



Refugee Week 2019

Overview and selected highlights

Refugee Week
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REFUGEE WEEK 2019 IN NUMBERS

Took place during 17-23 June 2019

800 events registered on the Refugee Week website –
20% increase since 2018

Involved all four UK nations & 100s of local partners

Estimated overall attendance 166,000

Over 600 people took part in two national conferences

Media reach 34 million

100s of schools took part

About Refugee Week

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).

Aim

Refugee Week provides a platform for refugees and communities to deliver and promote positive encounters, stories and images in order to create a culture of welcome throughout the country.

The ultimate aim is to create better understanding between different communities and to encourage successful integration, enabling refugees to live in safety and highlight the valuable contribution they bring to the UK.

Theme

The theme for Refugee Week 2019 was 'You, me and those who came before', inviting people to explore the lives of refugees – and those who have welcomed them – throughout the generations.

People escaping war and persecution have been welcomed by communities in the UK for hundreds of years, and their stories and contributions are all around us. From the Jewish refugees of the 1930s to people fleeing Vietnam in the 1970s, Kosovans in the 1990s to those arriving today; they are part of who we all are.

The theme of Refugee Festival Scotland, co-ordinated by Scottish Refugee Council, was 'Making Art, Making Home'.

Partners

Refugee Week is a partnership project made up of the following organisations: Counterpoints Arts (Refugee Week UK Coordinator), Scottish Refugee Council, (Refugee Festival Scotland Coordinator), Welsh Refugee Council (Refugee Week Wales Coordinator), NICRAS (Refugee Week Northern Ireland Coordinator), Amnesty International UK, Migrant Help, British Red Cross, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), National Education Union (NEU), Refugee Action, Refugee Council, City of Sanctuary, Solidarity with Refugees, Student Action for Refugees (STAR), Freedom from Torture, British Future, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and IMiX. Refugee Week is also supported by the Ben & Jerry's Foundation.

Our Community

Refugee Week is an umbrella festival, with hundreds of arts, voluntary, faith and refugee community organisations, schools, student groups and more holding Refugee Week events and activities across the country every year. Refugee Week is also supported by regional coordinators and key contacts and who help to coordinate activities in their geographical region.

This Evaluation

Given the scale and decentralised nature of Refugee Week, this is not an exhaustive report on the festival, but rather aims to give an overview and some highlights of Refugee Week 2019, as well as offering recommendations for future years. Information in this report is drawn from the Refugee Week online events calendar, a feedback survey for event organisers (176 responses), Counterpoints Arts' data and analysis of events; estimated media reach calculated by IMIX, web statistics, feedback from national partners and reports from partners in Wales and Northern Ireland.

EVENTS

Refugee Week 2019 saw our theme of 'You, me and those who came before' 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 and public squares, enabling a broad demographic to engage with refugee experiences, right across the UK. The cities and towns shown below are a small sample:

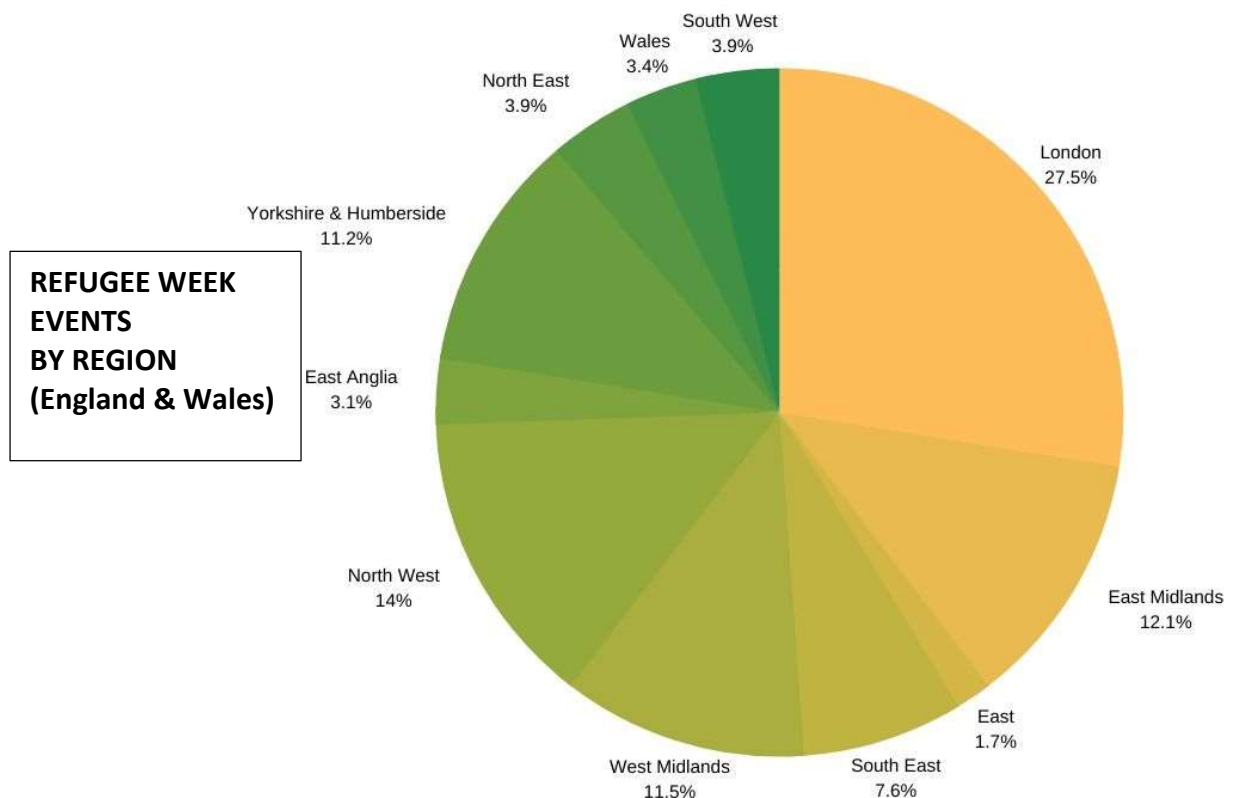
Geographical Spread of events



Organisers across the country held over 800 events, including at least 452 in England, around 180 in Scotland, 15 in Wales and several more in Northern Ireland, reaching an estimated audience of 166,000 nationwide. This represents a significant growth in the festival, with an over 20% increase in both number of events and estimated overall audience since 2018. As in previous years, these figures do not include activities that took place in hundreds of schools across the country, which engaged thousands of children and young people nationwide.

