

G3KKO^x

A PROJECT BY BETTER DAYS

MARCH 2019



LESVOS SITUATION OVERVIEW

As of the end of March, 480 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) were living on the island. 344 UASC are currently living in Moria Camp (41 UASC are living in the Safe Zone, 133 in Section A, 125 in Section B and 39 UASC in the Rubhall) and 136 UASC are housed in Iliatkida shelters in Mytilene.

1221 children ranging from 6 to 18 years old are residing in Moria Camp. Currently, the combined maximum capacity between existing educational actors is around 700 to 800 children.

GEKKO KIDS' CONCEPT

Gekko Kids is an alternative school offering non-formal education located in the center of Mytilene. From our launch in August 2017 to the end of December we registered 201 minors. From January 2018 to December 2018 we registered 344 minors & 203 adults. In the past, we have had as many as 21 different nationalities represented in our school at a given time.

From January to March 2019 we welcomed one-hundred seventy-three (173) new registrations of whom seventy-five (75) are unaccompanied minors living in shelters (36) and Moria Camp (39). This brings our total number of active students to three-hundred (300) of whom one-hundred fifteen (115) are UASC and thirty-five (35) are accompanied minors from vulnerable families housed in urban accommodation by Iliaktida AMKE & UNHCR.

The academic calendar for Gekko Kids started in October 2018 and will end mid-June 2019. Gekko Kids is a representation of Better Days' flagship and model for offering quality education to displaced communities on the move. Educational programming, as applied through Gekko Kids, is built in the following components:



Number of Unique Registrations in Gekko Kids from August 2017 until March 2019

	UASC	Accompanied Minors	Adults registered
August-December 2017	201	0	0
January-December 2018	303	41	203
January-March 2019	75	35	73

GEKKO KIDS' CONCEPT

Core Curriculum: focus on student integration into the public system with concentrations in Greek, Mathematics, Computer Programming and Literacy, Geography, and English.

Parallel Program: offer access to additional courses and extra-curriculum activities such as Advanced English, Guitar, German, Arts & Crafts, and Photography among others. This enables individual flourishing and provides an alternative means of learning for students who are in the process of relocation or reunification with family members in other European countries.

Supportive Lessons / Tutorials: facilitate the introduction of students into the public school system by offering a variety of supportive lessons and tutorials to address any learning gaps as the transition is challenging.

STEAM programming: To offer this program we had to expand our physical space beyond Gekko, to a near by facility recently renovated to host Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math subjects, with focus to project based learning and experienced based approaches. The new space is branded as Gekko X and is going to host our first ever accredited course in Computers. Additionally, it will offer access to e-learning, blended learning, and vocational training.

Trauma-aware teaching and SEL: Music, Art, Yoga and photography have become means of self-expression, therapy and trauma support. Social Emotional Learning techniques are now introduced in our classroom to facilitate further work in that area and ensure teaching in a trauma aware environment at Gekko Kids and Gekko X. This entails capacity building and training within the existing team, scheduling SEL activities, a child safeguarding police, and referral pathway for further support, educational referrals and so forth. We are working hard to secure funding for an Arts and Music Therapist as well as for a Mototherapist to join our 'Socrates' Sports & Development program.

Gender Empowerment & Sports Development : these are massive areas of focus for our team in 2019. We have observed positive results in behavioral improvements, emotional development, trauma support and academic engagement since its launch. At the moment, Socrates works with 42 Gekko Kids and the Gekko Girls Empowerment Project works with 16 female unaccompanied minors.



HEAD OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS & GREEK CURRICULUM

Magda Veloutsou was formerly employed by Better Days on the 1st of March as a Head of Local Partnerships and Greek Curriculum.

- In the past months we have succeeded in:
- Registering 8 advanced students in sitting Greek Language Certification exams offered by the University of Aegean
 - Collaborating with a local institute for 8 advanced students to sit the exams and receive their European Computer Driving License
 - From June 2018-March 2019 we have registered 109 unaccompanied minors to public education.

In March, she organised two museum visits for Gekko Kids visits. On the 12th of March 2019, our students visited the archaeological museum of Lesvos and were introduced to the collection and conservation process of antiquities. The following week, 'Socrates' students were invited to participate in the Local Football Tournament organized by the University of Aegean.

We made significant progress when we received our first two 'educational' referrals from the Appointed Representative of the Ministry of Education Maria Perdikouri in Kara Tepe and Moria Camp. This new referral pathway was designed by Better Days, with no other similar pathway having existed on the island before between educational actors. Better Days has been advocating for educational referrals, special education, and accreditation for over a year.

