

Refugee Week



REFUGEE WEEK UK 2016 EVALUATION

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refugeeweek

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KEY FIGURES



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 defend the importance of sanctuary and the benefits it can bring to both refugees and host 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 Scotland¹. Refugee Week is also celebrated in some other countries, including [Australia](#) and - for the first time in 2016 - [France](#).

Refugee Week is an umbrella festival, with events held by a wide range of arts, voluntary, faith and refugee community organisations, schools, student groups and more.

The aims of Refugee Week are:

¹ Full evaluations of Refugee Festival Scotland and Refugee Week Wales are conducted separately. Click [here](#) for the Scottish Refugee Festival 2016 evaluation, [here](#) to contact Welsh Refugee Council or [here](#) to contact NICRAS

- * To encourage a diverse range of events to be held throughout the UK, which facilitate positive encounters between refugees and the general public in order to encourage greater understanding and overcome hostility
- * To showcase the talent and expertise that refugees bring with them to the UK
- * To explore new and creative ways of addressing the relevant issues and reach beyond the refugee sector
- * To provide information which educates and raises awareness of the reality of refugee experiences

The ultimate aim is to create better understanding between different communities and to encourage successful integration, enabling refugees to live in safety and continue making a valuable contribution. Refugee Week aims to provide an important opportunity for asylum seekers and refugees to be seen, listened to and valued.

Theme

Inspired by the acts of welcome shown by communities and individuals across the UK and Europe following the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 the theme for Refugee Week was 'welcome', and the theme of Refugee Festival Scotland was 'Celebrating Solidarity with refugees'.

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 UK (UNHCR UK), International Organization for Migration (IOM) UK, Refugee Action, Refugee Council, City of Sanctuary, Student Action for Refugees (STAR), Freedom from Torture and British Future.

Our Community

The Refugee Week community is made up of hundreds of individuals and organisations across the country who organise and hold Refugee Week events and activities every year. Refugee Week is also supported by regional coordinators who help to coordinate activities in their geographical region.



EVENTS

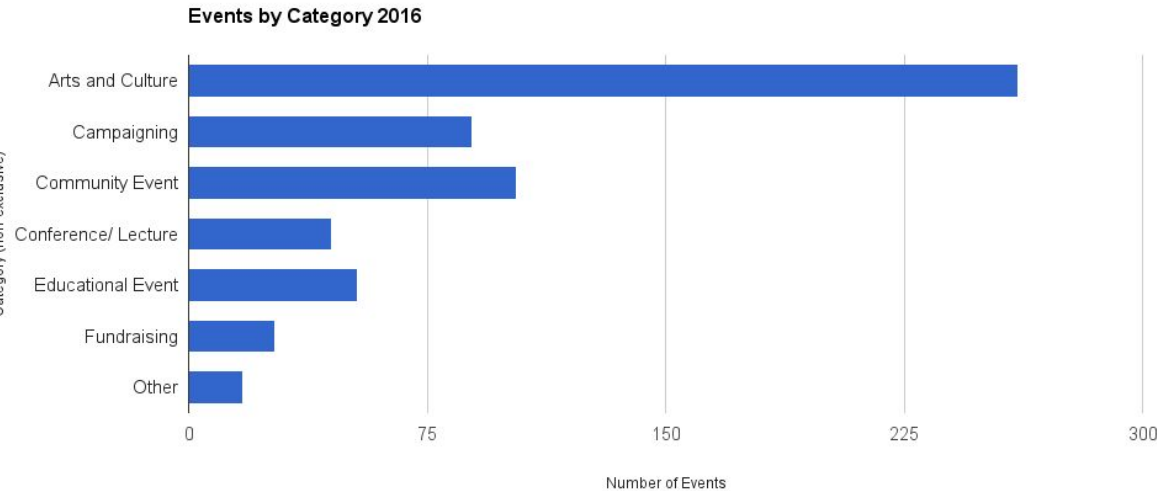
Refugee Week 2016 saw over 600 events and activities held across the UK, with at least 440 in England, over 140 for Refugee Festival Scotland, approximately 30 in Northern Ireland and 25 for Refugee Week Wales. This is a significant increase on the approximately 400 UK-wide events during Refugee Week 2015², probably partly due to increased interest following the 'refugee crisis' from 2015. In addition, we estimate that hundreds of schools across the UK held Refugee Week activities (see p21).

