

november 2019

SOLIDARITEE

new design launch



our new designs for 2019 are out now



We've been working on our new designs for some time, and we're delighted to release them as available to buy now.

The artwork for this year's t-shirt was designed Wahid Taraky, a refugee from Afghanistan, where he had taught at a university for 22 years.

His designs feature the Persian script for the words: 'peace', 'hope' and 'safety'. These words encapsulate SolidariTee's approach and values in our work to combat the refugee crisis.

Get yours now for £10

T-shirts are available in three colours - Ash, Purple and Blue. Sizes come in XS, S, M and L.

You can get one on our online shop: <https://shop.solidaritee.org.uk>

We ensure that our t-shirts are made in the most sustainable way possible. All our student representatives are volunteers, as are all of our full-time national committee. All of our t-shirts are ethically manufactured, with WRAP and OEKO-TEX certifications. We post shirts from our online shop in recycled wrapping paper.



WAHID TARAKY

My hope, my love, my patience is only to have a peaceful life for my family. I spent my whole life fighting in war, I don't want to push my children to the same condition. I brought them here to have a better future, to educate, to have a better life.

AFGHAN REFUGEE + SOLIDARITEE ARTIST



what we do



SolidariTEE is an entirely student-run charity which raises awareness about the refugee crisis and offers grants to organisations and individuals working in the sector, primarily in legal aid. Our aims were formulated in the context of the dramatic decrease in media coverage of the nonetheless growing refugee crisis, as well as in response to our vision to find sustainable forms of alleviating the refugee crisis.

SolidariTees

SolidariTEE began with just a simple t-shirt – in other words, selling our custom-made SolidariTees allowed us to fund vital legal aid for refugees, whilst acting as a visual display of solidarity towards refugees – and this continues to be a pillar of our work.

Events

Our events include, to name a few: club nights around Europe; panel discussions in London; pub quizzes in Amman; pottery evenings in Madrid; theatre company collaborations at the Edinburgh Fringe; and comedy nights in Durham and Bristol in partnership with Laugh 4 Change. We've partnered with student balls which raised over £6,000 total, and with university fashion shows (such as the Cambridge University Fashion Show, raising £3,000 alone). At just one club night at the Freud Club in Oxford, we raised over £1,000.

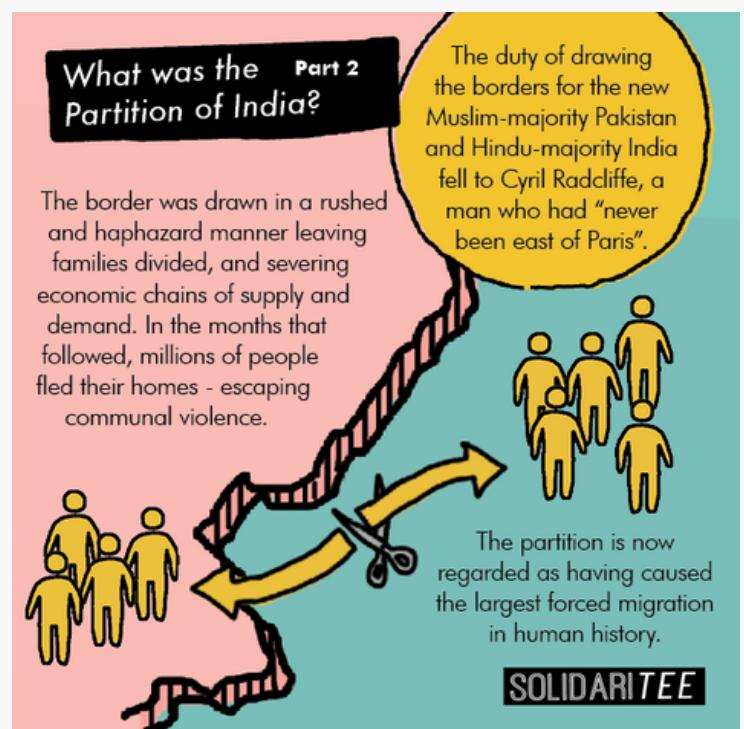
Our outreach programme launched this year with a view to expanding our educational reach. We have given talks to schools and businesses and have planned and run workshops for summer camps such as Oppidan Camps and LAS Edge Camp in Switzerland.

