



refugees
trauma
initiative

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

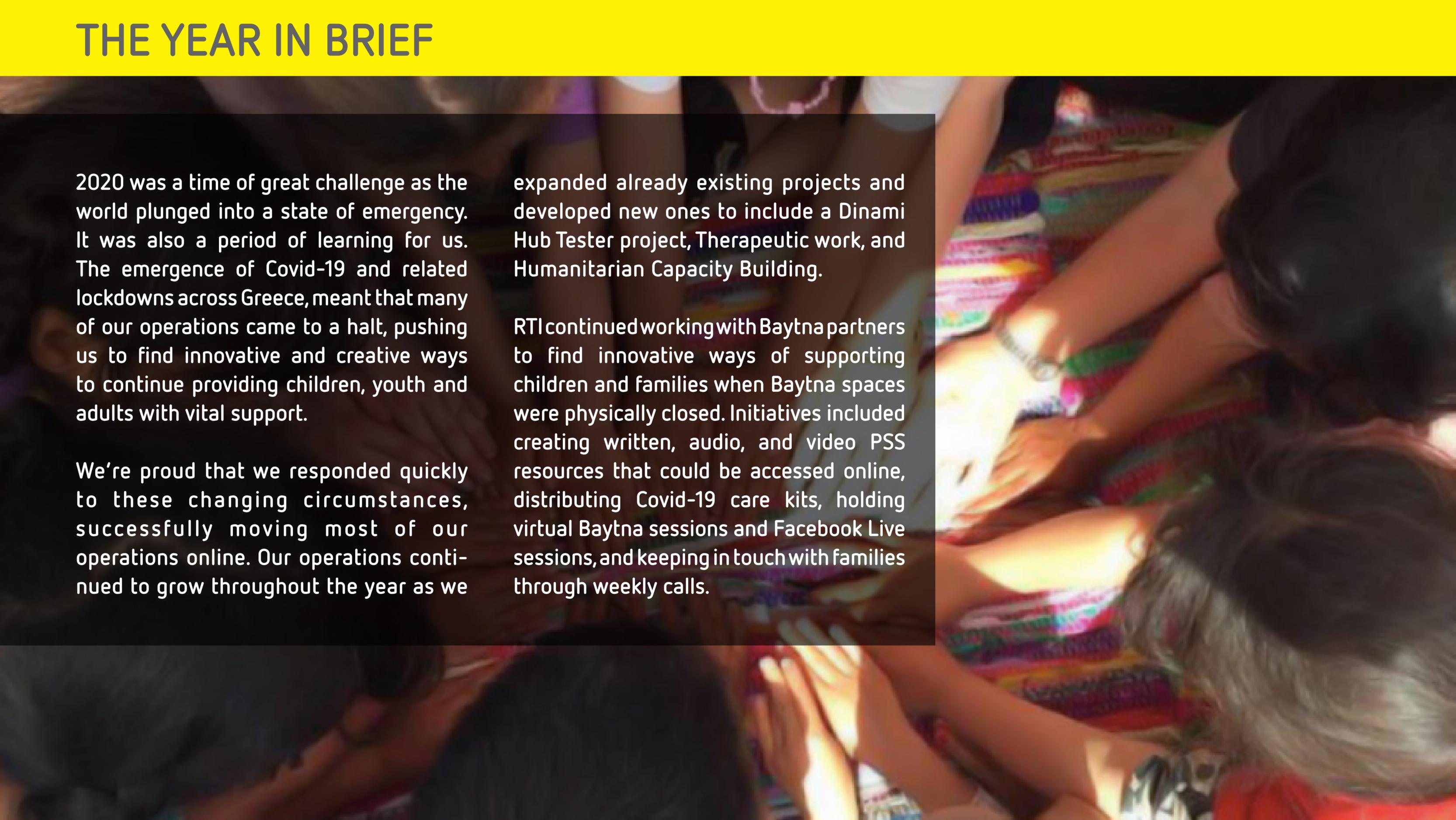
THE YEAR IN BRIEF

2020 was a time of great challenge as the world plunged into a state of emergency. It was also a period of learning for us. The emergence of Covid-19 and related lockdowns across Greece, meant that many of our operations came to a halt, pushing us to find innovative and creative ways to continue providing children, youth and adults with vital support.

