



## Refugee Week 2015 Evaluation Summary



## About Refugee Week

Refugee Week takes place every year across the UK, and increasingly internationally, in the week around World Refugee Day on 20 June.

In the UK, Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages better understanding between communities.

Founded in 1998, Refugee Week UK has grown to become one of the leading national initiatives working to counter hostility to refugees, defending the importance of sanctuary and the benefits it can bring to both refugees and host communities.

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 right across the UK.

The theme of Refugee Week 2015 was 'celebrate'.

## Events

From concerts and exhibitions at major UK cultural venues to solidarity walks across the country, Refugee Week 2015 saw over 350 organizations organizing 253 events attended by over 171,500<sup>1</sup> people. A further 8,700 people attended, organised or participated in Refugee Festival Scotland,<sup>2</sup> which saw 110 events held with 144 partners, with many more attending events in Wales.

These figures do not include potentially hundreds of schools events, which are not promoted to wider public or on our website.

Although this total is less than 2014's estimated 300 events, it is an exact figure rather than an estimate and is comparable to the 257 events registered on the Refugee Week website in 2014.

Similarly to last year, almost half of 2015's events focused on arts and culture, reflecting the conviction underpinning Refugee Week that arts, culture and education can create positive encounters with the potential to change attitudes.

### Venues Included:

- Southbank Centre
- British Film Institute
- Midlands Arts Centre
- Bristol Queen's Square
- Keele University
- Imperial War Museum North
- V&A Museum of Childhood

### Artists included:

- Akala
- Katibeh Khamseh
- Ali Smith
- Chris Cleave
- Marina Lewycka
- Manaf Halbouni
- Stella Chiweshe

Refugee Week again proved itself to be a truly national festival in 2015, with a good spread of events around the country, and activity more than doubling in the North East, the West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside, and jumping by around third or more in London, the South West and South and South East.

Other regions saw drops in activity, most notably in Eastern England. However, the apparent fall in the number of events in Wales does not present an accurate picture, as many more events took place in Wales than were uploaded to the Refugee Week website.

<sup>1</sup> This figure includes an estimated 106,000 people who saw Manaf Halbouni's installation 'Nowhere is Home' outside the Southbank Centre

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Refugee Council rebranded Scottish Refugee Week as Refugee Festival Scotland in 2015, which is evaluated separately. See <http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk> for more details



◀ Hiphop artist Akala was joined by Palestinian rap group Katibeh Khamseh for a sell out [show at Rich Mix](#), attracting a new audience of over 400 mostly young people

[Crossings](#) entertained shoppers with music ▶ at two Refugee Week stalls in Newcastle, where they invited passers by to add their messages of support for refugees to a piece of bunting. Crossings created a Refugee Week exhibition, 'People Like Us', showcasing work produced by refugees and asylum seekers during workshops with a creative writer and photographer. The Crossings band also welcomed renowned Zimbabwean mbira player Stella Chiweshe who performed and ran a music workshop.



◀ [Refugee Tales](#), organised by Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, saw hundreds of people joining an 80-mile walk and 1,500 attending events in solidarity with refugees and detainees. Echoing the route of Chaucer's pilgrims, the organisers held storytelling events along the way with leading writers, including Ali Smith, Abdulrazak Gurnah and Chris Cleave, who shared their tales of refugee experiences with local audiences.

Manaf Halbouni's outdoor ▶ installation 'Nowhere is Home' was seen by an estimated 106,000 people outside Southbank Centre, part of Counterpoints Arts' week-long exhibition [Dis/placed](#) at Shoreditch Town Hall



## **You told us: Feedback from event organisers**

- Local and regional organisers value Refugee Week for its capacity to raise awareness, provide a platform for sharing stories and the connections it enables between people from different backgrounds.
- 80% organised their event with the theme of 'celebrate' in mind, at least to some extent.
- Almost half contacted local media about their event, and would like more support with this in the future.
- Organisers would also like support with publicity, a more user-friendly website, more attractive publicity materials, better information and help with funding events

