



Finding solutions to Greece's refugee education crisis

A Theirworld Report

Written by Maysa Jalbout | April 2020

Theirworld



Theirworld is a global children's charity committed to ending the global education crisis and unleashing the potential of the next generation. Its mission is to ensure that every child has the best start in life, a safe place to learn and the skills they need for the future.

Theirworld is dedicated to providing education for refugees, and has been among the leading donors to refugee education in the Greek islands through its partnership with Education Cannot Wait. This report, produced in collaboration with the Global Business Coalition for Education, was made possible by the generous support of the players of the People's Postcode Lottery, Nationale Postcode Loterij (Dutch Postcode Lottery) and Dubai Cares.

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Abbreviations

EU	European Union
IEP	Institute of Educational Policy
GBV	Gender-based violence
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MoE	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
NFE	Non-formal education
NGO	Nongovernmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PM	Prime Minister
PSS	Psychosocial support
REC	Regional Education Coordinator
RIC	Reception and Identification Centre
UAC	Unaccompanied children
UAM	Unaccompanied minor
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ZEP	Zones of Educational Priority

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Refugee crisis in Greece: Key facts & figures

Last year Theirworld was the largest financial supporter of refugee education on the Greek Islands

There are **118,000** refugees and asylum seekers in Greece, the majority of whom are children and youth.

Of the **31,000** school-aged refugee children spread throughout Greece, only **13,000** were enrolled in formal schools in 2019–20.

Over **60%** of refugees are under the age of **30**; more than **5,000** are unaccompanied minors.

On the Greek Aegean Islands, the combined efforts of UN agencies and Greek NGOs delivering non-formal education had only reached **1,472** students at a time as of October 2019 (28% of the 5,296 school-aged refugees, though counts of children vary and have continued to grow, and the actual number of children is substantially higher and the actual coverage rate substantially lower).

In addition to more than **76,000** refugees on the mainland, more than **42,000** are residing on the Greek Aegean islands.

Refugees on the islands are suffering from extremely poor living conditions where **42,000** people are crammed into quarters designed to accommodate a few thousand.

Last year, Theirworld was the largest financial supporter of refugee education on the Greek Islands through its partnership with Education Cannot Wait and Nationale Postcode Loterij, supporting the local organisations working alongside UNHCR and UNICEF.

Opposite
Two refugee boys at
a centre on the island
of Kos
© Theirworld / Yorgos
Kyvernitis



Executive summary

The refugee crisis in the Greek Aegean islands has reached an untenable situation which requires urgent action by the Greek authorities and the international community. This report shows a way forward.

There are 42,000 refugees stuck on the Greek Aegean islands, their entry point to the country and, they hope, to Europe. Their futures are precarious and their daily reality is extremely harsh, especially for the most vulnerable – women, children and unaccompanied minors.

Arrivals continued to increase significantly in the early part of this year. Numbers in the Moria camp on Lesbos have swelled to nearly 20,000 people when it was designed for 2,500. Tensions on that island and others had reached a boiling point in the last months, with violent protests against the refugees' presence and the agencies serving them breaking out.

To make matters worse, the coronavirus is threatening to take hold among a refugee population that has no access to healthcare. As the world grapples with the Covid-19 pandemic, the UN has been sounding the alarm on the potentially devastating impact on refugee communities. Whilst as of April 2020 there had been no recorded cases of infection among refugees on the Greek islands, the threat is imminent.

UNHCR and UNICEF are urgently requesting \$1.5 million in emergency funds to extend remote learning for refugee children whose education has almost entirely been stopped.

Opposite

The situation for refugee and migrant children on the Greek islands remains dire and dangerous
© UNICEF / Gilbertson

Theirworld calls on the international community to support this urgent request in order to mitigate the impact of the disruption of learning on refugee children who have already suffered from long periods of waiting to integrate into formal schooling.

Prior to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic to Greece, less than a third of school-age refugee children on the islands were receiving any schooling, even though learning is vital for the welfare of children living in emergency situations.

This report presents proposals for immediate action to support children and youth trapped on the Greek islands. It puts forward strategies to improve refugee education not just on the islands but on the Greek mainland, where 76,000 refugees have been transferred since 2015.

We invite the Greek government, UN agencies, the EU and the broader international community to adopt our three-point plan for action, and to respond to requests for immediate assistance with the response to Covid-19. ●



Opposite
A Syrian refugee arrives
at a school in a suburb
of Athens
© UNICEF / Tomislav
Georgiev

Point

1

€20 million in urgent financial support for 2020–2022



Opposite
A class for refugee children at the Tapuat Centre, Lesbos
© Theirworld / Yorgos Kyvernitis

Our research has concluded that €20 million needs to be raised to prevent educational programmes operated by UNICEF and UNHCR and local NGOs closing this summer. Closure would deprive thousands of children not only of education but the only normality they currently have in their lives, with their existence in the camps blighted by poor diet, poor sanitation, tension and sometimes violence.

This funding would extend and expand those programmes to the end of the 2021–22 school year, and represent a near doubling in immediate reach to 2,000 children daily. It would also prepare for a likely 30% increase in refugee children. It would furthermore provide the confidence and trust for the development of plans to provide services to all refugee children in Greece.

More resources are badly needed to improve the quality of non-formal education as teachers often don't have the relevant training or qualifications, and many programmes rely on volunteers or recent graduates with no prior teaching experience. Current non-formal education programmes on the islands offer between four and 18 hours of instruction weekly, compared to 30 hours in Greek public schools. Class sizes are overcrowded and can be as high as 50 children compared to an average of 18 in Greek public schools.

As of January 2020, the refugee enrolment rate in public schools on the islands was only 6%. While we would like to see that figure rise, non-formal education is vital to give children and their families a mental and physical break from the unhealthy conditions of the camps.

At the same time, there is an urgent need to extend nursery services to children aged 3–5 and to support mothers with children aged under 3. With modest additional resources, UNICEF and its local partners could deliver pre-school services to 6,000 early learners and almost support 6,000 mothers with small children.

And it is essential the international community supports the emergency funding request by UNICEF and UNHCR to mitigate against the negative impact of a prolonged disruption caused by Covid-19 to the schooling of refugee children. Both UN agencies and their NGO partners are committed to provide remote education until they are able to resume face to face programming. ●

Point

2

International support for a comprehensive refugee education plan across Greece


Opposite

A teacher instructs a pupil in the Greek alphabet at the Tapuat Centre
© Theirworld / Yorgos Kyvernitis

The international community should recognise the pressure and drain on Greece's education system and more actively support the country's efforts to expand refugee education over the next five years. At the same time, the Greek government needs to demonstrate more thorough planning that would inspire greater support.

Of 31,000 school-aged refugee children, only 13,000 were enrolled in formal schools in 2019–20. That has to improve and the capacity of the Ministry of Education must be boosted to nearly double that figure to enrol 25,000 refugee children and youth for the 2021-22 school year. This would involve establishing a dedicated refugee education Programme Management Unit at the ministry to develop a national plan and to provide policy and programme leadership.

Greece, like many other refugee host countries, has found itself dealing with a crisis that it did not anticipate and is struggling to cope with. The Ministry of Education has made an admirable commitment to integrate refugee children into public schools, but it must rely on other government departments for everything from relocating the refugees to the mainland to providing essential services such as protection and health. More cooperation and coordination is needed.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has made a bold "No Child Alone" policy declaration regarding unaccompanied minors, which should be recognized, applauded and supported. However, despite some countries like Germany accepting small numbers of unaccompanied minors, Mr Mitsotakis has not received sufficient support from the EU for his call to help unite unaccompanied minors with their families across Europe. Greater political will must be shown, while the humanitarian community and private donors must come together to support the plight of these minors by advocating hard for a resolution to their future in Greece and Europe. ●

Point

3

Invest in the region and tackle the refugee problem closer to home



There are 1.5 million refugee children out of school in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, most having fled the Syrian war. Donor countries must fulfil the very public pledge they made in 2016 to educate those children.

In Greece and other gateway countries to Europe, our research found that private philanthropy has a significant role to play in closing financial gaps

But given that refugees come from dozens of countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East, more must be done to provide the hope and opportunity that will make families less likely to make the dangerous journey to Europe.

All donor countries should consider increasing their support to Education Cannot Wait, a fund created in 2016 that offers governments, multilateral institutions and the private sector the chance to work collaboratively to provide education to children in emergency settings and in post-conflict countries.

The current crisis underscores the need for multifaceted and preventive solutions that address the root causes of the regional refugee crisis, especially the war in Syria that has uprooted more than 6 million of its people; the need for additional support to the largest host countries; and a revision of Europe's current unsustainable refugee policies.

In Greece and other gateway countries to Europe, our research found that private philanthropy has a significant role to play in closing financial gaps in the absence of sufficient flexible funding from traditional bilateral and multilateral donors.

Education will not address all of the needs of extremely vulnerable refugee children and youth, but it is an essential missing component to help them survive the unacceptable humanitarian conditions they are forced to endure and to begin to heal and build a better future for themselves. ●

Opposite

The Tapuat Centre allows children to enjoy safe, outside space and games
© Theirworld / Yorgos Kyvernitis



Introduction

People are on the move from many places, but Syria continues to produce the highest number of refugees

Protracted conflict, violations of human rights, climate change and lack of economic opportunity have continued to drive millions of vulnerable people to more secure countries. In 2019, there were 71 million refugees and displaced people around the world, with an average of 37,000 persons fleeing their homes every day.

According to UNHCR, more than 57% of registered refugees are from Syria (6.7 million), followed by refugees from Afghanistan (2.7 million) and South Sudan (2.3 million). The number of Syrian refugees is set to grow even further as the ongoing conflict and attacks on civilians in Syria, especially the shelling earlier in 2020, have forced over a million people out of their homes.

The vast majority of refugees and migrants escape to and remain in nearby countries. Today, the burden of hosting of refugees is unequally distributed and heavily concentrated in neighbouring countries. In 2019, developed countries hosted 16% of refugees while developing countries took 84%. Due to the war in Syria, Turkey is host to the largest number of refugees in the world, and two small countries — Lebanon and Jordan — are host to the highest proportion of refugees at one in four and one in three, respectively. Uganda, Pakistan, Sudan, and Germany are also major hosts.

A growing refugee crisis in Europe's gateway countries

While the burden of hosting refugees continues to rest with mostly poorly resourced countries, many wealthy nations are closing their borders, building bigger barriers and forcing less-resourced and ill-equipped countries into becoming the *de facto* final destinations for refugees and migrants. This is creating a refugee crisis in gateway countries to Europe and with it new challenges and considerations for international aid efforts, including for schooling refugee children.

The international community needs to take a stronger stance on holding all countries more accountable to their legal responsibilities towards refugees. At the same time, it requires reconsidering aid policies and programming responses in countries not eligible for overseas development assistance but with limited capacity, resources or political support to integrate refugees.

Opposite
Refugees and migrants gather at a border crossing near Edirne, Turkey, hoping to cross into Greece
© UNICEF / Ölçer

Greece, with a population of 11 million and still recovering from an economic crisis that defined its last decade, is overwhelmed by the increasing flow of refugees

The constant threat of an increased number of refugees entering Greece or heading further into Europe is reminiscent of the fears and reactions of several European nations in 2015. Today, however, the EU as a whole is hoping to hold on to its policy of containment, keeping refugees in countries on its perimeters, including Turkey and Greece, in return for financial compensation.

In the new frontier for the refugee crisis, local NGOs are the first responders to support refugees, with delayed action by governments due to lack of political will, resources, capacity and know-how. International organisations, especially UN agencies, have a critical role to play but they too are operating in unchartered territory with limited and uncertain resources.

