

## **Refugee Week – media top tips**

### **Do you have a story?**

- If you are running a Refugee Week event, then you almost certainly do!
- Think about how your local TV or radio station, or your local newspaper, might report it.
- What is the headline? Why is it interesting?
- Who, what, why, when, where, how (and how much)?
- Pictures are important. What picture would accompany a news report on your event? Can you provide that photo?
- Journalists like stories about people. Who are the people in your story – local people / local figureheads / people from refugee backgrounds / famous people?

### **Getting a journalist interested**

- Local journalists will be very grateful for stories they can report on, because they're overstretched and their readers/listeners like hearing about what's going on locally.
- Contact them as early as possible and let them know what you've got going on.
- A relationship is better than a meeting, a meeting is better than a phone call, and a phone call is better than an email.
- Think about what you can offer the journalist – high quality photos? An interview? A quote? An event the local MP will be attending? Attending the event themselves? Think about what they will need to put together a news report.
- Do your research – who will be interested in your story?
- Journalists are very busy, so your job is to make their job (reporting on your event) as easy for them as possible.
- Find out what their deadlines are – when do they need everything finalised by to get your event into the newspaper/on the TV/on the radio?

### **Radio interviews**

- Speak to the producer beforehand to find out what kind of interview it will be. Is it live or pre-recorded? Over the phone or studio? One on one with the presenter or a discussion with other interviewees? Hard or soft? What's the line of questioning going to be? Don't be afraid to ask these questions!
- Write down your key messages and internalise them.
- Be confident! You are the expert.
- What kind of person listens to the radio station? Tailor your language to appeal to them. They are who you are talking to – not the presenter.
- If you're in the studio, assume you're on air before and after your slot. Don't say anything unguarded!
- If you're doing it on the phone ('down the line'), find a quiet room without distractions where you won't be disturbed.
- Never read from your notes. You need to sound human and genuine.
- Answer the question if you can but take every opportunity to use your key messages. If you don't force them in, you won't use them.

**Preparing for TV interviews:**

- Speak to the producer beforehand to find out what kind of interview it will be. Is it live or pre-recorded? In the field, 'down the line', sofa, or studio? One on one with the presenter or a discussion with other interviewees? Hard or soft? What's the line of questioning going to be? Don't be afraid to ask these questions!
- While you're being miked up or they're setting the equipment up, ask the presenter or producer what their first question will be. If you're friendly they probably won't mind telling you!
- TV cameras exaggerate distractions – so don't wear big dangly earrings or a loud shirt. Avoid tight contrasting patterns because they strobe and it's all viewers will notice.
- TV cameras sap energy – so use your facial expressions and hands more than you usually would. But keep your feet still!
- If you're sitting down, keep your bum in the back of the chair, straighten your back, cross your legs at the ankles and place your hands in your lap. But try to look relaxed!
- Avoid nodding at questions you disagree with.
- If there's a presenter or interviewer, maintain eye contact with them and ignore the camera. If there's not, look directly at the camera.
- Don't say anything unguarded before or after your interview. Stay where you are after your interview until you are moved by a producer.

**Preparing your message:**

- Prepare three concise, clear key messages. These are the bits of information you want your audience to remember.
- Bring your messages to life – paint a picture for your audience with human examples, statistics/figures and comparisons. These need to be prepared and practiced beforehand.
- Think about who your audience is – what do they care about and what is their level of understanding?
- You won't be able to say everything so choose the most important bits.
- Focus on the impact, not the process.
- Don't forget to mention your organisation and/or Refugee Week.

**Language:**

- Think about the language you use when describing your event to journalists and the public.
- Remember most people have really limited knowledge about refugees. Use simple language and avoid any remotely technical terminology or jargon.
- Always try to be positive, constructive and reasonable.