



2023 Annual Report

Table of Contents

- A. Letter from the Director
- B. The Year at a Glance
- C. Story Highlight: Our First Days in Türkiye
- D. Budget & Spending
- E. Site Updates
 - i. Mytilene (Lesvos)
 - ii. Samos
 - iii. Türkiye
- F. Feature Stories
 - i. A Mother's Reunion
 - ii. A Painful Reunification
 - iii. Leading People in Loss
 - iv. Letting Go—Handing Over Shelter Allocation

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is my pleasure to present to you the Eurorelief annual report for 2023. This has been a year of significant change for our organization, as we have faced new challenges and opportunities in our mission to serve refugees and displaced people in Greece and Türkiye.

We started the year with lower numbers of people in our camps on Lesvos and Samos. Our amazing volunteers on Lesvos worked together beautifully to provide the best level of service possible to those living in the camp. Life was calm and routine. In Samos, we started the year not being able to serve inside the camp due to registration complications, but later, we were allowed to re-enter and resume our community engagement activities.

In February, Eurorelief responded to the devastating earthquake that struck Türkiye, and we continue to have a team on the ground serving both Turks and Syrians whom the disaster has impacted. We are grateful for the generous support of our donors and partners, who enabled us to provide emergency relief and assistance to those in need.

During the Greek elections, we saw many of the key functions that we performed in the Mavrovouni camp taken over by the Greek government as part of their plan to improve the conditions and management of the camp. However, due to a sudden increase in new arrivals during late summer, we have been asked to resume some of those activities, such as non-food item distribution and food line management. We have not retaken over data or housing, but we

work closely with the authorities and other actors to ensure smooth coordination and delivery of services. As populations in the Samos camp also surged, we were asked to assist camp management with many of the critical services. We have taken responsibility for running the library and continue to provide transportation for medical runs and appointments.

These changes have required us to adapt quickly and flexibly to the evolving situation on the ground while maintaining our commitment to quality and dignity in our work. We are proud of our staff and volunteers who have shown resilience, creativity, and compassion in serving those who are most vulnerable. We are also thankful for our supporters who have stood by us through thick and thin and who have enabled us to continue our work despite the difficulties and uncertainties.

As we look ahead to 2024, we are hopeful that we will see more positive developments in the refugee situation in Greece and Türkiye, as well as in the wider region. We are also aware that there are still many challenges and needs that require our attention and action. We invite you to join us in praying for peace and justice for those who are displaced and for wisdom and guidance for us as we seek to serve them. We also ask you to consider how you can support us financially, practically or through volunteering as we strive to make a difference in the lives of those who are suffering.

Thank you for your partnership and friendship with Eurorelief. Together, we can make a difference.



