

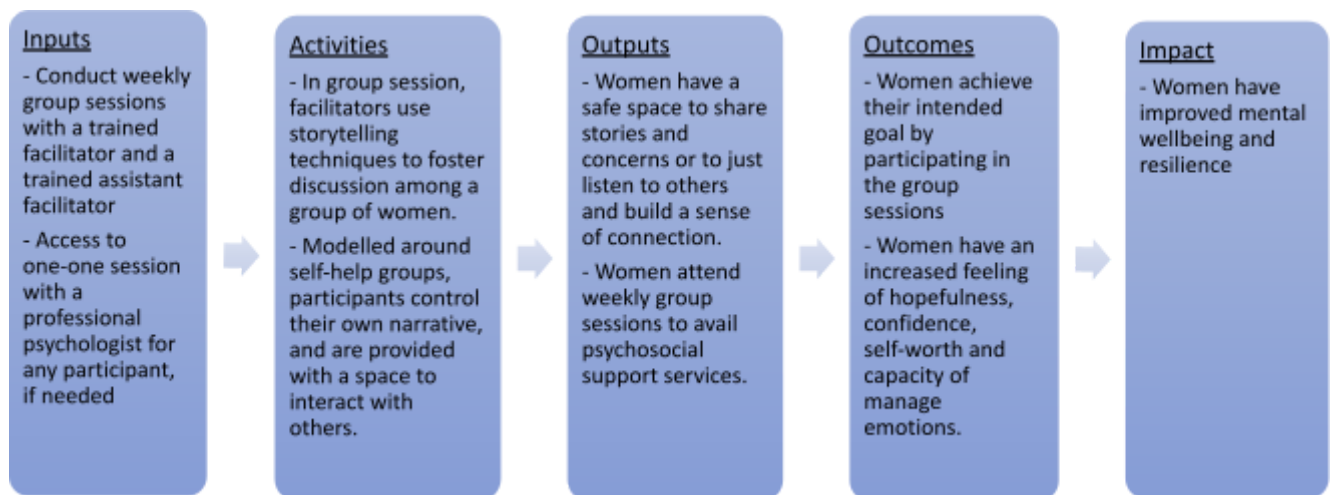
## The Azadi Project

### Monitoring and Evaluation Report for MHPSS Program in Lesbos

~ November 2021 ~

The Azadi Project launched DOUST – an MHPSS (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support) program in Lesbos, Greece in March 2021 on International Women’s Day. Over 70 women participated in the program from March 2021 – November 2021. Throughout the program a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan was implemented to observe the process of program activities and evaluate the outcomes and impact of the program.

#### M&E Framework



#### Aim and Objectives of the M&E

To monitor the process and to assess the success of the MHPSS program, the M&E plan focused on ascertaining to what extent the program activities have been able to prepare refugee women to deal with the strenuous conditions at the camp and the impending hardships, thereby, building resilience, given their mental health conditions. Additionally, the workshop also focused on providing a safe space for the women to share their stories, anxieties, fears, or struggles, or just listening to others’ stories, thus, helping them feel a sense of connection in their current circumstances.

The following objectives were included in the assessment:

To study

1. Whether the program participants' intent was achieved. (*At the beginning of their first session, each participant was asked to identify what they aimed to achieve through these sessions, and at the end through a survey they identified to what degree they reached the intended goal, if at all.*)
2. Whether the workshop provided a safe space for the women to talk, share their concerns, and connect with other women around them.
3. Whether there is an improvement in the mental wellbeing and resilience of the women who participated, measured through a change in feeling of hopefulness, confidence, self-worth, and capacity to manage their emotions.

These objectives were set keeping in mind that the evaluation can only focus on the short- to medium-term outcomes of the program; and the long-term impact cannot be ascertained yet. However, some of the qualitative assessment pointed towards a longer-term impact, discussed below.

### M&E Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative tools were used. Data was collected both at the baseline as well as the endline for a robust evaluation.

For quantitative analysis:

1. Questionnaire: A survey especially designed for the study was to be filled by participants before and after the workshop. Consisting of multiple-choice questions, it aimed to gauge their comfort level with the group sessions, their mental health state, their perception of themselves and the environment around them. The questions were in line with the type used by practitioners/researchers for psychological surveys.