This growth in engagement in Refugee Week was foreshadowed in February 2019, when over 600 people attended Refugee Week conferences in London and Coventry – the first time two national conferences have ever been held. This development was a response to the fact that the Refugee Week Conference in London has been oversubscribed by hundreds several years running, as well as Refugee Week coordinators’ continued commitment to support and promote Refugee Week regionally.

Refugee Week Wales held events in Cardiff, Swansea, Wrexham, Cathays, Bangor, and Brecon. In England, there remained a high number of events in London, alongside significant programmes and events across other regions, including Coventry, Manchester, Sheffield, Norwich, Brighton and Bristol.



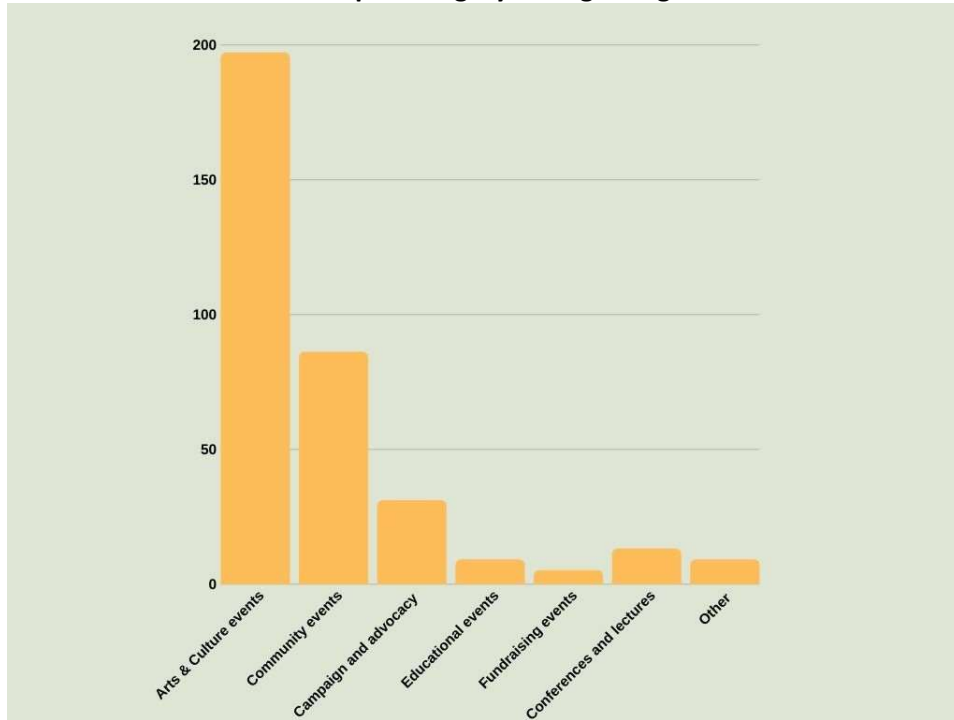
Range of events

Over half (56%) of entries to the Refugee Week online calendar were arts and culture events, which is comparable to previous years. The steady growth in engagement by arts organisations continued, with key cultural institutions such as the V&A Museum, Southbank Centre and Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre running Refugee Week programmes, and regional Refugee Week arts festivals continuing to

expand - the latter including Migration Matters, HOME, HORIZONS and Coventry Welcomes, which launched for the first time this year.

The arts and culture programming comprised of 18% theatre, 16% film, and an even spread of music, visual arts and multi-art form events, and a slightly smaller proportion of sports events.

Number of Events per category during Refugee Week 2019



Events: Refugee Week National Partners in England

As well as planning Refugee Week nationally, many of the festival’s national partners held their own Refugee Week events – here are some highlights:



COUNTERPOINTS ARTS

Counterpoints Arts coordinates Refugee Week nationally, developing annual themes, producing artwork and promotional materials, coordinating media and social media campaigns and providing resources and information to support organisers. Counterpoints also produces a flagship Refugee Week programme at some of the UK’s most prestigious cultural venues. This year, these programmes included events at the V&A Museum, the Southbank Centre and the BFI. Events included sell-out comedy nights by No Direction Home, programmes of choir performances in the Clore Ballroom at the Southbank Centre, live art performances, Balkan music, film programming and much more.

‘This Refugee Week was the first time I have ever faced an audience of 300 people at the Southbank Centre, all expecting to hear some jokes. Working with No Direction Home and Counterpoints Arts is a real treat. I had never thought of performing and doing stand-up comedy before, but working with Tom Parry and the team is so easy....’

Usman Khalid, No Direction Home participant



UNHCR

UNHCR ran a whole series of events during Refugee Week. Some of their highlights included 'A Journey Through St Paul's', a pop-up display of MADE51, the world's first-ever refugee-made homestore, an outdoor screening of the award-winning film 'Capernaum', a food court with refugee chefs from Ethiopia, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Nigeria and live music from Syrian musician Hamsa Mounif (The Voice, Middle East).

BRITISH RED CROSS

The British Red Cross hosted a number of events across the UK in London, Derby, Liverpool, Coventry, Leicester, Manchester, Aberystwyth, including a Refugee Week World Cup football tournament. They also devised a theatre piece 'Voices in the Dark' with Shakespeare's Globe, celebrating the stories and skills of young refugees. Once again they also supported Refugee Week by producing our Education Resource Pack that responded to the theme of 'You, me and those who came before'.



STUDENT ACTION FOR REFUGEES (STAR)

STAR have seen a significant growth in their scope for activity this year, with at least five groups organising activities, despite Refugee Week falling within the summer holidays for students. Highlights included STAR's Campaigns and Communications Volunteer Pam becoming a Refugee Week Ambassador and students sharing stories of welcome in their family history. For World Refugee Day, STAR took part in UNHCR's #StepWithRefugees challenge, walking from the Home Office in Westminster to Croydon.