We're proud that we responded quickly to these changing circumstances, successfully moving most of our operations online. Our operations continued to grow throughout the year as we

expanded already existing projects and developed new ones to include a Dinami Hub Tester project, Therapeutic work, and Humanitarian Capacity Building.

RTI continued working with Baytna partners to find innovative ways of supporting children and families when Baytna spaces were physically closed. Initiatives included creating written, audio, and video PSS resources that could be accessed online, distributing Covid-19 care kits, holding virtual Baytna sessions and Facebook Live sessions, and keeping in touch with families through weekly calls.



As of December 31, 2020, **75 PSS videos** had been viewed a total of 174,407 times on Facebook. On average, each video was viewed 2,274 times.

Resources on RTI's website were visited **4640 times** throughout 2020. In 2020, we reached **483 individuals** through the Baytna Early Childhood Programme, the Dinami Youth programme, therapeutic work projects and capacity building. The Baytna and Dinami Direct Delivery programmes registered nearly **8,000 attendances**.

RTI's specialised capacity building continued throughout 2020 training **seventy-five individuals from six organisations** on to adopt our tried and tested models to support refugees through psychosocial support, early childhood development programming and more.

653

Baytna Hub and Child Friendly Space Sessions including Covid-19 response initiative

52

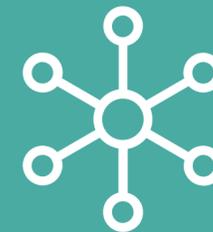
Dinami Direct Delivery Sessions

21

Mind, Body and Psychosocial Support Sessions



31 Baytna Hub Capacity Building individuals from four organisations, of whom 8 are from the refugee community



17 Dinami Hub Capacity Building individuals from 2 organisations of whom 9 are from the refugee community



Dinami Trainees
3 individuals from the refugee community



Humanitarian Capacity Building
25 individuals from 5 organisations

FIVE YEARS OF REFUGEE TRAUMA INITIATIVE



RTI began in a single tent in early 2016 in Idomeni



At the end of 2016, RTI moved to Thessaloniki and launched our flagship early childhood development programme Baytna



In July 2018, RTI's youth development programme Dinami was born



In August 2018, RTI set roots in Greece and registered a local entity



RTI is continuing to grow and support refugee communities sustainably and effectively



OUR MISSION

Build community
capacity for
collective healing



OUR VALUES

We put respect,
connecting,
understanding and
curiosity at the core
of our work

FORCED DISPLACEMENT IS ON THE RISE...

...affecting 1 in 95 people, compared to 1 in 159 more than ten years ago. Children are thought to comprise about 40% of the world's forcibly displaced population, numbering approximately 30-34 million. In Greece there are over 120,000 refugees and other displaced people.

Refugees are particularly susceptible to chronic, toxic stress and trauma as a result of fleeing their homes and uncertain circumstances and futures in their new host countries. In Greece, the mental health situation is stark with 1 in 3 refugees on the islands having reportedly considered suicide.

In five years of operations in Greece, we have observed the effects of chronic toxic stress on refugee families and young people resulting in profound, harmful impacts

on relationships and affecting the capacity to integrate into new communities.

Preoccupation with legal status, housing, or livelihoods prevents many parents from creating responsive, protective and healthy environments for their children. Children with high levels of anxiety, displaying symptoms of trauma including regression and aggression, in addition to adolescents and young adults experiencing isolation and depression, are all too common.

The already dire situation was made worse during pandemic related lockdowns as movement of refugees in Greek camps. An increased police presence, intended to enforce lockdown measures, further contributed to feelings of anxiety and vulnerability.



The past year has also seen an increase in the criminalisation of seeking asylum. The ability to seek asylum is a fundamental human right. In Greece, the authorities suspended the right to apply for asylum during the peak of the pandemic. This is a violation of international and indeed

EU law. More recently Greece deemed Turkey a 'safe' third country for refugees to be returned to. This means that more refugees are at risk of deportation by Greek authorities, even without the merits of their cases being considered.



