

Refugee Week



DIFFERENT PASTS, SHARED FUTURES

~ REFUGEE WEEK UK 2014 EVALUATION REPORT

Refugee Week UK

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Background & Context

History

Refugee Week was established in 1998 as a direct reaction to the hostility that was reflected in the media and society in general towards refugees and asylum seekers. Refugee Week is an international programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. Refugee Week UK is the most established UK-wide initiative that attempts to counter this negative climate, defending the importance of sanctuary and the benefits it can bring to both refugees and host communities. As such, it is designed to contribute to harder hitting advocacy work which organisations are engaged in throughout the year.

Refugee Week now takes place in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Australia and South Korea, and we hope to see the international movement grow.

Refugee Week takes place in June every year from the Monday to Sunday of the week around World Refugee Day on the 20th of June. The annual date of World Refugee Day was set by the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 55/76) in 2000.

Mission and Aims

Refugee Week as a whole provides a platform for refugees and communities to deliver and promote positive encounters/images in order to create a culture of welcome throughout the country. Engaging individuals and communities in these positive encounters will lead to greater empathy, understanding and awareness of individuals and communities, leading to more informed, aware and tolerant attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers.

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.

Themes & Focuses

Partners and supporters are encouraged to think creatively about how they engage in the Week to recognize and celebrate individual and collective contributions made by refugees to our shared society. The overall focus of Refugee Week is on "positive contributions of refugees". In order to be creative and promote different angles of the story and offer new and interesting reference points each year the Refugee Week UK partnership agree on a theme. For example; in 2011 we looked at iconic refugee contributions; in 2012 we celebrated the unsung heroes of the Olympics; in 2013 celebrated refugees in our history and heritage. This year Refugee Week UK (excluding Scotland) decided to focus on the contributions and aspirations of young people. Refugee Week Scotland explored the theme 'welcome', reflecting on the commonwealth games which took place in Scotland this summer.

We decided that a way to connect with Refugee Week Scotland's theme 'welcome' would be to introduce a series of 'Simple Acts of Welcome' that would encourage people to find creative ways to welcome refugee children and young people to the UK, highlighting their contributions to our shared future. For example; the **'Tell Your MP'** Simple Act was promoted in collaboration with Refugee Week partner The Children's Society, which highlighted the early day motion around asylum support for refugee children and families. We also encouraged a call for people to share their *'Words of Welcome'* with the Simple Act **'Take a photo of you with your pro-refugee banner'**. It was a small but effective way to highlight and promote solidarity across the arts and refugee sectors, with messages and photos appearing from supporters in our social media networks across the week. Individuals from all walks of life took part in actively welcoming refugees to the UK and celebrating the contributions that they make.

The Refugee Week Partnership

Refugee Week UK is a multi-agency project comprised of a broad range of organisations representing the refugee, development and human rights sectors. Representatives of each member agency form the Refugee Week UK Steering and Operation Groups for Refugee Week UK. The partner agencies currently include: Amnesty International UK, British Red Cross, British Future, Counterpoints Arts, The Children's Society, City of Sanctuary, Freedom from Torture, Migrant Help, Refugee Action, Refugee Council, Scottish Refugee Council, Welsh Refugee Council, Student's Action for Refugees (STAR) and UNHCR.

Co-ordinating Bodies

On the UK level Refugee Week UK is supported by the Refugee Week partnership and managed by the Refugee Week UK Coordinator for Refugee Week (hosted by Counterpoints Arts) and co-ordinators in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland – hosted by NICRAS in Northern Ireland, Welsh Refugee Council in Wales and Scottish Refugee Council in Scotland.

Different regions, areas and towns have their own Refugee Week Steering and Operational Groups which manage and co-ordinate Refugee Week activities in their areas. A small number of volunteers with specific skills also support across the UK.

