



The IRC in Greece

THE IRC RESPONSE

In 2015 early 2016, over one million people fleeing conflict and persecution travelled through Greece in search of safety and sanctuary in Europe. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) launched an emergency assessment on the Greek island of Lesbos in June 2015, and by the next month had established IRC Hellas and its first operations in response to the developing humanitarian crisis. Following the closing of the borders along the 'Balkan Route', and the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016, the IRC expanded its programming across mainland Greece and provided vital support and protection to the refugee and asylum seeking population hosted mainly in camp sites. Since then, the number of people arriving in Greece has decreased significantly but has not ceased (about 50,000 arrivals in 2018), and the possibility for legal onward movement has almost disappeared, changing the needs for asylum seekers and refugees, who will have to remain and integrate into Greek society. IRC's response therefore adapted, focusing more on the urban areas and adding services for integration.

As of June 2019, an estimated **76,000 refugees including over 3,800 unaccompanied children, live in Greece**, more than 15,500 of these on the Greek islands, often in crowded, substandard conditions. Over 75% of the newly arrived are from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Palestine and more than half are women and children. IRC Hellas responds to the needs of the most vulnerable with a holistic approach that spans from reception to integration; on the islands and on the mainland.



IRC locations in Greece include Athens, Lesbos and Chios

THE IRC REACH

46,670 people have benefitted from the IRC's programs

Over **100,000** people have benefitted from the Refugee.Info platform

Since the start of programming in 2015, the IRC has provided, directly or in collaboration with its partners, immediate shelter, emergency supplies, safe transportation, access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, vital, reliable, and up-to-date information, protection (including for 24/7 care for unaccompanied children), mental health and psychosocial support, as well as employability services to the refugee and asylum-seeking population in Greece.

THE IRC ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

HEALTH

- provided to **2,042 people mental health & psychosocial support**, in individual and group sessions;
- ensured over **13,795 people** received water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and supplies in camps;
- installed or rehabilitated and maintained **636 shelters and more than 1,000 latrines, showers, taps & water storage tanks**;

SAFETY

- protected more than **13,200 refugee children** in safe spaces and with case management;
- offered tailored one-to-one support to over **1,500 unaccompanied children**, including 24/7 shelter and care to 808 children travelling alone;
- supported **women and girls** in 7 women's safe spaces, **hosting over 32,500 visits and survivors of gender based violence** through case management and legal aid;
- trained over 1,400 service providers** on child protection, gender-based violence principles and mental health support;

ECONOMIC WELLBEING

- distributed emergency **cash assistance to 7,051 refugees**;
- provided **job-related skills training & counselling to 1,529 people**;

POWER

- offered** accurate, updated and often life-saving information to over **96,000 people** in the last year through [Refugee.info](https://www.refugee.info) Greece page & social media;

NEXT STEPS

- strengthen its mental health response on the islands**;
- continue developing targeted **livelihoods and integration programming including early integration on the islands**;
- invest in **alternative care options for unaccompanied children** and support refugee youth transition to adulthood.



Access to water in Kara Tepe camp, Lesbos



IRC partners in Greece

Athens Partnership	Lesvos Solidarity
Diotima	METAdrasi
Faros	Organization Earth
Generation 2.0.	Society for Social Psychiatry and Mental Health
Greek Council for Refugees	SolidarityNow

Over 2,957 refugees reached in collaboration with local partners



24/7 care for unaccompanied children

For further information visit <https://www.rescue.org/country/greece> or contact Dimitra Kalogeropoulou, Executive Director: Dimitra.Kalogeropoulou@rescue.org International Rescue Committee Hellas