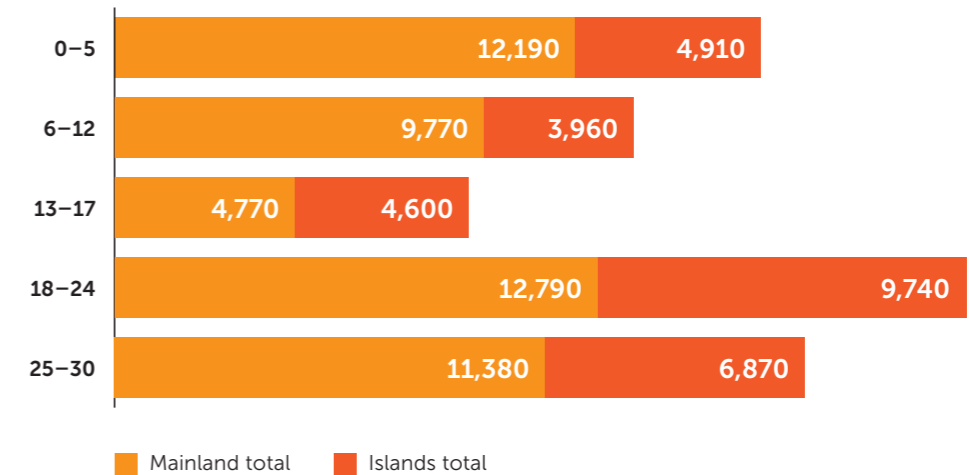
Nowhere is this scenario more evident than in Greece.

The refugee crisis in Greece

Europe saw its highest number of refugees arrive in 2015, primarily from Syria, and have since sought to quell the flow of refugees through a new European Union policy including tighter border controls and an agreement with Turkey. The number of refugees reaching Europe has therefore gone down significantly over the last two years but has had deep ramifications for gateway countries such as Greece. These high flows are putting already very vulnerable refugee populations at higher risk.

Greece, with a population of 11 million and still recovering from an economic crisis that defined its last decade, is overwhelmed by the increasing flow of refugees. Today, it hosts over 118,000 refugees and the numbers continue to increase. In 2019, Greece saw a rapid increase of asylum seekers month by month with the total arrivals reaching 57,000 – more than a 30% increase from 2018. Of those asylum seekers, more than two-thirds arrived on the islands of Lesbos, Samos, Leros, Kos and Chios. There are over 42,000 asylum-seekers and refugees staying in the Refugee and Identification Centres (RICs) that were designed for an estimated capacity of 5,400. The crowded RICs and their poor humanitarian conditions are drawing wide criticism from human rights organisations, such as Human Rights Watch, who call it a containment policy.

Refugee and asylum-seeking children and youth by age November 2019



Source UNHCR

On a visit to Greece in November 2019, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi expressed great concern over the conditions of the RICs and in particular the insufficient measures to protect the most vulnerable populations, especially children and youth, saying, “Conditions in which people live are extremely disturbing. There is a big sense of despair and a lack of prospects makes the situation difficult.” This unclear future can be particularly detrimental for young people. Grandi urged, “Unaccompanied minors need solutions in terms of safe shelter, education and future prospects.”

As of late 2019, the newly elected Greek government had not yet formally communicated its policy toward refugees, although there was an expectation that they will implement stricter measures to detract further asylum seekers from heading to Greece. Since then, Mr Mitsotakis has promised to improve humanitarian conditions on the islands by moving asylum seekers to the mainland. The Prime Minister reserved his highest level of concern for the over 5,000 unaccompanied minors and announced the No Child Alone programme with the mandate to develop a plan to better protect and address the needs of this most vulnerable population. He explained:

There is a wound that we can close immediately by ourselves because it is dictated by civilisation, humanity, sensibility and also by our tradition. I speak of the protection of the minors that are here unaccompanied, alone without anyone and without any hope. We can't let them be lost to the exploitation and crime. These little souls of the world can't become victims of the guilty of this world. For this reason, I personally take over their case and concentrate all jurisdictions to the Prime Minister's office.

Stranded without hope: The majority of refugee children are out-of-school

Despite some positive steps, the reported use of police force against refugees protesting the conditions in the camps and growing opposition by locals and the slow progress on moving refugees to the mainland are cause for concern, and make it very difficult to implement any form of longer-term education for refugee children.

In a positive sign from the Ministry of Education, it has adopted new policies that make it mandatory to give access to education to refugee children and to allow for an easier registration process. It has also employed new measures including hiring new teachers, training teachers and raising awareness among communities to facilitate better integration of refugee children in schools.

But the situation, exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis, requires urgent corrective measures to make up for lost time for educating the majority of refugee children and youth. To date, of the 31,000 refugee children and youth only 11,700 of them are in formal schools, including DYEP, in the 2017–2018 school year. The number of enrolled students is lower in 2019–2020 while DYEP was on hold for several months.

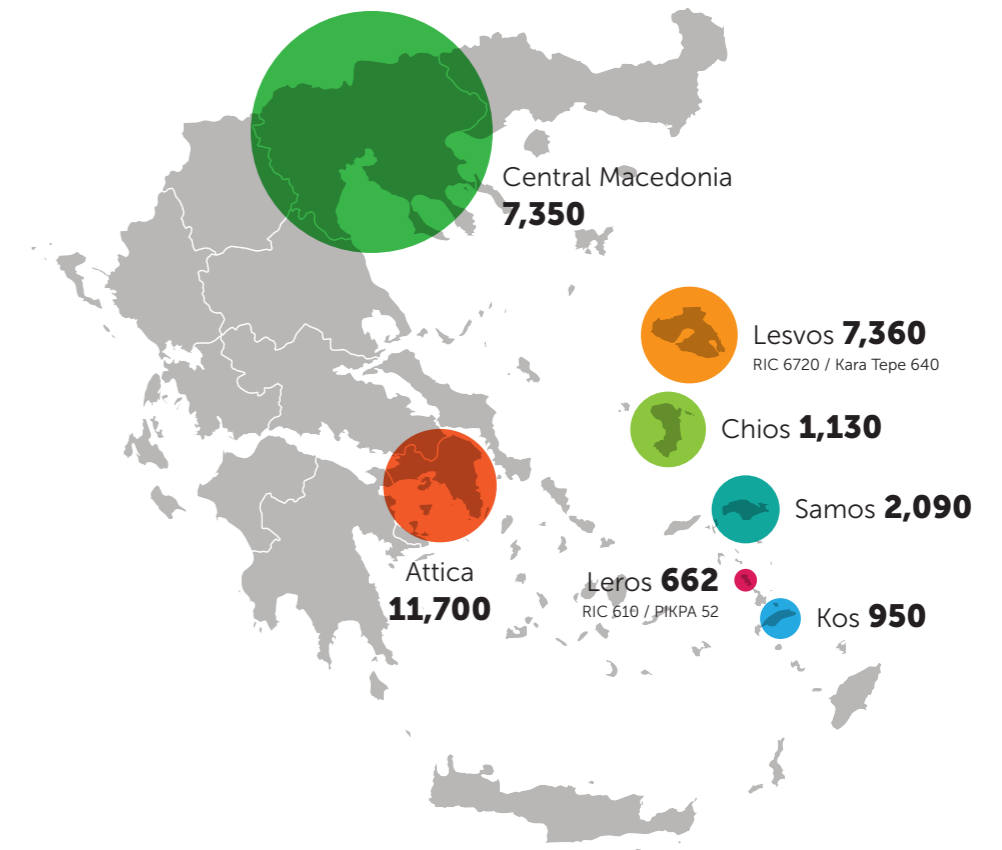
In the Greek Islands, home to 5,296 school-aged children (a conservative estimate that, by other counts, could be nearly double), in a parallel effort, UN agencies and Greek NGOs are delivering non-formal education to 1,472 students as of October 2019 (a 28% coverage rate, at its most optimistic, though actual coverage may be closer to half this figure).

Limited international engagement with refugees in Greece

The international community has had a limited role in both supporting the Government of Greece and delivering non-formal education to the most vulnerable children. UNICEF and UNHCR are leading the international education response, which includes funding local NGOs to deliver non-formal education, but are constrained by limited resources and the absence of a national action plan.

Funding for non-formal education has drawn the biggest share of support from private donors, including the awarding of the prestigious international Hilton Humanitarian \$2 million award to METAdrasi, a large Greek NGO that has been active in supporting refugees since 2009.

Refugee and asylum-seeking children in Greece, ages 0 to 17



Based on UNHCR data, November 2019

Theirworld, in a unique partnership with the Nationale Postcode Loterij and Education Cannot Wait, has invested more than \$2.5 million in the education response in the Islands, supporting more than 5,000 children, over the course of the partnership.

The direct donor funding to local NGOs has contributed to bolstering an important grassroots community-driven effort while also raising concerns around the sustainability and fragmented approach of their efforts.

Although there is greater recognition that the constant and rising flow of asylum seekers has been daunting for the Government of the Greece, the scale of the challenge remains relatively smaller than that of other refugee host countries with fewer resources. One in three and one in four people in Jordan and Lebanon respectively are refugees.

At the same time, despite its economic constraints, Greece is a developed country with a highly educated population and the capacity to integrate the majority of current refugee children and youth into its education system. Yet any demands by the international community must acknowledge the immediate strain on Greece and the implications for its own education reform plans and seek to support their efforts to include and improve education for all children and youth. ●



Understanding the refugee crisis on the Greek Islands

A generous history of hosting refugees

Greece has long been host to refugee and migrant populations. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Greece saw an influx of economic migrants from Eastern Europe. While the largest group of economic migrants came from Albania, migrants also came from other neighbouring countries including Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Romania and from countries further away such as Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia. It is estimated that there are 600,000 Albanians in Greece, making them 60% of the migrant population. Despite some challenges, migrants were integrated economically and provided for socially, including integration of children into the Greek education system.

In the last decade, however, the economic crisis has had a massive impact on Greece's economic and social prospects for its own people as well as migrants. The economic crisis resulted in severe austerity measures, loss of jobs, cuts to social welfare programmes – all of which made it challenging for migrants to survive financially.

Unprepared for 2015–19 refugee influx: The source of today's island catastrophe

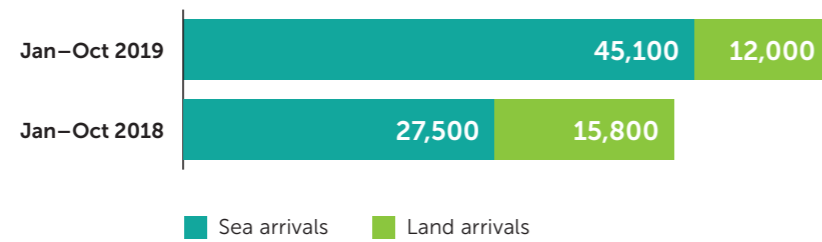
Despite Greece's experience of hosting migrants, like most of the countries who received a large influx of refugees in 2015, it was not prepared. It set up small temporary Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) on the islands to host asylum seekers but these RICs proved quickly to be too small, ill-equipped and unsuitable to protect the most vulnerable among the refugees.

At the outset, the RICs were intended as temporary accommodation while the Greek Government processed applications and transferred refugees from the islands to mainland accommodation under international protection procedure.

In March 2016, the asylum application procedures changed. Under the new procedure, *"Applications are deemed 'admissible' or 'inadmissible' based on interviews with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and Greek Asylum Service officers. Those applicants deemed admissible stay on the islands until their application procedure is completed, and those deemed inadmissible have the right to appeal. If their appeal is*

rejected, they are returned to Turkey" (Vergou, 2019, p. 3167). The waiting period is longer and more complex for those of undetermined status on islands because they are not eligible for support services.

