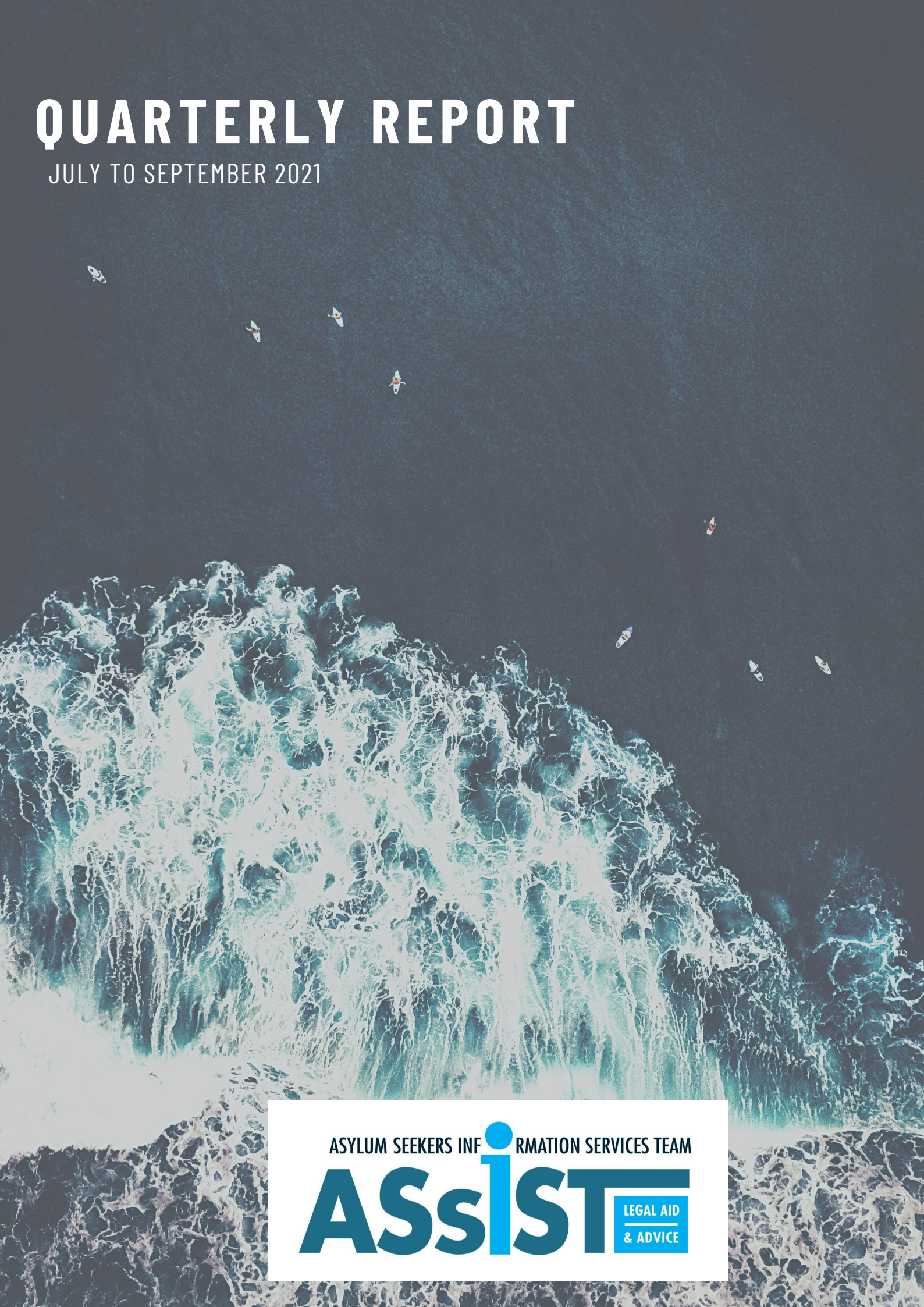


QUARTERLY REPORT

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2021



ASYLUM SEEKERS INFORMATION SERVICES TEAM

ASsIST

LEGAL AID
& ADVICE

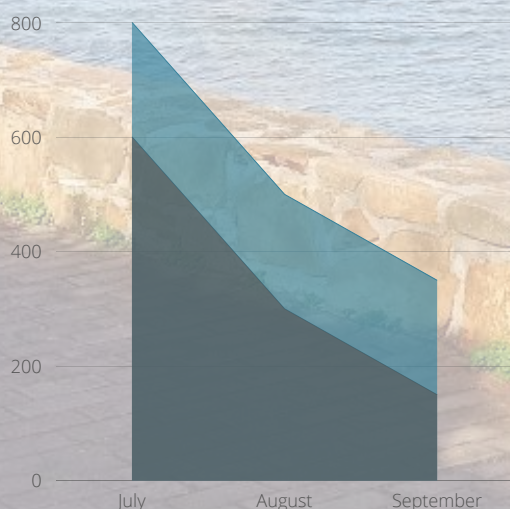
A CONTINUOUSLY EVOLVING CONTEXT

A.Ss.I.S.T. continues to adapt to the rapidly evolving situation for asylum seekers (AS) and beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) on Chios and, more broadly, in Greece. Accordingly, we are expanding and customizing our services to provide legal assistance to those on Chios and to as many AS and BIPs residing on the mainland as our capacity and resources permit.

The situation in Chios continues to evolve, as reported in the last quarter, only more rapidly. Authorities have transferred many people from Chios to the mainland. Two transfers of applicants took place in August, mounting to 220 persons forcibly moved to the continent. Others have left of their own accord. As a result, the number of people currently staying in Vial has also decreased significantly.

The Government announced that they have effectively reduced the migration flow to the Islands by 95%: the causes are controversial. With the transfer of many from the Islands, the number of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection has increased considerably on the mainland, placing additional pressures on all services, including legal aid.

The government-funded housing program closure on 31 October 2021 was confirmed, and there is mounting evidence that many beneficiaries of this Program have already left Chios.



Number of asylum seekers living in RIC Vial
Number of asylum seekers living elsewhere on Chios

