

Lesvos, November 2020

Dear friends and supporters.

This time, our newsletter does not contain happy faces and new explorations.

On Friday, 30th of October, police and military forces [evacuated](#) PIKPA Camp on Lesvos, [a place](#) that has hosted thousands of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees since 2012. PIKPA residents were moved to the Camp of Kara Tepe, which is run by the Municipality of Lesvos. According to the announcement of the Greek Ministry of Migration & Asylum, this hosting facility will also close by the 31st of December 2020! Creating or preserving a proper reception facility for the most vulnerable among the thousands of refugees on Lesvos does not seem to be in the Ministry's agenda.



Eviction of PIKPA Camp. At the back of the photo on the left, the yurt of Mikros Dounias.

PIKPA was an open, community-run camp, where some of the most vulnerable refugees on the island were hosted (please watch the video [“8 years PIKPA” here](#); Mikros Dounias is mentioned on minute 05:30). How painful it is to realize that this center of solidarity, this seed of hope, in contrast to reception facilities run by the state, is now deserted!

PIKPA camp was also the place where Mikros Dounias' heart was beating. The project has made its first steps in this friendly environment and has been supporting the families with young children residing in PIKPA for the last 3,5 years. The closure of the camp makes us sad and angry and at the same time drastically affects our operation, since our intercultural approach was based on the daily meeting of local and refugee children inside PIKPA camp.

Since the closure of PIKPA, we continue our outdoor learning activities with our group of local children and a few refugee children. Their families were once residing in PIKPA camp and, with the support of [Lesvos Solidarity](#), managed to get jobs and a house outside the camp. We are very happy that they still are part of our team. As long as the local families are concerned, we have committed to provide a safe educational frame for their children till June, i.e. the end of this school year. We realize our responsibility towards the parents who have trusted Mikros Dounias for the first steps of their children in education. In the meanwhile, the second wave of Covid-19 has affected our plans: all educational institutions in Greece

needed to permanently stop their operation, following the general lockdown. For now, we communicate through videos that the pedagogues send to the families and Zoom assemblies among parents and members of the team. We cannot wait to being able to see each other again!



Playing with mud with our current group of children in the forest.

The problem of a safe space for Mikros Dounias is already solved: We have managed to rent an olive grove and install our yurt in this beautiful place. This was a relief in the blackness we are experiencing.



During the installation of our yurt in the new land of Mikros Dounias.

At the same time, we are trying to identify new ways of operation, so as to continue supporting our mandate for the promotion of outdoor intercultural education on Lesvos. We promise to keep you updated!

With grief and a small amount of hope,

The team of Mikros Dounias