

STAND BY ME LESVOS

ANNUAL REPORT

Period January 2021
- December 2021



OVERVIEW



Stand by Me Lesvos is committed to supporting refugees. We seek to improve aspects of their lives through three initiatives: Education, Environment and Empowerment.

Since March 2020, Stand By Me Lesvos has adopted additional terms to their practice and has amplified the centrality of self-resilience, self-ownership and self-empowerment. This is achieved through the collaboration and the partnership with several self-organized groups within the camp: Moria Corona Awareness Team, Moria White Helmets and Academia. Inclusion and participation underpin the principles of SBML. We provide better living conditions for the refugees through empowerment and access to resources.

SBML supports education, self-empowerment services and the environmental community service initiatives – the following are some of our key projects:

The **Recycling Project** involves a recycling campaign whereby camp residents use recyclables in exchange for food received from the food line. The project participants also receive fresh cold water in the summer and different food items such as eggs, onions, juices, etc in the winter. This project raises awareness of the importance of waste management, which, in turn, becomes a tool for environmental education. The camp residents who are non-participants also benefit from the positive effects of the reduced amounts of rubbish present in their living environment. This campaign improves the overall public health in the camp.



The refugee camp's **Waste Management** project is managed by the Moria White Helmets (MWH). The program involves the regular collection of rubbish to ensure the inside, as well as the outside of the camp, remains clean. The Mytilini Municipality works in collaboration with the MWH, in cleaning the areas outside of the camp around old Moria, Mytilini city. SBML serves as a bridge to host both the local community and the refugees. This collaborative project has become a means to increase the engagement of both parties and to improve social cohesion.

The **Electricity Project** is a cooperation between the camp's Management Technical Team and Moria White Helmet, supported by SBML as the bridge between Greek authorities and self-organized groups. This project involves crucial services of both providing electricity to tents and constant electrical maintenance in different zones of the camp.

The **Distribution Project** involves distributing aids to refugees. MCAT partners with the Hope Project in delivering donations to around 70 refugees daily. The volunteers go from tent to tent and collect the aid request forms from the refugees. They are packed at The Hope Project warehouse accordingly. Stand by me Lesvos picks up the donations, and passes them to MCAT at various recycling points. As a result, the refugees in the camp receive the requested clothing and items they need.

Education is a core project of Stand By Me Lesvos since its creation. Academia is an informal education center run by camp residents for camp residents. The aim of informal education is not to take over Greek authorities' competence in education, but to prepare a smooth transition from informal to formal education in schools in order for camp residents to be integrated into the country they will be living in. The Mobile Classrooms which are located inside the camp enable the self-organized groups to run their projects using the mobile classroom buses as a learning space, and to access teaching resources and materials stored on the buses. Our Classroom Programs include first aid training, fire safety training, tool lending, computer lessons, music lessons, languages lessons and a dedicated sewing space, all create the ability for camp residents to improve the daily situation and increase the health and safety of camp residents.





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EDUCATION

EXPANSION OF ACTIVITIES

Education is a fundamental right enshrined on the international level in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1966). Indeed, Education in itself is an “empowering right and one of the most powerful tools by which economically and socially marginalized children and adults can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully in society.” (UNESCO, Right to Education).



While space continues to be an issue in the new camp, with highly limited exits of camp residents, an educational space outside the camp was not practical. Therefore, classes inside the camp were the only solution and so we decided to start with the construction of Mobile classes.

BUS PROJECT

In February, we began the refurbishment of 2 old buses, and transformed them into mobile classrooms, to provide the opportunity and a space for the residents of the camp to have space to give classes and receive classes, a learning space designed by them and for them.

While many females are denied or restricted from an education in their homeland, SBML consciously creates a safe space for women.

We have several classes that are led by women.



MOBILE ACADEMIA

In July, while the weather is warm, we make use the outside area for various activities to create a Covid-safe environment. We are planning to expand our learning space.

Tailoring Team

The tailoring team work very hard repairing and altering clothing for those in need. In addition, they spend time in making tote bags for the camp in the aim to reduce the use plastic bags.

