



Refugee Week 2020 Overview & Selected Highlights

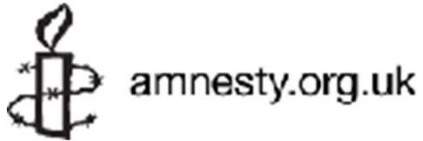
Image: Author Onjali Q Raúf © Pål Hansen, Refugee Week 2020

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National Partners



Refugee Week is coordinated by: **COUNTERPOINTS.**



Intro

Kicking off just a few months after Covid-19 broke out in the UK, Refugee Week 2020 took place as a digital festival for the first time, 15-21 June.

Despite the rapid move online and all the challenges that followed lockdown, over 350 Refugee Week events and activities were organised by groups and organisations across the UK, a vivid testament to the passion, commitment and responsiveness of the Refugee Week partnership and network.

At a time when community kindness was a lifeline and social inequalities were being laid bare, Refugee Week 2020 brought people together, gave a platform to the voices and talents of people who have lived through displacement, and enabled new audiences to connect with the struggles, experiences and creative work of refugees. The Refugee Week 2020 theme, 'Imagine', felt more relevant and important than ever.

The first ever digital Refugee Week was a major learning curve for everyone involved, and we believe that as a movement we have emerged better connected, digitally upskilled, and better equipped to respond to an increasingly uncertain world.

We hope you'll find inspiration in this report, and join us in being part of the growing Refugee Week movement, for 2021 and beyond.

This Report

This report is based on:

- Information submitted to the Refugee Week online events calendar
- A survey of event organisers (56 respondents)
- A survey of event attendees (109 respondents)
- Debriefs with national partners, the Refugee Week Leadership Group and other stakeholders
- A round-up of media coverage, by IMIX
- Social media analytics from Union Metrics
- Case studies submitted by event organisers, funded as part of a Comic Relief Covid Emergency Fund grant awarded to Counterpoints Arts with the aim of sharing learning about responses to Covid

This report is not intended to be an exhaustive evaluation, and a very small number of events are highlighted as examples. in order to give a flavour of the breadth of activity that took place.



What is Refugee Week?

Refugee Week is a UK-wide festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees.

Founded in 1998 in response to growing hostility to refugees and asylum seekers and held every year around World Refugee Day on the 20 June, Refugee Week is also a growing global movement.

Through a programme of arts, cultural and educational events alongside media and creative campaigns, Refugee Week brings about positive encounters between communities, helping them to connect and learn from each other, and promoting a culture of welcome.

Refugee Week is a partnership of national and international NGOs and unions, coordinated by Counterpoints Arts, a charity which supports the arts by and about migrants and refugees. In Scotland Refugee Week is celebrated as Refugee Festival Scotland, coordinated by Scottish Refugee Council, and Refugee Week Wales and Northern Ireland are coordinated by Welsh Refugee Council and NICRAS, respectively.

Alongside the national partnership, Refugee Week is realised by hundreds of organisations and groups across the UK who organise Refugee Week events and activities every year. These include arts and cultural producers and organisations, schools, universities, activist networks, refugee support and advocacy groups, faith groups, libraries and local councils.

Organisers included...

Migration Matters Festival **Coventry Welcomes** Bristol Refugee Festival **Celebrating Sanctuary Birmingham** Community Arts North West **Nottingham Refugee Week** Sanctuary on Sea **National Maritime Museum** Institut Francais **WeWork** Welsh National Opera **Southbank Centre** Canterbury Diocese **APPG on Migration** Leeds Playhouse **Journeys Festival** Bradford Cathedral **The Poetry Society** High Commission of Canada and Bertha DocHouse **Ben & Jerry's** Compass Collective **Good Chance and The World From My Window** Surrey Heritage **Seven Stories - The National Centre for Children's Books** Midlands Arts Centre **University of Liverpool** Ellen Hathaway Dance Company **The Syrian Sunflower** Garage MCA, Moscow **Citizens of the World Choir** Jewish Museum London **Brighton & Hove Libraries** Sunderland City Council **The Higgins Bedford** Museum of London **The Globe** PsycheDELIGHT **Manchester Met University** Sage Gateshead **National Archives**



Summary

Refugee Week 2020 invited people to respond to the theme of 'Imagine' by sharing their vision of a better world.

As always, everyone was invited to take part - by holding or attending an event, getting involved at their school or doing one of eight 'Simple Acts'.