79.5 million
forcibly displaced
people globally



Around 77%
of refugees are
displaced for more
than five years

حربے سوريا



OUR RESPONSE

RTI's programmes are informed by evidence and a continual learning process with the community we work with.

Healthy development provides the foundation for a child's future. But what does healthy development mean, particularly for refugee children growing up in uncertain environments? Early childhood development programmes can alleviate toxic stress and trauma leading to improved mental and physical health, social skills and educational ability. Our Baytna programme is designed to respond to the needs of children and their caregivers, resulting in an improvement in relationships as well as the child's emotional skills and providing a safe space for

them to recover from painful and traumatic experiences.

Youth are also agents of change. But many young refugees in Greece experience social isolation and are marginalised from the wider community. This can lead to depression, withdrawal and substance abuse. Our Dinami programme targets youth from refugee and host communities and supports them to build ties, acquire skills, and feel empowered and motivated to plan their futures.

Our organisational capacity has grown throughout 2020 as we expanded already existing projects and developed new ones to include Therapeutic work, and Humanitarian Capacity Building.





Our Capacity Building branch works to train local Greek organisations to replicate our programme models and serve more people across Greece. Cultural awareness is at the core of

our therapeutic work and our team includes experienced therapists with the cultural awareness needed to connect with the people we work with.

COVID-19

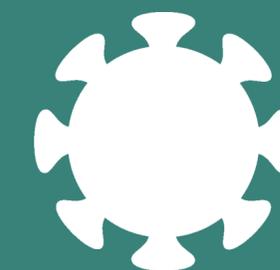
Greece has recorded over 350,000 cases of coronavirus and implemented strict lockdowns and other restrictions. In March 2020, as the crisis was beginning, Greek authorities announced restrictions on all non-essential movement. Those in refugee camps were particularly vulnerable to the crisis due to overcrowding making social distancing difficult if not impossible in some cases. Later, as restrictions went through various stages of easing, restrictions for refugees in camps were maintained.

The pandemic brought many NGO activities in Greece to a halt leading to feelings of isolation among refugees, as well as a gap in support services. RTI quickly adapted its services, finding innovative and creative ways to continue providing children, youth and adults with vital support.

We developed written, audio and visual psychosocial Baytna resources, in English, Greek, Farsi, Arabic, French and Kurdish for families to try at home. We also sent Baytna activity care kits to many families. Additionally, our operation developed new ones to include Humanitarian Capacity Building. In the build-up to the second lockdown, RTI shifted its focus to supporting our Baytna partners to develop their own inspired responses.



The first lockdown in Greece began in March 2020. RTI immediately began adapting its programmes to online



Greece has recorded over 350,000 cases of the coronavirus to date

BAYTNA – EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Our Baytna programme is a unique early years programme that has been designed to provide the key emotional support that refugee families require alongside high-quality early years education. Early Childhood development is critical for establishing the foundation for a child's future. Refugee children are subject to prolonged toxic stress and have often been through deeply traumatic experiences on their journey to safety.

Baytna gives families with young children the tools to address symptoms of trauma and toxic stress, build strong relationships and get essential respite from the difficulties of everyday life in camps and shelters.

Baytna has been incredibly successful since its inception because of the respect we give to the families we work with. Baytna is designed to respond to families, focusing on empowerment, co-creation and building on children's natural desire to learn and explore,

which helps develop their agency. We also work with facilitators who have relevant language skills and the cultural awareness to be able to engage with families. Our facilitators develop positive and purposeful relationships with children, support children to build relationships with their peers and also work with caregivers to develop positive and healthy relationships with their children. We do this through:

- The principles which guide the way that we work
- The spaces we create
- The activities we use

Since its establishment in December 2016, the programme has supported nearly 2000 children.

Through capacity building our small team can achieve far greater impact. In 2020 the RTI Baytna team shifted its focus from

providing direct delivery support to refugee families to training and capacity building partner grassroots organisations to set up and deliver values-based, trauma-sensitive and identity-informed Baytna spaces for more families across Northern Greece.