Sincerely,

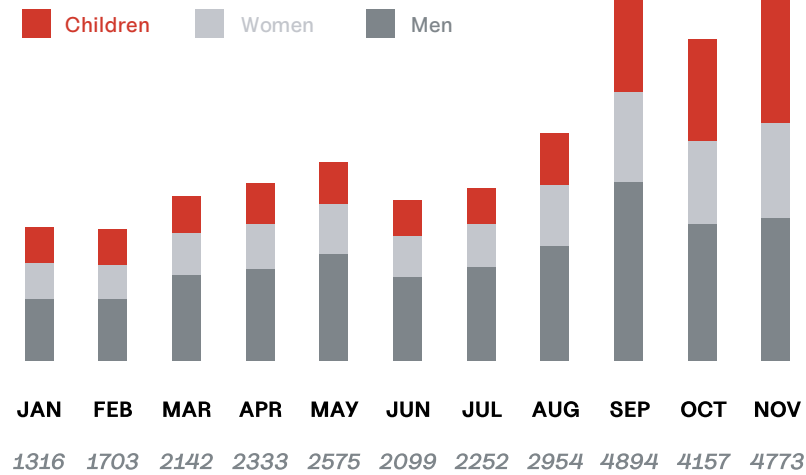
Rodney Nolt

Executive Director,
Eurorelief

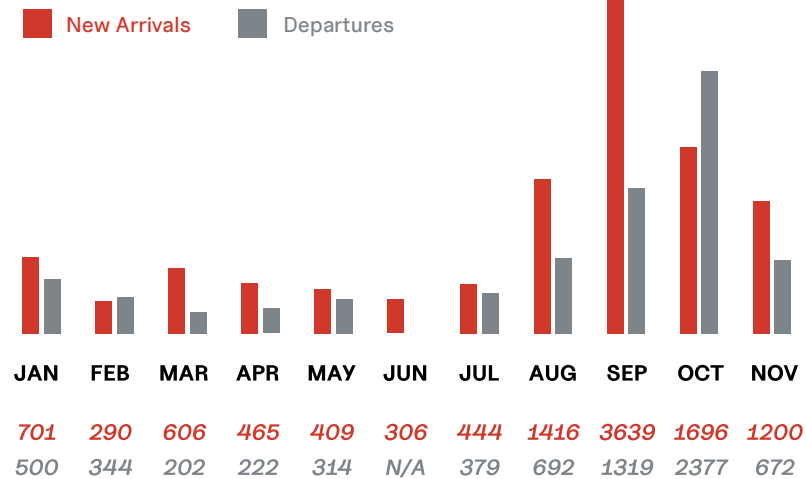
The Year at a Glance

Fluctuation of Mavrovouni Camp Population

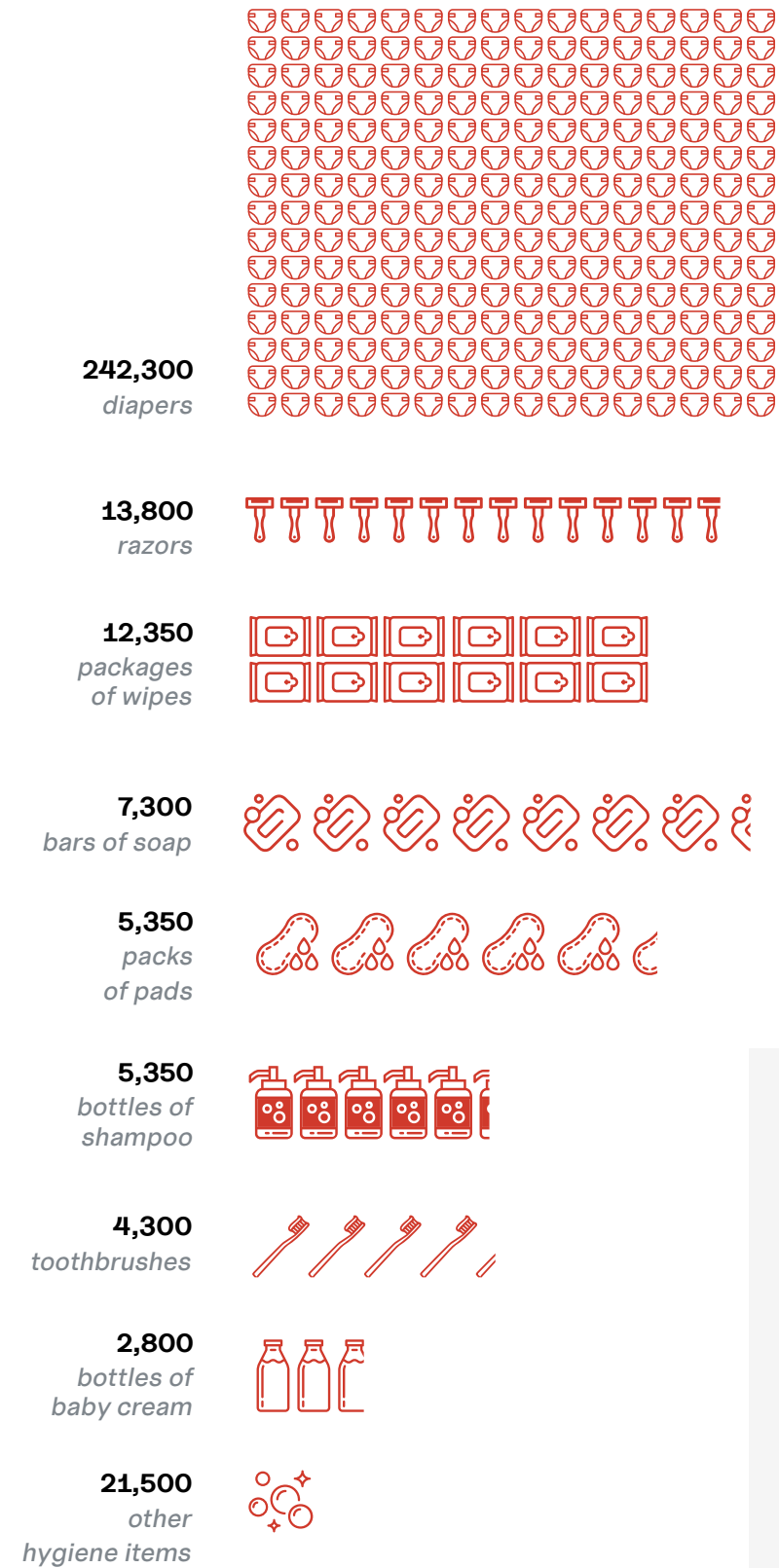
This year we welcomed and assisted tens of thousands of refugees in Mavrovouni camp