'Refugee Week was a fantastic opportunity for us to spark conversation around the narratives of migration represented in our collections. From 17th century Huguenot silver through to Sergey Ponomarev's contemporary photography, we explored histories of displacement through generations.' **Fausia Tucker, Producer, V&A**

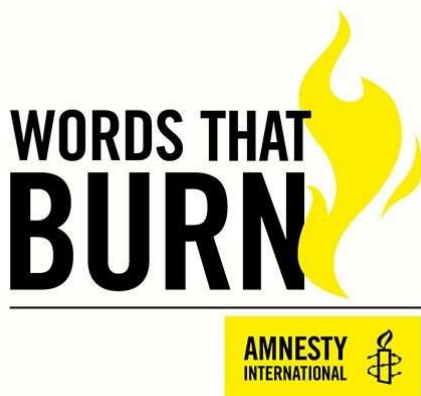


INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

This was the IRC's first year partnering on Refugee Week. Their highlights included programming as part of the V&A Museum activities, the creation of an online portrait series called Stories Of Everyday Welcome, a partnership with Tate Museums to spotlight works by artists who fled conflict and persecution and celebrate the contributions of refugees. This was accompanied by a press conference at the Tate Modern with Anish Kapoor and David Miliband.

CITY OF SANCTUARY

City of Sanctuary hosted lots of activities around the country including Brighton, Ripon, Swindon, Norwich, Hull, Bradford and Oxford. Event highlights included a performance of 'Three Mothers' at Harrogate Studio Theatre, a free movie night screening of 'Capernaum', Phosphorus Theatre performances in Sheffield and Nottingham, a walk in Sunderland promoting positive stories of welcome and Stories Of Sanctuary visiting Yorkshire as part of the Migration Matters festival. City of Sanctuary also took part in the V&A Museum programme.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

This year Amnesty International partner in our 'Write a Poem' Simple Act, tying it in with their 'Words that Burn' campaign. We invited people to write poems on the theme of 'family' in support of #FamiliesTogether, calling for more refugee families to be able to live in safety in the UK. This Simple Act had a great take up on social media channels.

REFUGEE COUNCIL

Refugee Council hosted an event at the V&A Museum as part of the Refugee Week launch. Using images from their extensive archive and hosting craft activities based on the archive working with UEL, they created a display from the archive and invited visitors to respond. Several events also took place within the resettlement teams around the country, including a screening of the film 'Capernaum'.



SPONSOR REFUGEES

Sponsor Refugees held 'You, me and those who came before', a Parliamentary Event organised and run by refugees and hosted by Helen Hayes MP. The event celebrated news of the extension of the refugee resettlement scheme, as well as highlighting the challenges newcomers face as refugees and asylum seekers to the UK.

MIGRANT HELP

Migrant Help coordinated a large number of events around the UK including film, football tournaments, walks, coffee and cake afternoons, and a number of internal events. Public event highlights included: a 'build a time capsule' activity at the V&A, where families were invited to create an item representing their family and contribute it to the Refugee Week Generations time capsule. They also ran a social campaign around the Simple Act of 'find out who you really are', a Derby football tournament partnering with the local council & police and a day of entertainment, games and food and in Liverpool.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE

As well as participating in the Refugee Week Leadership Programme, other highlights included a takeover by a survivor on social media during #Internationaldayagainsttorture, 'Faces and Spaces' photography exhibition in London, local MP Jeremy Corbyn attending to show his support and Write to Life performing new pieces of work at the V&A. There was also Arsenal in the Community football tournament, and Singing Our Lives choir closed Refugee Week with a performance at the Southbank Centre.



IOM

IOM hosted a number of events during Refugee Week, including Bristol Mayor and Bristol Refugee Foundation holding a discussion about inclusion and what it means from refugee, Windrush and 'host' perspectives. They also hosted a virtual reality exhibition. 'Holding On' as part of the V&A programme, featuring internally displaced people from around the world.

Refugee Week partners identified the following areas for development:

- The need for a clearer launch moment at the start of Refugee Week where media and key influencers can be invited
- A more co-ordinated approach to social media activity

REFUGEE WEEK @ THE MAYOR'S EID FESTIVAL, TRAFALGAR SQUARE, LONDON



On 8 June the Mayor of London invited thousands of Londoners and visitors to join the Eid Festival, an event that celebrates the end of Ramadan in Trafalgar Square and attracts more than **30,000 people** throughout the day.

This year Counterpoints Arts curated a refugee related strand of the Festival, providing a taste of the upcoming Refugee Week. The programme featured spoken word performances headlined by poet Asma Elbadawi, a British Sudanese basketball player and Creative and Global Brand Adidas Ambassador. There was music by The Damascus Band – a group of exceptional Syrian classical musicians now based in the UK, along with the musical talents of Hamsa Mounif, Raghad Haddad, Taim Saleh and Walid Zaido.

Maurice Wren, CEO of the Refugee Council also shared his thoughts about Refugee Week as a national platform for celebrating the resilience, creativity and contribution of refugees to the UK.

REFUGEE WEEK WALES



This year 15 events took place across Wales for Refugee Week, in the areas of Cardiff, Pembroke, Llanell, Swansea, Newport, Brecon, Wrexham, Cathays and Bangor.

The Welsh Refugee Council, in collaboration with the Welsh Refugee Coalition, planned and hosted Wales' first ever **Nation of Sanctuary Awards** for asylum seekers and refugees. The event was sponsored by Jane Hutt Assembly Member and Deputy First Minister for Wales and part of Refugee Week Wales. Over **40 organisations** took part and **130 people attended** the event at Mercure Holland House Hotel, where award proceedings were hosted by Wales' very own celebrity and TV presenter Jason Mohamad. On the night, 11 asylum seekers and refugees in Wales were the recipients of 8 prestigious awards. In total, 56 asylum seekers and refugees were nominated.

Another highlight event took place on 18th June, when 24 asylum seekers and refugees in Cardiff and Newport made a special Refugee Week Wales visit to the Senedd to help them better understand the workings of the Welsh Government and how decisions are made. They met with the First Minister for Wales, the Deputy First Minister, and seven other ministers and Assembly Members. The group was given a tour of the Senedd and later gathered to listen the Deputy First Minister's written statement on the progress on the nation of sanctuary plan. They also attended the question time session in the afternoon, listening to the political debate from ministers and Assembly Members. This was covered extensively by regional press.

