

IMPACT REPORT

*A short summary of our activities
and what we've achieved in the
past academic year*

2020-21



The 20-21 academic year has been our biggest yet

900 students



60+ universities



10 countries



one movement



SolidariTee is an international, student-led charity striving to uphold the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable migrants worldwide.

We're a grant-giving charity, offering grants to NGOs which provide legal aid and other long-term, empowering forms of support to asylum seekers. We also work to raise awareness among the international community about the injustices perpetrated against refugees and asylum seekers worldwide.

Our supporters are people from all walks of life, with students and non students alike, united in solidarity with all those forced to flee their homes.

What We Do

At SolidariTee, we stand for equal legal and human rights for all, and seek to empower students to be the change they want to see.

The 4 pillars of our activities

In addition to providing grants to NGOs and our range of awareness-raising activities both on and off campus, we place a key focus on equipping students with the tools and confidence to be able to advocate sensitively and appropriately in the long-term for the rights of people who have been forced to flee their homes.

1. Grant-Giving

- £103,000
- 6 NGOs
- 4 regions in Greece

2. Education

- 250+ events and initiatives
- Multiple conferences
- Infographics + podcast

3. Student Engagement

- rep initiatives
- whole-team events
- welfare support
- workshops & skill building

4. Modelling respectful, inclusive activism at every level of the charity's operations



Key Milestones

1st February 2021: Day of SolidariTee

Marking the start of the Week of Action, on this day students and those who support us from all corners of the globe wore their SolidariTees, changed their profile pictures, and told the world one reason why they chose to stand in solidarity with refugees and other forcibly displaced people

June 2020

Refugee Week Conference, themed 'Beyond the Mediterranean' (online)

March 2020

Final grant installment of £103,000 paid

November 2020

Launch of Right to Refuge: A SolidariTee Podcast
Virtual art exhibition featuring artwork created by those with lived experience of displacement

October 2020

SolidariTee x Elpida Home t-shirts launched

July/August 2021

End of academic year

10,500 t-shirts sold
£190,000 raised
171 events held
200 initiatives run

1st-7th February 2021

Week of Action

In addition to one centrally organised event per day of the week, more than 35 teams took action on campus by hosting their own events.

December 2020

Livestream Christmas piano concert
60+ events & initiatives organised by our regional teams by the end of term 1

6th-7th Feb

SolidariTee's very first Conference, themed 'Seeking Solutions to Injustices Against Refugees', with over 100 online attendees

August - October 2020

Central Team, Head Rep & Rep training sessions

Aleppo - Lesvos Challenge

Symbolically covering the 1201km, the distance between Aleppo in Syria and the Greek island of Lesvos, teams of reps and other supporters raised more than £10,000 this week

Letter from Alexa Netty, SolidariTee's 20-21 Executive Director

Dear All,

Thank you for taking the time to read this impact report - after this letter it gets far less wordy I promise!

It has been a little over three years since I first began working with SolidariTee, and I have been lucky enough to have been executive director for almost 18 months of that time. In many ways, this academic year was a year of SolidariTee's reincarnation; no longer were we a brand-new charity, and no longer were we the 't-shirt charity'. It had been a long time since the 2015 'refugee crisis' first began, and in order to stay relevant and impactful within an ever-changing context, we needed to make some changes to the ways in which we operated. Prior to taking on the ED role, I had identified a few key areas in which I wanted to take the charity forwards, and to see those changes come to fruition is a real testament to the incredible team members I have been able to work alongside.

Team training and culture

My approach to team management revolves around focussing on each person's own individual motivations. I view my job as a leader to be about setting the overall vision, protecting the wider team from uncertainty and instability, and then providing the resources, training and infrastructure in order for each person to achieve their individual and collective goals. People join SolidariTee for a variety of reasons; some wish to build skills within the charity sector, some have family members with lived experience of displacement, and others are simply appalled by the injustices they witness in the news. What binds all of us is a will to use our time and energy in a meaningful way, and to be part of a community of others fighting for positive change. For me, keeping that wider goal in mind has been central. Some of the steps we took to allow reps to participate in the team as fully as they wished included running training workshops for those in each different role within the charity, setting up a designated welfare team, and developing a mental health-conscious culture which actively sought to combat burnout and compassion fatigue.

Reinventing the rep role

A challenge which I had identified from analysis of previous years' activities was that reps, up until this year, appeared to focus almost solely on t-shirt selling. This was certainly not helping to build our team's collective knowledge and skills within the sector, and meant that reps weren't feeling as personally connected to SolidariTee's mission, or to the rest of the team, as they could. Moreover, it placed a huge cap on the number of people we could reach outside of our team, limiting our educational and awareness-raising impact too.

For this reason, reconceptualising the regional roles to include a designated events-focussed component was perhaps the most notable success of the year. With teams being responsible for organising both fundraising and awareness-raising events, the number of opportunities for people to learn about legal aid and other sustainable solutions to the 'refugee crisis' shot up, and fundraising outside of shirt sales skyrocketed. Another step along this road was to allow regional teams, with proper training and editorial support, to run their own regional social media pages, enabling our teams to find their own voice within the space.