Following an invitation by Refugee Week UK, Refugee Week was also [celebrated in France](#) for the first time in 2016, with refugee support organisation SINGA hosting a whole week of community and arts activities in Paris, Lille and Lyon.

Events and activities in England reached an audience of approximately 120,000, compared to 171,500 in 2015 (although the 2015 figure was unusually boosted by the approximately 106,000 who saw Manaf Halbouni's installation 'Nowhere is Home' outside the Southbank Centre), while audiences and participants numbered approximately 13,300 in Scotland, 1,000 in Northern Ireland and 1,000 in Wales, taking the UK total audience figure up to 135,300.

Many events were held in high profile venues and public spaces such as museums, libraries and outdoor squares, making them more likely to be accessed by those not actively seeking out refugee-related activities (see venues box below). Refugee Week media and social media campaigns and schools activities are also key ways for the festival to reach beyond already 'converted' audiences (see later sections).

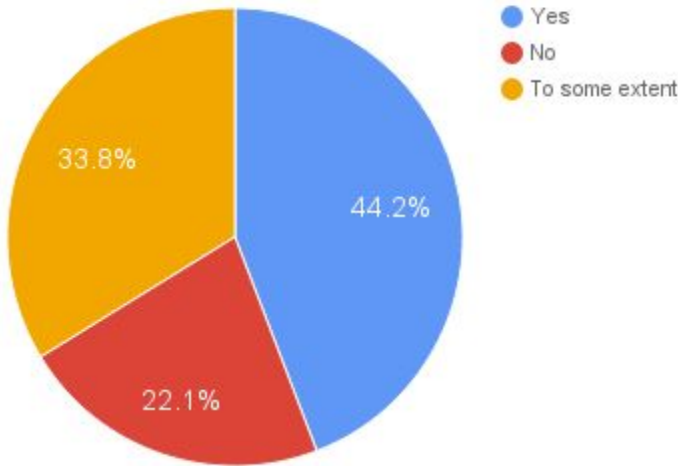
Refugee Week seeks to harness the power of arts and culture to create spaces for positive encounters between communities, which is reflected in the fact that 60% of events listed on the Refugee Week website focused on arts and culture, up from just under 50% in 2015.



² Full evaluations of Refugee Festival Scotland and Refugee Week Wales are conducted separately. Click [here](#) for the Scottish Refugee Festival 2016 evaluation, [here](#) to contact Welsh Refugee Council or [here](#) to contact NICRAS

Refugee Week organisers responded positively to the 2016 theme of ‘welcome’, with 78% of survey respondents saying it informed their programming, at least to some extent³:

Did you organise your event with the 2016 theme 'welcome' in mind?



“The theme of Welcome was very apt for this year with so much ‘unwelcome’ in the news.” - Refugee Week event organiser

Venues included:

- British Museum
- Southbank Centre
- British Film Institute
- The Hidden Gardens, Glasgow
- Wales Millennium Centre
- National Museum of Wales
- Belfast City Hall
- Turner Contemporary
- Birmingham Symphony Hall
- Theatre Royal & Concert Hall, Nottingham
- Town Hall Square, Leicester
- Queen Square, Bristol
- West Yorkshire Playhouse

