

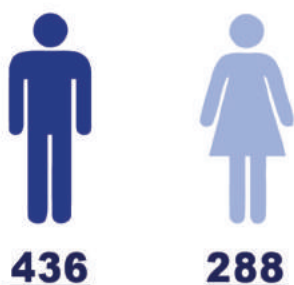
Not just a refugee: The educational and professional background of SolidarityNow beneficiaries

A snapshot on educational and professional background of refugees and asylum seekers in Greece, beneficiaries of SolidarityNow programs.

Full and credible information about the educational and professional background of refugees and asylum seekers in Greece is by no means easily attainable. However, based on the extent of SolidarityNow interventions, through Solidarity Centers and accommodation projects, an approximate profile can be shaped.

This snapshot reflects on the information collected out of 724 SolidarityNow (SN) adult beneficiaries. For research purposes, asylum seekers in Greece were at the spotlight of this survey.

Participants by gender

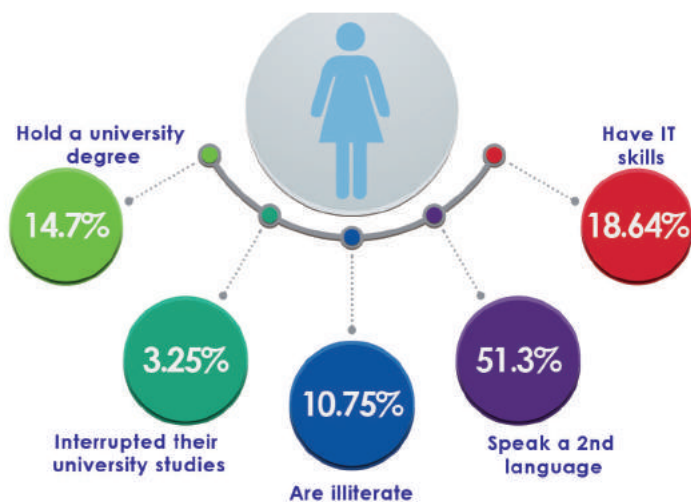
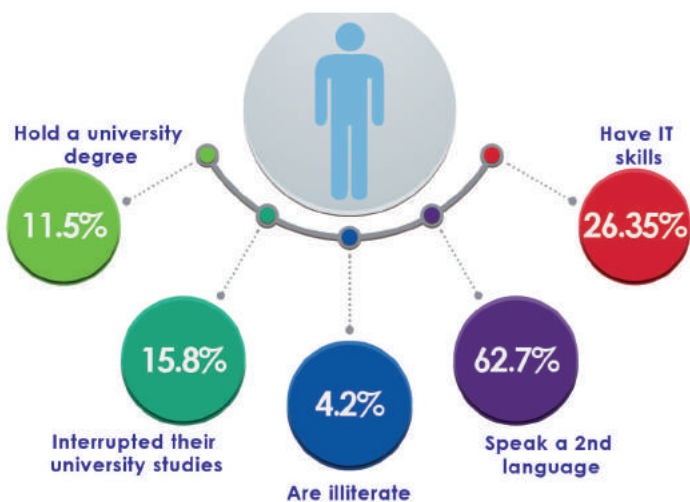


Participants by status



During 2016, Greece amended its legislation so that asylum seekers could legally find employment, since the filing of their case. Asylum seekers and refugees (with the exception of those remaining under the status of pre-registration) are now able to obtain a work permit, but still they cannot fully access to the vocational education and training system. By earning a living or acquiring a professional qualification, refugees have the opportunity to become active members of the Greek economy rather than remaining aid recipients. Even among relocation candidates, a 17,5% would prefer to stay in Greece, should they were able to find a job.

So far, sporadic formal education providers offer services adapted to refugees' needs. Not all refugees have the necessary level of knowledge of Greek or other European spoken language. As a result of the war, a significant number among them were unable to participate and/or complete any training or formal educational path, while they are no longer in possession of their technical and/or academic certificates. Refugees and asylum seekers are not familiar with the Greek labour market and the available advisory services.



Educational Achievement

Fleeing away from home had a significant impact to the moving population, as 10,66% have quit their academic courses in order to find a safe place from war.

Men have been most affected, as they represent 87% of those dropping university studies, while the rate among university graduates is equal for male and female population.

As a percentage, women represent two thirds of the illiterate population.

