



NATURAL  
HISTORY  
MUSEUM  
OF THE LESVOS  
PETRIFIED FOREST

RURITAGE   
Heritage for Rural Regeneration

# INTRODUCING OUR HERITAGE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR REFUGEES

Action «Rural regeneration through systemic  
heritage-led strategies — RURITAGE»

HORIZON 2020 Programme

Sigri, 25 July 2019

## REPORT

Mytilini, Lesvos Island  
July 2019

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF THE LESVOS PETRIFIED FOREST

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# INTRODUCING OUR HERITAGE

## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR REFUGEES

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The Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest, wishing to contribute to the efforts of Lesvos authorities to relieve refugees and migrants on the island, organizes and implements educational information activities for refugees. On July 25, 2019, a refugee team composed of children (7 – 18 years old) that arrived alone in Lesvos visited the Museum and participated at a special organized educational programme.

The educational programme took place at the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest and the open air Petrified Forest Park at Sigri.

The Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest is situated in Sigri in the western most area of Lesvos island. The Museum was established in 1994 to conserve, protect and promote the fossils which constitute the Petrified Forest of Lesvos.

The Petrified Forest of Lesvos is one of the most beautiful monuments of our geological heritage worldwide. Remains of fossil plants, declared as Protected Natural Monument, have been found in many localities on the western part of Lesvos island. The fossilised plants in Lesvos are silicified remnants of a sub-tropical forest that existed on the north-west part of the island 20 million years ago, due to the intense volcanic activity in the area.

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Recognising the major environmental, geological and palaeontological value of the site, the Greek State has declared the Petrified Forest to be a preserved Natural Monument (Presidential Decree 443/85). The aim of designating the Petrified Forest as such is to provide more effective protection and rational management of the area.

The visit in the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest is a unique experience. The quantity of the Petrified tree trunks that constitute an entire fossilized ecosystem is impressive and cannot be observed anywhere else in the world.

The two permanent exhibitions of the Museum offer an informative interpretation of the most important facts detailing the evolution of the landscape and life. They tell the story of the large and complex changes that led from the Aegian landmass to the Aegean archipelago of today and allow visitors to travel back through time, inviting them to feel, contemplate and attempt to comprehend this amazing story of the world.

The Museum organizes every year a variety of high level services and special activities like information services, ecotouristic activities, educational programmes, temporary exhibitions, cultural events, the agrotourism festival. The Museum's facilities are available to scientists for the organization of conferences, scientific congresses etc.

The Museum is the managing body of "Lesvos – UNESCO Global Geopark" and collaborates with the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network, the European Geoparks Network, scientific bodies, museums, universities and research centers from Greece and abroad.