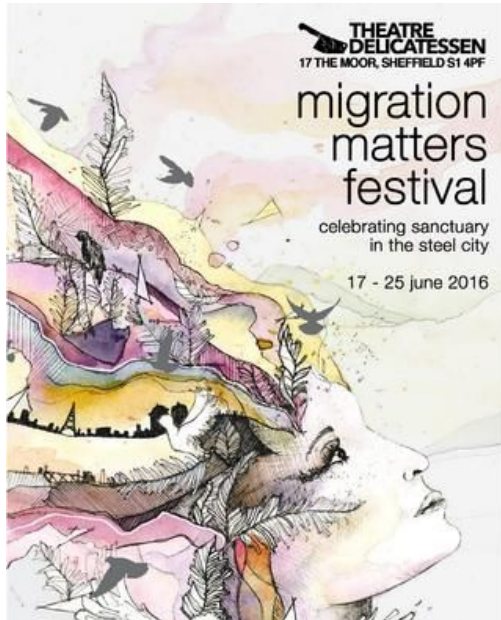
It is of course impossible to do justice here to the hundreds of ways Refugee Week was celebrated in regions all across the country. What follows is rather a small selection of events and activities, to help give a flavour of Refugee Week activity nationwide. It is also worth noting that organisers responded positively to a call to [blog](#) about their events for the Refugee Week website this year, helping to provide a rich picture of the national programme.

³ Source: Refugee Week Event Organisers’ Survey 2016 (77 respondents)

Events: Refugee Week England



The 440+ events in England included Counterpoints Arts' *Moving Stories* at British Museum, where visitors enjoyed workshops, film screenings, participatory installations and performances, including virtuoso kanun player Maya Youssef (top right) and interactive installation *Refugees Welcome* by Alketa Xhafa Mripa (top left). At Southbank Centre, also in London, Reem Kelani and Rafiki Jazz were followed by a free concert curated by Guy Garvey marking the end of Meltdown Festival and the start of Refugee Week, while school pupils took part in an installation by Bern O'Donoghue (left). Counterpoints Arts also screened *Beats of the Antonov and Fire at Sea* (bottom right) at British Film Institute and held two music nights at Rich Mix, including *Refugees Welcome!* featuring Logic, Afrikan Boy and OpSa!



In Sheffield, the nine-day [Migration Matters festival](#) saw Theatre Delicatessen host a programme of events run by artists, theatre companies, charities & community groups. Established names such as ice and fire, Target Theatre, Eclipse Theatre and Chris Thorpe appeared alongside local Sheffield-based projects Open Kitchen Social Club, intercultural drama group Side by Side and refugee-led dance groups Umoja African Dance and One Way Belongings. Celebrating the diversity of the UK's first City of Sanctuary, the festival ran under the tagline 'celebrating sanctuary in the steel city' and was supported by City of Sanctuary Sheffield, British Red Cross, the Refugee Council and SYMAAG.

Yasmin Fedda's award-winning *Queens of Syria* was screened as part of part of Nottingham Refugee Week 2016, in partnership with Nottingham Beyond Borders. [Nottingham's programme](#) also featured the premiere of Matt Milne's documentary *Grant Me Safety*, a specially devised play called *#RefugeesWelcome*, *The Stateless Present* art exhibition, a world music night and several other arts and community events at venues including the Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham Playhouse, New Art Exchange, Broadway Cinema and Theatre Royal and Concert Hall.



Local community festival [MyRaynesPark](#) made Refugee Week the focus of their 2016 festivities, partnering with churches, schools and a library to encourage reflection about refugee experiences. Members of the public and school children engaged with a Refugee Reflection Zone (including Güler Ates' *Sea of Colour* installation, left) at the Lantern Methodist Church, members of local book groups met author Gulwali Passarlay and passersby through a popular pedestrian tunnel were encouraged to share how they would like to be welcomed.

Events: Refugee Festival Scotland



Coordinated by Scottish Refugee Council, [Refugee Festival Scotland](#) featured over 140 events across Scotland, with approximately 13,000 people taking part or attending events.