Many of the women who learn in Acadamia came from **Afghanistan** and they as so many Afghan women want to learn and educate themselves. Here they can and they can decide how they like to dress. They are free. This is what they also wanted in their home country but now again this is all in danger.

Hello World!

This is our message! We are Afghans from all parts of the country and we are here as refugees in Greece. We believe in freedom, peace and education and we hate extremism. Today we gathered to give you this message. Our people are left behind and betrayed but we will not keep silent. We are here and we talk in the name of all who cannot talk any more, because their voice is silenced. But in their hearts, they are with us and we all will continue until one day we will have our country back. We want human and women rights to be respected and we want pens to rule not guns!

September 2021: Medico visit was a very important one because they are a very important donor who supports our education project.

Interview of Medico: How do Afghan refugees in the Mavrovouni/ Kara Tepe camp on Lesbos react to the Taliban's takeover? A conversation full of worries.

<https://www.medico.de/en/the-world-must-pay-attention-18345>



02. WASTE MANAGEMENT

The collection of rubbish is carried out by Moria White Helmets (MWH):

Every Friday, the team members, in collaboration with Mytilini Municipality work outside the camp to clean areas such as old Moria, Moria village, Mytilini city.

This allow both communities to work together. SBML serves as a bridge to host both the local community and the refugees. This collaborative project has become a means to increase the engagement of both parties and to improve social cohesion.



03. RECYCLING PROJECT

In the new temporary camp of Kara Tepe, there were approximately 7,000 asylum seekers residing in the beginning of the year. Poor waste management has, in the past, caused a huge waste issue within camp, leading to a public health issue.

This issue is further compounded in times of Covid-19 and must be addressed for the safety of all on the island. Approximately 40% of all daily rubbish is comprised of plastic bottles. This project aims to recycle these bottles, reward the project participants with fresh, cold water (in the summer) which is highly lacking in camp, and raise awareness on waste management, as well as bring environmental education, with special interest to child and adolescent engagement. This project takes 15,000 plastic bottles daily out of camp and to recycling. This project strengthens Mytilene Municipality's position in the camp and is implemented with collaboration of the refugee self-help group, Moria Corona Awareness Team (MCAT).



Description of the project

This project started at Moria Camp in March 2020 and is continuing with success in the New Temporary Camp of Kara Tepe. The affected groups were the 7,000 asylum seekers residing in the Camp and the roughly 30,000 people residing in Mytilene. The direct target group are camp residents who are participating in the project, recycling water bottles, receiving fresh drinking water in summer or different food items such as onions, potatoes in winter. In addition, once a week, they receive hygiene products, and opportunity to participate in educational activities. The camp residents who are non-participants also benefit from the positive effects of the reduced amounts of rubbish present in their living environment. This campaign improves the overall public health in the camp. Consequently, the families and community members who interact with the individual participants of this project also benefit through obtaining additional information on waste management, recycling and environmental conservation.

MCAT members have received education and training with regards to waste management, recycling and environmental conservation in order to relay said material to project participants.

Mytilene has seen an immediate impact from this project with the reduction of plastic bottles reaching streams, roadways and the sea. Proper education on recycling and environmental conservation directed to asylum seekers has and will improve the daily practice of individuals on the island, as well as further protect the ecosystem on Lesbos.

Nearly 40% of camp residents are below 18 years of age and lack activities. This project is designed to engage and educate, especially during the time when the lock-down measures were put in place for Covid-19.