At the moment Gekko Kids is the only centre providing accredited courses to refugee minors through collaborations with local partners in Arts, English, Greek and Computers. Similarly, Gekko Kids has the highest percentage of successful registrations to public schools and the lowest rate of drop-outs. Last year 100% of the students who sat the public school exams succeeded in passing them. Focusing on individual progress has been Gekko Kids primary means to success.





A DEBRIEF REPORT FROM **BETTER DAYS**
INTRODUCING SEL IN THE CLASSROOM

THE AUTHOR

Myriam Correa is a social educator from Spain, specialized on social emotional learning, addiction, peacemaking culture and photography. After working for several years with children with behavioral and mental disorders, she came to Lesbos with the intention of applying her skills and expertise in the field of emergency education for refugee children and populations in transit.

MAIN CHARACTERS

- The Social Worker as a trainer,
- The Educators as observers and practitioners,
- The Students as subjects of impact.
- The NFE Coordinator & the Programme Director as the guiding force.

PRINCIPLES

We chose 12 main principles which today guide our curriculum
We are guided by Social Emotional Learning methodologies, and by the intuition of Free Schools Pedagogy and Education of Peace.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of our program are to restore human dignity by accompanying the children through this learning journey and the process of social and emotional development as a means to cope with traumatic experiences and enable learning.

COMPETENCIES

Emotional awareness and regulation, cognitive development, acquisition of positive social skills, emotional growth, and self-knowledge

CONCLUSION

Promote the use of SEL to enable deeper communication in the classroom, subsuming academic goals to the creation of a safe and healing medium in the classroom (which in turn enables learning and development).

From the foundation of built-up human competencies (positive social skills, emotional regulation, and self-knowledge), building curricula that meet academic objectives in linguistic acquisition, literacy, and numeracy.

**PSS MANAGER
SEL TRAINER**

Better Days is entering a new era, where our own custom-made psycho-social support (PSS) program is built around healing and trauma aware teaching.

As an avenue to learning and growth, PSS is now being introduced and organically exposed to all Better Days' projects and members.

As of March 2019, Myriam Correa took over her role as BD's PSS Manager and started developing the PSS component of Better Days, guidelines, procedures, and PSS-informed ways of intervention. She is introduced in all the organisation's projects as the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) trainer and supervisor, in addition to providing consultancy and manage protection concerns.

Introducing SEL into the classrooms is part of our pedagogical philosophy. This aims to not only cover protection gaps (identifying and dealing with trauma) but also to address socio-emotional gaps and learning difficulties in a safe, private, and healing environment. This supports our approach to promote individualized learning for all students in addition to individual and group counselling and tutorials.



GEKKO X - LAUNCH

The new centre will focus on Science, Mathematics, Technology, & Arts. Gekko X is a step forward in realizing our vision about the Gekko Kids model, in providing a safe and positive educational experience, catering to the needs and passions of our students in a sustainable and empowering way.

This new centre will allow us to broaden our curriculum and allow our kids to explore and attain new competencies in science, technology, and mathematics, while also improving upon our facilities and programming in the arts.

The lease of the space was signed on the 1st of February 2019. Since then, the space was renovated and prepared to exhibit the works of 11 Gekko students.

CUSTOMIZING CURRICULUM & PROGRAMMING

After finding and renting the space we actively started the procurement of the required equipment (computers, a 3D printer, a copy machine, internet, etc.)

Gekko X's core goal is to offer STEAM-related curriculum, use blended learning methodology, a project based learning approach, reflective and evidence based teaching, and SEL to create an engaging, healing and empowering space.

With Gekko X equipment, we are able to develop a curriculum using hands-on and fun activities to stimulate the students' curiosity, passion and interest; relying in part on online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path and / or space to encourage them to pursue their own learning. We anticipate launching our STEAM curriculum in May, following the Easter Break. Our team believes that education in general should strive to foster learning as a fun way to apprehend the comprehension of the Earth, Nature, Law of Physics and more globally how the all universe functions.





Certificate of Completion

The Light Space

For the completion of The Light Space
professional photography training program
and excellence in photography.

he Light Space - Founder,
Brooke Shaden

Better Days - Partner,
Elena Moustaka

The Light Space - Instructo
Olga Saliampoukou



PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

DIVING DEEPER IN THE PSYCHE OF
TEENAGE PHOTOGRAPHERS

OPENING DAY FRIDAY, 5TH APRIL
PINDAROU 9, MYTILENE
17:00 - 21:00



Gekko Kids is a Better Days project operated in partnership with Illaktida AMKE and the invaluable contribution of Refugee Education & Learning International, Connect by Music, and The Light Space. We are an alternative educational center for displaced teenagers from across the world. The Light Space present to you a photographic exhibition ON FREEDOM.

The exhibition will run until the 19th of April, 17:00-21:00 excluding weekends