

SOLIDARITY

April 2019



What's SolidariTee all about?

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.

Registration with the Charity Commission

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. In accordance with British law, our trading is managed by the subsidiary trading company SolidariTee Sales LTD. The charity SolidariTee owns all shares in SolidariTee Sales Ltd and all profits are sent over to the charity. The trading name SolidariTee therefore encompasses both the charitable incorporated organisation SolidariTee and the subsidiary trading company SolidariTee.

The foundation of the subsidiary trading company has meant that as much money as possible is going to be spent on aid in the refugee crisis.



SolidariTee is growing...

The response to SolidariTee's message has been astounding, and we have jumped from 11 committees in the UK to an ever-growing team across 37 universities and 6 countries, including in the UK, France, Germany, Australia, the USA, and Jordan. Our 600 representatives are equally international, with year abroad representatives bringing SolidariTee to Munich, Berlin, Murica, 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!

This year SolidariTee will be funding Fenix and Mobile Info Team, who both offer legal aid to refugees.



Who we support

Fenix

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.



Coming from the starting point that many 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.



Mobile Info Team

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.

Testimonials from our reps

Alice Abrey, 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 and am excited for SolidariTee to gain even more awareness in Cardiff for future campaigns."



Gemma Viner, 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."



Lizzy Phillips, 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."



What we do

SolidariTees

SoldariTee 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. This year’s designs were created by graphic designer Dar Al Naim, who spoke to us about how she developed them:

"I created these symbolic designs in the hopes that they will bring awareness to a major crisis - human migration - forced migration - and that we recognize it as a problem - the sea you see, is not just for holidays but the only road to freedom from ultimately death and destruction for thousands of people - struggling everyday."

We will be celebrating our third ‘day of SolidariTee’ on May 3rd – a chance to show your solidarity wherever you are. If you don’t yet have a SolidariTee, you can pick one up via our online shop – www.shop.solidaritee.org.uk – or from one of our fantastic reps at your university.



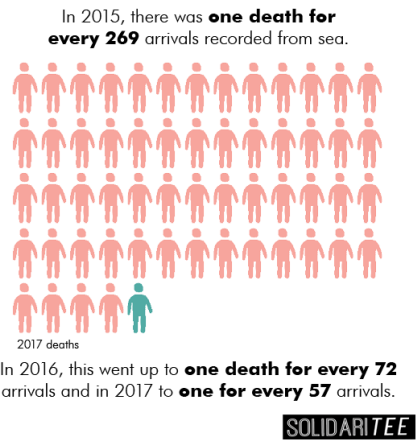
Events

SolidariTee is also putting on a growing number of events, including our recent event ‘Happy Birthday SolidariTee’, which celebrated the new charitable status of SolidariTee, and featured talks from Tiara, our founder, and representatives from Fenix and Mobile Info Team. Some events, such as our ‘So you want to volunteer in the refugee crisis’ talk, focus explaining the refugee crisis to students and delineating how students can get involved. Other events have ranged from comedy gigs to concerts to club nights, and we’re always looking for more ways in which to expand.

SolidariTee’s outreach programme has successfully been launched this year, and thus far has consisted of talks at schools. This summer SolidariTee will be undertaking activities at the summer camps LAS Edge and Oppidan which will introduce the children to the refugee crisis and its key concepts. We will be celebrating our third ‘Day of SolidariTee’ on 3rd May; a chance to show your solidarity wherever you are. If you don’t yet have a SolidariTee, you can pick one up via our online shop – www.shop.solidaritee.org.uk – or from one of our fantastic reps worldwide.

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. 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. 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. Our newly-launched ‘Visualising the refugee crisis’ posts on all three mediums have proved equally popular, shedding light on the scale of the crisis and remembering those who have fallen victim to it.



German efforts to integrate migrants has been very successful - 400,000 refugees who arrived have since 2015 are now in employment or undergoing training courses for employment.

SOLIDARITEE

Sophie Blitz, Member of the SolidariTee National Team:

Wherever I went, SolidariTee was there too. From studying in Jordan to volunteering in Greece, wherever there were students and talk of refugees, I saw someone wearing a SolidariTee. The longer I stayed in Greece, I realised why. For no right-minded individual would choose to take on an asylum interview which gambles with their future in Europe without crucial legal support, yet this is not a choice most asylum seekers get to make. Legal aid for asylum-seekers is scarce, overwhelmed and under-funded. Meanwhile, the majority of people volunteering on the frontline of the refugee crisis are not politicians or lawmakers, but young people: students, graduates, from all over the world, devoting their support to a cause far greater than themselves, not because they have been told to, but because they want to see justice for refugees. Put hundreds of creative young minds together and unite them under the common aim of improving legal-aid for asylum-seekers in Europe, then you get SolidariTee and all its success. So when a few months after leaving Greece, an opportunity to join SolidariTee arose, I jumped at it; and I'm so glad that I did, because I'm inspired everyday by the determination, enthusiasm and innovation of fellow students bringing justice to refugees at SolidariTee.



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