



KEY FACTS *



25,766
Sea arrivals
in 2018



Arrivals during the first
nine months of 2018
are **17% higher** than
those of 2017



19,251
migrants and refugees on
the islands



More than half of
the arrivals are women
and children



Nearly **7 out of 10**
Children
are below the age
of 12

76% of total arrivals from refugee
producing countries
Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, DRC

KEY INFORMATION

Greece is one of the main gateways to Europe, together with Italy and Spain in the Mediterranean region. Refugees and migrants reach Greece both through its land border with Turkey in the North and, mainly, through the Greek-Turkish sea frontier in the Aegean. During 2015, almost one million refugees and migrants arrived in Greece, in their majority viewing Greece as their first stop and as a transit country towards their final destination to central and northern European states.

The EU-Turkey agreement on migration had further significant consequences in the refugee response in Greece. Since March 2016, when the deal went into effect, the vast majority of asylum seekers and migrants that arrived on the Greek islands have been restricted to the islands, often held in the “hotspots”, in places where they were designed for transit and not for long term periods of stay.

Only migrants who are considered to be “vulnerable” such as unaccompanied minors, disabled persons or persons with serious health problems, seniors, pregnant women and victims of trafficking, torture, violence or abuse, family reunification cases and those admitted to the Greek asylum system following admissibility interviews, are excluded from the scope of the EU-Turkey Agreement, so that they can ultimately be transported to mainland Greece where their special needs can actually be addressed.

However, due to the increased number of arrivals and gaps in healthcare services on the islands there is often a backlog in vulnerability assessments. As a result many migrants undergo their asylum procedure without having their vulnerability properly assessed and identified.

Arrivals during the first nine months of 2018 are 17% higher than those of 2017. 19,251 refugees and migrants are currently residing on the Aegean islands, i.e. mostly on 5 islands (Lesvos, Chios, Kos, Samos and Leros). Lesvos continues to shoulder the biggest number of arrivals, having received more 52% of total sea arrivals on Lesvos in 2018. The number is significant and continues to put pressure on the already overwhelmed Greek reception and asylum system. Overcrowding, inadequate and insufficient living conditions, lack of protection and insecurity, are some of the problems refugees face.

The government is trying to increase accommodation in the mainland and transferred more people from the islands. However, the number of arrivals continues to be higher than those of those transferred. Thus, urgent actions are needed to ease overcrowding and improve conditions on the islands.



MDM ACTION

MdM aims to guarantee access to basic health services migrants in Mavrovouni - Kara Tepe Hospitality Center of the Municipality of Lesvos (overall accommodation capacity ~ 1.300 persons) and to Alternative Accommodation Facilities in Chios in collaboration with UNHCR, focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable populations (such as women and people in need of psychosocial support, SGBV survivors as well as people with chronic medical condition). As of end June 2018 MdM actions on Chios ceased, due to the relevant project reaching its end.

