

Dear Brothers and Sisters in
Christ,

The Bishop in Europe:
The Right Reverend Dr. Robert Innes

BISHOP'S LENT

APPEAL 2019

Mental Health and Livelihoods Support for the Vulnerable in Greece

I send you this appeal as we begin to prepare our hearts and minds for the beginning of Lent in three weeks' time.

Natural as well as man-made disasters in our world bring hurt and heartbreak to all those affected. They remind us of the fragility of our human existence, wherever we live. Where natural disaster has occurred, there is physical suffering: the tragedy of lives lost, or the pain of families, homes and livelihoods devastated. But the wounds are also psychological. And they frequently do not manifest themselves immediately, but later on. This is especially true for the vulnerable and applies particularly to children.

In July 2018, the resort village of Mati witnessed Greece's worst ever forest fires. The death toll reached 100, over 200 people injured, and over 700 evacuated from their homes. To these numbers, we should add the number suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other psychological after-effects.

An Athens-based organisation called Hestia Hellas is providing a vulnerable community with sustainable tools and a skill set necessary to participate in daily life and thrive in times of difficulties. Greece is facing multiple challenges including an economic crisis, an influx of refugees and migrants and the devastating fires that have deprived many families from housing and jobs. Hestia Hellas is dedicated to offering psycho-social support services, Child Friendly Space, jobs and life skills support, and food distribution to those in need.

In a video, our chaplain in Athens, Fr. Leonard Doolan and Lauraine Velez, Co-Founder and Director of Hestia Hellas speak about the project. This can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amsICtNval1s&feature=youtu.be>

There will be an Appeal launch on the Diocesan website at <https://europe.anglican.org/bishops-appeals/bishops-appeals>, followed by regular updates on the website, and our social media. Do keep an eye out for these. And please do consider how you can support my appeal. As usual, you can give money to this appeal through your church treasurer, who will forward money to the diocesan office.

Hestia Hellas express in their own words why this cause is so important and how we can help:

“The Greeks, who were recent refugees themselves, know what it’s like to be forced from their homes. They have a special word in their culture, Filoxenia, which the literal translation means “friend to the foreigner”. Greeks, like the many refugees and migrants we see today need our help to regain parts of themselves that they’ve lost through devastating experiences. With the continued support of the Anglican Church, and their generosity, we can serve the Greek and refugee populations side by side.”

I wish you a holy and spiritually fulfilling Lent.

With every blessing,

+ Robert Gibraltar in Europe

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HESTIA HELLAS COMMUNITY APPEAL

Hestia Hellas provides psychosocial support (PSS) and livelihoods training to vulnerable populations in Greece. Sustainability, integration and community building are our core values, therefore when news broke of the devastating forest fires in Mati, we felt very impassioned and ready to do all that we could to offer our support. In the face of such tragedy the nation has once again rallied in a massive show of solidarity. In July 2018, the resort village of Mati witnessed Greece's worst ever forest fires. The death toll reached 100, over 200 people injured, and over 700 evacuated from their homes. When you take into consideration the many who are suffering from PTSD and other psychological after-effects from the tragedy, this number is significantly higher.



Our psychologists Kate Cooper and Ourania Kirka volunteered their time and skills to create an entire workshop to present to support workers in Mati. They were taught what symptoms the victims may experience; how to identify them; strategies and coping mechanisms they can offer to victims; and ways in which people can rebuild their lives and cope with the after-effects that will undoubtedly stay with them for years to come. We continue to support them with supervision, feedback and any other needs that may arise.

Hestia's goals have been the same since our inception; to help our beneficiaries prosper and achieve a more dignified life through the critical support and self-sustaining skills we provide. Our holistic approach comprises all of our services from our Child-Friendly Space (CFS) to our food distribution services. On average we serve 300 people per day and a total of 6,000 beneficiaries per month in our 480 square meter community center located in central Athens.

Mental Health and Livelihoods Support is an ongoing and growing need within the refugee and Greek communities, with a demand higher than the supply. Hestia fills this gap by providing tailored and adaptable services for Children, Adolescents and Adults. Recent developments in Greece show that support for refugees is decreasing and international NGOs are leaving Greece for crises elsewhere. Support for Greeks is also dire with the increasingly strained public sector and high taxes. Within a short timeframe, multiple organizations providing PSS and warm meals have closed due to limited funding. Thus, Hestia Hellas is receiving an increase in referrals and is expecting a larger demand for our services. With natural disasters, like the fires in Mati and the current economic depression, there will always be more areas that we can help both the native Greek populations and those fleeing war and persecution. In addition, we emphasize cooperation with other actors and providing relevant referrals to other NGOs and the Public or Private Sector. We also collaborate internally between PSS, CFS and Livelihoods services to create a holistic support system for our beneficiaries.

