

Refugee  
Week



## REFUGEE WEEK UK 2017 EVALUATION SUMMARY

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@refugeeweek



refugeeweek



@refugeeweekuk

## KEY FIGURES

600 events

Media reach  
47 million

Social media reach  
4.5 million

100s of schools  
took part

## ABOUT REFUGEE WEEK



Image: Audience at 'Different Pasts Shared Future' at British Museum © Marcia Chandra

**Refugee Week is the UK's largest festival celebrating the contribution of refugees and promoting understanding of why people seek sanctuary.**

Founded in 1998 in response to growing hostility towards refugees and asylum seekers, Refugee Week is a national programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrates the contribution of refugees to the UK and encourages a better understanding between communities.

The festival takes place every year in the week around World Refugee Day on the 20 June, and is an established part of the cultural calendar in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland (where it is celebrated as Refugee Festival Scotland). Refugee Week is also celebrated in some other countries, including Australia and France. Refugee Week was held in Jersey for the first time in 2017.

Refugee Week is a partnership project coordinated by Counterpoints Arts<sup>1</sup>, with events held by hundreds of organisations and groups across the UK. The theme of Refugee Week 2017 was Our Shared Future.

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of Refugee Week national partners see the end of this document and the Refugee Week website







Refugee Week 2017 saw 'Our Shared Future' celebrated at hundreds of events in mainstream cultural institutions and small local venues, in big cities and small villages, in theatres, cinemas, museums, art galleries, libraries, schools, universities, places of worship, train stations and public squares, enabling a broad demographic to engage with refugee experiences, right across the UK (the venues shown above are a small sample).

## **Geographical Spread**

Organisers across the country held around 600 events, including at least 456 in England, 104 for Refugee Festival Scotland, 25 in Wales and at least 11 in Northern Ireland, reaching an estimated audience of 131,000 nationwide (in addition to these figures, hundreds of schools took part).

Refugee Week was celebrated in Jersey for the first time, in France for the second time, and through an expanded programme of events in Ireland. Events were held in seven local authorities for Refugee Festival Scotland, while Refugee Week Wales took place across Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham.

In England, there remained a high number of events in London (over 180), alongside a good spread across all other regions.

## **Range of Events**

Over half (55%) of entries to the Refugee Week online calendar were arts and culture events, and 2017 saw the steady growth in engagement by arts organisations continue, with key cultural institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum running Refugee Week programmes, and regional Refugee Week arts festivals expanding or emerging.

## **Refugee Week and the Great Get Together**

June 2017 was the first year anniversary of the murder of Jo Cox MP, and Refugee Week was proud to form a partnership with the national Great Get Together, which was held in her honour over the weekend of 16 – 18 June, on the eve of Refugee Week.

Refugee Week organisers across the UK took up the call to hold joint Refugee Week–Great Get Together events, with at least 15 community gatherings taking place from the North West to the South East.

One 'Refugee Week Great Get Together' saw a group of Congolese refugees joining a community tea party in Windsor, where they met the Mayor and Mayoress of the Royal borough. Another was a Syrian Refugee Community Iftar, which brought together refugees and others from London's communities to break the Ramadan fast.

## Refugee Week 2017 'Artistic Offer'



New for 2017, Refugee Week coordinators Counterpoints Arts commissioned three live artists, Richard DeDomenici, Gil Mualem Doron and Alketa Mripa-Xhafa, to offer their installations encouraging connection and conversation to Refugee Week events in localities across the UK. The installations appeared at Southbank Centre and British Museum, and Gil Mualem Doron's New Union Flag project travelled to Swindon.

Counterpoints Arts also worked with Highlight Arts to produce 'Moving Worlds', a programme of refugee-related feature and short films available to screen at reduced rates during Refugee Week. This pilot project was well received, resulting in 11 screenings in locations ranging from Wales to Scotland, and even Canada.

