



# 2020

## ANNUAL REPORT



LIGHT  
HOUSE  
RELIEF



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2020 was an extremely trying year for people all over the world. For 120,000 asylum seekers and refugees in Greece, it has meant tremendous isolation and stress, as well as increasingly uncertain and unsafe living conditions. The global pandemic has disproportionately affected vulnerable people in Greece, bringing many vital services to a standstill, and eroding an already tenuous access to basic rights such as education and housing.

We welcomed 2020 knowing that the coming year would be difficult, but with little idea of the magnitude of the challenges in store. At the end of 2019 and in early 2020, Ritsona Refugee Camp, then home to 900 people, tripled in size. The then-2,700 residents of Ritsona Refugee Camp faced multiple lockdowns throughout 2020, grappling with increased stress, isolation, and a lack of access to basic human rights, including education. From March until July, our team provided as much support as possible to residents from a distance, until we could resume in-person programming in August.

On Lesbos, we witnessed momentous shifts that radically altered the context in which our Emergency Response team had worked since 2015. Tensions amongst the local community on Lesbos, coupled with the global pandemic, and political shifts, meant that our landing support and spotting operations were suspended from March onwards, though we continued to support new arrivals with non-food items. In September 2020, we made the heartbreaking decision to conclude our Emergency Response operations on Lesbos, recognising that the operational context no longer allowed us to provide direct support to people arriving. Our team continues to monitor the situation, and is ready to return to the north shore if the context allows for our presence.

After the closure of our Lesbos operations, our Emergency Response team pivoted to the Greek mainland, to determine how our skills could be most useful to refugees and asylum seekers. It became clear that there was a new emergency situation unfolding in Athens. Due to a change in legislation in March 2020, those who receive their refugee status must leave their accommodation in just thirty days, and are cut off from cash assistance. Our Streetwork Pilot Project set out to support vulnerable people, focusing on refugees in very precarious housing situations as a result of this shift.

2020 was a year of adaptation, flexibility, innovation, and most of all, tenacity. Though daunting, we have adapted to the challenges of the year, building up a new Emergency Response project, our Streetwork Project in Athens; integrating strong anti-COVID procedures into all our activities; tackling new administrative hurdles for NGOs in Greece; and launching a formalised Resident Volunteer programme to ensure the sustainability and inclusivity of our activities. In order to ensure our continued presence in Ritsona Refugee Camp, LHR also began an extensive registration and certification process in 2020, as outlined by a law and joint ministerial decree. Three UN Special Rapporteurs have recently voiced concern about this decree.

Thanks to the fierce dedication of our teams of skilled humanitarian workers; Resident Volunteers; the community of Ritsona Camp; and partner organisations in Ritsona Camp and Athens, we were able to not only react to the many changes and challenges but to grow and learn from them.

In 2020, though the migration context may have changed in many ways, a few things have remained constant. Asylum seekers are still

stranded, often unable to move forward and unsupported in their quest to do so. But there is, in spite of it all, reason for hope. In the past years, and especially during the height of the pandemic, we have seen community initiatives flourish, and we have ramped up our Resident Volunteer programme to offer a greater role to community members in our programming — this enriches our activities, making them more accountable and responsive.

Through all of our work, our most central goal is to provide support in a respectful, dignified, and non-intrusive manner. Humanitarian action must be driven by the individuals whom it affects, and the voices of asylum seekers and refugees must be elevated and included in shaping the support that they receive. In 2020 and beyond, these principles provide a compass for our work in Greece.





# A Letter From Our Board

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Dear Lighthouse Community,

We are very happy that you are still with us! Our organization has seen many challenges over the years on both organizational and programmatic level, we have always pulled through and continued to provide support to refugees in Greece.

2020 was no exception. With your support, we made drastic adaptations to be able to continue with our important work despite the global pandemic! Today, our programming may look different in many ways because of these adaptations.

This year tested our flexibility and stamina in unprecedented ways. Due to changes related to COVID-19, our team was no longer permitted access to people arriving on the north shore of Lesbos. In September of 2020, we made the heartbreaking decision to shutter our ER operations in recognition of these barriers. Like many other humanitarian organisations in Greece, we were faced this year with a long and complex registration and certification process to be able to continue our services.

2020 had many bright spots for us as an organisation as well. This year, while very challenging, has also been a testament to the dedication of our teams, and the resilience of the people whom we serve in Greece. In the last months of 2020, we pivoted our Emergency Response to mainland Greece, launching a Streetwork Pilot Project to dignified support to refugees and asylum seekers struggling with homelessness in Athens. We also welcomed new team members, as well as three new members of our Board of Directors.

In Ritsona Camp, our team continued their work undeterred, providing psychosocial support in any way possible to children and youth in the camp, at a time when it is most needed. In Ritsona,





our programmes have also had to adapt, finding ways to ensure that we are prioritising the health and safety of the residents, as well as our team. One of the many ways in which we adapted was creating an online support space for youth. We also formalised our Resident Volunteer Programme, which engages residents in our activities as partners, while sharing with them therapeutic techniques for their own wellbeing

Regardless of the many obstacles thrown our way, our team has worked tirelessly to address the gaps in support both in Ritsona Camp and Athens. In 2021, Lighthouse Relief may look different in many ways - but the Lighthouse Spirit is very much alive. Our founders set out to provide a dignified humanitarian response over five years ago - to us, that means working with those we support to create solutions that are not only accountable to them, but are shaped by them.

With your support we continue to offer a dignified support to refugees in Greece for as long as it is needed.

Warm regards,



Sara Granath

Lighthouse Relief, Chairperson of the Board of Directors





# Who We Are

Lighthouse Relief (LHR) was founded on the Greek island of Lesbos in September 2015, mobilising to provide an emergency response to arriving refugees. In 2016, LHR expanded to support vulnerable groups such as children and youth on the mainland of Greece. Our mission is to provide a dignified, respectful, and empowering humanitarian response, with a focus on supporting vulnerable populations such as children and youth.

Today, Lighthouse Relief is focused on providing psychosocial support in Ritsona Refugee Camp, mainland Greece, and on providing support to refugees and asylum seekers experiencing homelessness in Athens. In Ritsona Refugee Camp, mainland Greece, we have been providing psychosocial support since April of 2016. There, we manage a Child Friendly Space (CFS), a Youth Engagement Space (YES), whilst running a Resident Volunteer Programme (RVP), and a Sports programme. Through the RVP, LHR works with members of the camp community to plan and implement our programmes, ensuring that they are accountable to the people whom we serve. Currently, since December 2020, LHR's Emergency Response programme is providing support to refugees and asylum seekers in Athens who are struggling with homelessness.

As of 2020, Lighthouse Relief is registered in Greece as an AMKE, or civil not-for-profit company. This is the Greek branch of our organisation in Sweden, where we are registered as a non-profit. Our Board of Directors includes individuals based in Sweden, the United Kingdom, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, and the United States.





# Psychosocial Support

WELCOME  
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RITSONA



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In Ritsona Refugee Camp, mainland Greece, LHR has been providing psychosocial support since April of 2016. There, we manage a Child Friendly Space (CFS), a Youth Engagement Space (YES), whilst running a Resident Volunteer (RV) Programme and a Sports programme. Throughout 2020, the LHR team adapted programming in order to address the changing needs of the community, and to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic.

