



FINDING REFUGE'S DUNIYA HOUSE

2020-2021

FINDING REFUGE

PROJECT REPORT ON DUNIYA HOUSE

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DUNIYA HOUSE WAS FORMED AS A RESPONSE TO A GROWING HOUSING CRISIS IN THE MIDST OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In July 2020, there was a surge in homelessness for refugees and asylum seekers in Athens, Greece due to evictions by both the Greek government and the UNHCR. In total, the government evicted 8,000 recognized refugees from camps and accommodations across the country. The first phase of evictions led to nearly 200 people sleeping in Victoria Square in Athens, where refugees faced continuous harassment by police and fascist groups. The situation was deteriorating day by day and the level of need for our services was growing.



**WELCOME TO
DUNIYA HOUSE**

WHY DUNIYA HOUSE?

Finding Refuge opened Duniya Housing Center in the face of growing demand and limited funds. This new model allows us to house more people than our previous model of renting out individual apartments, as well as streamline our services. Duniya House welcomed its first tenants in August 2020. With this centralized location, we are now able to provide safe and dignified housing, emergency assistance, asylum support and additional services. Duniya House comprises of a community working to support each other, and it is also a space where individuals can work on themselves and a particular goal. Those who apply for Duniya housing must disclose a particular goal. Our team of on-site coordinators, caseworkers and volunteers will assist them in their journey to achieving this goal via the provision of asylum case support and connection to services. At Duniya, we believe in fostering an inclusive, collaborative and engaged community that supports one another.





BREAKDOWN

15

ROOMS

3

FLOORS

**50-60
PERSON***

OCCUPANCY

4

BATHROOMS

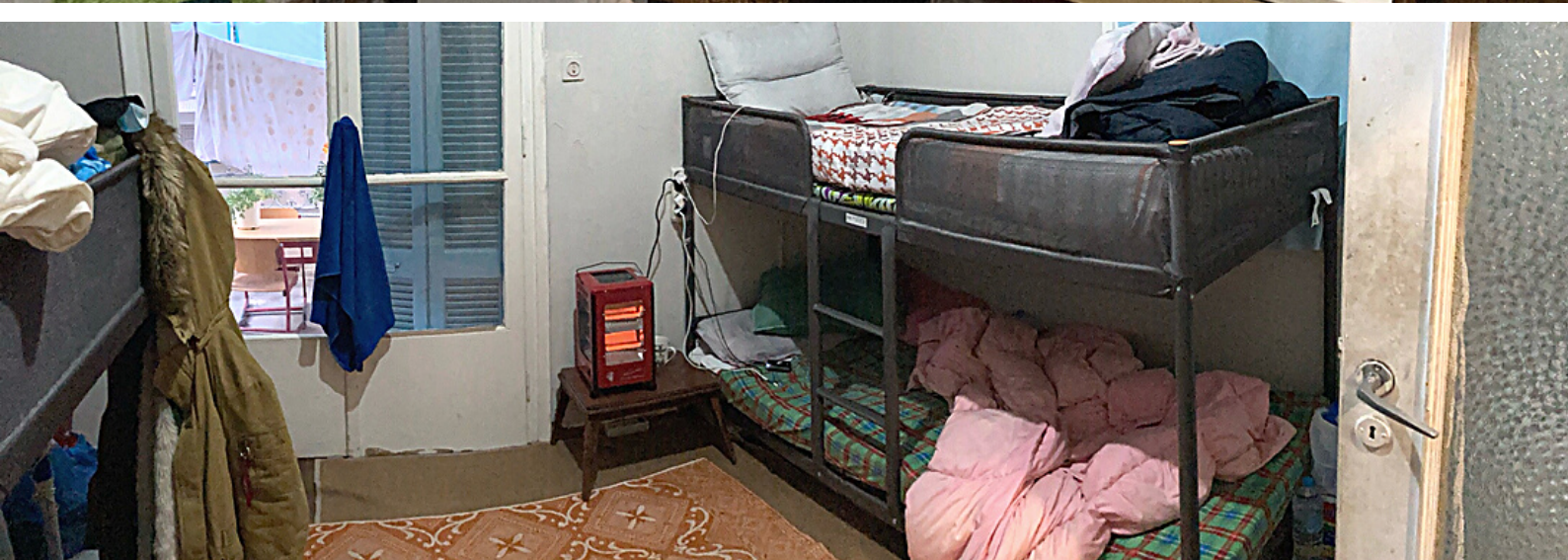
4

KITCHENS

*This max occupancy varies depending on tenant unit in each rooms and what is comfortable and dignified for all residents. Ideally, each room should house at least four people but this may vary as there might be smaller family units occupying a room.

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- Provide immediate emergency housing assistance for vulnerable and neglected refugees and asylum seekers.
- Build a network of support for beneficiaries and create individually catered self-sufficiency plans
- Develop community dialogue and engage beneficiaries in the management and operations of the Duniya House
- Create an inclusive and open space which encourages beneficiaries to engage with each other
- Provide assistance with accessing other social services
- Streamline communications and check-ins with beneficiaries



DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Below are the steps we took to ensure that this accommodation shelter will be successful.

Step 1: Building Search: We found and secured a building for rent. Price negotiation was essential to ensure financial feasibility for the project.

Step 2: Budget Development: Determined projected costs for the building and formulated a longer term budget. We assessed the funding gaps by calculating current and confirmed revenue streams and costs.

Step 3: Fundraising: Used the budget as a guide to determine the funding gaps and aimed to fill them. This stage is continuous as we are still looking for funds to help cover monthly costs.