*"This was a fantastic opportunity to show a film for a very low cost and meant that we were able to bring together people in our community to watch it together. We are very keen to do this again... Thanks to everyone involved in making this happen across the UK for Refugee Week"*

**- Mid Wales Refugee Action, who screened 'On The Bride's Side' from the Moving Worlds programme**

## Events: England

Here are a few case studies taken from the over 450 events that took place in England:

### Counterpoints Arts' Programme



Refugee Week UK Coordinator Counterpoints Arts produced a flagship programme of events at some of the UK's most important cultural venues: In partnership with Southbank Centre, a week of events with an estimated audience of over 3,000, including 'Our Shared Future' hip hop concert curated by M.I.A as part of the Meltdown Festival, the Refugee Week Big Sing, Borderline satire about the Calais camp and a partner-led day of interactive activities; at the British Museum, 'Different Pasts Shared Futures' featuring installations by Bern O'Donoghue and Richard DeDomenici, music from Aar Manta and Simo Lagnawi and a film programme; a week of screenings and discussion at the British Film Institute and the launch of Rafiki Jazz's latest album at Rich Mix.

### Hull Gig in the Gardens

As part of its City of Culture programme, Hull launched Refugee Week with an outdoor celebration at Queens Gardens on 17 June, featuring global collective Rafiki Jazz and local bands with roots in Tanzania and Ghana. Passers-by encountered words and flowers embroidered by Syrian women on refugee tent installation 'Am I My Brother's Keeper', by artist Kate Daudy and supported by UNHCR UK. Hull was also declared a City of Sanctuary during Refugee Week 2017.







## Refugee Week at the V&A

One of over 20 museums that took part in Refugee Week 2017, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London held a special Refugee Week programme of 21 events, attended by over 4,000 people. Highlights included music and poetry performances, a refugee and LGBTQ tour of the museum's collections, music workshops led by young refugees and a discussion of the role of the museum in the 'migration crisis'. V&A also ran virtual tours of refugee-related objects from their collections, which reached an estimated 280,000 people.

## Waving Hello, Oxford

On 25th June, thousands of paper boats fill Bonn Square in Oxford for the culmination Waving Hello, a six-month community art project by Oxford Concert Party. Members of the public added their own boats to the installation, symbolising the benefits of trade and travel, as well as those who have lost their lives trying to reach safety across the Mediterranean.



Through Waving Hello, nine artists worked with Oxford primary schools, local refugees organisations, detainees at Campsfield detention centre and the Ashmolean Museum to challenge ideas about refugees and explore our shared humanity.

*"I had the idea about a year ago but it was beyond my expectations. It was absolutely breathtaking to see Bonn Square totally transformed. It was wonderful and it was all about promoting a message of peace and compassion."*

**Isabel Knowland, Oxford Concert Party, in the Oxford Mail**

## Events: Refugee Festival Scotland<sup>2</sup>



George Square, Glasgow. Solidarity on World Refugee Day 2017 © Roddy Scott

Coordinated by the Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Festival Scotland - which ran 20 June - 2 July and had the theme 'Connect' - saw approximately 10,500 people attending and taking part in over 104 events at 17 local authorities across Scotland.

Locations included new local authority areas, including Aberdeenshire, Moray and the Scottish Borders, where families were being resettled for the first time as part of the UK Government's Syrian re-settlement programme.

### Open Programme

The festival had a positive response to its open programme, which is an open call for artists, cultural and voluntary sector organisations to hold events in collaboration with refugees and in response to refugee experiences. Seventy-one visual arts, film, discussion, family and schools events and activities were registered as part of the festival's Open Programme, including Iranian artist and photographer Iman Tajik's 'Who Is?' exhibition at The Civic Rooms, Glasgow, and a programme of discussions, workshops, films and talks by Glasgow Refugee Asylum Migration Network (GRAMNet).

*"Really nice to see the community coming together – this is the Glasgow/Scotland I want to live in."*

**Attendee, 'Share With Us' event, Garnethill Multicultural Centre**

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<sup>2</sup> For a full highlights and impact report of Refugee Festival Scotland, contact Scottish Refugee Council

## Creative Communities

Scottish Refugee Council offered grants to 33 community groups through its Creative Communities Fund, which supports refugee focused or led community groups to deliver activities that will strengthen their connections with receiving communities.