Counterpoints Arts offered a range of resources to event organisers, including:

- An event organisers pack
- A children and young people's pack, containing resources from a range of organisations
- A media and social media pack
- Moving Worlds: a programme of films available to view at home during Refugee Week
- Simple Acts: inspiration for events and suggested activities for all ages

Event organisers responded creatively to the shift online, running a range of activities suited to different settings and audiences, including creative workshops, talks, podcasts, film 'screenings' and Q&As and activities for young people.

34% of organisers surveyed were holding a Refugee Week event for the first time

The move to digital also inspired greater communication within the Refugee Week network. A group of festival producers met every month and 360 people joined Zoom sessions about how to get involved in Refugee Week.

350+ online events compared to 800+ in 2019

500+ organisations took part

100+ pieces of media coverage

18K+ Tweets

Groups and organisations from every region of England held events, with many city-wide Refugee Week festivals holding online editions, including Migration Matters Festival in Sheffield, Bristol Refugee Festival, Hope Festival in Plymouth, Coventry Welcomes and Refugee Week in Brighton, Sunderland, Manchester, Birmingham and Nottingham.

In Wales, Welsh Refugee Council coordinated a programme of arts, culture and community events, while in Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council put Refugee Festival Scotland on hold and focused on marking World Refugee Day online (several groups in Scotland held events independently).

Media coverage remained a key way for Refugee Week to reach wider audiences, and 2020 was Refugee Week's most successful media year yet, with daily features in The Metro among over 100 pieces of coverage. There was also wide participation in Refugee Week on social media.



Learning

- Online events present both challenges (in terms of access and achieving deep impact) and opportunities for reaching wider audiences, including internationally. They complement but cannot replace in person events, and if possible, a 'hybrid' model enabling the best of both should be pursued in future years.
- As Refugee Week continues to grow in mainstream spaces, event organisers would like more support with promotion to help them to reach new and wider audiences.
- The success of the Refugee Week resource packs can be built on by offering organisers further specific guidance, both about practical aspects of holding an event and about the values and approach of Refugee Week.

Artists included...

Lady Leshurr Onjali Q Raúf **Inua Ellams** Waad al Kateab
Sean McAllister Nish Kumar **Otis Mensah** Nyaruach and
Emmanuel Jal **Aeham Ahmed** Edmund de Waal **Rupi Kaur**
Marina Lewycka **Roger Robinson** Mohsin Hamid **Gary**
Younge Himesh Patel **Momtaza Mehri** Dina Nayeri **Vesna**
Maric Pål Hansen **Hamed Amiri**

- The strength and resilience of the Refugee Week movement has never been clearer, and should be built on through even greater communication and consultation with the wide range of voices involved in the festival.
- The Black Lives Matter movement gained renewed prominence in June and many Refugee Week events responded to it. We also commissioned an article by Mandla Rae from our Refugee Week 2020 leadership group, which shared their reflections about the intersection between injustices faced by Black people and refugees.

There was some discussion about making more over links at the national level to BLM, but it was felt that there wasn't enough time to do this in a considered way. However, there was then some feeling that this was an opportunity lost. How best to connect to other relevant movements and organisations, including those working on racial justice, will be a focus as we discuss the theme and approach for Refugee Week 2021.

64% of events focused on arts and culture



Going Digital

The move online presented both challenges and opportunities. Many event organisers were able to reach wider and new audiences, including internationally, but also acknowledged that digital activities rarely have the same impact as in person events.

Many organisers also had to overcome access issues, including involving participants with limited access to technology or the internet access.

Responses to these challenges included:

- Topping up participants' phones so they could use mobile data to take part
- Delivering printed materials and packs to people without internet access
- Holding test sessions to help people get to grips with new technology
- We held a workshop sharing tips for running arts workshops online

“Not having access to the Internet is like being in the Sahara and not knowing where to go” Ahmed Noori, Refugee Week 2020 Leader in his report on the digital divide for STAR

"This is the best zoom I've attended on lockdown (and I've attended hundreds) so enlightening, moving, truly beautiful. Thank you" Participant, Good Chance's 'Change the Word' event at Migration Matters Festival



55% of organisers said they faced challenges relating to digital access

82% of organisers would like to run online activities alongside in person events in the future

Image: Recognising that many refugee and other households lack internet access, Nottingham Refugee Week distributed over 1000 creative activity packs to families across Nottingham during Refugee Week.



Imagine



In response to the theme of Refugee Week 2020, we commissioned photographer Pål Hansen to take portraits of nine artists, campaigners and innovators – familiar names and new – who we invited to share their vision for the future.

After lockdown the project itself was re-imagined, with Pål directing the sitters to take the photos and record video messages from their own homes. The images and video were shared widely on social media.