Celebrating Solidarity (above), the family-friendly launch event coordinated by Scottish Refugee Council and delivered in partnership with Tramway and The Hidden Gardens, attracted an audience of over 1,000 and was described by a number of attendees and volunteers as Refugee Festival Scotland’s “best ever” (image: Iman Tajik).

In addition to its Signature Events, Refugee Festival Scotland’s Community Celebrations provided information for refugees and asylum seekers in the community and encouraged friendships and connections to develop.

Below: Scottish Refugee Council launched its arts and heritage project *Lest We Forget: First World War – Refugees Then & Now*, which brought together a group of more than 20 refugees and local Scots as ‘Heritage Researchers’ to explore the heritage of 19,000 Belgian refugees who came to Scotland during the First World War (image: Iman Tajik).

Events: Refugee Week Wales



Refugee Week Wales, coordinated by Welsh Refugee Council, saw 1,000 people enjoying 33 events in towns and cities such as Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham throughout the week, with over 73,500 estimated to have visited the touring Refugee Week Wales multimedia exhibition throughout the month of June.

Two events at Wales Millennium Centre drew an audience of around 250 each - *Music Without Borders*, which featured music from Eritrea, India, Egypt and Wales; and *Blackbird* (pictured above), a sell-out play in which local drama students and young people from refugees backgrounds joined forces to tell a story of migration and resilience.

The majority of Refugee Week Wales events were film (10 events), followed by arts (7) and education (6). Several sports and family events were also held, including a family funday at Wales Millennium Centre attended by over 250 people, where families from all over the world played, chatted and left messages on a Tree of Welcome created by local children.

Events: Refugee Week Northern Ireland



Coordinated by NICRAS, Northern Ireland's Refugee Week programme engaged school students, MPs, football fans and more with around 30 events at diverse venues, including local schools community centres.

One was the *Welcome Fest* at St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast, organised by NICRAS, British Red Cross, Belfast Friendship Club among other partners, which brought together local artists from refugee and host communities for a musical celebration of diversity.⁴

⁴ Click [here](#) for Northern Ireland's Refugee Week 2016 programme, or visit www.nicras.org.uk for more information

“The response to the festival has been incredibly positive. Members of the public, many of who aren’t familiar with the plights and struggles of the asylum system and the hardships faced by refugees, have spoken about how important it is to have a festival like this for the city.”

[Julia White](#), Migration Matters Festival, Sheffield

“Good to hear accounts of people’s direct experiences of being immersed in the day to day life of the camp; better than hearing/seeing it on TV news where only isolated events considered ‘newsworthy’ are reported, with not much analysis or depth.”

Visitor to Voices photography exhibition, Cardiff

“There was a magical moment where the daughter of an Eritrean Refugee did a self-taught Highland dance through the entire performance of the St Francis Pipe Band to end our event – a lovely demonstration of integration.”

Organiser, Bridging the Gap’s Gorbals One Nation Street Community Celebration, Refugee Festival Scotland

“It was great to be a part of it, bringing so many different genres of music together, local musicians with refugee musicians and enabling our local community to experience something new created a very special atmosphere. I think the standout highlight was the amount of support we had from the local community.”

Refugee Week event organiser, via feedback survey

Events: Challenges and Recommendations

Several event organisers identified attracting larger and more mainstream audiences to their events as a challenge. Organisers also said they would like more support with event publicity, including via media and social media, easier access to event resources (e.g. activity packs and printable materials) and more guidance about fundraising.

In addition, the organic nature of Refugee Week means an accurate breakdown of audiences across events is a challenge.

The following recommendations offer some ways to address these challenges:

- Encourage event organisers to partner with organisations and venues beyond their usual circles to help engage members of the wider public
- Streamline and publicise resources on the Refugee Week website aimed at supporting organisers with fundraising and publicity, in order to make them more easily accessible
- Publicise and encourage the use of evaluation resources, including at the Refugee Week Conference
- Continue to support organisers in publicising their events through a social media pack and media and social media training at the Refugee Week Conference
- A further way to support local organisers and to build Refugee Week as a cohesive national festival would be for Counterpoints Arts to offer a package of suggested activities to all local organisers, including e.g. films and artistic activities



MEDIA

Refugee Week's 2016 media campaign sought to share stories of how UK communities have welcomed refugees, as well as highlighting Refugee Week events.