Arrivals by land and by sea 2018 and 2019



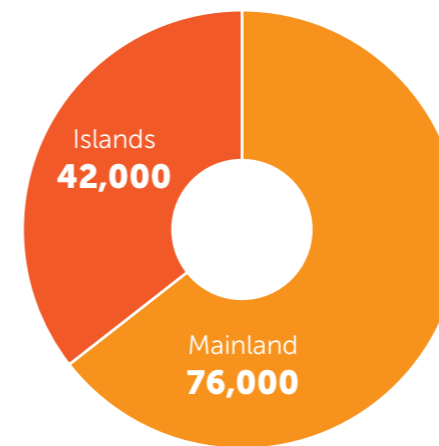
Source UNHCR, 2019

In 2019, the lengthier procedures and the rapid increase of asylum seekers caused a major backlog in transfers to the mainland. The number of asylum seekers increased month by month with the total arrivals reaching 57,000 – a more than 30% increase from 2018. Of those asylum seekers, more than two-thirds arrived on the islands of Lesbos, Samos, Leros, Kos and Chios resulting in unmanageable conditions in the RICs on those islands.

Four types of facilities on Greek islands

Detention Centres	Open Camps	Reception & Identification Centres (RICs)	Community-based Shelters
Detention centres holding migrants who arrived after the EU-Turkey statement; located in Eastern Aegean Sea islands	Smaller camps, few in number, for vulnerable populations such as families who require medical attention; Kara Tepe on Lesbos is one example	Over-crowded camps originally set up for smaller numbers and shorter stays; located on five islands, the biggest being Moria on Lesbos	A small number of specialised community-based shelters run by UNHCR or EKKA and intended to serve highly vulnerable refugees, especially UAMs

Refugees and migrants in Greece February 2020



UNHCR, 2020

Less than one third of refugees have been transferred to the mainland. The majority of refugees remain on the islands in overcrowded RICs and a smaller number in detention centres and open camps for vulnerable populations.

A humanitarian failure: Refugees are suffering from extremely poor living conditions

The RICs, where the majority of refugees are currently held, are unsuitable for the lengthy periods of time for which they have been operating. They are often built on old army facilities, factories and parking lots. Sprawling camps on Lesbos in particular are extending beyond their intended borders. Overwhelmed and under-resourced, RIC managers have advised newcomers to pitch tents wherever they can find an empty piece of land, leading many to end up in olive groves or muddy hillsides on the edge of the camp without the relative safety of the camp and exposed to the harsher effects of bad weather.

Newcomers have been advised to pitch tents wherever they can find an empty piece of land, leading many to end up in olive groves or muddy hillsides on the edge of the camp.

People inside the RICs are crowded into small tents with that offer little to no privacy and insufficient insulation. The grounds have poor water and sanitation facilities, and insufficient access to electricity and lighting. There is one lantern for every 200–300 people, well below what is provided in far less developed countries.

These conditions have contributed to an environment that is unsafe for unaccompanied minors, with violence against women and children, and high exposure to and risk of physical, sexual, and psychological violence (including child prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation). Refugees International recently reported that of 622 refugees who had experienced sexual and gender-based violence prior to arriving, at least 28% experienced it in RICs.

The poor conditions of RICs are made worse by the lack of sufficient essential services. Health services are woefully insufficient with shortages of doctors, psychologists and social workers. Long queues for what many refugees describe as substandard food often last more than two hours, forcing some to abandon the wait. Families complain that the food is so bad that some children would rather not eat on some days.

The poor services have prompted some entrepreneurial activity among the refugees. Small stalls offer fast food from their countries of origin or fresh vegetables, women bake bread and men have started small barbershops.

Beyond daily sustenance, there is little to no psycho-social support for the refugees inside the RICs and extremely scarce education services for children. A very small number of NGOs offer services inside the RICs. A big number of NGOs opted not to offer services inside the camp due to the poor conditions, including insufficient space to deliver services such as education for young children. ●

Newcomers have been advised to pitch tents wherever they can find an empty piece of land, leading many to end up in olive groves or muddy hillsides on the edge of the camp



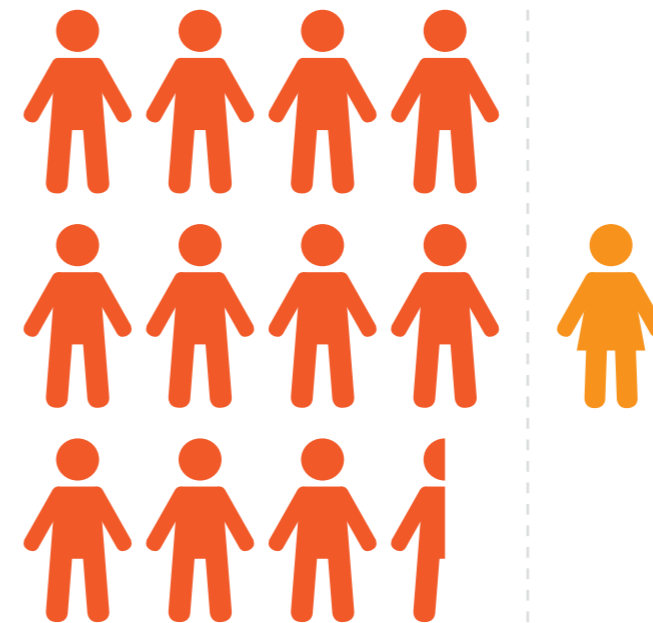
Opposite
Children walk over a creek that filled with plastic debris and rubbish in the Reception and Identification Centre in Moria, Lesbos
© UNICEF / Romenzi

A crisis within a crisis: Unaccompanied refugee minors

One of the greatest challenges of the refugee crisis in Greece is the high number of unaccompanied minors and the lack of sufficient protection measures for them.

There are over 5,000 UAMs in Greece with 92% of them being male, 91% over the age of 14 but some as young as seven years old.

92% of unaccompanied minors are boys



One figure represents 8%

Source EKKA, 2019

Like the rest of the refugee population, UAMs have fled conflict, human right violations, abuse and lack of opportunity. Most had hoped to end up in Western Europe. Up to one third have asked to be reunified with family members in Europe.

In the autumn of 2019 the Greek Prime Minister called on the EU to share the burden of settling the UAMs. Since then the PM has formed a cross-government commission, reporting to his office, to develop a protection and integration plan for the UAMs. EU member states have been too slow in resettling UAMs, with eight countries eventually following Germany's lead and saying they would take children. The first group of 12 boys is due to be resettled in Luxembourg soon.

The international community has criticised Greece for the lack of sufficient protections for the UAMs and slow action in developing a plan. The European Court of Human Rights has condemned Greece for its treatment of UAM in five rulings in the past year, which found that some children are being detained illegally and in inhumane and degrading conditions.

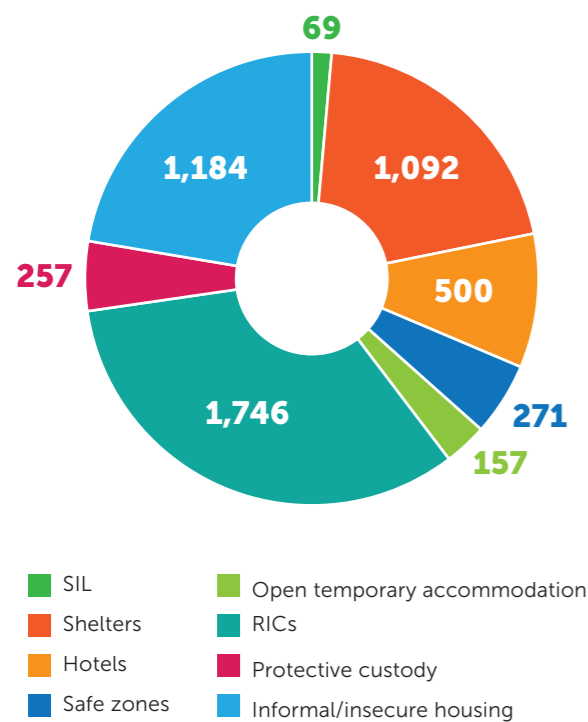
EU member states have been too slow in resettling UAMs

Opposite
Unaccompanied children and migrants from Afghanistan and Algeria play basketball in the courtyard of the SOS Children's Villages shelter, Athens
© UNICEF / Loulou d'Aki

A recent report *Children Cast Adrift* has underscored the stark incoherence between the Greek legislative framework and the practices implemented on the ground, which has led to a fragmented ad hoc child protection system, filled with shortcomings.

UAMs are spread out in Greece between the mainland and the islands. The majority of UAMs do not have access to government-funded housing. They are scattered across a mix of very poor and largely insecure housing that leaves them extremely vulnerable to physical and sexual violence, including rape and trafficking. Too many have gone missing or are living in precarious conditions in order to avoid possible deportation back to their countries.

Unaccompanied children by reported accommodation type November 2019



Source EKKA, 2019

Of the UAMs on the islands, Moria camp on Lesbos Island hosts the largest number at 1,100, of whom the majority are boys between the ages of 15 and 17 years old.

Some UAMs have had to wait in unsafe conditions for up to two years for their papers to be processed. The new law, however, allows the government to fast-track deportation in cases where the minor is 15 years old or older and not deemed to have fled an unsafe country. The new law is expected to drive more minors into harm's way, while they try to earn enough money to pay for dangerous smugglers who they hope will get them to the next European country.

It is expected that the Government will work with UNHCR and METAdrasi to implement a guardianship system in 2020. The Government of Greece has also indicated that their immediate priority is to find shelter for 1,500 UAMs, followed by building new facilities, although that is likely to take too long and be too expensive to meet the full demand.

Education ranks among the highest priorities of UAMs, after their basic protection needs, such as shelter and legal papers, have been met. ●

Case study

François is a 17-year-old unaccompanied minor from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, staying in a RIC on one of the islands. He only attended through grade 5 of school in the DRC and has been out of school for several years. He doesn't feel confident in his French language skills and is finding Greek challenging to learn, but is improving "bit by bit." Though he is committed to his education, saying there is "no choice [but to continue], even if it's difficult," studying is limited by the short hours at the learning centre and the noise and absence of places to write. The situation is trying, especially for unaccompanied minors. One of his peers at the learning centre, an unaccompanied boy from Ghana, noted that the learning centre offers a rare opportunity to escape the worries of the camp, and unaccompanied children can discuss their concerns with their instructors, as they would with parents. Even so, François says, "I am alone... there is no solution."

“
**I am alone...
there is no solution**
”



The state of refugee education in Greece

Despite its own economic and education challenges, the Greek Government is well positioned to provide education to all children in Greece. It has the human capacity, systems and schools. It faces some unique challenges for its region but the majority of issues could be resolved quickly in coordination with UN agencies, local NGOs and with support from the international community. The refugee education response to date has fallen short.

Understanding the education system in Greece

The Greek education system is overseen by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and implemented by regional directorates for primary and secondary education (Palaiologou, et al 2018). The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) is the Ministry's academic institution that provides technical guidance on matters related to policy, curriculum, pedagogy, school leadership, evaluation, and training.

Compulsory education, which runs from ages 6 to 15, encompasses six years of primary school, beginning with Grade 1 (ages 6 to 12), and three years of junior high school (ages 12 to 15). Pre-primary school is not compulsory, and while kindergarten was offered in the RICs under DYEP, there is a shortage of public kindergartens in urban Athens. Very few NGOs offer any form of early childhood education. Subjects of study in primary and junior high include Greek language, maths, science, geography, physical education, history, foreign language (English, French, German), computers, art, environmental studies, and religion (beginning in grade 5).