The context in Ritsona Camp changed substantially in 2020, with residents experiencing both a significant expansion of the camp, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In January, the camp tripled in size, increasing from 900 residents to 2,500 residents, 700 to 800 of whom were younger than 18. Many new residents were especially vulnerable, transferred from notoriously overcrowded and under-resourced areas including the islands of Lesbos and Samos. Throughout the year, the camp population continued to increase, and now stands at almost 2,763 in 2021. 45% of the camp's residents are children under 18, with over 800 at school-age. They are in need of targeted, consistent, and responsive psychosocial support, especially given increased stressors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the residents of Ritsona have undergone three successive lockdowns in 2020 - in April, September (a camp-specific lockdown), and again in November. In April and September, positive Coronavirus cases were found in the camp, further isolating residents and causing great distress. Social distancing, frequent hand washing, and quarantining - terms that rose to prominence in 2020- are extremely difficult for asylum seekers in overcrowded facilities. Throughout this ongoing lockdown, the residents have grappled with increased stress and isolation, largely unable to leave the camp in order to replenish supplies. They also continue to experience extensive delays in their asylum processes, and a lack of access to basic human rights, such as education.



COVID-19's impact on education for young children in Ritsona Camp has also been particularly concerning. In 2020, most of the children in camp did not have access to a single day of formal education. This risks taking a toll on their mental wellbeing as well as their development. For the children who arrived at the camp in January 2020, it is possible they may have never been able to go to school, depending on the conditions in the country from which they fled.

In order to ensure the safety of the residents, and of our team, in March 2020, LHR temporarily suspended our in-person activities in the camp, providing remote psychosocial support through our Youth Online Space. Throughout this time, we also sought other means to support residents. In April, we joined Cafe Rits and Love Welcomes in assembling aid kits for residents of Ritsona Camp, helping them to protect themselves against the Coronavirus. The kit included masks donated to us by a generous supporter. To mark the start of Ramadan in Ritsona, we partnered with Cafe Rits and Love Welcomes to provide fresh food kits for all residents of Ritsona Camp, the distribution of which was carried out by the amazing team of Cafe Rits volunteers.

After a four month period of working off-site to support residents, LHR was able to return to the camp in July, working directly with residents to rebuild the spaces, and reopening for activities in August. Thanks to LHR's strong reputation for adherence to COVID-19 guidelines, and strong hygiene protocols, we were granted permission by the Camp's management to continue our activities, despite the second national lockdown starting in November of 2020.







## Youth Engagement Space

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LHR's Youth Engagement Space (YES) functions as a safe space, drop-in centre, and a creative hub for young adults in Ritsona Camp. We developed the space in 2017 to provide support to young adults within the camp, when our team became aware of a significant lack of support and opportunities for this age group. The YES aims to encourage self-worth, resilience, and social coherence through creative activities (such as music and art workshops), informal learning (through English and other skills-based workshops) and informal psychosocial support.

In the first months of 2020, our Youth Engagement Space in Ritsona Camp was even more bustling than usual. Due to the expansion of the camp, the YES hosted 125 to 135 people every day, almost double the number of people we welcomed to the space in December. The team welcomed many new faces to the space, offering a diverse range of workshops - German, English, dance, fitness, guitar, music writing, and of course, the space's ever-popular art workshop.

In response to the suspension of our in-person activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the YES team spearheaded the Youth Online Space (YOS). The YOS was launched in April, following the start of Greece's first national lockdown, and brought together current and past residents in a digital space. Using a Facebook group, the YOS team engaged participants in creative activities, fitness sessions, and English language workshops, while also sharing information about the COVID-19 measures in camp.



The YES team continued providing workshops throughout the year, both held in-person or virtually on the YOS. Over the course of the year, 18 different types of workshops were offered. In-person workshops ranged from music writing to muay thai to German language, while remote workshop topics included singing, drawing, and writing challenges. Through remote workshops, we aimed to provide tools to cope with the stresses of this difficult period in Ritsona, while also providing a digital space for self-expression. Our YOS team also found creative ways to lead sports and fitness workshops from afar, with our YES Manager creating bite-sized fitness workshops, teaming up with family members to demonstrate exercises that can be done at home.

Throughout 2020, English language workshops were a particular highlight of our activities, as they were implemented consistently and offered different levels of proficiency. These workshops were implemented by the YES Facilitator, a certified TEFL instructor with experience as an English teacher. The YOS was an ideal way to develop a student-centred English curriculum, combining grammar lessons, poems, writing challenges, short stories and quizzes. Online learning also gave students the opportunity to receive individual feedback and to engage directly with the teacher and other students. After the return to activities in August, the YOS was used primarily for sharing English language resources and English lessons.

In order to support community initiatives in Ritsona, the YES Facilitator also implemented a teacher-training workshop for five Ritsona residents working as teachers in the community-run “Wave of Hope for the Future School.” This training was very successful, with positive feedback from participants, and is being replicated in 2021, in collaboration with another organisation called RefugeeEd.

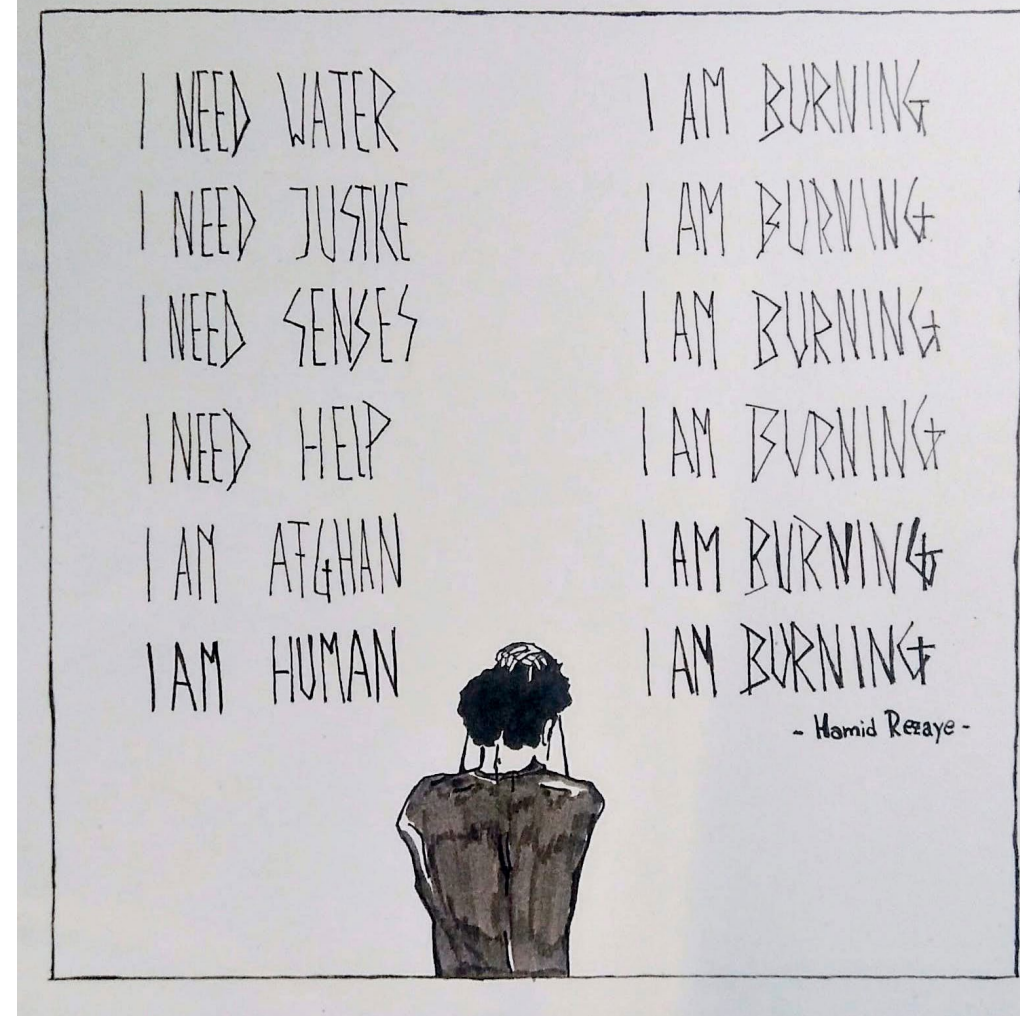
Throughout the year, the YES also provided two sewing machines in our spaces, which are at the disposal of residents. These were especially popular and in near-constant use whenever the space was open. Many residents, from experienced tailors mending and making clothes for their family and friends, to complete beginners picking up a new skill, used the machines for their personal projects. This was particularly important as residents had limited mobility throughout the year due to the multiple camp closures.