As in previous years, Refugee Week partner organisation British Future hired a PR consultant to lead on the planning and implementation of the media strategy, in consultation with the Refugee Week operations group, which greatly enhanced Refugee Week's capacity to engage with the media.

The Refugee Week 2016 media campaign had an estimated reach of 7 million, compared to 12 million in 2015. This was a relatively positive result, given that the timing of Refugee Week coincided with the referendum on Brexit and also followed a period of heightened media coverage of refugee issues.

One highlight was a feature in the Mirror on how a town in Wiltshire has welcome resettled Syrian refugees. Refugee Week stories also ran in the Huffington Post, ITV News Granada and i-D Magazine among many others (see images and caption below), as well as in over 60 local and regional media outlets - a similar figure to 2015.

"The welcome received by the first seven families to arrive in Wiltshire was both extraordinary and very British. In recent months, as the country has convulsed over Brexit and immigration, local volunteers have done up dilapidated flats, donated clothes and furnishings and held fundraisers...In return, they say the life of the town...has been enriched."

'Warm welcome for Syrian refugees in a country town shows divided Britain can heal',
[The Mirror](#)

"The rhetoric in the media is one that suggests that the UK is 'full', and that those arriving on our shores are a drain on our economy. Not only are these assertions unfounded, but they fail to recognise the positive, life-affirming contributions that generations of refugees have made to British society - and that we ourselves are changed by welcoming the stranger."

- Rowan Williams, Former Archbishop and Chairman of Christian Aid, quoted in the
[Daily Mail online](#)



THE BLOG

The British Response to Refugees - The Better Side of Us

19/06/2016 19:10 | Updated 19 June 2016



191 Likes

Daniel Singleton Charity worker, writer, commentator and sometime playwright and arm-chair historian

In the midst of a painful week, the tragic death of MP Jo Cox, the senseless loss of life in Orlando, football violence around the Euros and the caustic nature of the referendum debate it is important to think on the good and righteous acts of individuals. To recognise that some of the most heroic acts of kindness happen



UK must do more for refugees, says former archbishop Rowan Williams

By PRESS ASSOCIATION PUBLISHED: 00:03, 20 June 2016 | UPDATED: 00:03, 20 June 2016



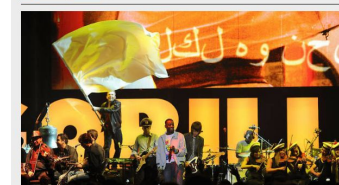
A former archbishop of Canterbury has called on the Government to do more to help refugees. Dr Rowan Williams also criticised "unfounded" claims that the UK is "full". Speaking ahead of Refugee Week in his role as chairman of Christian Aid, Dr Williams told the BBC the UK could not ignore the refugee "crisis".



ADD COMMENT LOVE IT SAVE IT

Five ways to get involved with Refugee Week in London

Share Tweet | Monday June 20 2016, 5:00pm



MOST RECENT POSTS This map shows the London postcodes with the most hot posts

News UK News

Warm welcome for Syrian refugees in a country town shows divided Britain can heal

20.07.2016 20:07, 23 JUN 2016 BY ROS WYNNIE JONES

The Wiltshire town is not the most diverse part of the country but locals say their new arrivals have increased their faith in humanity and made them proud

506 SHARES 3 COMMENTS

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Recommended In UK News

COURT CASE Woman jailed after leaving baby strapped in upside down buggy in a park for 7 hours overnight