Social Media Campaigns

We have been realigning our focus in order to raise awareness of the realities of the refugee crisis, and much of this is achieved through social media.

Our Twitter (@solidariteeuk) now offers daily news updates on the refugee crisis, whilst the Instagram (@teesofsolidarity) and Twitter include quotes from leading minds on the refugee crisis. We aim to shed light on the scale of the crisis and remembering those who have fallen victim to it.

Two successful recent campaigns have been our 'Infographics' and 'Myth busters' posts, both of which clarify often biased news stories and shock tactics regarding refugees. See an example below!



why buy a SolidariTee?

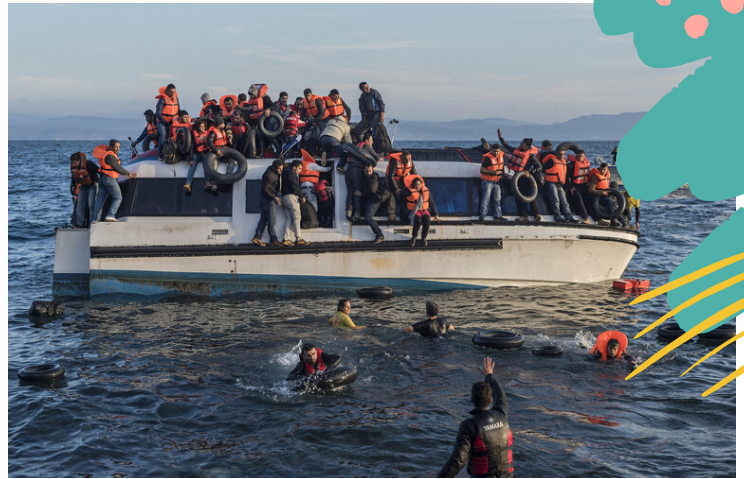
The refugee crisis is worsening

Media coverage of the refugee crisis has subsided since 2015, but it is getting worse by the day.

In Lesbos's main refugee camp, at Moria, 13,000 people are currently living in a space with barely adequate provisions for a capacity of 3,000.

It has been described in the press as 'the worst refugee camp on earth'. Children as young as ten have attempted suicide at Moria. Teenagers are turning to prostitution simply to get by. Many have little hope of ever getting safe asylum.

SolidariTee is working to combat the crisis by offering grants to NGOs working in the field, and creating a broader social movement in support of refugees' rights by raising awareness of the crisis.




We fund legal aid as part of the solution

In 2019, 64% of asylum applications in Europe were rejected with over 80% of applicants coming from war-stricken countries.

This is typically due to lack of legal guidance within a notoriously complex process to seek asylum in Europe. This is where we come in.

We fund lawyers, interpreters, and translators to help people through the lengthy asylum process and gain safe passage out of these camps, and away from deadly conflicts, persecution, and even torture.

We are currently funding two small NGOs - Fenix Humanitarian Aid and Mobile Info Team, who you can read more about in this pack.



SolidariTee began in January 2017 with a Cambridge student, Tiara Sahar Ataii. She spent months completing volunteer work as a translator and interpreter with a legal aid NGO in Greece.

Profoundly affected by what she saw, Tiara spent her student loan on 600 t-shirts ('SolidariTees') to sell to raise money for lawyers working with refugees, delivering them around Cambridge by bike.

Since then, we've grown... a lot!