Since September 2020 we have been supporting each hub partner to meet the following objectives:

- Continue and, where possible, expand Baytna Hubs and its service reach, in person or online through future lockdowns
- Spread Baytna values and approach, to either other organisations and / or within their own organisation
- Become more community-led and involve more displaced people
- in its design and delivery
- Take steps towards becoming a self-sustained Baytna through fundraising and advocating for services

- Work as a team to respond to crises to ensure families accessing Baytna services continue to be provided with Psychosocial Support (PSS) in person or remotely, as needed

As a result of the pandemic, Baytna's focus for

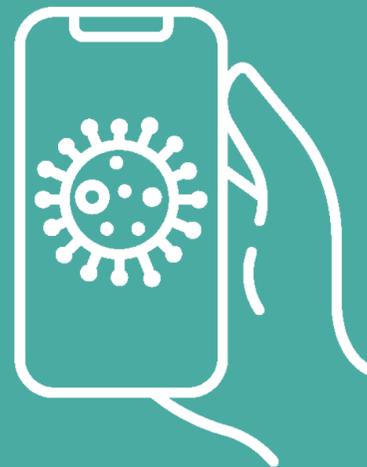
2020 shifted to responding to the pandemic and ensuring Baytna families continued to feel supported and cared for, as many refugees across Greece reported feeling abandoned as many organisations stopped or reduced their services.

During the first lockdown, in partnership

with Baytna Hub partners, we worked tirelessly to produce written, audio and visual psychosocial Baytna resources, in English, Greek, Farsi, Arabic, French and Kurdish for families to try at home, that do not require bought materials. These materials can be viewed on the RTI [website](#).



280 children and caregivers reached through in-person partner sessions through Baytna Hubs.



58 online resources created for families and children during the pandemic.

“During the second lockdown we were building connections with people on a daily basis, visiting the children at least twice a week and we gave them numbers so they could call us if they needed something, we updated them about what was happening in the camp, we were distributing games and other materials. The most important thing is that we were there.”

Rasheed, Baytna Facilitator

DINAMI – YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Our intention in every project is to provide a holistic space that encompasses psychosocial care, community building, skills development and professional coaching. Dinami (meaning 'power' in Greek) focuses on youth empowerment and integration by providing free skills training combined with psychosocial

support to refugee and host community youth aged 14-25 living in Thessaloniki.

Many young people in this age range are living in Greece unaccompanied, away from their family and community; or are under immense pressure to provide for their family

with them in Greece or back at home.

In 2020, we conducted a thorough review and assessment of the Dinami programme to ensure it was responding to the needs of those we work with effectively. We identified that people needed the following from Dinami:



Experience respite and relaxation in safe spaces



Gain work experience, skills, and support securing employment



Engage with and process their feelings and traumatic experiences through creative therapies



Participate in projects that are easy to access, for example in a range of settings including refugee camps



Connect to their own and others' cultures and identities.



Form communities and meet with others with shared experiences



The full findings can be read on our [website](#).

Dinami Hub mini Pilot Taster

In August 2020 we launched 'Dinami Hubs Pilot Programme' where we recruited two partners - A Drop in the Ocean and

ARSIS Lagkadikia to help them embed Dinami within their youth programming.

In 2020, the RTI Dinami team designed and

trialled a Dinami Hub Pilot to see whether the Dinami approach could be scaled into a capacity building programme to support other grassroots organisations to run

values-based, trauma and identity informed collective healing youth projects. As with Baytna, if successful this would mean RTI can increase its impact and influence through the same size, time, and training of multiple partners to deliver Dinami projects.

Over three months, RTI provided organisations with weekly capacity building training and tailored support to either set up new youth projects informed by Dinami principles or incorporate Dinami principles into existing projects. Due to Covid-19 lockdowns preventing our partners from implementing the projects they have designed, the RTI team supported partners until February 2021 to set up the projects and integrate their learning.

