Focus on the programme ‘Action Against Gender-Based Violence Affecting Refugee and Migrant Women and Children in Greece, Italy, Serbia and Bulgaria.’

October 2019 – December 2020

Refugee and Migrant Situation Analysis

In 2020, over 15,500 migrants and refugees arrived in Greece, 23.4% of whom were women and 35.8% children. Between January and November 2020, 4,520 children arrived in Greece – an 80% decrease compared to the previous year. The majority (3,415) arrived by sea, and 74% were no more than 13. 15% of all children arriving by sea were registered as unaccompanied children (UASC). In total, over 44,000 refugee and migrant children, including 4,027 UASC lived in Greece by the end of 2020.

Most refugees and migrants arrive first to Lesvos or other Greek islands where they are held in Reception and Identification Centres (RICs). During 2020, more than 33,000 of these refugees and migrants were transferred from the islands to mainland Greece. Despite this, by the end of the year, around 4,000 children remained in overcrowded RICs on islands, including a new RIC on Lesvos that was constructed following a fire in September 2020 that destroyed Lesvos’ Moria RIC and displaced 12,000 people.

Access to shelter, basic services, and economic opportunities continue to be limited for refugees and migrants in Greece. COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation, with rising economic hardship and homelessness among refugees and migrants as a result of reduced informal work opportunities, movement restrictions and insufficient support upon arrival. The situation poses specific threats to women and girls, who face increased risk of sexual violence and exploitation when they are left without safe accommodation, adding to already overcrowded housing conditions in reception sites, limited WASH facilities and livelihood opportunities.

Gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against children (VAC) were urgent issues both outside and inside Greece’s refugee camps prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. Movement restrictions that prevented encamped populations from leaving RICs during the first national lockdown caused increased tension that exacerbated GBV inside the camps. At the same time, GBV services were disrupted by the crisis.

UNICEF Priorities and GBV Strategy

UNICEF is working with state and civil society actors in Greece to facilitate refugee and migrant women’s and girls’ access to GBV prevention and response services. This includes supporting women’s and girls’ safe spaces (WGSS), aiming to promote girls’ and women’s safety and resilience while providing them a confidential place to disclose GBV and seek specialized support; information sharing and awareness raising about GBV risks and services; ensuring availability of interpreters to support survivors’ access to counselling centers, shelters and other services provided by actors supporting GBV survivors; and deploying mobile multi-disciplinary teams to sites, to be able to respond to emergency situations. Specific attention is also given to upstream work through data collection and analysis, capacity development of frontline workers, supporting referral pathways, strategic partnership with public institutions, ministries and grassroots organizations for system strengthening and policy reform.

GBV Programme Updates and Achievements

UNICEF supported public systems and civil society to prevent and respond to GBV against refugees and migrants. As of December 2020, 3,144 women and 791 girls accessed GBV prevention and response services in Greece. 214 boys and 38 men also accessed services, bringing the total number of people who accessed services between October 2019 to December 2020 to 4,187. An increasing number of survivors are accessing GBV services thanks to interpretation available at state-led and civil society service points, provided through a UNICEF partnership with METAdrasi. Services include case management, psychosocial support, material assistance, shelter, medical services and referral to specialised services. Some of the services were delivered through WGSS’s operated by UNICEF’s partners.

KEY POPULATION FIGURES

44% of all child refugee and asylum seekers were girls, and 23% of refugees and asylum seekers were women

9,714 arrivals by sea and 5,982 arrivals by land in 2020

More than half of the sea arrivals in 2020 were women (23%) and children (36%)

4,520 children arrived in Greece between January and November 2020

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

(Oct 2019 – Dec 2020)

4,187 people in need accessed GBV prevention and response services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET June 2021</th>
<th>REACHED Dec 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>4,187</td>
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89% of polled beneficiaries would recommend UNICEF-supported services to others

Beneficiary Feedback

- Was the staff friendly? 99%
- Did the staff treat you in an open minded and non-judgmental way? 95%
- Did the staff express themselves clearly? 94%
- Did the service provider help you to adapt to remote service delivery? 83%

1,042 people accessed information about GBV prevention and response

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TARGET June 2021</th>
<th>REACHED Dec 2020</th>
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<td>495</td>
<td>500</td>
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495 frontline workers trained

Frontline workers trained, by profession

- 10% Reception
- 24% Other
- 19% Cultural Mediators
- 24% PSS staff (GBV Specialists)
- 23% Educational staff

Country Factsheet GREECE
UNICEF and partners have carried out GBV awareness raising, including information about GBV risks and services in the context of COVID-19, both inside and outside Greece’s refugee camps. Before and during the pandemic GBV-related information and messages have been distributed through various channels, including via videos on GBV shared with teenagers in four languages, which have received over 15,000 views on Facebook, as well as the teen story book *The World According*, published in four languages. A total of 1,042 people accessed information about GBV prevention and response.

