

A NON-LINEAR JOURNEY TO ADULTHOOD: A VIEW FROM GREECE

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**SOLIDARITY
NOW**

This is our common ground

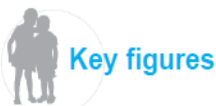
Obstacles to overcome

- What makes it so difficult for a vulnerable child to reach adulthood?
 - Reaching adulthood requires different tools and time-frames for different children.
 - The key is to Imagine a future and to set goals
 - What is true for one's own child applies equally to refugees.
- **Childrens' lives cannot be frozen. They cannot be put 'on hold'**
 - Their development needs cannot wait for an emergency situation to end
 - Bureaucratic procrastination is especially pernicious
 - Children do not (and cannot) develop in isolation
- **Being a refugee anyway hurts a child's development - in all of its dimensions**
 - Uprooting, disruption, insecurity-
- **UaMs are especially vulnerable. They lack, by definition, a supportive family network.**
- **Adolescence** is in *any case* a transition phase.
 - Legal challenges, mostly pertinent but not limited to asylum rights
 - Discontinuity in education and difficulties in accessing the labour market
 - Psycho-social changes associated with anxiety and exacerbated by prejudice and discrimination
- **The 16-year old unaccompanied refugee combines all difficulties and vulnerabilities**

Refugee and migrant children in Greece

As of 31 January 2020

unicef for every child

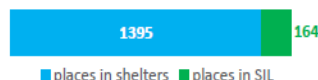


Key figures

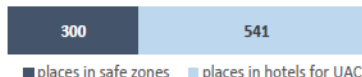
42,500 estimated number of refugee and migrant children across Greece. Among them **5,041 unaccompanied**

96 accompanied children have been returned to Turkey, in the framework of the EU - Turkey Statement (20 March 2016 – 31 January 2020)

37 unaccompanied children received international protection in Greece on first instance during Jan 2020 (January 2020)



Number of available places in temporary accommodation for UAC (safe zones and UAC hotels, January 2020)



Total number of UAC in need of long term accommodation (January 2020)



Out of the estimated 5,041 unaccompanied children in Greece, approximately **3,482** (including **187** in protective custody) are still in need of long-term accommodation



It is estimated that **13,000** refugee and migrant children of school age (4-17 years old) across Greece are enrolled in formal education (as of January 2020, source: Education Sector Working Group)



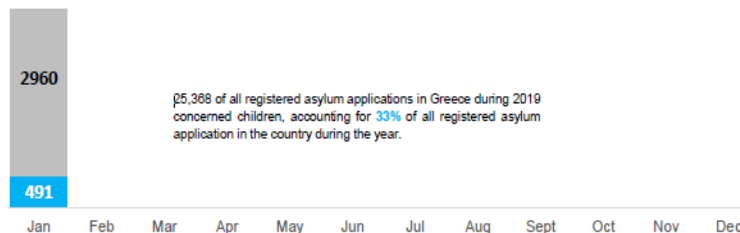
73% of children 4-17 years old residing in apartments with their families or shelters and hotels for unaccompanied children are enrolled in Greek schools (as of January 2020)



38% of the total sea arrivals in 2020 were children. Among total sea arrivals **12%** were unaccompanied children

The main countries of origin of children arriving by sea in Greece during Jan-Dec 2019 were Afghanistan (53%), Syria (26%), Iraq (7%), and other countries (14%).

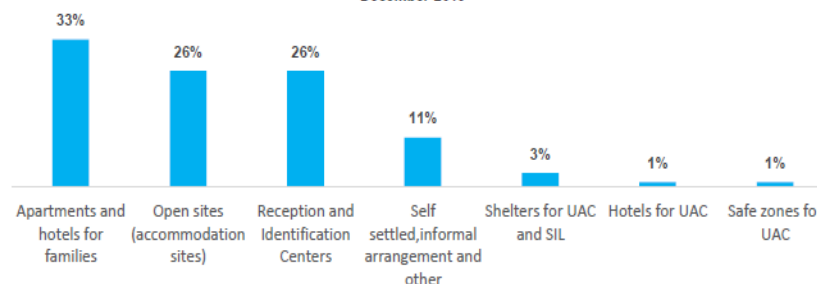
Child Asylum Applications January - December 2020*



