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SNAPSHOT

Snapshot 2: June 2017

Reaching society's potential: How SolidarityNow works for a paradigm shift in integration of refugees?

Can a newcoming population with different social and cultural background become a boost factor for the sustainable development of small local societies?

Local integration is a complex and gradual process with legal, social, educational and economical interdependencies; It imposes considerable demands on both the individual and the receiving society.
SolidarityNow (SN), along with the Municipality of Tilos, implemented a pilot project aiming at reinforcing refugees' resilience and integration potential, combined with local opportunities' growth.

Tilos is a small island of 800 inhabitants, in proximity to Rhodes and Kos, that gathers all the typical features of a local society with limited resources. Amidst the increased or dramatic 2015 flows, the inhabitants of the island demonstrated solidarity and has been the first and only local society that expressed interest in hosting refugees.

What SN intends to?

TILOS project has as prime objectives to:

- Enhance economic opportunities and development of the host community through activities that maximize the opportunities arisen from the presence of refugees, while addressing the challenges of the underlying crisis;
- Sustain and ameliorate the living conditions and self-reliance of refugees and vulnerable members of the host community;
- Develop a project bridging humanitarian aid with development perspective;
- Demonstrate the new opportunities and benefits for regional and local economies through refugees' human capital, labour, skills and services deriving by third country nationals' presence, within a non-typical context (not within a developing country).

SN designed a four-level approach intended to build on the island's expressed solidarity and progressiveness

Level 1 SN supported Doctors of the World, within the framework of refugee response, to run a medical project securing access to healthcare of 1.022 refugees and locals

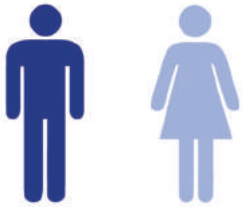
Level 2 SN, with the support of Open Society Foundations, funded the construction of an accommodation site, applying all international standards, in order to respond to the refugee influx needs

Level 3 SN, with the support of UNHCR, run a pilot project promoting peaceful co-existence, investing in educational activities and communities' interaction plan, rather than pure accommodation

Level 4 SN seeks to establish synergies between the two communities and facilitate the establishment of a social enterprise, that could serve as a model for integration projects

Tilos project demographics

SolidarityNow, with the cooperation of the Municipality of Tilos, created an accommodation center of 50 places, which has welcomed 100 people throughout the project's duration.



45 **55**



20 Young Children (0-4)

34 Children & Teenagers (5-17)

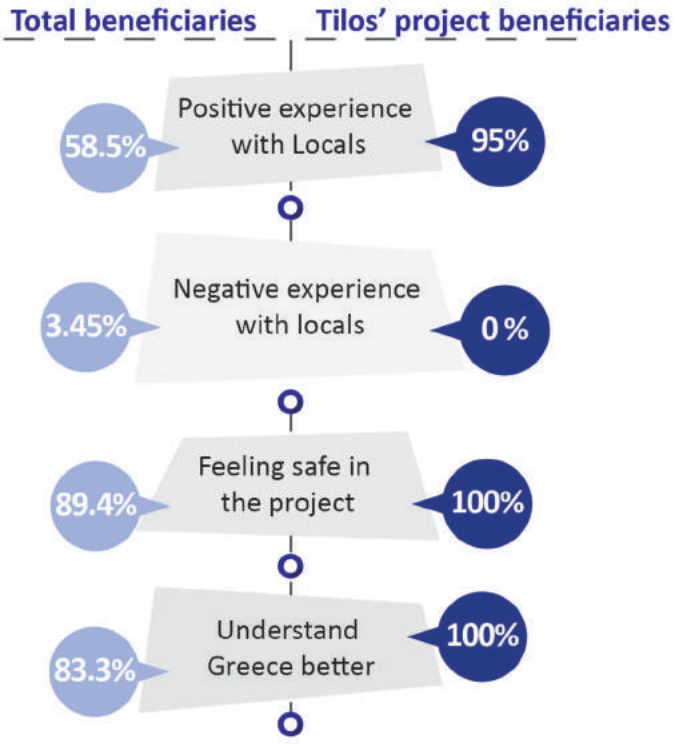
44 Adults (18-59)