Source: Refugee Week 2015 event organisers' feedback survey,

***“Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are not alone. Geordies and people from North East support you.”***

Visitors to People Like Us exhibition by Crossings, Newcastle

***“This exhibition demonstrates that whatever the diverse backgrounds, culture, travails, life experiences - art provides hope and brings people together. It can convey the suffering these people have endured. Both humbling and inspiring exhibition.”***

Visitor to City of Sanctuary exhibition at The Lighthouse, Wolverhampton

## Media

Following the theme of 'celebrate', Refugee Week 2015 focused on personal stories of positive refugee contributions and encounters. Local, regional and national coverage of these stories, as well as of Refugee Week events, achieved an estimated potential reach of 12 million.

Although this figure is less than the 35 million estimate in 2013 (when media reach was last measured), this is likely to be due at least in part to a more accurate measuring methodology.

Refugee Week was mentioned at least 60 times in local and regional media. In addition, there were a greater number of national Refugee Week features this year than during Refugee Week 2014.

Some of the biggest media hits this year came from strong case studies, combined with either a peg making them relevant to the current news agenda (e.g. Mohammed's story of his journey to Europe) or an innovative approach (e.g. Amjal Faizy's Refugee Week boxing match). This is important to consider for next year.



Manaf Halbouni's 'Nowhere is Home' featured in Sky's [The Week in Pictures](#)



[The Long Road EP](#), an album by British Red Cross telling the stories of refugees and asylum seekers and announced for Refugee Week, received good coverage on music and entertainment sites, and the [Press Association's interview](#) with artist Scroobius Pip was widely featured on news websites



A full-page spread in [the Mirror](#) documenting the journey and aspirations of Mo, a young refugee from Afghanistan



Refugee boxer Amjal Faizy's World Refugee Day was covered by [BBC News](#), [BBC Sport](#) and [ITV News](#), and a TV appearance on ITV Grenada and BBC North West



How to Teach... About Refugees feature in [The Guardian](#)



Jon Walter's top 10 refugee heroes in children's fiction in [The Guardian](#)



[Regional Asylum Activism](#)'s podcasts of refugees and locals in and around Manchester featured on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour



Feature on the Huguenots in [The Independent](#)

***“Really informative but not depressing. People seem so resilient and positive in light of such negativity from their fellow human beings.”***

Visitor to Counterpoints Arts' Dis/placed

***“Thanks to Refugee Week we are seeing what a wonderfully rich and diverse country we live in, with all the social, cultural and economic contributions brought to us by refugees”***

comment on Refugee Week Facebook page

## Social Media



Refugee Week's 2015 social media campaign was the most successful yet, with an estimated reach of over 800,000 and leading to a substantial rise in followers and engagement on Facebook and Twitter - which reached the milestone of 8000 followers in August 2015.

### Social media graphics

Refugee Week's [#RefugeesContribute social media graphics](#), ranging from fish and chips to the achievements of Rita Ora, proved popular with Refugee Week partners, followers and other social media users.

While it isn't possible to measure the reach of an image on social media, one indicator is that our fish and chips graphic was used in a [blog post](#) by Richard Branson and tweeted to his over 6 million-strong Twitter following.



### Key figures

Social media campaign had an estimated reach of 814302\*

Social media community grew to 14,996, an increase of 11%\*

#refugeeweek used 13,787 times

#refugeescontribute used 2,013 times

@refugeeweek mentioned 4,379 times

\*These figures encompass Refugee Week, Counterpoints Arts, Platforma, Simple Acts and Celebrating Sanctuary London's accounts; compared to a benchmark in May 2015

## Platform by platform

The following table indicates the success of the 2015 social media campaign on each Refugee Week platform, from May until the end of June 2015:

	Growth in followers	Reach/ impressions
Twitter	856	418,323
Facebook	602	72,179
Instagram (new for 2015)	70	850

These indicators were not measured in the same way following Refugee Week 2014, however the statistics we do have for last year indicate a growth in impact this year:

- Refugee Week Facebook page gained 436 new likes between 1 – 30 June, compared to 179 over the same period in 2014
- Refugee Week gained 924 Twitter followers in the two months between 2 June and 2 August 2015 alone, compared to around 1,500 in the six months between January and the end of June 2014.