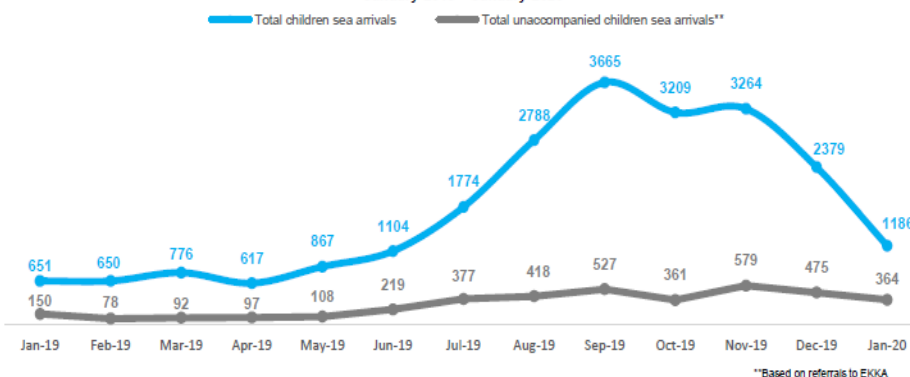
25,368 of all registered asylum applications in Greece during 2019 concerned children, accounting for **33%** of all registered asylum application in the country during the year.

■ Unaccompanied children ■ Accompanied children
*data may be adjusted upon final validation by the Asylum Service

Percentage of children per location December 2019



Child sea arrivals January 2019 – January 2020



**Based on referrals to EKKA

Secondary analysis of data by the following sources: MoMP, MoE, MoCP, Hellenic Police, EKKA, Greek Asylum Service, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF. The estimated total number of refugee and migrant children in Greece includes also figures on self-settled population receiving cash assistance from UNHCR in urban locations in Greece.

Refugee and migrant children in Greece

42,500 refugee and migrant children across Greece, of whom **5,041 unaccompanied.**

13,000 (between 4-17) are enrolled in formal education.

38% of total sea arrivals in 2020 were children, **12% unaccompanied.**

Main countries of origin:
Afghanistan (53%), Syria (26%), Iraq (7%).



Βασικά Στοιχεία

2809 Α.Α. σε μακροχρόνια ή προσωρινή φιλοξενία
 95* Α.Α. σε Κέντρα Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης
 35* Α.Α. σε Προστατευτική φύλαξη
 158* Α.Α. σε Ανοιχτά κέντρα φιλοξενίας
 930* Α.Α. σε Άτυπες/Επισφαλείς συνθήκες στέγασης

* συμπεριλαμβάνονται **183 παιδιά** που συνοδεύονται από ενήλικο που δεν είναι κατά τον νόμο ο κύριος κηδεμόνας τους (separated) και **104 Α.Α. προς μεταφορά** σε θέσεις μακροχρόνιας ή προσωρινής φιλοξενίας

4028 Εκτιμώμενος αριθμός Α.Α στην Ελλάδα
 εκ των οποίων:
92,5% Αγόρια
7,5% Κορίτσια
8,1% <14 ετών

Δυναμικότητα θέσεων φιλοξενίας

1961 Θέσεις μακροχρόνιας φιλοξενίας
 (Δομές/Διαμερίσματα υποστηριζόμενης διαβίωσης Α.Α.)

1535 Θέσεις προσωρινής φιλοξενίας
 (Ασφαλείς ζώνες/Ξενοδοχεία)

Τα στοιχεία αλλάζουν δυναμικά και προσαρμόζονται αντιστοίχως μέσω ελέγχου και επαλήθευσης από το ΕΚΚΑ.