Given the Government's announcement in June 2021 declaring Turkey is a safe country for the return of people of five nationalities (Afghan, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali, and Syrian), applicants of these nationalities must first pass an 'admissibility' interview to seek international protection in Greece. Failure to pass this interview will result in their eventual forced return to Turkey. However, as the Turkish maritime borders remain closed, to our knowledge, there have been no forced returns to date from the Islands.



On 4 September 2021, the new Law No. 4825 «Reform of deportation and return procedures for third-country nationals, residence permit issues and procedures for granting international protection and other provisions under the responsibility of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum and the Ministry of Citizen Protection» was promulgated. This law makes it more difficult for asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected to challenge a deportation order by applying a stricter definition of the term "humanitarian grounds." It also reduces the period they can take legal action once a negative decision has been issued.

OUR SERVICES

In this quarter, the demand for A.Ss.I.S.T. services became increasingly irregular. The caseload over September for interview preparations was very uneven, with a sudden surge of appointments when new arrivals were released from quarantine, registered in Vial RIC, and interviews scheduled by the Asylum Services. The number of arrivals per boat has been between 8 and 30 people. In one week, A.Ss.I.S.T. may receive requests for 10 IPs on Chios and the next none. For this reason, we endeavour to follow the arrivals and forecast their release from quarantine so that, in our forward schedule, we can assure the availability of our VLAs or AGLs to serve all our clients. Both interview preparations and appeals have strict deadlines. For these reasons, we carefully schedule other clients and referrals from the mainland while remaining aware of the potential need for new arrivals.

Client Contact Log (Office)