***“I was there!! Got a couple of tix at the last minute. Powerful vibes at [#RichMix](#)  
What a night, my mind was blown...Left there [#hopeful](#) that we can all make a  
change. Starts with us!”***

*Audience member at Akala + Katibeh Khamseh at Rich Mix, via Facebook*

## Website

2015 saw a growth in engagement with the Refugee Week website, with the number of total visits increasing from around 17,100 during June 2014 to around 20,500 over the same period in 2015 . This could be due to increased social media activity leading to greater visibility for the website.

## Marketing and promotional materials



Following the theme of celebrate, the free posters and postcards designed for Refugee Week 2015 featured the words 'Get together, create & celebrate the contributions and resilience of refugees in the UK', against a backdrop of icons reflecting the creative ways communities across the country creatively engage in Refugee Week - from making music to sharing meals.

Distribution of posters was comparable to last year (around 2000) while distribution of postcards grew to around 15,000 (from around 12,000 in 2014)

## Simple Acts, Education and Creative Learning

Thousands of young people took part in lessons, assemblies or workshops celebrating refugee contributions or exploring why people seek sanctuary this Refugee Week. Schools, organisations and grassroots groups across the country worked with children and young people in imaginative and creative ways – here are just a few examples:



- British Red Cross's Refugee Week classroom resource was sent to 50,000 secondary school teachers\* and downloaded from the internet 569 times. British Red Cross also delivered anti-stigma education to 1085 young people
- Many of the hundreds of schools are involved in City of Sanctuary's [Schools of Sanctuary](#) network took part in Refugee Week. City of Sanctuary also worked with Oxfam to develop a new schools resource for Refugee Week

2015

- Young Roots delivered awareness raising lessons and assemblies in 12 London secondary schools, reaching over 3200 pupils
- Across events, schools and SA led workshops, a total of over 3000 people are estimated to have taken part in [Simple Acts](#), which included a new creative competition for Refugee Week 2015\*\*

\*Via a newsletter with an open rate of 10%

\*\* A Counterpoints Arts' project encouraging members of the public to support refugees through simple actions



**Miss Maile** @MissMaile1 · Jun 16

@RefugeeWeek check out our #refugeeweek tent- up all week with info & activities promoting #simpleacts @SandbachHigh



## Key recommendations

1. Analyse the reasons why level of activity has dropped significantly in certain regions (i.e. East and the North West) and find ways of supporting where possible.
2. Support local and regional organisers to bring in new audiences who are not already connected to refugee issues, for example through training, facilitating learning sharing or targeted support of events.
3. Support organisers from an early stage in engaging local media, e.g. by offering model press releases early on, providing media training and sharing information about the central media strategy
4. Recruit a volunteer to work with either the Refugee Week coordinator or the media consultant to support finding case studies and other research
5. Liaise with regional coordinators from an early stage to identify events and case studies in each, and begin gathering case studies and stories from January 2016
6. Have as much of the social media strategy ready as possible by February conference, to get local and regional organisers on board in a face to face setting
7. Create attractive, shareable social media visuals again
8. Recruit two or three volunteers solely dedicated to monitoring and responding on social media, at least one week in advance
9. Ensure a commitment to social media strategy across partners, even those who are not represented in the social media subgroup; each partner to commit to a specific number of on-message pieces of content they will share during the week
10. Introduce a promotional materials pack with a set number of flyers and posters
11. Develop a mechanism for schools to share their events and activities online

## Our Partners



(The International Organization for Migration (IOM) UK joined the partnership in October 2015)

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[www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)

 @refugeeweek

 /refugeeweek

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