The role of the Refugee Week UK co-ordinators is to promote Refugee Week as widely as possible within and outside the refugee sector and to provide event organisers and other relevant agencies taking part with a general working framework, support and guidance. We serve as a central point of contact and advice; producing, distributing, and managing promotional and informational resources; facilitating networking and partnership building; ensuring that local efforts and activities are inter-linked and presented as parts of our UK wide effort to change perceptions and inform people about refugee experiences.

The Refugee Week UK partnership recognises that the real success of the Week is owed to the hard work of the hundreds of individuals and organisations that contribute on many different levels. The strength of the Refugee Week movement comes from supporting this invaluable work being done on the ground across the UK whilst also exploring creative ways for the movement to grow internationally.

*Please see **Appendix** at the back of this summary for more information on the partnership and for full listings of the Refugee Week 2014 events featured in the images at the start of this document.*

REFUGEE WEEK UK 2014 Evaluation Summary (excluding Scotland)



Key Findings and Developments

Events

- **Over 300 Refugee Week events** took place this year across the UK (this figure excludes Scotland's programme)
- Approximately **100,000 people attended** this Refugee Week activity
- **Events were organised by over 200 individuals, groups and organisations** – often working together in partnership in order to deliver strong regional activity

Promotional Materials & Marketing

- Nearly **2,000 posters and 12,000 postcard flyers** marking this year's RW theme - 'the positive contributions of refugee children and young people: our shared future' - were distributed to **over 200 organisations & partners across the UK**
- The designs received great feedback again this year, particularly popular with children and young people and the services / education centres / community and arts organisations working with them
- We distributed a range of other Refugee Week materials this year via the online shop, such as: banners, T-shirts, balloons, badges, Simple Acts journals
- Refugee Week **newsletters and event flyers** went out to over **2,000 subscribers (and shared to over 5,000 followers via social media)**

Media (please note this is a summary of our main findings as advised by the external media agency and taking in to account an error in their reporting)

- This year the media committee worked hard to change its model and approach to increase quality media coverage. Led by British Future, it was decided that a particular news hook needed to be created rather than just relying on the Week itself. This led to commissioning a survey on 2015's first-time voters' views of Britain's tradition of providing refugees with a sanctuary

- Other activity within the media plan included engaging journalists from an early stage to develop possible news stories and establishing good links with case studies
- The Observer, which has a readership of 22,5474 people, carried the story about the YouGov poll findings. The Metro published a two-page feature on Refugee Council's Refugee Gift exhibition and highlighted Refugee Week and the poll with a quote from David Suchet (Poirot). This newspaper has a massive circulation of 1,900,000
- Other articles that mentioned Refugee Week appeared in a number of media including: The Sunday Telegraph (418,670 readers), Daily Mirror (962,670), The Guardian's website for teachers, Guardian Teachers Network (2,664 Page Views). There was also broadcast with BBC Radio London and London Live (combined listenership of 580,000)
- Due to an error with the media monitoring agency this year, we don't have the full extent of coverage as we have had in previous years. At a minimum, the media we know of reached 5 million people. However, this does not include the very large list of events and news stories that appear in local and regional media that has been included in media analysis in previous years. We can safely assume that there would have been similar numbers for previous years if not a steady growth. In 2013 our media coverage reached approximately 35 million people. In 2012 our media coverage reached approximately nearing 18million people.

Website & Social Media

- The Refugee Week website (refugeeweek.org.uk) continues to be the central point for information sharing and supporting our networks.
- Across the year (1st January 2014-30th June 2014) **25,540 people** visited the website, amounting to **34,816 visits**
- Approximately **70% of visitors were new audiences**
- We responded to approximately **200 individual enquiries** about Refugee Week via the website email submission form, over email and through additional telephone support
- By the end of July 2014 Refugee Week UK had 1,790 supporters on its Facebook (facebook.com/RefugeeWeek) page (please note that there are a number of other social pages for specific Refugee Week groups)
- Refugee Week UK recorded 179 new users on their Facebook page from 1st June- 30th June 2014
- Refugee Week now has over **5,000 Twitter followers (#RefugeeWeek)** – with **over 1,500 people following Refugee Week since January 2014!**
- Additionally (although there will be crossover and duplication of followers amongst partners) **Refugee Week reaches over 312,914 people through the Refugee Week partner networks** on *Twitter* alone (i.e. there is a far larger reach taking in to consideration the extended networks of all supporters/ followers)