Each rep was also responsible for organising their own initiatives, either alone or in small groups, which could follow their own interests completely. Many reps organised panel discussions and quizzes, whilst others ran Instagram takeovers or bake sales. Some of the most memorable initiatives include the handmade earrings which were sold by one rep to raise money for SolidariTee, and another rep who made a Vietnamese cookbook together with her Mum. Overall, reps appear to be having more fun than ever before, despite many of our team members never having met anyone else from SolidariTee in person due to the pandemic.

The move to organic tees

I was clear from the start that SolidariTee would not be manufacturing any new clothing which was not made from organic cotton, which uses far less water and is much less environmentally harmful than non-organic cotton. To do this required us to increase the price of the new t-shirts from their well-known, and more convenient, £10 to a slightly more awkward £12. While this seemed bold at the time, the response to the organic collections (of both 2020 and 2021) has been overwhelmingly positive.

Broadening our fundraising, communications and outreach

As much as I am a believer in the power of our t-shirts, as a visual display of solidarity and a conversation starter, I was very conscious of the importance of placing a focus on the environmental sustainability of our operations. We felt strongly as a team that we only wanted people to purchase SolidariTees who really wanted and would wear them. What this meant is that we needed to expand the number of ways that people could contribute in other capacities, whilst being mindful of financial inclusivity. Additionally, we sought to ensure that our educational content was not solely limited to the Mediterranean, and adopted an intersectional approach to understanding forced displacement. The poor treatment refugees around the world face intersects with racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, misogyny, the climate crisis, and economic inequality to name but a few factors, none of which can be considered in isolation.

My visit to Greece

I recently spent some time volunteering with NGOs in Greece after graduation, and witnessing the context first-hand. Despite believing that I knew what to expect, it was unbelievably shocking; and yet, paradoxically, it was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. Legal aid, something which had at times can feel so intangible, really can be life-changing, and my conviction in its power was strengthened more than ever.

Thank you and next steps

To everyone who has been a part of the SolidariTee team this year, thank you - it has been an honour and an absolute pleasure to work alongside you, and I just know that whatever you each go on to do next, it's going to be amazing. To our supporters - thank you for keeping the SolidariTee world turning and enabling us, and in turn the NGOs we support, to continue their vital work. To Tiara, SolidariTee's founder - I owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude for trusting me to lead this team - what has been achieved since the charity's conception is quite simply amazing. To Rosie, Emma, Sarah and Flic, the central team directors 2020-21 - thank you for being there for every 3 hour long meeting, for keeping me accountable, challenging the status quo, and bringing success, fun, and kindness to everything you touched.

It should be noted that many of the ideas I listed here would never have come to fruition without the gentle encouragement and nuanced suggestions of our newest executive director Anna Marshall. There is no one I would rather hand this role over to, and if you stay tuned this year I have no doubt you will witness some fantastic achievements through Anna and the new central team's leadership. Prior to handing over, I worked with the other outgoing central team directors to develop a steering committee within the board of trustees, with an aim of improving institutional memory and capacity-building future central teams. The director roles are huge, especially alongside degrees, and so in order to keep building on our success, I believe the key is to provide an additional resource as opposed to adding additional responsibilities to the existing roles.

I hope you enjoy reading this document even 1% as much as I have enjoyed this past year - if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours, in solidarity,

Alexa Netty

Executive Director 2020-21

Trustee & Head of Steering Committee (current)

alexa@solidaritee.org.uk

About me:

I have a degree in psychology, neuroscience and behaviour, with a particular interest in trauma psychology, as well as a degree in veterinary medicine. Prior to leading SolidariTee, I was president of the organising committee for International Development and TEDx conferences, in addition to working with other student-led social impact initiatives. My other love in life is animal behaviour, and if I'm not at my desk it's very likely I'm teaching at puppy school!



I'm pictured above selling SolidariTees at a market stall in London, alongside my Mum and Grandma (in Greek we say Yiayia), two of the people who have taught me the most about standing up for what is right, each wearing their favourite SolidariTee.

Team Structure



Our Regional Teams

UK Universities

Aberdeen	East Anglia	Liverpool	SOAS	Sunderland
Bath	Edinburgh	London South Bank	Southampton	Sussex
Bath Spa	Exeter	LSE	St Andrews	UCL
Birmingham	Glasgow	Manchester	St Georges	Warwick
Buckingham New	Goldsmiths	Newcastle	Strathclyde	York
BPP	Guildhall	Nottingham		
Brighton	Heriot Watt	Nottingham Trent		
Bristol	Imperial	Oxford		
Cambridge	KCL	Oxford Brookes		
Cardiff	Kent	Queen Mary		
Courtauld	Lancaster	Queens, Belfast		
Durham	Leeds	Sheffield		

International Teams

Italy: IULM
Greece: numerous universities
Switzerland: Graduate Institute Geneva
Australia: Melbourne University
Germany: Munster University
USA: Yale, UNC Chapel Hill
Canada: Ontario University
France: SciencesPo Menton & Paris
Sri Lanka: numerous universities
Republic of Ireland: Trinity College Dublin

& a Year Abroad team, and an Online team for those studying at wholly remote institutions

Left: in a 'normal' year, our SolidariTee teams get together to organise photoshoots. The pandemic made this impossible, but our St George's team were undeterred, and did a zoom photoshoot instead!