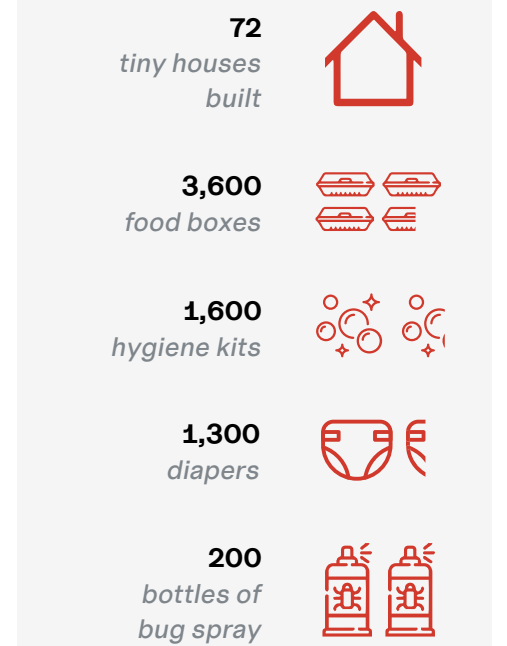
New Arrivals in Mavrovouni



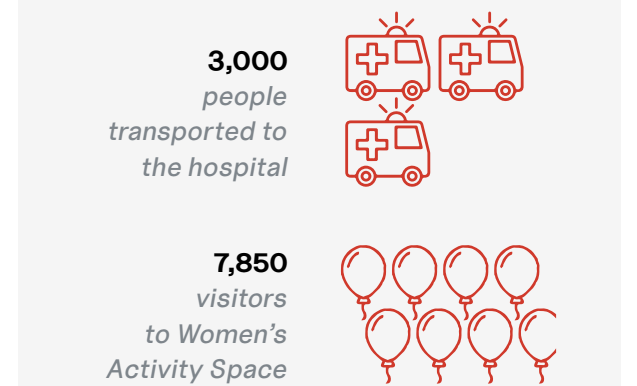
Lesvos



Türkiye



Samos





Story Highlight

OUR FIRST DAYS IN TÜRKIYE
by Andrea Wegener, Director of Development

It is completely quiet. Forty people stand in front of a 5-story house that has been reduced to nearly its ground floor. Heavy equipment surrounds us on all sides and a collection of Search and Rescue and firefighters are scattered about. Everyone stays very, very still. We stand there for what feels like forever, but ends after 5 minutes. Anyone passing nearby is told to stop and silence themselves through universal hand motions. A Search and Rescuer breaks the eerie silence and knocks on the broken ground floor, searching for signs of life with special equipment. I know I am not the only one praying during these endless minutes.

But then the seeker steps outside, shouts *tamam*, “okay” in Turkish, and everyone resumes their lives and things quickly become noisy. We, too, walk on. Apparently no one has been found.

In the early hours of February 6, 2023, an earthquake registering 7.8 on the MM Intensity scale devastated southern Türkiye and northern Syria. Some of the aftershocks, and another 7.5 MMI earthquake later in the afternoon, did even more damage. It’s an unfathomable tragedy, only made worse by the sub-freezing temperatures and the snow and sleet. Two days after hearing the news, our team boarded a high speed train in Istanbul at 6:45 in the morning, and sped south toward the town of Antakya, Türkiye.

“If only it were just the houses ruined..” “But it’s really a huge cemetery.” Beneath many of the collapsed buildings are the bodies of those who were crushed or shattered to death, who suffocated or froze, or died of thirst—still waiting to be recovered and buried by loved ones waiting in nearby tents or cars. I tried not to think of how the men, women and children, who laid in the rubble underneath us, spent their last minutes or hours, or even days.