In primary school, students pass from grade to grade without qualifying exams, while in junior high, students have to pass year-end exams to determine if they pass to the next grade. At the end of junior high school, students must pass to receive the junior high school diploma, which allows them to continue on to three years of further secondary education, which is not compulsory. Senior high school can take the form of general education or vocational education. At both the junior and senior high school levels, 'second-chance' evening classes are available for adult students and working students.

Qualifying for tertiary education at the country's universities or higher technical institutes requires passing the national exams at the end of senior high school. Those who do not pass the exams can still qualify for vocational training institutes.

The quality of education in Greece

Low quality education has resulted in declining learning outcomes for over a decade in Greece. Students in Greece scored below the OECD average on maths, reading and science on the 2015 and 2018 PISA tests. According to 2018 test results, a smaller percentage of students in Greece reach either high levels of proficiency or minimum proficiency compared to their peers in other OECD countries; just over two-thirds of 15-year-olds attained minimum proficiency in reading and science, and just under two-thirds attained minimum proficiency in mathematics. Notably, immigrant students in Greece perform worse on PISA tests than the average performance of immigrant students in OECD countries.

Cuts in funding for education have contributed to the lower quality of education. Between 2010 and 2016, the Greek education system saw dramatic public sector funding cuts including decreasing expenditures on education personnel, appointment of temporary teachers and increasing class sizes. There has also been degradation of new education institutions established by major educational reforms (Vergeti, 2014: 83).

Yet, despite the declining quality of public education, in the 2018 report, Education for a Bright Future in Greece, the OECD recognised the Greek Government's efforts "to increase the quality and equity of the education system through a combination of innovative policies and deep structural reform". In the same report, the OECD called on Greece to prioritise education spending. Its key recommendations include providing greater autonomy to schools, focusing on developing the skills children and youth need for the future and investing in teachers and infrastructure.

Inclusion in education in Greece

The Greek Constitution ensures that all citizens receive free education, and obliges the State to provide support to students with special needs. Yet inclusive education for children with disabilities and other marginalised groups, such as Roma students, remains an area in need of significant improvement.

Broadly, children with mild learning difficulties can attend mainstream classes. Some students attend mainstream classes with additional education and support from special education teachers, depending on the type and severity of disability. Another option is Integration Classes, offered in general and vocational schools, which can involve either a combination of mainstream and specialised programmes or a specialised group or individualized programme. Children with more severe disabilities attend special needs schools. There are 90,743 children with registered disabilities enrolled in the Greek education system between kindergarten and upper high school. This figure includes a wide range of disabilities and severity but nonetheless constitutes 43% of the school age population.

The Greek Constitution ensures that all citizens receive free education, and obliges the State to provide support to students with special needs

One source described the integration system for children with disabilities as "inefficient" in its current state, saying, "The current Greek legislation 3699/2008 also encourages the development of inclusion through co-taught practices but as the previous one its implementation focuses more on the partial education of pupils in the resource rooms rather than their full education in mainstream classes" (Dimitrios, 2018, pg. 184). Another source found low quality education for children with special needs in integrated preschools (Fyssa, 2015).

In many respects, the inclusive pedagogies, differentiated teaching strategies, and broader institutional supports needed to better serve children with disabilities, Roma children, and other marginalised student groups would similarly benefit refugee students. Inclusive education is a growing priority for UNICEF, which is advocating for the national education system to be more inclusive of vulnerable groups. UNICEF is also working to build teachers' capacity to work with children from vulnerable groups including children with disabilities, as well as refugee and migrant children, children from poor households, Roma children, and victims of abuse and exploitation. The agency is also building a network of organisations that are working on inclusive education.

Legislative and programming supports for refugee education

The Government of Greece is bound by its own laws and the Convention on the Rights of the Child to provide education to all children in Greece. Furthermore, according to the Council of the European Union, children seeking asylum are eligible for education until an expulsion measure is enforced against them or their parents. Council Directive 2003/9/EC stipulates they must be enrolled in public school within three months of applying for asylum, or up to one year if they are receiving language training to facilitate their transition to public school (Rau & Van Esveld, 2018).

Greece's education system has a history of integrating migrant students that predates the 2015 refugee crisis. Intercultural schools began as schools for repatriated Greek children in the 1980s and under a 1996 law (Law 2413/1996) were reframed to support refugee students in the Greek education system. The intercultural school curriculum was adapted from the standard public school curriculum to meet migrant students' learning needs. Teachers in intercultural schools are specifically trained in relevant areas such as differentiated teaching, Greek as a foreign language, and languages that students speak as a home language. There are currently 26 intercultural schools across the country.

Though they benefit from teachers' commitment and relevant specialisation, there is also a perception that they are of lower quality than other mainstream schools.

Under Law 3386/2005, migrants residing in Greece have the same right to public education (Article 72). A 2010 law (Law 3879/2010) established Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP), regional directorates that host primary and secondary level reception classes in the morning in Greek schools, targeting children who do not have the necessary level of Greek to be fully integrated into the formal system without additional supports. These classes are not limited to refugee children, but also included repatriated, Roma, migrant, and vulnerable children who do not have the level of Greek required for success in the mainstream education system. Through ZEP, students take three hours of Greek reception classes daily and otherwise follow the curriculum in mainstream classes alongside Greek peers.

In the refugee crisis, ZEP was activated at the primary level in 2016 and at the secondary level in 2017. ZEP and its reception classes are a key mechanism for well-scaffolded refugee participation in the formal education system. ZEP benefits from more meaningful integration than two-shift systems for refugee education.

An additional reception class approach called DYEP also began transitionally in the 2016–2017 school year and was more formally embedded in Greek law in 2018. In line with recommendations from the Scientific Committee, kindergarten classes for refugee students were established in reception centres and afternoon reception courses were set up for refugee students in primary and secondary schools located near reception centres.

The DYEP curriculum was set by the Institute of Educational Policy. It includes intensive Greek, English, maths, computer science, physical education, and art and delivered by qualified teachers. While DYEP was a critical avenue for getting refugee students into formal education on the islands, it has also been criticised for serving as a form of *de facto* school segregation for refugee students, as children do not engage or integrate in any way with Greek students in the afternoon DYEP classes. The Ministry of Education has indicated that DYEP teachers are being hired to fill the big gap on the islands. DYEP (both the afternoon primary and secondary reception classes and in the kindergarten courses inside reception centres) have not been operational this year. In other words, the vast majority of children on the islands, particularly in reception centres, do not currently have access to any form of formal education.

Most recently, the Government adopted new legislation (Law no. 4636/2019) and relative administrative acts and circulars to facilitate and simplify the procedures for integrating refugee children into the formal education system throughout Greece. According to the MoE, the law makes it compulsory to enrol refugee children under the same terms and conditions that apply to Greek citizens.

Administrative mechanisms for refugee education

In 2016, the Government of Greece mobilised several administrative mechanisms to deliver refugee education across the country. The MoE established the Scientific Committee for the support of education of refugee children in March 2016 with the goal of providing guidance on the refugee education response, including a transitional plan for 2016–2017 and a full plan for the 2017–2018 school year. The IEP has also been involved in the response in developing materials for teaching Greek as a second language. The Working Group on the Management, Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education in the Ministry was established in August 2016 and has since been made into a formal department at the Ministry, The Department for the Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education, which currently has three staff members.

One of the most helpful mechanisms in accelerating progress is the appointment of Regional Education Coordinators (RECs) to act as a bridge between the formal education system and refugee families. Based in RICs and urban areas around the country, RECs help asylum-seeking children register for formal school (e.g. organising documentation and arranging for vaccinations) and support them in navigating school. RECs also liaise with families to help them understand how the system operates. RECs are highly qualified and specialised teachers. Approximately 70 RECs have been hired for the current school year.

Most recently, the MoE increased the number of teachers serving refugee children, bringing the total number of primary education teachers to 1,441 for the 2019–2020 school year and 225 teachers in DYEP and 1,216 in reception classes in priority zones. And, in secondary education, the number of teachers has increased to 413. Despite this increase, the MoE anticipates that they will require additional teachers and assistant teachers to respond to the ongoing new arrivals.

The MoE has also implemented two new initiatives to improve its ability to deliver refugee education to all children. With the support of the Institute of Educational Policy, the MoE is rolling out *Schools for All – Integration of Refugee Children* – a three-year project (2019–2022) to train teaching staff and parents of students in local areas that have recently received or are about to receive refugees into their local schools. It was officially launched in Athens in October 2019 and aims to pave the way for smoother integration throughout secondary schools in four prefectures (Attica, Central Macedonia, Central Greece, and Epirus).

The second project – *Towards An Inclusive Education for Child Refugees* – provides tools that enable schools and policymakers to better address the needs of migrant and refugee children, including: a) a database of best practices in three areas (guidance, evaluation, validation); b) a portal of collaborative exchange and repository of resources on education integration; and c) introducing peer support learning as an innovative means

for promoting inclusive education. The project began in 2018 and is a 3-year partnership with organisations in Greece, Turkey, Latvia, Italy, Romania and elsewhere.

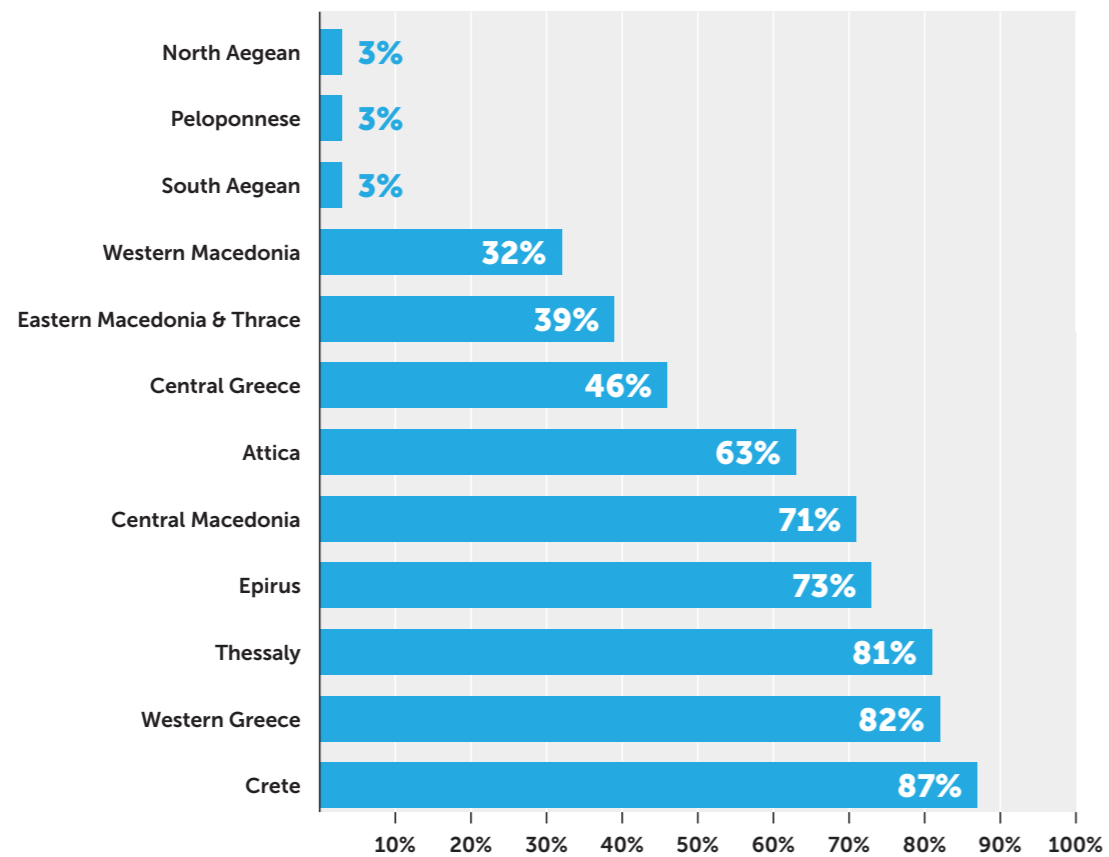
Outside of public sector actors, UNICEF, UNHCR and a number of local NGOs deliver non-formal education and other support services for refugee children.