Unfortunately, the challenges faced throughout the year meant that publication of the Ritsona Kingdom Journal - our youth-led writing and art magazine - had to be postponed. However, the YOS was able to serve as an outlet for residents, who were encouraged to create and share artistic works. This includes several beautiful pieces that were written for World Refugee Week, including poetry and prose from several visitors to our YOS.

The YES team continued to monitor protection concerns, particularly around mental and behavioural health, working closely with psychologists on site and the youth to reduce stigma around seeking care and support. The YES team provides informal one-to-one support for individuals in the space, helping them to find resources for support or working with them to determine the appropriate referral pathways. Outreach is also done daily to monitor vulnerable cases and engage youth in activities. As the YES team continued offering informal support directly through the YOS, they ensured that the YOS was a part of the referral pathway in Ritsona Camp, enabling the team to refer any protection concerns to the relevant protection actors still present in Ritsona Camp.



*“Teaching music to youth is not only a capacity-building activity but also an opportunity for confidence-building, by allowing them to rediscover or find new ways of expressing themselves in a positive way. Making music in a relaxed and supportive environment encourages youth to adopt healthy coping mechanisms that allow them the opportunity to express their emotions, feelings, thoughts, and experiences in a creative way. Be it through teaching music-writing, guitar, or singing, I believe we can offer a range of skills to provide youth with the tools they need to improve their well-being.” (Anna, YES Intern)*



## Impact in Numbers

- The YES was open for in-person activities for approximately 21 weeks in 2020, due to multiple national and camp-specific lockdowns.
- During that time, the space had an average weekly attendance of 281 youth, and an average of 82 unique youth per week.
- From January through March 2020, the space hosted an average of 176 unique visitors per month, with an average of 117 unique youth per week.
- After the LHR spaces reopened in August, the YES received 70 unique visitors through the month. In September, the YES was closed due to the camp lockdown. From October through December, the space saw 82 unique visitors per month.
- The YOS had an average of 125 active members from April-August, and 64 active members in September. The average for all six months was 115 active members. From April to September, a total of 253 posts were shared, including those posted by Resident Volunteers and residents.



82

**Average Unique Visitors Per Week**

Through 21 Weeks in 2020

117

**Average Unique Visitors Per Week**

From January to March 2020

82

**Average Unique Visitors Per Month**

From October to the end of December 2020

125

**Members of the YOS**

From April to September 2020







## Child Friendly Space

Our Child Friendly Space (CFS) was established in 2016 as a safe place where children can learn through play and regain a sense of normality in the midst of an emergency. The programme also provides some structure and indirect relief to parents of young children in the camp. Over the years, the CFS has catered to a variety of age groups ranging from 3 to 10 years old, and is currently focused on offering activities to 3 and 4 year olds in the camp, as per our restructured COVID-safe programming.

Following the camp's expansion in January, where Ritsona Camp tripled in size, the CFS saw a large increase in the number of new children attending the space, many of whom were particularly vulnerable. Much loved activities, including crafts, jump rope, colouring, and singing songs, were offered to the hundreds of children attending the CFS daily, who were divided into two groups according to their age range.

Following LHR's in-person programme suspension, the CFS resumed programming in August of 2020. The team adapted activities, hosting two sessions per day, moving indoors, and inviting a limited number of children ages 3-4 in order to ensure activities were COVID-safe. In response to the continued absence of other formal or non-formal opportunities for the youngest children in Ritsona Camp, the CFS team made the decision to focus programming on three and four year-olds. This enabled the team to ensure that children at this crucial developmental stage receive consistent support, tailored to their needs. Each of the 200 three and four year old children in Ritsona Camp was invited to take part in at least one 90 minute session per week, and children with special needs in this age range were ensured multiple CFS sessions per week.



Throughout our CFS programming in 2020, children were invited to take part in free-play activities, which ranged from play-doh, to imaginative play with kitchens and train sets, to jenga, lego, sock puppets and reading. LHR's CFS team takes great care in selecting games, books, and activities to respond to the needs of this age group and the specific interests of the children in the space. Every month, the CFS team chose a different theme for the craft activities in the space, with 2020 seeing much-loved themes such as nature, fruity fun, and winter magic! Under the careful guidance of our team, paper plates and rolls, with the help of some pain, glue and googly eyes, transformed into lion manes, snowmen, dragons and maracas. Each session was also closed out with dynamic sing-alongs, which help improve children's language and coordination skills.

In 2020, our CFS team introduced the children to Emotional Regulation activities created by our Resident Volunteer Programme Facilitator (RVPF). These simple but impactful activities include playful breathing, stretching, and loving-kindness exercises designed to help the children learn to quiet their minds, relax their muscles, and reduce stress. Under the guidance of our RVPF, the team of Resident Volunteers began themselves to lead these exercises.

In addition to implementing activities, the CFS team coordinates with other actors onsite to ensure vulnerable cases can access cohesive services, and also conducts regular outreach and follow-up with vulnerable children and families. This includes regular coordination with the protection actor on site, Solidarity Now.





*“This year has brought a great deal of uncertainty and many new challenges across the globe, yet we hope that one of the positive impacts of this pandemic will be that people will be more empathetic towards others. To be more understanding of the challenges faced by those who are displaced, and live with constant uncertainty. To be more able to look beyond ourselves and reflect upon the implications of a lockdown and what ‘staying home’ means for those without a home. For children, living with uncertainty has an adverse impact on their wellbeing and development.*”



*With a complete lockdown of the camp for the last few months, the children of Ritsona Camp have been unable to go to school or participate in our Child Friendly Space; a space for them to build social connections and express themselves. We have been working hard at a distance to adapt our activities and re-open the space in the safest and best way for the children. It is important that we get our CFS back up and running as soon as possible to provide a structured environment for the children to engage in activities. We can't wait to see their smiling faces and sing ‘Baby Shark’ with them again!”*  
(LHR's CFS Team, July 2020)



## Impact in Numbers

### Weekly Unique Attendance Averages

111

From January to March

77

In August

69

From October to December

From late January until mid-March, the large expansion in the number of residents meant it was extremely challenging for the CFS team to perform accurate tracking of the number of children attending programming. LHR's tracking provided an average of 142 unique visitors per week in January, 110 in February, and 82 in March. Due to the increased numbers of children, weekly unique engagements may be as much as three times higher as these numbers.

When programming resumed in August 2020, the weekly attendance averaged 91, with 78 unique visitors to the space.

Programming was once again interrupted in September due to the camp-wide lockdown. From October to December, the average weekly attendance was of 84 engagements, with 69 unique children. Through September, while programming was on hold, the CFS team supported the children and youth remotely with activities, such as handing out activity packs and face masks. The LHR CFS Facilitator, a previous Resident Volunteer in Ritsona Camp, worked with a friend to craft hundreds of handmade masks for all the young visitors to our CFS.