Επικαιροποιημένη κατάσταση: Ασυνόδευτα Ανήλικα (Α.Α.) στην Ελλάδα

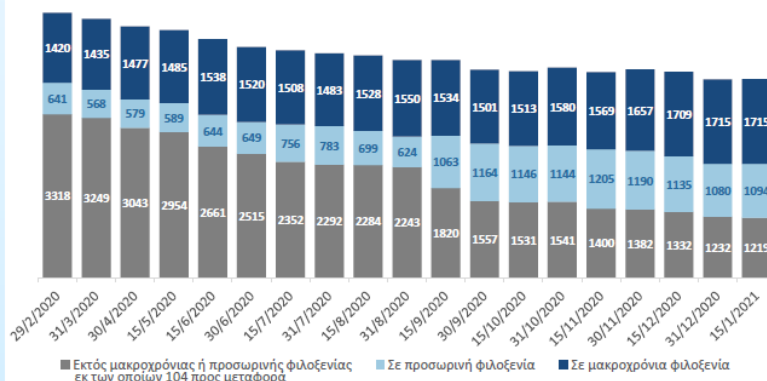
15 Ιανουαρίου 2021



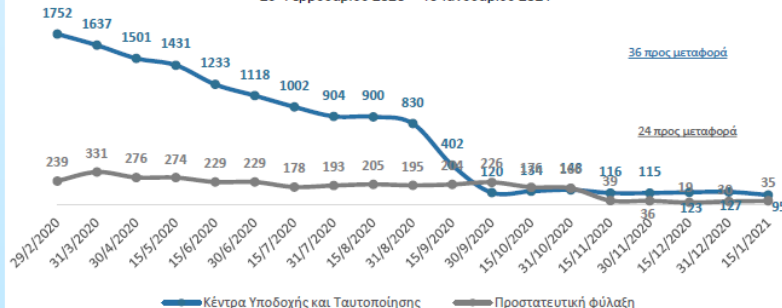
Ε.Κ.Κ.Α.

Εθνικό Κέντρο Κοινωνικής Αλληλεγγύης

Α.Α. ανά τύπο διαμονής
 29 Φεβρουαρίου 2020 – 15 Ιανουαρίου 2021



Αριθμός Α.Α. σε Κέντρα Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης/Προστατευτική φύλαξη
 29 Φεβρουαρίου 2020 – 15 Ιανουαρίου 2021



Ανάλυση πληθυσμού Α.Α. ανά τύπο διαμονής
 Σύνολο: 3097 άτομα



Επιπρόσθετα, **930 Α.Α.** (εκ των οποίων **36 προς μεταφορά**) όπου κατά την παραπομπή τους δηλώθηκε πως διαμένουν σε άτυπες/επισφαλείς συνθήκες στέγασης, όπως σε διαμερίσματα με άλλους, καταλήψεις, σε αστεγία, ενώ αλλάζουν συχνά τύπο διαμονής. Ο παραπάνω αριθμός συμπεριλαμβάνει 24 Α.Α. για τους οποίους δεν δηλώθηκε τοποθεσία διαμονής από τον φορέα παραπομπής. Το ΕΚΚΑ είναι σε διαδικασία επικύρωσης της πληροφορίας αυτής.

Με την υποστήριξη:



Unaccompanied refugee minors in Greece

4,028 UaMs, of whom **92.5% boys**; only **8.1% under 14**.

930 children live under precarious and dangerous conditions.

In early 2020 **1,752 UaMs resided in Reception Centres** or under protective custody.

UNICEF estimates that around **3,500 UaMs still lack long-term accommodation.**



This is our common ground



TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD: COMPLEXITIES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Lessons from the work of SolidarityNow

Our work on the ground:

- **Transit Hubs for UaMs: Three Transit Hotels in Northern Greece**
 - (172 minors relocated from the Islands of N. Aegean and the Evros border)
- **Supported Independent Living (SILs): for UaMs aged 16-18 in urban settings**
 - (48 capacity in Athens and Thessaloniki)
- **Guesthouse for young adult refugees (18+) in Athens**
 - (25 capacity and ... years of experience)
- **Employability: our weapon to help young adults to become and remain independent.**

Transit Hubs

- **The idea:** Provide **safe spaces** for UaMs while their papers are being processed
 - Applications made for relocation or family reunification and can last a long time, while accommodation is often problematic
 - Hence these adolescents are more restless, vulnerable and -at times- difficult to win their trust.
- **Key challenge:** :Living in a state of **flux** and **uncertainty**
 - **short-term horizons**; lack of opportunities requiring longer-term commitment (e.g. education.
 - Lack of space for making **everyday decisions** - what they eat, what they learn and what they wear
 - Everything complicated by the pandemic.
- **Key objective: to articulate their voice** and win back **agency**.
 - We strive to involve them in as many decisions as possible – even if that occasionally creates conflict among them.
 - **But** agency also creates a sense of belonging in a community of shared experiences.
 - To strengthen **the concepts of justice and accountability**, our psychologist-led teams form groups where issues such as restorative justice and mediation for conflict resolution are practiced.
- **Crucial pre-condition: a welcoming host community.**
 - Easier said than done. Experience from other Transit Hubs shows that **locals can become extremely hostile** and intolerant to young refugees arriving at their territory.
 - Extensive discussions with Local Authorities and participation in **Open Local Meetings** has proved **key to reassure and to overcome insecurities**.
 - It is fundamental to win the hearts and minds of neighbours.
 - **Not easy but - experience shows - is doable.**



Lessons learned

Important to **allow space** to make decisions

Important to **spend time as long as possible with them** (especially during meals) in order **to build a sense of community**, trust and understanding.

Trying a variety of responses vis a vis offending behaviour and exchange of experiences in interdepartmental meetings.