From July to September 2021

2498

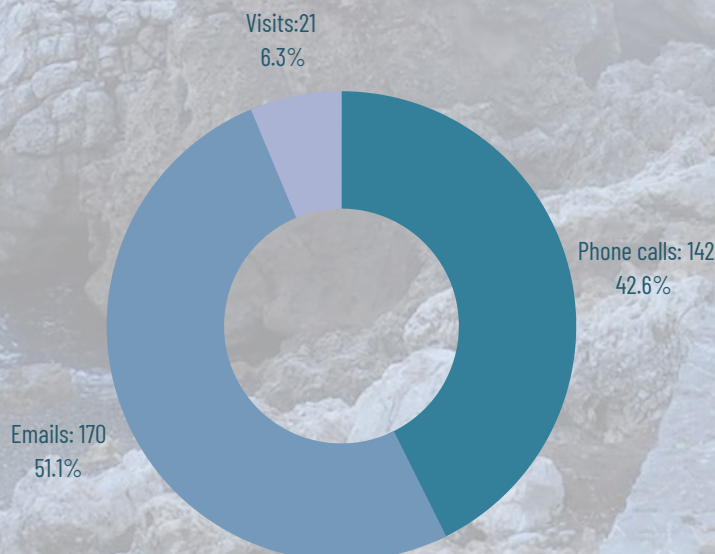
Text Messages Sent

11

Average Daily Contacts

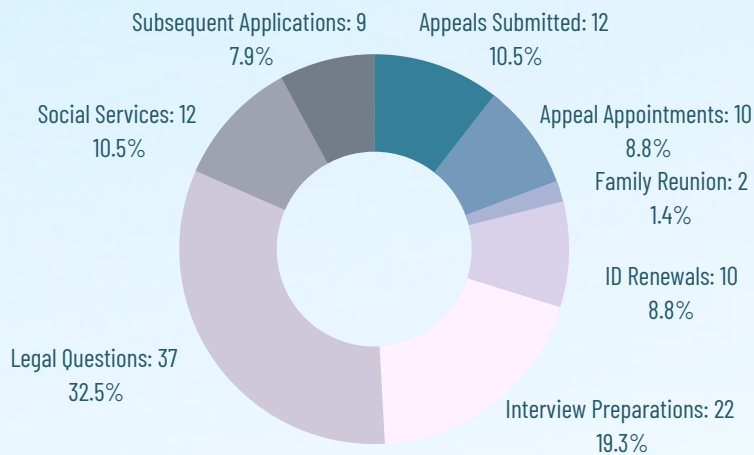
Contact Log with Greek Authorities (AGLs)

From April to June 2021



Consultations

From 114 consultations

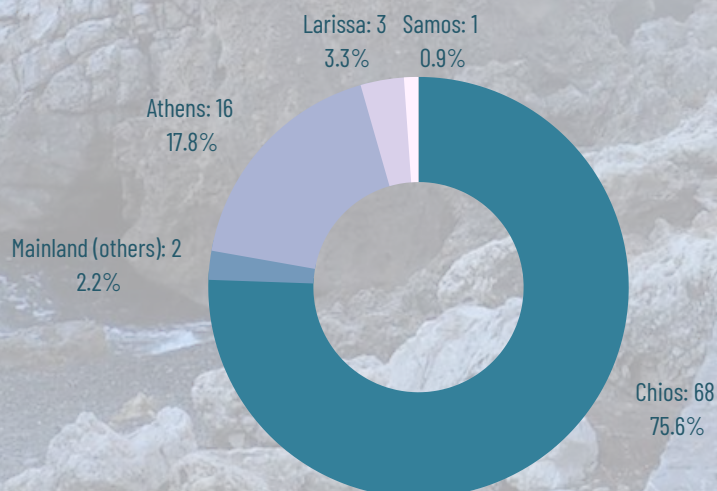


A.Ss.I.S.T. has developed a strategy to act as a 'safety net' for applicants that other legal aid organisations are unable to accept. All of our legal services can be delivered remotely from Chios, and, shortly, it is proposed to establish an A.Ss.I.S.T. presence in Athens as soon practicable. Hence, A.Ss.I.S.T. services remain available to those on Chios, those who arrive on Chios (over 100 asylum seekers from July to September) and provide services to those residing elsewhere in Greece.

A.Ss.I.S.T Information Manager revised and finalized a referral form to facilitate coordination and cooperation with interested Organisations on the mainland. Feedback on the referral form and the proposed referral system from the interested organisations has been very positive.

