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Summary

For the first time in Greece, the financial crisis had extreme and worrying impact on the country's most vulnerable population: children, adolescents, and young adults. The country's social web has been destroyed, the educational system has been collapsing little by little every day, the health and social care system have failed to meet the population's urgent needs: 50% of the public hospitals and health centres have been shut down or continued operating with only 1/10 of staff, and most of the times with no medicines and medical equipment, 41 out of the 48 student accommodations in Attica have been closed, and consequently many young adults are unable to continue their studies. In 2013, 1/5 of adolescents were reported self-harming themselves on a continuous basis. Our screening research showed that in 2017 1/3 of adolescents were hurting themselves. Our aim is to continue our screening research for the rest of the year and obtain an overall number of children who are led to such actions.

What is the problem

Living below the poverty line and having no access to mental health services, being excluded from higher education and having no job prospects, all these have led many young people to feel excluded from a variety of life aspects. Even though young people are employed, their salary may not be enough to cover the expenses of their own house. As a result, with a salary of just \$500 per month, young adults are unable to live on their own, or even create their own family in the future. Kokkevi et al. (2011) stated that one fifth of adolescents exert nonfatal, self-harm behaviours against themselves, and committing suicide

is among the three leading causes of adolescents' and young people's death in Europe. Children and young people nowadays live a life with no basic human rights, with no vision, and with no hope. Choosing to hurt themselves and commit suicide is the strongest cry of despair due to the financial crisis. These incidents are extremely worrying as it seems that this phenomenon becomes genocidal. A healthy society is one that protects the reproduction of human species and ensures a safe lifestyle and the development of civilization. The financial crisis succeeded in destroying all three components of a healthy society. At the same time, families, teachers, and friends who make up the social environment of children in Greece report feelings of anxiety, panic, and stress, while two people attempt suicide and at least one succeeds.

How the project will solve the problem

H.U.G. plans to initiate its action in two countries, Greece and the United Kingdom. England is a country with significant knowledge and expertise in the prevention, treatment, and detoxification of self-harming, suicidal behaviour and mental disorders that can impact the healthy well-being of children and youths. Main priority of the H.U.G. project is therefore, to help those children and young people whose lives have been strongly influenced by the economic crisis. Our goal is to support those children in Greece, but also Greek-speaking children who were forced to emigrate due to the crisis. As long as you unite with us and help us achieve our goal with your donations and support, we can meet children's mental health rehabilitation needs in other countries as well. We invite you to join us and support children and young people who are in need. What follows is a brief description of our actions:

1. Meeting with the central municipality of Athens, with various ministries and institutional bodies in order to take emergency measures.

2. Hold information talks at schools with the aim to inform students and parents about the diagnosis and treatment of those with suicidal thoughts and behaviours.
3. Initiate the operation of student accommodations in Athens for adolescents and young people who leave their homes and families due to mental disorders where they will have the support of specialized psychotherapists and art-therapists.
4. Conduct research across the capital and to achieve this we need your help.
5. Train psychologists, psychiatrists, parents, educators, and institutional bodies
6. Offer scholarships to students who wish to specialize in these areas of treatment (5-10 scholarships).

In order to ensure the communication with young people from other countries and their rehabilitation, we ask women of culture to take action with us as protectors of children, as sacred figures whose role will be to protect and heal the social web through their speech and actions so that a global healthy environment for the protection of children is developed. The aim of those women will be achieved by running as a project with the title “Café des Femmes”. “Café des Femmes” will operate in Greece for youths supported by the central H.U.G. in the UK. Our goal is to extend the H.U.G project and support adolescents and young people in other countries suffering from the financial crisis. By donating, you are helping us and our mental health centre to: a) provide technical assistance for better government policies and programs, b) establish and operate student accommodations in Athens as a solution to spreading self-harming in Greece, c) implement a sensitization and prevention campaign against self-harm addressed to children and adolescents, young adults, parents and educators, d) operate the “Café des Femmes” community centre, as an open, free hub-meeting point which will not stigmatize those adolescents and young people who feel like they have lost their mental well-being, e) create and operate a scientific research on self-harm screening on

adolescents and young people aged 15 to 25 years in cooperation with UK academic and clinical institutions.

Long-term impact

The H.U.G. project in cooperation with “Café des Femmes” as a means of communication and support of the project, is the only centre of treatment and rehabilitation of mental disorders in children, youths, and young adults in Greece. The H.U.G. project operates 12 hours per day, helping children and at the same time supporting the social environment of children such as their school, home, and friends, experiencing the agony of the society concerning the lack of a solution to the problem that the whole country faces because of the financial crisis. It is of great importance to train our colleagues to conduct professional therapies, something that was not done before as there was no such issue concerning the treatment of self-harming in Greece. H.U.G.’s operation can work as a remedy against the violence and panic caused by the sudden rise of young people’s tendency to self-harm and exhibit suicidal behaviours. The society and the government have not developed neither a strategy or plan to solve the problem. H.U.G. is not just an alternative to the problem, but it is the only solution the country can currently provide. Consequently, it is extremely important to develop therapy centres and provide them with expertise staff to reduce the phenomenon of self-harming that resembles a genocide, rather than just a problem to be solved. Our estimation is that 1/3 of children and youths in Greece throughout this year have hurt themselves or have attempted suicide. We hope this is the last time that something like this happens. United with you we can embrace children and young people to stop self-harming themselves and focus on positive outcomes.