

2020-2023

# STRATEGIC PLAN



**PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY**

ELENA MOUSTAKA & STRATEGY COMMITTEE

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A MORE ETHICAL APPROACH TO HUMANITARIAN AID

We are witnessing the shift of an era. The world is changing rapidly and the global wealth disparity between the global South and the global North is widened due to climate change-related issues such as famine and droughts, prolonged conflicts and increased ethnic violence amongst communities, political instability, extremism, and institutional corruption to mention but some.

The outbreak of Covid19 brought the global healthcare and market to its knees and has challenged otherwise established political systems, causing civil dissent, disillusion, and disorder.

Moreover, in the past half a decade we have witnessed heartbreaking human rights violations within European borders and beyond. The rationalization of brutal migration policies on behalf of European leaders and the criminalization of humanitarian action has polarized popular opinion and is breeding xenophobia and violence. At the same time, humanitarian aid approaches have failed their purpose to end poverty within humanitarian territories. Today more than ever, the aid industry is being scrutinized for its neocolonial tendencies and inability to appropriately represent affected and indigenous populations or to promote better, more ethical, and sustainable practices.

We are driven by a fierce determination to bring innovative and dignified solutions to the field and have a holistic and long-term impact on the lives of displaced children and youth seeking asylum in Europe. Our child-specific programs are built with the conviction that all children should have access to a safe space and be provided opportunities that will allow them to reach their full potential.

With that in mind, Better Days will do whatever it takes to ensure that it remains reflexive, agile, and independent from special interests and self-serving ambitions. Our aim is to acknowledge all voices intersectionally and to do that we must first acknowledge our own positionality within the aid field. We believe that balanced funding and collective action are powerful means of countering unethical practices and becoming more accountable to the affected communities. Thus we are committed to approaching all of our partnerships humbly, being active listeners and participatory leaders, and working closely with governmental and non-governmental entities to tackle some of the world's most pressing issues for the world's most vulnerable populations.

***It is our responsibility to deliver a fairer society that offers young generations prospects for growth, hope, and safety; recognizes localized expertise, and invests in collective but locally-led action within territories affected by migration, conflict, climate-specific disasters, economic and other crises.***



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# ABOUT BETTER DAYS

## A CHILD-SPECIFIC AGENDA



### A LITTLE BIT ABOUT OUR WHEREABOUTS

Better Days Greece was established in early 2016 in response to the influx of refugees arriving in Lesvos, Greece. Since its birth it has supported over 40 organizations in Greece, Serbia, Lebanon, and Syria to provide critical aid to displaced and unaccompanied children at risk. In Greece, Better Days have implemented several interventions in Moria camp, designed and managed globally awarded and recognized humanitarian programs in Athens, Lesvos, and Thessaloniki, namely Gekko Kids (2017-ongoing) and EcoHub (2017-2020), and have developed programs for and alongside the Greek government, UNICEF, UNHCR, Radcliffe Foundation, La Liga Foundation, LUSH, Le Rosey Foundation, and Choose Love to mention but some.

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# OUR CORE

## AN INTRODUCTION TO BETTER DAYS ETHOS OF WORK - OUR AMBITION FOR THIS DECADE

We lead with a fierce determination to bring innovative and tailored solutions to the field of humanitarian action, dignify the delivery of humanitarian aid and inspire better ways to tackle humanitarian disasters. Hence we have invested deeply in the design and development of programs that can have a holistic and long-term impact on the lives of displaced communities seeking asylum in Europe. Whether we are providing education or responding to emergencies, we continue to emphasize the importance of localized efforts, participatory governance, and sustainability. Through our work, one can recognize our individualized approach to aid and the conviction that all children should have access to opportunities that will allow them to reach their full potential.

### OUR VISION

We want to see a world where refugees and asylum seekers are guaranteed access to their rights as per The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and are treated with dignity and humanity. A world where no child under any circumstances is forced to endure the trauma, stagnation, and dehumanization currently faced by millions of children across the world.

