

Athens, 22.05.2020

Minutes of the 76th MHPSS Technical Working Group at Babel Day Centre

Chaired by Nikos Gkionakis

Participants: ARSIS, GCR, Society of Social Psychiatry P. Sakellaropoulos, IOM, EPAPSY, Network for Children’s Rights, IRC, Solidarity Now, ADDMA, TdH, UNHCR, MsF VoT, MsF Swiss, Babel Day Centre

Agenda:

- Discussion and updates on the current situation
- AOB

<p>Discussion and updates on the current situation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNHCR: UNHCR informed that since March 2019, approximately 2,700 beneficiaries of international protection have been exited from ESTIA accommodation. According to the new asylum law and the new Joint Ministerial Decision on ESTIA, beneficiaries of international protection are obliged to exit from the accommodation scheme 30 days after they receive the decision granting status by the Asylum Service. The vulnerability criteria for the persons that can still remain in the accommodation scheme have also changed. It is estimated that around 8500 people will be asked to exit the accommodation scheme (sites, hotels, apartments) by the end of May. Beneficiaries of international protection affected by exit are being referred to Helios project. However according to the feedback received by UNHCR’s accommodation partners and beneficiaries of international protection, there are many challenges such as difficulties in finding apartments
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beneficiaries themselves and language barriers. It is expected that a big number of refugees will not comply with the current exit strategy and will not leave the apartments. The government is currently discussing on legal measures that can be taken for those who will not comply with the decision. UNHCR has already requested extension for the most vulnerable of them from the Ministry. They are waiting to see how the Ministerial decision will be implemented.

- **IOM:** The lockdown of the three sites was over. Two more psychologists were added to Malakasa site. There is a good collaboration with the staff of Red Cross. IOM focused on the provision of protection assistance and emergency transfers. 150 individuals remain unregistered in the site of Malakasa.
- **Solidarity Now:** The Athens Solidarity Centre has reopened and receives beneficiaries only after appointment. An appointment can be arranged by phone, e-mail, facebook. Regarding PSS services, new referrals are not yet accepted, maybe in a month. Only individuals who do not have access to technical infrastructure are having their sessions in the Centre up to now.
- **TdH:** TdH is now responsible for the safe zone in Skaramagas site. The protection teams continue to provide services in the sites.
- **IRC:** Webinars focused on health providers and protection actors' staff in the islands were launched by IRC. The helpline will start operating on 25th May and the first appointments will be scheduled for the 27th May. There will be a morning and afternoon zone.
- **EPAPSY:** On Tuesday 19th May started operating the PSS helpline with community workers in Farsi and Arabic language. More information on this initiative can be found in the following link:

	<p>http://epapsy.gr/index.php/nea/ekdiloseis/item/489-19-5-2020-psychosocial-support-pss-helpline-for-refugees-asylum-seekers-in-greece</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MsF Swiss: A helpline operates in Sotiria hospital by MsF. The Day Care Centre in Solonos operates as usual and discussions are made for the reopening of the group activities. • Velos Youth Centre: Velos Youth Centre reopened and beneficiaries can come to the centre for washing clothes or having a shower or for having one-to-one sessions with social workers after appointment. Referrals can be made by phone (2108256749) or by e-mail (marios@veloyouth.org; thanos@veloyouth.org;). Velos Youth Centre is focused on the provision of services to individuals from 16 to 21 years old.
<p>Changes that were noticed due to COVID-19 in the provision of PSS services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MsF Swiss: Increased need for mental health support during this period. Increased difficulty for registration in the Asylum Services. • IRC: Increased need for follow-up sessions. Decreased access to psychiatric support since psychiatrists cannot provide easily remotely assessments for newly referred beneficiaries. • MsF VoT: An effort was made to quickly translate material in multiple languages so that beneficiaries can have access to accurate information. Magnified symptoms or relapse of certain symptoms were noticed. Difficulty on accessing food reported some beneficiaries. • ADDMA: Increase of domestic violence was reported.
<p>AOB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unicef was offered to support the MHPSS TWG with the greek translation of the Basic psychosocial skills guide. • The Operational Guidance for Multi-Sectoral MHPSS will also be translated in greek language by the support of colleagues from different organizations. The material is to be shared

	during the following days.
Material shared during the meeting	https://www.facebook.com/notleavingmyhome/ https://www.facebook.com/RefugeesTogether/?_tn_ =HHH-R
Agenda for the next WG	-Discussion and updates on the current situation -AOB

The next MHPSS WG meeting is going to take place on **Friday 5th of June** at **09:30 -11:30**.