Step 4: Project Implementation (current): Completing building repairs, conducting housing intakes, and moving tenants in to the building



52

TOTAL
HOUSED

10

TRANSITIONED
OUT

27

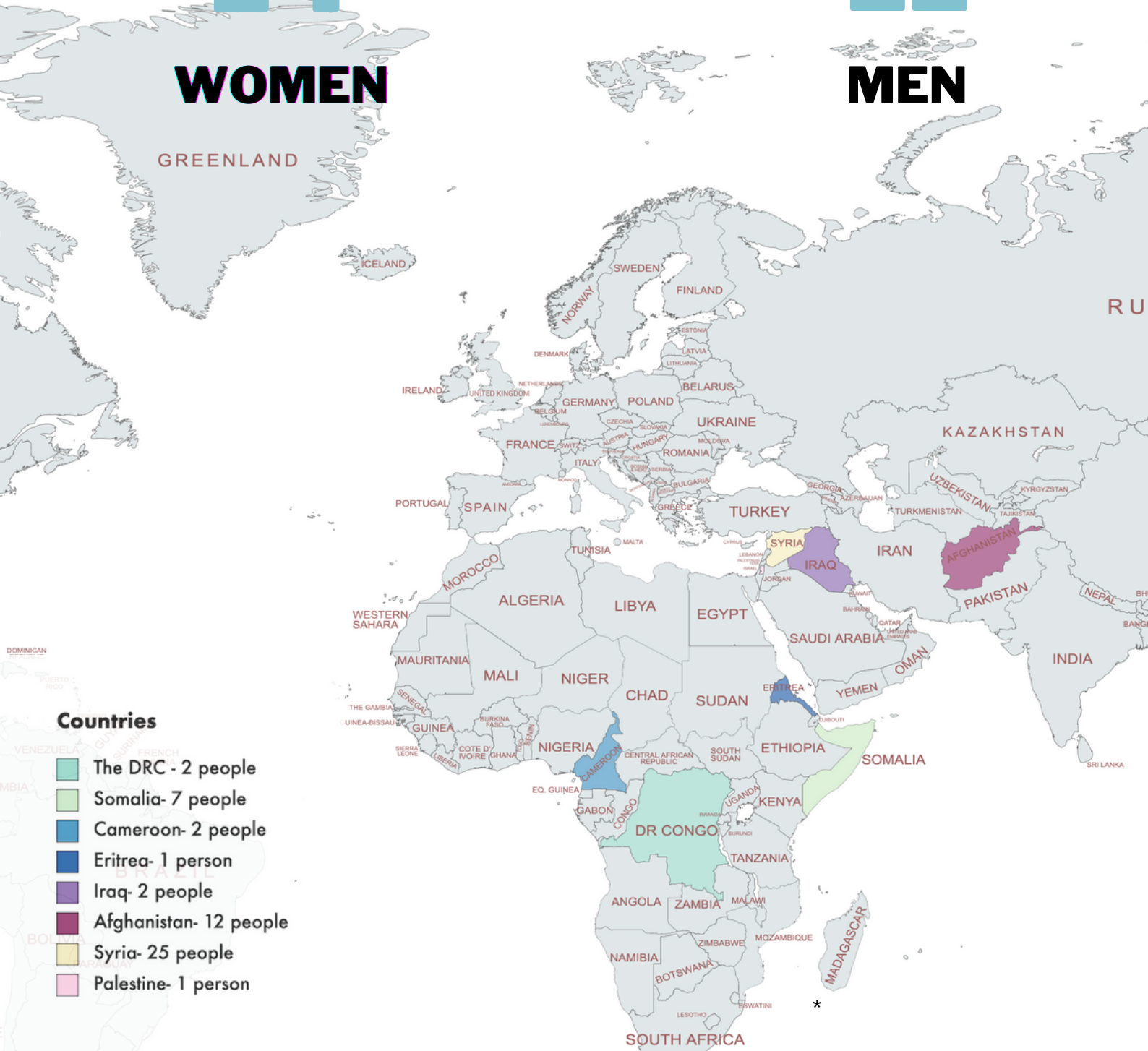
CHILDREN

14

WOMEN

11

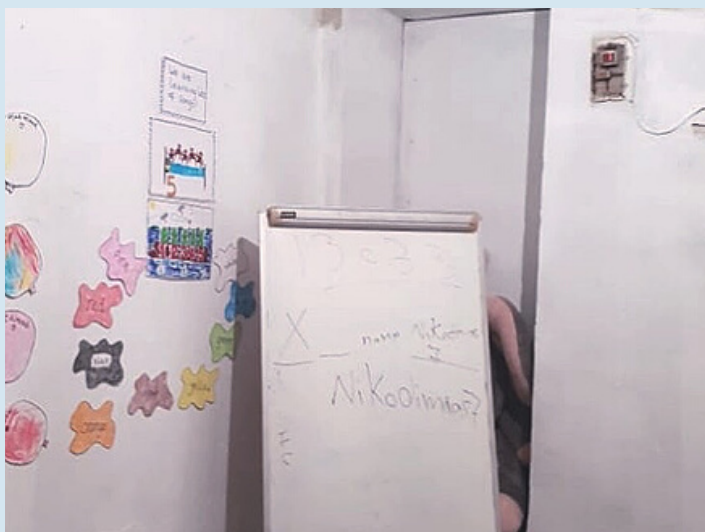
MEN





OUR CLASSROOM

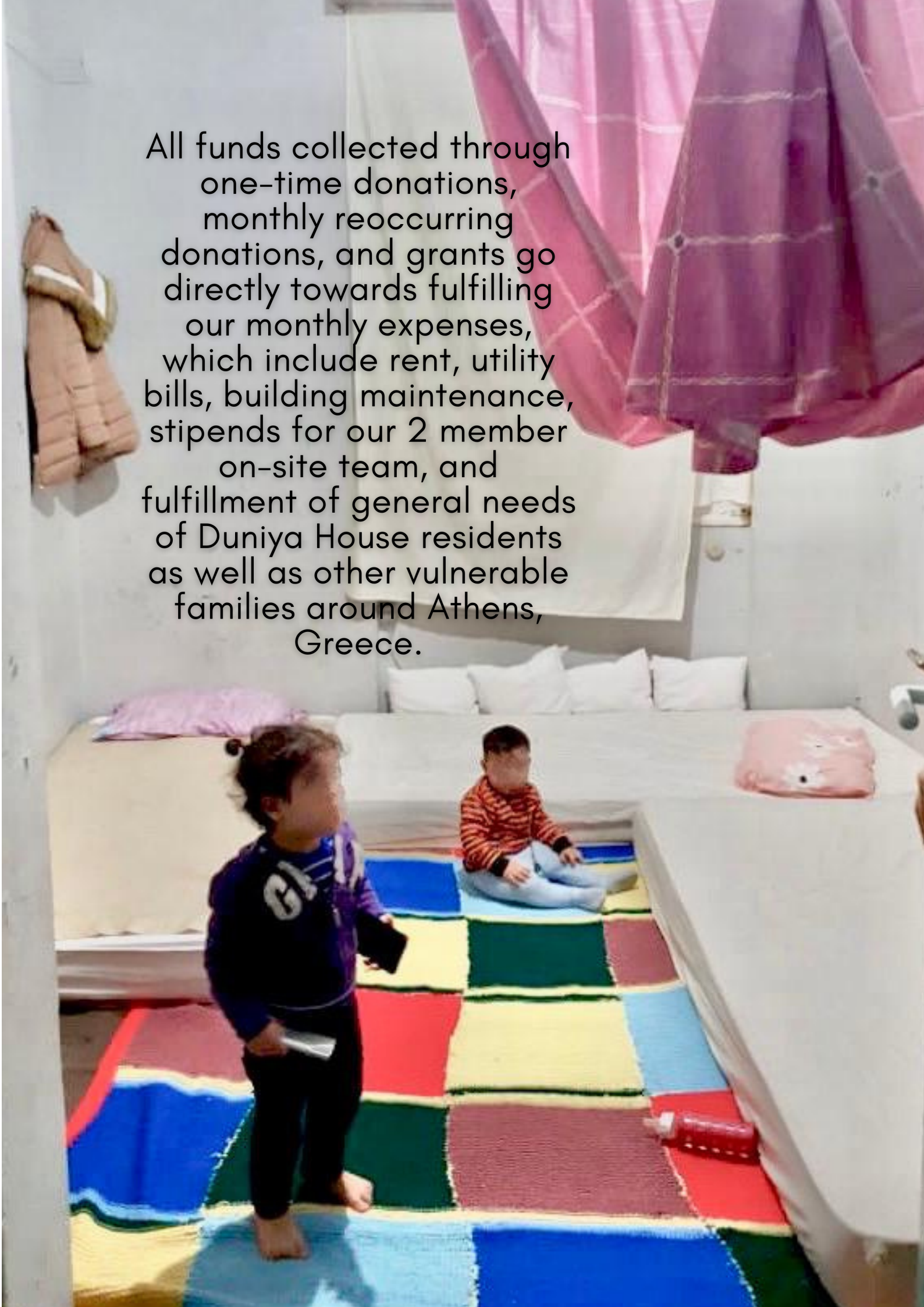
In September, we began providing English courses at Duniya House for all residents interested! A certified teacher volunteers to host classes 3 times a week in our very own classroom.



Classes are conducted for children, teenagers, and adults. Some of our residents have shown great improvement in their English language skills since classes began!