Simple Acts, Education & Learning

- In response to this year's theme, Simple Acts worked alongside Refugee Week to promote '**Simple Acts of Welcome**' for refugee children and young people, such as: ['Take a photo of you and your pro-refugee/ welcome banner'](#); ['Tell Your MP'](#); ['Visit a Refugee Week event'](#); ['Tell a child a story from another country'](#)
- Our various partners promoted Simple Acts and its materials to their networks, nationally
- **Simple Acts supported Refugee Week partner *The Children Society* to campaign for asylum support for children and their families** (a new early day motion) via their 'Tell Your MP' simple act (Simple Act # 24)
- We had a fantastic collection of **welcome messages and photos sent in via the Refugee Week twitter and facebook accounts (Simple Act #19 : 'Take a photo of you and your pro-refugee/ welcome banner')**
- On Facebook under hashtags: #Wordsofwelcome #RefugeeWeek2014 posts reached **over 2,000 people, received nearing 150 'likes' and 200 post clicks**
- **The current number of submitted Simple Acts is 30,646** and it includes submissions by individual supporters as well as those carried out in Simple Acts workshops, schools assemblies and other various workshops. **This year there were just over 3,000 submissions on the Simple Acts website** which hundreds of children and young people engaged with in schools across the UK
- This year Simple Acts commissioned an illustration student from Norwich School of Art to develop a participatory workshop for both CSL at Southbank and New Voices. The student, Jessica Nash, is at the moment preparing a follow up workshop which we hope to take to schools over the next few months
- Simple Acts materials, workshops and specific asks were promoted across Celebrating Sanctuary London events during June 2014. Total number of visitors at the events was 18,000

Other Activity & Developments

- **Migrant Help** joined the Refugee Week partnership
- Our **9th Refugee Week annual conference** was held in February this year and was another hugely successful day full of lively conversation, inspiring performers, speakers and inter-active workshops. The conference was **attended by 150 individuals** from refugee services, refugee community groups, arts organisations, local authorities, schools, colleges and universities-with young people running workshops and sharing their thoughts and experiences throughout the day to fully explore the Refugee Week 2014 theme; ' the positive contributions of refugee children and young people: our shared future'
- Refugee Week appointed **two new Regional Co-ordinators** this year: Tom McReady (Refugee Week Yorkshire & Humberside); Lisa Pascoe (Refugee Week South and South East). Althea Collymore returned to her post as Welsh Refugee Week Co-ordinator (based within Welsh Refugee Council) having been on maternity leave
- Refugee Week piloted a **new Young Ambassadors scheme**; The Refugee Week UK co-ordinator and colleagues within Counterpoints Arts worked with **11 Young Ambassadors from across the UK** to promote Refugee Week, engage new audiences (in particular young audiences) and raise awareness of refugee contributions and experiences in the UK

General Recommendations

Events

- Launch a theme and/or focus for Refugee Week as far in advance as possible to enable more people to have the time to engage and prepare. This also helps us to have a good overview of the range of activity taking place and support people where needed
- To develop and publicise our regional press release to support people to further promote their work with local media and create strong news stories
- Support regional co-ordinators and others in the Refugee Week partnership and networks where we can who give generous time and energy to supporting people in taking part in Refugee Week
- Build on new partnerships in other sectors (such as arts and education and children and young people) to expand our network, further promote Refugee Week and ultimately create a strong platform for supporting and celebrating diversity and promoting human rights in the UK