### OUR MISSION

We are committed to creating blueprints that can be replicated globally and honor our commitment towards a sustainable future that guarantees access to safe spaces, quality education, and prosperity for all displaced children in the world.

### OUR AMBITION FOR 2030

We want to aspire a new generation of humanitarian organizations who understand their positionality in the field and the uneven power dynamics inherited in it. We will work hard to promote more ethical and appropriate ways to support affected communities and remain dedicated to advocating in favor of locally-led humanitarian action and more sustainable practices. We lead with the conviction that displaced children and youth should have access to positive and safe environments and that humanitarian programming should be reflexive and holistic and can only succeed when we place the individual needs of every human being at the center of all efforts.

### OUR CORE VALUES

Agility, Integrity, Resilience, Responsibility, Collectiveness, Excellence, Creativity, Sustainability.



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# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

## AN INTRODUCTION TO BETTER DAYS ACHIEVEMENTS & GLOBAL AWARDS

- Since 2019 we have supported over 1000 unaccompanied minors (UAMs) in critical need of assistance, 50% of whom were homeless or invisible to the national protection mechanism.
- In 2019 we designed and implemented 'MIRE', the first mapping and identification exercise for UAMs living in a state of homelessness or considered missing. We have since assisted with the identification of hundreds of unregistered children in Lesvos and in Athens.
- Following repeated unsuccessful attempts at eliminating the scabies epidemic within the UAM sections, Better Days and medical partner CMA implemented a 15-day intervention that involved 7 actors and permanently treated scabies amongst 340 unaccompanied minors.
- With our work, we have assisted over 100,000 refugees and asylum seekers to access critical services such as safe space, legal aid, quality education, and healthcare.
- From 2015 to 2020 Better Days remained one of the key emergency response actors on the island of Lesvos and worked closely with RIC, local and international actors to respond to crises in the field.
- In 2020, following the Covid19 outbreak Better Days took a leading role in the design and implementation of a Central Triage Clinic and Pharmacy alongside EODY, CMA, MSF, and other healthcare actors providing medical care to over 15000 people.
- Following the pandemic, Better Days supported the community with over 100,000EUR worth of investment in PPE, medical equipment, and medication for the affected communities and first responders.
- Alongside Save the Children Germany and representatives of the Greek and German governments, we worked tirelessly to promote the rights of unaccompanied minors and children to live with dignity and be relocated to safer living environments across Europe. By 2020 we had supported the safe relocation of over 600 UAMs, previously living in deplorable and unsafe reception facilities.
- With Gekko Kids and other education-specific programs, we have helped thousands of young people to access quality education by providing opportunities for accreditation, employability, psychosocial support, and personal growth. In 2021 Gekko Kids, was shortlisted amongst 5000 candidates across 126 countries as one of the world's 100 most sustainable humanitarian programs representing Best Practices in the world on Sustainability (UN SDGs), Innovation, and/or Good Governance.
- Pioneering in green humanitarian aid and ecological education for children: In 2020 EcoHub was awarded the Permaculture Magazine Prize. The Permaculture Magazine Prize celebrates activists and permaculture practitioners around the world who are transforming communities and landscapes with climate change solutions and regenerative agriculture.
- In 2019, Better Days co-founder Elena Moustaka received the Book of Peace Award from FUNVIC Membro do BFUCA - WFUCA for Better Days' contributions in humanitarian aid, human rights, and the promotion of peace.





# CHILDREN AT RISK

## DATA SUMMARY ON REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN IN GREECE

As of late 2019, Moria camp, built to hold 3000 people, had a population of more than 20,000 men, women and children of whom over 1100 were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) also known as Unaccompanied Minors (UAM). By then Moria had become a place of violence, deprivation and suffering.

As refugees, children suffer threefold. They first experience the trauma of migration but the hardship of displacement (the journey) is especially difficult for unaccompanied or separated children travelling alone. In Greece they are not always afforded the protection and care they need to escape poverty or exploitation or receive support in navigating an extremely complicated asylum process. While they wait, in overcrowded camps and toxic environments, they lose precious opportunities to be reunified with their loved ones, socialize, heal, and access formal education during their formative years.