‘To imagine’ means to picture something you can’t currently see. To step beyond the current moment, and perceive something different. Rather than being a flight away from reality, imagination is sometimes the best response to it – the only way to get us somewhere new.”
Refugee Week 2020 theme description



Imagine

Over 60% of organisers said their activity linked to the theme of 'Imagine'



Commissioned by Counterpoints Arts, the Imagine digital anthology featured the likes of Mohsin Hamid, Edmund de Waal and Vesna Maric alongside new voices, including Mandla-Rae and Md Mominul Hamid from the Refugee Week leadership project.

The anthology reached wider literary audiences including through an episode of Damian Barr's Literary Salon podcast, which was downloaded 8900 times (downloads from Megaphone 21 June - 8 July 2020).



Swindon City of Sanctuary and artist Bekah Grace made an 'Imagine' colouring book which they delivered to 20 young children from asylum-seeking families across Swindon, inviting them to imagine and draw a future of respect and fairness.

Image from the Swindon Advertiser.



Walk With Me - a global music project
World Peace Day
Monday 21st September, 5pm BST

A project launched in Refugee Week by Together Productions, IOM and I Speak Music produced Imagine Imagine: 'Walk with Me', a song and music video featuring 120 performers in 15 countries, including the UK, Syria, South Africa and El Salvador.

"If we imagine it, we can create a world where we lead with humanity, not hostility." Mandla Rae, Refugee Week Leadership Project, in their Refugee Week 'Imagine' video message

Case Study: Brighton & Hove Libraries

What did they do?

Ran online storytime sessions for children on the theme of Imagine and a shoebox-house making craft session inspired by the Giant Dolls House project. They also ran a Flash Fiction competition for children and adults on the theme of 'Imagine', judged by writers Onjali Q Raúf, Umit Ozturk and Sharon Duggal, which received 122 entries from across the UK and the world, in six languages.

The library linked their regular activities - such as Baby Boogie music - to the Refugee Week Simple Acts and asked customers and staff to share their favourite books about refugees, which they posted on social media. Customers could also download a selection of books by and about refugees for free during the week.

The library's involvement stretched beyond Refugee Week, with staff receiving information about refugee issues and services, and the library announcing its new status as a Library of Sanctuary on 15 June.

Why did they get involved?

It's part of their commitment making their libraries welcoming places for refugees. The Refugee Week Conferences have provided the library with ideas, networks and inspiration.

What was the process?

They took part in a meeting with others organising Refugee Week activities in Brighton & Hove, to avoid clashes and promote each other's events. Events were delivered by library staff, and partners helped to promote Flash Fiction competition on social media and in their newsletters.

What impact did it have?

It raised awareness of Brighton & Hove Libraries as a service that is welcoming and inclusive of refugees and asylum seekers, and brought enjoyment and awareness to the wide range of people who took part. While working digitally was a challenge, it enabled activities to have a wider reach - their story time sessions had an average of 1,200 hits (10-20 people would usually attend in person).

What advice do they have for people interested in taking part?

Do it! Go to the Refugee Week conferences/ Zoom meetings and sign up for newsletter. Find partners to work with. Consult your community to see what they would like to see and encourage them to get involved by delivering, promoting and taking part.

To find out about becoming a Library of Sanctuary, visit www.libraries.cityofsanctuary.org.



Reaching New Audiences

The wide range of artists, activities and partners involved enable Refugee Week to reach broad audiences.



Commissioned by Counterpoints Arts, Lady Leshurr (rapper and co-host of ITV2's 'Don't Hate the Playaz') wrote a new track in collaboration with football fans, celebrating the diversity of football. The launch Q&A brought together a range of voices including football fans, bloggers, sports journalists and anti-racism campaigners.

The refugee standup night: 'none of us can believe how successful it is'

Coached by Tom Parry, the comedy collective No Direction Home are bucking stereotypes about refugees and migrants - and thriving online during lockdown



Around 800 people joined three Zoom gigs by Counterpoints Arts' No Direction Home comedy collective, headlined by Mo Omar and Nish Kumar.

"A huge opportunity to reach people... who wouldn't otherwise know about our work, about Refugee Week, or about the experience of refugees and asylum seekers." Good Chance



Reaching New Audiences

The Telegraph

Support through sport: how football brings hope to refugees around the world

The beautiful game has a way of bringing people together, even in the strangest of places

By Jordan Kelly-Linden
12 June 2020 • 6:00am



The Goal Click Refugees online exhibition, by Goal Click and UNHCR, explored football's role in refugees' lives, and reached wider audiences through mainstream and football media.