COVID-related social distancing and quarantine restrictions have been impeding education and training sessions -while on line solutions often run up against insurmountable difficulties with communications infrastructure.

Outdoor activities are very important and good fun.

Supported Independent Living (SILs)

- An alternative type of care provision and accommodation for children 16-18 years of age
- **Diversity:** from different cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds
 - Opportunity instead of cacophony: *they are de facto obliged to communicate in Greek among themselves*, and this accelerates their progress with the language.
- **Objective:** to **facilitate smooth transition into Greek society** based on best practices:
 - Individualised care
 - Individual action plan
 - Improvement of abilities and skills
 - One-to-one support in order to achieve personal goals
 - Employability counselling for those about to reach their 18th year
 - Strengthening self-confidence and self-preservation
- Main (unforeseen) challenge: lockdown due to COVID19 pandemic
- **Nevertheless, it has proved a rewarding experience**
 - **Education: difficulty in enrolling in Primary and Secondary Education** because of pandemic and lack of educational priority zones (ZEP) for refugee children.
- **However, it is possible to find work-arounds –e.g. nonformal education courses to improve language skills and adjust easier to the school environment at a later stage.**

Instances from daily life in SILs





Lessons learned : Social Investment?

It is a very interesting innovative approach towards **holistic support and individualised tailored-made care.**

Certain aspects which initially appeared as obstacles, in the event helped accelerate integration (diversity leading to speedy Greek language proficiency).

Can be thought as an example of social investment: the more you offer, the more you achieve.

COVID restrictions are challenging but we keep our cool and optimism.

Guesthouse for young adults (18+) in Athens (since 2018 under ESTIA).

- 25 young adults in 9 rooms, one kitchen, several WCs and a common room.
- Services provided: standard for ESTIA programme (accommodation, psychosocial support, referrals and interpretation)
- Up till now, we have hosted over 65 young adults (asylum seekers and recognized refugees)
- **Our emphasis:** support and empowerment for self-confidence, optimism + self-respect and decision making for themselves so as to become independent.
 - Education opportunities and acquisition of skills
 - Preparation for employment (info sessions, rights and obligations, guidance re options and gaps in labour market, preparation for interviews etc).
 - Create a sense of belonging to a community (with support, when needed, encouragement (all the time), problem-solving etc
- **A fine balance between freedom and responsibilities.**

Two success stories..

- **KM, aged 19, from Pakistan**

- Arrived in Lesvos as UaM in 2015 and stayed in Moria camp
- Sleeping rough for 6 months in Athens
- While staying with us he mastered the Greek language (even got an advanced certificate) and is now studying in a Technical Lyceum (information technology)
- He volunteers as an interpreter (fluent in English, Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali).
- He is working as professional interpreter for a Greek NGO
- He has many friends including many Greeks.

- **A.H., aged 19 from Afghanistan**

- Stayed with us for 2 years and is now a "graduate".
- He arrived in 2017 in Lesvos, then moved to a mainland camp.
- He was trying to reunite with his family (fleeing Taliban prosecution) in Austria. His application has been turned down.
- He attended school with conviction and made it to the Nursing School.
- He has worked as a carer in a shelter for UaMs while learning Greek
- He now holds proudly a job as an interpreter at SolidarityNow.
- He lives independently in Athens.



Lessons learned from the Guesthouse for 18+

Freedom and trust pay off.

Empowerment and independence are not unattainable goals, even if demanding ...

15 young beneficiaries have successfully transitioned to economic independence and live on their own.

12 beneficiaries managed to find and keep a job.

2 young adults found their way to Higher Education in Greece.

What should drive us?

- This is a fascinating journey: Our immediate task is teaching, but **I** feel I am learning at the same time
- I often feel that, in the case of Young Migrants, what we are doing in SN is part of a social investment experiment. That what is at stake is the model of what **Europe's future citizens are or should be.**
- **If an inclusion model is to be successful, it should, surely, work for Unaccompanied Minors.**
 - Why? – they are receptive, are capable, they are there to be won over.
 - They are also easily hurt, pushed in a corner or alienated.
 - UaMs are on a knife edge:
 - one side is to become what Europe would want of its future citizens
 - The other it to feed future divisions and construct new conflicts.
- What we are experimenting with, in essence, is finding ways to help the good scenario.
- To do our work, we try to be **modest** but we know that we must also be **resolute** to deliver.
- What must drive us in the everyday work is the hope that what is ultimately at stake is the quality of life for all.
- This work can only deliver if it is driven by values and given meaning by contributing to a larger project.