Rosie Richards, TeamSolidariTee director 2020-21

Being a part of SolidariTee has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. One of the most valuable things about being part of this charity is the level of investment in empowering young people to make a difference. Unlike at so many levels of the professional world, SolidariTee acknowledges both the passion and potential that young adults have and harnesses those qualities allowing them to translate into skill and productivity. Our focus is on providing volunteers with the training, knowledge and confidence they need to take the reins themselves. I have volunteered with many organisations and none of them have given me this opportunity to see my ideas through from conception to execution, with enough support to not feel overwhelmed, yet enough agency to to learn and progress as an activist. SolidariTee has equipped me to move into the professional world with a level of confidence and self respect to enact sustainable change in the humanitarian aid sector in which I now work.



changes to better support and empower our reps

1. Rep Initiatives & Team Events

For the first time this year, every member of the SolidariTee team was given the responsibility, support, and freedom to organise their own event or initiative, either alone or in small groups of 2-3.

In previous years, SolidariTee teams had been encouraged to organise events, including team photoshoots, and whilst some teams had organised fantastic events such as 'Dance 4 SolidariTee' or run panel discussions, uptake was not even or universal.

As such, this year we built the requirement for engaging with outreach and fundraising other than through t-shirt sales into the role itself. Each team was given the target of organising two outreach and two fundraising events as a group over the academic year, in addition to reps working on one of their own personal projects, known as 'rep initiatives'.

In doing so, reps are given the tools and confidence to take SolidariTee's mission forwards once they have left the team and are no longer selling tees, and were far more engaged and connected to the cause as a result.

2. Discussion Sessions

In Spring 2020, Team SolidariTee developed a new team structure to allow for remote activism and volunteering, at a time when universities were closed and meeting in-person was too unsafe. We began our very first series of discussion sessions during this period, in response to feelings of helplessness and restlessness among many of our volunteers. We decided that if we weren't able to be out in the world acting, then we would use this time for education. The sessions proved so successful in providing a safe, engaging space to learn from and with each other, that we continued these into the following academic year.

Each session was conceived, researched, and facilitated by a different volunteer from across SolidariTee - many of our team members have worked with NGOs, written dissertations, or otherwise gained specialist experience across a range of topics including gendered experiences of exile, NGOization, hostile border policy, volunteering in Greece, Palestinian refugees, and climate refugees.

Changes to better empower and support our reps



3. SolidariPedia

In response to the success of the discussion sessions, we also wanted to provide accessible, collated information about a range of displacement contexts outside of Greece, where our work has focussed in a written format. Central team members compiled resource packs covering contexts including Venezuela, Myanmar and Afghanistan, designed to act as a springboard for regional teams to facilitate their own discussion sessions. From there, 3 groups of regional teams embarked on research projects covering climate migration, the importance of language in experiences of migration, and refugee mental health, giving presentations alongside our other seekers at our Refugee Week Conference. Empowering reps to take agency over the ways in which they wish to make change is a cornerstone in our vision for the year, and this was one of our favourite examples of success.

4. Welfare Team

The welfare of our volunteers has always been a top priority for TeamSolidariTee. We are acutely aware of the often distressing subject matter of our mission, the difficulties of maintaining stable mental health in a university setting, and the compounded challenges posed by successive lockdowns. As such, this year we sought to create a dedicated welfare team with official training and formalised mechanisms through which any volunteer could seek support, and be able to reach either a friendly listening ear, or be signposted to more appropriate professional resources. Our welfare team each had expertise in one or more specific fields such as gender, sexuality, physical and mental health, financial access, and diversity and ethnicity, and all received training from someone qualified as a mental health first aider. We also held weekly welfare drop ins for anyone to access if they wanted advice in an informal and confidential capacity.

Background image: SolidariTee
team photoshoot (pre-pandemic)

Regional Team Highlights

We asked a few head reps to tell us about their SolidariTee year...

“

Newcastle - led by Head Rep Esther Price

The Newcastle SolidariTee team 2020-2021 had a wonderful year. We created, organised and delivered 9 events including an incredibly successful 9 hour DJ livestream raising £375 and a 555 challenge in which our team walked, ran, and cycled 555 miles- the distance many refugees are forced to travel, from Izmir to Dubrovnik. This event raised a huge £970, something we are so proud of. It wasn't just about fundraising events though, we put on panel talks spotlighting incredibly knowledgeable and inspirational individuals from organisations such as the West End Refugee Service, N.E.S.T and ASSIST. Those who attended these events told us how much they had learnt from those with lived experience and how they had been moved by their stories of courage, tenacity and strength. Our team created some incredible and diverse initiatives from creating freshly made brownie and cookie delivery boxes, to an Instagram running challenge, to a week of blog posts all targeted at raising awareness of the refugee crisis. Last but not least our t-shirt sales were a triumph, and in total we raised over £6000!

”

12	team events	30	debates, conferences + panel discussions	200+
collaborations with other organisations	170+	team quizzes and art exhibitions	50+	rep initiatives

“

KCL- led by Head Rep Jessica Gjeloshi

KCL ran 12 events and initiatives in total including a freely accessible day long conference in collaboration with 6 KCL societies including Students for Justice for Palestine and charities like Safe Passage UK and The Learning Station Project. They had a variety of speakers including lawyers, psychiatrists, psychologists and various academics, where possible ensuring they platformed those with lived experiences of displacement. KCL also ran a month-long fundraiser, again in collaboration with various sports and academic socs at King's, which involved running/cycling/walking 50km for 500k refugees in Greece that raised over £700. Multiple volunteers wrote articles in different languages to highlight different issues relating to experiences of exile. Alongside this they ran a yoga class, political sketch class, and a virtual cooking class with Majeda Khouri, a Syrian chef and asylum seeker who runs the 'Syrian Sunflower' cooking school.