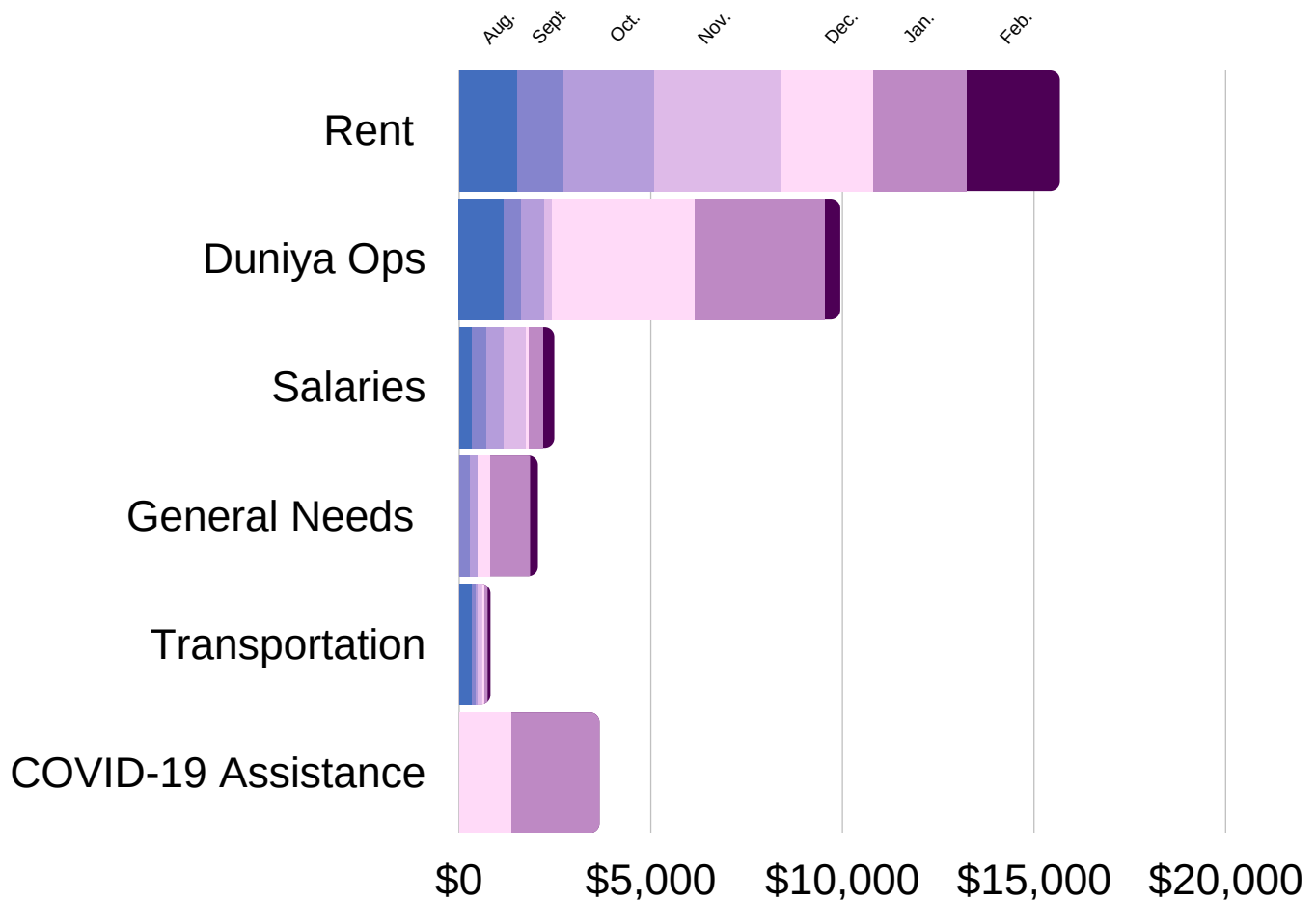


All funds collected through one-time donations, monthly reoccurring donations, and grants go directly towards fulfilling our monthly expenses, which include rent, utility bills, building maintenance, stipends for our 2 member on-site team, and fulfillment of general needs of Duniya House residents as well as other vulnerable families around Athens, Greece.



EXPENSES

SINCE THE FOUNDING OF DUNIYA (AUGUST - FEBRUARY)

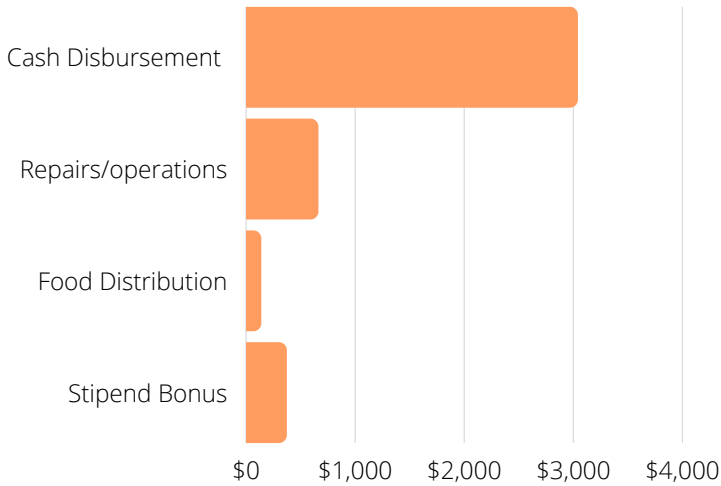


The graph above depicts categorized expenses from August 2020, Duniya House's founding, to February 2021. Duniya operations cover costs related to ongoing repairs, essential operations such as utility bills, cleaning supplies, food items, fridges, stoves, and other household items and appliances. General Needs refers to emergency funds given to individuals that do not live at Duniya House but need monetary assistance. For the most part, beneficiaries of the General Needs program will use these funds on medication, food, or fees associated with obtaining proper Greek documentation. Transportation refers to costs associated with transporting people and materials to Duniya House. Most transportation costs occurred over August and September when Finding Refuge was implementing the move-in process to Duniya House. The next page will provide a more detailed analysis of expenses from December to February, as Finding Refuge took on many activities these past few months!

