

LIGHTHOUSE RELIEF

2023-2027

# STRATEGIC PLAN



**PREPARED AND APPROVED BY**

THE LIGHTHOUSE RELIEF STEERING COMMITTEE  
(BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE TEAM)

ATHENS, GREECE JANUARY 2023

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# ABOUT LIGHTHOUSE RELIEF



OUR MISSION IS TO FILL  
GAPS IN HUMANITARIAN  
PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE  
SEEKING REFUGE.

## ETHOS

Our ethos of flexibility, accountability, and inclusivity, means that we adapt quickly to evolving needs on the ground and draw on the experiences of team members and partners who have lived as refugees to shape our response.

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# ORIGINS

Refugees have been crossing from Turkey to Greece's Aegean islands under perilous conditions for decades. However, in 2015 the escalation of conflict in Syria and other disruptive occurrences displaced an unprecedented number of people worldwide, driving 1.3 million to seek asylum in Europe.

Half a million of them (500,018 according to UNHCR) entered via the village of Skala Sykamineas on the north shore of Lesbos, which has a population of only 140 people.

In the fishing village of Skala Sykamineas, residents struggled to support so many people in urgent need of food, shelter, clothing and medical care.

**“There are 100 people in this village. When the refugees were coming, there were 50-60 boats per day. We were all alone.”**


– Stratos Valimos, a fisherman from Skala Sykamineas, whose leadership of local rescue efforts earned him a Nobel Peace Prize nomination in 2015.

In 2016, European countries began shutting their borders to asylum seekers, stranding many of them in Greece.

## LIGHTHOUSE RELIEF IS FORMED

In September 2015, as the average number of daily arrivals neared its peak of 4,000, volunteers from Sweden, Norway, Syria, the UK and Spain met in Skala Sikamineas and coordinated the first round-the-clock emergency response.

They kept a lookout for vessels stranded at sea and welcomed people coming ashore with warm blankets. In a field across from the beach, they set up a camp offering treatment for hypothermia, a hot meal, dry clothes, and other respites. These volunteers became the founders of Lighthouse Relief.



**“We were a group of strangers, but we pulled together to form a team and do what needed to be done.”**

– Aliya Abidi, describing the early days of Lighthouse Relief



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# OUR SCOPE OF WORK

WE ENVISION A SOCIETY THAT OFFERS SAFE HARBOUR TO REFUGEES, UPHOLDS UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND CREATES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ANYONE TO THRIVE.



## AREAS OF SUPPORT AND SERVICES PROVIDED

**Emergency Response**  
(Food, Non-Food Items, Shelter)

**Access to Social Services and Integration Support**

**Mental Health and Psychosocial Support**

- Information points
- Streetwork and outreach shifts
- Multilingual helplines
- Emergency Housing
- Case management
- Safe spaces
- Educational activities
- Sports activities
- Recreational activities
- Referral pathways
- Distributions



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# OUR VALUES

## AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Put **the people we serve first** by responding to their needs, valuing their ideas, and recognising them as part of the solution.
- **Prove ourselves worthy of trust**, respect, and support by communicating honestly and transparently with our partners, including when we fall short.
- **Never give up.** Adapt as circumstances change. Seek creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Be willing to learn and grow from mistakes.
- Welcome ideas and initiatives from **all community members**, regardless of background or affiliation. Within the team, avoid hierarchy and encourage constructive criticism.
- Uphold the highest standards of **human dignity** by recognising the humanity, agency, and equal rights of everyone.





# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## OBJECTIVE 1: ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

### A) STABLE FINANCES

- Establish financial reserves equal to one year of operating expenses.

### B) COMMITTED PERSONEL

- Maintain appropriate staffing levels for all key programmatic and operational positions to reduce the risk of burnout.
- Offer competitive remuneration to attract and retain talent.
- Support staff well-being through regular check-ins, annual and sick leave policies, access to psychosocial support, peer-to-peer support, and coaching.
- Provide professional growth and development opportunities through trainings, field visits, participation in relevant conferences, and 360-degree evaluations and feedback.

### C) GOOD GOVERNANCE

- Comply with national regulatory requirements.
- Practice quality control and auditing through thorough proper documentation and record keeping, GDPR compliance, and adhering to best practices for NGO transparency.
- Maintain a clear division of roles and responsibilities among the organisational leadership, including executive, regulatory, advisory and operational positions.



## OBJECTIVE 2: PROGRAMMATIC EXCELLENCE

### A) RUN QUALITY PROGRAMMING

Target the needs of underserved/hard-to-reach populations within the refugee and asylum-seeking community based on regular needs assessment.

### B) BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Prioritise their needs and incorporate them into programme design and implementation.

### C) KEEP PROGRAMMING FLEXIBLE

Adapt to the evolving needs of our target population, changes in the political environment, or unforeseen circumstances.

### D) PURSUE AND MAINTAIN PARTNERSHIPS

Partner with trustworthy actors working toward shared goals to benefit from additional brainpower, capacity and cost efficiency.

### E) COORDINATE SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER ACTORS

Prevent duplication and maximise our collective impact.

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## OBJECTIVE 3: COMMUNITY INCLUSIVITY

### A) RECRUIT PEOPLE WITH LIVED REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

The composition of our team and Board of Directors should reflect our commitment to creating jobs and pathways to leadership position for people from the communities we serve.

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### B) COMMIT TO MAKING EVERYONE FEEL WELCOME

People from the communities we serve should feel welcome, safe, and valued whenever they visit our premises or participate in our activities.

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### C) RESPECT OUR NEIGHBOURS AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO BE PARTNERS IN OUR WORK.

This includes people who live or work in Skala Sykamineas, Chalkida, Athens' Victoria Square district (or wherever we have a base of operations), regardless of their background.

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## OBJECTIVE 4: HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY

### A) POLICY CHANGE

Implement an advocacy strategy that works towards fair and inclusive asylum policies in collaboration with advocacy partners.

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### B) PUBLIC AWARENESS

Campaign to counter the prevailing narrative that asylum seekers threaten national and border security by appealing to our shared humanity.

- Amplify stories that refugees want to tell.
- Leverage host community members to reach the “movable middle”, which refers to people who do not feel strongly on either end of the spectrum and therefore can be convinced either way.





# PROGRAMMATIC IMPACT

## GOALS

1

### PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH AND PYSCOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

through safe spaces, sports, recreational and educational activities.

2

### DISTRIBUTE EMERGENCY FOOD, NON- FOOD ITEM'S

and facilitate access to shelter and healthcare

3

### CONNECT PEOPLE

in need of humanitarian protection with services not otherwise accessible to them through case management and partner referrals.