Overall Objectives

- Clean Camp
- Improve public health in times of Covid-19
- Environmental protection
- Awareness raising/education
- Empowerment and capacity building of a refugee self-organized group

Achieved goals and results

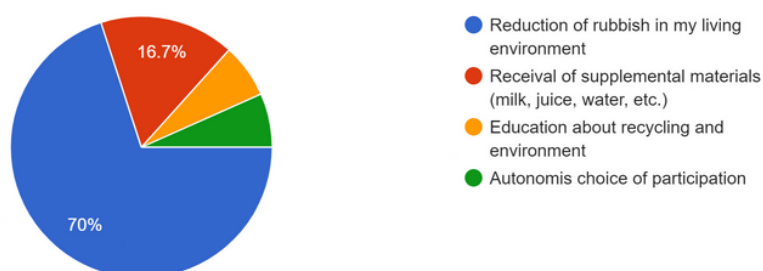
1. Remove 15,000 plastic bottles daily from Camp for recycling: Exchange 10 empty plastic bottles for 1 cold water bottle
2. Raise awareness and educate people on waste management, recycling and environmental conservation
3. Training of trainers and capacity building for refugee self-organized, self-help groups
4. Collaboration between camp residents and local providers: everyday coordination for bottle pick-up with waste company to be taken to recycling

On this link you will find the feedback sheet of MCAT recycling:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/188bFGBVoz9w3Pvo9tTgPUKPDUE8r7BhWee0AgKH9Xyc/edit#responses>

What has been the most important aspect of this project to you?

30 responses



This video describes in a few words and images the recycling process in the camp

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=503906550987393¬if_id=1618308247885225

MCAT

Moria Corona Awareness Team (MCAT) is a camp resident, self-organized, self-help group, created as an emergency response in the times of Covid-19, to address the dire needs of camp residents and to protect all who live on the island from Covid-19. This is a youth organization with a proven record of being highly efficient and effective in implementing projects in both Moria and the new camp. This group lives within the target group with complete access to all populations in camp.

04. PANDEMIC AND AWARENESS PROJECT

From the first wave of the covid pandemic a small group of immigrants inside the camp with the help of Stand By Me Lesbos started the campaign of information and protection against the deadly virus. This action has two parts. The first part concerns informing migrants about the virus and how they can protect themselves. Moria Corona Awareness Team visits from tent to tent handing out leaflets as well as using a loudspeaker to inform every family and every resident of the camp. The second part concerns the distribution of hygiene items and protection against the virus. Every week through Stand By Me Lesbos they distribute masks, vitamins, antiseptics, soaps and gloves in order to be safe. It is very important to continue this action because Covid19 become more dangerous than ever and conditions inside the Maurovouni camp are not ideal..



05. COOKED FOOD DISTRIBUTION

270 meals with cooked food bread and fruits distributed daily, 5 days per week. Our partners Zaboreak and Home for All are in partnership with SBML. Our drivers pick up the hot meals from our partners every midday and deliver them straight to the camp residents.



06. CLOTHES DISTRIBUTION

Clothes distribution system



07. ELECTRICITY

Moria White Helmet (MWH) and its Special Skill Electric Team, are in charge of conducting and maintaining electrical work in the new camp, by a shared agreement of working with and under the supervision of the Camp Managements Technical Department.

MWH involves in minor electricity issues such as fixing damages in different zones of the camp. It supports the Electric Team from the Camp by offering emergency technical support and material support in weekends, holidays. All this is possible with the support of their partner Stand By Me Lesbos.



08. ERASMUS

We strongly believe that Education is the greatest asset, which is why we turn to our specialists - professional partners from Erasmus. SBML and Mobile academy teachers collaborate through Erasmus with teachers from all over Europe in order to gain knowledge, experiences and new ideas for teaching. They analyze the education needs of the refugees together and they will continue for better and effective education. Some of Erasmus projects are Volunteering for refugees: Best practices for ethical volunteering program and management, and Train The Trainer of Immigrants.

<https://sderasmus.blogspot.com/2021/10/volunteering-for-refugees-best.html>

<http://trainthetrainerofmigrants.eu/>



09. LAUNDRY PROJECT

Three times per week, our driver from Stand By Me Lesvos, team up with our partner Lava project, collect the laundry from the camp residents to wash, The next day, our driver delivers the clean clothes back to the residents. Each month, we wash more than 240 big bags of laundry.