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

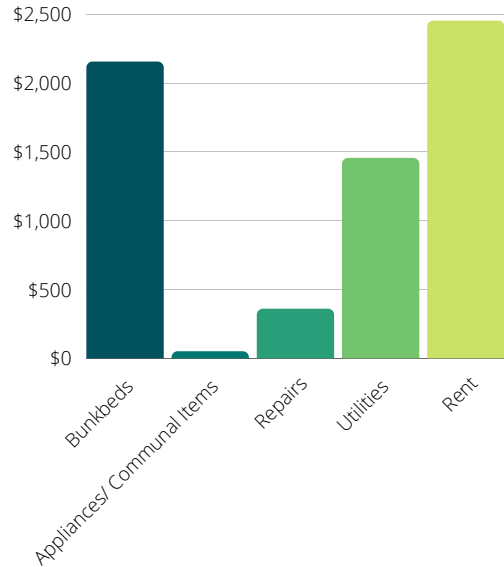
DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY

Covid-19 Support Breakdown



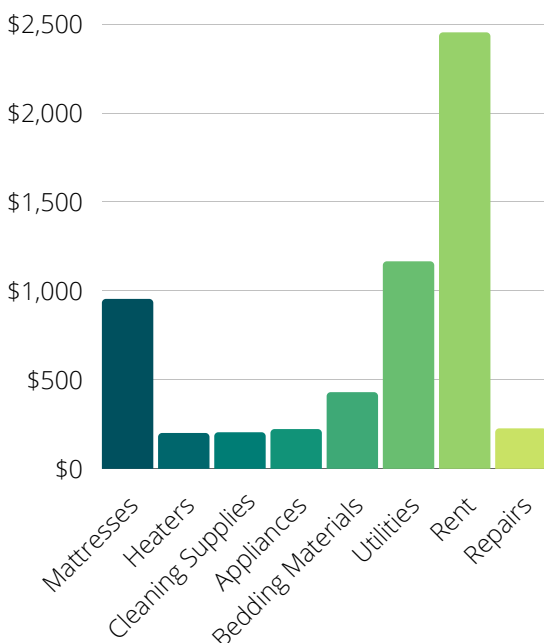
In November we launched our emergency COVID-19 relief fundraiser for our residents and other community members. We distributed cash assistance ranging from 100 to 150 euros per resident unit and provided a bonus for our onsite team. We also had community dinners around the Holidays!

December Duniya House Expenses



In December, we finally were able to purchase bunk beds which increased our housing capacity. We also worked to deep clean and exterminate the building.

January Duniya House Expenses



In January, we repaired the water heaters and cleaned out the basement to make room for storage. We also bought a fridge, mattresses, heaters, and bedding supplies for the bunk beds!

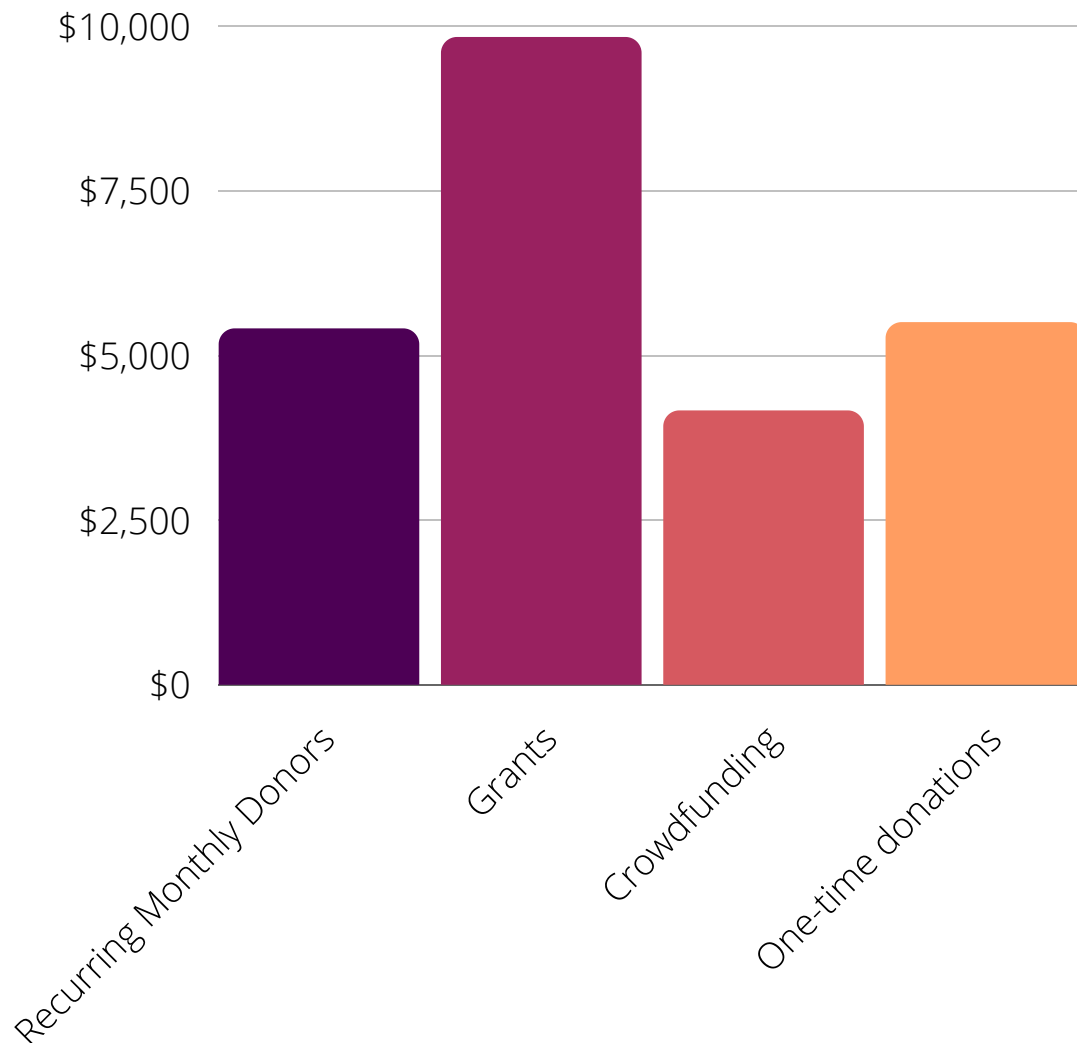
February Duniya House Expenses



In February, the majority of our costs went towards paying rent and repairing the pipes in the basement.

