

Dear friends,

After a challenging yet rewarding school year in [Mikros Dounias](#), we would like to thank you for the meaningful support that you provided us with. In this e-mail you can find a collection of photos and a brief report of what we have been doing over the past months. We share it with you in order to thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

The updates

- Mikros Dounias has been operating successfully from October 2017 till the end of June 2018. Unlike schools and kindergartens in Greece we will keep operating in July and August. Our second school year will begin in September.
- During the past months, 5 local and 11* refugee children spent their days together in a small piece of woods within [Lesvos Solidarity](#) refugee camp (*the places for refugee children have been 7, yet they were successively occupied by 11 children, as the refugee population of Lesvos is usually in transition). We plan to increase our capacity during the next school year, yet not immensely: we try to make small, secure steps in order to be able to offer qualitative pedagogy.
- We achieved our principal goal: close love and trust relationships were developed within the group. We noticed significant changes in the behavior of specific children as well as in their ability to trust in others and express their feelings.
- We learnt thousands of things with and from each other, starting with words in each other's languages (Greek, Arabic, Kurmanji Kurdish, Sorani Kurdish, English).
- We became experts in free play and had the chance to experiment and create with natural materials on a daily basis.
- Twice a week, there was an optional music or art class, provided voluntarily by two local mothers, who happen to be experts on the fields.
- We confirm the saying "There is no bad weather, only bad clothing". The children could choose between being indoors or outdoors at any time (we provided each child with a rain suit, a ski suit and a pair of wellies that could be used for this purpose). The children generally preferred to spend their time outdoors rather than next to the stove in our cosy yurt. It seems that they belong to nature!
- During May and June, we often visited a small piece of woods nearby the camp. We found out that it is very beneficial for the refugee children to spend some time outside the camp. During the next school year, we are planning with undertaking excursions on a weekly basis. For this purpose, we are currently trying to find cheap yet safe baby car seats - let us know if you have any ideas!

- Seven local families actively supported the project – five of their children are already in Mikros Dounias and four more will join us once they grow old enough (we host children from 2,5 to 5 years of age). It is surprising and touching how much time and effort these families invest in the project. In order for their children to join the project, local families pay a monthly fee according to their financial capacities.
- All pedagogues and parents of the children met at least once a month in order to talk or celebrate together. This is a central goal of our project, on which we will focus even more in the future: While local and refugee children meet within a just pedagogical frame, their parents meet as equals, work on a common goal, exchange and become friends.
- We are constantly educating ourselves and our community on matters that are linked to our efforts. There are three big axons, under which our research is organized:
 1. Learning beyond discrimination
 2. Learning & freedom
 3. Learning in natureIn case you have any relevant suggestions (for example literature or sources that we can use, in order to educate ourselves on these matters) please send us an e-mail to mikrosdounias@gmail.com

The photos

We put together some photos, in order give you an insight of our life in Mikros Dounias - please find them in the PDF attached.

Some of them reveal how we spend the money collected from our crowdfunding campaign and further donations: Construction of a wooden floor for our yurt and our pagoda tent; building up a compost toilet; building up wooden constructions in the forest; wood for our stove; books; educational and creative material; outdoor clothing. The rest of the money is used to cover our stable monthly expense, which is the salaries for two pedagogues.

We are very open to comments or questions, suggestions or ideas. Just contact us!

Warm regards,

The team of Mikros Dounias