Clockwise from top left above: [The Huffington Post UK](#) ran a week-long blog series from people who have welcomed refugees; [The Daily Mail online](#) covered Former Archbishop Rowan Williams' call for the Government to do more for refugees; [Time Out online](#) highlighted Refugee Week events in London; [i-D Magazine](#) covered Marios Schwab and Kate Moross's new Refugee Week t-shirt designs; [BBC World Service](#) radio highlighted the Lampedusa Cross, used to mark the beginning of Refugee Week at St Paul's Cathedral; [The Mirror](#) ran a feature about Syrian refugees being welcomed in a Wiltshire town; [ITV News Granada](#) ran a special video report highlighting the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in the North West

Below: Headlines from the [Huddersfield Daily Examiner](#), [Ipswich Star](#), [York Press](#), [Yorkshire Evening Post](#)

Refugee Week: Seven myths about asylum seekers busted

Teenage refugee who was forced to flee Syria reveals her hopes of a university education after being resettled in Ipswich

Syria play will be an eye-opener at West Yorkshire Playhouse

“These are people who have come through hell.” Why it's right that York should welcome its share of refugees from Syria

Media: Refugee Festival Scotland



In Scotland, the eighth annual Media Awards (pictured above) welcomed around 100 guests from the media to St Luke's in Glasgow, with prizes awarded in recognition of fair and accurate reporting of refugee issues. The event was coordinated by Scottish Refugee Council in partnership with British Red Cross and the National Union of Journalists.

Key pieces of media coverage in Scotland included:

- Festival highlights in The List magazine
- Two features in the Daily Record on communities welcoming refugees and St Albert's primary School
- Feature in the Evening Times on Glasgow Afghan United and Scottish Unity League's football tournament
- STV news broadcast coverage of *Lest We Forget: First World War – Refugees Then & Now*

“Angus has always had a strong international community and with the groundswell of goodwill for this cluster of refugees and the festival to celebrate our growing bonds, we hope to build more long term resources and traditions in celebrating the variety of Scots in Angus.”

- Islam Mohammden, Director of Angus Refugee Care, quoted in the [Angus & the Mearns Courier](#)

Media: Refugee Week Wales

Cardiff Radio ran a one-hour feature on Refugee Week Wales. Other media events included an interview on Good Morning Radio about the *Voices* photography exhibition and a Big Lottery Grant interview with Salah Rasool.

Media: Challenges and Recommendations

Unsurprisingly, media coverage was impacted by the Brexit referendum falling within the week, which dominated the news and may also have led to fear of perceived political bias by journalists. It is likely that the prominence of the 'refugee crisis' 2015-16 also meant some journalists felt they had 'already done the refugee story'. Both factors will need to be taken into account for Refugee Week 2017, which will coincide with the anniversary of the Brexit referendum.

There is scope for placing more emphasis on Refugee Week as an arts festival, which could provide a fresh angle. There was an appetite this year for case studies of people involved in Refugee Week events, but gathering case studies, as well as information about events, in enough time to meet media lead-in times was a challenge.

The following recommendations could help to address these challenges:

- Formulate a media strategy that actively seeks to mitigate the impact of the Brexit referendum dominating the news and media fatigue on refugee issues
- Work with venues and local organisers to gather information about events, and case studies, in enough time to meet arts media lead-in times
- Make specific offers to arts journalists e.g. interview with an artist, look round a gallery
- Connect with celebrities well in advance with a view to recruiting them as 'Refugee Week Ambassadors'
- Repeat successful Huffington Post blog series



SOCIAL MEDIA

Counterpoints Arts hired social media consultant Jen Lowthrop to lead on formulating and implementing the Refugee Week 2016 social media strategy, in consultation with Refugee Week partners via the operations group.

Following the theme of 'welcome', the strategy aimed to promote the message that refugees are welcome in the UK, celebrate the contributions of refugees to the UK and promote Refugee Week events. #RefugeesWelcome and #RefugeeWeek were the key hashtags used.