From panel events and workshops to talks on first-hand experiences, we wanted to give our diverse community of members and employees the opportunity to not only learn about the reality of refugee experiences but also be inspired by their stories. We encourage everyone – whether you're an organisation or an individual – to get involved and support this initiative.” Mathieu Proust, General Manager, WeWork UKI and Emerging Markets



IOM UK hosted a live Q&A with Waad Al-Kateab, Emmy award-winning director of 'For Sama', who spoke to the Metro about her experience of the siege of Aleppo and life as a refugee in the UK for Refugee Week.



Engaging Young People

The involvement of schools and educators is an important way for Refugee Week to reach a wide cross-section of society.

Although schools remained partially closed in June, children and young people took part in a range of creative activities at school and at home.



The Refugee Week Children & Young People's pack included films, activities and resources for young people of all ages. 'Help them feel at Home' by Kazzum, an animated poem for younger children, was viewed over 6.5K times in the month starting 06 June. Image: Kazzum



173 shoe box houses were created for 'Alone Together' by The Giant Doll's House Project, by architect Catja de Haas with Oxfam and the London Festival of Architecture, which invited young people to explore home and refuge. Image: Giant Doll's House

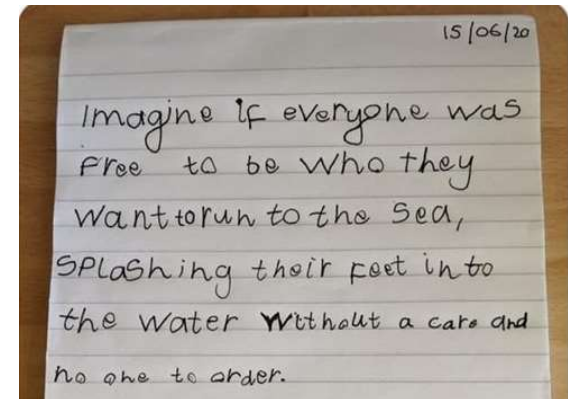
1.5K downloads of British Red Cross Refugee Week school resource*

1.7K downloads of Kazzum Refugee Week activity packs**

The National Education Union is a Refugee Week national partner



Online activities for children included readings by Onjali Q Raúf (Boy at the Back of the Class) and Chris Naylor-Ballesteros (The Suitcase), the latter with Seven Stories - The National Centre for Children's Books.



This poem, by year 1 and 2 pupils in the Topaz Class in Cardiff, inspired organisers in Yukon, Canada, who featured it in 'Chairs for Asylum' event after it was retweeted by Refugee Week Image: Topaz Class Twitter

*8 June - 8 July

**20 May - 29 June



Engaging Young People

“Despite Covid, distance learning and associated challenges, teachers provided an excellent range of resources and follow up activities including art, song, poetry, discussion work and various genres of writing...”

We invited parents and families to share any personal experience or stories with us- and as a result a child in Year 2 produced an incredibly moving account of her great-grandmother's experience after World War Two.

The feedback from the child's mother on how this task had impacted their family was really powerful.”

Anne-Marie Bingham, teacher at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Luton