**Since 2015 Better Days has used its expertise and knowledge to design and build spaces of hope and safety for hundreds of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and youth surviving precarious living conditions in Greece.**

**More info @TedX: The Capital-Truth of Education by Andrew Foley**

## 0 - CHILDREN ACCESS FORMAL EDUCATION OUT OF THE 6,500 CHILDREN LIVING IN MORIA CAMP IN 2019

In 2019, over half of the population of UAMs living in Moria camp were considered missing. Better Days launched its first Mapping, Identification & Registration Exercise (MIRE) to trace those who had been registered in arrivals but were 'lost' because of the overcrowded conditions and inability of the authorities in Moria to guarantee shelter, protection and legal representation, with fears that some had not been registered at all.

Following the success of our child-specific programs we remain committed to creating physical, mental and emotional spaces to offer displaced children access to safety and high quality services such as protection, education, social support and legal aid, outside of the camp environment, where they can rebuild a sense of normalcy and heal from trauma.

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# SWOT ANALYSIS

## Strengths:

Over the years Better Days have demonstrated an incredible capacity to remain efficient with its spending and implement impactful interventions and programs by retaining its agility and responsiveness to the volatile humanitarian context experienced in Greece, affected by EU migration policy and ongoing developments in the country. Its direct and open communication with donors has allowed it to establish long-lasting and mutually beneficial relationships and implement sustainable and quality programs for asylum-seeking and refugee communities living in Greece whilst working closely with the local population.

Better Days has invested highly in its staff, volunteers, and partners offering mandatory and optional training opportunities through a blended learning approach, clear SoPs, a dedicated human-focus approach to HR management, and quality programming. Our internal processes have been developed in accordance with best practices. Ultimately most of our programs are designed as blueprints and retain the ability to be customized, replicated, and implemented in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, international humanitarian standards, and Greek law.

## Weaknesses:

Over the years Better Days developed an exclusive stream of donors who have supported Better Days' growth and fuelled our ability to remain independent, neutral, and performance-focused within a highly political and unstable environment. In spite of the security this provides, Better Days has limited experience in communication which this Strategic Plan is aiming at countering by setting SMART objectives in this area and signaling the creation of a competent department in Communications and Fundraising.

## Opportunities:

- ISO certification and building competence in international quality standards.
- Accumulate expertise and know-how on four key pillars: Grant Management & Fundraising, Communications, Branding, Research & Advocacy, Development.

## Risks:

- Fundraising: need to identify new donors to secure existing program costs and enable a scale-up in Athens. In the absence of a broader donors' portfolio, BD could face an imminent risk of a funding gap, program discontinuity, or overall growth stagnation. The risk can escalate if existing donors are affected by Covid19 or other serious issues between 2020-2023.
- Covid19: Discontinuity of programming, increased programming costs due to health and safety, inability to access the population or operate in accordance with Greek guidelines and legislation, and consequences of regular outbreaks amongst team members.
- National requirements for non-profits: often unclear, strict/unrealistic time-frames and excessive cost ie., registration, ISO, audits, annual reports, translations.

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# METHODOLOGY & APPROACH TO BD STRATEGY 2020-2023

## **Methodology:**

Designing a strategic plan following the outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic, helped us define BD priorities for the immediate future. We do not only know who needs our help the most and where, but also how and what we can do to support refugee and asylum-seeking children and youth in Greece. This 3-year strategic plan is going to focus on internal alignment but also on stabilizing our funding by expanding our funder's portfolio. This will allow BD to remain focused on quality programming but also agile and responsive to emerging needs, changes, and developments on the ground.

Our approach to strategy is similar to our approach to programming: it is a real-time approach with elements of alignment planning which is helping us strengthen our internal communication and establish a shared sense of culture, identity, purpose, and vision for Better Days in Greece.