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram users were encouraged to share specially-created graphics showing real-life stories of welcome taken from the Refugee Week 2016 publicity materials, as well as others showing more general images and of welcome (e.g. a cup of tea) and slides promoting Refugee Week events. People were also encouraged to share their own messages of welcome via the Simple Acts campaign.

Local organisers were provided with a social media pack with suggested social media posts and graphics, to help them publicise their events.

Posts on external blogs on the theme of welcome also helped to expand Refugee Week's reach online.

The social media graphics proved popular, with those showing personal stories getting the best engagement. Sharing content from other organisations and scheduling in advance to free up time to respond to live activity also worked well. Refugee Week had a social media reach of at least 250,000, although the real figure is likely to be higher, as the use of #RefugeesWelcome was not included because it is widely used outside of the Refugee Week context. However, overall the campaign had a similar reach to 2015.

Social Media Reach

- @refugeeweek mentions: 180,000
- #RefugeeWeek and #RefugeeWeek2016 mentions: 10,000
- Twitter growth: 8% - 906 new followers
- Facebook post reach: 64,600
- Facebook community growth: 11% - 436 new page likes

“We were grateful for the additional publicity and shout outs via e-mail and social media you guys gave us. Our entry on your website resulted in one of our volunteers getting involved and they've been a fantastic asset.” - Refugee Week event organiser



20 – 26 June | 2016



Rosereira and Syrian-born Abdulaziz Almashi organised the biggest demonstration in support of refugees in British history.

#RefugeesWelcome



20 – 26 June | 2016



#RefugeesWelcome

#RefugeesWelcome



20 – 26 June | 2016



Emergence, Watford Palace, 26 June.
A new play from Tangled Feet - a strange portal has emerged in Watford.

#RefugeesWelcome



How would **YOU** welcome refugees?

Send us your Simple Acts of Welcome this Refugee Week via www.simpleacts.org.uk



SIMPLE ACTS

#RefugeesWelcome

Refugee Week 20 – 26 June | 2016

One significant post not included in the figures above is [a video by British Red Cross](#) showing a baby being reunited with his parents at Heathrow airport, which was shared using the hashtag #refugeeswelcome and reached a quarter of a million people on Facebook. The figures also exclude Refugee Festival Scotland (where different metrics were used to measure reach) - lives streams of events there reached audiences of over 10 thousand, and likes of the two key Facebook pages increased by 940 over the festival promotion period.

Social Media: Challenges and Recommendations

Concerns over safeguarding impacted on plans to encourage users to share their own stories of welcome. The focus on stories of welcoming refugees also made it less easy for the general public to share their own experiences. Finally, using the already popular #RefugeesWelcome hashtag made reach hard to measure.

- Consider ways to gather personal stories that do not have safeguarding implications, for example gathering user-generated content at the Refugee Week Conference
- Invest in sponsored posts for key content on Facebook
- Continue to share other organisations' content and news
- Ensure users are able to relate the campaign to their own experiences if they are being asked to share their own stories
- Consider using a more focused hashtag to better measure reach



PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS



Twenty seven thousand postcards and 2,000 posters were distributed to over 170 supporters across the country for Refugee Week 2016. The materials, designed by Bravo Charlie Mike Hotel and featuring photographs by Nana Varveropoulou, showed real-life stories of ways people have welcomed refugees to the UK - from an English teacher to the West Yorkshire Playhouse. In Scotland, 15,000 Refugee Festival Scotland brochures and 1,600 posters were distributed, and 52 street posters were displayed, including on the Glasgow Underground.

For the first time, the designs above were also used for the Refugee Week social media graphics and t-shirts, helping to build a strong and cohesive festival brand.

"As a child Diaquiesse lived in a refugee camp in the Congo and then came to the UK as a refugee 22 years ago. When he moved into his current neighbourhood, Diaquiesse's neighbour, Gloria, embraced his family and has been close to him and his daughter Melian ever since."