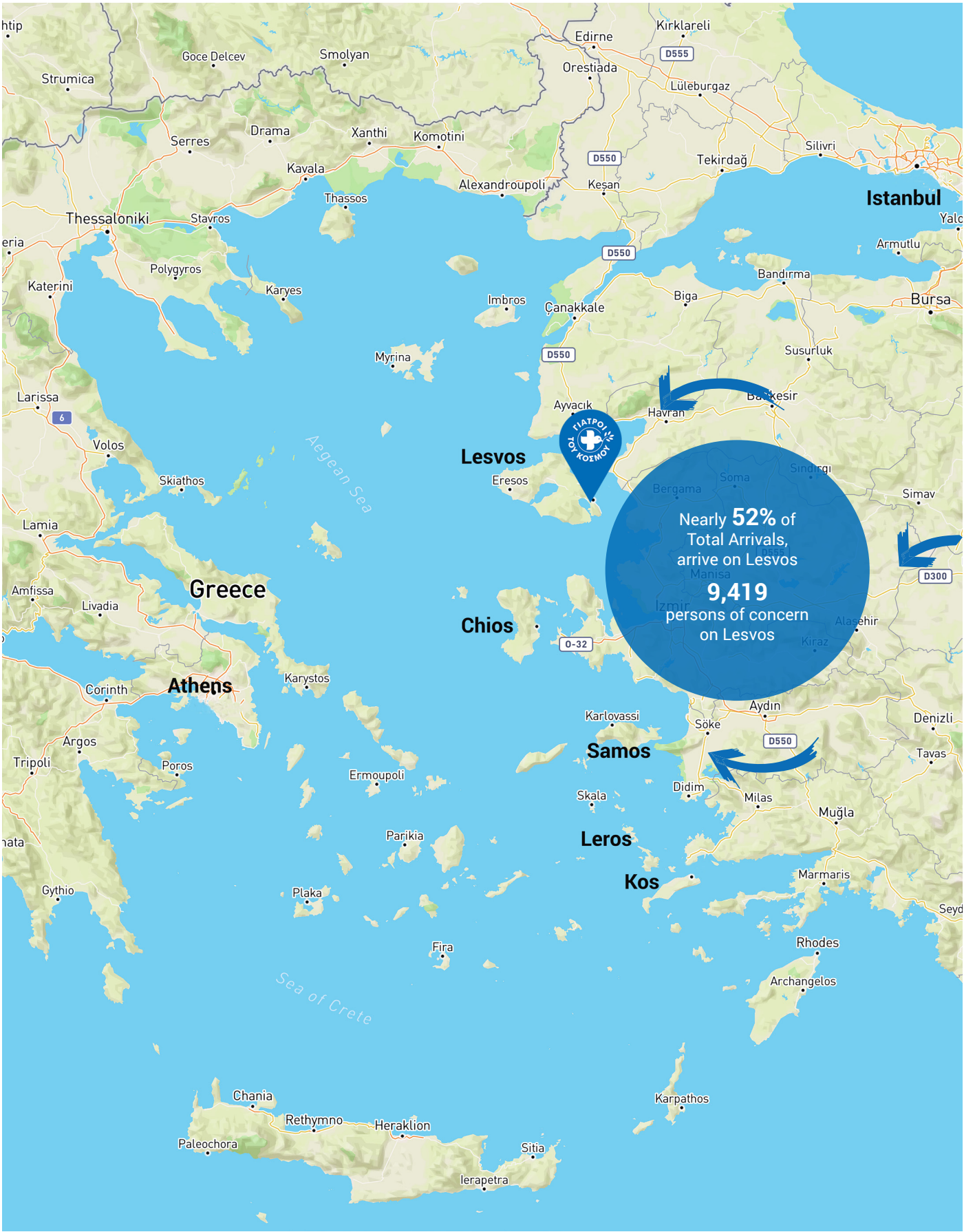
This goal has been met through the maintenance and adaptation of community based health services offered by MdM teams (including primary health care, sexual and reproductive health/SRH planning, psycho-social support and referral to the National Health System). Since January 2018, MdM has served as a Focal Point for Sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) Cases in Kara Tepe.

At the same time, MdM - Greece aside from the emphasis on the quality and decency of services provided, strives to support its beneficiaries in all ways possible, including linking them to other projects of MdM - Greece (such as shelters, emergency projects for most vulnerable cases etc.) and refer them to other stakeholders. MdM action has a significant and long-term impact with regards to the quality of life of its beneficiaries and the promotion of the right of access to humanitarian services for all.

FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 2018 MAIN ACTIVITIES



DOCTORS OF THE WORLD GREECE: REFUGEE RESPONSE-GREEK ISLANDS





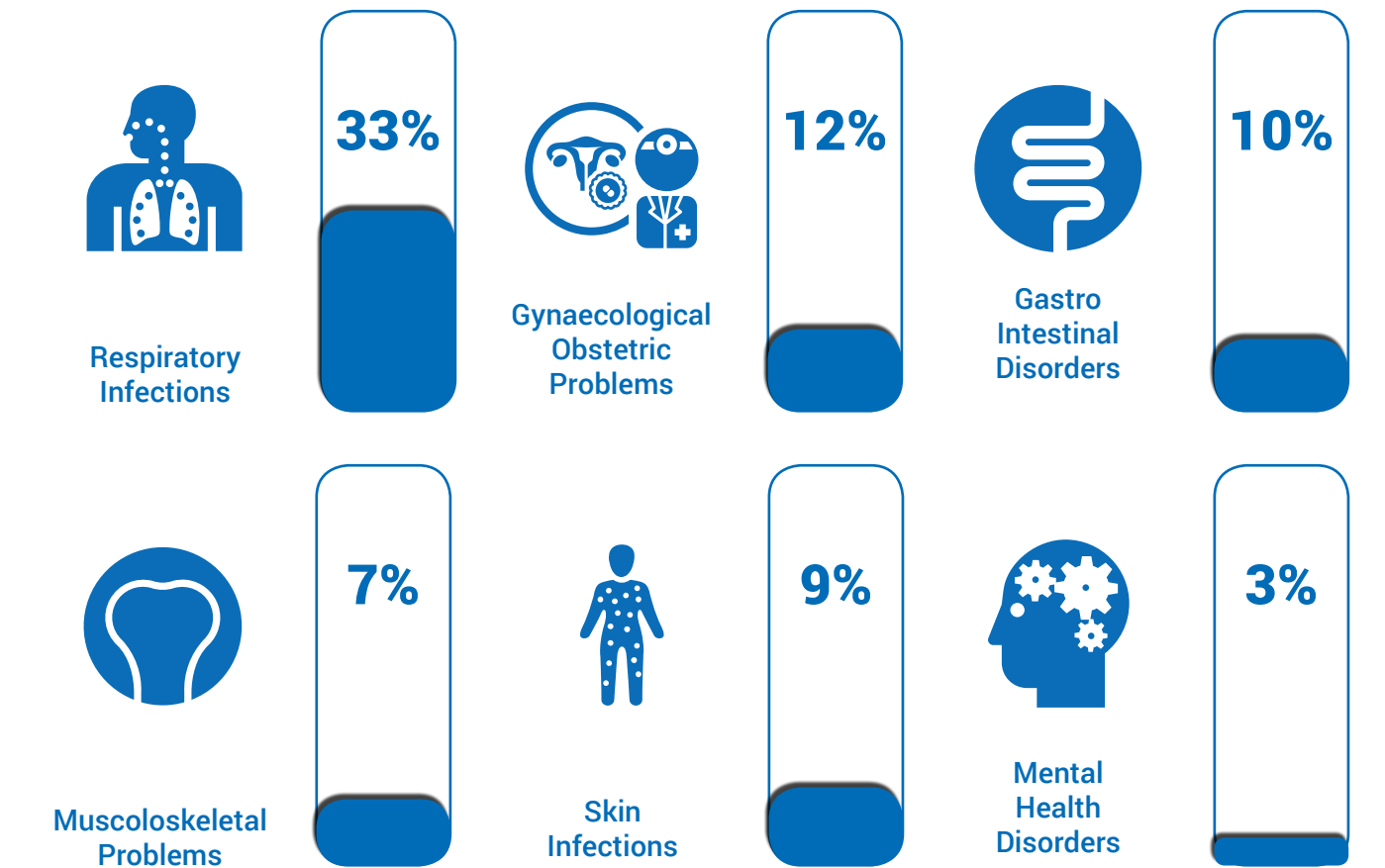
HEALTH SITUATION

A direct consequence of the camp based accommodation is the cross-cutting deterioration of the health status & psychological condition of all different groups of population. People live in limbo and uncertainty, they feel de-motivated, and their morale is low.

According to MdM data gathered and field assessment activities, there is a significant deterioration in mental health for refugees and migrants due to the harsh living conditions and their restriction of movement on the islands, following the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement on migration. Fear, use of alcohol and drugs, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SBGV) in camps are also aspects of the refugee’s deteriorating everyday life on the islands.

