



DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL GREECE



ABOUT US

Defence for Children International – Greece (DCI – Greece) was established in 2016 with a clear mandate to develop its own programmes in order to provide high-quality protection services to a broad spectrum of vulnerable individuals. Our commitment extends to children, youth, vulnerable girls, young mothers, survivors of extreme violence, who have been forced to flee their countries and/or who come from marginalize and disadvantaged backgrounds

Since the DCI Greece's inception in 2016, we have been one of the few human rights organizations in Greece acting as a watchdog for the implementation of children's and youth's rights and working directly at a UN level in this regard.

WE ARE MEMBERS OF

- The Global 'Defence for Children International' (DCI) child movement
- Child Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ), where we hold the Vice Presidency for the next 5 years

WE DEFEND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS BY



Investigating and documenting violations of children's rights



Providing direct protection services with a particular focus on legal and administrative proceedings



Advocating for structural change

WHAT WE DO



Individual legal and psycho-social support



Empowerment and healing sessions



Capacity building to professionals



Strategic Litigation, and Advocacy

Main pillar of our Organisation is our HELPDESK

TARGET POPULATION OF OUR HELPDESK

- ✓ Alone mothers, survivors of trafficking , FGM, torture and exploitation with their children
- ✓ Alone children fleeing war and persecution
- ✓ Vulnerable families
- ✓ Youth transitioning into adulthood



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Non-discrimination
- Best interest of the children
- Participation
- Non-Victimization of the Child



Main pillar of our Organisation is our HELPDESK

SERVICES WE OFFER

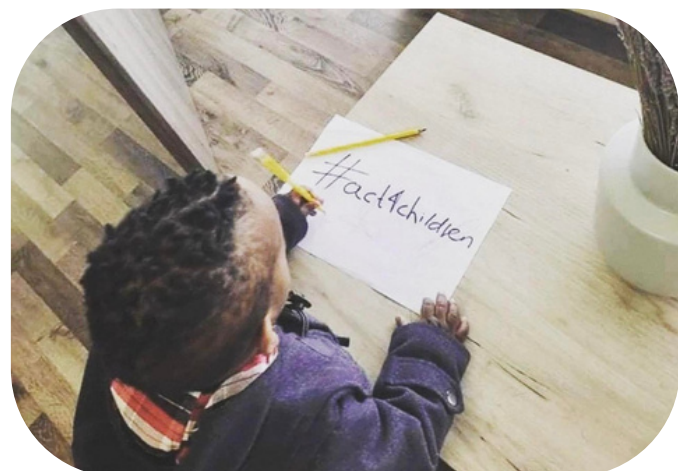
- ✓ Outreaching to homeless children with or without their caregivers
- ✓ Risk identification and Vulnerability assessments
- ✓ Legal Representation during the asylum procedures
- ✓ Psychological Support & Empowerment and Healing Activities
- ✓ Extensive follow-up case management
- ✓ Delivering mass information sessions to the refugee population about their rights, the existing risk factors but also the durable solutions available to them



By employing a trauma informed holistic approach, we bring our beneficiaries in visibility and safety.



The services provided through our Helpdesk have received a Global Award for their high quality and impact



REAL LIFE STORIES

“
They told me that I have to go back to my country. My life there is in danger. How can I go back? Now I am homeless with my children and I feel hopeless
”

Flore, 23 years old

- Flore, mother of two from Congo (DRC) had been referred to us for support through the refugee community. Her life took a devastating turn when her asylum case was rejected, despite being a survivor of torture and trafficking. She was left homeless on the streets of Athens after being forced out of the camp due to the rejection, together with her two young children, aged 2 and 5. Her children, all this time that she lived in Athens, were deprived of schooling and regular activities.
- She and her children for more than 1 month were living out in a park, while during the night, they found safety inside a church.

The mother was overwhelmed, urgently needing legal but also psychological support.

To address this distressing situation, our action plan swiftly went into action. Through a thorough **risk assessment**, we **identified their vulnerabilities** and **assisted her in initiating the process to obtain a certificate of torture**, critical for her subsequent asylum application.



OUR ACTION PLAN

Our dedicated team worked on her new asylum application to give her another chance at safety and protection. At the same time, through persistence, we have managed to request an appointment with the authorities so as to submit the new evidence, since the electronic system was not operating since May.

Understanding the significance of mental well-being, our psychologist started sessions with her, while her children attended our healing activities.

Through our strong referral pathway, we have managed to provide her with temporary accommodation to alleviate the immediate burden of homelessness.