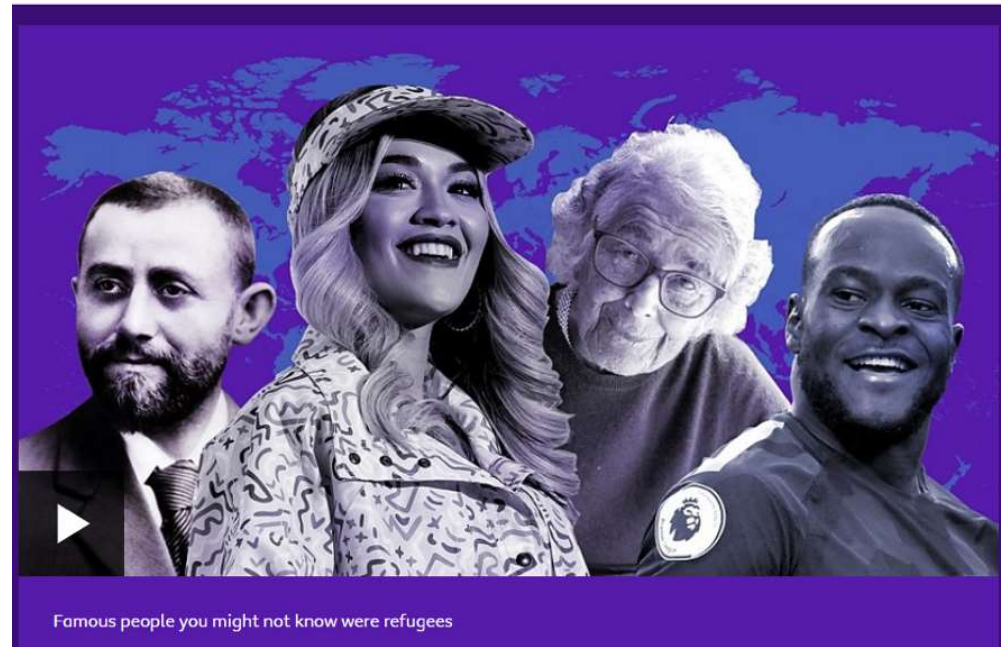


Right and left: Refugee Week featured in Newsround and National Geographic Kids magazine.

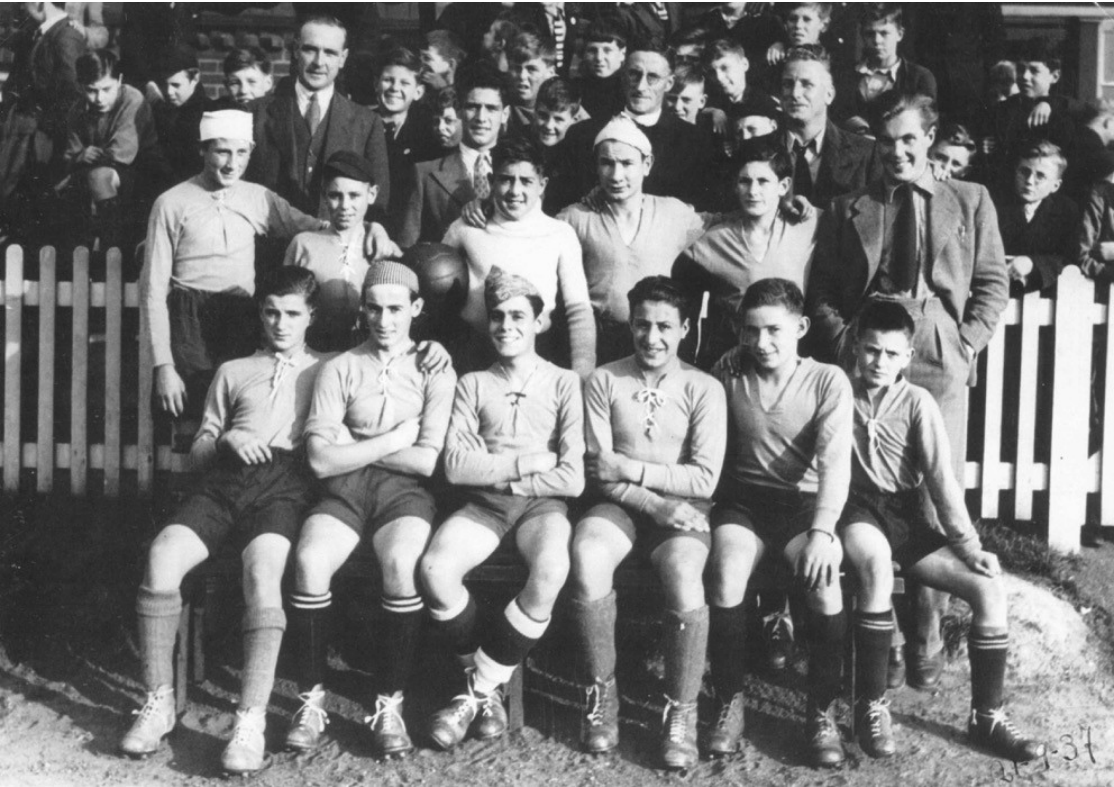
newsround

Refugee Week: Famous people you might not know were refugees

© 19 Jun 2020 Last updated at 15:35



Case Study: Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary



Above: The Basque Boys football team that took on local teams in Norfolk, one of the photographs shared at the Haven's East exhibition.

Next page: Words of Welcome artwork by a Year 4 pupil at Avenue Junior School, Norwich.