## OUR AREAS OF WORK 2020-2023

### **Child Protection & Homelessness:**

we help unaccompanied children access the national protection mechanism and navigate the legal asylum system, receive medical attention, and reunification with their families.

**Social Support & Safe Space:** we invest in the design and operation of safe child-friendly physical and emotional spaces for all participants and a holistic approach to social support.

**Quality Education:** We work closely with youth to understand their individual aspirations and help them access accredited learning opportunities, public schools, vocational training, and the Greek labor market.

**Covid19 Support:** we work closely with first responders and affected communities to support vulnerable groups access to PPE, medication, and medical care.



# PRIORITIES for every decade

## WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE BY 2030

Following the global outbreak of Covid19, Better Days designed its first 3-year strategic plan for the period of 2020-2023. Our approach to setting our strategy, the timeframe and SMART objectives was relevant to the times of unprecedented external instability and force-major events - from climate change-specific disasters to the global economic recession and Covid19 pandemic - and was the reason why we chose a real-time approach strategy with elements of alignment planning. Nevertheless we decided that a longer-term timeframe could be applied in setting our priorities for the decade. Following a series of team workshops and exercises we were not only able to define our mission, vision and values but also to identify our most pressing goals for realizing our ambition for 2030.

- Build more knowledge on how to handle humanitarian crisis and global risks.
- Develop excellent communication with the Greek child protection services and help counter homelessness and invisibility amongst unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- Invest in BD's branding as a new generation of professional humanitarian aid actors well equipped to implement largely impactful programs without losing their critical voice, their independence and ability to maneuver and adapt to volatile situations and changing circumstances/needs.
- Increase our impact in Greece and continue to promote a human-centre and holistic approach to humanitarian interventions in whatever we do.
- Commit to learning partnerships and prioritize localized humanitarian action and development.
- Diversify our portfolio of donors and partners and generate more income which will allow us to respond to the greatest needs affecting children and youth at risk at the right time.
- Invest in greener humanitarian aid and more sustainable practises.

Because of the sociopolitical instability and insecurity the pandemic is causing to our programming we commit to reviewing BDs priorities alongside the strategy review meeting in September 2023. Nonetheless, it is noted that a real-time planning approach to strategy requires frequent monitoring of progress and assessment of contextual change to remain relevant.





# STRATEGY TIMELINE

THIS SECTION STIPULATES ANNUAL STRATEGY REVIEW DATES BETWEEN 2020-2023

TASK	START DATE	END DATE
<b>REVIEW 01</b> SITUATION OVERVIEW & ASSESSMENT	OCTOBER 2020	NOVEMBER 2020
<b>REVIEW 02</b> POST-COVID PROJECTION & ASSESSMENT	MAY 2021	JUNE 2021
<b>REVIEW 03</b> SITUATION OVERVIEW & ASSESSMENT	JANUARY 2022	FEBRUARY 2022
<b>REVIEW 04</b> SITUATION OVERVIEW & ASSESSMENT	OCTOBER 2022	NOVEMBER 2022



# YEARLY PROJECTIONS

THIS SECTION IS REVIEWED ON A YEARLY BASIS. AMENDMENTS MAY OCCUR FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL STRATEGY REVIEW

YEAR	DATE RELEASED	TOTAL EURO
<b>BUDGET 2020</b>	FEBRUARY	1,000,000.00
<b>BUDGET 2021</b>	FEBRUARY	500,000.00
<b>BUDGET 2022</b>	JANUARY 2022	1,000,000.00
<b>BUDGET 2023</b>	JANUARY 2023	1,500,000.00



# STRATEGY BOARD

Drafting strategy is a big project and involves overseeing a lot of moving parts, oftentimes from different people. To have a successful rollout, the management relies on the input and thoughts of the rest of the team, to ensure objectives are SMART, are promptly met and on budget. SWOT and PESTLE are valuable analytical tools to help us determine the external and internal factors affecting our work. PESTLE will give us an overview of the different macro-environmental factors to be taken into consideration.