What visitors said about the event:

"I think I have learned the true minister of democracy by visiting the Senedd. That no one is above the law. It was good to hear the Deputy First Minister has made provision for asylum seekers and refugees through the nation of sanctuary plan" – Alma, visitor

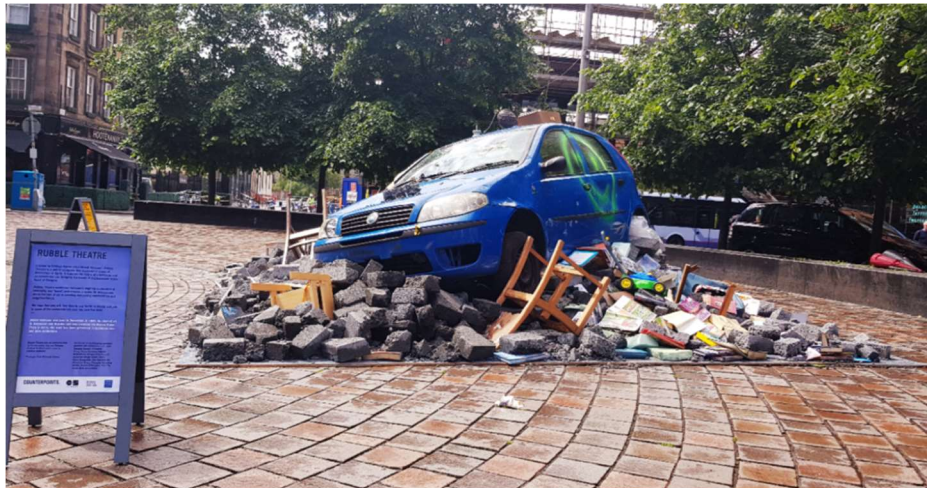
*"Well done, finally people are getting to understand what we do and how we contribute" –
Asylum seeking visitors*

REFUGEE FESTIVAL SCOTLAND



Coordinated by the Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Festival Scotland ran between 20 – 30 June and had the theme this year of 'Making Art, Making Home'. The full Impact Report for Refugee Festival Scotland is available [via Scottish Refugee Council](#).

One of the highlights was a launch event held in St Enoch Square, Glasgow, at the site of 'Rubble Theatre' - a public art piece by German-Syrian artist Manaf Halbouni - produced by Counterpoints Arts and Refugee Festival Scotland. This sparked conversations with locals and drew interest and attention across the city and beyond.



NORTHERN IRELAND

Information about Refugee Week Northern Ireland is available via Refugee Week Northern Ireland coordinators [NICRAS](#).

FOUR BRIEF CASE STUDIES

COVENTRY WELCOMES FESTIVAL



2019 was the first year organisations from across Coventry came together to celebrate Refugee Week. From 15-23 June, organisations hosted a programme of music, dance, theatre performances, art exhibitions, discussion forums, comedy and a football tournament. There were 26 events across the city with the week culminating in a city centre market stall-style Saturday event complete with food from around the world. Approximately 8,138 people attended the events over seven days, of which approximately 2,000 were from migrant communities.

'Coventry Welcomes 2019 was the largest of the city's Refugee Week celebrations yet - in scale and ambition, in duration and in the wide variety of programming on offer. The festival achieved its aim of being welcoming to all, raising awareness of the resilience of migrants to the city as well as celebrating the contribution they bring. Probably the most joyful element was the commitment of over 60 volunteers of all different nationalities in ensuring the success of each event. Long may it grow and continue.'

Jacqui Ibbotson, Coventry City of Culture Trust

MIGRATION MUSEUM

'As part of my internship with the Migration Museum, I curated a Refugee Week Late event, taking the opportunity to work with artists with lived experience in displacement as a means to access the often concealed and drowned out voices by those in positions of power, as a means to listen to an alternative worldview.'

Daniela Nofal, Refugee Week Leadership Project

For Refugee Week the Migration Museum hosted a late opening featuring a night of storytelling, performances, exhibitions, music and food. Highlights included a dance workshop by the **Hawiyya Dance Company**, a women's dabke group, a story-telling performance by **Qisetna** and **Yamen Makdad**, a Syrian sound artist, playing records throughout the. Another highlight of the night was the Lebanese food prepared and served by **Migrateful chef Ahmad**. Guests also had the opportunity to view two exhibitions: **Room to Breathe** and **Borderless**, curated by artist-curator and educator **Dima Karout**.

'Shakespeare's plays are full of deeply moving portraits of family separation, of the displaced and lost relying on the solidarity of others, of the need for understanding in the face of conflict and division. Refugee Week encourages us to think explicitly about our social responsibility as a place of storytelling, sharing and welcome - and our programming so far is just the beginning.'

**Matilda James, Producer,
Shakespeare's Globe**

SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE THEATRE

Shakespeare's Globe celebrated Refugee Week for the second year running with a celebration of storytelling, as well as hosting a placement for one of the Refugee Week Leadership Project cohort. Highlights included ***Where We Belong***, written and performed by **Madeline Sayet**, an indigenous artist from the Mohegan tribe, a sell-out launch of ***My First Memory***, a new anthology in association with the Refugee Council with speakers including Maurice Wren and Lord Alf Dubs and ***Voices in the Dark: From Across the Globe***, a collaboration with the **British Red Cross Young Refugee Service and Compass Collective**, who worked with young unaccompanied people from five boroughs across London who have arrived in the last 12 months. They created a show that joyously celebrated their cultures, stories and skills. This performance sold out the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse.



BRISTOL REFUGEE FESTIVAL

This year Bristol hosted around 20 events including community events, feasts, exhibitions, music, conferences, talks and discussions and sports tournaments. Event numbers were comparable to last year, but they experienced a wider diversity of people engaging and a greater level of involvement from refugees and asylum seekers. Highlight events included a **festival launch** which was a big community celebration with a fashion show, music, speakers and food. The city cup **football tournament** brought together 15 teams from all over Bristol. **One City, Many Stories**, a facilitated discussion about inclusion and integration, was co-hosted with Refugee Week partner IOM and the Bristol Mayors Office and generated some good local press interest.

REFUGEE WEEK LEADERSHIP PROJECT



Funded by Ben & Jerry's Foundation, the Refugee Week Leadership Project was a new initiative for Refugee Week 2019. Aiming to help ensure people with lived experience of displacement have leading roles in Refugee Week, the project supported emerging leaders from refugee backgrounds on their leadership journeys in the arts and culture, campaigning, education, media and social change.