”

Our Communications

A policy was put in place early on by Tiara, SolidariTee's founder, to avoid showing refugee faces in our social media content, and we have stuck to this ever since. This is to avoid playing into tropes about what a 'good' or 'typical' refugee looks like, prevent feeding into exploitative or saviourist narratives, and to ensure there are no issues surrounding informed consent, especially in contexts with marked power asymmetries. In addition, we have sought this year to develop a range of educational content which is:

- **Accessible and inclusive** – for a post to be educational, it needs to first be understandable! We avoid the use of jargon, seek to never assume prior knowledge, and provide alt text, content notes, and references as appropriate
- **Global and intersectional** – we have chosen not to focus solely on the locations where we fund work, and strive to acknowledge the many factors which compound injustices against refugees, as well as the many vulnerable migrants and forcibly displaced people who are not covered under the refugee convention.
- **Bold** – brave activism requires us to address the elephants in the room, approaching charged topics in a sensitive, nuanced way



In March 2020, we also released a concept video, with more information on what we stand for as well as messages from team members.

Watch it here!

Social Media: taking a global, connected approach

Internally Displaced Person

Noun

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.

The UN Refugee Agency

A History of Refugees:

The Spanish Inquisition (1478-1834)

Sources: Britannica
Jewish Virtual Library

A History of Refugees:

The Partition of India (1947)

'Back to Basics' series

New: history of refugees series

8,000 migrants crossed from Morocco into the Spanish city of Ceuta this week.

Spain
Ceuta
Morocco

6,500 have now been returned to Morocco.

Migrants' lives are not a bargaining tool to be used in border negotiations or political spats - yet this is increasingly what we are seeing.

Long-term, often indefinite, mandatory detention has become Australia's first resort, rather than its last.

Why are Palestinians facing eviction from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah?

And how is this part of a wider system of occupation and dispossession

"We use the term 'eviction' to highlight how these acts are legalised under Israeli law. However it is important to note that they are illegal under international law."

The Syrian Civil War 10 years on

March 2021 marks 10 years since protests demanding democratic reforms began in the major cities of Syria.

It followed the accumulation of economic, political and social suffering under the Assad regime (Hafez al-Assad from 1970, followed by his son Bashar al-Assad since 2000).

Infographics & Current Affairs

"In South Africa, the rights and liberties of people with non-binary gender expressions are not protected. My sexuality is at the core of who I am."

- Recipient of Micro Rainbow Support

NGO Spotlights

Thessaloniki: Mobile Info Team (MIT)

Lesvos: Felix Humanitarian Legal Aid Legal Centre Lesvos

Chios: A.S.x.I.S.T.

Samos: Advocates Sans Frontières European Lawyers in Lesvos

This year, we are proud to be supporting six legal aid NGOs, in four different locations in Greece, providing grants totalling over £100,000

One T-shirt. One Statement. One Movement.

SOLIDARITEE

Mythbusters

Myth:

Asylum seekers are mostly men, not women and children who really need asylum

Now let's unpack this myth...

Our Projects

New: multilingual content

I Paesi che sono più compassionevoli nei confronti dei rifugiati hanno livelli di violenza più bassi

I rifugiati sono spesso considerati capri espiatori dai media e dai politici per casi di violenza e altri problemi.

Tuttavia, una nuova ricerca ha dimostrato che i Paesi in Europa e Nord America che trattano i rifugiati con compassione e che ne accettano in maggior quantità tendono ad avere tassi di omicidi inferiori.



Led by Sarah Davidson, Comms Director 20-21



New for 2020-21: SolidariTee Conferences

One of our key goals for the year was to broaden the variety of educational and awareness-raising opportunities offered by our Central Team, and our two centrally organised conferences were highlights in the SolidariTee year. By bringing a range of speakers ranging from NGO workers and academics to journalists and psychiatrists, including those with lived experiences of forcible displacement themselves, our audience were able to meaningfully connect with new information and make links between various themes within the fight for refugee rights.

Tickets were available on a 'donate what you can' basis, with free tickets for anyone experiencing financial hardship – we believe that combining fundraising with outreach can be a great way for interested individuals to connect meaningfully with SolidariTee's mission whilst gaining something in return, but we don't ever want access to our educational resources to become financially exclusive. At both conferences, current SolidariTee volunteers were also given the opportunity to present their own ideas and research.