For Better Days, a strategy plan is more than a formal pathway to realizing our ambition and goals. It is the backbone of our organization as we try to bring about change for the better and leave a positive footprint on the world and communities we serve.

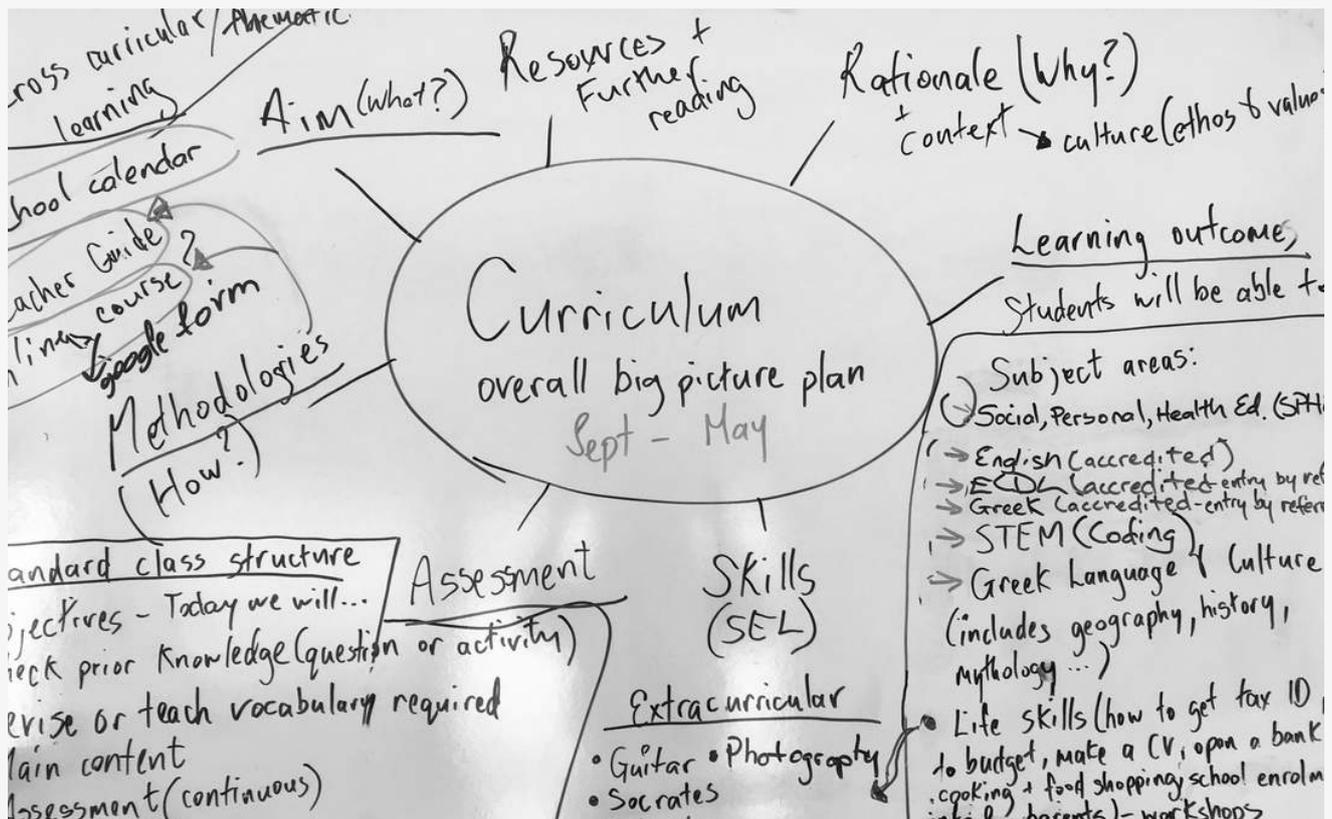
To achieve that, our strategy plan is aiming at answering fundamental questions like what is the scope of our work, our most immediate goals, what activities are involved in realizing our objectives, who will be responsible for that, and when is it expected to be completed?