On February 25th 2019 we successfully registered as a charity. We will still continue to offer grants to NGOs and to campaign for greater awareness as before, but now, we will be able to take advantage of more opportunities and benefit from greater legitimacy

our story



Our founder, Tiara Sahar Ataii




The response to SolidariTee's message has been astounding, gaining traction on an international scale.

We now have an ever-growing team across 36 universities and 6 countries, including in the UK, France, Germany, Australia, the USA, and Jordan.

Our 700 representatives are equally international, with year abroad representatives bringing SolidariTee to Munich, Berlin, Murcia, Barcelona, Innsbruck, and Vienna. Events abroad this year have included a pub quiz in Amman and a pottery workshop in Madrid.

We are proud to say that all this has been achieved exclusively by university students!



since we began in 2017,
we've grown exponentially

SOLIDARITEE

2017-2019

SolidariTee seeks a sustainable solution to the refugee crisis. Led entirely by students, we offer grants to individuals and NGOs offering legal aid to asylum seekers and refugees.

January 2017: SolidariTee is founded in Cambridge University as a response to the diminishing media coverage of the refugee crisis.

2018: The movement spreads to 11 universities in the UK and receives endorsement from 13 MPs.

October 2018: 3600 SolidariTees and 600 SolidariTotes have now been sold. Over £33k donated to legal aid.

Students:

700

February 2019: SolidariTee starts a new life as a registered Charity in the UK!

January 2019: By now, the movement has spread to 36 universities, across the UK, the USA, Jordan, Germany and Australia.

Countries:

6

from one girl on her bike, to
36 teams across 6 countries



CAMBRIDGE VICE- CHANCELLOR'S SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD 2019

Presented to our founder, the charity's work was described as 'humbling and incredibly inspiring'.



DIANA AWARD 2019

Presented to exceptional young change-makers who have demonstrated a capacity to mobilise new generations to serve their communities and create long-lasting global change.

Fenix is a brand new NGO, founded in November 2018 and based in Lesbos, which looks to provide legal aid from a more holistic lens than done before.



As many legal processes remain impenetrable for many refugees and asylum seekers, the team combines lawyers, psychologists, and translators to ensure that all basic needs are all met – be it preparation for the asylum interview, navigating the complex school registration process, or obtaining medical appointments for serious conditions. The NGO also uses community ambassadors in order to support their beneficiaries in taking leadership roles, replacing charity with empowerment, and ensuring that correct information is spread throughout asylum seeking communities.

Fenix works primarily on Moria Camp, one of the most notorious camps in Europe, and where most refugees fleeing Turkey make land-fall. The camp was built to house 2,500 refugees, yet currently houses over 7,000 men, women, and children. Many of these individuals have been abused or taken advantage of during their journeys; medical NGOs on the island believe that up to 60% of the population of Moria has been a victim of sexual and gender-based violence.

Having partnered with Eurorelief (the organisation responsible for the administration and day-to-day running of Moria Camp), Fenix is able to provide information sessions open to all camp residents and to offer appointments to new arrivals to attend the next session, meaning that refugees will get vital information as early as possible.

who we support



Mobile Info Team (MIT) is an NGO founded in 2016 and based in Thessaloniki, which offers legal aid to refugees, with a focus on family reunification.

Family reunification is a procedure whereby family members in different European countries may be reunited before the asylum procedure begins. It is very difficult to relocate to a different European country once you already have refugee status, and so many families have been left stranded across Europe with no legal possibility to live together.

But family reunification is no simple matter, and requests for family reunification without legal representation often lead to rejection.

Many asylum seekers have failed to reach their family members for reasons such as not sufficiently proving a family relation, which could be proved as quickly by providing family photos. Having said this, family reunification is a notoriously difficult procedure, even for the largest NGOs and legal aid providers, and MIT has marked itself as a specialist in the field in their very short life.

MIT use various channels to provide vital information to confused and vulnerable individuals, including social media, refugee camp visits, and visits to the homeless population to spread this information. Run by a group of committed volunteers, MIT will begin to expand to a larger team with more volunteers who can commit to long periods of work with the NGO with SolidariTee's help.