This courageous mother's journey underscores the need for compassionate support systems, proper evaluation of asylum cases, and timely intervention to safeguard vulnerable lives. Through our concerted efforts, we aim to bring hope and positive change to those facing unimaginable hardships.

REAL LIFE STORIES

Abdul, a young boy from Afghanistan had endured immense hardship, having tragically lost his parents to bombings. Arriving in Greece just before turning 18, he found himself alone and vulnerable, urgently seeking to be reunited with his sister in Germany. Swiftly taking action, we followed his case closely, recognizing the importance of completing all necessary procedures before he reached 18.



I cannot wait to go to Germany and live with my sister. After the first rejection, I thought that I would never see her again and that I would stay forever in this Camp. But you made it

- Abdul, 18 years old from Afghanistan

With dedication and determination, we managed to secure an appointment and we prepared and submitted the entire case file to the authorities well in advance. However, despite our best efforts, we initially faced rejection from the German authorities on the grounds that the child did not submit his birth certificate from Afghanistan.

Yet, we refused to give up. Through persistent advocacy and legal argumentation, we successfully overturned the initial decision.

Now, the boy stands on the threshold of reuniting with his beloved sister, eagerly awaiting the issuance of travel tickets.

Abdul, filled with renewed optimism, is eagerly looking forward to the journey that will reunite him with his beloved family member.

Legal intervention project on Lesbos Island

Our legal project providing legal aid to vulnerable asylum-seekers arriving on Lesbos, including

- ✓ Single mothers
- ✓ Vulnerable Families
- ✓ Young adults
- ✓ Unaccompanied minors



WHAT WE DO?

- Have Immediate access to the new arrivals
- Guarantee fair access to the asylum procedures by receiving quality legal support and representation before the authorities
- Offer legal support and representation through individually tailored legal sessions and asylum interview simulations
- Draft personalized legal memo and submit to support the above-mentioned legal actions before the 1st and 2nd degree for both Admissibility and Asylum interviews
- Conduct vulnerability assessments to determine their needs and to provide our services accordingly
- Make referrals for health and psychological support



OUR HEALING & EMPOWERMENT ACTIVITIES

WE AIM TO

- 🎯 Empower children, youth, and alone mothers on the move
- 🎯 Offer them the tools to relax their minds and bring ease into their daily life,
- 🎯 Increase their sense of value, safety, and belonging
- 🎯 Develop the quality of gratitude and resilience and realize how incredible and capable they are of becoming who they truly wish to become

“ It is the first time I feel safe to stay in silence with myself and feel the presence of all of you at the same time

” 16 years girl old from Syria



“ I feel my body and my mind so relaxed. It's like I had a mind- clearing’

” 16 years old from Afghanistan

WHAT TECHNIQUES ARE USED?

Breathing, sound therapy, meditation, yoga, art, and mindfulness



Click or Scan me!



Healing moments happen in the most unexpected ways when a person is truly seen, understood, and heard, when a person is given the space they ask for. Through our consistency, we create safety, and our love and support restore faith in humanity.

When we introduced healing techniques to our beneficiaries, we witnessed a significant shift in their sense of well-being and belonging

OUR HEALING & EMPOWERMENT ACTIVITIES

The healing me suitcase travels also to shelters but also visits community centers.



Tailored healing cycles for adolescents and young mothers equipping them with valuable knowledge and skills to promote their emotional well-being, foster resilience, and facilitate their integration into new environments.



HEALING & EMPOWERMENT MOMENTS



Narrative Exposure Therapy Method

In 2022 we brought in Greece the innovative and clinically proven method ideal for people on the move. The Narrative Exposure Method.

The flowers represent the joyful moments, the rocks the painful and traumatic ones while the candles the loss of a person.

The narration of the traumatic memories allows people to 'touch' their traumas, without being re-traumatized by them.

Narrating at the same time, the happy memories allows people to realize their lives include beautiful and joyful moments that their pain had buried down for so long.

With one-to-one sessions with our psychotherapist, the aim is to

- empower the people we support through the narration of their own story
- increase their sense of value, safety and belonging



Narrative Exposure Therapy Method

REAL LIFE STORY

Z. is a single mother from Cote d'Ivoire, a survivor of trafficking. She has also experienced torture, both in her country of origin and during her trip to Greece. This deep trauma has also affected her children, who were forced to mature early and struggle to enjoy the carefree childhood they are entitled to. Z. started her one to one sessions with our psychologist, under the 'Narrative Exposure Therapy' technique, aiming to empower her to become the narrator of her own story and release her pain.