**Better Days has invested in a democratic style of leadership that encourages participation from all members of the team. Although the road is paved by our executive team of directors Elena Moustaka & Andrew Foley, no decision is made without the input and careful consideration of Better Days' most valuable asset: its employees.**

In addition, when drafting Better Days' 3-year strategy, trusted associates and partners were encouraged to make recommendations and provide feedback during the annual reviews.

# BD'S COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

THIS SECTION INCLUDES THE TOOLS WHICH WE WILL USE TO COMMUNICATE OUR STRATEGY WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS



Better Day's aim is to convey information clearly and as frequently as possible to its key stakeholders through a combination of online and offline mediums which can help us amplify our message, receive feedback, increase donations, educate our audience, minimize noise and counter racism, xenophobia and false information.

Better Days Communication Strategy has the following priorities:

- fundraise
- be accountable: communicate information to key stakeholders
- engage in critical advocacy
- seek new collaborations
- expand reach and audience

## OUR COMMITMENT IN COMMUNICATIONS

1. WE SHALL CONDUCT FREQUENT EVALUATION ACTIVITIES TO MEASURE PROGRESS AS PER THE STRATEGIC PLAN & SMART OBJECTIVES. ASSESSMENT RESULTS SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED BROADLY WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION IN TEAM MEETINGS AND VIA EMAILS AND COMPANY COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS.

2. BETTER DAYS ACCOUNTABILITY PAGE ONLINE WWW.BETTERDAYS.NGO MUST INCLUDE THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANNUAL REVIEWS TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS.

# SMART OBJECTIVES 2020-2023

Objectives	Problems we are solving or opportunity we are going after	Support we need to achieve this goal	How will achieving this goal have a great impact?	Key Metrics. How will we know we have achieved this goal?
<p>Broaden BD's funding portfolio and increase fundraising capacity</p>	<p>Instability with funding and opportunity for program security</p>	<p>Acquire fundraising expertise and allocate human and other resources to communications and fundraising</p>	<p>It will help us to implement more holistic and sustainable interventions and promote an agile and reflexive approach to programs for better impact</p> <p>A Communications &amp; Fundraising specific position will allow us to reserve and focus capacity of all other team members to other areas of program development</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase annual funding capacity to 1,500,000 by 2023</li> <li>2. Broaden BD's funding stream by inviting and securing at least two EU or UN funding agreements by 2023</li> <li>3. Secure longer-term funding collaborations (12-24months) and avoid short term funding renewals</li> <li>4. Develop and implement a Comms/ Fundraising Strategy by 2021</li> <li>5. Scale up our programs to another location in Greece ie. Athens by 2021</li> </ol>
<p>Protection of UASC in Greece</p>	<p>Homelessness and invisibility of UASC living in Greece</p> <p>Limited access to legal aid and timely reunification with family in EU countries</p>	<p>Create capacity building and awareness among other actors and collaborate closely with illegal aid actors and the national protection mechanism to cater for the needs of UASC in Greece</p>	<p>Meeting international child protection standards and complimenting the Greek child-protection services to guarantee access to safe shelter, protection and legal aid for all UASCs</p> <p>Protecting UASC from being exposed to prolong stays in unsafe and deplorable living conditions, poverty and risk</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scale up of Themida in Athens by 2021</li> <li>2. Annual trainings of all actors interested in child protection with focus on identification and referral of UASC on Lesvos and in Athens</li> <li>3. Set-up of an external rapid response protocol as of 2021 to provide immediate relief to UASC at risk in Moria camp and in the streets of Athens (capacity for 5 RP per week)</li> <li>4. Scale up Themida's capacity to 200 UASC per year prioritizing unregistered UASC living in homelessness</li> </ol>

Adapt programs to Covid19 circumstances

Stagnation and lack of opportunity

Outbreaks and health and safety risks

Restrictions in movement, group activities and lockdown of population in camps

Create capacity to provide online or semi-online education for populations under lockdown

Train our staff and participants to be Covid19 responsible, equipping them with PPE

