BACKGROUND

Overnight on September 8th, fires ravaged through the Moria Refugee Camp on the Greek island of Lesbos, the largest of its kind in Europe. Over the course of the following 24-48 hours, the majority of the camp was burned down. More than 12,000 refugees - mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria - were left without a place to sleep or access to vital services provided by humanitarian actors, including hygiene supplies and education for children.

In the days leading up to the fires, there had been 35 positive cases of COVID-19 reported among the population of Moria. Since the destruction of the camp, cases have continued to rise. Social distancing and safe hygiene practices became even more challenging as people slept on the sides of the road and in orchards.

The Greek government has constructed a temporary camp on Lesbos, which currently accommodates 9,600 people. The living conditions in Moria were harsh, with minimal access to necessary services, but the infrastructure in the new camp is even more limited.
ACTIVITIES

IsraAID has been working in Lesbos for five years and our team on the ground was able to respond immediately. Despite severely restricted access to both Moria and the new temporary camp, we were able to distribute essential non-food items together with partner organizations and IsraAID team members who lived in the camp. IsraAID’s team distributed tents, sleeping bags, and power banks; **1,500 personal hygiene kits** including soap, hand sanitizer and reusable face masks made at our refugee community center in northern Greece; in addition to **182 family hygiene kits** and **25 baby packs** to families living around the site of the old camp.

IsraAID’s ongoing program in Lesbos focuses on expanding access to education for refugee children. In addition to focusing on meeting urgent physical needs after the fire, our team has worked to provide psychosocial and education support for children affected by the emergency. We have distributed **500 activity and education packs for children** aged 2-6 and 7-12 inside the temporary camp. The packs include arts and crafts materials, worksheets and activity books that work as a psychosocial support aid for children. Interventions like these are crucial to mitigating the potential psychological effects of traumatic experiences.

IsraAID has also launched a **capacity building program for refugee teachers** from our educational facility adjacent to Moria. With themes like “stress management”, “health, hygiene and safety”, “child protection”, and “psychological first aid”, the program provides teachers with the resources and knowledge to support their students – and themselves – at this difficult time. Each member of the refugee community has already suffered their own trauma; capacity building supports them in building themselves as individuals, as well as a community.

PLANs

Our team continues to plan new activities and respond to the changing situation on the ground, while continuing to distribute activity kits for children outside of the new camp and provide capacity building for refugee teachers.

Our educational facility for refugee children – the ‘Secret Garden Educational Center’ – has been operating online using messaging and video platforms throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This service has been relaunched, ensuring renewed access to education for refugee children on Lesbos.
PERSONAL STORY

N., 25 years old, is a refugee from Afghanistan. N. teaches at IsraAID’s Secret Garden Educational Center, providing social and emotional learning in Dari for children from Afghanistan.

N. had this to say about their role as a teacher:

“Teaching for me is like a painkiller, it allows me to forget the pain, everything that bothers me and doesn’t let me feel okay. When I walk into the classroom, I feel so much energy from the children that I can’t allow myself to be down, it makes me to focus and put myself together. I am looking forward to resume our classes with kids from the camp.”

N. has been taking part in IsraAID’s capacity building program for teachers, learning new techniques to better support children from the refugee community after the fires.

![Image of stress diagram](image-url)

*Descriptions of stress from IsraAID’s stress management program for refugee teachers on Lesbos*

PROFILE

IsraAID is a leading international humanitarian non-governmental organization, based in Israel. Since 2001, IsraAID has become synonymous with a rapid response to humanitarian crises. Its medical teams, post-trauma experts, community specialists and other professionals have led international responses to disasters and civil strife around the world. After the initial emergency period, IsraAID shifts to long-term programs, accompanying communities and governments as they strive to build a better tomorrow. IsraAID has responded to crises 53 countries.

Please Support IsraAID’s Emergency Fund