It’s honestly quite difficult to describe a walk through Antakya. Simple impressions stay lodged into my memory: the smoke that hangs over everything, the dust that makes breathing difficult. The woman who smiles while she talks on her cell phone, only

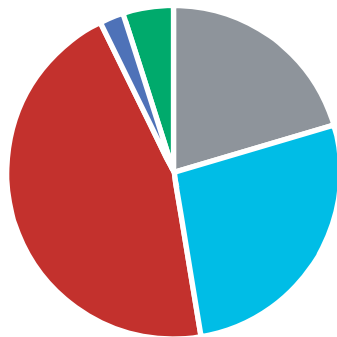
to burst into tears after hanging up. The exhausted firefighters resting around a fire and offering us a coffee, ‘*we haven’t slept in five days.*’ The colourful “Love Antakya” sign on the edge of a makeshift tent settlement in a park, and the garbage piles everywhere you look. Half a metre of clothing in the ditch—likely the remains of a well-intentioned relief effort. Roads ripped apart. Far too many incredibly tired faces. Four men lifting a small car out of the way for excavators. Curtains blowing in the wind of broken windows behind completely intact living rooms and bathrooms. A single house lying on its side completely undamaged, looking as if it had just laid down to sleep.

And the silence in which one searches for survivors.

Budget & Spending

Total Donations € 479.934
Total Expenses € 586.850

Expense analysis



| | |
|---------------|---------|
| Operations | 266.126 |
| Volunteers* | 158.316 |
| Admin | 119.820 |
| Other | 28.825 |
| Moria Academy | 13.761 |

*these expenses are covered by the volunteers

2024 Budget

Türkiye

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Gas | €2,500 |
| Other | €3,500 |
| Purchase Vehicle | €4,000 |

Samos

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Vehicles | €3,000 |
| NFI/WH | €2,000 |
| Office & General | €3,000 |
| Comm. Eng. | €4,000 |
| Resident Volunteers | €2,000 |
| Purchase Vehicle | €4,000 |

Lesvos

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Vehicles | €2,500 |
| NFI/WH | €5,000 |
| Office & General | €4,000 |
| Education | €4,000 |
| Comm. Eng. | €3,000 |
| Translators/RV | €8,000 |
| Maint & RHU | €3,000 |
| NAA | €1,000 |
| Skills/Vocational | €1,000 |
| Social Care | €1,000 |
| RIC Support | €500 |
| Purchase Vehicle | €4,000 |

New Sites Fund €12,500

Disaster Response Fund €12,500

Admin €5,000

Total Monthly €100,000
Total Annually €1,200,000



Site Updates

MYTILENE (LESVOS)

In January, we were asked to take over foodlines from another NGO. After a steep learning curve and the integration of their team of 50 resident volunteers, we had the lines running smoothly before they were reallocated to camp management in April. The next few months were a weird dance with management, as we lost many of our key services. Experienced volunteers helped as much as possible, while still struggling to see how the management of our past services was being run, and witnessing decisions being made by the Ministry and camp management that were difficult to understand. Then near the end of summer, during a time of significant camp expansion, we were asked to start distributing food to new arrivals. Shortly after that, we were given back control over all foodlines. Since then, it has really become a centre-point of our work in camp, in partnership with over 50 new resident volunteers (including around 20 very enthusiastic women). Concentrating on NFI distributions while other basic needs like food competed for resources was very challenging, and we had to streamline some of our work in order to help with more urgent priorities. Our team came together, worked hard, and many volunteers responded to our call for help.

The last two years have been highlighted by a growth in relational and community development work. This year we moved into a new centrally-located Women's Community Center, expanded our Men's Community Center, finalised the Skills Area, had a beautiful exercise gym in a Rubb Hall for a season, and even developed a Social Outreach program—we're always trying to find new ways to impact people's lives. Closer to the end of the year, we commenced a Vocational Training department, to assist residents in developing creative and useful skills. Due to recent camp growth, it has been placed on hold, but we expect this to play a significant role in our future. One highlight for our volunteers was being on-call registering new arrivals 24/7 for 9 precious months, welcoming thousands of people, morning and night. Our volunteers got to be present at crucial moments on people's journeys, providing some comfort and kindness after what may have been one of their worst days. The off-island transfer of many long-term residents and positive asylum decisions happened frequently throughout the year. Due to the extreme influx of new arrivals in the autumn, a lot of our work has returned to a basic needs focus of providing food and clothes to the thousands.

