



SolidariTee is a student-led campaign which fundraises for legal aid for refugees through the medium of selling t-shirts. Started in 2017 by Cambridge University student Tiara Sahar Ataii, the campaign was a response to both the decreasing media coverage of the refugee crisis and the frustration with the 'echo chamber' of student activism. Prompted by her work as a translator for a legal NGO in Greece, Ataii set up SolidariTee with a twofold purpose: to demonstrate solidarity whilst, crucially, making a material impact through fundraising.

This twofold purpose is what makes SolidariTee unique. In donating to legal aid NGOs working with refugees on the ground, SolidariTee attempts to sustain long-term change. Legal aid is the only way to get people out of a traumatic and often interminable 'legal limbo' in temporary camps. It starts from the basic premise that everyone has the right to know their rights and be represented in an asylum process, which, if unsuccessful, could lead to someone deserving of asylum being deported to the country from which they fled.

SolidariTee has grown incredibly quickly and has struck a chord with students around the country. Starting from just Cambridge in 2017, the campaign now has teams in 25 universities (and counting) across the UK. The first 600 t-shirts were funded out of Ataii's student loan. Since then, the campaign has had donations and sales of nearly £48,000 and sold 3600 SolidariTees and 600 SolidariTotes.

The teams have hosted a large number of events, including an address from Lord Dubs, a joint exhibition with the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, speeches at the Cambridge Union, partnerships with student film festivals, club nights, pub quizzes, bake sales and many more.

SolidariTee has also gained the support from 12 MPs, MSPs and party leaders from a number of political parties, including Jeremy Corbyn, Tim Farron, Caroline Lucas and

Daniel Johnson, who all took part in the photo campaign. Outside the political sphere, the campaign also won the support of other public figures, such as the actors Douglas Booth and Bel Powley.

Until now, SolidariTee has supported Advocates Abroad, an NGO providing legal aid and representation to refugees in Greece. SolidariTee chose Advocates Abroad for two reasons: firstly because of its vital work in legal aid - in July and August of 2017 100% of the people they prepared for interview were granted asylum - and secondly because it was a key moment in the NGO's development. SolidariTee has been instrumental to its growth; since 2017 they have been able to employ field coordinators in each of their operational centers and their outreach and capabilities have increased significantly. Moreover, many students who heard of Advocates Abroad's work through SolidariTee have gone on to volunteer with them after they graduated.

The story behind the designs

It was through Ataii's own work with Advocates Abroad that the design for this year's t-shirts and totes came about. The t-shirt design is based on a hand-drawn map by an Afghan man she worked with in a camp in Chios, showing the basic geography of his life and, crucially, where he was captured and tortured by the Taliban. When she took the map home to decode the place-names, she realised she was holding this man's life-story in her hands.

During this meeting, she realised that the man's nine-year-old son was bored, and so brought a pen and paper to the next. The son occupied himself writing down a poem which his father had written and taught him about coming of age. On her last day in Chios, the father presented her a copy of the poem which his son had written up 'neatly and properly'. This poem now forms the design of the tote bags.

Teams in 25 Universities



**A massed donations of
£48,000**



**3600 SolidariTees and
600 SolidariTotes sold**



**Over 250 participants in
the photo campaign**



Gained the support of 12 MPs



SOLIDARITEE IN NUMBERS

EDINBURGH raised
£3,663 with the
help of 2 bake sales

DURHAM raised £1,188
and co-hosted an event with
the University Law Society

LEEDS raised
£300

MANCHESTER
raised £240

LIVERPOOL raised
£1,453 with the
help of a bake sale

SHEFFIELD
raised £160

OXFORD raised £8,136
through sales, chapel
collections and lobbying
JCRs in 9 colleges

CAMBRIDGE raised
£15,586 through t-shirt
and tote sales, 'Dance for
Solidaritee' club nights
and college chapel
donations.

BRISTOL raised
£4,127 through t-shirt
sales and a pub quiz
fundraising night

EXETER raised £1,360, all
through one student selling
t-shirts outside the library

UCL raised
£1,635

LSE raised
£364

IMPERIAL raised
£2,486 and sold
tees at an event at
the Barbican