# Sports Programme

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Sports is one of the most crucial psychosocial tools that we offer residents of Ritsona Camp - a universal language that bridges differences and allows for relationship and skills building. Through LHR's sports programming, we offer structured opportunities for social interaction, learning, and play.

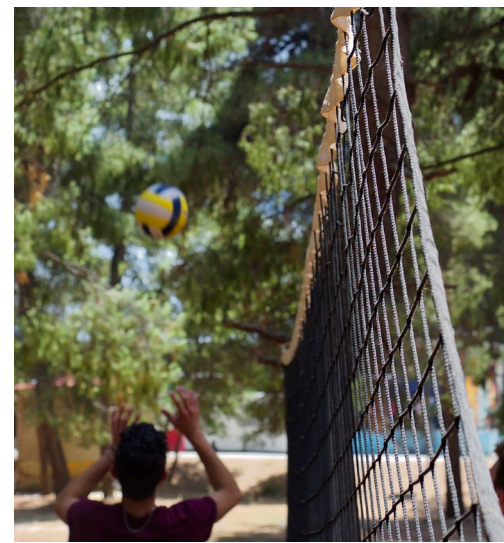
Thanks to the continued support of the SOL Foundation, LHR has been able to expand and build the capacity of our Sports Programme since 2018. In January 2020, with an expansion of the camp, our teams continued hosting sports activities within the YES and CFS, including popular tennis workshops carried out thanks to a professional tennis coach, who joined our team in Ritsona Camp as a volunteer for a month. During his time with us, his tennis workshops were extremely well-attended, engaging 50 participants on a daily basis. In the early months of 2020, football workshops also continued with a UEFA Certified Coach.

From March to July 2020, though we were not able to provide in-person activities, our Youth Engagement Space team used the Youth Online Space (YOS) to offer short exercise and work-out videos. Upon our return to camp in August of 2020, our Sports programme set out to specifically target children who had no access to formal or informal education, in consideration of Ritsona camp's increased isolation. The updated Sports programme aimed to combine traditional sport sessions, with inclusive versions of sport disciplines, as well as non formal education sessions. One of the key concepts of the sports programme is the idea of sports as a playful, fun, and accessible tool to raise awareness around topics such as inclusion and cooperation.



Due to multiple lockdowns in April through August, in September, and again in November, coupled with strict COVID-19 prevention measures in camp, our Sports team was not able to consistently implement activities through the year. In winter of 2020, however, the Sports Programme offered activities to Resident Volunteers. Our Sports Facilitator worked with our Resident Volunteer Programme Facilitator to create sample activity sessions for RVs. During the sessions, RVs from all Ritsona Camp programmes were invited to participate in games and activities designed to foster team building while also offering a preview of the Sports Programme itself. The sessions feature icebreaker activities, a collaborative take on volleyball, and end with the traditional - and much beloved - football match.

*“My journey with Lighthouse Relief began in 2018. I returned to Ritsona in January 2020, and I’ve seen the numbers growing each day and week. The reaction to the sport has been fantastic - the kids have come back each day, and gain so much self-confidence when they see their skills improving. Sports, and these workshops, provide both exercise and strengthen mental well-being. I keep coming back each time because I truly have a love for it - the residents, Ritsona, the LHR team. Their work inspires me enormously.”*  
*(Wesley O’Brien, tennis coach & LHR volunteer)*







# Resident Volunteer Programme

In order to implement Lighthouse Relief's programmes in a sustainable and culturally appropriate way, LHR spearheaded its Resident Volunteer Programme (RVP) in 2018 in Ritsona Camp. Through the Resident Volunteer Programme (RVP), our psychosocial support teams in Ritsona Camp work with members of the Ritsona Camp community to plan and implement activities in our Spaces. RVs are a crucial part of LHR's programming, allowing us to run activities that are inclusive, accountable, and reflective of the community we serve.

In August 2020, LHR began expanding and formalising the RV Programme in the midst of increasing challenges in Greece, by bringing a dedicated Resident Volunteer Programme Facilitator onto the team. Our activities this year were made possible largely due to the vital, consistent support of our amazing team of Resident Volunteers.

Throughout 2020, RVs led and supported activities throughout all of our programming. Under the formalised programming, the RVs were trained in Emotional Regulation, and were able to implement Emotional Regulation activities for children in the CFS. In our Youth Engagement Space, our Youth Online Space, as well as the Sports Programme, RVs have also acted as crucial members of the team, leading workshops and working alongside our team to plan and set up activities.

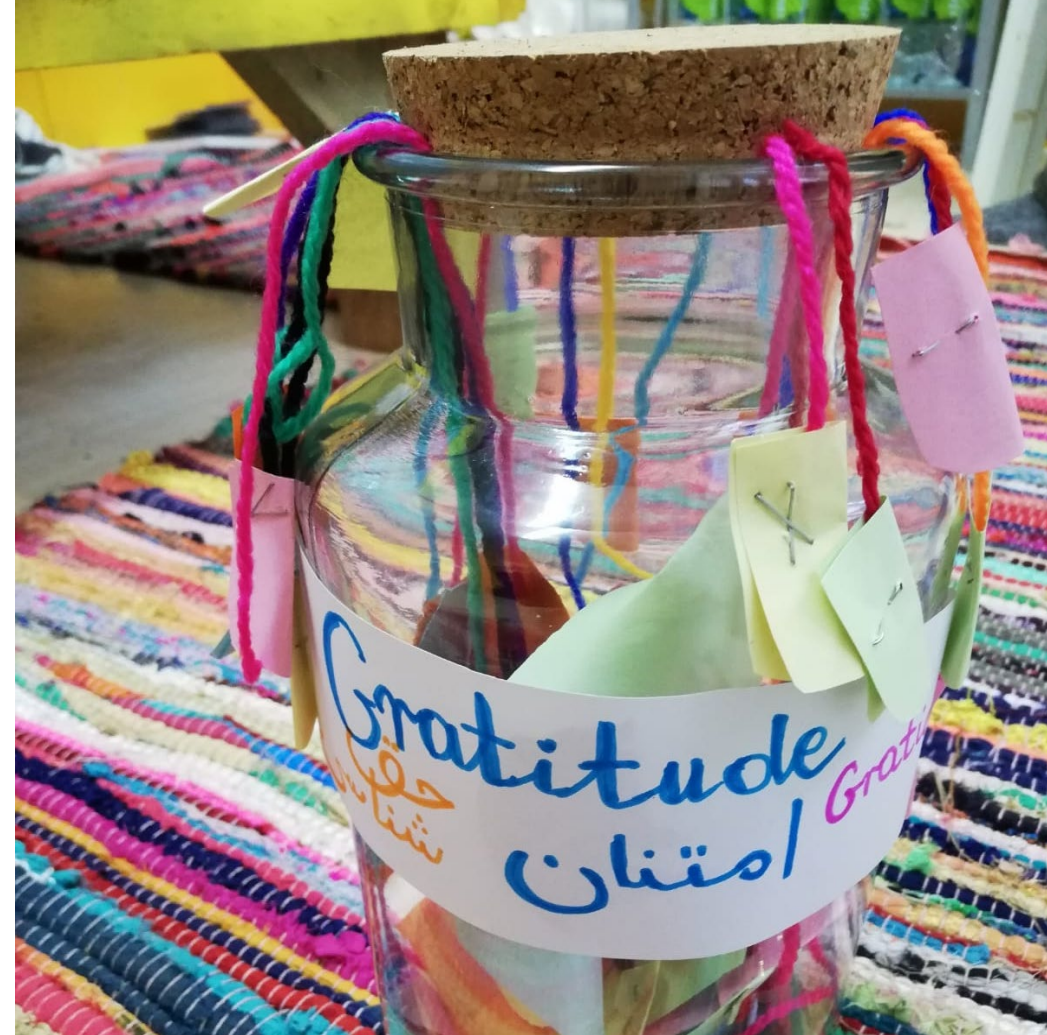




As of August 2020, all LHR Resident Volunteers could access new and expanded training, provided by our Resident Volunteer Programme Facilitator. RVs are trained in humanitarian and protection principles and receive targeted training on subjects including Child Protection, Emotional Regulation, Conflict Mediation, and Workshop Facilitation. The programme also serves as a psychosocial and peer support structure, and all RVs are provided with self-care tools, including dedicated art therapy sessions and mindfulness exercises. RVs also receive direct psychological and psychosocial support from our RVPF, who supports them individually both on-site and remotely.