Images © Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary

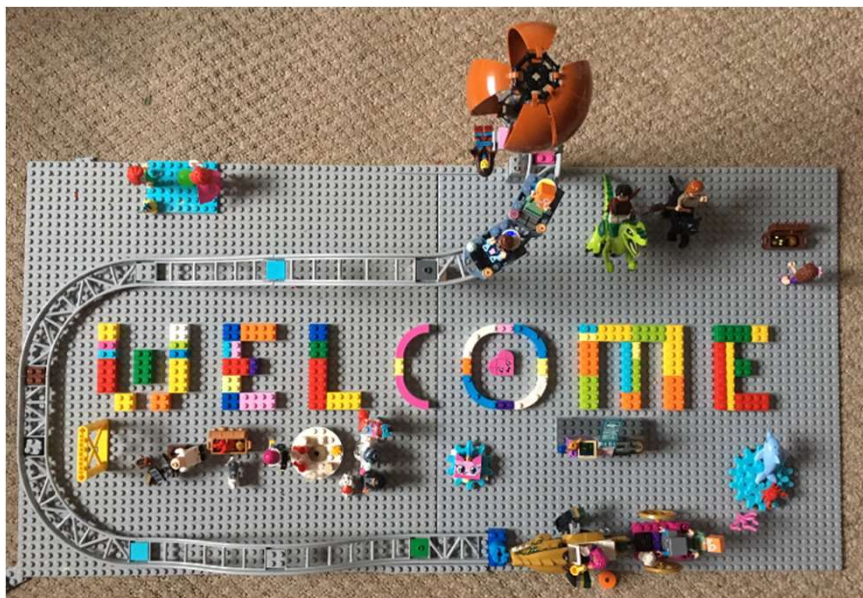
What did they do?

Held 'A Day of Welcome' on the Friday before Refugee Week – an initiative helping young people at schools (and at home) across the UK to develop understanding and awareness of the experiences and contributions of refugees and asylum seekers.

Responding to the Covid context, A Day of Welcome grew out of 'Norfolk Welcomes', a day of learning for schools inspired by local histories of migration and founded in 2018 by Norfolk SoS with Dr Jeanette Baxter of Anglia Ruskin University. To date Norfolk Welcomes has involved 40,000 schoolchildren and raised thousands of pounds for refugee causes.

A Day of Welcome was inspired by Norfolk SoS's National Lottery Heritage-funded partner project, 'Havens East', which uncovered the forgotten stories of some of the 4000 unaccompanied child Basque refugees who sought sanctuary in the UK during the Spanish Civil War. The research for the project was carried out by volunteer citizen researchers, including refugees and asylum seekers, across Cambridge and Norfolk.





Norfolk SoS created resources and activities for teachers, schools and home-learning families to engage critically and creatively with refugee migration, including:

- The Havens East online exhibition, which uses rare film footage and photographs along with the voices of rescuers and refugees to tell the story of Basque refugees
- The Words of Welcome project, which invited pupils to create a work of art welcoming Syrian families to the UK

In partnership with Amnesty International, Norfolk SoS also ran a training session for teachers about building a culture of welcome in their schools.

Why did they get involved?

Refugee Week is part of Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary work to support schools to become safe, welcoming and inclusive places, especially for refugees and asylum seekers.

What impact did it have?

Moving the Havens East exhibition online allowed it to reach a much larger audience than originally planned. The exhibition website had over 1600 visitors, and at least 38 schools took part in A Day of Welcome. 125 artworks were submitted and have been compiled into an online exhibition, to be shared with families of Syrian refugees who are rebuilding their lives in the UK.

What advice do they have for people interested in taking part in Refugee Week?

Get in touch with the people or organisations involved in Refugee Week in your area and find out what's already happening. If no-one's involved yet, maybe you can get the ball rolling! Look for local organisations and projects who you can collaborate with. Organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers may be able to help you advise on designing your event in an inclusive way, and you can help promote and support their work.

To find out more about becoming a School of Sanctuary, visit www.schools.cityofsanctuary.org.

*In the two weeks following A Day of Welcome on 12 June



Providing a platform

Refugee Week amplifies the voices and creative work of people on the move.

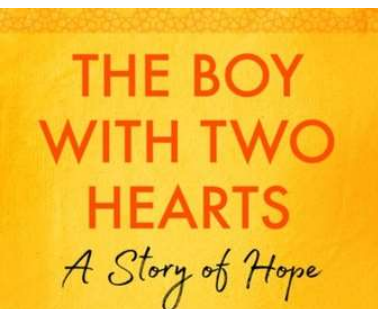
“Refugee Week was an opportunity for more diverse programming, and to spotlight voices that are often overlooked in museums.” Holly Elson, Museum of London



Southern Sudan-born singer Nyaruach was joined by her hip-hop artist brother, Emmanuel Jal in an event hosted by Counterpoints Arts and Southbank Centre.



Migration Matters Festival held ‘Is Covid-19 racist?’, a panel with former Sheffield Lord Mayor and MEP Magid Magid, NHS doctor and campaigner Dr Sonia Adesara and NHS worker and BAFTA winner Hassan Akkad.