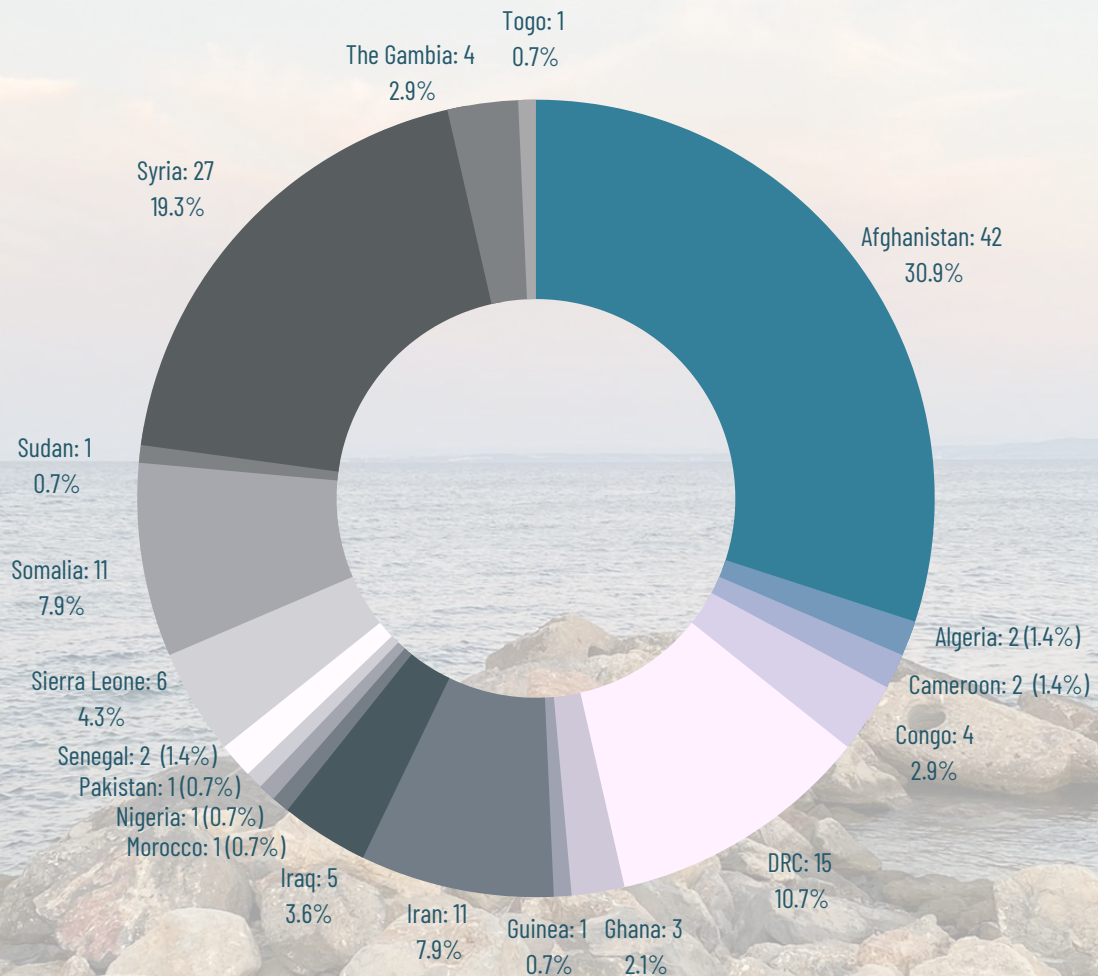
Geographical location of clients

From 114 consultations



Nationality Breakdown

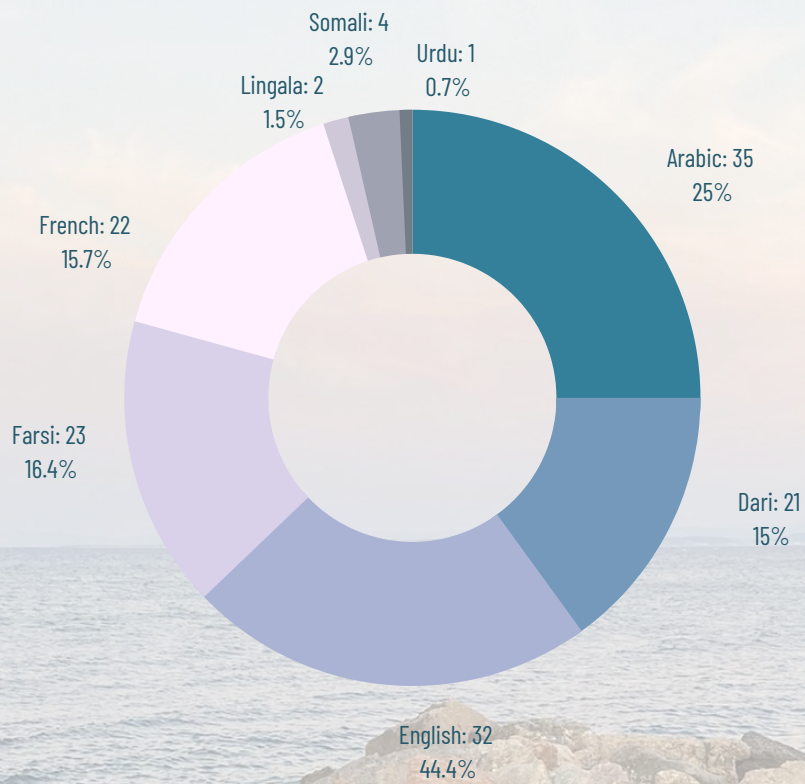
From a total of 140 clients across all age groups



A volunteer Greek lawyer with extensive experience in Migration Law and who previously volunteered with A.Ss.I.S.T. in 2019/20, researched anomalies found by A.Ss.I.S.T.'s AGLs in recent decisions made by the Greek Asylum Services. Based on the findings of this research, A.Ss.I.S.T. has decided to expand the research sample to include more decisions reached during the same period as those already examined.