Main need: We always have a need for longer-term leaders to fill the roles of outgoing volunteers. We also need funds for winter items, and for the gradual expansion of our Resident Volunteer program.

Site Updates

SAMOS

Our year started with being removed from camp on the second day of January, which was a huge shock and a big adjustment for the entire team. During this time, we organised activities outside of camp like outreaches in town, activities at the town playground, we organised our warehouse, and even refurbished volunteer apartments. As a team, we focused on our foundational values and strengthened our core beliefs together as a team, for months. In mid-April, we were finally back in camp and needed to find our new "normal" again. The camp atmosphere was very different, and the absence of NGOs and its effect was palpable. In the months that followed, we gained a few more spaces, like our sewing container and the men's activities space. Another new responsibility was managing the library. We have been invited by camp management to get more involved in smaller jobs, like helping transport blankets in and out of camp's storage for distribution purposes. In general, the months following our return to camp have consisted of more opportunities, more spaces, and better

relationships in camp. Even after some vandalism, we received lots of support from cleaners and security guards, and eventually had two guards placed in front of our container overnight. It validated our role in camp and solidified some of our relationships. In the fall, the camp went back into crisis mode due to the sudden influx of new arrivals. We eventually lost access to our community spaces, because all areas have been needed for housing, so our team once again needed to adjust. We've had to make the difficult decision to stop serving tea and coffee at our activity spaces, because people didn't even have water to drink or shower. Amid everything, new doors continue to open for us to get more involved in other areas, like assisting in clothing distributions and camp clean-up, which grant us access to zones and spaces we've never had access to before.

Main need: Vehicles and volunteer apartments. We have enough work and the permission to bring in more volunteers, but can't do more until we also have accommodation and vehicles available.

"On one of the first days that the Sewing Container in camp opened, two women left our women's activity container to go over there. At the end of the day, they came back and one of the women had sewed a bunch of new clothes for the other one, and they all fit perfectly! She showed all the residents and volunteers in the Women's Activity Container, and everyone was clapping and telling her she did an amazing job. We are many different cultures in one space, all supporting each other."

— Anne-Ruth, Volunteer



TÜRKIYE

We arrived at a local church three days after the February 6 earthquake, where we met a group of people who were taking shelter from the destruction of the earthquake. In the months that followed, we've been hosted as if we are family every single day. The first weeks were defined by building relationships and just offering hands wherever we could. We were able to consistently support a local foodline that served hot meals daily, in partnership with the organisation Kurtuluş. We were even able to take over their kitchen completely at times to relieve their Turkish staff, who had been working 7-days-a-week for months. We served two meals a day nearly every day to the same village for 5 months. We became friends with the people that we saw every day, and were invited back to at least one home every day. Even when it felt like all odds were against us at many times, we have been able to stay present in Türkiye consistently since we arrived. At some points, we had no vehicles on the ground to take us to our scheduled jobs throughout the day. When morale was low, or when we wondered if we should stay, we've always felt carried and suddenly strengthened with endurance in those moments. We continuously visited a refugee camp every week for two months, distributing our supplies for an hour or two, and spending the next hours in tents having chai with families. Since May, we have been helping our local partners, Yahve Yire, build tiny homes for people who have lost their houses. The project is a local church caring for their neighbours who have been affected by the earthquake, and we have been the stable hands helping with their project. As we help build, we always

make time to sit and enjoy chai together and listen to people's stories. We visit many of these families after we've finished building to check on how they're doing. As a team, we believe in the "invisible work" that may not show physical proof of our efforts, but we believe that being present is the work we've given ourselves over to.

Main need: Vehicles remain an immediate and urgent need. At one point, all our cars on site either needed maintenance or were out of circulation for bureaucratic reasons. Fortunately, our gracious hosts let us borrow their cars in this time so we could continue serving.