Psycho-social support team and roles

The majority of the clients we see are coping with depression, anxiety disorders, PTSD, OCD and Personality Disorders. Cases are evaluated on a case-by-case basis with subsequent referral to external specialists as appropriate. We welcome individuals regardless of their residency status or accommodation arrangements, and welcome both self-referrals and agency referrals. Our core Interpreting staff include Arabic, Farsi, French, Turkish, Urdu, Somali and Sorani. We are always seeking other ways to help, the devastating recent wildfires in Mati is one example. With the help of the Anglican Church, we can continue to provide much-needed, specialized support for survivors of the Mati fires through our workshops, trainings and experienced Greek staff. Our hope is to help them lead normal lives again, while rebuilding their homes.



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Community Appeal - additional information

Hestia Hellas serves vulnerable Greek and refugee populations in Athens in their path to independence and participation in society. We focus on integration, autonomy, and sustainability by providing psychosocial support, job and life skills, therapeutic interventions for special needs children, and community advocacy. Hestia Hellas uses an holistic approach in order to support the social and economic integration of vulnerable communities into the Greek society. We are providing a vulnerable community with sustainable tools and a skill set necessary to participate

in daily life and thrive in times of difficulties. Greece is facing multiple challenges including an economic crisis, an influx of refugees and migrants and recently devastating fires that have deprived many families from housing and jobs. At Hestia Hellas they have safe access to multiple programs that will help them cope with the situation and strengthen their position in society. Many have experienced traumatic events including abuse, violence and natural disasters which can have long term effects on their mental health and their position in society.



Psychosocial Support (PSS) services

Our 8-person PSS team provides group and 1:1 therapy to children, adolescents and adults. Modalities used among the team include, CBT, Gestalt and Psychodynamic therapies. In addition to therapeutic sessions, our PSS team also holds about 3-8 workshops per month, including places like Mati. We also tailor workshops for other NGOs, beneficiaries, schools and other local stakeholders.

Child-Friendly Space

Our CFS is run by volunteers who have background in psychology, education and mental health. Modalities used are ABA, (Applied Behaviour Analysis), TEACCH model (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related to handicapped Children), PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and MAKATON with a focus in on therapeutic interventions for children with special needs. The CFS is open to all children ages 2-17 years old. Some of our educational activities include an IT program, English, Maths, Science Activities, emotional learning and health and nutrition among others. Our CFS also provides the ideal location to identify children who have been Victims of Torture (VoTs), sexual violence, PTSD and other forms of trauma to be referred internally to our PSS team.



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Livelihoods (job and life skills support)

Our Livelihoods program currently offers computer classes such as typing, Word, Excel and PowerPoint. We also have a job wall where we advertise any local openings for which our beneficiaries may qualify. We offer CV preparation, interviewing skills and assistance in applying for universities here in Greece. We will also be expanding our current services to include life skills and focusing more on on-line learning with certificates from American and British universities. In addition, we provide a 12-week Sustainable Entrepreneurship for Empowerment and Development (SEED) Business Course the next of which will start in February. Currently, our livelihoods is solely run by volunteers.

Food Distribution

We offer a warm lunch every weekday, from 12-15:00 hours and serve up to 3,000 persons per month.



Our appeal covers the cost of our PSS Coordinator who is a Greek national with over a decade of experience and holds a Masters Degree in Psychology. She not only supervises the 8-person PSS team, but also create leading workshops for practitioners, beneficiaries, and leads any further support provided to Mati wildfire survivors. Additional funds would cover the cost of our Child/Adolescent Psychologist, a Greek national who also holds a Masters Degree in Psychology and has over 4 years of experience working for vulnerable groups. Both paid professionals adhere to the strict codes within their field and will comply with the UK's safeguarding procedures.

Psychologist Supervisor	£2,000 month (actual salary €1,200)	£24,000
Child/Adolescent Psychologist	£1200 (actual salary €900)	£14,400
Total / year:		£38,400

We pray the Bishop's lent appeal will allow us to continue these much-needed services. Any surplus funding will go directly towards the salary of our Child/Adolescent Psychologist as outlined above. Our video lent appeal, found on Hestia Hellas's youtube [page](#), further outlines the work we do and our valued and esteemed partnership with the Anglican Church.

Please feel free to contact me at lauraine@hestiahellas.org for any additional information.
Co-Founder and Director

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