POSITIVE OUTCOMES

The positive results are already visible: Z. is regaining hope, strength and motivation to fight her traumas. She is also more capable to concentrate on her asylum procedures and feels ready to narrate her past experiences in front of the asylum office.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

We strongly believe that children and youth are not only the rights-holders in need of protection and safety, but also...



Advocates for their rights

Active members of a society, capable of voicing their own rights

Child and Youth participation is a key principle guiding our work and we strongly advocate for the right of all children to be heard and have their views taken seriously, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this light, we always encourage our children to come together and exchange experiences, while communicating their opinions with the rest of the world.



An entirely youth-led online event
“We are More Than a Refugee”



One of our young ambassadors - Mr. Rahmat Amiri, Former child on the move from Afghanistan, participated as a speaker at the panel ‘Institutional Violence against children on the move, during the UNHCR 50 Side Event in Geneva.



Click or Scan HERE to watch more!



Moments from our workshops with our youth Ambassadors

YOUTH AMBASSADORS CLUSTER

The establishment of the cluster of Young Ambassadors within DCI-Greece has been a milestone in the Organisation's trajectory.

It was not formed as a response to a specific project activity, but it came to complement the Organisation's structures and advocacy work. Since 2019, the Young Ambassadors, consisted of migrant teenagers and young adults, have undertaken a variety of awareness raising and advocacy activities



Our Youth Ambassadors speaking at the Annual Conference of Child Friendly Justice European Network 'Transforming Justice Systems for Children in Migration'



JUSTICE STARTS WITH US - YOUTH AMBASSADORS IN ACTION!

The 'Justice starts with US' project empowers migrant children and youth in contact with the Greek justice system. It targets those involved in administrative asylum proceedings or as suspects/victims of crimes.

Building on the Young Ambassadors cluster within DCI-Greece, it provides interactive education on their rights and child-friendly justice principles. The project also introduces the participatory method of 'Theatre of the Oppressed.'

Moreover, the participating children will engage with authorities at the national, regional, and European levels to share their thoughts, ideas, recommendations, and influence policies.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

HUMAN RIGHTS ACADEMY



At a capacity-building level, our team of experts has been delivering **trainings to professionals** working within the national child protection and/or migration system, in accommodation facilities, in Camps and/or in the third sector.



HUMAN RIGHTS ACADEMY

OUR MAIN TOPICS

- ✓ The Convention on the Rights of the Child as a guiding tool in our daily work
- ✓ Trauma - Informed Lawyering/ Approach
- ✓ Child protection Case management
- ✓ Our role as professionals to watchdog and limit institutional violence against children
- ✓ Refugee Law and Asylum procedures
- ✓ Family Reunification Dublin III Regulation

“The seminars, helped me a lot in finding a job in the refugee sector.”

” - Helen, international law expert

“Very useful and constructive, with a human-centred approach, immersion in real stories and learning activities”.

” - John, lawyer

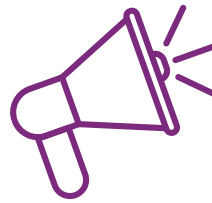
“All the necessary tools are given for the management of cases at a practical level, always with respect for the "human being".

” - Irini, lawyer



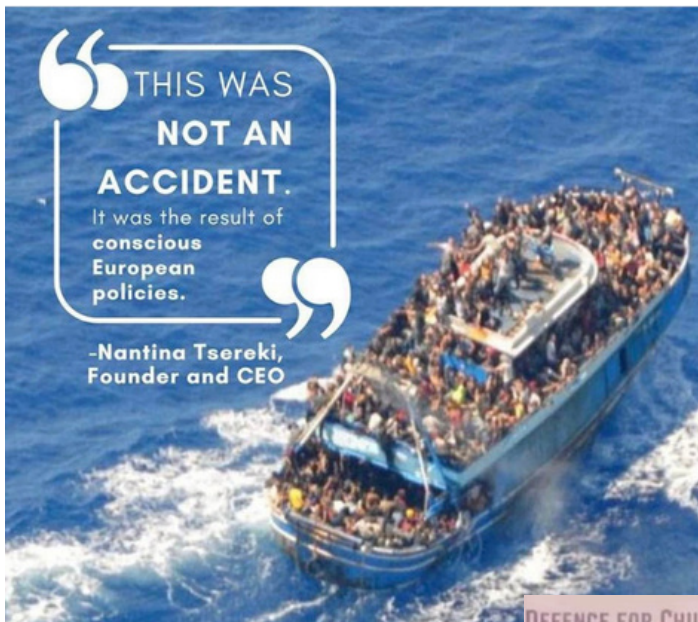
ADVOCACY

Through our legal intervention efforts, we gather valuable **first-hand information**, which serves as the foundation for our strategic advocacy endeavors. Specifically, we actively **advocate for the rights of children** before EU and International Human Rights Bodies.