*The Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest*

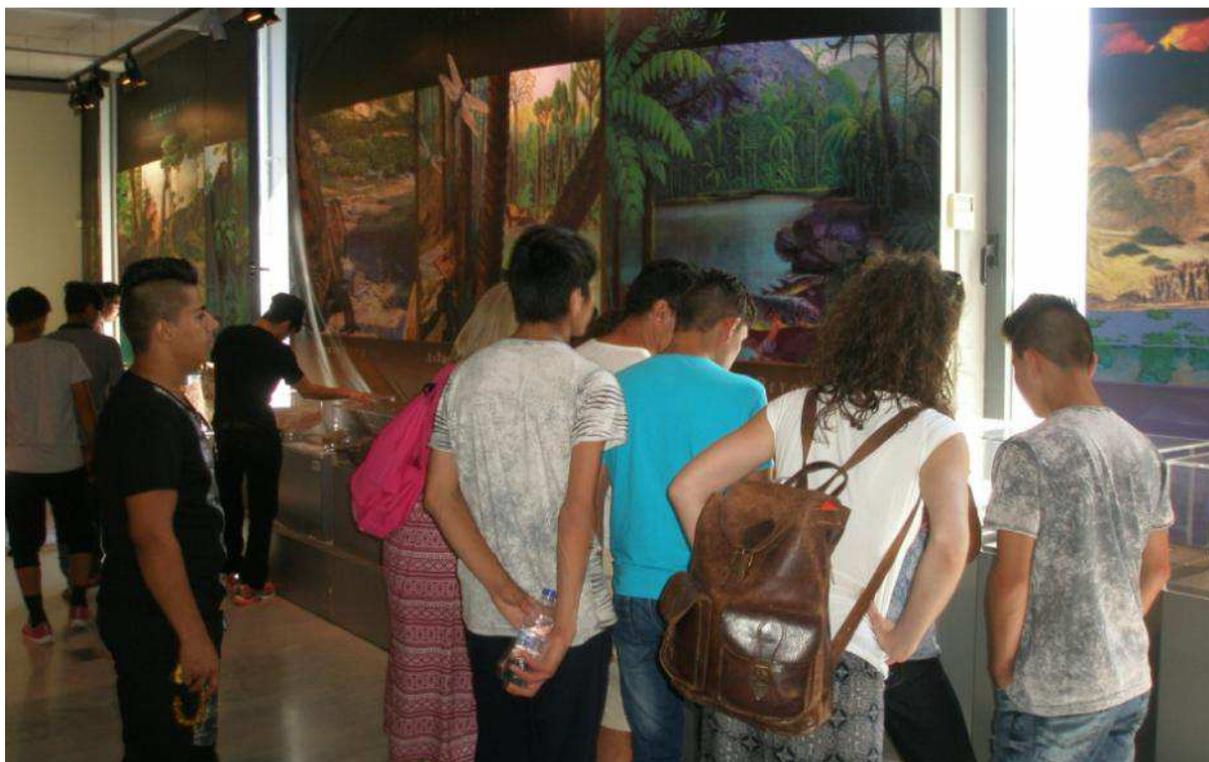
## The educational information program

The educational programme started at the Museum's audiovisual media room. Through the presentation of audiovisual material with rich representations and photographic material and oral information by the Museum's scientific staff, the participants got to know the way the Fossil Forest was created, the fossilized forest plants and the elements they give us about evolution. climate. At the same time, they were informed about the volcanic phenomenon and the large volcanoes of Lesvos



*Scientific information of the refugees' team in the Museum's audiovisual room*

The next stage included the dissemination of information in the permanent exhibition rooms of the Museum, where through plentiful exhibits, models, representations and maps, the countries of Europe, Middle East and Africa are identified with the boundaries of tectonic plates, the active volcanic arcs, the rocks and plant fossils that are found in every part of our planet. At the first permanent exhibition hall which is dedicated to the Lesvos Petrified Forest, they get familiar with the rare plant fossils from the region of western Lesvos. Information was provided on the process of fossilization and the different types of fossils to be seen in nature. At the second exhibition hall which is dedicated to the geohistorical evolution of the Aegean area, they get familiar with geological phenomena and processes related to the system of the Earth's crust that helped create the Petrified Forest.



*Scientific information about the Lesvos Petrified Forest and the evolution of life in the first exhibition room of the Museum*



*Scientific information in the exhibition room "Evolution of the Aegean"*

Then the activities include an Informative tour through the Sigri Petrified Forest open air Park. The tour encourages the active participation of the children in their observations of the petrified tree trunks, their root systems, the geological and ecological characteristics of the area, the different volcanic rocks, the palaeosoll and the active faults of the area.

In the museum's premises operates an earthquake simulator, simulating some of the most destructive earthquakes. The earthquake simulator offers visitors a realistic experience of the seismic vibrations, aiming to the understanding of the phenomenon and their preparation in case of an earthquake.



*Scientific information about the earthquakes in the Museum's audiovisual room*

The refugees participated in the educational activity of simulating devastating earthquakes in the Museum's earthquake simulator. During the activity they informed that Greece is the first country in seismicity in Europe and the sixth in the world and earthquakes that can be felt occur almost on a daily basis and many of the refugees during their stay in Lesvos are experiencing major earthquakes and for this reason they have to be prepared and aware of the protection measures.



*Participation at the educational activity of simulating devastating earthquakes in the Museum's earthquake simulator*



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