REVENUE BREAKDOWN

DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY



Total Income: \$24,893.71

Total Duniya-related Expenses: \$19,861.4

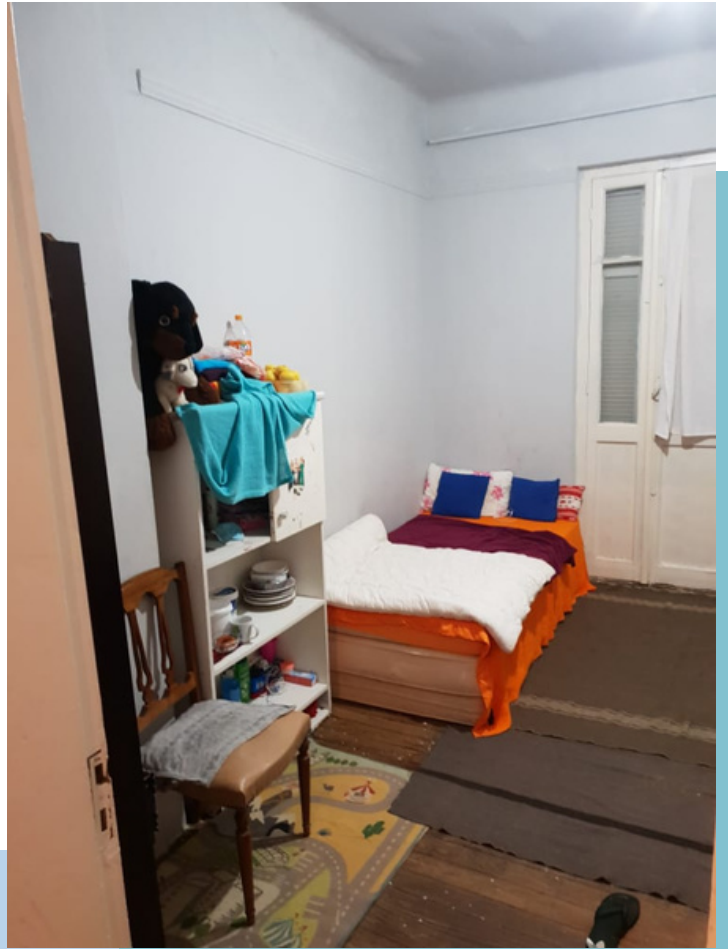
Other Expenses: \$1,804.52

All the work we do at Finding Refuge would not be possible without our generous donors. We rely heavily on our recurring donors to help us fund Duniya House each month. During these last three months, we also received a number of grants from two organizations:

Donate4Refugees-- their grants assisted us with paying rent for a month we were short and also provided us with the funds to purchase bunk beds. Move-92 provided us with a grant to purchase essential items for Duniya House!

August-November News: Repairs, Responding to COVID-19 Lockdown, Cold Winters, and More!

- **Repairs:** Duniya House went through a series of repairs, which included fixing broken lights, re-cementing small holes in walls, fixing plumbing, repairing the roof after a storm, and linking phone lines for Wifi. We are currently working on repairing our water heaters to run on electric power rather than just solar power.
- **New families moved in:** We were able to house 2 families from Syria, a woman from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a woman from Syria.
- **A mother gave birth:** We welcomed our youngest resident, a new born baby, just a few hours after the family moved in.
- **A family transitions out of Duniya:** One of the first families at Duniya House moved out and rented their very own apartment.
- **A new fridge and washing machine:** These are essential appliances for our residents. We are still on the lookout for a fridge for the first floor.
- **COVID-19 Lockdown:** Greece has recently announced a mandatory lockdown to quell the spread of COVID-19. This means that many services available to refugees are operating in a limited capacity, or are not open at all. Many of our residences rely on these services to get by. FR is actively trying to fill this gap by providing food supplies and sanitary materials.
- **Distributions at Duniya:** Thanks to a generous donor, we were able to provide food supplies (rice, pasta, lentils and oil) to all residents.
- **Keeping residents warm:** Thanks to partnerships with the organizations Pamperaki and SOS Refugidos, we acquired 65 blankets to help residents stay warm during the winter.

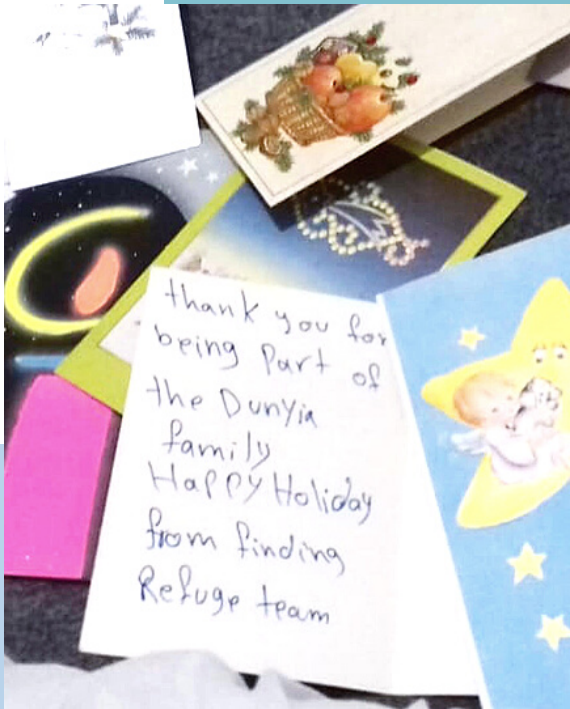




Decemeber-February News: Repairs, Holiday Cheer, Bunkbeds, and More!