Access to Refugee Education by Age and Location

Children in Urban Settings

While 13,000 children were enrolled in school in the 2019–2020, the vast majority remain out of school. Enrolment rates among refugee children are higher on the mainland (with a 61% enrollment rate among refugee children), where access to public schools is easier than on the islands (where the refugee enrollment rate was 6% as of January 2020).

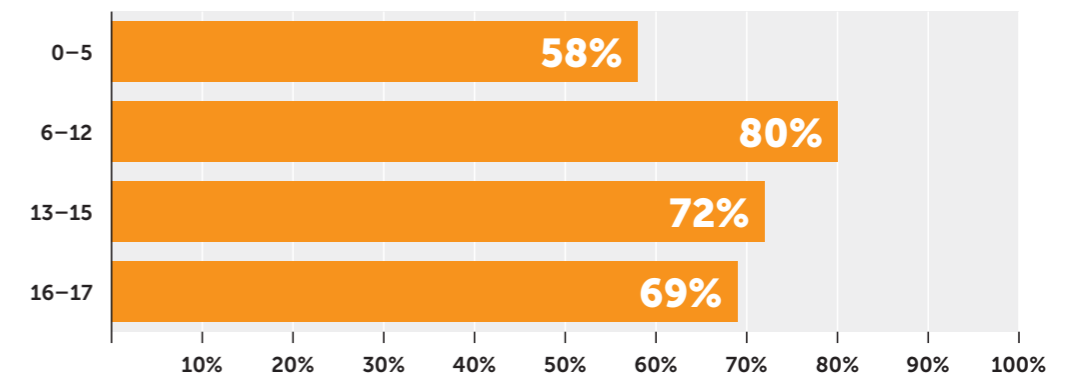
Enrolment rate in formal education of children 4–17 years old, per region
January 2020



Source ESWG/UNICEF 2020a

Enrolment rates are highest in primary — mandatory by Greek law — and lowest in pre-primary and secondary, which is consistent with international trends in refugee education.

Enrolment rate per age group of children living in urban accommodation
January 2020



Source ESWG/UNICEF 2020b

UAM in Urban Settings

Enrolment rates of refugee children in an urban setting varied widely based on their type of accommodation. The lowest urban enrolment rates among children in urban accommodation are children housed in hotels. Enrolment in these settings varies based on many factors including the risk associated with their accommodation and the level of support offered to UAMs.

Formal education enrolment rates for UAMs by accommodation type
January 2020

Accommodation type	Percentage of children enrolled
Shelters for UAC	76%
UAC safe zones	72%
UAC hotels	65%

Source ESWG/UNICEF 2020c

Refugee Education on the Greek Islands

Refugee children on the islands however have almost no access to formal education. UNICEF and UNHCR alongside local NGOs have stepped in to offer non-formal education although demand far outweighs their current capacity due to insufficient funds, cost of refurbishing facilities and the unanticipated surge of refugees, among other factors.

The number of preschool and school-age children on the islands is likely closer to double the 5,296 figure below, given more recent estimates and the continued influx of refugees to the islands, so the coverage rate is likely to be much lower than the 28% shown below as NFE capacity has not risen substantially.

In a recent assessment in Greece, 77% of refugee children listed going to school as one of their top priorities. One in three parents reported that education was the key reason for leaving for Europe (UNHCR). ●

Refugee children on the islands however have almost no access to formal education

Non-formal education coverage on the islands

	Number of children 3–17 years old	Number of children participating in NFE	Percentage of children participating in NFE
Lesvos	3,086	701	23%
Chios	402	279	69%
Samos	1,059	405	38%
Kos	428	87	20%
Leros	314	0	0%
Rhodos	7	0	0%
Total	5,296	1,472	28%

Source UNICEF, 2019

Case study

Mitra is an Afghan woman staying in the RIC on one of the islands with her four children, who currently attend a non-formal learning centre near the RIC. Before coming to Greece, the family was displaced in Iran, where the children attended school for a few years but were out of school for two years before leaving. Mitra herself didn't attend school as a child in Afghanistan, but did attend alongside her children in Iran. She has noticed an improvement in the children's psychological state since they began attending the learning centre, and now when her children come home from the centre, they try to teach Mitra to read. Her children want to enrol in formal schools so they can make Greek friends, and she feels strongly that her children attend school in Greece. Part of Mitra's interest in her children's education comes from her commitment to teaching them about equal rights. In Afghanistan, women's rights were never taught in school, but it is one of the first things the children learned in Greece.



A three-point refugee education response

In addition to responding to the urgent request for emergency funds by UNICEF and UNHCR related to Covid-19, there are 16 challenges we have identified that a comprehensive response must address. They fall into four categories: challenges with (1) children and unaccompanied minors, (2) schools and communities and (3) non-formal education providers and (4) the Ministry of Education.

Our recommendations include a three-point refugee education response to address these challenges:

- 1 Urgent financial assistance of €20 million for non-formal education on the Greek islands**
- 2 International support for a more comprehensive refugee education plan across Greece**
- 3 Greater investment in the region to tackle the refugee problem closer to home**

We outline the challenges, the required urgent response, considerations for the government response and then channels for additional support in the region to reduce the refugee flow and provide education in more immediate proximity to countries of origin.

Opposite

A boy inspects the lock on a gate in the Reception and Identification Centre in Moria, on Lesbos
© UNICEF / Romenzi

Key challenges for refugee education in Greece

The following section outlines the challenges the proposed three-point response intends to address.

Children & Unaccompanied Minors

- 1 Refugee children's access to education is dependent on their location and housing arrangements.** Refugee children who were relocated with their families to the mainland have higher level of access to public schools than children who remain on the islands. And, although there are variations in enrolment rates correlated to the type of accommodation, access for UAMs is also significantly higher than enrolment rates on the islands. This disparity is largely explained by the insufficient capacity of public schools on the islands to accommodate refugee children and the expectation that refugee children's stay on the islands is temporary.

While non-formal education is likely to increase to support refugee children on the islands, the Government of Greece is committed to moving the families with children and UAMs to the mainland, which will facilitate much greater access to public schools. It is therefore the speed at which the different government bodies are able to coordinate the relocation of the refugees that will have the biggest impact on if and when out of school children receive access to education before the next school year.

- 2 Refugee children have low enrolment rates outside of primary education.** As primary education is mandatory and providers focus on delivering it first, the youngest children and those beyond junior high school have largely been excluded due to lack of targeted programming. Only 58% of children 3–5 years old in urban accommodation have access to pre-primary while children on the islands have almost no access, with few NFE centres offering services for young children and kindergarten DYEP paused officially until December 2019. Moreover, in general, there is a shortage of ECE programming in almost every setting.

Access to vocational and tertiary education are also very limited. Globally, only 3% of refugee youth have access to tertiary and this seems to be the case in Greece. Beyond small individual efforts, no programmes were identified. The lack of progress at this level is affected by many factors. Many refugee youth do not have sufficient levels of education, sufficient documentation nor the resources to pursue a higher education beyond a few small-scale private university scholarships and support programmes. For vocational education, refugee participation in formal vocational education is extremely limited,

though the General Secretariat for Professional Education, Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning sees vocational training opportunities for disadvantaged youth, particularly refugees, as a top priority for 2020 and beyond.

- 3 Refugee children have poor levels of education prior to arriving to Greece.** Too many refugee children arriving to Greece have been out-of-school for extended periods putting them at a severe disadvantage at integrating successfully in Greek public schools. Although no formal data is available and the current refugee settlement procedures do not include education assessment, a recent UNHCR survey estimates that up to one quarter of children had not completed any formal level of education, while one third completed only primary education prior to their arrival.

Children from Afghanistan and Iraq who arrived in Europe through the eastern Mediterranean route had the lowest level of education, and more than one third had reportedly never gone to school. More than half of Syrian, Afghan, Iraqi, Pakistani and Iranian children who were interviewed had been out of school between one and two years prior to the survey, which includes the duration of travel. Among Syrian children this gap can reach 2.5 years.

Overall, half of asylum seekers in Greece with a primary education met minimum proficiency levels in literacy (World Bank, 2018).

- 4 Refugee children lack the Greek language skills necessary for them to benefit from formal education.** Lack of proficiency in the Greek language is a major barrier and cited as the main reason for refugee children dropping out of public schools (UNESCO, 2018). All refugee children arriving in Greece would never have had exposure to the Greek language prior to arriving. For those who have had access to some Greek language training since they have arrived, it has largely been insufficient to master the language.

Many refugee children and their parents express frustration at the infrequency of the language classes available to them through non-formal education providers. For children who are in formal school, many do not continue their schooling due to the challenge of understanding the language of instruction and the lack of preparedness of public school teachers to teach Greek to non-Greek-speaking students. Teachers for ZEP and DYEP are not selected based on Greek as a second language training or intercultural education experience (UNESCO, 2018).

Too many refugee children arriving to Greece have been out-of-school for extended periods putting them at a severe disadvantage

Case study

Nadine, a 12-year-old Syrian girl staying in a camp on one of the islands, is enrolled in Grade 5 at a formal Greek school.

She switched seamlessly between Arabic and English as she described the situation at school. She and the other asylum-seeking student in her class have been seated in the corner of the classroom, mostly overlooked, while her teacher focuses on teaching Nadine's Greek classmates. Her younger sister is in grade 1; in the half year she has been enrolled in school, her teacher has only assigned her a few pages of homework, while her Greek peers receive homework regularly. Another 12-year-old living in the camp expressed frustration that she is not allowed to participate in school, even when she wants to join her peers in reading aloud in class. She has been enrolled in school for a year but never received a starter book; when she told her teacher she wanted to learn, the teacher replied that she thought the girl did not speak Greek. Nadine's mother and other parents in the camp expressed a desire for more teacher support for asylum-seeking children as they try to adjust to the Greek system.

5 Refugee children although resilient have not received the psychosocial support needed to ensure their wellbeing and readiness for education.

All refugee children in Greece have experienced varying levels of trauma due to conflict, violence and risks they faced in their home countries, throughout displacement and on their journey to asylum. While some agencies have been delivering programmes to support the mental health of refugee children, there is a big gap in the resources available. Children who remain in the RICs are living in unsafe and unsuitable conditions that are further deteriorating their mental and physical health. Families who remain in camps often ask for their children to spend longer hours in non-formal education settings as the only safe and healthy place their children can access.

For refugee children who access education, studies show that there are factors that affect their mental health inside schools including the lack of capacity of their teachers to welcome and integrate them into their classrooms and their exclusion by native children (Reitz et al, 2015 as cited in UNESCO, 2018). Outside of school, one of the biggest challenges to their wellbeing and success at school is the lack of consistency and normalcy in their lives especially as they move around often in search of a better life (Simopoulous & Alexandridis, 2019).

Schools & Communities

6 Some local communities have been resistant to the integration of refugee children in public schools. For children on the islands, delays in administering vaccinations to refugee children have prevented them from being able to access public schools as Greek parents expressed fears of exposing their children. The tension around the issue of vaccination seemed to increase xenophobia and led to some protests against the integration of refugee children in public schools.