An interview with Wahid Taraky

Our 2019-2020 focus on Hope, Safety and Peace. This message and our design was inspired by Wahid Taraky, an Afghani asylum-seeker in Moria Camp, Lesbos.

Elena Casale interviewed Wahid on behalf of SolidariTee to learn more about his journey as a refugee and about his hopes for the future.

Elena: Why do you think people leave Afghanistan?

Wahid: In my experience, people only leave Afghanistan when their lives back home are no longer safe. They leave their home and country, they cross borders and seek refuge in nations unfamiliar to them, for this is the only way they can establish lives that are secure. When our homes become precarious and our lives are endangered, how can people ask us to stay there? That's why people leave: in search of a better future.

Elena: What does hope mean to you?

Wahid: We hoped that we would leave our homes for European countries – that was our only hope. We hope that we will still be welcome.

Elena: If you feel comfortable sharing, I'd really like to hear more about your personal background. What was your life like in Afghanistan?

Wahid: I was a teacher in Afghanistan – I taught in a university for 22 years. I did my undergraduate degree in Iraq and my masters in Tajikistan. When I graduated from university, I did so with high marks. When I finished, I was hired as a teacher – and now it has been 22 years that I have been teaching in my country. And I taught the field that I myself studied, the very same field.

Elena: Was there anything specific that drove

your family to start new lives in Europe?

Wahid: It is only here – not in Moria, or Mytilini – that we feel safe. Here, we are surrounded by laughter, by happiness, by people celebrating and sitting in restaurants and laughing. We didn't see those things in Afghanistan.

Elena: Was the journey here difficult?

Wahid: Yes. We went from Iran to Turkey and from Turkey to Greece.

Elena: Could you tell me a bit more about the situation in Moria and how you're experiencing it?

Wahid: The conditions in Moria are the same as in Afghanistan. It's unsafe – people are fighting, arguing, burning, killing, dying. It has been 45 years since the Revolution but in our minds it never ended and the fighting never stopped. We had no choice but to fight.

Elena: Do you have hope that things will change in the future?

Wahid: All my hope, love and patience is directed towards forging a peaceful life for my family. I spent my whole life surrounded by war, and I don't want my children to grow up in the same situation. I brought them here for a new start, a better education, a better life.

Elena: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Wahid: Nothing else. Just that when we meet people like you, who are happy, who receive each other with love and a smile, and who help us Afghani people, we imagine that you must have been raised in peaceful countries where you learned to act with friendship and love. Why isn't life like that in our country? We are encouraged not to give up when people like you engage with us.

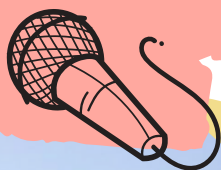
Refugee



Gemma, Head Rep at York University:

"Our York team has quickly grown, as has SolidariTee - it's been a very positive response! The immense popularity of the movement is inspiring, and demonstrates that York students are proud to wear SolidariTees and support the cause."

testimonials



Alice, Head rep at Cardiff University:

"I brought SolidariTee to Cardiff in November and it's had a great reception so far, mainly because of SolidariTee's simple but impactful approach to activism. Anyone can buy a shirt and show solidarity so we've had no problems getting things going in Cardiff which already had a very socially active and outward-looking student community. I've loved bringing like-minded, passionate reps together for such a worthy cause."



Lizzy, Chair at Columbia University:

"I got involved with SolidariTee back in November as part of the recruitment towards American universities. I am currently working for a human rights non-profit in the US that provides legal assistance to refugees seeking asylum in the United States. I have witnessed how difficult, long and emotional the process is and I knew that I wanted to keep helping in any way I could. Students at Columbia also feel the same especially given the current political situation in the US, which is why many people were very excited at the opportunity to get involved in SolidariTee."

solidaritee.org.uk



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