## Signature Events

On World Refugee Day (20 June), Scottish Refugee Council and partners coordinated an action in Glasgow City Centre that brought diverse members of the public together to form a human chain within George Square, symbolising solidarity and connection with refugees.



“‘Colours of Life’ Dancers, Refugee Festival Scotland Launch © Angela Catlin

On the same day, Refugee Festival Scotland was officially launched at The Lighthouse, hosted by actor Sanjeev Kohli and featuring live music from classical Syrian guitarist Ayman Jarjour, Maryhill Integration Network’s Joyous Choir, dancers from Colours of Life and an exhibition coordinated by Refuweegee of letters from locals to recently arrived refugees in Glasgow.

The start of Refugee Festival Scotland was heralded by ‘You, Me and a Cup of Tea’ on 17 June, a Great Get Together event hosted by Scottish Refugee Council and Refuweegee as part of the Cup of Tea with a Refugee campaign, that saw old, young and new Scots sharing tea, sandwiches, cake and stories in the Glasgow sunshine.



## Events: Refugee Week Wales



Coordinated by Welsh Refugee Council, Refugee Week Wales held over 25 events, including over nine in Cardiff, over five in Swansea, at least two in Newport and two in Wrexham, attracting an audience of around 450.

At Wales Millennium Centre, the 'Creating Sanctuary' exhibition showcased narrative portraits of six volunteers working with refugees across Wales, by Cardiff-based photographer Nigel Pugh.

A second exhibition, 'Why We Flee', by photographer Glenn Edwards, toured four venues including Swansea Waterfront Museum, where visitors were addressed by people who had been through the asylum system, two of whom were also interviewed by BBC Wales.

The Refugee Week Wales programme also featured poetry and writers events, several film screenings, family activities, music and a table tennis and a football tournament.

*"I enjoyed hearing people's stories and it gave me a better understanding of how asylum seekers feel and the hardships they are enduring while waiting. An excellent event."*

**- Visitor, 'Why We Flee' exhibition**

## Events: Refugee Week Northern Ireland



At least 11 events took place in Northern Ireland, in Belfast, Ballymena and Downpatrick. The programme encompassed film, theatre and music, information sessions for people working with refugees and asylum seekers and social events for the whole community, ranging from the launch of a report on destitution to a Great Refugee Week picnic in Ormeau Park. Refugee Week Northern Ireland is coordinated by NICRAS.





# MEDIA

**Welcome to the UK!**

**It's Refugee Week, from 19 to 25 June, so we find out more about refugees and meet a teenager from Afghanistan who's made a new life here in the UK...**

Can you imagine leaving behind all your friends and family, and travelling to a strange and unfamiliar land where you can't speak the language? Sounds scary, right? That's the reality for refugees - people who have been forced to flee their home country because they are in danger and are seeking protection (or refuge) in a new nation.

**Meet Nazeem!**  
This young man from Afghanistan tells us why he left home and talks about the people who've made him feel welcome in the UK...  
Name: Nazeem  
Country of origin: Afghanistan  
Age: 17 (came to the UK age 16)  
Hobbies: Table tennis, swimming, football.

When I was 15, I began working as an interpreter for my cousin in Afghanistan. I speak many languages, including Hindi, Farsi, Pashto and English, and we were interviewing people about the war in my home country, trying to give them a voice to express themselves. But when the Taliban authorities found out what I was doing, they started sending me threatening letters. They said if I didn't stop, they were going to make me pay. After that, I came to the UK as part of the Gateway Protection Programme (a way for some refugees to resettle in the UK without claiming asylum (see glossary below)). It was really hard to leave my family - I had never been anywhere without them before. I cried every night for my first two weeks in the UK. But then I was reunited with my big brother and felt secure again. It's very difficult to leave your home town and come to live in an unknown country. Luckily, because I already spoke English, it was easier for me to make friends at school. My social worker helped me out a lot. I spend a lot of time at my local table tennis club. They really welcomed me - it became like my second home! I'm also involved in a theatre production called *Borderline* - it's a comedy about life in the 'jungle' refugee camp in Calais.