Following the destruction of the Lesvos RIC in Moria, UNICEF and partner Iliaktida turned the Child and Family Support Hub on the island into an emergency shelter for single mothers – many of them GBV survivors, or at risk of GBV – as well as UASC. To respond to immediate needs following the fire, as well as to ensure the continuation and expansion of GBV case management and services, UNICEF entered into partnership with the civil society organization Diotima. UNICEF also supported GBV coordination in the new RIC and participated in the re-establishment of referral pathways, in close collaboration with UNHCR. UNICEF also continues to support WGSS across 14 open accommodation sites in the country.

UNICEF Greece has strengthened its collaboration with the GSDFPGE by seconding a GBV Information Management (GBVIM) expert to the Secretariat. With assistance from the expert, and since the outbreak of COVID-19, the GSDFPGE has compiled a bi-monthly newsletter analysing existing GBV response and services, which has been used to inform response strategies. The newsletters are also shared with the public, and have been featured as a good practice in a booklet on Best Practices from Europe on the Protection of Women against Violence. The GBVIM expert has also supported a mapping of civil society actors that supports refugee and migrant GBV survivors.

**In Focus: Programme adaptations and response to COVID-19**

COVID-19 has exacerbated GBV risks and created challenges for UNICEF and its partners in delivering GBV services in Greece. During the first lockdown, people were not allowed to leave camp sites, causing high levels of stress that exacerbated GBV inside the camps and disrupted GBV services. Outreach activities were also curtailed, with a concomitant spike in sexual violence against girls and boys.

UNICEF supported partners to adapt their ways of working to reach GBV survivors during COVID-19 imposed restrictions on movement via remote services. One notable challenge in the transition to remote service provision was that many refugee women do not have access to mobile phones (as these are typically controlled by male family members), and therefore have low digital/online literacy. In response to this, partners provided digital devices and training in digital literacy and skills to enable refugee women and girls to access remote GBV services and support. Partners systematically gathered information on which women had access to mobile phones, tablets or other digital devices, and what their preferred means of communication were. This was not only for existing clients, but also those at risk. For example, Melissa provided tablets and data bundles to women at risk of GBV to help them stay in regular contact with them. Melissa and Solidarity Now also created digital ‘safe spaces’ for women and girls, aiming to replicate the regular WGSS.

Some UNICEF partners were able to continue providing in-person services, handle emergency cases and even see new GBV clients throughout the various stages of movement restriction. For example, in the periods between lockdowns, Melissa provided in-person mental health sessions to groups of 6-8 women at a time, while also running online classes. Solidarity Now launched a weekly magazine for women that was distributed door-to-door in camps, providing staff an opportunity to follow up on open cases of GBV without ‘targeting’ certain households. UNICEF and GSDFPGE collaborated to develop an operational guide for shelters during COVID-19, which was launched at an early stage of the crisis when there was a lot of uncertainty on how to support the operation of the shelters. GSDFPGE also translated guidelines on teleworking case management and data protection into Greek.

**Endnotes**

1 UNICEF estimate based on secondary data analysis, December 2020.
5 Phase III of the programme is October 2019 - June 2021, therefore this factsheet does not cover the entirety of Phase III of the programme.
7 Supra note 4.
8 Supra note 3.
9 Supra note 4.
10 Ibid.
13 Female Friendly Spaces is being used interchangeably with WGSS within UNICEF Greece programmes.
14 Supra note 12 (for more information on UNICEF Greece and partners’ adaptations and response to the COVID-19 pandemic).

**Percentage of services that meet GBV minimum standards**

- Appropriate group activities are offered (e.g. peer support, community reintegration, etc.)
- The service friendly and accessible for adolescent girls
- GBV client records are stored securely
- Trained staff/volunteers can provide care for GBV survivors at the appropriate level

**UNICEF BRPM Partners**

General Secretariat for Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality (GSDFPGE)

Iliaktida, Melissa Network of Migrant Women, KETHI (Research Centre for Gender Equality), Diotima, METAdrasi, Solidarity Now

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