While supporting Resident Volunteers in the present, the Programme also enables them to build towards their long-term futures, by helping to foster professional development. RVs receive certificates for participating in training, as well as assistance with writing their CVs and professional references to facilitate integration with their next steps.

Much of our programming in 2020 would simply not have been possible without the dedicated support of our team of Resident Volunteers - we are extremely grateful to them for their consistent, compassionate, and enthusiastic support.



*“During programming, I assist and mentor Resident Volunteers, encouraging their leadership. An important part of my day is also teaching and modeling positive coping skills among RVs. I also provide direct psychological or psychosocial support to RVs whenever they need it. I am always humbled to witness other people’s resilience and how it unfolds — it’s a very powerful testimony of human strength. There has not been a single day, spent with the community either on-site or remotely, that has not had an impact on me — I have received the most powerful lessons of acceptance, compassion, care, and resilience from the residents including young kids.” (Diana, RVP Facilitator)*



## Impact in Numbers

Throughout 2020, 11 RVs were inducted and engaged. The RVPF provided the following three trainings to Resident Volunteers:

- Evidence-based techniques to enhance children’s emotion regulation (5 modules), provided remotely, after which weekly in-person follow-ups were provided, including 1 hour training for the CFS team and Resident Volunteers. As a result, 5 RVs have facilitated Emotional Regulation sessions in the Child Friendly Space
- Interpersonal Conflict resolution Strategies (3 module), provided remotely
- Introduction to Child Projection, provided in-person.

The RVPF also introduced 13 therapeutic approaches & practices in order to provide direct support to RVs. There was a theme introduced each week, and within this theme, different exercises were introduced daily on-site and once a week remotely. These practices included breathing techniques, self-compassion, gratitude, loving-kindness meditation, guided visualizations, progressive muscle relaxation, journaling, brief behavioral techniques, identification of common mental health concerns, and self-help

Throughout these self-care and support sessions, the RVPF used evidence-based techniques based on the therapeutic approaches and interventions, including trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy; Acceptance and commitment therapy; Mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapy; motivational interviewing; Art therapy; Play therapy; Group therapy and Psychoeducation.



11

RVs Inducted

4

Trainings Offered

Including Emotional Regulation and Child Protection

13

Self-Care Tools Introduced

Tools Included mindfulness techniques, gratitude practice, art therapy & more.

5

RVs Facilitating in the CFS

Five RVs regularly facilitated Emotional Regulation sessions for the three and four-year-old children in the CFS.





A serene sunset scene over a large body of water. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a dark, clear blue at the top. In the distance, a range of dark mountains is silhouetted against the sky. Several small boats are visible on the water's surface. A prominent yellow rectangular box is centered in the upper half of the image, containing the text "Emergency Response" in a white, serif font. The overall mood is calm and quiet.

# Emergency Response





# Lesvos Programme

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Throughout 2020, LHR faced momentous challenges and changes to our Emergency Response programming, and to the operational context on Lesvos. These changes made it extremely difficult to provide a dignified, direct response to people arriving on the north shore of the island. From January to March 2020, we provided emergency aid, including spotting and landing support, and from March to September 2020, we provided indirect support to new arrivals in any way that we could, despite daunting challenges.

At the outset of 2020, arrivals by sea to Lesvos continued, despite bitterly cold winter weather. With a team of volunteers, LHR's ER team assisted boat landings on the north shore of Lesvos, providing a warm, dignified welcome, water, biscuits, and emergency blankets. Our team also continued spotting for boats in the Greek waters, in order to enable a fast and efficient response.

At the end of January 2020, our team received the difficult news that Stage 2 transit camp would be closed down, due to a decision made by the Municipal Council of West Lesvos. For several years, this facility provided a place for new arrivals to rest and recover after a long and difficult journey across the sea. As one of the primary actors in Stage 2, our team provided blankets, non-food items, and hot tea to people while they rested. This closure created numerous challenges for people arriving to Lesvos. Without the facility, they often waited for hours in the cold, in order to be registered at Moria Camp. Due to this shift, our team pivoted our approach, and commenced providing non-food items, including clothes, on the shoreline at arrival sites.



At the end of February and beginning of March of 2020, LHR's team of staff and volunteers faced significant security threats, as tensions on the island erupted. At the end of February, plans to build detention centres on the island led to large protests by the local community, and shortly thereafter, tensions between Turkey and Greece mounted following Turkey's announcement it would no longer prevent boats from crossing the Aegean Sea. This announcement further inflamed existing tensions.

At this time, humanitarian workers, asylum seekers, journalists, and others, faced threats and physical violence from members of the local community. Given these security risks, LHR took the decision to evacuate volunteers and to retain a small core team on the island. We continued this suspension in mid-March due to the threat of COVID-19, retaining a very small team, monitoring the situation, supporting new arrivals in any way that we could, and exploring options for the continuation of our work.

Amidst the fears of the Coronavirus pandemic, the process of arrivals became increasingly militarised — those who were able to land on Greece's shores were kept in isolated spots on the shore, and starting in May, new arrivals were kept at a remote quarantine camp in the north of Lesbos. Our access to new arrivals remained strained, as only the authorities and the UNHCR maintained access to these areas. We were no longer able to provide direct support at landing sites, and therefore transitioned to providing non-food items (NFIs) to new arrivals, through a partner organisation as an intermediary. Throughout this period, we liaised with the UNHCR, providing various items (food packs, hygiene items, clothes) to the UNHCR to be given to people in the quarantine camp. Unfortunately, due to these factors, as well as concerns around COVID-19 amongst the local community, we were unable to carry out our annual ECO Relief project.







Meanwhile, in 2020 continuing human rights violations at sea made it nearly impossible for people to seek asylum, a right to which they are entitled by international law. As news reports have confirmed, the practice of pushbacks significantly increased in the Aegean Sea, greatly reducing the number of arrivals to the Aegean Islands.

In September 2020, due to these changes in Greece and due to the impact of COVID-19, LHR made the difficult decision of formally ceasing Emergency Response operations on the north shore. In making this decision, we recognised that we were no longer able to provide the same dignified emergency relief to people arriving on the shores of the island - the support that our founders had set out to provide in 2015. Though the role of NGOs like ours in the context of arrivals has become extremely limited, we continue to monitor the situation, and remain ready to restart operations should the need and the opportunity arise. In making this decision, we also prioritised the wellbeing of the local population of Skala Sikamineas, recognising our presencing may increase the fear of COVID-19 in the community that has hosted us and often treated us like family

What we call the “Lighthouse Spirit” - dignity, humanity, and respect - is embodied in all those we have worked with, from the local community of Skala Sikamineas, who have given so much to aid people fleeing from conflict and persecution; to the many, many volunteers who donated their time, compassion, and dedication to our work; and the supporters championing us from afar. We are immensely grateful to all those who not only made our work on the North shore possible, but who shaped our identity as an organisation, and continue to inspire us beyond our five years on Lesbos.