For qualitative analysis:

1. Focus group discussions: The women participated in multiple focus groups through the workshop. This was used to understand key points related to the objectives of the study. For example, one of the activities included asking the participants to identify one word that describes their current mental health state. This was done both at the beginning and towards the end of the workshop to see the change in their emotional health and well-being.
2. Personal interactions: Through the course of the workshop, the program facilitators engaged with the participants closely. Their interactions proved to be a sound source for the evaluation, keeping in line with the objectives.

### Results and Discussion

Over 70 women participated in the group sessions. Due to the transient nature of the refugee camps some women were not able to attend all sessions that a group went through. Among those who completed all sessions, before and after survey results are available for 23 women.

***Successful creation of a safe space by facilitators***

Both through quantitative and qualitative analysis, the women unanimously reported that the workshop provided them with a much-needed safe space to raise their concerns, share their feelings and understand their needs. 100% of the respondents reported that they felt comfortable and safe to share their thoughts in the group sessions. They also said that this was the only professional guidance they have received and would like to continue having this support. A beneficiary said, “I love the fact that we can come together in a safe and friendly space to talk about things that worry us.”

The women reported feeling a sense of connection and contentment by participating in the workshop sessions. 81.8% respondents said they felt a sense of connection with people around them as a result of the sessions; 18.2% responded with “somewhat”. Testimonials from a participant reveal the following:

“The time we spend with each other as women, away from the problems of the camp, is a great respite. We feel good and safe.”

***Achievement of intent***

At the beginning of their first session, each participant was asked to identify what they aimed to achieve in terms of mental well-being through these sessions, and at the end through the survey they identified to what degree they reached the intended goal, if at all. The intent would vary for each participant and is something that they set for themselves.

81% of the respondents (17 out of 21) were able to achieve their intended goal through sessions and 19% (4 out of 21) reported that they were “somewhat” able to achieve their intended goal.

***Progress toward improved mental wellbeing and resilience***

The progress toward the long-term impact of improved mental wellbeing and resilience was to some extent evaluated by short- to medium-term outcomes of increased feelings of hopefulness, confidence, self-worth and capacity to manage emotions in the participating women. Through the surveys and through qualitative discussions with the facilitator, the women at large reported positive

outcomes of attending the workshop on their emotional health and mental wellbeing. Following are the results as computed through the pre and post surveys filled by 23 beneficiaries.

- **Increased feeling of hopefulness:** 20% respondents report an increase, 65% reported hopefulness at the beginning itself, 15% did not report change in negative outlook
- **Increased feeling of self-worth:** 13.6% report an increase, 9.1% already report positive attitude at the beginning, 63.7% report no change in negative attitude (14 out of 22), 13.6% report a decrease
- **Increased feeling of confidence in handling difficult circumstances:** 47.6% respondents report an increase, 42.9% already report positive response at the beginning, 9.5% report no change in negative response
- **Increased capacity to deal with their emotions:** 52.4% report an increase, 42.8% had positive attitude at beginning, 4.8% report no change in negative attitude

The facilitator notes that some of the results that indicate that the participants reported positive emotions and attitudes in the pre surveys could be attributed to the fact that the pre survey was filled in the first session of every group, which is when some women may report that positive feeling due to the safe space provided to them while attending the workshop.

It is important to note that the long-term sustainability of these results cannot be ascertained by this evaluation process, which has been done at the beginning, during, and right at the end of the workshop. Thus, the long-term impact assessment is not under the purview of this M&E process, but the progress made toward the achievement of that long-term impact is something these results reflect.

### ***Observations on program activities***

Throughout the run of the program, the facilitator made some observations during the focus group discussions. These observations highlight that women participants want more focused guidance on stress management, English lessons, and other specific exercises or activities for further resilience-building. The facilitator also noted that if a set agenda for each session is communicated to the participants, it would increase the rate of women returning for consequent sessions.

*NOTE: Some of the patterns of the survey responses look random and not intentional, which indicates that respondents may have selected responses without thought, in some instances, for the sake of completing surveys. Therefore, these results should be taken into account along with the qualitative feedback from the facilitator on how the participants reacted and responded in sessions.*