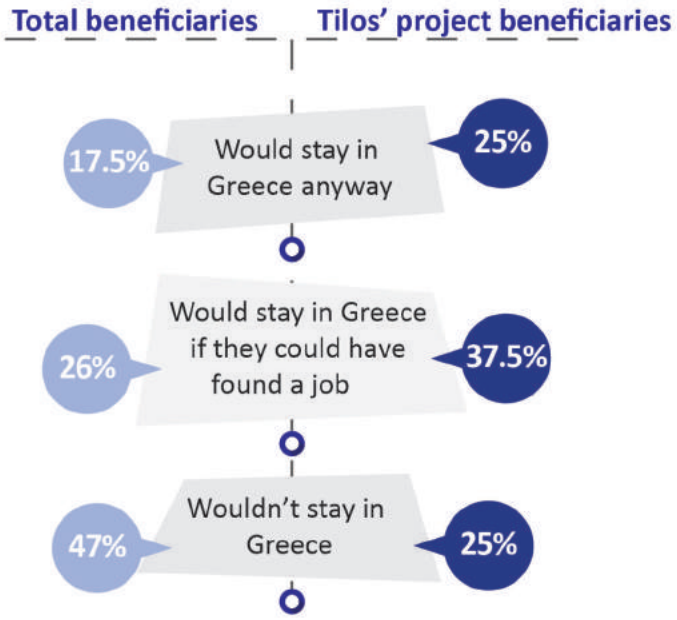
2 Senior (60+)

Activities benefiting the refugees

- All adults attend Greek and English language courses, while the majority of them attends computer classes, music and craft lessons as well.
- 100% of refugees succeeded in their English language exams, after the provided training course, were awarded with at least a B1 level certification; facilitating their access to labour market; more are about to sit for ICT and English exams.
- 5 out of 20 adults currently on the island found employment, after being trained in Greek and English language

As a result of the services' provided, recognized refugees feel more inclined to stay in Greece, learn Greek and work in the Greek society. Indicatively, the ratio of those willing to stay on the island is significantly higher than the overall percentage of beneficiaries willing to stay in the country.





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Benefits for the local society

Because of the program's different phases and support to refugees, SolidarityNow assisted the island to:

- Reinforce its health facilities through a grant to Doctors of the World, providing medical services to the local population.
- Counter the population decrease trend with the return of 29 people of Tilos' descendence In order to work in the framework of the program's activities; 15 children of school age populate the island's educational institutions.
- Boost the local economic cycle through provision for 50 accommodated population and the direct cash assistance for refugee families;
- Ensure support in IT training and English language to local population; 11 locals joined the classes for refugees.

What beneficiaries say

"I like that I can cook on my own; I choose what my family wants for lunch and dinner; although a small residence, it feels like home again"



"I like that my children learn Greek, that's how they'll advance in their lives.
I would wish that they have more courses in Greek"



"Our life changed 180° since we arrived from Lesvos. We have forgotten our problems in Syria because we had bigger ones on Lesvos.
On Tilos, everything has changed; the island and the people are great"



The overall SN integration approach

Observing dependency trends in refugees' integration process, SN launched a program that attempts to decrease dependency and victimization of refugees and empower them to reach their potential, mainly through Solidarity Centers and supportive accommodation activities. Findings from researches and feedback among SN beneficiaries, demonstrate that:

Pre-integration indicators



28.49% report that they have documentation proving their educational achievements, that could facilitate their access to labour market.



52% of asylum seekers in Greece, beneficiaries of SN programs, have been issued with a Tax registration number and a Social Security Number.



90% of SN accommodation beneficiaries who are recognized refugees in Greece and have been rejected from relocation have been assisted to acquire the Tax Registration number, while 100% have been issued with a Social Security Number.



19% of recognized refugees, SN accommodation beneficiaries, have opened a bank account;

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Dependency Indicators



73.68% of asylum seekers and refugees in Greece report that they are dependent to NGOs assistance to pay the rent for their families.



72.19% of asylum seekers and refugees in Greece report that the prime source of their income is assistance received by NGOs and international organisations.



89.66% of asylum seekers and refugees prefer that SolidarityNow provides with support in apartment search, while only 3,45% privileges own research.



32% of people stating that they have found employment, work in the shadow labour market.

How SolidarityNow has approached integration and co-existence so far?

- Solidarity Centers provide needs-based and not status-based services, bringing together people from different social background; SolidarityNow kicks off its accommodation projects for underprivileged Greek families.
- Blue Refugee Center in Thessaloniki acts as an Info-Desk for refugees and asylum seekers residing in wider Thessaloniki, providing information, facilitation with authorities and documents' translation to its 1600 beneficiaries.
- SolidarityNow operates an InfoLine providing practical guidance and support to callers for everyday issues and orientation to more than 560 people.
- SolidarityNow teams develop and operate a mechanism of support and referrals in order to use the social welfare services and structures of the host community.

Our agenda for change

- Provide framework reconnaissance and civic education for asylum seekers and newly recognized refugees in Greece, in order to become aware of the Greek reality, customs and legal framework.
- Support a transition rental support scheme, along with employability skills' enhancement, in order to empower refugees to lead their lives in dignity and independence.
- Provide targeted educational activities and classes, in order to enhance refugees' chances to reach their life potential.
- Develop entrepreneurial projects, bringing together Greeks and skilled refugees, responding to unmet needs of the population groups.
- Develop small-scale projects in peri-urban and non-urban municipalities throughout the country, ensuring smooth integration and interaction of refugees and hosting population.

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