*“If you’ve ever been a Lighthouse Relief volunteer or worked alongside the incredible people of Skala Sikamineas, then you’d know how vital this organisation was there. Thousands of people were welcomed by the teams. So many lives were saved. I was there. I saw it. Closing down response operations not because they’re not needed anymore, but because the work had been made to be impossible, is a sad reflection on Europe’s border policy. This light will shine again though, for like all lighthouses, the darkness is only temporary. I’ll never forget my time there. Huge love to the people of Skala Sikamineas who have helped refugees there for as long as anyone remembers, and to everyone who has volunteered there to help.”*

*(Brendan Woodhouse, LHR Volunteer, 2016, 2017)*

*“When we stood here 4-5 years ago, I would never, never have thought or understood that this would continue for so long. I will never forget this period of life, and the enormous hope that we had when we set this up in Skala. I’m glad I didn’t know how it was going to look five years ahead in time, because both me and those on the run saw hope and lots of humanity. Thank you to everyone who contributed to getting Lighthouse up and standing in Skala. And to the amazing locals. Let’s not give up. Let the good in humanity win.”*  
*(Liv Karin Dahlstrøm, LHR Volunteer 2015)*





# Impact in Numbers

- Overall, through 2020 LHR was involved in 50 operations providing emergency assistance on the north shore of Lesvos. LHR logged the arrival of 2,114 people to the north shore in 2020, including 677 children and 87 unaccompanied children.
- From January to March 2020, LHR assisted 1,252 new arrivals in emergency response operations, approximately 41% of whom were children, 17% unaccompanied.
- From March 2020 to September 2020, LHR provided support to new arrivals by providing non-food items, including clothing and hygiene materials. During that period, LHR supported 740 new arrivals staying in quarantine upon their arrival (first, in remote locations on the shore, and after May, in a so-called quarantine camp at an area called Apanemo).
- Throughout this period, LHR provided support 58 times to groups of new arrivals as they awaited their quarantine period to finish.
- In September 2020, following the fires that ravaged Moria Camp, LHR supported the response in the south of Lesvos with urgently needed items. We delivered over 1,500 bottles of water, dry food such as nuts and biscuits, crates of baby food, and other organisations, Because We Carry and Movement On The Ground.



## 2,114 New Arrivals

Including 677 children and 87 unaccompanied children.



## 50 Operations

LHR's team was involved in 50 operations from January to March, including landing and spotting.



## NFI Support to 744 People

Staying in remote quarantine areas and Apanemo Camp



## 1,500 Bottles of Water

Water as well as food items and non-food items, including crates of baby food, distributed to partner organisations after Moria fires.





# Athens Streetwork Project

In March 2020, the Greek government [drastically reduced](#) the support that asylum seekers could access upon receiving their refugee status. Whereas refugees previously received six months of financial and housing support while finding their own accommodation, obtaining a social security number, and seeking employment, they now only have 30 days to do so. As stated by the Asylum Information Database, this results in a high risk of homelessness, especially considering the limited integration opportunities for beneficiaries of international protection.<sup>1</sup>

When this new regulation took effect at the end of May, over 11,000 refugees in these so-called “exit schemes” were left without any support — with even their scarce cash assistance taken away. Many recognised refugees, including thousands transferred from the islands, were left struggling with homelessness, [living on the streets in the middle of a crowded square in Athens](#).

In September 2020, Lighthouse Relief concluded its Emergency Response programming on the north shore of Lesbos. After an in-depth needs assessment on the mainland of Greece, it was clear to our team there was a gap in service provision specifically for asylum seekers and recognised refugees struggling with homelessness. In response, our team designed a Pilot Project deploying a skilled streetwork team to support them in a manner that upholds Lighthouse Relief’s core values of dignity and empowerment.



<sup>1</sup> <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/overview-main-changes-previous-report-update/>





Lighthouse Relief's Streetwork Project Pilot phase was formally implemented from December 10, 2020 to January 8, 2021. The project's aim was to provide non-discriminatory and dignified support to people experiencing homelessness or living in precarious conditions, with a focus on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. The project's approach is centred on understanding their individual needs through a holistic approach. The project also aims to facilitate integration for refugees, and to strengthen a city-wide support network in order to act as the "missing link" between refugees and services.

Our team provides them with non-food items and food items, and with information to link them with the appropriate actors who can support specific needs, and with support in accessing other services, such as medical appointments or shelters. The approach developed can be conceived of as "collaborative problem solving" and accompaniment.

The Streetwork team consists of an Emergency Response Coordinator, Officer, and two Intercultural Mediators, speaking Arabic and Farsi/Dari. Together, they divide their work between outreach shifts, case management and distribution of NFIs. Collaboration and cooperation with other like-minded organisations working in Greece is an important part of the team's work, with the team often serving as a "bridge" between the individuals met during outreach shifts and other organisations.

During the month-long pilot phase of the project, the Streetwork team worked in close partnership with the Emfasis Foundation, a well-respected Greek NGO with over eight years' experience providing dignified support to people experiencing homelessness in Athens. Through the formal collaboration, the two teams shared best practices, resources and knowledge. This enabled our team to develop approach methods, and to map the areas where their support was most needed.





*“What we are doing isn’t just support - it is problem solving. People share their needs with us, and we work with them, and as a team, to solve these problems. In one shift, we usually meet and speak with around 15 people. It is important for us to spend time with each person we meet - to learn about their needs, gather information about them, and to create a strong connection. We draw from our network, expertise, and knowledge, to find solutions that work for each individual.” (Lourdes, ER Coordinator)*



*“Streetwork is an outreach approach to meet people who are subjected to multiple forms of exclusion. It is offering support responding to their needs and based on respect, empowerment and trust. while raising their awareness of existing services.” (Dimitra, ER Officer)*



## Impact in Numbers

- Throughout the Pilot phase, the ER team supported 145 families and individuals experiencing various forms of homelessness.
- 59 of these people did not have any form of accommodation, while 37 were at living in a non-long term accommodation programme such as ESTIA or HELIOS, which would end in a short time. 49 were living in sub-standard, overcrowded apartments. This number included 32 single females, 52 single men, and 61 families. Many of the people were contacted on multiple occasions to follow up and ensure that their needs were being met.
- Throughout the pilot phase, the team distributed 45 non-food item packs and 166 “first contact” packs (consisting of a carton of juice and a croissant) to vulnerable individuals in precarious housing situations.
- In the first month of operations, the team worked collaboratively with 16 other organisations, sharing resources, information and best practices, and making referrals to their services.



**145 People Supported**

Including 32 single females, 52 single men, and 61 families.



**166 Food Packs Distributed**

Consisting of a carton of juice and a croissant



**NFI Packs Distributed**

Including clothing, phone, power banks and baby items.