113



young people reached

21



young people engaged in dancing workshops

31



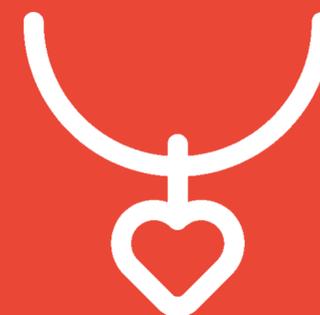
members of Dinami friends group

9



young people participated in drumming workshops

47



took part in jewellery workshops



THERAPEUTIC WORK

Our dance and movement therapist has been offering therapeutic movement sessions to refugee women in collaboration with Irida, the women's centre RTI has partnered with.

The objectives of the project were:

- To have a closed and stable group where women could feel safe and have a sense of belonging and connection to each other and to themselves
- To use art, movement and speech as means of free expression and exploration
- To develop a sense of agency and to have a space that is just for themselves.

Women shared that they were feeling lighter when leaving the session, happier and more connected to their bodies. They thought it was very important that they had a space just for themselves. This project faced some challenges with regard to the attendance



HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY BUILDING

RTI's goal is to develop a healing model adopted and replicated by governments and humanitarian organisations and build a self-sustaining network. Through this we aim to change and raise the standard of how refugee psychosocial care is approached by the humanitarian sector and other actors.

Our Capacity Building branch works to train local Greek organisations to replicate our programme models across Greece. During the pandemic, we worked with partners to find innovative ways of supporting children and families when spaces were physically closed. Together, our initiatives included creating online PSS resources, distributing Covid-19 care kits, holding virtual sessions, and keeping in touch with families through weekly calls.

We have continued to provide bespoke identity and trauma-informed external capacity building to a range of organisations and have led a coalition with a range of partners across the humanitarian sector to develop a humanitarian wellbeing pilot. This will take a

of the project and it is currently paused with plans to restart in 2021 with new partners and participants.

In partnership with a volunteer, now consultant therapist, in May 2020 we launched an online pilot therapeutic group for male refugees. The group is currently in its third cycle and feedback from group members about its impact has been overwhelmingly positive. This is emphasised by the continued attendance from core group members who continue to call in weekly despite the most difficult of changing circumstances. Based on the pilot's success in Winter of 2020, we recruited a clinical supervisor to join this movement to set up more therapeutic groups, and to bridge the gaps between mental health and human rights. In 2021 we will continue growing this movement.

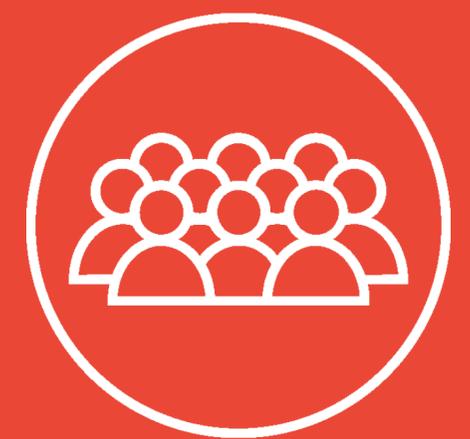
more systematic approach to upskilling grassroots humanitarian organisations to provide training and wellbeing support to their teams. This pilot has received the funding to launch in 2021.



22
therapeutic sessions
held in person and
online



25
capacity building
sessions with five
organisations



INFLUENCING THE SECTOR

One of our goals is to change and raise the standard of how refugee psychosocial care is approached by the humanitarian sector and other actors. We have begun this effort by developing replicable care models and working with trusted partners to implement them in different contexts across Greece.

At RTI, we're motivated by the people we work with. We've built up extensive knowledge about best practice in delivering psychosocial care for refugees through engagement with these communities and taking an identity and trauma-informed approach, putting them at the centre of our practice.

In 2020 we continued to roll out our hubs projects, influencing how other organisations in Greece who share our values approach care and beginning to plant a systemic approach to refugee care across Greece. This



approach included introducing our approach to a wider audience via speaking and other engagements:

In early 2020, we joined our colleagues for a round table discussion on the importance of PSS mainstreaming in education for refugees. Our CEO Zarlisht Halaimzai joined Pod Save the World, a podcast hosted by Ben Rhodes to offer insights on then President Trump's deal with the Taliban and the human impact of geopolitics. She also joined Baktash Ahadi on the podcast Stories of Transformation to discuss the work of Refugee Trauma Initiative, trauma and healing.

