



Overview: Gender-based violence programme

Greece – Refugee and migrant response

September 2021

Focus on the programme: Action Against Gender-Based Violence Affecting Refugee and Migrant Women and Children in Greece, Italy, Serbia and Bulgaria, supported by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, October 2019 – June 2021<sup>5</sup>

Situation of refugees and migrants

The number of refugees and migrants arriving in Greece fell in the first half of 2021, compared to 2020, with 3,606 arrivals recorded between January and May<sup>6</sup>, compared to 9,424 in the same period of 2020.<sup>7</sup> Children accounted for 27 per cent ( 973) of the new arrivals. An estimated 119,700 refugees and migrants are now living in Greece<sup>8</sup>, 31,000 of them children (44 per cent girls and 56 per cent boys). These children include 2,825 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) (of whom 92 per cent are boys and 8 per cent are girls).<sup>9</sup>

Most refugees and migrants arrive at Lesbos or other Greek islands where they are held in reception and identification centres (RICs). Between April and May, 3,594 refugees and migrants were transferred from these RICs to second-line reception facilities on the mainland. As of the end of August 2021, 4,483 refugees and migrants remained in the five RICs on the islands of Kos, Chios, Leros, Samos, and Lesbos, with the latter still hosting the majority of arrivals (711).<sup>10</sup> Around 1,300 children remained in RICs on the Greek islands, including a new temporary RIC on Lesbos that was constructed following a fire in September 2020 that destroyed the Moria RIC and displaced 12,000 people.

Access to shelter, basic services, and economic opportunities continue to be limited for refugees

and migrants. COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation, with rising economic hardship and homelessness among refugees and migrants as a result of reduced opportunities to work, movement restrictions and insufficient support upon arrival.<sup>11</sup> The situation has heightened specific threats to women and girls, who already face greater risks of sexual violence and exploitation when they lack safe accommodation, live in overcrowded housing conditions in reception sites, and have only limited access to proper sanitation and livelihood opportunities. In the second quarter of 2021, changes in the first and second-line reception framework led to the closure of five open accommodation sites (OAS) and the termination of emergency hotel accommodation programmes for refugees and migrants. This change left a considerable number of self-settled asylum seekers unable to access such vital assistance.

Gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against children (VAC) were already urgent issues both outside and inside Greece's refugee camps before 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.<sup>12</sup>

UNICEF priorities and strategy on gender-based violence

UNICEF is working with state and civil society actors in Greece to facilitate access to GBV prevention and response services for refugee and migrant women and girls. This includes supporting women's and girls' safe spaces (WGSs),<sup>13</sup> which promote safety and resilience for women and girls while providing them with a confidential place where they can disclose GBV and seek specialized support. Support has also included 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 the deployment of mobile multi-disciplinary teams to sites to respond to emergency situations. There has also been a specific focus on upstream work through data collection and analysis, capacity development for frontline workers, support for referral pathways, and strategic partnerships with public institutions, ministries and grassroots organizations for system strengthening and policy reform.

Programme achievements

UNICEF has supported public systems and civil society to prevent and respond to GBV against refugees and migrants. As of June 2021, **4,960 women** and **1,288 girls** had accessed GBV prevention and response services in Greece. In addition, **414 boys** and **171 men** had accessed services, bringing the total number to **6,833** between October 2019 and June 2021. An

increasing number of survivors are now accessing GBV services thanks to the interpreters who are available at state-led and civil society service points, provided through a UNICEF partnership with METAdrasi and KETHI. Services include case management, psychosocial support, material assistance, shelter, medical services and referral to

KEY POPULATION FIGURES

**44%** of all child refuge and asylum seekers in Greece were girls (Aug 2021), and **23%** of refugees and asylum seekers were women (Dec 2020<sup>1</sup>)

**1,213** arrivals by sea and **2,393** arrivals by land in Greece from January to June 2021<sup>2</sup>

More than half of the sea arrivals in 2021 were women (25%) and children (38%), while 37% were men<sup>3</sup>


RESULTS AT A GLANCE

(Oct 2019 – June 2021)

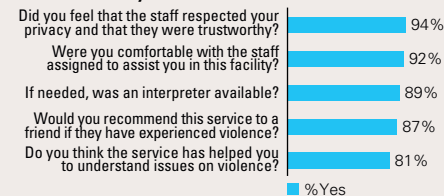
**6,833** people in need accessed GBV prevention and response services 

TARGET June 2021 **4800**  
REACHED June 2021 **6833**



**89%** of polled beneficiaries would recommend UNICEF-supported services to others 

Beneficiary Feedback

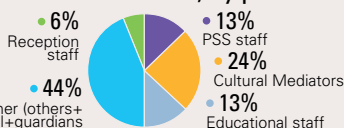


**36,021** people accessed information about GBV prevention and response

**903** frontline workers trained

TARGET June 2021 **500**  
REACHED June 2021 **903**

Frontline workers trained, by profession



**87%** of trained workers polled reported an increased understanding of GBV

specialised services. Some of the services were delivered through the WGSSs operated by UNICEF's partners.

***"I am excited about my new job as an interpreter for Solidarity Now. I decided to take my life in my own hands; I raise my sons on my own and nobody can limit me."* Asifa, 27, from Afghanistan and now in Greece, working as an interpreter for UNICEF partner Solidarity Now**

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. GBV-related information and messages have been distributed through various channels before and during the pandemic. These have included [videos on GBV](#) shared with teenagers in four languages, which have received over 15,000 views on Facebook, as well as the teen fiction book [The World Anew](#), published in four languages and distributed via OASs where WGSS operate on the Greek mainland, and via UNICEF partners that operate WGSSs on Samos and Lesvos. The teen fiction book was also adapted for an audiobook in Greek to make it accessible to children with disabilities. In all, 36,021 people accessed information about GBV prevention and response between October 2019 and June 2021.