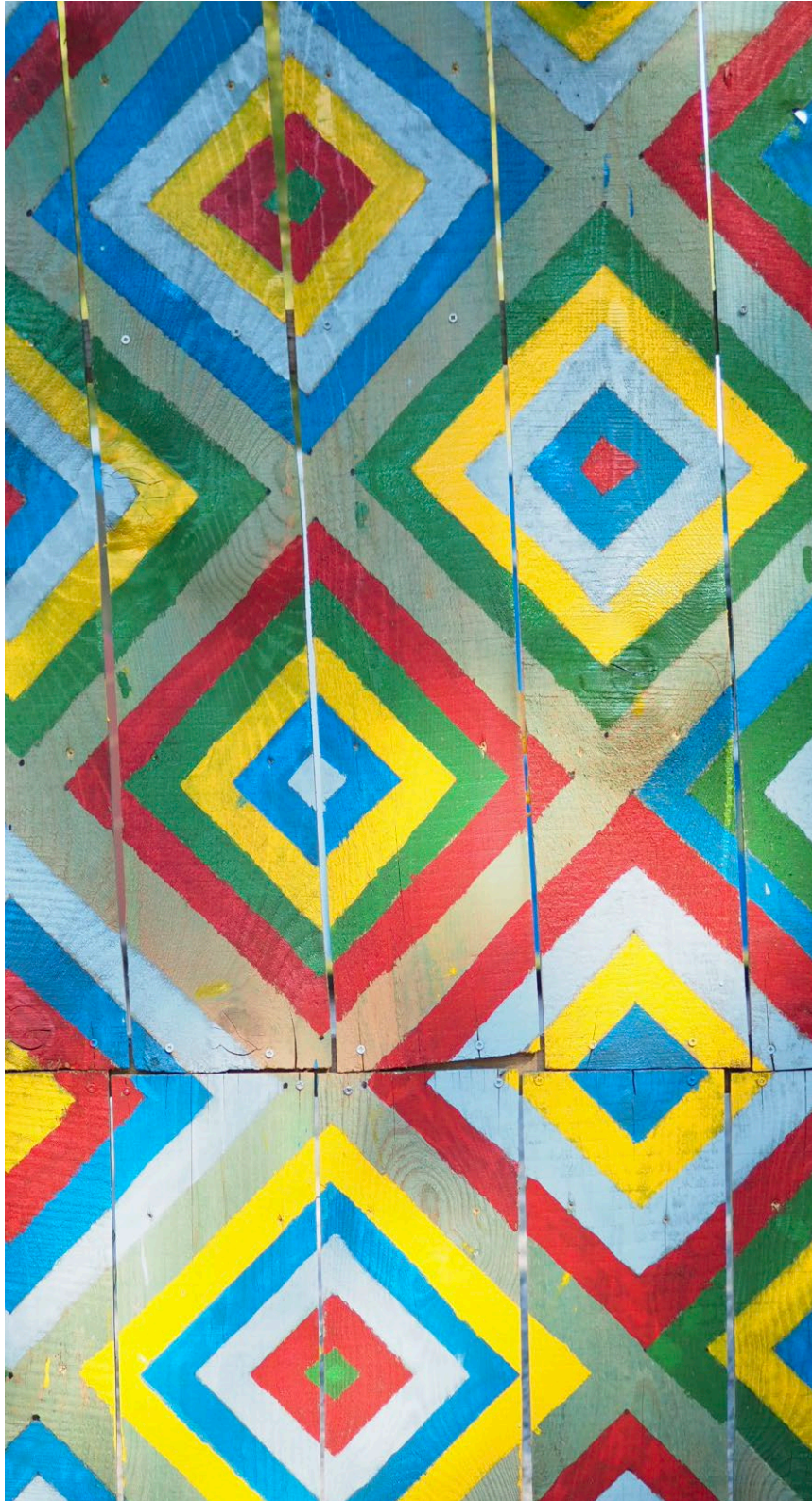


**18 People Referred**

To one of 16 partner organisations







# Communications & Partnerships

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Through 2020, LHR's communications team continued to raise awareness about the situation in Greece, highlighting the alarming deterioration in respect for the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees.

In order to raise awareness of the situation in Ritsona Camp, LHR staff provided several interviews to journalists regarding our programming, including a piece in [ZDF Heute about the impact of COVID-19 in Ritsona Camp](#), and an interview in an Italian outlet "[Observatory for Human Rights](#)." LHR's communications team also regularly advocated for a sustainable, dignified solution for the thousands of people in appalling conditions on the Aegean Islands. To that end, the team participated in several advocacy statements throughout 2020, including the following:

- [Greece/EU: Urgently Relocate Lone Children. Refugee Camps Have Reached Breaking Point, Human Rights Watch, March 2020](#)
- [Fire Moria Camp: Call for urgent evacuation and radical change, Change.org, September 2020](#)
- [8,300 refugees to be evicted from their homes in Greece - Joint Letter to EU and Greek officials, Help Refugees, May 2020](#)
- [Risk of homelessness and destitution for thousands in Greece during winter, Help Refugees, December 2020](#)



LHR continued to share updates about programming in Ritsona, Lesvos and Athens through external channels, including [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), all of which gained followers thanks in part to increased staffing resources. Through the year, the Communications team had limited access to programme locations in Greece, due to COVID lockdown restrictions. However, the Communications team frequently liaised with the programme teams, in order to share an insight into the challenges for refugees and asylum seekers.

The Communications team also worked to amplify the voices of Ritsona residents, collaborating with Ritsona residents on several creative projects. These projects included a video rendition of a poem by CFS Facilitator and previous Resident Volunteer, Adnan. For Refugee Week in July, the communications team collaborated closely with the YOS, sharing several pieces crafted by the residents, including poetry and prose. On other occasions, the Communications team was proud to publish several blog posts authored by Parwana Amiri, a young writer, activist, and visitor to the YES.







# Accounting & Finances

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Lighthouse Relief's programmes on Lesbos and mainland Greece are funded through a combination of individual donations and institutional support.

Our annual income for 2020 was €261,552.28, which included a grant from the SOL Foundation, a grant from Stiftung Fons Margarita, a grant from the Dashlight Foundation, as well as a microgrant from Project Hermine. While we received a grant from the European Outdoor Conservation Association, this grant was fully reimbursed when we were not able to implement the ECO Relief Project.

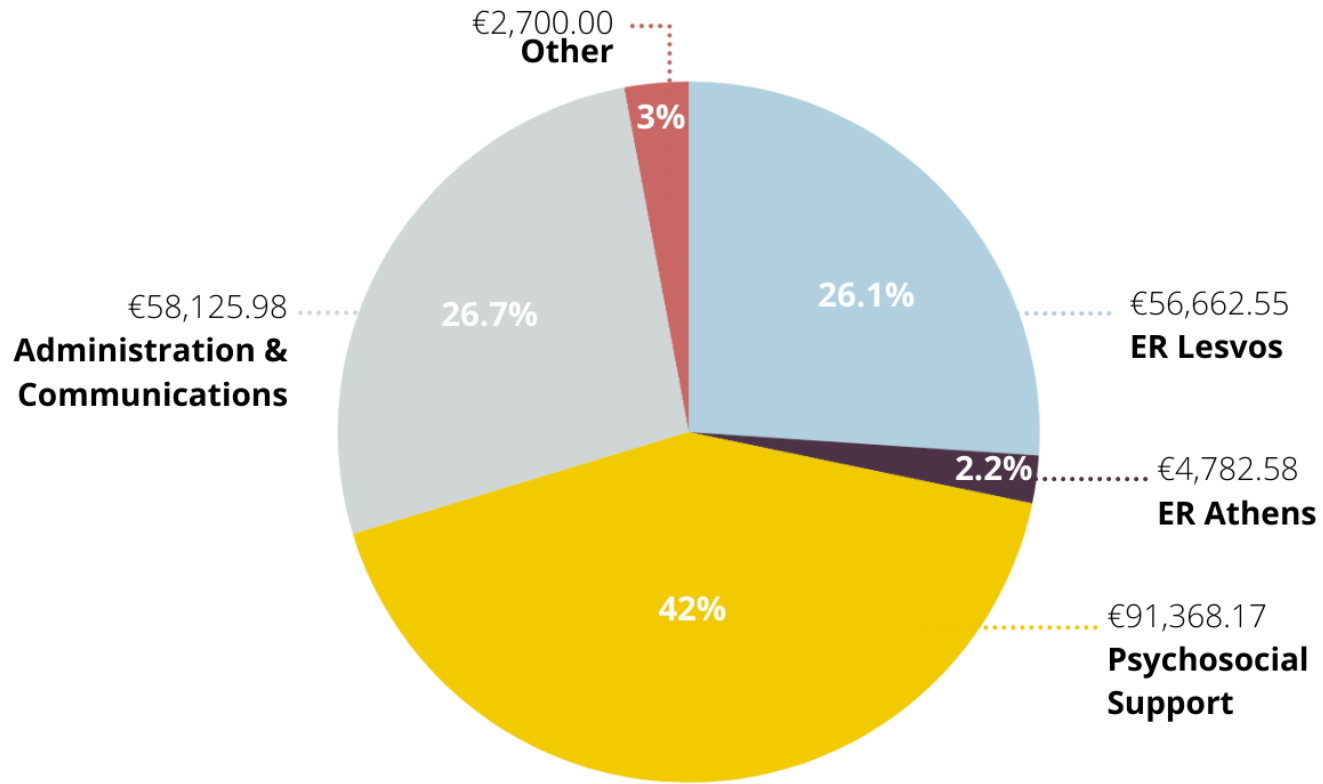
The remainder of our income has been raised through direct donations (through PayPal, our Website, or Bank Transfer) as well as through crowdfunding on the GlobalGiving platform.