Media

- Continue to build on the media sub-group to better co-ordinate media activity and pool partner resources
- Build on Refugee Week 'case studies'; maintaining relationships with current ambassadors and other individuals keen to
- Create new opportunities for Refugee Week ambassadors and case studies
- Consider a media partner to help promote Refugee Week
- Explore possible celebrity supporters – working with an agency to achieve this
- Consider a marketing partner to support the profile and promotion of Refugee Week

Social Media

- Formally agree ongoing support to oversee social media between the Refugee Week UK team and a Refugee Week partner with expertise and resources in this area
- Explore an intern position to support our social media work – considering an ongoing role for a Young Ambassador within the Refugee Week UK team
- Ensure that social media and national media groups work closely together from the outset

Website

- Continue to promote website pages via our social media channels, which have a growing following
- Invite partners, supporters and young ambassadors to contribute content to our site to help keep the website up-to-date, fresh and interesting
- Reassess the structure of the Refugee Week website and the efficacy of website programmes used by the web provider so that it is accessible

- Work closely with regional co-ordinators and networks to use the site/ contribute to the site/ signpost others to the site

Promotional Materials & Marketing

- Make the most of the designs created and think of new ways to use them – for example; limited edition posters, new clothing, bags or mugs
- Work with partners to develop materials and promote limited edition shop items and unique artworks/ books from our partners and their networks, for e.g: inviting partners to sell their books/ artist commissions/materials in the Refugee Week shop
- Produce materials as early as possible in order to be able to promote and distribute them as early as possible - helping to broaden our reach
- Work with a marketing partner to consider our approach in terms of design/ messages and distribution
- Make best use of the postcards for building support, for example; incorporating a call to action on the cards

Simple Acts, Education & Learning

- Develop the Young Ambassador scheme to support the young ambassadors who are interested in delivering more education work, drawing on resources such as the collection of *Simple Acts*
- Use Simple Acts as a good way to launch a 'call to action' for Refugee Week
- Continue commissioning artists to respond to yearly themes with original and participatory activities which would further develop Simple Acts programme
- Aim to work with strategic partners on developing individual Simple Acts projects/calls to action, or linking Simple Acts methodologies to their existing practices, campaigns and projects to reflect on the current themes
- Better use joint networks to promote calls to action and results would be the ways of promoting Refugee Week, partner's work and Simple Acts
- Create specific educational materials and packages to be promoted to schools and educational settings with leading refugee services in this area

Other Activity & Developments

- Source funding to support regional co-ordinators to attend the annual conference
- Work with **Platforma** to strengthen and develop networks
- Arrange (in collaboration with Refugee Week co-ordinators and regional partners/ supporters in England) one regional meeting per year
- Call on Refugee Week partners to explore potential new partners across the year
- Consider the eligibility criteria of partners with the Refugee Week steering group, for e.g.: expand the partnership incorporate large regional agencies/ arts organisations/ public sector services/ other charitable organisations working in the field (for e.g charities working with young people; mental health charities etc.)

“It’s vital to show the positive contributions that refugees have made to our communities whether it was on the sixteenth century or twenty first century. It’s also a really important part of the learning process to show people that the history of their country has been shaped by refugee and immigrant communities for centuries.”

~ Di Stiff, Collections Development Archivist, Surry History Centre

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“It is important to keep up the awareness about positive contributions made by asylum seekers and refugees and also about the situations they have come from and the reality of how they live here in UK. We are an area of high deprivation in Wakefield with active right wing groups and we constantly work to combat negative attitudes. Refugee Week allows agencies and volunteers to come together and highlight relevant issues.”

~ Ali Bulliven, Education Officer, Wakefield Cathedral

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“What a week! With such a beautiful range of events, so well organised and full of inspiration...for the young people, adults, hopefully everyone who attended from our partner organisations.”