Following a call out which attracted 116 applications from across the UK, we recruited a leadership cohort of five in December 2018. The group went on to contribute to Refugee Week at the national level as well as develop their leadership skills and experience, including through:

- Doing ten-day leadership placements at leading national arts and advocacy organisations including Shakespeare's Globe, Migration Museum, Freedom From Torture and Salusbury World
- Running a highly popular workshop on 'Refugee-led Projects' at the Refugee Week Conferences in London and Coventry, compering the conference in London and delivering the keynote speech in Coventry
- Contributing to meetings with national Refugee Week Partners
- Receiving the support of a one-to-one mentor
- Undertaking leadership training by the Clore Social Leadership Programme
- Undertaking media training by Refugee Week partners IMiX

Following renewal funding from Ben & Jerry's Foundation, we are now rolling out the second year of the leadership programme, and launched our call for participants in November 2019, this time with a focus on emerging leaders aged 30 or under.

"I am extremely pleased with my achievements during [the leadership] programme...."

"I am going to apply my ability to speak out and use my own personal experiences to inspire others."

"I will be campaigning more on the hope of getting more reforms to the current immigration / asylum system in the UK and for peace, justice and freedom in my home country: Zimbabwe."

Salani Mutseyami, Refugee Week Leadership Project 2019

MEDIA

'Working with Refugee Week is the joy of our year' Denise Meredith, IMiX

UK



Refugee Week 2019 gained a wide range of media coverage at national, regional and local levels, including print, online, radio and TV. There were approximately **194 pieces** of coverage that ran around Refugee Week, reaching an estimated audience of almost **34 million people**.

Once again, Refugee Week's media work was supported by media partner IMiX, through a funded media consultant to lead on the campaign, plus support from IMiX's social media manager. The coverage was marginally lower this year in relation to 2018, which is likely to do with the ongoing 'Brexit effect', and also due to last year's campaign leading with the significant hook of the '20th anniversary'.

Coverage focused on human stories about refugees and their new communities, as well as promoting Refugee Week events and encouraging people to take part. Highlights included a live Sky News interview with Counterpoints Arts' Almir Koldzic, features in National Geographic Kids magazine, Guardian, Guardian online, Metro, a Huffington Post blog and video series, and mentions in the Evening Standard, on BBC Radio 2 and BBC World Service.

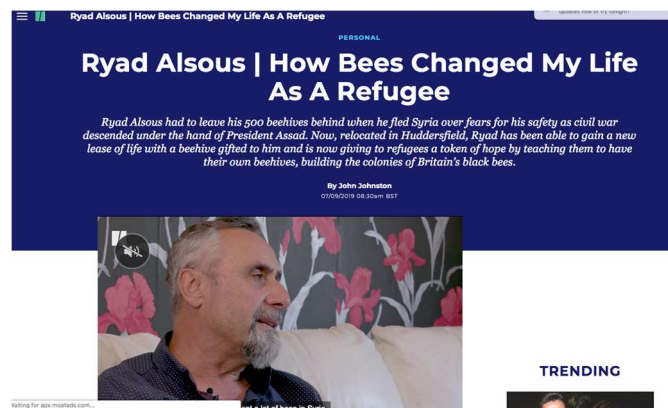
'Now when I tell my story I'm the boss, and people listen.'
Syed Haleem Najibi, Refugee Week Ambassador 2019, writing in the Huffington Post

Ambassador-led media coverage

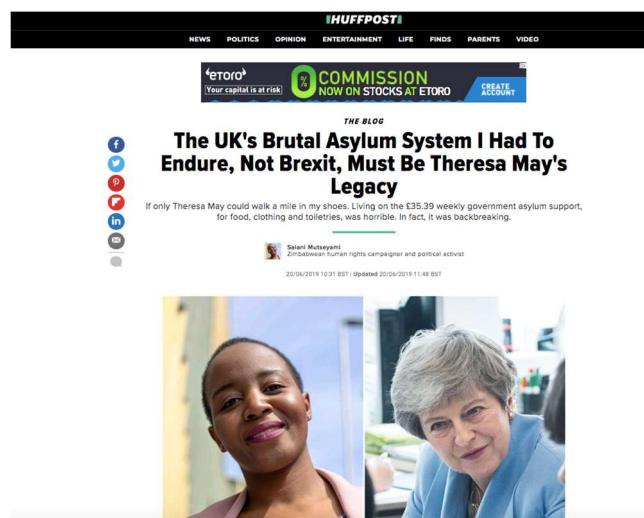
For the second year running, we had a strong group of Refugee Week Ambassadors who participated in our media training days and decided to share some of their story and experiences publicly, via the press and social media. Our Ambassadors are people from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds, who actively want to share their experiences and views. Refugee Week offers media training days to help equip them to hold the power when sharing their stories. As well as emphasising that storytellers must set and defend their own boundaries, we hope our ambassadors feel empowered to share experiences on their own terms.

The Huffington Post partnered with Refugee Week to cover a number of stories told by our Ambassadors. Some of the highlights include:

Ryad Alsous – Huffington Post – How Bees Changed My Life As A Refugee



Salani Mutseyami (RW leader 2019) - Huffington Post Blog - The UK's Brutal Asylum System I Had To Endure, Not Brexit, Must Be Theresa May's Legacy



Regional highlights

Regional coverage extended to approximately 50 pieces. Highlights include:

The screenshot shows the ITV News website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Live TV', 'Shows', 'Categories', and 'News'. Below that, a 'NEWS' banner includes 'Top stories', 'Your area', 'Topics', 'Sport', and 'Weather'. The main content area features a video player with a map of the UK and the text 'Syrian stories...a new chapter'. Below the video, it says 'BORDER 5 UPDATES 18 June 2019'. The article title is 'Syrian stories...a new chapter'. The text below reads: 'To mark Refugee Week, Hannah McNulty meets groups of people who have fled war in Syria for a new life here in the UK. Over the last eight years, millions of families have left the country due to the ongoing conflict, just over 200 of which are now living in Cumbria and southern Scotland.' At the bottom, there are social media sharing options for 'SHARE', 'TWEET', and 'REDDIT'.

ITV Border – TV – Series of broadcast pieces with individuals who sought sanctuary in area during Refugee Week

The screenshot shows the Eastern Daily Press website. The header includes 'Home', 'News', 'Sport', 'Business', 'Going Out', 'Features', 'Your Town', and 'Opinion'. Below the header, there are 'Hot Topics' like 'FOOD REVIEWS', 'GENERAL ELECTION 2019', and 'NFC STICKER ALBUM'. An 'ARCHANT' logo is visible with the text 'To find out more about advertising in the East'. The article is a video piece titled 'Schoolchildren discover their city's history of welcoming strangers' by Bethany Whymark. It includes a photo of five children in yellow and green school uniforms. The text below the photo says: 'Students from Avenue Junior School who have loved learning about refugees and asylum seekers during Norfolk welcomes. Picture: Ella Wilkinson'.