Need to identify and prioritize solving health and safety risks for more stable and safe programs

Learn to perform work remotely in a flexible manner and in various locations

Funding to support third parties with NFIs, PPE and educational material to secure access to education, medical care and other critical service during covid

Facilitating for access to public education and other critical services provided outside and inside the camp

Lower the risk factor for outbreaks within the communities we help

Manage negative psychosocial and physical outcomes caused by prolong lockdowns, Covid19 and limited or lack of access to medical aid, decent nutrition, and hygiene standards

Increase capacity and resources of health actors

1. Design a semi-online educational curriculum for our students at Gekko Kids to transition to a more Covid19 appropriate model by September 2020
2. Re-budget for PPE and create more competence in Health & Safety
3. Design of a Covid19 protocol and train staff, partners and participants to provide services safely during Covid
4. Offer online and small-group activities (education, legal, psychosocial support) to at least 200 participants per year
5. Provide frequent Information to 100% of our participants about Covid19-related decisions in Greece affecting their lives and asylum processes
6. Respond to 5+ local actors' per year for in-kind or monetary support during Covid19
7. Support RIC, EODY and medical actors to respond to Covid by contributing 20% of funds and capacity in the design of a Moria-wide Covid19 response plan

Access to quality or formal education

Illiteracy and dependency on aid and unemployment

Limited or no access to public education, accredited courses and learning opportunities for refugee & asylum seeking communities

Hire and train competent teaching staff and volunteers

Share expertise and collaborate with a wide network of educational actors

Create awareness about quality education

Create good collaboration with the formal education sector to open up dialogue and referral pathways

The goal will enable access to education for children and young people aiming to academic growth, skills building, employability and inclusion in the community

1. Provide tutoring lessons to 100 students per year during covid-19
2. Scale up Gekko Kids in Athens by 2023
3. Build and launch Better Days Studentship Scheme by 2021 for +17yrs students who strive to attend Greek Universities
4. Support access to education by helping 5+ other educational actors per year with educational material and/or training to provide education to children from disadvantage backgrounds coming from the local, refugee and other communities in Greece
5. Support access to public education for 20 students per year

Capacity Building  
& Sustainable  
Growth for Better  
Days

Develop expertise and design programs in line with Sustainability Development Goals and in line with ISO quality and other humanitarian standards

Opportunity to formalize our knowhow and invest in HR development with further training and accreditation

Build competence in new areas and boost organizational development

Remain ahead of the game, aware of the most effective, ethical and innovative methods and practices in the field and continue to be an example among other non profit organizations in Greece

Hire external consultants, trainers with experience and expertise in our area of focus

Acquire a wide portfolio of training resources ie training platforms, accredited courses for our staff, partners and participants

Achieve the development of a L&D plan with individualized approach to staff development

Invest a larger % of funds in capacity building, developing expertise and retaining or attracting experienced staff in back-office and senior roles (MEAL, Accounts, Quality, Compliance)

The making of more competent aid workers and field professionals providing services in Greece

Provision of quality services across all areas of work in Better Days, minimizing liability and risks and securing a child-focused and human-centre approach to our programming

Meeting accountability and transparency standards for non-profit organizations in Greece

Providing high quality programs in a more efficient way maximize impact and bring effective solutions on the ground

Creating awareness amongst our staff, partners and other social actors about the positive impact of aid when appropriate methodology and a locally-led approach is applied

1. Launch L&D program by 2021: Implementation of mandatory, individual and internal trainings on an annual basis for staff, volunteers and partners
2. Afford and attend capacity building in ISO, GDPR, MEAL and conducting Internal Audits by 2023
3. Receive and maintain the ISO9001:2015 certification
4. Successfully perform Financial Audits for 2018-2023
5. Increase accountability by creating a better website which publicises and communicates key information about Better Days operations, programs and governance.
6. Hiring a Compliance Officer, Fundraising / Development Expert, Advocacy Support, ISO consultant, and other key positions to realize growth.