~ Marie-Louise, Children & Families Project Worker (The Children's Society, Blackburn)

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“A great atmosphere that harnessed our attention and provided for a brilliant Sunday afternoon”

~ (Anonymous) Attendee at Celebrating Sanctuary London, Southbank

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“I like to use this opportunity to thank [the North West Refugee Week network] for your hard work to support and change the life of asylum and refugees within the borough and outside..“

~ Muhktar, The Children's Society & member of the Refugee Week North West network

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“(In Refugee Week) I was glad to see that people were caring about asylum seekers and refugees... It also gave me the chance to experience writing a weblog and meeting new people”

~ Reza, Young Ambassador (Norwich)

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“Thanks so much for the lovely event, I loved it. I made new friends whilst doing some work, and I danced and I laughed - what more do I want! Thank you.”

~ Mohamed, Young Ambassador (London)

Appendix

Partnership Background

Refugee Week is a multi-agency project comprised of a broad range of partner organisations representing the refugee, development and human rights sectors. Representatives from these member agencies form the UK Steering and Operation Groups for Refugee Week, and sub-groups are made up of individuals from the Steering Group, other staff within the partner organisations and invited experts (where appropriate).

The governance of Refugee Week is the responsibility of the UK Strategic Steering Group. This group is made up of Chief Executives and relevant senior representatives of the major UK agencies working on refugee and related issues. It agrees and oversees the delivery of the Refugee Week business plan, and the work of the UK Operations group, which is responsible for delivering Refugee Week across the UK.

The RW UK co-ordinator works with Regional Coordinators in each region in England as well as (Inter)national Refugee Week Co-ordinators, for example in Scotland, Wales. The Regional Coordinators within England are people who dedicate their time, often completely voluntarily or as an add-on to their main job, to ensuring Refugee Week continues to grow and become an important part of the yearly calendar around the UK. Different regions, areas and towns throughout the UK also have their own Refugee Week groups which manage and co-ordinate Refugee Week activities in their areas.

Refugee Week is currently supported by the following organisations on the national level:

1. Amnesty International UK
2. British Red Cross
3. British Refugee Council
4. British Future
5. The Children's Society
6. City of Sanctuary
7. Counterpoints Arts (hosting agency)
8. Freedom from Torture
9. Migrant Helpline
10. Refugee Action
11. Scottish Refugee Council
12. Student Action for Refugees
13. UNHCR
14. Welsh Refugee Council

If you would like to talk to us about joining the partnership please contact Refugee Week UK Co-ordinator Jess Linton: jess@counterpointsarts.org.uk; 0207 012 1761.

Refugee Week 2014 featured events (in images):

Top row: *Refugee Week Newcastle* at Grainger Market in Newcastle; *Refugee Week Young Ambassador* Gulwali Passerley filming short film "We're Glad To Have You Here" with Lib Dem MP and Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Refugees Sarah Teather, exploring the contributions that young refugees make (and will go on to make) to our society and the ways in which the UK could support them; "Feasts of Stories" at *Kinning Park Complex, Refugee Week Glasgow*

Second Row: a selection of images from Refugee Week Bristol celebrations

Third Row: Jeff Lillystone (Cleveland Police, Community Engagement Officer) and Ahmed Hassan Alim (Chairman of the Sudanese Tees Valley group) at the Refugee Week Middlesborough football event; visual artist Maryam Hashemi working on the *Our Shared Future* museums project with Museum of London, Wallace Collection, V&A, V&A Museum of Childhood and Counterpoints Arts; FODI City of Sanctuary /Refugee Week Sunderland 'Walk for Sanctuary'

Fourth Row: *The Paper Project* collaboration between young migrant artists, Ovalhouse Theatre and Counterpoints Arts at; *New Voices festival* at V&A Museum of Childhood London (a collaboration between Praxis; Brighter Future, V&A Museum of Childhood and Celebrating Sanctuary London); *Young Ambassador Sayf Malik* at a Refugee Week Norwich event; From Interface Learning to 'New routes', Refugee Week Norwich

Fifth Row: A selection of Refugee Week Wales events

Bottom Row: Refugee Week Nottingham celebrating with Haiki Bona-Fide at Nottingham Contemporary, 22nd; 'Words of Welcome' messages (with many more to read at: facebook.com/refugeeweek).