7 The majority of teachers are not trained to receive refugee students in their classrooms and schools are not well equipped to support teachers. Teachers of refugee students are not given additional resources to address the challenges refugee students face in integrating such as language and academic barriers and psychosocial stress (Vergou, 2018). As a result, many refugee students complain that they are not able to participate in class, feel isolated and are not motivated to attend. This may begin to change with the additional teachers the Government has hired and the training the Ministry of Education is delivering to teachers as referenced earlier in the report.

8 Schools do not engage refugee parents in supporting the integration of their children. This is a wasted opportunity especially as most refugee parents value education highly and would suggest the pursuit of quality education for their children among the reasons for their asylum journey. On the other hand,

some parents are not thrilled about sending their children to Greek schools as they perceive it at odds with their ultimate goal of reaching another part of Europe (UNESCO, 2018).

Non-formal Education Providers

- 9** **Insufficient funding prohibits non-formal education providers from expanding their offerings.** UNICEF, UNHCR and local NGOs rely on limited international funding, especially as Greece is not eligible for official assistance. To date, funding for non-formal education has been provided by a small number of donors as one-time contributions, putting in jeopardy the sustainability of these programmes. Critically, programming by UNICEF and UNHCR is at risk of shutting down if new funding is not secured by June 2020. At the same time, there is an urgent need to secure funds for doubling the current offering and building a contingency plan for a likely 30% annual increase of refugee children.
- 10** **While non-formal education is not intended to replace formal education, providers are under pressure to address the massive learning gap of refugee children without the necessary resources.** Non-formal schools offer anywhere between 4 to 18 hours of instruction weekly compared to the 30 hours in Greek public schools. They most often do not have teachers with the relevant training or qualifications, and many rely on volunteers or recent graduates with no prior teaching experience. The absence of more formal training and supports raises concerns about quality of education (and related factors, like PSS) provided by these centres. In addition, class sizes are overcrowded and can go as high as 50 children compared to an average of 18 in Greek public schools.
- 11** **Non-formal education is not currently aligned with the Greek public education curriculum nor providing a bridge to formal schooling.** As it is the intention of the MoE to integrate refugee children into the Greek education system, UNHCR is currently developing the Bridging Education Programme, which is targeting 5,000 children on the islands with learning and skill-building opportunities to prepare refugee children for formal education when they transition to the mainland.

Programming by UNICEF and UNHCR is at risk of shutting down if new funding is not secured by June 2020

Ministry of Education

- 12** **The MoE is largely constrained in its ability to move swiftly to integrate all refugee children as it awaits a whole of government response.** Like many refugee host countries, Greece has found itself dealing with a crisis that it did not anticipate and that has proven difficult to manage. While the MoE has made the commitment to integrate refugee children into public schools, it must rely on its counterparts in other parts of the government for everything from relocating the refugees to the mainland to providing essential services such as protection and health.
- 13** **The lack of a clear and comprehensive national plan weakens the position of the MoE as the lead on the refugee education response.** It also contributes to lack of cohesion and fragmented results in refugee education response. Non-formal education providers could play a significant role in ensuring refugee children are prepared to integrate successfully in public schools if there were a coordinated strategy.
- 14** **The influx of refugee children into Greek public schools places a further strain on the MoE as it aims to improve the quality of education and learning outcomes of its students.** The MoE has its pre-existing pressures and limited resources even before the refugee crisis. It must now contend with continuing its commitment to improve quality while also addressing refugee inclusion and its consequences, such as push-back from some communities and pressure on teachers.
- 15** **The MoE is challenged to develop a unique response to meet the needs of UAMs.** Following the PMO's announcement of the No Child Alone initiative, the MoE will need to work closely with other departments to ensure the education response is woven in and supported by other interventions. Important considerations for UAMs that differ from children with families include ways to study while earning a sustainable wage, need for assisted housing and protection services.
- 16** **The MoE does not have sufficient funds to increase its capacity to integrate refugee children into public schools effectively.** The MoE requires additional funding for hiring teachers, training all teachers and continuing to raise awareness and support communities hosting refugees. In addition to direct financial support, the MoE relies heavily on the IOM to provide transportation to refugee children.

Point

1

Urgent financial assistance for non-formal education for refugees on the Greek islands



Non-formal education providers are delivering an essential service to the survival and healing of refugee children and youth. Their efforts should be recognised and supported

While the ultimate goal should continue to be to integrate refugee children and youth into the Greek public education as soon as possible, the reality is that a) too many have been waiting to enter school for too long; b) many are not ready to enter formal schooling without preparation and support; and c) more refugees are expected to continue to arrive on the islands and should have access to education support immediately upon arrival in order to avoid a long gap.

The international community needs to rally around the most urgent priority of providing access to non-formal education to children and youth on the islands — the most under-served and vulnerable refugee population.

UNICEF, UNHCR and their NGO partners need urgent financial support of €20 million to provide non-formal education from kindergarten to grade 12. This would enable them to maintain their existing programming beyond the current school year and scale up their efforts to reach 2,000 children daily over the next two school years, 2020–21 and 2021–22, on the islands. This plan would allow them to double their existing programming and be prepared for a 30% increase in refugee children over two years.

At the same time, there is an urgent need to extend non-formal education services to children ages 3–5 in the RICs and support to mothers with babies 0–3 years old. While there are few early childhood providers, it is understood that with modest additional resources, UNICEF and its local NGO partners could deliver ECE to 6,000 early learners and almost support 6,000 mothers with small children.

Non-formal education providers are delivering an essential service to the survival and healing of refugee children and youth. Their efforts should be recognised and supported not only for NFE's educational benefits but also for the mental and physical break from the unhealthy conditions of the camps.

Beyond the immediate emergency, international agencies and local organisations recognise the need for improving upon their services to address the inconsistency in the quality of education across providers, to make learning targets clearer, and to begin planning for the integration of refugee children and youth into formal schooling.

Additional funding to support non-formal education should: a) stipulate a requirement for qualified teachers who are trained to work with refugee children; b) hold organisations accountable for meeting learning outcome targets; and c) support programming that ensures a successful bridge to formal education through an accelerated learning programme coordinated with and approved by the MoE. ●

Opposite
Children attend a school in the Skaramagas refugee camp, near Athens
© Theirworld / Yorgos Kyvernitis

Point

2

International support for a comprehensive government-led refugee education plan across Greece



Opposite
Girls from the Syria and Afghanistan attend an English class at an education centre
© UNICEF / Felipe Jacome

The international community must recognize the pressure and drain on Greece's education system and more actively support the country's efforts to expand refugee education. At the same time, the Greek Government needs to demonstrate real progress that will in turn inspire further confidence and leads to additional support.

Below we propose 12 strategies that would expand the Greek Government's refugee education response and ensure a more comprehensive approach that meets the needs of all refugee children and youth. The strategies are divided into four priorities: 1) increasing the capacity of the Ministry of Education; 2) supporting the PMO's 'No Child Alone' programme for UAMs; 3) expanding education offerings to include all levels of education; and 4) exploring new approaches to delivering access to education.

Priority 1

Increase the capacity of the MoE to provide 25,000 refugee children and youth with access to education by the 2021–22 school year

- 1 **Endorse the MoE's intention to develop a comprehensive national refugee education response.** The Government must lead on developing a national refugee education response. A comprehensive plan, developed in consultation with all partners, will contribute to unifying the vision to integrate all refugee children into Greek public schools, align all refugee education providers (including non-formal), accelerate progress and attract new partnerships with its clearly laid out action plan, targets, and accountabilities.
- 2 **Establish a dedicated refugee education Programme Management Unit at the MoE.** The refugee education response requires a dedicated PMU to develop a national plan, provide policy and programme leadership, coordinate the efforts of all education providers within Greece, collect data and report on national progress by all partners. It would take on the role of the previously established Department for the Coordination and Monitoring of the Refugee Education, including the oversight of the Refugee Education Coordinators. The PMU would also be the conduit between the Government of Greece and national and international partners on refugee education, enabling it to share its experience and draw on lessons learned while building up its own capacity to monitor implementation.
- 3 **Accelerate action to integrate refugee children and youth into Greek public schools through political leadership and international support.** The integration of refugee children and youth into public schools requires urgent political leadership and coordination among all government departments in Greece to accelerate the process of moving children from the islands to the

mainland, where they would be able to access public schools. The international community should support to the MoE through: a) technical expertise in the form of a one to two-year temporary secondment to the PMU; and b) high level advocacy support through a small advisory group to Niki Kerameus, the Minister of Education.

- 4 Adopt the refugee education response as an integral part of the MoE's inclusion goal.** The MoE has been working with the EU on strengthening its inclusion strategies for children with disabilities and minority children. The international community should support this effort and ensure that the refugee education response benefits all children in Greece, including the most vulnerable Greek, Roma and other children.

No Child Alone is a bold pledge by the PM and is the right moral position. It should be recognised, applauded and supported

Priority 2

Support the PMO's 'No Child Alone' programme for UAMs

No Child Alone is a bold pledge by the PM and is the right moral position. It should be recognised, applauded and supported.

- 5 Provide international expertise to support the development of the education response for UAMs.** The government understands the need for a multi-dimensional strategy and has established a government-wide commission. International lessons learned on education may serve to accelerate progress and provide reassurance to the government in developing its own strategy.
- 6 Work with PMO and the MoE to mount a global campaign around the plight of the UAMs and the shared international responsibility towards them.** Despite some countries like Germany accepting small numbers of unaccompanied minors, the EU response has been too slow to PM Mitsotakis' call to help unite UAMs with their families across Europe. In the absence of political will, the humanitarian community and private donors must come together to support the plight of the UAMs by first ensuring that there is a resolution around their future in Greece and Europe and second by devising a plan to ensure they begin to build a healthier future through education, skills and job experience.

Priority 3

Expand education offerings to include all levels of education

As with almost every refugee crisis, the focus has been on primary education first. This response aligns with Greece's own mandatory levels of education, which includes primary and junior high school. As the numbers of refugees increase and the duration of their stay lengthens, it is important that the education response meet the needs of all refugee children and youth from 4 to 24 years old.

- 7 Enrol all refugee children in pre-primary.** In addition to the learning and development benefits of early childhood education, it offers a protective environment and respite from the extremely harsh living conditions of the camps. It also offers a chance at addressing children's psychosocial needs, learning Greek early and preparing them for successful integration into the Greek education system. While early childhood education in Greece is optional, the benefits of ECE — especially trauma-informed, play-based models — to refugee children and to their readiness for school cannot be overstated.
- 8 Provide opportunities for higher education.** There are currently very few opportunities for refugee youth to enter higher education. While the numbers of refugee youth who qualify and are interested may be small, it is essential that they have equal access if they are going to integrate into Greek society successfully. A deep dive into the sector is needed to detail solutions, however international experience shows that scholarships are necessary to lower the barrier for refugee youth.
- 9 Invest in a more robust vocational education sector for the benefit of all youth in Greece.** The quality of vocational education in Greece is not optimal and improving its quality would be valuable to Greece's economy. Investing in vocational education would contribute to filling the skills gap and creating jobs in industries that require new technical skills such as digital technologies. For refugee youth who have been out of school of extended periods and need to begin earning a living soon, vocational education may one of the best solutions.

Priority 4

Explore new approaches to delivering access to education

Advancements in technology are opening up new opportunities for higher access to education and better learning outcomes. While many tech-enabled education programmes have failed to address the needs of refugee youth, the magnitude of the challenge globally and within Europe warrants a more concerted effort. Greece is an ideal location to test out new models given the high technology penetration across the country. It is important to note that EdTech solutions should not be pursued as a replacement of classrooms or teachers for refugees but rather as an opportunity to reinforce and accelerate learning, increase access and improve the quality of refugee education. There are at least three areas that could be studied.