Author Hamed Amiri launched his memoir A Boy with Two Hearts, former BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week, in an event hosted by University of South Wales.



‘Imagine living on £5.39 per day’ was a special episode of the ‘Still We Rise’ podcast by CARAG, a migrant-led community organisation in Coventry.



Community Arts North West ran #EveryoneCAN, a series of multilingual digital arts workshops delivered by artists from refugee and migrant backgrounds.



Case Study: Phosphoros Theatre



Image © Phosphoros Theatre

What did they do?

Phosphoros Theatre is a charity that makes performance by, with and for refugees and asylum seekers. For Refugee Week 2020, they ran a series public-facing events and workshops with refugees around the UK.

Their largest project was 'Strung Out', a short film created under lockdown telling the story of a lost musical instrument and exploring friendship, identity and the trickiness of the label 'refugee'.

Phosphoros screened their show 'Pizza Shop Heroes' followed by a Q&A session at Migration Matters Festival, ran a workshop for artists about using autobiography and held a roundtable with Counterpoints Arts about challenging the hostile environment in the arts.

Eight online drama workshops exploring human rights fed into a recorded poem which Phosphoros shared online, and a film made with partners was presented to an online audience of councillors and community groups in Wandsworth.

Why did they get involved?

To share their work and message more widely, and connect with young people from refugee backgrounds through talks and workshops.



What was the process?

Team members took responsibility for different projects, and a TV producer, film editor and director came on board to help produce the film 'Strung Out'. Company member Syed Haleem Najibi supported all aspects of the programme, from driving scripts across London and overseeing socially-distanced filming to delivering workshops and contributing to the roundtable. Phosphoros were supported by Arts Council's Emergency Grant and City Bridge Trust, via the London Community Response Fund.

What impact did it have?

Phosphoros Theatre's performances, events and workshops reached over 3,600 people, including viewers in 39 countries. Its performances helped raise awareness and understanding of refugee experiences, while its workshops provided a space for connection and creative expression by young people and women from refugee backgrounds.

Adapting to Covid also helped the company develop as it discovered the potential of online workshops to reach young people outside their existing networks, and branched into film for the first time.

What advice do they have for people interested in taking part?

Make sure local people from refugee backgrounds are able to engage with your activities. Consult grassroots organisations to learn how to make your programme accessible, inclusive and relevant and make sure you're not repeating what's already on offer. If you're not from a refugee background, build into your funding application a process of working in partnership with refugee artists, professionals and communities. Lastly, be wary about asking for free work from refugees, whether artistry, emotional labour or consultancy.



More Than A Week

Refugee Week can be a focal point for longer-term projects that have a lasting impact on individuals, communities and organisations.



Virtual drama classes providing a lifeline for asylum seekers

Compass Collective's film multi-art form film 'On the Line' followed eight weeks' of creative workshops with 60 young refugees and asylum seekers across the UK, helping to provide a social network and creative outlet during lockdown. It was supported by Shakespeare's Globe and launched at Migration Matters Festival.



'The World Is For Everyone', a podcast by writer Eve Makis produced for Nottingham Refugee Week, told the story of a creative outreach programme with Pamoja Women Together, a group of women from refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant backgrounds in Nottingham, which resulted in a pioneering anthology of their writing.

"It brought a community together from across the UK during lockdown. It provided a social network, a support group, vital engaging activities, for both the 20 creatives and over 60 participants we had involved."

Leah Gayer, Compass Collective

"We had more engagement from the public and our message of love and inclusivity reached a larger audience than usual. The biggest impact was the motivation and collaboration that came about between different organisations, something we hope to build on." Refugee Week 2020 event organiser



Coming Together

Refugee Week is a space where people from different backgrounds can connect, celebrate and learn from each other. The move online meant that for the first time, this included people all over the world.



In a collaboration between Good Chance and The World From My Window, poet Inua Ellams and Diyo Mulopo Bopengo from Good Chance's Change the Word collective ran a workshop with people from 28 countries, from Mexico to New Zealand via Sudan and Iran, resulting in the collective poem 'A Decision Filled With Colour'.



Through funding from Ben & Jerry's Foundation, 23 groups ranging from Paddington Rotary Club to Near Neighbours in Peterborough hosted refugee speakers living in the Middle East and beyond as part of NaTakallam's Refugee Voices programme.