- **Repairs:** Duniya House continued to go through a number of repairs over these months, including fixing bathroom pipes, repairing the water heaters, and cleaning out the basement to make room for storage.
- **New faces:** We welcomed a number of new residents, including a woman from Eritrea that speaks five different languages, a young boy from Afghanistan, a young girl from Iran, an elderly man from Palestine, and two young brothers from Syria. We were happy to welcome these new people to our community!
- **We said goodbye to some residents:** A young boy from Afghanistan, finally received government housing! Our elderly resident from Palestine went back to Gaza after realizing he couldn't be far away from his family. We said good bye to both of them and are happy they got to be a part of the Duniya family.
- **Bunk Beds & More:** Thanks to a generous grant from Donate4Refugees, we were able to purchase a total of 12 bunk beds and mattresses. Our team was busy building these bunk beds for most of January! We also finally purchased a fridge for the first floor!
- **COVID-19 Fundraiser:** In response to the second lockdown in Greece, FR started a Launchgood campaign to provide residents with extra support during a time where many organizations and shops were shut down. Throughout the months of November and December, our team was busy collecting the funds. Luckily, thanks to our incredible donors, we were able to meet our goal of \$5,000! We worked to complete the campaign obligations including distributing cash assistance and rewarding our on-site team with a well-deserved bonus for the holidays.
- **Spreading the Holiday Cheer:** Our on-site director took on the role of Papa Noel on Christmas Eve to distribute the first round of cash disbursements! The residents enjoyed a wonderful dinner to commemorate the holiday spirit!
- **Keeping residents warm:** Thanks to a generous donor, we were able to purchase heaters and blankets for all residents.





MEET ONE OF OUR RESIDENTS, SARAH

Sarah* is a 28-year-old single parent from Iraq with her son Adam, whom she brought with her to Athens. She currently resides at Duniya House, sharing space with women from Somalia, Congo, Cameroon, Syria, and Afghanistan. Sarah left Iraq in 2018, fleeing increasing aggression from different factions and militias in Iraq. Sarah recounts that a red X was marked on her door after accompanying her Christian friend to a Sunday church service. Along with the continued aggression, Sarah's sister had committed suicide recently, and her mother was going through a nasty divorce. Sarah no longer had any support system. She did not feel safe in Iraq. She made the journey to Greece, finally arriving in Lesbos with her son. They were taken to Moria camp.

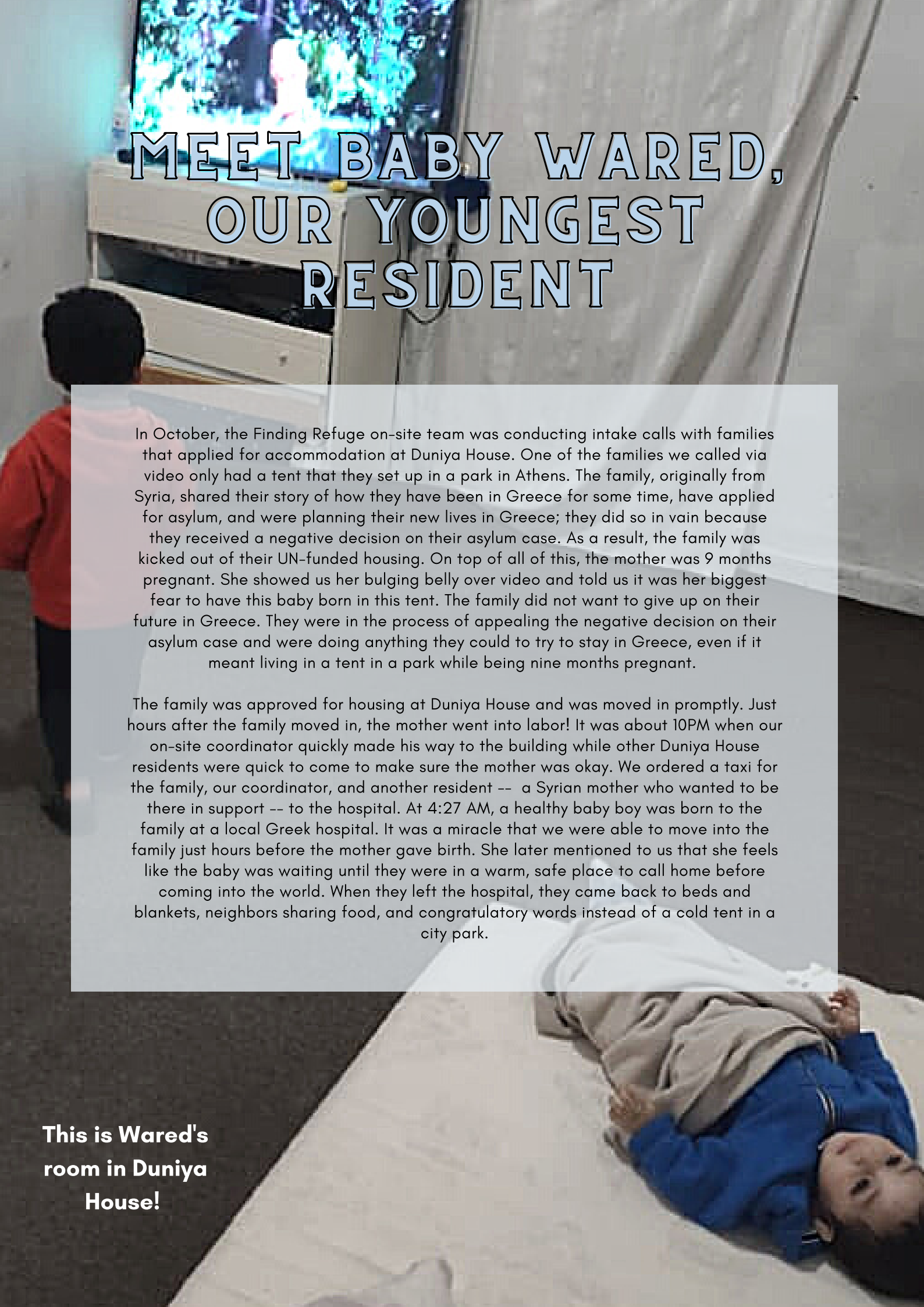
Sarah says to us if she had the slightest idea that she was going to be living in a place like Moria, she would have never left Iraq. She mentioned seeing people fight each other with knives to the point of almost killing each other. Sarah faced sexual assault almost daily and her mental health was deteriorating. Her son Adam was also becoming aggressive and she felt the difficulty of being a lone woman with a child in a place like Moria. She could not take it anymore.