- 10 Reinforce and accelerate progress on learning in the classroom in formal and non-formal schools.** Refugee children and youth in Greece have lost years of schooling setting them far behind their peers in Greece and putting them at risk of never continuing their education. At the same time, they remain eager to study and are frustrated by their inability to integrate into formal schooling or the limited hours of education through non-formal learning. For example, they may only have a few hours of Greek language training per week whereas they would prefer to learn full-time. Access to Greek language training online would help them achieve their goals faster and reduce the pressure on instructors and providers.
- 11 Increase access to high quality micro-credentials that would lead to jobs.** Not many refugee youth in Greece are able to continue onto traditional higher education. Yet it is necessary to develop their skills and give them the opportunity to gain credentials that make them attractive employees. Given the wide range of online and blended programmes and credentials, especially in new job fields, refugee youth should be encouraged and supported in pursuing these opportunities. Support to refugee students studying online should be facilitated through a local education provider and include access to a network of peers, counselling on selection of areas of study and academic counselling.
- 12 Create an online network for teachers working with refugee students in Greece.** Teachers in Greece are often overwhelmed and not prepared for integrating refugee students in their classrooms. An online network of teachers from the formal and non-formal sector would encourage sharing of lessons learned, tips and tools that teachers need to succeed teaching refugee and other students such as those with disabilities and Roma children. ●



Point

3

Invest in refugee education in Syrian refugee host countries and other emergencies

Without education, refugee children live in fear of having no future prospects of improving their lives



There are 75 million children out of school today globally. One in four of these children lives in conflict-affected countries. Yet education receives a mere 2-4% of humanitarian aid. Similarly, aid to refugee education in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey has fallen short. In February 2016, donors pledged to provide more than \$11 billion in multi-year support that they have failed to deliver. Today, there are over 1.5 million children who are out of school in those three countries. These children are suffering the consequences on a personal level every day but the impact will be felt around the world.

The benefits of education to an individual are well documented especially in terms of better health and higher income. Without education, refugee children and youth do not only suffer the immediate consequences such as child marriages, child labour and low wages in unregulated environments, they also live in fear of having no future prospects of improving their lives for themselves and their families. For Syrian youth and families with children, the lack of educational opportunities is an important consideration for seeking asylum in Europe, where they hope to access good quality education and decent jobs.

To reduce the number of refugee children and youth who attempt to head to Europe, donors should fulfil their pledges for refugee education in the three countries hosting the highest number of Syrian refugees — Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. They should also work closely with host countries in ensuring the success of the refugee education responses and broadening the scope of the support to include substantially greater resources for secondary education, vocational education and School-to-work transition schemes.

While supporting education for Syrian refugees is essential, it is important to note that there are over 60 nationalities among the refugees in Greece, with Afghan refugees registering as the highest among new arrivals, according to UNHCR January 2020 data. It is therefore imperative to consider the strength of the refugee education response for all nationalities in the countries hosting them and ultimately rebuilding the education systems in their home countries.

All donor countries should consider increasing their support to Education Cannot Wait, which was created in 2016 to help close the \$8.5 billion funding gap needed to reach these 75 million and children and youth. Education Cannot Wait is a fund that offers governments, multilateral institutions and the private sector the chance to work collaboratively on education responses in emergency settings and post-conflict countries.

The lack of funding for refugee education on the Greek islands illustrates the failure of donors and existing funding mechanisms to be more responsive and agile to the needs of extremely vulnerable refugee children, who have fallen through cracks of the international humanitarian system. But in this instance and many others like it, including in other gateway countries to Europe, private donors have a significant role to play in closing financial gaps in the absence of sufficient flexible funding from traditional bilateral and multilateral donors. ●

Conclusion

This report presents a glimpse into the dire humanitarian conditions of refugees on the Greek islands and the acute vulnerability of women with young children, children and unaccompanied youth.

It is important to note that while writing this report began in December 2019, the situation continues to evolve and remains very fluid. The facts within the report capture the most up-to-date and reliable data available at the time of publishing but continue to change daily.



The goal of the report is threefold: to outline the urgency of responding to refugee education needs in Greece; to summarise the specific challenges that the Government of Greece and non-state actors face in delivering education to refugees; and to present a plan for delivering education for all refugee children and youth in Greece based on the facts and in consultation with the key stakeholders.

Education will not address all of the needs of these extremely vulnerable children and youth but it is an essential missing component to help them survive the unacceptable humanitarian conditions they are living in today, to begin to heal and build better future for themselves.

The report calls on the international community of governmental and private donors to support the emergency Covid funding and get behind a three-point refugee education response in Greece including:

- 1 Urgent financial support** of €20 M to scale up the efforts of UNHCR, UNICEF and local NGOs in delivering refugee education to the most vulnerable children and youth on the Greek islands over the next two school years.
- 2 Support the Government of Greece** and its partners over the next five years through 12 strategies under four priorities that strengthen the capacity and lead of the Ministry of Education and ensure a more comprehensive approach to meet the needs of all refugee children and youth.
- 3 A reminder to governments to keep their promise to Syrian refugees** and other children in emergencies by delivering on their financial pledges to support education in the countries hosting the highest number of refugees and by supporting Education Cannot Wait. It also encourages private donors to step up in a situation where they could have significant immediate impact.

The refugee crisis in Greece poses many new challenges for it as a country, for the EU as a region and for the international community. The EU and the international community must reconsider their policies, funding and approach to support the refugee response in Greece to align with the needs of Greece and the refugee population there. They must work together to urgently and diligently improve the humanitarian conditions of all refugees and asylum seekers, including providing education to children and youth. ●

The EU and the international community must reconsider their policies, funding and approach to support the refugee response in Greece

Children line up for fruit juice in the Reception and Identification Centre in Moria, on Lesbos
© UNICEF / Romenzi



Appendix A

Non-formal refugee education providers

There are many organisations working to provide education on the Greek islands. UNHCR and UNICEF work together to coordinate international finance and delivery provision. At the same time, direct funding of local providers is possible. Theirworld, through its partnership with the Nationale Postcode Loterij has also channelled support to various partner organisations via Education Cannot Wait.

UNICEF

UNICEF provides a range of child well-being services in Greece, with particular attention to refugee education. The agency works in support of the Greek Government and in partnership with other UN agencies and NGOs, targeting refugee children as well as other marginalised groups in Greece like children with disabilities, Roma children, and children from poor households. With regard to refugee education, UNICEF chairs the Education Sector Working Group, provides interpretation in public schools, and supports non-formal education through Child and Family Support Hubs (14 on the mainland and one, the Tapuat Centre, on Lesbos, described in more detail below) and in urban non-formal education centres (three in Athens, including ELIX, also detailed below). These urban NFE centres include language classes, social-emotional learning, adult learning, and support in enrolling in and attending Greek public schools. In addition to NFE for children, Child and Family Support Hubs offer PSS, adult education, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, mother and baby corners, case management, and identification and referrals. Beyond education, UNICEF offers child-friendly spaces in Regional Asylum Offices and runs a community centre for women and girls in Athens, promoting life skills and offering

Opposite
Children in the grounds
of the Kara Tepe refugee
centre, Lesbos
© Theirworld / Yorgos
Kyvernitis

GBV prevention and response. The agency also supports unaccompanied minors through 12 apartments in Athens through the Supported Independent Living scheme.

Apart from its direct refugee response work, UNICEF also supports activities like teacher training and inclusive education advocacy, which aim to improve education for all children, especially those from vulnerable groups, including refugees.

UNHCR

UNHCR plays a central role in the refugee response in Greece. The agency supports the Government of Greece and works in close collaboration with NGOs, civil society and other UN agencies. Through partners, UNHCR supports non-formal education programming on the islands and in Athens. The agency also helps to facilitate refugee children's access to formal schooling on the islands and the mainland. Through partners, UNHCR also supports vulnerable children — including unaccompanied or separated children — with legal aid, psycho-social support, and other assistance. For older unaccompanied children, UNHCR provides places in supported independent living apartments and for younger children, UNHCR works with foster families. Accommodation is a major need, and UNHCR runs the ESTIA accommodation scheme, the cash assistance programme and Kara Tepe accommodation site, all funded by the EU. UNHCR also works to safeguard protection standards, promote refugees' access to health services as well as offer support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR has staff present in key border locations on the islands and Evros

for support to new arrivals and to provide information on the procedures and identify the most vulnerable. The agency has also been involved in promoting integration with the Greek government and in relocating those seeking international protection, including unaccompanied children.

UNHCR worked with 35 partners as of December 2019, including national and international NGOs and multilateral agencies. The agency has a country office, two sub-offices, three field offices, and four field units in Greece. As of January 2020, the Greek operation is 5% funded (\$13.56 million). UNHCR's work in Greece is heavily supported by the European Union, as well as funding from other governments, private donors, foundations, and Education Cannot Wait.

METAdrasi

METAdrasi is a key non-governmental player in the refugee response in Greece. The organisation, which plays a major role in supporting refugees across multiple sectors, predates the most recent refugee surge. METAdrasi began with a strong focus on language interpretation and currently offers such support in key areas such as asylum procedures, reception and identification procedures, educational settings, and health centres. The organisation has since expanded to include a wider range of education, protection, integration, legal assistance activities, verification of victims of torture, and a comprehensive safety net for unaccompanied children. Education activities include Greek as a foreign language classes for adult asylum-seekers and refugees, non-formal educational

activities for refugee children, and skills training and job placement. In addition, the organisation operates two non-formal learning centres on Lesbos (one for children from Kara Tepe and one for children residing in Moria camp), one learning centre for children from the RIC on Chios, and a child-friendly space in Kara Tepe, all in partnership with UNHCR and together serving 600 school-age children on a daily basis.

METAdrasi's education centres operate outside the RICs to provide a sense of normalcy away from the difficulties of the hot-spots, and the organisation provides transportation as needed. The centres have slightly different goals depending on the children they serve. The learning centre in Kara Tepe, for instance, is focused more on school preparedness for children not yet enrolled in public education, while the centre in Mytilene, which specifically serves unaccompanied children from Moria, is more focused on survival language skills and on providing a space for UAC outside of Moria. Centres are staffed by dedicated teams. At the learning centre in Mytilene, communication can be a challenging issue, as students and teachers sometimes lack a shared language, and staff identify a strong need for interpretation services and psychosocial support referral services to better support their students.

Beyond this centre, METAdrasi offers a range of other supports for UAC, including operating transit accommodation facilities, supporting a guardianship network, operating a temporary foster care system for UAC, and implementing the Supported Independent Living accommodation scheme for unaccompanied minors aged 16 to 18 in partnership with UNICEF and UNHCR.

METAdrasi is unique in that a significant portion of its staff, both in interpretation roles and other positions, are refugees and migrants. The organisation received the prestigious Conrad N. Hilton Foundation award for its innovative approach to supporting refugees and unaccompanied children. As of October 2019, METAdrasi's education programmes have served 5,610 child beneficiaries, 3,392 on the islands since programming began on Chios and Lesbos in January 2018 and 2,218 on the mainland since education activities were launched in Athens in July 2017.