**WHY DO REFUGEES LEAVE THEIR HOMES?**  
There are many reasons a person might fear harm in their country of origin. They could be fleeing from a war there, or they could be persecuted (treated badly) because of their religion, beliefs, race, political views, gender or membership of a particular social group.

**AMAZING FACT!**  
Nazeem learned to swim from watching YouTube videos. He's!

**GET INVOLVED!**  
During Refugee Week, hundreds of events take place across the UK that celebrate the music, art, literature, food, fashion, dance and ideas that refugees bring to the UK. Head to [refugeeweek.org.uk/events](http://refugeeweek.org.uk/events) to find an event near you. From BBQs and dance-offs to football matches and music festivals, there's something for everyone. Yay!

**5 FACTS ABOUT REFUGEES**

- 1 There are an estimated 21 million refugees around the world, and almost half of them are children.
- 2 The UK is home to less than 2% of the world's refugees. Only a quarter of people who apply for asylum in the UK have their claim accepted.
- 3 Most refugees (86%) live in poorer countries, often in refugee camps.
- 4 Many refugees and asylum seekers hope to return home at some point in the future. If the situation in their country of origin has improved.
- 5 Last year, the most UK asylum applications came from people from Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

**READ MORE ABOUT REFUGEES**  
These books explore what it means to have to flee your home...

**Aziz in Between**  
Sarah Gerland  
The graphic novel tells the tale of Aziz and her parents, who must flee behind their country and start afresh in a new land. The book follows the brave and resourceful girl as she learns to adapt.

**A Story Like the Wind**  
Gill Lewis  
A small group of refugees share their stories as they sail towards dreams of safety and freedom crowded onto a boat on the sea. A poetic, illustrated book.

**Bone Sparrow**  
Zaina Khalil  
Sabbi has never seen the outside world. But one day he meets a girl who lives nearby. This book shows the challenges of life in a refugee camp, but also the power of hope and friendship.

**Jackdaw Summer**  
David Almond  
Liam spends his days playing war games with the other boys in his village. But when his life becomes complicated with other children, he soon learns about the horrors of war.

**Refugee Boy**  
Margaret Stachurska  
Life is not safe for Alen. His father is a politician and his mother is a doctor, and his faith means that he has been welcomed in neither place. Can he find safety and refuge in the UK?

**GLOSSARY** We clear up the confusion!

**Asylum seeker** Someone who has fled their country of origin and is seeking for asylum (refuge) in another country. Every refugee is initially an asylum seeker unless they prove to be a genuine (legitimate) refugee.

**Refugee** Someone fleeing conflict or persecution in their home country. A person who has fled their country of origin and is seeking for protection in another country.

**Refugee camp** A temporary settlement for displaced people. The majority of refugees live in camps. There are an estimated 10 million people in the world who are currently in camps.

**Migrant** A person who has travelled to another country to improve their lives (to find better opportunities or to reunite with family). Not every migrant is a refugee or an asylum seeker. A British person who goes to live in another country is also a migrant.

**Illegal migrant** Someone who enters a country without the proper permission to do so. Illegal migrants are not recognised as refugees.

**Illegal immigrant** Someone who does not have a visa permission to enter and stay in the country. Illegal immigrants are not recognised as refugees.

Refugee Week 2017 gained a wide range of media coverage at the national, regional and local levels, including print, online, radio and TV.

In 2017 support for Refugee Week's media work moved to IMiX, which funded a media consultant to lead on the campaign, in consultation with national partners through the Refugee Week operations group.

Media mentions of Refugee Week reached an estimated 47 million people, a significant increase on the estimated 7 million in 2016<sup>3</sup>. This growth can partly be explained by the greater capacity enabled by IMiX and also funding from Ben & Jerry's Foundation.

Coverage focused on human stories about refugees and their new communities, as well as promoting Refugee Week events. Highlights included Refugee Week features in National Geographic Kids magazine, BBC News, Daily Mirror, Guardian, Independent, Metro and Evening Standard, a Press Association package, Huffington Post blog series, and mentions in the Times and the Telegraph.