WE AIM TO

- 🎯 Bring attention to their unique challenges
- 🎯 Work towards positive changes that will secure a brighter future for all



Following the tragic shipwreck of Pylos back in June 2023, the Director of DCI-Greece delivered a **statement** before the United Nations Human Rights Council 53, **shedding light on the tragic shipwrecks** taking place in the Mediterranean Sea and **the need for conscious decisions from European politicians to regularize safe migration routes.**

[Full speech HERE](#)



It is of paramount importance to realise that people will keep on moving in search of a better future to other countries. Only by regularising their efforts and by providing them with the opportunity to become part of our societies, these people won't be a footnote in our societies' life stories.

ADVOCACY

High Panel Event ‘**Preventing and repairing injustice for Children**’ co-organized with Child Friendly Justice European network in collaboration with the Greek Deputy Ombudsman on Children's Rights Ms Koufonikolakou and with the honorary presence of Mr. Benoit van Keirsbilck, member of the UN CRC Committee.

The event reflected on the recent concluding Observations of the **UN Committee on the Rights of the Child** towards Greece and generated a constructive dialogue between Official Representatives from the Child Protection Structures, Civil society and political parties.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- No Protection from Violence without coordinated multi-agency cooperation
- No Rights without remedy
- No Rights without budget allocation

ADVOCACY



On the 30th of June 2022 and during the **50th Session of the UN Human Rights Council**, DCI-Greece organized together with DCI Headquarters, a side Event on Institutional Violence against Children on the Move that took place in Geneva.

Following the issue of the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on migration, DCI-Greece took the opportunity to put the spotlight on **Institutional violence against children on the move**, the forms it can take in cross-border situations, as well as, in reception contexts, in times of emergency.

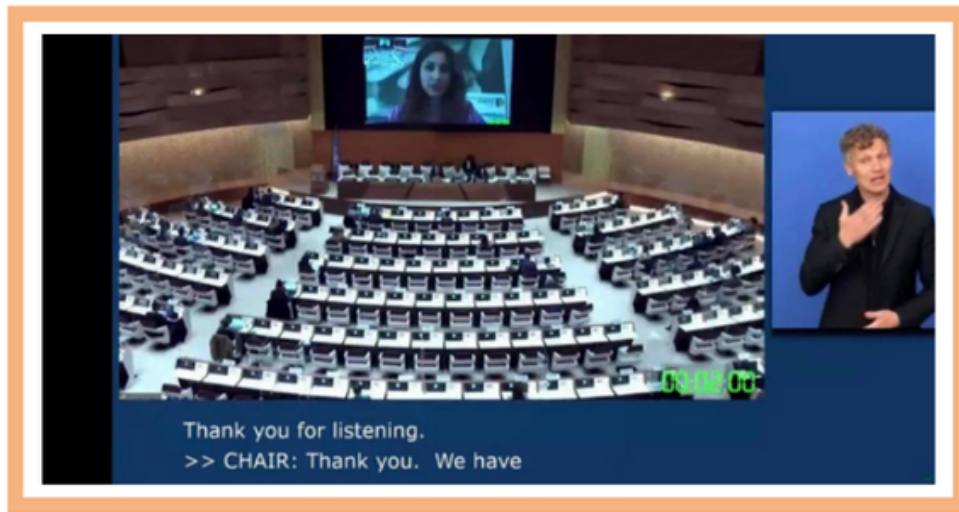
Watch the whole discussion HERE



Click or Scan me!

This event provided the necessary fertile ground for further discussion between the speakers around the importance of forming a European Alliance against Institutional Violence.

ADVOCACY



On 9th of March 2022, our Director, delivered a statement on behalf of the DCI International global movement, in front of the **49th Session of the UN Human Rights Council** on the Annual Day of discussion on 'The Rights of the Child and Family Reunification'

Read the whole statement **HERE**



Click or Scan me!

“ We urge States to commit to a well-established inter-state structure that places best interest procedures at its core, where children on the move are seen as children first and foremost and their voices can be heard, where all bureaucratic obstacles are replaced by accessible, effective, and child-friendly procedures. And for this to happen, States will need to commit to the allocation of budget for family reunification. ”

ADVOCACY



- Actively present in the weekly and monthly advocacy meetings within the civil society and key stakeholders ensuring that our beneficiaries' voice is heard within the broader discourse
- Engage in individual meetings with EU Members of Parliament fostering essential dialogues and exchanges
- Participate in Conferences, children's rights forums, round tables, and working groups.



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