In 2020, our total expenses were €217,362.62, 28% of which covered our Emergency Response programming, 42% of which covered our Psychosocial Support programming, and 26% of which covered our Communications and Administration costs. LHR's registration as a Greek entity, as decreed by the Greek government, entailed additional costs to undertake, which include costs for registration, and certification in order to work in a camp.

Our income is from donations made by individuals, businesses and organisations who wish to support asylum seekers. Our funding agreements state that we are a non-religious, non-political organisation, and we ensure that our funders align with our humanitarian objectives.



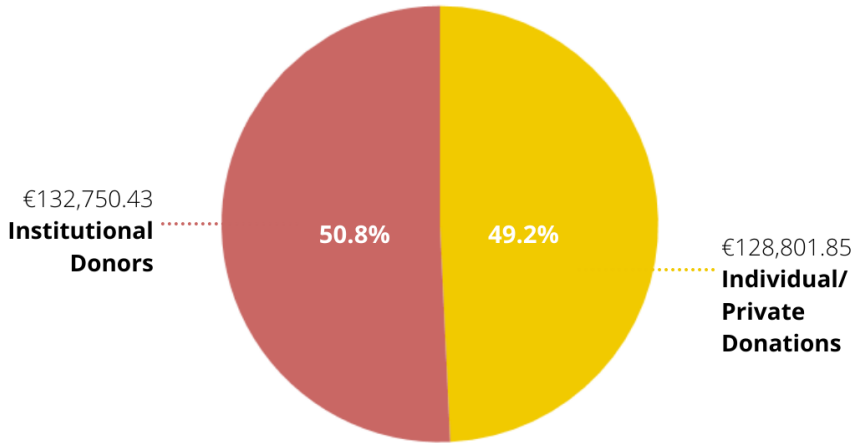
# Expenses



Total spending in 2020 was €217,362.62



# Income



Donor	Amount	Percentage of Income
SOL Foundation	68,982	26.4%
Dashlight Foundation	35,000	13.4%
Fons Margarita	28,263.81	10.8%
Project Hermine	500	0.2%

Total income in 2020 was: € 261,552.28

Our work is made possible thanks to the support of both institutional and individual/private donors. In addition to financial donors, we would also like to thank all those who donated non-food items throughout the year, including: Smiles on the Way; Project Hermine; Safe Place International; SOS Refugiados; Because We Carry and Mary Dallas. We would also like to thank Hero Textil AG; Fynn Kliemann; and Abo Jamil for donating and or crafting masks for the residents of Ritsona.



## *A Few Words from Lighthouse Relief's Supporters*

*In the Autumn of 2020, Alexandre Jenn, Alexander Galimberti, Hector Drake and Daniel Shailer completed a 12 hour, 22-mile (35 km) swim across the English Channel, raising over \$30,000 USD for Lighthouse Relief!*

*This challenge was 16 years in the making for The Alexes. What started out as a friendly swimming rivalry between their schools developed into a strong friendship when the two became roommates whilst living in Beijing, China. When deciding on which cause to fundraise for, the team chose Lighthouse Relief, an "important cause that was personal to us." Both Alexander Galimberti and Alexandre Jenn's brother had volunteered with LHR in 2017, and remained closely connected to the situation for refugees in Europe.*

*"What we put ourselves through is trivial, it's a challenge," Alexander said: "It's not life threatening, nothing like what a lot of refugees and asylum seekers go through. People wouldn't do this unless their lives were in serious danger."*

*LHR is grateful to this group of friends for their support, enabling us to continue providing psychosocial support in Ritsona Camp and to launch a new Streetwork Project.*

*In March 2020, German rap group BHZ launched a fundraiser in support of LHR, raising \$15,400. This amazing act of solidarity truly empowered our operations at a pivotal time!*

*"We at BHZ are very happy that we were able to support the initiative of Lighthouse Relief with our crowdfunding 'Rap in Solidarity'. The work of LHR is representative of all those who have been working for refugees in the Mediterranean region for years and we felt it was important to set an example and use our reach to make people aware of the situation and the voluntary work on the ground." (BHZ)*

*"Our co-operation started back in 2018 when introducing a pilot programme at the Ritsona Refugee Camp, namely, to use sport and in particular football with the main target of providing a regular routine and structure for participants, for whom daily life is often characterised by waiting for the next step in asylum proceedings.*

*Lighthouse Relief's approach here was and is a perfect example of an organisation where sport can generate massive contributions. You are still on the ground although you had to overcome a few quite significant turbulences over the past years. And passion is in our sector always an essential project element. Lighthouse Relief has a big portion of it paired with the relevant know-how, a sustainable set up and the necessary commitment – for the benefit of the programme and many young people."*  
(The SOL Foundation)

*"One of LHR's great strengths is that you have been on the ground in Greece for a long time, and have a very deep understanding of the needs of refugees and of the specific issues in Greece. You come at the support with a deep understanding of what works: the most effective way to provide valuable support."*  
(The Dashlight Foundation)

*RAFT, a UK-based charity providing aid to those affected by conflict, has provided support to LHR since 2019 through crucial fundraising efforts.*

*"RAFT (Refugee Aid from Taunton) is delighted to have been able to support the urgently important relief that LHR has managed to continue to provide in Greece despite the desperate constraints of the pandemic year. Your front-line operation is a source of continuing admiration and inspiration. Thank you."*





WELCOME

بنه راغلاست أهلا و سهلا خوش آفديد

## Thank You

*Whether you are former volunteers, staff or residents, partner organisations or advocates, whether you have donated to our campaigns, or simply liked or shared our appeals, you are all little lighthouses.*

*In so many ways, you make our work possible, and build toward a brighter, better future for people on the move - you do this by recognising the importance of inclusive and dignified support; by tirelessly advocating in your homes and communities; and by always seeking new and innovative ways to be a beacon of light and warmth for vulnerable people around the world.*

*Thank you for everything you've done to shape Lighthouse Relief, and to make our work possible*

*Photos credits: Edward Grattan; Julie Flavin; Julie Bourdin; Tommy Chavannes; Anna Tascha Larsson; Nick Powell; Claire Thomas; Samuel Nacar; LHR teams in Ritsona, Athens & Lesvos*

*Artwork on pages 13 & 35: Hannah Simon; Anna Moreno*



TRAVEL INFORMATION



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