Arsis – Association for the Social Support of Youth

Arsis, another Greek NGO that predates the 2015 refugee crisis, operates in a number of sectors in support of refugees and asylum seekers, including education, protection, legal aid, and accommodation. In partnership with UNHCR, Arsis runs two non-formal education centres in Kos and Leros, called KEDU and LEDU, serving children from the islands' RICs, including unaccompanied children. The centres run in two shifts, with young children in the morning and older children in the afternoon. The centres operate with a more structured curriculum than some other non-formal learning centres serving refugees in Greece, with learning in Greek, English, maths and science organised around cross-disciplinary projects and themes. The KEDU centre has approximately 90 children per day, with a maximum capacity of 120, and LEDU has a capacity of 130. To date, KEDU has served 594 students between six and 18 years old.

The centres provide critical safe spaces and support to students from the RICs. As one student at KEDU described, in the RIC, there is *"no space in the camp to play, no computer to touch."* KEDU, then, provides opportunities for learning and recreation that children in the RICs otherwise do not have. An unaccompanied minor from Ghana also spoke about the critical social and emotional support that the centre can provide; while in the RIC, students' heads are *"full of worries"* but at the centre, students feel comfortable talking to teachers about their problems. Those without parents even *"take the teachers as parents,"* relying on them for much-needed emotional support. Though students in many cases still wish to go to Greek schools alongside Greek students, the Arsis learning centres are a critical resource for children in RICs.

ELIX

In partnership with UNICEF, ELIX implements the Learning for Integration Project to provide quality non-formal education to refugee and migrant children in Greece. A 'mothership' in Athens hosts classes and ELIX's administrative functions, and additional centres operate out of public schools.

To foster a sense of routine, children attend for two hours a day. Students ages 6 to 17 learn Greek and English. The centre has piloted a blended learning approach for teaching Greek, combining in-person teaching with a digital learning platform. Teachers also guide use of the platform in the classroom. The curriculum also includes science, maths and life skills learning. Pre-school classes are offered for

children ages 3 to 5. Instructors are Greek-certified teachers, and cultural mediators provide additional support. Social workers and psychologists are also available; beyond providing support and referrals, social workers have helped a small number of students to enrol in public schools.

In addition to learning opportunities for students, the centre offers Greek and English language classes for parents, which operate parallel to the centre's pre-primary classes. These parent classes also sensitise parents to the importance of education and fill a critical and over-overlooked area of need in the education response, helping to build parents' capacity to navigate life in Greece and to support their children's educational journey.

To date, ELIX's educational activities in the Attica region have reached 5,337 children (ages 3 to 17) and 1,101 adults (mostly parents) between November 2016 and December 2019. When operational in Central and East Macedonia in 2017, ELIX reached 718 children and 76 adults.

PRAKSIS

PRAKSIS is a Greek NGO that provides humanitarian and development support to vulnerable groups of both Greek and migrant backgrounds. The organisation works to improve the social and economic inclusion of a wide range of vulnerable groups, including refugees and asylum seekers. Programming includes advocacy and social and medical service provision, including support for accommodation and psychosocial support for unaccompanied minors and other asylum-seeking children. Within the PRAKSIS model, education is situated within child protection.

In partnership with UNHCR, PRAKSIS operates a child-friendly learning centre (CFLS) for about 100 children from the Vathy RIC on Samos. The centre offers a combination of recreational and educational activities; the latter includes Greek, English and maths. Greek is the language of instruction, as language learning is the main goal of the centre, as the long-term expectation is that children will be enrolled in formal education on the mainland. Instructors at the centre are PRAKSIS staff; all have university degrees and generally have some prior experience working with refugees. The centre does not provide psychosocial support, but PRAKSIS offers a separate PSS programme in the RIC.

In addition to the CFLS, PRAKSIS has semi-independent living (SIL) for 24 unaccompanied children ages 16 to 18 in six apartments. The SIL arrangement has a strong education component, with formal schooling supplemented by non-formal lessons focused on Greek language, life skills and work promotion.

Tapuat Centre

The Tapuat Centre is a child and family support hub serving children and women from Moria. It is supported by UNICEF and implemented by local Greek NGOs. Theirworld has provided support to fund the Tapuat Centre and expand its facilities to accommodate additional refugees.

Children aged three to five are enrolled in early childhood education, and subjects for older children include Greek (the language of instruction at the centre), English and psychosocial support, which can take the form of a range of creative

activities such as arts and music. Children also learn basic maths. Traditional language learning has been supplemented with learning via tablets, though students at the centre expressed a preference for in-person instruction. Children currently attending the centre note that the psychosocial support classes have been helpful in building their confidence outside of class. With little space for recreation and almost no organised learning opportunities in Moria, the centre provides an essential safe space for play and education.

In addition to educational services for children, mother baby services support mothers in caring for their young children. The centre also offers child protection, psychosocial support, referral services, and GBV prevention and response for young women residing in Moria RIC. A daily snack is provided to learners.

The centre runs in two shifts, together serving 200 children, and is planning to expand to nearly double its capacity with new support from Theirworld and partners. A stronger focus on unaccompanied children is expected as part of the expansion. The new centre is also expected to include more opportunities for electronic learning. As with all non-formal learning opportunities for children from the RICS, the Tapuat Centre has a long waiting list, and children often wait for months to enrol. And as with other learning centres, children attending express appreciation for the facilities and the opportunity to be outside the RIC and a desire for more time at the centre. In addition to non-formal education to these 200 children, the centre serves 50 young women ages 18 to 24 with its other services.

Deree – The American College of Greece

Deree – The American College of Greece is one of the few higher education institutions in Greece offering admissions and scholarships for refugee students. The programme began with support from the US Embassy through Education Unites, a scholarship programme supporting refugee students at The American College of Thessaloniki – Anatolia College, Deree, and Perrotis College – American Farm School. Scholarships at Deree fund half-time study, a daily meal, books, and a Xerox card at a cost of approximately €12,000 per student annually. However, without a living stipend and accommodation support, some students are unfortunately forced to drop out.

To be eligible, students must be over 18, have completed high school and be in Greece legally as asylum-seekers. Students receive intensive English support before beginning their studies, with courses students can take depending on their level of English proficiency. Beyond their academic contributions, asylum-seeking students at Deree have helped changed their classmates' perspectives on refugees.

Eighteen refugee students are currently enrolled; ten of them are students continuing from last year. Students are supported by a full-time Education Unites consultant at the college. A proposal has been submitted to increase the number of refugee students to 40, with annual intake and graduation of ten students each year.

Faros Horizon Centre

Faros Horizon Centre provides support and humanitarian services to unaccompanied minors and other refugee youth in Athens. The organisation operates a drop-in centre for refugee boys and a boys' shelter, mostly for unaccompanied boys. In partnership with the MIT D-Lab and with funding from UNHCR, Faros also operates a non-formal educational programme for refugee boys, prioritising unaccompanied minors and homeless boys. Unlike many other non-formal learning centres where children stay enrolled for as long as they are in the area, the Horizon Centre has a distinct programme duration of a few months. A significant portion of the programme participants are also enrolled in formal school. The programme is focused on the design process, in some ways functioning similarly to a maker space; the focus on planning and design is intended to build students' soft skills, creative problem-solving abilities, and self-esteem in addition to technical skill development. The programme's current capacity is 35 boys. Faros has a separate centre for girls. In 2020 there will be just one centre with both boys and girls occupying the space for programming, though at different times, with conservative estimates of 35 to 45 boys and 10 to 15 girls participating in the early stages of the project.

Though the centre does support skill development, the set-up and duration of the programme is not sufficient to serve as comprehensive vocational training. Moving forward, however, the centre plans to work to support university scholarships for students, in partnership with an American university; facilitate refugees' access to Greek vocational schools; and prepare

and advise students on opportunities for employment (including self-employment), including trying to link students with employers.

Refugee Trauma Initiative

Refugee Trauma Initiative (RTI) fills a critical gap in early childhood education opportunities for refugee children in Greece, where few interventions and little coordination exists at the ECE level. Recognising that specialised care for young children is often limited in refugee and emergency settings, RTI has developed an approach to provide specialist care through non-specialists. This approach to early childhood learning is called Baytna (meaning "our home" in Arabic) and focuses on mitigating the toxic stress faced by young refugee children by facilitating and encouraging protective relationships. The Baytna approach is play-based and emphasises parent involvement – a critical dimension of support for young children that is often overlooked in emergency settings.

RTI currently works with six partner organisations to directly or indirectly deliver Baytna. With three partners, RTI implements Baytna directly, while another three partners are participants in a structured year-long capacity-building programme to help early care providers build the skills and capacity to appropriately support young refugee children's specific needs. These organisations were chosen through a rigorous selection process, and participate in trainings and monthly check-ins, and receive intensive support and supervision over the course of the year to build their capacity in trauma-informed early childhood programming.

The selected organisations cover operating costs and provide the space for Baytna programme to operate, which could allow this model to function and scale at a lower cost compared to other ECE models.

About half the RTI team is from the refugee community, reflecting the organisation's commitment to build on the understanding and expertise among the communities the organisation serves. To date, RTI has supported over 1,000 children through its innovative, trauma-informed model and is working to build a rigorous evidence base around the model to guide future expansion.

Appendix B

Non-formal education costs forecast by UNHCR and UNICEF

UNHCR

Goal: Maintain current capacity for 770 children July 2020 – December 2020

Description of cost	EUR
Six centres on Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Kos and Leros (e.g. rent, maintenance, utilities, communications, office support)	79,451
Activities (e.g. teachers, cultural mediators, social workers, coordinators, drivers, cleaners, admin/logistics, protection, field and programme support)	996,867
Local transportation and travel (e.g. bus, fuel, travel costs for visits/missions)	62,957
Equipment and Supplies (e.g. educational material)	33,590
Support in quality assurance and coordination	175,930
Project support costs (6.5%)	87,672
Total	1,436,468

Goal: Double capacity to reach 1,540 children on a daily basis January 2021 – December 2022

Description of cost	EUR
Six centres on Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Kos and Leros (e.g. rent, maintenance, utilities, communications, office support)	540,273
Activities (e.g. teachers, cultural mediators, social workers, coordinators, drivers, cleaners, admin/logistics, protection, field and programme support)	6,497,707
Local transportation and travel (e.g. bus, fuel, travel costs for visits/missions)	428,108
Equipment and Supplies (e.g. educational material)	227,692
Support in quality assurance and coordination	1,154,067
Project support costs (6.5%)	575,110
Total	9,422,957

Appendix B: Non-formal education costs by UNHCR & UNICEF

UNICEF

Goal: Provide 3 shifts to reach 630 children per day + 90 ECE September 2020 – June 2022

Description of cost	EUR
Tapuat centre near Moria (e.g. rent, maintenance, utilities, communications, office support)	158,400
Activities (e.g. teachers, cultural mediators, social workers, coordinators, drivers, cleaners, admin/logistics, protection, field and programme support)	1,066,162
Local transportation and travel (e.g. bus, fuel, travel costs for visits/missions)	117,700
Equipment and Supplies (e.g. educational material)	246,627
Support in quality assurance and coordination	50,000
Project support costs	131,111
Total	1,770,000

Goal: Reach 150 children per day + 50 ECE September 2020 – June 2022

Description of cost	EUR
Samos (e.g. rent, maintenance, utilities, communications, office support)	75,600
Activities (e.g. teachers, cultural mediators, social workers, coordinators, drivers, cleaners, admin/logistics, protection, field and programme support)	504,000
Local transportation and travel (e.g. bus, fuel, travel costs for visits/missions)	58,800
Equipment and Supplies (e.g. educational material)	117,600
Support in quality assurance and coordination	25,200
Project support costs	58,800
Total	840,000

UN Agencies and local NGOs

Goal: Provide access to 12,000 children, early years care and education September 2020 – June 2022

Description of cost	EUR
ECE (3-5 yrs) – 6,000 children	600,000
Mother with Infants (0-3) – 6,000 children	600,000
Total	1,200,000

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