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOMES (%)

RECYCLING

42,91

ELECTRICITY

25,62

EDUCATION

22,19

WASTE

MANAGEMENT

4,56

ERASMUS

2,74

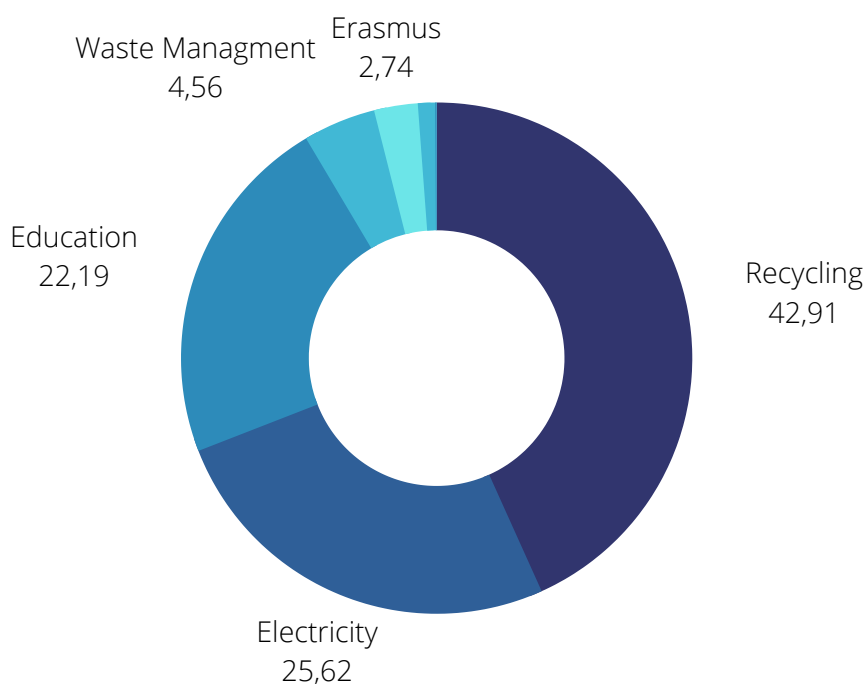
AWARNESS

1,08

CLOTHES AND FOOD

DISTRIBUTION

0,9



We want to thank all our donors and partners that make our work possible. We also wish to thank all the supporters who have contributed to our projects.

Organization

Medico, Solidarités International, Ein herz fuer Moria, Solingen Hilft, Plastic Free, Stiftungsfonds, Kikarada Project, Heimatstern (Andreas), Plastfritt Hav, Leave No One Behind, Michael Graversen - Warehouse supply.

Local donors and partners

Home for all - Food, International School of Peace - Education, Zaporeak – Food, Boat Refugee Foundation - 1st Aid Training.

OUR GOALS FOR 2022



We are approaching the end of 2021. Looking back at the progress of refugee situations, the situations in 2021 has been slightly better comparatively to 2020. This is due to the reduced number of refugee in the camp, together with the effort in improving the facilities within the camp. Of course, there had been a number of difficulties last winter when the camp had just been constructed, but we will continue to make effort in every possible way to improve the situation. Still big problems there is no official school, no network for electricity, no running water. But these problems seems not big when only in few days last week 30 refugee drowned in Aegean sea.

My last 12 years' experience as a volunteer for the refugee crisis, has taught me to be patient and accommodating to the ever-unpredictable future ahead. While we prepare ourselves to be adaptable for what is to come, we, Stand by me Lesbos, have set ourselves six targets for 2022:

1. Organise of remote-volunteers team, an approach to combat Covid-19
2. Enhance the provision of the education to meet the needs of the refugees
3. Issue recognised certificate for course completion
4. Vocational training and job-seeking for refugees
5. Community Needs Relief: Befriending to understand the most urgent needs and problems for the refugees; to foster good relations between refugees and the wider society
6. Creative recycling art and craft workshops, making use of recyclables from the camp.



We are not alone in achieving our goals.

I have faith that our refugee self-organized teams, all of our donors and volunteers will give their very best for a better tomorrow.

John Lennon's lyrics inspires us all:

*You may say I'm a dreamer but I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us and the world will be as one.*

Michael Aivaliotis
[Stand by Me Lesbos](#)