Eastern Daily Press –Story about initiative with school children in Norwich / Norfolk learning about why people seek sanctuary

The screenshot shows an article from the Border Counties Advertiser. The title is 'Oswestry welcomes Syrian refugees at tea party' by Rebecca Lennard. It features a large photo of a tea party with many people and food. Below the photo, it says 'SEVEN Syrian refugee families were made to feel welcome at an afternoon tea party in Oswestry on Tuesday.' The text continues: 'Visitors tucked into lots of tasty afternoon treats including cakes and biscuits at the event at the Willow Gallery which was hosted by Oswestry Welcomes Refugees supporters – as part of Refugee Week 2019. Along with many of their friends who they have made since their arrival in the town, the seven families were joined by the Rotary Club of Oswestry, Oswestry Equality Group, Shropshire Council, Qube, Kinokulture, Castle Mill Mosque, Church and many others who have...'. There is a 'Most read' and 'Commented' sidebar with a list of related articles.

Border Counties Advertiser –Story about local community welcoming newly arrived Syrian families

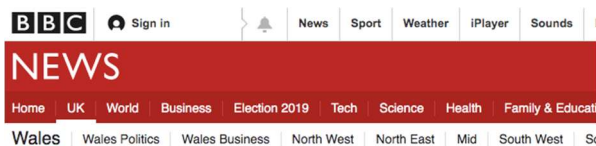
The screenshot shows an article from the Oxford Mail. The title is 'Cowley Road restaurants come together for Refugee Week in Oxford' by Tom Williams. It features a photo of a group of people standing in front of a building on Cowley Road. The text below the photo says: 'Cowley Road restaurants come together for Refugee Week in Oxford'. There is a 'Most read' and 'Commented' sidebar with a list of related articles.

Oxford Mail –Story about local businesses fundraising for refugee charities

WALES

The Welsh Learner Award sparked significant interest with the Welsh media, and Mohamad Karkoubi was featured in several press pieces across Wales, including **BBC, ITV, inews, Evening Express and the Belfast Telegraph**. Highlights include:

BBC News Wales – reported on the support provided to Mohamad to learn Welsh within the community in Aberystwyth



Aberystwyth-based Syrian refugee wins Welsh learner award

© 26 July 2019



"I am really happy now"

inews - feature on Mohamad's journey as a Syrian Refugee Living in the Welsh Speaking market town in Tregaran

News > UK

Syrian refugee who found a new life as a blacksmith honoured for learning Welsh

His family fled the Syria city of Aleppo and arrived in Wales via a Lebanon refugee camp



By Simon Rushton

Friday, 26th July 2019, 6:30 pm

Updated Friday, 6th September 2019, 4:20 pm



Syrian refugee, Mohammed Karkoubi (right) and Aberystwyth University's Sion Meredith, Head of Learn Welsh (Photo: Vince Jones/Aberystwyth University/PA Wire)



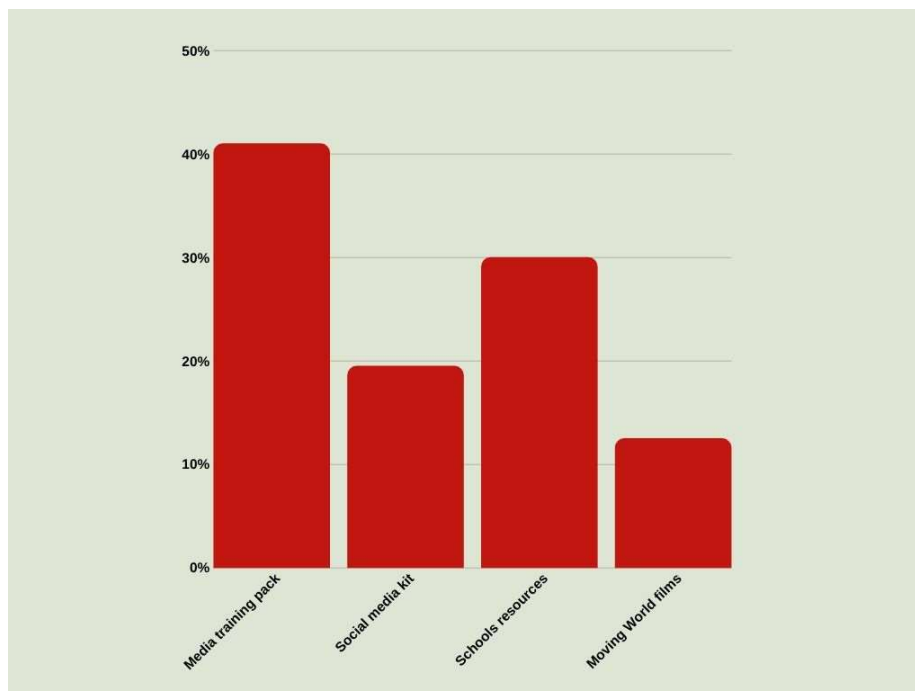
ITV Wales ran a news feature about the visit to the Senedd on the 6 o'clock news, co-produced with Hazar Almahmoud and the Welsh Refugee council. The piece reported on how people are settling in Wales and making it their new home. It had an estimated reach of 1.6 million people.

SCOTLAND:

See the Refugee Festival Scotland 2019 [Impact Report](#), by Scottish Refugee Council

Resources

Refugee Week provides a number of online resources for event organisers and schools around the country. These include a media training pack with guidelines on how to write press releases, pitch stories and engage with regional and national media, used by 40% of organisers¹ and a social media kit with a number of guidelines on how to create engaging content whilst also providing ready-made graphics and template graphics so that event organisers can personalise these and use them to promote their own regional Refugee Week events. The schools resource pack developed by the British Red Cross is also another invaluable resource for schools around the country and was utilised by 30% of organisers who participated in our survey.