RTI did extensive work on the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on the wellbeing of refugees in Greece. RTI was invited to speak about the issue in a webinar hosted by the Atlantic Institute and we released our own

report on the issue which can be read [here](#).

At RTI, we never presume to know what communities want. To further inform our Dinami programme, we conducted an online youth assessment. The findings can be read [here](#). Additionally, continuing our work into ECD, we joined the Bernard Van Leer Foundation for an online discussion about the challenges faced by children and families affected by displacement across Greece.

Finally, in line with RTI's approach which recognises, respects and celebrates identities, our CEO Zarlisht spoke in a video about the dangers of dehumanising people as 'illegal migrants' for ATTN.

RTI is continuing this work in 2021, with more plans to upscale its work through an ambitious five-year plan.



PARTNERS

RTI continues to work with a range of partners from small Greek grassroots organisations to international actors. RTI's network in Greece is a community of civil society organisations sharing the same values as RTI. We envision continuing working on the Hubs, with additional partners for PSS worker expansion. Each of these partners share our commitment to change and

a better future for those we work with. With each partnership is an opportunity to upscale the work we do and reach more people. Our partnerships bridge the gap between large donors and small community-based organisations, ensuring that work on the ground informs policy and that policy supports the work on the ground.



FINANCIALS OVERVIEW 2020

RTI Hellas Not for Profit Company

Type of Income	Restricted	Unrestricted	2020 Total	2019 Total
Standard Sources				
Grants	€ 262,868	€ 2,977	€ 265,845	€ 362,829
Trusts	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Individual Donation	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ 100
Online Donations	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Consulting	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ 2,319
Deferred from 2018	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ 29,621
Deferred to/from 2020	€ 86,167	€ -	€ 86,167	-€ 86,167
Deferred to 2021	-€ 24,699	€ -	-€ 24,699	€ -
Grand Total	€ 324,336	€ 2,977	€ 327,313	€ 308,703

Type of Expenditure	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
Programmes	€ 232,028	€ -	€ 232,028	€ 266,902
Core Cost	€ 88,848	€ 1,563	€ 90,412	€ 33,807
Fundraising	€ -	€ 1,222	€ 1,222	€ 660
Capacity Building	€ 759	€ -	€ 759	€ 2,333
Grand Total	€ 321,636	€ 2,785	€ 324,420	€ 303,703

Furniture and Fixture	€ 4,336	€ 3,989
Computer Equipment	€ 6,518	€ 3,153
Office Equipment	€ 967	€ 877
Grand Total	€ 11,821	€ 8,020

RTI UK Under the auspices of Prism the Gift fund

Restricted	Unrestricted	2020 Total	2019 Total
£554,908	£178,132	£733,040	£41,888
£-	£-	£-	£24,000
£-	£9,251	£9,251	£9,777
£-	£2,128	£2,128	£5,180
£-	£223	£223	£-
£-	£-	£-	£95,547
£24,834		£24,834	-£24,834
-£357,712		-£357,712	£-
£222,030	£189,733	£411,763	£151,559

Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
£142,966	£-	£142,966	£67,257
£75,756	£10,957	£86,713	£14,900
£-	£-	£-	£9,754
£2,819	£-	£2,819	£3,922
£221,540	£10,957	£232,497	£95,832

THE FUTURE OF RTI

At RTI we are constantly looking for ways to make our work more sustainable whilst reaching more people and maintaining our values and impact. In 2021 we will be launching a five-year strategy which will lay the roadmap for RTI's growth, including outside of Greece for the first time.

As we approach this exciting stage in our history we are constantly asking ourselves how we can continue working effectively on a grassroots level with our partners and communities whilst considering how our growth can make a huge impact to many more lives.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US

Our work would not be possible without the support of people like you. If you would like to support our work, please feel free to make a donation through our ongoing crowdfunding campaign [here](#).





refugees
trauma
initiative

Refugee Trauma Initiative is a restricted fund under the auspices
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RTI Hellas is registered in Greece as a Civil Non-Profit Company
Refugee Trauma Initiative (RTI) Hellas, reg. num. 14716360400