Text from poster/ postcard, right



Designer and 'Refugees Welcome' T-shirts



Two sets of new t-shirt designs were launched for 2016: a 'Refugees Welcome' t-shirt, echoing the design of the posters and postcards, and an exclusive collection of designs by London fashion designer [Marios Schwab](#) and the award-winning [Studio Moross](#).

The designer t-shirts, featuring calligraphy techniques and symbols from different countries and languages, aimed at celebrating the contributions and diversity that refugees bring to society, as well as helping Refugee Week to move in a new creative direction and reach new audiences. One way this was achieved was through coverage of the designs in [i-D magazine](#).

The new designs were sold alongside the classic Refugee Week t-shirts and other branded materials via the online shop, with the 'Refugees Welcome' t-shirts selling over 130.

“We wanted to show how important collaboration and openness is, working with different cultures and in different styles, you can create something more than the sum of its parts. The creative world works best with a free flow of ideas and people, with no walls or barriers, everyone bringing something to the table.”



- Kate from Studio Moross and Marios Schwab

EDUCATION AND CREATIVE LEARNING



We estimate that thousands of young people in hundreds of schools took part in Refugee Week 2016, including through national networks [Schools of Sanctuary](#) and [Citizens UK](#).

It is not currently possible to get accurate figures for schools' participation in Refugee Week, as organisers of non-public activities do not tend to upload them to the Refugee Week website - a gap that should be looked into for 2017.

However, one indicator is that the British Red Cross's Refugee Week 2016 education resource reached 37,000 young people.

Another is the rich content shared on Twitter: the increased level of social media engagement by schools this meant we were able to use this as an information-gathering tool for the first time this year, resulting in a [Storify blog post](#) showcasing examples of schools activities.



Top: Oasis Academy Mayfield and Swathling Primary become Schools of Sanctuary during Refugee Week; Left: Glebelands primary school in Leicester became a School of Sanctuary during Refugee Week 2016. Pupils worked on art work on theme of welcome with artist Ali Agayev and did [whole series of activities](#) including meeting local musicians, authors and campaigners from refugee backgrounds, including Syrian novelist A Dassu, who helped the children empathise with refugee experiences by writing letters as characters from her book.



Above: Teenagers at South London's Saint Gabriel's College hosted the first [Refugees Welcome Schools Summit](#) during Refugee Week, attracting dozens of schools keen to support refugees; Below: A welcome card from St Catherine's Academy

“We asked 10-11 year old children at the beginning of the session what they thought of when they heard the word 'Refugee'. Some answers included 'something to do with session what they thought of when they heard the word football' (like a referee), 'people that aren't from here' and 'I don't know but I heard someone talking about it on the bus'. At the end of the session, after hearing the real life experiences of four people, they understood that a refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their home.”

Refugee Week workshop facilitator

Education: Challenges and Recommendations

- Implement a mechanism for monitoring schools activities more consistently, e.g. a way for schools to register their events online without them necessarily being made public
- Streamline the large number of educational resources on the Refugee Week website to make them more accessible
- A 'package' of suggested activities and resources would be one way to support teachers and young people in their activities and build the sense of a cohesive festival across schools and colleges

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage event organisers to partner with organisations and venues beyond their usual circles to help engage members of the wider public
- Streamline and publicise resources for event organisers on the Refugee Week website, including resources on publicity, fundraising and educational materials
- Publicise and encourage the use of evaluation resources
- Consider offering a package of suggested activities to organisers
- Formulate a media strategy that actively seeks to mitigate the impact of the Brexit referendum dominating the news and media fatigue on refugee issues
- Consider ways to gather user-generated content for social media that is not complex in terms of safeguarding
- Implement a mechanism for monitoring schools activities more consistently

“My vision for Refugee Week 2017 is more of a focus on learning from one another - not just host communities welcoming, but mutual enrichment.”

Refugee Week event organiser

