

Child Psychosocial Support Programming (PSS) for Informal Education NGOs in Lesvos, Greece

Lesvos, Greece¹

- Northeastern Aegean island that is a **primary entry point into the EU** from Turkey for refugees and migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Africa
- Home of the notorious Moria refugee camp; currently **22,000** refugees and migrants awaiting asylum claims and living in **unsanitary and unsafe conditions**
- In response to recent provocation from Turkey, Greece has decided to **suspend the asylum process** until April 2020, leaving all stranded

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Children gather for daily art sessions in Mandala, June 2019



Wooden playground in Mandala constructed by hand, July 2019



Mandala Child Space

- Constructed by NGO **Refugee4Refugees** in spring 2019, adjacent to Moria camp
- Informal space for children in camp to play, learn English, and engage in PSS activities

PSS in Education in Emergencies (EiE)²

- PSS refers to the processes and actions that promote the **holistic wellbeing of people** in their social world, including support provided by family and friends
- Psychosocial wellbeing is **a significant precursor to learning** and is **essential for academic achievement**
- Intentional investment in education-based PSS has **proven to protect children against the negative effects of disasters** by creating stable routines, providing opportunities for friendship and play, and reducing stress, among others

Research Question

How are child psychosocial support (PSS) interventions designed, implemented, and monitored in informal education spaces on Lesvos, and how can local NGOs improve the outcomes of their programs?

Challenges

- **Declared state of emergency on Lesvos** beginning March 2020 given Greek-Turkish hostilities
- **Dismantling of Mandala Space** in March 2020 due to severe camp overcrowding
- **Prioritization of emergency response** over education programming, especially during COVID-19 crisis
- **Temporary status** of children on island
- **Lack of funding** for PSS programming
- **Lack of instruction for use of INEE guidelines** to design, implement, and monitor PSS programs

References

1. UNHCR. "Act Now to Alleviate Suffering at reception centers on Greek islands." February 2020.
2. Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies. "INEE Guidance Note on Psychosocial Support." June 2018.