Asylum Seekers in Greece

General Survey Population

6.4%	Are illiterate, of which 2/3 are women	6.9%
18.6%	Have only finished primary school	24.08%
47.9%	Have graduated from secondary school	45.54%
9.3%	Have interrupted their university studies because of the war	10.7%
17.1%	Are university graduates	12.6%
0.7%	Hold a Master's degree	

Linguistic Capacities

Because of their origins many of the refugees and asylum seekers speak a second language of the region. English is not a regionally used language that most refugees and asylum seekers speak, while a significant percentage of them have started the process of learning Greek.

Language as perceived indicator of social integration is reflected through the difference among general survey population and asylum seekers in Greece, with the latter group speaking basic Greek at almost double rate.

General survey population:

56,79 % speak a second language (30,66% speak English and 8,47% speak Greek).

Asylum seekers in Greece:

47% speak a second language (29,52% speak English and 16,27% speak Greek).



Computer Skills

1 out of 4 refugees and asylum seekers is computer literate, a crosscutting trend regardless status, origin or gender.

General survey population:

23,21% have at least basic, functional knowledge of computer skills.

Asylum seekers in Greece:

24,10% have at least basic, functional knowledge of computer skills.



Professional Background

Lack of recognition of their professional and academic skills in the European (and Greek) context leads many refugees and asylum seekers to seek jobs unrelated to their qualifications.

In Greece, due to the major needs for interpretation a significant number of asylum seekers work as interpreters in NGOs, UN agencies and EU bodies.

A 17,86% of SN employees are of refugee and asylum seeker status. Back in their country of origin, asylum seekers and refugees were employed in a wide range of sectors, from construction work and arts to education and art. The number of public servants and farmers seem significantly low compared to the average among population groups, while the rate of teachers (from kindergarden to university) and art/beauty professionals is high.

19.71%	<u>Factory workers, constructors, technicians, cleaners</u>
14.89%	<u>Housework</u>
10.66%	<u>Students</u>
9.20%	<u>Not previously employed</u>
7.45%	<u>Teachers and professors</u>
6.28%	<u>Sales, shop assistants and secretarial work</u>
5.84%	<u>Arts, fashion and beauty professionals</u>
5.40%	<u>Shop owners</u>
4.67%	<u>Tourism and restauration employees</u>
4.23%	<u>Drivers and car mechanics</u>
2.63%	<u>Interpreters and translators</u>
2.34%	<u>Public servants and retirees</u>
1.90%	<u>Agriculture professionals / Farmers</u>
1.31%	<u>Medical and healthcare professionals</u>
3.50%	<u>Other Scientists (Law, Humanities, Engineers)</u>

Basic constraints

- Interruption of school attendance;
- Limited access to formal education, especially for adolescents;
- Lack of understanding of Greek context;
- Accommodation in isolated camps hinders refugee integration to education and labour market;
- Pre-registered do not have access to labour market;
- Limited capacity of learning the local language;
- Absence of certification recognition mechanism from EU authorities;



How SolidarityNow approached the issue so far?

1. SN has integrated employability services within its three Solidarity Centers in Athens and Thessaloniki, leading the empowerment of beneficiaries' skills and matching with labour market services. SN social services orient refugees and asylum seekers and facilitate their interference with administration.
2. **967 children and 262 adults attended non-formal education activities** taking place in the accommodation structures mainly courses of English, Greek, German and Arabic. With Rovies, Sindos and Tilos teams being the pioneers of the structured non-formal educational activities, on Tilos four beneficiaries have already found local jobs.
3. SN, acknowledging the need for formalization of education provided, secured **200 IT and English language learning packs** leading to certification, in a small pilot activity that could enhance social integration in the post-arrival relocation country or Greece, through a certification that could fast track the integration in the labour market.
4. SN Organised courses for skills empowerment in interpretation for 100 refugees and asylum seekers.
5. SolidarityNow has advocated for accommodation solutions in urban areas, and for the amendment of the legal framework with a view of providing access to the labor-market for the pre-registered population.



Our agenda for change

1. Integration of refugees and asylum seekers into national education system.
2. Skills empowerment in IT and innovation for asylum seekers and refugees, with emphasis on girls and women.
3. Provision of post-primary education asylum seekers and opportunities to re-integrate secondary school, with emphasis on access for girls and other marginalised groups.
4. Development of a mechanism for skills, certification and degrees recognition of asylum seekers and refugees.
5. Provision of merit-based scholarships to refugees and asylum seekers in order to pursue their interrupted academic studies.