

## Activity Report 2018

The first six months of 2018 Stand by me Lesvos focused on providing hot meals and food rations for the most vulnerable refugees at Moria camp. The cold and terrible conditions in the camp made nutritious food an urgent essential need, especially for pregnant women, babies, and young children. Hunger and poor nutrition can have lifelong negative consequences for babies and children, and the food rations provided at the camp are woefully lacking in quantity and quality. At times we were providing up to 800 meals per day. This was our first response to a desperate situation, but our focus is on our center; which is a place where women can meet in safety and enjoy a welcoming atmosphere, where they can come together and participate in courses and activities together.

The start of 2018 was just the beginning of a long-term program to help. While the world starts to forget about the fate of refugees on Europe's shore, we are committed to stay.



*Children engaging in crafts and fun while their mothers attend class*

The second half of 2018, Stand by me Lesvos set up and opened the “Academia”, which is a school for adult women refugees from Moria camp. Currently we offer English and Greek courses, English is useful wherever these women might end up in the future and Greek is important because we want them to be able to communicate with their host community and not be so isolated from Greek society and life. The really wonderful part about the school is that all the teachers are refugees themselves. I have been trained by a [European program](#) in peer-mentoring and the idea is simple: to train the refugees who already know English to teach other refugees. This is ideal for refugees, because while a peer-mentor might not know perfect English, he or she speaks the same language as their refugee students and have similar life experiences so they can understand their needs and feelings in a different way than a European volunteer might.



*Construction of one of our classrooms*

Opening the “Academia” has taken our volunteers a lot of hard work, and has been quite the journey, that we could not have done without the support from individual donations, and our partner NGOs. We want to share some of this journey with you. We started by renting the land in June 2018, and with just a tent that could fit 20 students, we started our English courses. In July our volunteers worked extremely hard constructing more classroom tents, and by the end of that month we were able to accommodate 200 students, we started offering English and Greek classes every day. In August we continued expanding our physical classrooms and set up a pallet room, we set up three different time slots and different class levels for our now 300 students.



*One of our early classrooms*

In September we began the process of winterizing the classrooms, to protect the students from the cold, wind and rain. We also connected electricity and started the process of bringing heating to the classes. We also focused on keeping a high quality of learning and making sure classes were not becoming overcrowded. In October Kitrinos NGO donated an 'isobox' which was very much appreciated as it is our warmest and driest classroom. We also worked with Erasmus+ on training our teachers, and four of our refugee teachers went to Italy to be trained further. In November WADI Organization donated wood for one more classroom, which we decided to turn into an activity room for the children of our students, so that their mothers can have time to focus on their education while their children play in a safe space. In December donations from Hope Project and individuals allowed us to provide the school with 6 computers, a video projector, table and chairs. We also were able to increase the amount of training for our teachers. Throughout all this we continued to provide food for our 350 students.



*Our new generously donated computers*

Our plan for the first months of 2019 is to start providing free legal advice for the refugees in cooperation with Fenix NGO. We will start offering art classes, sewing workshops, and classes on how to repair things, as some of our new volunteers have much experience in those fields. We are also excited that in February some of our teachers will go to Poland to be further trained through the Erasmus+ program for refugee education. Also we are working with Erasmus+ and Team 8 to make a training center for volunteers in Moria.

In 2019, one of our goals is to start job training for refugees to help them restart their lives. We are working with some local businesses and hope to be able to share more on this project in the spring. To support these projects please donate [here](#).

Looking forward to a busy 2019,

Stand by me Lesvos Team