



Our Response

STEPPING STONE PROJECT

A holistic approach that provides displaced children and their mothers—survivors of violence and displacement—with the support they mostly need to heal, grow, and reclaim the lives they were denied.



♥ Stay connected with us:

@[defenceforchildrengr](#) Instagram &

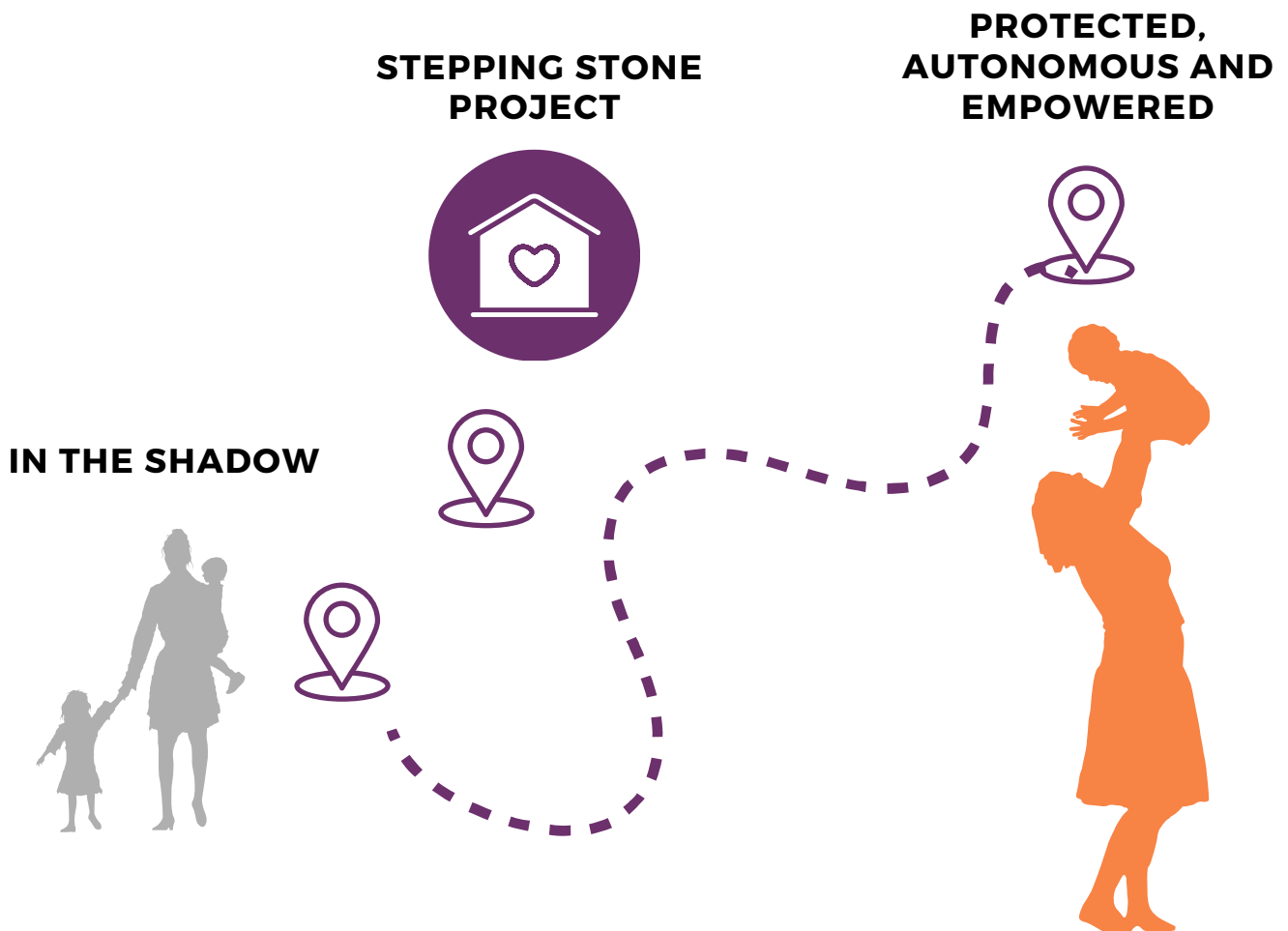
@[DCIGreece](#) on Facebook

STEPPING STONE PROJECT

A Pathway to Healing and Integration

In response to the challenges faced by the accompanied children and their mothers,—and in consultation with the target population—we designed the **Stepping Stone Project**, which is a transformative initiative aiming at the personal development and stability of both children and their mothers, with the ultimate goal of empowering them and supporting their smooth integration into society.

ALL THE WAY FROM SHADOW TO VISIBILITY



Everyone deserves a place to *feel safe and thrive*

At the heart of Athens, just steps from Victoria Square — where many displaced young mothers reside — we created something vital: a safe, welcoming space for their children and themselves.

Here, children are the first to feel the difference.

They take part in carefully designed activities that help them heal from trauma, support their cognitive, social, and emotional development, strengthen their language skills, and gently prepare them for the structure of school life. Through art, play, music, and caring relationships, they begin to feel safe again — opening the door to education and rekindling a sense of hope and belonging.

This space is more than just a place of care — it's a space for recovery, growth, and connection.

At the same time, their mothers begin their own courageous journeys. They receive legal support, attend employability workshops, access trauma-informed therapy, and take meaningful steps toward independence.

It is a space where healing unfolds — and the path to self-reliance becomes possible.



STEPPING STONE PROJECT



The innovation of this program lies in providing ***simultaneous support*** for both children and their mothers. It is specifically designed to meet their unique needs and is implemented under the monitoring of DCI Greece with the support of its team of experts, interns and community members who all together can promise impact and sustainability of the efforts.