Key needs established by event organisers:

- To receive resources earlier
- Clearer guidelines for social media resource kit and make it easier to find on website
- Facilitation of a stronger regional network to enable exploration of sharing resources e.g. marketing and press
 - Website navigation to be made more straightforward
 - Improve online shop ordering system

Source: Refugee Week Organisers 2019 Survey

¹ Source: Refugee Week Organisers 2019 Survey

SOCIAL MEDIA



Reflecting the theme of ‘You, me and those who came before’, the Refugee Week 2019 online campaign encouraged social media users to look to the past to explore the lives of refugees and those who have welcomed them throughout the generations, as well as promoting and celebrating Refugee Week as a festival. The hashtags for the week were #generations and #refugeeweek2019.

As with previous years, Simple Acts formed a central part of the Refugee Week social media campaign, alongside content generated by our Refugee Week Ambassadors.

Reach

For technical reasons, full figures for estimated reach of the Refugee Week social media campaign are not available this year.

However, the campaign achieved an estimated reach of at least **over 700,000** during the week, boosted by engagement from high profile individuals and organisations such as Jeremy Corbyn, Foyles, the BBC and Extinction Rebellion, as well as several mainstream institutions outside the refugee sector.

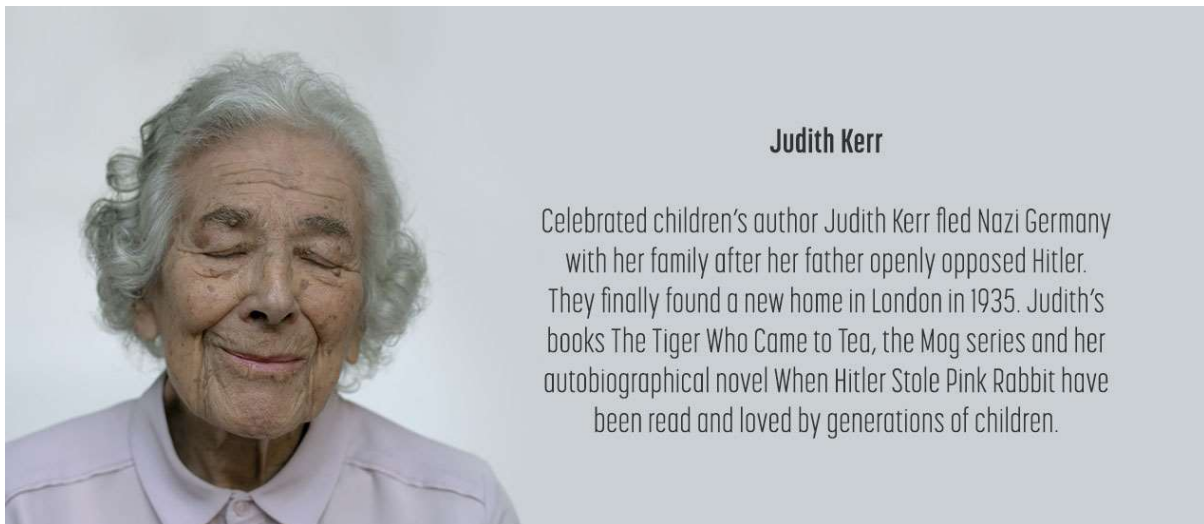
Resources

The Refugee Week media and social media resources offer support, content and ideas for local event organisers. Over **40% of organisers utilised the media training pack** this year, and almost **30% made use of the social media kit** – a resource that provides blank graphics organisers can personalise and use to promote their own Refugee Week events. Basic media and social media

training was also offered as part of the Refugee Week conferences held this year in Coventry and London.

The Refugee Week national partners continued to be active and supportive in their social media activity, many undertaking their own Simple Acts challenges within their offices, with volunteers and their wider communities and sharing these via social channels.

The Campaign



Across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, the Refugee Week community shared the striking portraits by Jillian Edelstein. These have reached an estimated audience of **500,000 via Facebook**. The photographic series was accompanied by personal narratives from well-known public figures such as the late children's author Judith Kerr (58,000 Facebook reach), actress Zoe Wanamaker (124,000 Facebook reach), and actor Ncuti Gatwa (51,000 Facebook reach), telling the stories of displacement from their own family histories. Alongside this, users were invited to look into their own family histories to find any stories of migration and welcome within their own heritage, and share this as a Simple Act.

Simple Acts engagement



There was a continued high level of active engagement on social media this year, mainly via engagement with the Refugee Week Simple Acts challenges. The 7 Simple Acts for 2019 were popular

in providing simple ways for people to engage with the festival during the week. They are a great way of pulling out elements of the annual theme and tying it into the bigger picture.

For 2019 we ran our first Instagram campaign around the Simple Act ‘Share a dish’, to coincide with London’s first Refugee Food Festival. We gathered eight recipes by people from refugee backgrounds and shared these along with the stories and memories linked to that particular recipe. Our recipes were shared on social by Ottolenghi (Facebook) and Caravan restaurants (Instagram) as well as by our community.

Ambassador content



During our Refugee Week Ambassador training days, our ambassadors worked on creative storytelling exercises and wrote short poems and stories about their experiences of arriving in the UK. We designed graphics and shared the shorter form content on Facebook and Instagram. The ambassador longer-form stories and blogs were shared on the Refugee Week blog and via the Huffington Post blog series.

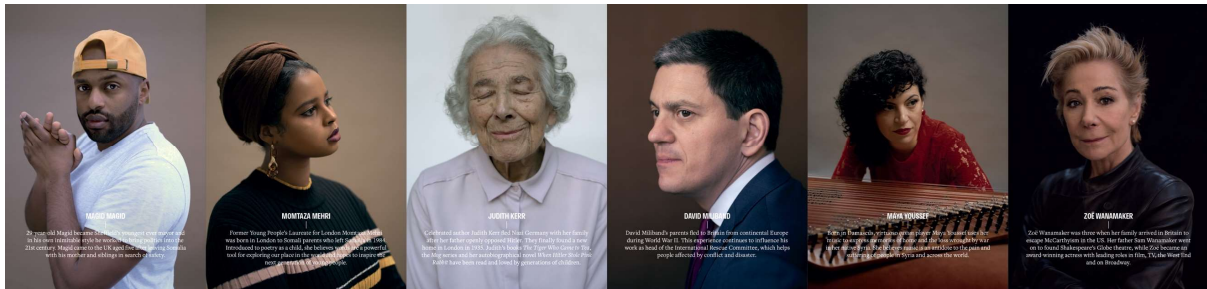
First Facebook Watch Party



This year we hosted Refugee Week’s first Facebook Watch Party, with a premiere screening of ‘Return to Calais’, a short 14-minute film made by Edith Goldenhar. Based on her mother’s wartime journals, Paulette’s daughter Edith makes a pilgrimage to Calais over 75 years later, to honour the woman who sheltered Paulette and her family during the wartime bombings. That same humanitarian spirit is alive

today, she discovers, among the volunteers in Calais and their efforts on behalf of refugees who again have fled their home countries.