Features in special interest publications reached 'beyond the bubble' to audiences interested in design and sports, while local headlines such as 'Refugee Week 2017 was Swindon's biggest yet' and 'Hundreds celebrate Lancaster's City of Sanctuary status' reflected positivity about Refugee Week and pride in local support for refugees.

<sup>3</sup> Methodology: total readership of all the publications which covered Refugee Week were totaled, and daily online readership figures multiplied by 30 to get a monthly figure, leaving print readership figures unadjusted, while publications which covered Refugee Week more than once were double counted. The resulting figure was divided by 40 (to reflect an estimated one in 40 chance that someone reads that particular article in the publication).



## Media: Refugee Festival Scotland



Refugee Festival Scotland Media Awards © Roberto Ricciuti

### Media Awards

Produced by Scottish Refugee Council in partnership with British Red Cross and the National Union of Journalists, the 9th Refugee Festival Scotland Media Awards drew 100 people from the media and voluntary sectors to Glasgow Art School on 29 June, to celebrate the most compelling, accurate and fair stories published in the Scottish media.

With pieces filed from Lebanon to Calais, the winning entries ranged from an online mini-documentary on Dungavel detention centre to an in-depth multimedia piece on domestic abuse faced by refugee women.

### Media Coverage

Refugee Festival Scotland was positively received by the mainstream media, with all major Scottish newspapers covering its World Refugee Day celebration and carrying its messages, including with substantial page leads and double page spreads. Several outlets also covered the launch of the programme, and local media had particular success in the Highlands and Angus, areas which have not previously covered refugee issues substantially.

## Media: Refugee Week Wales

Refugee Week Wales' 'Why We Flee' exhibition was covered by BBC Wales news, featuring interviews with two speakers with refugee experience.

The 'Creating Sanctuary' exhibition featured on BBC Radio Wales and the Western Mail, in addition to several blogs.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



Reflecting the theme of Our Shared Future, the Refugee Week 2017 online campaign encouraged social media users to share content celebrating what people from different communities have achieved together, as well as promoting Refugee Week as a festival. The hashtag for the week was #OurSharedFuture.

The campaign achieved an estimated reach of over 500,000 during the week, which is double that of 2016. This is also a conservative estimate, as it does not include the reach of the #OurSharedFuture hashtag (reports on hashtag reach are very costly). What's more, the Thunderclap campaign promoting Refugee Week, which was launched on 12 June, reached an estimated four million accounts.

The reach of the social media campaign was boosted by engagement from high profile individuals and organisations such as author Neil Gaiman, artist Ai Wei Wei, the Young Vic Theatre and UK Scout Association, as well as several mainstream institutions outside the refugee sector, such as unions, councils and adoption agencies.

2017 also saw an increase in creative engagement with Refugee Week on social media, with users sharing their own content in response to the theme of Our Shared Future.

### **Social Media: Refugee Festival Scotland**

The hashtag #RefugeeFestScot was used in Scotland, where engagement also increased this year, with over 114,000 engagements on Facebook and over 8,750 on Twitter. An animated video produced by Scottish Refugee Council reached over 5,000 people.

## PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS



© Marcia Chandra

Rendered in a bold, 'screen-print' style, Refugee Week's 2017 posters and postcards featured four real-life stories of Our Shared Future: artists, community leaders and school projects bringing diverse communities together.

The stories also featured as social media graphics, and told in more detail as blog posts on the Refugee Week website.

A total of 2,000 posters and 20,000 postcards were distributed free to event organisers nationwide, and the eye-catching designs proved popular with passers-by.

A new 'Our Shared Future' t-shirt also proved a popular addition to the Refugee Week badges, balloons and other merchandise sold via the Refugee Week website, with over 100 Our Shared Future t-shirts sold over the Refugee Week season.

### Promotional Materials: Refugee Festival Scotland

Refugee Festival Scotland was promoted through the distribution of 15,000 flyers, 1,600 A3 posters and 56 street posters.



