs and stresses out the need for them. If our program were incorporated in rehabilitation centers, the total reach would be even larger. These conclusions were made possible after the realization of the Camps. "Triti Diadromi" a documentary about the camps showcases the full potential of our work. It presents the participants' experiences, records our working methods and all the possibility for change and improvement in our society

Sustainability

**Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution's plan to ensure financial sustainability?**

Financial sustainability is ensured from sponsorships and donations in money or commodities from companies that trust A.O. A team of professionals with expertise on fund raising handles this procedure and is constantly in search for new funding resources. The members of A.O also contribute financially. We have been planning to minimize operational costs by organizing permanent facilities for implementing the camps

**Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?**

The Training Camp of "Alli Opsi» and the training seminar for the supportive staff are the only specialized programs based on peer support that exist in Greece for people with SCI. All the services and programs designed by "Alli Opsi" are provided by volunteers in a manner that strengthens relationships and trust between participants. This scheme also contributes in keeping our budget low. Unfortunately, there isn't any other public or private organization in Greece that offers specialized rehabilitation and post-rehabilitation services for people with SCI based on peer support

Team

**Founding Story**

Rehab of SCI in Spinal Units improves survival and functional outcomes. In 2005, as a novice PhD student, I tried to show the devastating results from the lack of such unit in Greece. By 2010, the conclusions of my study would start a revolution that would lead to the founding of the first Spinal Unit. Meanwhile, an urge to see results sooner & to prepare an army for the revolution, lead me to franchise a concept from Sweden. After two years of hard work, a team of passionate rebels founded Alli Opsi & organized the first peer support training camp for SCI in Greece. In 2014, while still waiting for the revolution to come, Alli Opsi is preparing the 8th camp, training the 250th person with SCI & is educating the 150th volunteer. DivanoglouA

**Team**

Qualified professionals cover both the managerial-administrative and training positions. Indicatively: Prof. Physiotherapy, Msc physiotherapist, MA Disability Studies social worker, specialized nurses, trainers with SCI, trainers on special education cover these positions. Newcomers are trained as trainers and as supportive staff. We have regular collaborations with experts e.g doctors, psychologists, athletes with disabilities and many more

About You

About You

**First Name**

Alli Opsi

**Last Name**

Alli Opsi

**Email**

[info@alli-opsi.gr](mailto:info@alli-opsi.gr)

**Twitter URL**

**Facebook URL**

About Your Project

**Organization Name**  
**How long has your organization been operating?**

Project

**Organization Country**

, Thessaloniki

**Country where this project is creating social impact**

, All over the country and Cyprus

**What awards or honors has the project received?**

**Funding: How is your project financial supported?**

Friends and family, Individuals, Foundations, Businesses.

Supplemental

**Partnerships: Tell us about your partnerships.**

The idea for the creation of the "Alli Opsi " came after our acquaintance with the Swedish nonprofit organization Rekryteringsgruppen. The organization Rekryteringsgruppen has 30 years of experience in organizing and implementing such training programs. Swedish trainers with disabilities together with support staff got involved in the training camps of "Alli Opsi" and transferred their knowledge and many years of experience. On the same time, instructors with physical disabilities and support staff from the "Alli Opsi " participated in educational programs in Sweden in order to gain more experience.

We have pursued this partnership because we believe that there is expertise that we can learn from and employ it in Greece to bring change and solutions and eventually further develop it by taking into consideration the specific needs and social framework of Greece

<http://www.rekryteringsgruppen.se/>

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