Day 1 • 6/Feb 2021

SOLIDARITEE CONFERENCE

10:00-10:20	Welcome Alexa Natty, Executive Director of SolidariTee
10:20-11:00	From the field: in conversation with legal aid NGOs Panel: Sheila Cross & Philip Worthington, in conversation with Alexa Natty
11:00-11:30	Mary Atkinson Keynote: campaigner at Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
11:40-12:40	Media depictions of refugees: how can journalists report responsibly? Panel: Melis Omalar, Mathilda Mallinson, Katy Fallon, Abdulwahab Tahhan & Charlotte Eager Chair: Emma Penny
14:00-14:30	Sophie Kloos Keynote: Director of Asylos, on country of origin research in promoting evidence-based asylum processes
14:30-15:15	Gender: how gender identity shapes experiences of borders & migration Panel: Anila Noor, Billy Holtsberg & Navot Sawilney Chair: Rosie Richards
15:15-15:45	Matt Mahmoudi Keynote: advisor at Amnesty International & PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge
15:45-16:15	Zabihullah Jamili Keynote: Coordinator for Translation & Cultural Mediation at Fenix Humanitarian Aid

'Beyond the Mediterranean'

One day conference: Saturday 19th June

AM	PM
Panel: Rohingya Refugees 10 - 11 am	Panel: IDPs - Legal and humanitarian challenges 2:30 - 3:30 pm
Panel: Seeking Asylum in the UK 11:30 - 12:30 pm	Research Presentations from SolidariTee Team 3:50 - 5 pm
Workshop: Resisting the Hostile Environment 12:45 - 1:45 pm	Keynote: Malual Bol Kiir 5 - 5:30pm

Other projects: fundraising & outreach



Led by Flic Kersting (L)
and Emma Penney (R),
Fundraising and
Outreach directors
202-21



This year, we placed a big focus on diversifying the ways in which students and non-students alike can be a part of the SolidariTee movement. In order for supporting us financially be more accessible, we broadened the range of products we offer to include a long-sleeved option, and virtual non-consumer products, as well as 'donate what you can' events. To build upon our outreach and educational foundations, we hosted shorter panel discussions and launched a podcast in addition to running 2 conferences, leaving people free to engage in whichever manner suits them best.

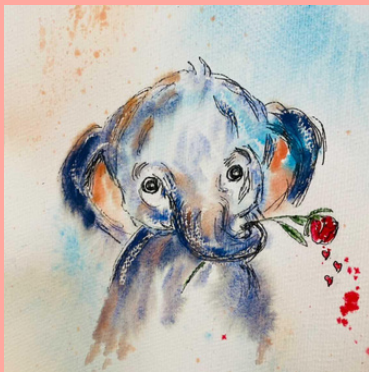


*Launch of 'coffee
cup' monthly
donations & virtual
gifts*



SolidariTee jumpers released

Other projects



*Valentines card commissions
by Judy Fishel*



*Panel discussion in
collaboration with WWF*



*SolidariTee's podcast, which
ran for two seasons during
the academic year, covering
topics ranging from the use
of language around forced
migration to how to have
tricky conversations.*

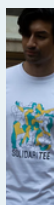


*SolidariTee cookbook
created by team Italy*

Virtual Exhibition



Spotlight on: SolidariTee x Elpida Home 2020 t-shirt collection



For the first time ever, the 2020 SolidariTees were made from 100% organic cotton. The climate crisis already forcibly displaces people from their homes, and this is set to increase drastically if nothing is done. We know that in order to fight for human rights, we also need to fight for the planet. Our 2020 tees are also certified:

- PETA-vegan approved
- Global Organic Textile Standard
- OKEO-TEX 100
- Fair Wear

Our designs are printed using phthalate free, vegan, non-toxic, water-based inks by London Living Wage Employer Fifth Column

They are based on a design created by a group of 12 refugees and asylum seekers, who each stood against a piece of paper and traced each others outlines. It is displayed in the Elpida Home community centre, where the art was created, in Thessaloniki.



SolidariTee open letter to UK home office

You can read a copy of the letter [here](#).

'We are returning migrants who have no legal right to be in the UK. They have illegally crossed the Channel when they have no need and no right to leave mainland Europe.'

UK Home Office Spokesperson

Now let's unpack these myths...

August 2020

The New Plan for Immigration is against international law.

The UK Home Office's New Plan is based on harmful myths and baseless stereotypes which aim to undermine human rights, asylum seekers' rights and refugees' rights.

March 2021

April 2021: open letter written by SolidariTee published, cosigned by over 50 organisations

Yesterday, at least four people, two of them children – aged five and eight – died after a boat carrying asylum seekers capsized just off the coast of northern France.

October 2020

BREAKING NEWS

On Friday, a fire broke out at Napier Barracks in Kent, a former military barracks which is being used to house asylum seekers.

Swipe to read more about the UK government's response, and the reality of life for asylum seekers at Napier Barracks

January 2021

DEAR UK HOME OFFICE,

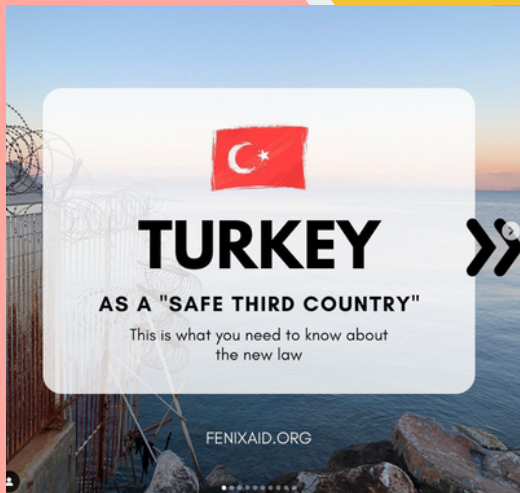
"We condemn in the strongest terms any attempt to criminalise those seeking safety from violence and persecution, and see this proposal as especially damaging in this light."