## EDUCATION AND CREATIVE LEARNING



Year 4 & 5 children at Atkinson Primary celebrate Refugee Week, image @Bigfoot\_NE

Thousands of children and young people took part in Refugee Week 2017 in hundreds of schools and colleges across the UK. While it isn't possible to know exactly how many schools celebrated the Week, one indicator is that the British Red Cross Refugee Week 2017 schools resource was downloaded over 3,700 times<sup>4</sup>, while the Refugee Week schools resources were viewed over 6,500 times during June 2017.

### Education: Resources

Educational practitioners made use of a wide range of schools resources created especially for Refugee Week 2017, from British Red Cross's secondary resource on the theme of Our Shared Future to a Youtube video-guide to writing a poem for Refugee Week by poet Simon Mole for Salusbury World.

Several resources used creativity and the arts to encourage young people to engage in refugee experiences. Supported by Counterpoints Arts and British Red Cross, Music Action International created a new Harmonise schools resource enabling UK school students to learn a song written by Everyday People: LDN, a group of young refugees and asylum seekers, with a message of peace and equality.



Everyday People: LDN © Music Action International

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<sup>4</sup> May – September 2017

Grumpy Sheep's musical *As Free As A Bird*, which uses an animal adventure story to raise awareness among younger children, was also released for Refugee Week 2017.

## Education: Activities

These four brief case studies show some of the ways young people engaged in Refugee Week:

1. Counterpoints Arts worked with Refugee Week partner IOM and Lifeworlds Learning on Building Tomorrow Together, which saw UK schoolchildren and Syrian refugee children in Lebanon sharing their hopes for the future on paper leaves, which were displayed on a shared tree at Refugee Week at Southbank Centre on 24 June.

2. Hackney Museum ran interactive workshops for primary schools based on stories collected by the Child Migrant Stories project. Children explored objects in suitcases, which told the story of a person who had moved to Hackney as a refugee. They also had the chance to meet one of the people whose story they had investigated.

3. The UK Scout Association developed a resource to help young people learn about refugees and how they can take positive action locally, and held a training event for older teen Scouts on how to use and disseminate the learning to younger members.

4. Norwich Millenium Library exhibited work by over 200 local school children, including books they had made celebrating the countries refugees come from, creative writing on having to flee your home, self-portraits highlighting what we have in common and welcome posters for newcomers to Norwich.



Hackney Museum  
@HackneyMuseum

Following

As part of our [#RefugeeWeek](#) workshops, Hackney children spoke to Linh about her experience of fleeing Vietnam and finding refuge in Hackney.



*"My highlight was having students thank me for helping their classmates understand their experience and seeing young adults want to get involved and volunteer with refugee charities."* - **Organiser of activity with young people**

*"My highlight was seeing our Refugee pupils shine when they shared their stories and culture to younger pupils. Their confidence was really boosted. Also, seeing pupils at other schools open their minds and change their opinions of refugees."* - **Organiser of activity with young people**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Events

- Make resources and information available to local organisers earlier
- Provide further support for local organisers in the areas identified in the feedback survey (see box on p13), including through Refugee Week Conference 2018
- Continue to build diverse partnerships to bring Refugee Week to new spaces and audiences

## Media

- Publicise a deadline for information about events to be submitted for inclusion in press releases
- Work with spokespeople on a longer-term basis, providing training and mentoring in the run up to Refugee Week

## Social Media

- Successes that should be repeated next year were the Thunderclap campaign, having a clear and simple online ask, consistent engagement from national partners, doing some paid advertising on Facebook and gathering user-generated content ahead of time
- Continue to share quality content throughout the year to build audience, including Instagram, where Refugee Week's following remains smaller than other channels
- Continue to provide resources and template graphics to local organisers

## Schools

- Explore new partnerships to help Refugee Week reach even more schools



# REFUGEE WEEK 2018

Refugee Week 2018 (18-24 June) will be a special anniversary celebration, marking 20 years of Refugee Week highlighting refugee experiences and bringing communities together. Anyone can get involved by holding or attending event or activity, or taking part in the conversation online – take a look at the Refugee Week website for more information, or contact Refugee Week UK Coordinator Emily Churchill Zarea: [emily@counterpointsarts.org.uk](mailto:emily@counterpointsarts.org.uk).



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