Sarah escaped the camp with her son and arrived in Athens, but with nowhere to stay and no familiar faces, she spent days sleeping in the streets of Athens. After seeing her dire situation, a kind stranger referred her to Finding Refuge. Since then, we have been able to accommodate

Sarah in Duniya House, provide her support with her asylum application, and connect her to other services. Sarah dreams of being a beautician, learning English, seeing her son go to school, and most importantly continuing to have a safe place to call home. Through having a safe place to call home, emotional support, asylum case support, and general needs fulfillment, Sarah can work towards reaching her goals for her and her son.

NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED*

This is Sarah's room in Duniya House!



MEET BABY WARED, OUR YOUNGEST RESIDENT

In October, the Finding Refuge on-site team was conducting intake calls with families that applied for accommodation at Duniya House. One of the families we called via video only had a tent that they set up in a park in Athens. The family, originally from Syria, shared their story of how they have been in Greece for some time, have applied for asylum, and were planning their new lives in Greece; they did so in vain because they received a negative decision on their asylum case. As a result, the family was kicked out of their UN-funded housing. On top of all of this, the mother was 9 months pregnant. She showed us her bulging belly over video and told us it was her biggest fear to have this baby born in this tent. The family did not want to give up on their future in Greece. They were in the process of appealing the negative decision on their asylum case and were doing anything they could to try to stay in Greece, even if it meant living in a tent in a park while being nine months pregnant.

The family was approved for housing at Duniya House and was moved in promptly. Just hours after the family moved in, the mother went into labor! It was about 10PM when our on-site coordinator quickly made his way to the building while other Duniya House residents were quick to come to make sure the mother was okay. We ordered a taxi for the family, our coordinator, and another resident -- a Syrian mother who wanted to be there in support -- to the hospital. At 4:27 AM, a healthy baby boy was born to the family at a local Greek hospital. It was a miracle that we were able to move into the family just hours before the mother gave birth. She later mentioned to us that she feels like the baby was waiting until they were in a warm, safe place to call home before coming into the world. When they left the hospital, they came back to beds and blankets, neighbors sharing food, and congratulatory words instead of a cold tent in a city park.

**This is Wared's
room in Duniya
House!**

MEET MASRETH, OUR NEWEST RESIDENT

Masreth lost her entire family in Eritrea. She escaped the same fate and sought refuge in Greece. Her journey to Greece was not easy, but somehow she persevered only to suffer further at the hands of a cruel asylum process that kept her homeless. However, her resilience and determination did not falter. Her strength was clearly evident during our intake call with her in

December, where she recounted her experience of being homeless as a single woman in Athens. Depending on the kindness of strangers, she would occasionally find a place to rest her head. However, sometimes people would take advantage of her situation and try to coerce her into sexual relations in exchange for help. She emphasized that no matter how bad her situation was, she never succumbed to that. She told us she would rather sleep on the street or in parks than be exploited by evil men.

During the intake call, she started crying, not because of what she had been through, but because she had no one to talk to about her experiences. She exclaimed that even if we are unable to provide her with refuge, our willingness to listen to her story meant so much to her. Masreth explained that the only thing she has is her faith that one day she will have a family.

We were brought to tears by Masreth's resilience, strength, and kindness. We approved Masreth's housing application and welcomed her to the Duniya House family.

We were in awe of not just her personality, but her determination and adaptability. Through her experiences of crossing many borders to arrive to Greece, she learned multiple languages. Besides her native language, Tigray, she is also fluent in English, Arabic, French, and Somali! Her translation skills are extremely helpful in Duniya House to help bridge language gaps!

Since arriving at Duniya House, Masreth has been determined to achieve her goals. She has already gotten a positive asylum decision and a Greek tax number, which she was able to secure all because she had a safe place to call home! We are happy to support Masreth on her journey and have her be part of the Duniya Family!

**This is Masreth's room in
Duniya House!**

*Thank
you!*