Following the destruction of the Lesvos RIC in Moria after the fire in September 2020, UNICEF partnered with civil society organizations Diotima and Caritas Hellas to respond to the immediate needs of refugees and migrants, and to ensure the continuation and expansion of the operation of WGSS and GBV case management



### Support for interpreters

Since April 2020, UNICEF Greece has been working with METAdrasi to support interpretation services for refugee and migrant GBV survivors who do not speak Greek, helping them access services such as counselling and shelters. Previously, only 3 languages were covered, there is now a pool of interpreters who cover 22 different languages and dialects. By June 2021, 26 service delivery points from National Network of the GSDPPFGE, state actors and civil society organizations supporting GBV survivors used this interpretation service, increasing access to life-saving GBV support for many refugee and migrant survivors. Following the successful implementation of the tripartite collaboration of METAdrasi-UNICEF and KETHI, the latter has taken on the financing of METAdrasi's pool of interpreters that have been supporting the National Network of the GSDPPFGE.

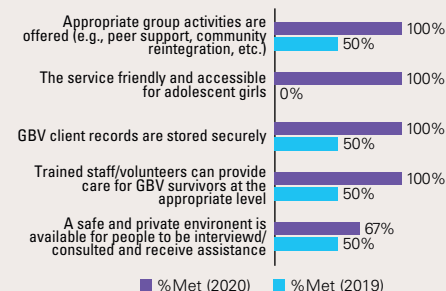
and services. This included the deployment of a mobile team comprised of a social worker and a psychologist supported by interpreters. UNICEF also continued to support WGSS in 12 OASs across the country.

UNICEF follows a complementary approach to the provision of direct services, with systems strengthening and advocacy. To enhance the capacity of professionals working in the protection field, 903 frontline workers were reached with in-person and remote training between October 2019 and June 2021. The strategic partnership with the General Secretariat for Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality (GSDPPFGE) also continued through various activities led by the

## 16 GBV service delivery points supported



### Percentage of services that meet GBV minimum standards



### UNICEF Partners

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



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



information management consultant seconded to the Secretariat. This included training KETHI and Secretariat staff, as well as the members of METAdrasi's Guardianship Network and publishing [the first National Report on Violence Against Women](#) in English, supported by UNICEF. The partnership continues with a launch of a Programmatic Review of services available and accessible to children in the shelters of the network of the GSDPPFGE, in partnership with the Institute of Child Health, to inform policy and planning for services for children.

## In Focus: Multi-country coordination and technical approach to the Common Results Framework

The UNICEF Greece Country Office has been working within a multi-country approach, collaborating closely with the UNICEF GBV coordination team and other country offices in Bulgaria, Italy and Serbia. This multi-country approach has included technical support, joint technical work and coordinated programming across different countries.

One benefit of this approach has been the participatory development and use of a common results framework. The GBV coordination team developed and adapted


a monitoring framework, based on [the UNICEF operational guide and resource pack](#). The framework includes data collection tools, such as a participatory psychosocial service assessment and monitoring tool, a client satisfaction survey, and a training assessment tool. The multi-country pilot of this monitoring framework is the first of its kind in UNICEF.

UNICEF Greece and their partners have been making extensive use of the monitoring framework and data collection tools. This has helped to standardize the work carried out by

each partner. It also enables analysis of the extent to which partners are meeting UNICEF's GBV minimum standards, indicating gaps and measures to improve the quality of their GBV services to reach a higher standard. Notably, UNICEF Greece has shared the client satisfaction survey with the General Secretariat for Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality (GSDPPFGE), so that the Government can consider drafting something similar for its own network of providers, such as counselling centres and shelters, as part of the overall response to violence against women and girls.

## Endnotes

- UNICEF estimate based on secondary data analysis, December 2020.
- UNHCR Operational Portal (2021) *Mediterranean Situation, Greece* (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>).
- UNHCR Greece (2020) *Sea Arrivals Dashboard, December 2020* (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/85039>).
- National Coordination Center for Border Control, Immigration and Asylum, ESKESSMA.
- The Programme officially started in October 2017. This factsheet, however, focuses on the final phase of the Programme, which ran from October 2019 to June 2021.
- Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2021.
- UNICEF Refugee and Migrant Response in Europe Situation Report #40 ([www.unicef.org/documents/refugee-and-migrant-crisis-europe-humanitarian-situation-report-no40-30-june-2021](http://www.unicef.org/documents/refugee-and-migrant-crisis-europe-humanitarian-situation-report-no40-30-june-2021)).
- Figures based on UNICEF estimates, as of July-August 2021.
- National Center for Social Solidarity, Situation Update, Unaccompanied Children in Greece, 31 July 2021.
- Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2021.
- Eskerine, D. (2020) *Double Jeopardy: The European Refugee and Migrant Crisis and COVID-19: Insights into the Emerging Impacts on Women and Girls*, GBV AoR Helpdesk (<https://gbvguidelines.org/en/documents/double-jeopardy-the-european-refugee-and-migrant-crisis-and-covid-19-insights-into-the-emerging-impacts-on-women-and-girls/>).
- UNICEF, *Impact of COVID-19 on Gender-based Violence Refugee and migrant Response, UNICEF Multi-Country Case study*, 2020.
- Female-friendly spaces are being used interchangeably with WGSS within UNICEF Greece programmes.

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 | **for every child**