Watch this video, which highlights the struggles and needs of these children and mothers, offering a glimpse into the challenges they face and the strength they carry every day.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpIU7PxT2WY>

‘I feel like I’m being seen and heard for the first time’

Anneta, 28, Sierra Leone

‘I didn’t know where to start. Now everything is falling into place for me and my child.’

Aminata, 21, Democratic Republic of Congo

‘War is not forgotten. Some days are very difficult and it feels like we’re falling into the void, but now we have a hand to lift us up.’

Hanna, 28, Ukraine



deserves a chance to learn and grow

Specialized Educational Activities

Many refugee children have experienced significant disruptions in their early development and access to education. Our specialized educational activities are designed to respond to these challenges by bridging critical learning gaps and supporting each child's successful entry – and continued participation – in formal schooling.

- For preschool-aged children, we focus on building foundational skills through play-based learning, helping them develop language, concentration, and basic cognitive and motor abilities essential for classroom readiness. These early interventions are crucial for children who have missed out on stable, nurturing learning environments.
- For children of primary school age, we provide targeted academic support to prevent school dropout, address learning delays, and strengthen literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills. Through engaging, inclusive, and trauma-informed approaches, we help children regain confidence, catch up with their peers, and see education as a space where they belong and can thrive.



EVERY CHILD

to heal, find peace and joy

Supporting the Mental Health of Displaced Children

Across Greece, refugee and displaced children face unimaginable hardships. On their journeys, many have witnessed violence against their mothers, endured abuse, or been exposed to the threat of sexual violence. Once in Europe, they often continue to live in extremely difficult conditions—crowded shelters, uncertainty about their future, and isolation from familiar support systems. These traumatic experiences leave deep emotional scars, affecting their sense of safety, trust, and self-worth.

At DCI Greece, we believe that **mental health support is not a luxury** but a lifeline for these children. That is why we provide safe, consistent, and child-centered spaces where healing becomes possible.

Creative Arts Therapy

We offer holistic, trauma-informed sessions that use painting, drawing, sculpture, and other crafts as powerful tools for emotional healing. These creative activities give children a safe, non-verbal outlet to process complex emotions, express their inner worlds, and rebuild a sense of safety. Arts and crafts help children reclaim their voices, build confidence, and rediscover joy, even in the midst of uncertainty.



Healing Practices for Resilience

Children learn practical techniques to calm their minds and bodies. **Sound therapy** releases stress and restores balance, **yoga and breathing practices** ease tension and manage anger, while mindfulness and art foster reflection and self-expression. Together, these approaches teach children how to cope with painful emotions—without carrying trauma in their bodies.

We witness remarkable change: children who were once restless, anxious, or withdrawn grow calmer, more confident, and more connected to others.





to heal, find peace and joy

Music and Movement Education

Music and movement sessions combine rhythm, dance, and play to create a joyful, healing experience. For children who carry deep stress and trauma, this offers a safe and creative way to release tension, express emotions, and reconnect with their bodies.

In these sessions, children rediscover playfulness, strengthen cooperation, and build confidence. Music and dance do not simply entertain—they restore balance, awaken creativity, and foster a renewed sense of belonging and hope.



Play and Social Interaction

We uphold every child's right to play as a vital part of healing, learning, and growing. For refugee children who have lost access to safe homes, schools, and spaces to simply be children, we create environments where play is not just allowed — it's protected and encouraged. Through guided play, cooperative games, and group activities, children are given a renewed sense of belonging — supporting them reclaim the most natural and necessary part of their childhood.

deserves support to rebuild her life

Legal and Trauma-Informed Protection Services

- Displaced mothers are provided with risk and vulnerability assessments to identify specific threats and levels of risk. Based on this, individualized action plans are developed, tailored to each family's unique circumstances and protection needs.
- Through specialized legal representation and support throughout the asylum process, mothers and their children are better equipped to obtain legal documentation, secure protection from detention and deportation, and begin building safe, stable lives with access to rights and services.

Mental Health and Empowerment:

- Individual psychotherapy sessions using the Narrative Exposure Method
- Group empowerment activities using restorative practices to foster resilience and belonging.

Skills Development:

- Linking to vocational Training Workshops tailored to the interests and aspirations of the women
- Greek Language Classes
- CV creation and job interview preparation
- Connection with employers for internships and employment opportunities

Information Sessions

- Targeted sessions that equip them with essential knowledge to navigate life in Greece.

Topics include:

- Asylum procedures and legal rights
- Key aspects of Greek society, including laws, culture, and daily life
- Understanding gender-based violence (GBV), trafficking, and available protection mechanisms



A FEW WORDS ABOUT US

Defence for Children International – Greece is an organization that stands alongside the most vulnerable individuals, especially those who have faced the harsh realities of war, displacement, and gender-based violence.

Through our Center, we provide a safe haven for those in need: children, youth, vulnerable girls, and young mothers who are survivors of extreme violence. Here, they find more than just support—they discover a space where dreams are nurtured, voices are amplified, and their safety is a top priority.

Our beneficiaries receive socio-legal support throughout the asylum process, psychosocial services, empowerment and therapeutic activities, and access to vital information in an environment that places their safety at the forefront.

Our team of specialists applies a comprehensive, holistic, and trauma-informed approach to ensure the protection and well-being of everyone we serve.

Our services were honored with the Global Child 10 Award from Sweden in 2020, in recognition of their high quality and impact. These achievements are a testament to the effective work carried out by DCI-Greece.