When coming to women and Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRH), the complexity faced is even bigger. Pregnant women, need for pre-natal and ante-natal care & family planning, pro-existing gynecological problems and cultural constraints. And while Alternative Accommodation Facilities (AAF) schemes do offer better living conditions and –in theory- easier access to services, PHC, PSS and SRH needs still remain high and largely uncovered for a variety of reasons spanning from the inability of the National Health System (NHS) facilities AAF on islands to correspond to the need for PSS in particular, to the complex vulnerabilities people residing in AAF.

MOST COMMON HEALTH ISSUES



* Data from MdM Clinic at KaraTepe, Lesbos Jan-Sept 2018

VOICES FROM THE FIELD



“Just right from the start, when I started working as a doctor, I always wanted to be a part of a humanitarian mission. I never expected that this would happen in my own country and more precisely in the place where I actually live, on Lesbos.

Our team has witnessed over the last three years milestone events that took place right in front of our eyes on the spur of the moment, when it was least expected. Images of thousands of desperate people crowding in the streets, squares, harbors. Thousands of lifejackets lying piled on the coast. People crying for what they lost, but also people who, despite the incredible difficulties they experienced, stood upright and remained optimistic for their future to come; a future life that would most definitely be better from their past.

If I were to keep in my mind something of all that I have been fortunate to experience over the last three years that would be “relief”. The relief that these people felt when they realized they were safe. Relieving the mother who sees her child not being sick anymore. Our own relief when we managed to cure the sick, irrespective of their race or religion. And baby smiles ... because our greatest gift was all these beautiful smiles of the kids ...”

Anna Rekleiti, Medical doctor, MdM team on Lesbos



“I am from Afghanistan and I was born in 1972. I came to Greece together with my wife and my grandchildren about a year ago, our lives were threatened in our home country. At first we stayed at Moria and in March 2018 we were transferred to Karatepe camp. My wife was pregnant with our sixth child. Initially I was very happy, but after examining her, Doctors of the World informed us that my husband might not be well. Immediately the Doctors referred us to the hospital where she was further tested.

Unfortunately my wife was diagnosed with a serious problem and we had to leave the island to get further treatment. Doctors of the World referred us to their Social Service, who listened to our problem, advised us, and with their help, after a week or so, arranged to leave the island. During all this time, they stood beside us, advising and supporting us. Thank you for what you did for us. We hope we meet again!”

B., refugee from Afghanistan



ADVOCACY



In September, MdM, together with eighteen other NGOs, appealed to Greek authorities to immediately improve conditions at RICs on the islands. [In a joint announcement](#), we highlighted that over 17,000 people are packed at the RICs, when the reception centres’ capacity is for 6,000 persons. We noted that the number of people at the RIC on Samos has exceeded its capacity by six times while the conditions at Moria RIC on Lesbos are explosive and have dramatically worsened. At Moria, the sewage system is out of order and the waste water from toilets has reached the tents and mattresses of children, when all necessary funding for this has been approved already.

We also warned about the rising incidents of sexual abuse and violence, stressing that the majority of hosted migrants, refugees does not feel safe. The situation is worsened by the lack of core staff positions and the repeated resignation of needed medical and nursing staff due to harsh working conditions. These conditions make it difficult for organizations to help out, and nothing justifies these humiliating conditions under which thousands of trapped people live on European ground, and we called on Greek authorities to take immediate action and for European leaders to renew efforts for the implementation of a fair and permanent allocation of responsibility in the European Union.

NETWORKING



In July Doctors of the World – Greece conducted a special workshop on Lesbos, within the framework of the Project “IENE6 – Contemporary large migration waves into Europe: [Enabling health workers to provide psychological support to migrants and refugees and develop strategies for dealing with their own emotional needs](#)” of the Erasmus+ Programme.

During the seminar, participants had the chance to familiarize themselves with the Knowledge Hub, a useful digital tool for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, addressed to health professionals, nurses and volunteers dealing with migrants and refugees of the current refugee crisis, as well as to the beneficiaries themselves for the improvement and enhancing the provision of psychological support in the humanitarian field.

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