Swipe to find out how you can help

Context in Greece: 2020-21



March 2020: The world locks down, whilst in some regions of Moria, Europe's largest refugee camp at the time, there was just one tap per 1200 people.



June 2020: Joint Ministerial Decision - Greece unilaterally declares Turkey a 'safe' country for asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Anyone attempting to seek asylum in Greece from these countries who has passed through Turkey is assumed to be 'inadmissible' within the Greek asylum system unless proven otherwise, and can be forcibly returned.

This is despite the fact that Turkey is definitively unsafe for a variety of groups, and has recently withdrawn from the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence). This does not change when the Taliban gain control of Afghanistan.

September 2020: Fires almost entirely destroy Moria camp, leaving its thousands of residents homeless, including those who had tested positive for covid-19. For several days, people were stranded between two police checkpoints on the roadside. A year on, research by Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid would find that many former residents did not have access to daily food provision during the fires.



Context in Greece: 2020-21



Autumn 2020: A new 'temporary' camp named Mavrovouni is assembled, consisting of open air tents which flooded at the first rains. Many refugees and asylum seekers are transferred off the island to mainland Greece, often with little knowledge of where they are being sent. For those midway through asylum procedures, this is devastating.



Spring 2021: Though still officially denied by Greece to this day, overwhelming evidence of Greek coastguard and authorities carrying out illegal 'pushbacks', forcibly preventing asylum seekers from entering the territory continues to come to light. In many cases, there are reports of vessels having been deliberately capsized, with those aboard violently attacked.



March 2021: EU Commissioner announces funding of 250 million euros to build 5 new 'closed' camps across Greece.



Autumn 2021: 'temporary' Mavrovouni camp has been formalised, with most of the accommodation now taking the form of large partitioned marquees or 'isoboxes' - plastic one-room cubes.

Arrivals are lower in 2020 & 2021 than in previous years despite humanitarian crises unfolding, likely linked to pushbacks and other deterrent policies. Plans for closed camps remain unclear.



Our Grants

In the 2020-21 academic year, we are honoured to have provided grants totalling £103,000 to 6 NGOs, working in 4 different regions of Greece.

Legal Centre Lesvos



LEGAL
CENTRE
LESVOS

"Since August 2016, we provide free and individual legal information and assistance to migrants who arrived by sea to Lesvos, where our office is based. Beyond this continuous and direct support, we work on documenting violations of migrants' rights and engage in advocacy and strategic litigation to hold the Greek government, Member States of the European Union, and European institutions to account. In addition, we advocate for equal access to safe and legal routes of migration in Greece, Europe and globally."



Above: Fenix Team



Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid

"Fenix was founded in November of 2018 by 5 young professionals who believed that there was a need for a different, more holistic approach to legal aid in humanitarian contexts. Two years later Fenix celebrates having over 50 staff members and volunteers who provide what we have coined 'Holistic Legal Aid'.

This is a service that addresses the legal, protection, psychological, social and emotional needs of our clients through legal, protection and mental health services to the most vulnerable amongst the vulnerable: unaccompanied minors, survivors of torture and sexual gender based violence, and people with medical issues or disabilities.

In the last 32 months, Fenix has assisted over 3,700 asylum seekers and refugees from 25 countries in 11 different languages. Our multidimensional, survivor-led and trauma-informed approach to legal aid combines effective and skilled individual case work and emergency response with high quality evidence-based advocacy and strategic efforts at the local, national and European level. We strongly believe in the power of our work: in information, safety and empowerment as compelling tools for healing trauma and fostering integration, and in community engagement, advocacy and strategic litigation as means for structural change."

Dated: Autumn 2021

Our Grants 2020-21 (ctd)



Mobile Info Team

The Mobile Info Team (MIT) has supported over 700 asylum cases, representing over 1,500 refugees, and specialising in family reunification. An asylum claim cannot be straightforwardly transferred from one country to another, leaving many family members and unaccompanied minors stranded across several different countries, with the threat of deportation hanging over them.

Thus far, their advocacy has directly resulted in countless positive application decisions for those struggling to navigate the complex asylum process. MIT use a 3 tier system: their social media provides essential information to their followers, which includes many refugees; they have a WhatsApp hotline for asylum seekers' concerns and enquiries; and hold in-person sessions, with group sessions to provide information and one-to-one casework sessions.

Asylum Seekers Information Services Team



A.Ss.I.S.T's mission is to ensure all asylum seekers have access to fair process when their case is being assessed through the provision of information and legal aid, and that those ineligible for asylum still receive adequate information and support about their situations.

They work with the core values of accountability, honesty, respect and responsibility, and impartiality.

From July to December 2019, they supported over 1000 asylum seekers through information Sessions and legal aid provision. There are few lawyers on Chios who are qualified to support refugees in their asylum applications, with A.Ss.I.S.T working to fill this gap.

Quantifying Impact

By nature, real-world impact is delicate and ever-changing. Asylum processes can take years, and success rates vary according to the complexity of someone's case, their country of origin, and the international political landscape to name just a few factors.