PROMO MATERIALS



Using Jillian Edelstein's stunning photography commission, we featured her portraits of well-known public figures to illustrate our theme of 'You, me and those who came before'. Each portrait included a short biography of the contributors and the story of migration within their family history.

These images were made into postcards, posters and a fold-out concertina. A total of 2000 posters, 2000 postcards and 5000 concertinas were distributed free to event organisers nationwide.

MERCHANDISE



In line with the design of the 'You, me and those who came before' promotional materials, Refugee Week designed a new t-shirt with the theme logo in two colours. The t-shirt proved a popular addition to the Refugee Week badges and other merchandise sold via the Refugee Week website, with over 150 t-shirts sold over the Refugee Week season.

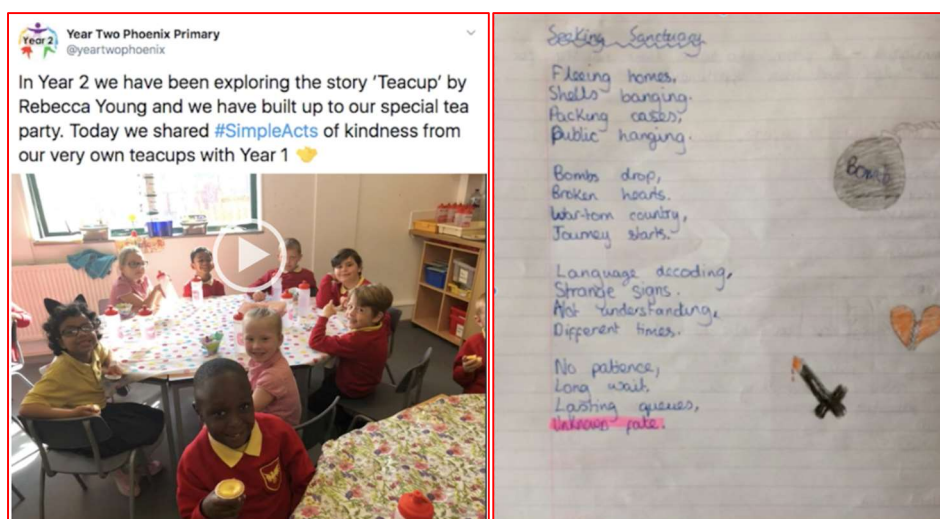
EDUCATION AND CREATIVE LEARNING

Thousands of children and young people took part in Refugee Week 2019 in hundreds 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 Refugee Week schools resources were viewed over **8,500 times** during June 2019, seeing an increase in traffic of 35% since 2018, making it one of our most popular pages to visit.

Education: Resources

Educational practitioners made use of a wide range of schools resources created especially for Refugee Week 2019, including British Red Cross's secondary and primary resources on the theme of 'You, me and those who came before'.

A huge number of schools engaged with the 2019 Simple Acts challenges, writing poems, letters of welcome, filming messages of welcome, finding facts and feeling the beat with the Refugee Week Spotify playlist.



Schools and educationalists identified the following as key needs:

- Resources to be made available with a longer lead into Refugee Week
 - Closer links with curriculum would be good where possible
 - More activities to be separated by year group
- Request for more facilitated school assemblies and workshops
 - More materials for Key Stages 1 and 2 needed

Source: Refugee Week Organiser 2019 Survey

Norfolk Welcomes

Norfolk Welcomes organised a 'day of welcome' where schools across the county learnt about the experience of refugees and asylum seekers and came together to build more welcoming communities. Inspired by the stories of individuals and groups who have sought sanctuary in the UK, pupils from two Norwich schools, Avenue Junior School and Hellesdon High School used art as a voice to send a message of welcome to sanctuary seekers in the community.



New Animation

Counterpoints Arts commissioned a new animation for Refugee Week by the award-winning animation studio Fettle with help from DASH (Huddersfield) Sanctuary Kirklees, Kirklees and Yorkshire Spirit's Carry My Story Project. This was a popular resource used by schools and was made available across the Refugee Week social channels, reaching an audience of over 14,000 via Facebook alone.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Events

- Invest in growth by developing more creative partnerships with arts venues
- Simplify and streamline website to make it more user friendly for event organisers to upload events and for users to navigate events
- Share the upcoming theme for 2020 earlier with events organisers
- Provide template for posters where there is space to add in own event details
- The printed concertina proved more popular with organisers, so look to do this again
- Look at possibility of hosting more Refugee Week conferences, to facilitate requests for more networking and collaboration among regions
- Deliver a wider range of media training days regionally in partnership with IMiX
- Develop a good practice guide and make this available online for the network
- Develop community networks through hosting regional conferences

Media

- The Ambassador programme was one of the elements that received the most positive feedback in the organiser survey. It is a successful way of generating social media and media content and people enjoy hearing refugees tell their stories in their own voices. This should be continued
- Establish a more formal launch event at the opening of Refugee Week to which press can be invited
- Coordinate media training days across select regions to facilitate collaboration among networks and offer comprehensive training in running media and social media campaigns
- Continue to invest in more staff resourcing to expand the press strategy

Social Media

- Provide earlier access to social media resources for event organisers
- Explore possibility of having a separate social media site
- Create clearer guidelines for social media activity and timings
- Simplify the social media toolkit to make it more user friendly
- Promotional materials appealed to a broad audience - something to replicate for 2020
- Continue to share successes via social media as this is a great way to inspire people
- The Simple Acts continue to be popular and these should be continued for 2020

Education

- Continue to develop these and find ways of following the curriculum
- Look at how to meet the need to facilitated assemblies and school workshops
- Cater for all ages and try to meet specific request for KS1 & 2 materials
- The 'famous refugees and history' part of the website gets a lot of traffic. Develop an updated factsheet/downloadable quiz for 2020 and offer it as a resource

REFUGEE WEEK 2020

Next year, Refugee Week will take place between 15 – 21 June 2020. Anyone can get involved by holding or attending an event or activity, or joining 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.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

