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Team Wins Grant to Develop Trauma-Informed Practices in Classrooms and Refugee Camps

Funded by the U.S. State Department, and implemented in partnership with Partners of the Americas, the Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund selects projects that that will advance key foreign policy priorities. This year, 25 projects were selected which advance science and innovation; build civic participation and resilient communities; and promote inclusion in educational opportunities. Projects will take place both domestically and abroad in collaboration with U.S. embassies in 15 different countries.

Greek Fulbright alumni Vicki Kouskouna (Associate Professor of Seismology, School of Science, Department of Geology and Geoenvironment, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) and Maria Gazouli (Associate Professor of Molecular Biology, School of Medicine, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) will team up with **US Fulbright alumni** Heather Ridge (Front Range Community Collage Westminster, CO), Erna Olafson (Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry and Pediatrics, University of Cincinnati, OH), and Deborah Young (Executive Director at Americas Association for the Care

of Children, University of Colorado, CO) to develop resources which bring a stronger awareness of mental health needs to practices in both educational settings and humanitarian services in classrooms and refugee camps.

The team will begin their work in Colorado, USA in February 2020. While there, they will offer training to educators and develop a resource guide for trauma-informed practices that is available online, to better support students who have experienced traumatic events. In May, the team will meet first in Athens, where they will provide training for clinicians around treating trauma and grief in adolescence, and then travel to Lesbos to meet with NGO's supporting refugees.

A focus of their work while in Greece will include training around how trauma can impact the brain and resulting behavior of persons experiencing trauma, as well as practices to support those individuals in any environment.

One aim of this project is to provide information regarding vulnerability of schoolchildren to threats that may arise in the camp due to natural disasters, such as earthquakes, and in self-protection measures, personal hygiene and health interventions. It will also work with groups in understanding and navigating the health care system.

In addition to strengthening resiliency among youth who have faced trauma, this project hopes to strengthen ties between the US and Greek Fulbright alumni network.