For this reason, we also consider the impact on an NGO's operating capacity when measuring the impact of our grants. Each grant given out enabled the NGO in question either to pay for a Greek lawyer for a year, or to implement a growth and sustainability strategy. Please note all grants were 'unearmarked'



Left: childrens' drawing in the A.Ss.I.S.T office
Right: Alexa, 2020-21 executive director + current trustee, visiting MIT



Our Grants 2020-21 (ctd)

European Lawyers in Lesvos



ELLIL believes that every asylum seeker should be able to receive free, high-quality assistance from an independent, experienced lawyer before their asylum interview. They provide legal assistance to asylum seekers on Lesvos and Samos. Of those they have assisted, 74.5% have been granted asylum, compared to an average of 46.5% in Greece, and have provided free legal assistance to over 11,000 people since 2016.

They provide one-to-one legal consultations, assistance with family reunification applications, and group legal information sessions. These help familiarise asylum seekers with the asylum process, help them understand their rights, and prepare fully for interview.



Avocats Sans Frontières

Avocats Sans Frontières is an international organisation that works to defend individuals' fundamental rights through providing access to independent legal advice and ensuring the proper implementation of human rights. This year, SolidariTee are supporting their work at a legal aid centre on the island of Samos. The centre opened in January 2019, and in their first six months supported 387 individuals with their asylum applications.

ASF in Samos focus on providing support and information to asylum seekers prior to the initial asylum interview and throughout the appeals process where necessary. This includes activities such as translating medical documents, communicating with the Greek asylum service, working on family reunification cases, and identifying individuals who are classed as 'vulnerable' so able to access specific protections.

the results were better than we hoped

Thanks to the support of all those who stood in SolidariTee during that period, we were able to deliver all of our grants in just 7 months, 9 months ahead of schedule, and confidently increase the amount which we pledged in our next round of grants. In the 21-22 academic year, we have pledged £142,000 to 8 NGOs working across Greece, the Western Balkans and beyond - to read more about who we're currently supporting, click [here](#).

about our grant-giving

We believe our grant-giving model is the most impactful form of support we can offer. Defined sums of money enable NGOs to focus on doing the work that they do best, allowing them to plan ahead with financial certainty.

We carefully select each grant recipient to ensure that we are funding work where SolidariTee's support is able to make the biggest difference, through a combination of written application, budget review, and interview. We seek to provide grants where an injection of funding will enable an NGO to either ensure its long-term sustainability, or to expand, grow, and develop.

The NGO world is not straightforward; funding is scarce across the board, and tends to come and go along with media attention. Many NGOs doing vital work are forced to close simply through being unable to secure enough money to keep going. In many contexts, this has led to a continual turnover of new NGOs being set up and closed down, leading to less reliable services for the communities they seek to support, and no ability for organisations to plan ahead. At the same time, funding can sometimes be very 'donor-driven', meaning that NGOs have to focus on doing projects that donors want to fund, which can be at odds with where the greatest need is. This, amongst other factors, also results in refugees, asylum seekers, and other affected populations having little say in the services they receive, or ability to report any issues they experience in many cases.

That's why, at SolidariTee, we've tried to take a different approach. We focus on enabling NGOs to do what they do best.

We don't ask that NGOs set up specific new projects in order to get funding; we are just as happy to cover general operational costs as we are to support a specific project, so long as there will be a long-term benefit to the organisation. We also focus heavily on accountability to the affected population - we want to ensure that the NGOs we fund are involving those they seek to support in guiding strategy at every level. Beneficiaries must be able to express what kind of services they want, and how those services are best provided, protected from further harm through robust safeguarding procedures, and have the opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences. Above all, we want to know that the work we're funding provides tangible, lasting benefits to those forced to flee persecution and violence, and is provided in a respectful, inclusive way.



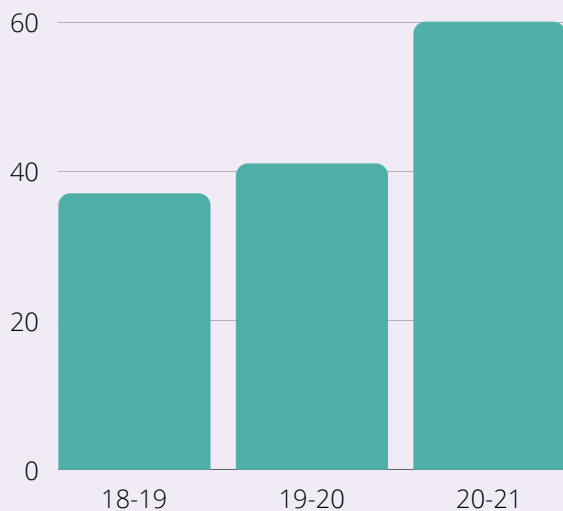
Mavrovouni camp, Lesbos: Right:
Autumn 2021, Left: Autumn 2020