A MOTHER'S REUNION by Kenzie Ross, Communications Coordinator

I welcomed two teenage sisters from Afghanistan one Sunday afternoon. They spoke no English, so we tried our best with a translation app. We slowly moved through the registration questions, and they kept mentioning that they had family. This is always a confusing step, because we are trying to figure out if this means that more people from their boat will be coming later. They kept motioning that their mother and sisters were HERE. In confusion, I looked through our New Arrivals Area registration log and couldn't find anyone with their last name. On a whim, I thought to look at our camp-wide computer system for the mother's name and last name. ISOBOX 151 popped up. I was stunned. The single mother had been here for a year already, and I began to be so excited that this immediate family was about to be reunited. After we got them food and blankets and everything they needed to settle into the New Arrivals Area to wait a few days for official registration, I was planning to walk right up to ISOBOX 151 and tell the mother the best news ever. But as I turned the corner to enter into the main part of camp, a group of Afghan women came screaming and crying around the corner for the best long-awaited family reunion.

A PAINFUL REUNIFICATION by Kenzie Ross

In early spring, a man waited at our Info Point to speak with me. Not many people know me because I work all day in the office with our teams. As I stepped outside to speak with him, he immediately said, "do you remember me?" I panicked because I'd met so many people that I often couldn't link what story to what face. But a second later, my stomach dropped as I remembered. My face softened as I said, "yes... I welcomed.. and registered you. You lost your 2-month old baby on the boat..." I was a little embarrassed that it even took me a second to remember his face. His face shifted to this brightness, as he said, "My wife is coming tomorrow." And I remembered the evening so vividly. I welcomed 33 new arrivals one night, and registered them each individually. One of the questions we have to ask in order to understand family structures, is: "Do you have a family here with you today?" to help us understand if other family members are present for registration and housing purposes. When I got to the question, he went silent, and a group of women immediately showed me a phone with a dead baby in the middle of their empty raft. I was likely the first person to know of this, so I had to ask a few more uncomfortable questions about how it may have happened. The other women spoke for him at this point, also sharing that his wife was on another boat that evening, and got pushed back to Türkiye. I was sick to my stomach, but had to continue registration so everyone could settle and rest for the evening. *I am so sorry, I will tell the people who need to know all this to help your family.* For the next few months, every time we saw each other around camp, we exchanged a pained smile, because of our short history. So when he told me his wife was arriving soon, I just about burst into tears, but I shared with him as genuinely as I possibly could, *I'm so happy for you.* He shared how she had made it to another Greek island the day before and was about to be transferred to reunite with him after 3 long months of separation.



LEADING PEOPLE IN LOSS by Henk and Grace Dinkelman, Member Care Coordinators

It came as a surprise to everyone when we arrived at the CCAC Zervou on January 2nd and were not allowed to enter camp. At first we thought it would take the government a few days to sort paperwork out, and we'd be let back into camp swiftly—they realising how necessary we were to the residents. But this day commenced our 4 months of waiting. Every single person on our team went through their own process of disappointment and had their expectations rearranged. Still though, every week, we were full of hope and faith that we would be allowed back in again. But in reality, some volunteers who signed up for 3 months of volunteering, never actually saw the inside of camp. As leaders, we did everything in our limited power to try to get ourselves back into camp. As a team we started praying for the situation, the Greek people making these decisions, the people forced to enact these policies, but mostly for the residents in camp. We knew that this meant overnight—there would be no organised activities for anyone, no more volleyball tournaments, and no grocery store or hospital rides.

But slowly during this long process, our team started to appreciate all the new things they were learning. Everyone in their own way was stepping out of their comfort zone and doing things they'd never done in their lives before, us included. We began to shift into

something called "Town Activities." The team created playing materials for all ages and found where the residents were in town—at the bus stop or at the playground, really anywhere. We became Eurorelief on the move—to wherever the residents were. What connecting we couldn't do in camp, we did in the street.

As Member Care, there was more time and more opportunities to connect with the volunteers. It was easier to go for a walk-and-talk, or a walkie-talkie as we call them here. As we shifted our focus for the sake of the residents, we found ourselves taking more time to also shift our own internal focus. We saw more growth in the lives of our teams than ever before. We started investing more into our team culture, and saw big growth steps happen weekly. We had enough free hands to get our warehouse organised and one of the volunteer houses renovated, and we started teaching each other about the countries the residents came from. Even though we could not do what we wanted to do most, we all look back and remember a rich time where we took time expanding our focus to make an impact. And you should've seen everyone's smiles on April 18th when we stepped back into camp—I'll never forget it.

LETTING GO—HANDING OVER SHELTER ALLOCATION

by Kenzie Ross

Our site coordinator was saying how this is still one of the most life-altering times for Eurorelief Lesvos: the first being the volunteer attacks in 2020, second being the Moria fire and transition into the new camp, and third being this.