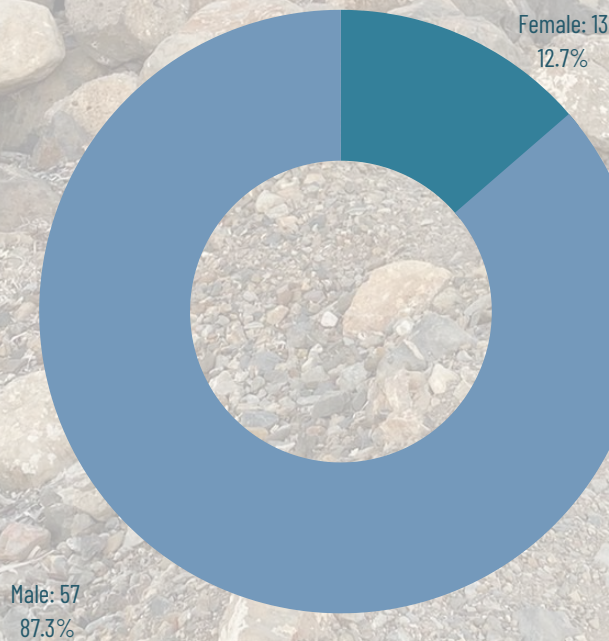
Language Breakdown

From a total of 140 clients attending consultations



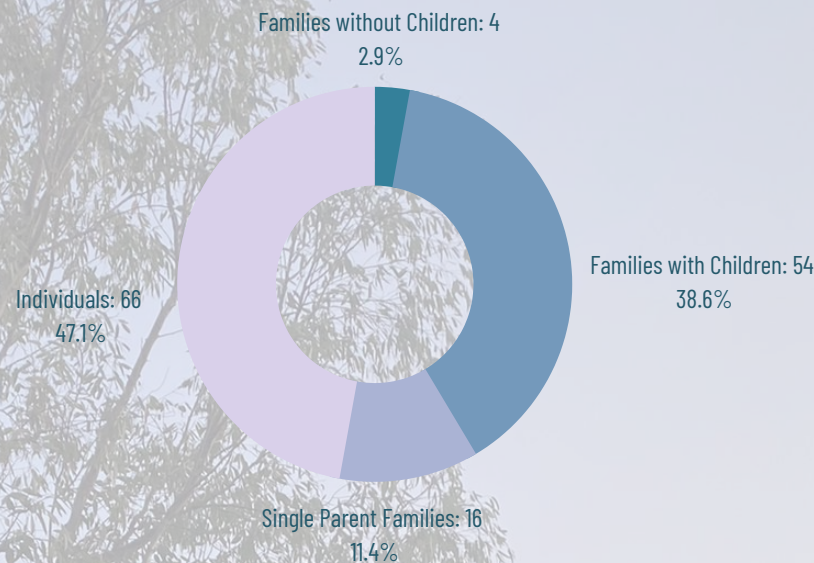
Gender Breakdown

From a total of 66 people attending as individuals (i.e, not as a part of a family unit)



Family Composition Breakdown

From a total of 126 clients attending consultations



The Team has reviewed and improved various administrative systems – both internal and external. A client feedback form was developed and is now provided to all clients after their consultations. Client feedback has been positive to date, and A.Ss.I.S.T. is aware that this may be attributed to cultural norms of appreciation and/or a lack of alternative services with which to compare those of A.Ss.I.S.T. Nonetheless, it provides clients with an opportunity to comment on the services received and may give us some insights for service improvements and/or to revisit any problems identified.

Examples of translated comments from client feedback forms:

“I need to thank you for all your efforts for asylum seekers, it is something really, really nice from you to us.”

“Very satisfied by you, I thank you deeply.”

“I don’t have any comments. All I can say is the way that you are helping me and all the people thanks for everything and all the hard work.”

Social media (website, Facebook and Instagram) also being reviewed and a forward strategy developed. A.Ss.I.S.T. resources collection is also being reviewed and developed. All information materials for both internal and external use are being updated, scrutinised by our lawyers for accuracy and the design of presentations for both Information Sessions and Information Sheets for A.Ss.I.S.T. broadcast lists is a work in progress.

LOOKING FORWARD

A.Ss.I.S.T will continue to strengthen our procedures and improve our services in order to reach out to the largest number of applicants while continuing to provide high-quality legal services.

Throughout the next quarter, we will continue to serve clients on Chios and those requesting assistance or referred to us from Athens and elsewhere in Greece.

What's next?

OCTOBER

A.Ss.I.S.T.'s Board will undertake a capacity review to finalise forward plans for a presence in Athens.

NOVEMBER

Arrangements will be finalised with prospective partners in Athens.
All Information sessions materials should be completed.

DECEMBER

We plan to establish a presence in Athens.

We look forward to your continued support.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Report.

If you would like to make a donation to ASsIST please visit
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or contact office@assistchios.info