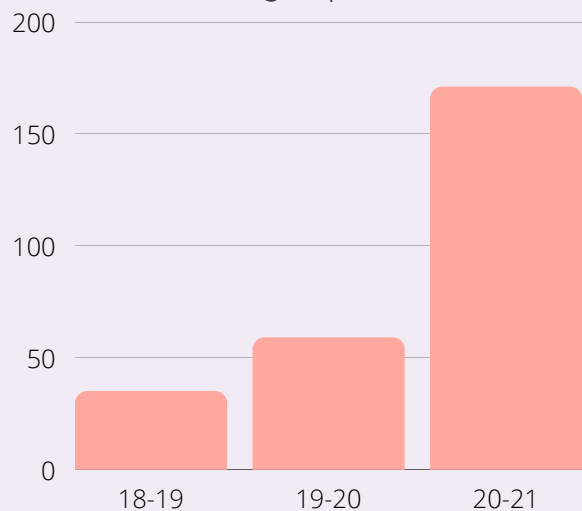
In Figures

Measuring our growth per academic year

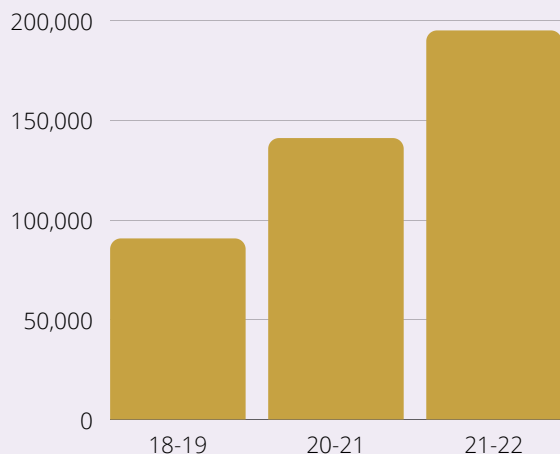
No. university teams



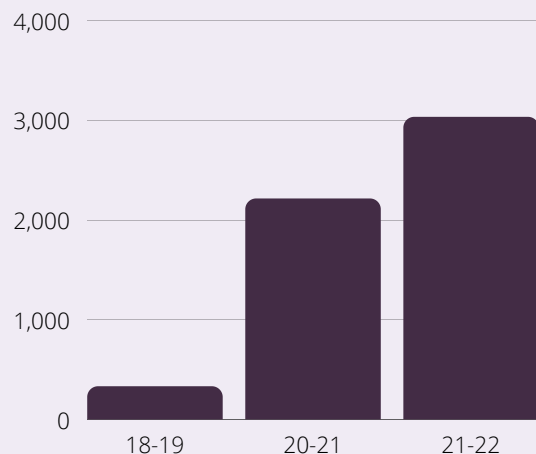
No. regional team events (excluding rep initiatives)



Money Raised (1st Sep - 31st Aug)



Online Sales (no. products) (1st Sep - 31st Aug)



At our last financial review (Autumn 2021) we spent under 1% of our income on administrative costs such as our website and insurance. The rest either goes directly to our grants, or is used to manufacture products and ship orders to customers. By all working remotely, we have next to no overheads, making our work incredibly efficient.

Thank You!

Everybody reading this has contributed to SolidariTee's mission in one way or another, be that by attending one of our events, purchasing a t-shirt, or simply taking an interest in our educational resources. SolidariTee is based upon the principle of united impact, so our work would, quite simply, not be possible without you. Thank you for helping us grow from a one-student initiative to where we are today.

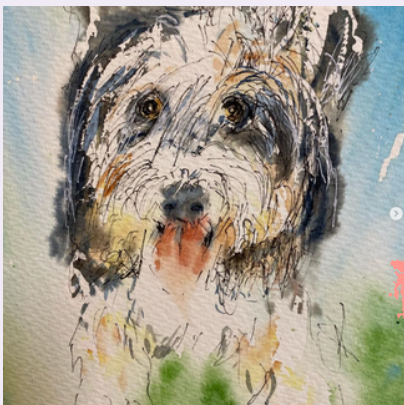
We would also like to extend a particular thanks to our partner organisations Judy Fishel Art, Jericho Coffee Traders, and NEMI Teas.



JCT is an Oxford-based roastery and coffee subscription service, who donate 15% of the price of all online orders to SolidariTee when the code JCTXSOLIDARITEE is used.



NEMI Teas are a London-based specialist tea company who employ refugees at every stage in their supply chain. They donate 15% of the price of all online orders to SolidariTee when the code SOLIDARITEE15 is used.



Judy Fishel is a watercolour artist who donates 100% of the proceeds from commissions made referencing SolidariTee.



Looking Ahead



“

This report serves as a clear reminder of just how much has been achieved over the past 18 months and the sheer standard that has now been set. Internationally, the past year has seen a toughening of anti-refugee policy, making our charity's growth not only remarkable but also crucial. As a volunteer-led organisation, we are a smooth machine only when every volunteer feels able to contribute to the best of their ability. The challenge now is to find ways to continue this drive and engagement across every campus.

”

*- Anna Marshall, Executive Director
for the 21-22 academic year*

Whilst 4 of the 5 outgoing Central Team directors from the 20-21 academic year went on to join the board of trustees and form the new strategic steering committee, Anna has taken over as Executive Director, overseeing the day-to-day running of the charity alongside studying for a masters in Climate Change, and leading a fantastic new Central Team. We look forward to combining the collective knowledge and experience across all areas of SolidariTee to ensure that this coming year is just as impactful and true to our mission.

If you'd like to get involved, either through an event or partnership or as a volunteer, we'd love to hear from you!

To get in touch, please email:

*teamsolidaritee@solidaritee.org.uk for volunteering queries
boardoftrustees@solidaritee.org.uk for grant-making information
fundraising@solidaritee.org.uk for partnerships and donation info
outreach@solidaritee.org.uk for event & speaker enquiries*

Document written January 2022 by Alexa Netty, with contributions from Rosie Richards. Both are current members of the board of trustees and steering committee at the time of writing.