Imagine you foster a child named Shelter at birth. You raise them for many years. Then the parents come back, and say they want them—and legally—they can have them. But they really haven't been involved in the last transitional and forming years, except for some occasional discipline. And right away, 'the parents' ask you to fully train them on their child—all the wisdom and love and care you've learned from raising this beloved child.

It began on March 27th when we were told that the next day we would begin training RIC (Registration and Identification Centre) employees on the Shelter desk, with the intention of giving them a better overview. But with every new day, they began to ask for a little more—first it was looking into our created computer housing system, then assisting in the New Arrivals Area.

Then on April 4th, we were all sent a text: "As of today, you are kindly requested to limit your activities on the field and stop any relocation procedures in camp." The Eurorelief leadership team was invited to the camp commander's office and told how the Ministry of Migration and Asylum had sent a task force to require RIC to take charge of Shelter. All the RIC staff were shocked by the immediate

expectation to assemble a Shelter team from their best people. We sat there as the camp commander appealed to the Ministry to delay the changes and explained that Eurorelief's expertise was still needed.

The Ministry announced a 6-day census, where no shelter could happen so that they could complete an official government check-in of all people, beds, and mattresses. RIC began making plans and the camp commander directed us to wait until the Ministry completed their census before we inquired about our new role. This meant that all the 246 new arrivals in the quarantine area and the 74 new arrivals in the secondary waiting area could not move out into camp, despite them finishing their registration process.

We were shocked when we heard that the first 12 new arrivals had been housed without our knowledge. At that moment, our food list would no longer be accurate, we could no longer find them for important medical and legal tickets, and we would have no clue if they had mattresses or could be found by our Social Care team to prepare them for questions in their official asylum interview.

Maybe this is a good time to pause and say how us holding Shelter for the last 5 years—has been a complete privilege. The government should have held this responsibility all along, not an NGO. So at any moment, we've always known that this could be taken from us, but we had always hoped it would be a slow transition with lots of training, and maybe

some joint oversight. Either way, I have loved being a part of this work the last few years. In my 5 years with Eurorelief, I have never done anything other than Shelter Allocation.

But in the weeks to come, we were invited to sit in their Shelter office and help run jobs with them, and it became my honour to teach them in real-time. Every day, they gained a little more confidence and we worked together for as long as we could. I sent our Eurorelief teams with their RIC teams and we took it one day at a time. We were eventually told that the RIC Shelter staff were only allowed to be trained by Eurorelief until May 1st. But I had seen their hard work first-hand. Many of them had worked in Moria, and at least half of them worked in the previous unaccompanied minors section, so I knew they were tough, resilient, and kind. A few came back to me after housing some people the first week and said with all seriousness, "We're doing it with love, that's all we can do." I was getting to be so proud of them. It was during this intense time, that the government had also been ordered to handle all the data—and the upkeep of this official data, alongside the night-time welcoming of new arrivals.

This was a time where all of our team really learned endurance, how there is really nothing that which love cannot endure. Even after all our optimism and coping strategies burn to the ground, we find a muscle we did not know we had. We find a power in our throat that rejoices while being pressed under insurmountable odds.

Thank-yous

Lesvos thanks our donors:

Thank you for your perseverance, although Lesvos isn't in the news often, and we know there is so much need all around the world. Thank you Gain and CRR who have kept supplying us with NFI contributions month after month, year after year! After the high influx of people in September, our donors were able to send us more items in the middle of the emergency. This last year has been a rollercoaster of changes and needs, and while we can provide hands and feet to try and meet this, we are so extremely thankful for the flexibility and openness of our donors helping to meet these spontaneous needs.

Samos thanks our donors:

Thank you for providing all of our operational essentials, big and small. You helped us with big things like building our Men's Activities area and funding a new vehicle, and small things like coffee for residents, craft materials for women's activities, and fabric for sewing spaces. It's all important and cherished by us.

Türkiye thanks our donors:

In the first crucial weeks, we were able to support the locals with immediate needs by setting up tents for people without homes, thanks to you. Without our sponsors, hundreds of people would have remained on the streets. Thank you for the donation that allowed us to support a local partner organisation made up entirely of refugees who are looking after their own people. Because of this donation and partnership, we have made strong connections with the community this entire year.



www.eurorelief.net