"We visited each others' countries online, and one participant's brother who lives in Idlib started attending and is now coming every week."
Sophie Besse on PsycheDELIGHT's 'Together Workshops'

"We are proud to support Refugee Week which provides us all with a chance to learn more about the life and death decisions facing people escaping war and persecution, and better appreciate the cultural and social contribution they make to the world.

Refugees sharing their stories and experiences with us all helps create better understanding of why they were forced to flee, and their determination to bring their skills, talents and creative energy to life in our city."

Councillor Michael Mordey, Deputy Leader of Sunderland City Council, in the Sunderland Echo.

The Council, Sunderland Museum and Friends of the Drop in Sunderland were among those who led activities in Sunderland, where City of Sanctuary led a distanced 'Walk of Sanctuary' around the city and civic landmarks were lit up blue to symbolise the skies and seas we all share.



Case Study: Migration Matters Festival

What did they do?

Sheffield's Migration Matters Festival went digital for the first time, with a programme of 45 online events including an immersive children's theatre adventure, an online exhibition, dance, writing and theatre workshops, a podcast series, talks by university academics, a global hip-hop and music event, a spoken word double bill and a set by a Uganda-based DJ.

Why did they get involved?

The Festival was founded in 2015 in response to growing concern about the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in Sheffield and the UK.

What was the process?

The Festival is run by a small team in partnership with arts venues and organisations in Sheffield, and works closely with refugee and asylum support organisations to make sure that it is accessible to newly-arrived people. Migration Matters is funded by the Arts Council and also received funding from the University of Sheffield, Evan Cornish Foundation, Lush Ltd, Sheffield Town Trust and other local initiatives and businesses.

The team were preparing to announce the Migration Matters 2020 programme when the Covid-19 outbreak hit, leading to some soul-searching: could a digital edition of the festival inspire audiences, and what were the safety implications of running events online?

Ultimately, the team decided that at a time when arts and cultural activities under threat they had a duty to go ahead, and began the hard work of shifting their programme online, turning the festival website into a platform for digital events.

What impact did it have?

Migration Matters brought together people from different backgrounds to celebrate the range of cultures that exist in Sheffield and the UK, and. Moving online meant that for the first time, Sheffield locals were joined by audience members and participants from 95 countries including Canada, Singapore, Taiwan and Palestine.

What advice to they have for people interested in taking part in Refugee Week?

Things never go 100% to plan, but hiccups are an opportunity for learning and growth. Don't scare yourself into inaction - if you have an idea, find out how best to resource it and pursue it.



Media

Despite the busy media landscape, 2020 was the strongest year yet for media coverage of Refugee Week, with daily pieces in the Metro and Huffington Post, and features including in the Telegraph, Stylist, BBC Newsround and National Geographic Kids. Refugee Week's partner IMIX led the press campaign and supported over 25 people to share their experiences in the media, mostly for the first time.



How refugees are leading the way in helping UK communities through the pandemic



EXCLUSIVE From making face masks, to cooking meals for vulnerable families, and dropping off prescriptions – refugees have been vital to their communities during their hour of need. »

FIRST PERSON I still remember the first time I walked down the street without my niqab – the feeling of freedom was amazing. »

Doctor's journey from warzone to NHS prepared him for trauma of coronavirus wards



EXCLUSIVE Doctor Mohamad Kajouj was forced to flee Syria before risking his life crossing the Aegean Sea on an overcrowded rubber dinghy. »



PERSONAL 18/06/2020 06:00 BST | Updated 18/06/2020 08:28 BST

I Started A Food Bank For Refugees Like Me Going Hungry In This Pandemic

Thinking of asylum seekers like me struggling to get by, I couldn't stay home and do nothing.



By Md Mominul Hamid



From childhood, I was taught that to love someone was to be there for them. My mother, a school headteacher, used to pay exam fees for the students who couldn't, while my dad used to feed poor people in our community every week.

100 pieces of coverage in publications across the political spectrum

28 national, 43 local and 29 'niche' media pieces



Social Media

Social media was used widely to share Refugee Week activities and content, creative responses to the Simple Acts campaign and messages of support.



In Wales we keep a welcome in the hillside.

We're proud to be working on becoming a Nation of Sanctuary for those fleeing war and persecution.

To all refugees/asylum-seekers in Wales: You're seen, you're heard, and it's our privilege to have you.

@RefugeeWeek

#RefugeeWeek2020

**It's our privilege
to have you here.**



To refugees across London: you are Londoners, you are welcome here, and we are grateful for the contribution you make to our city - including throughout this pandemic.

#RefugeeWeek2020



18 thousand+ Tweets tagged or shared posts by @refugeeweek

46m 'potential impressions' across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram



The Prince of Wales and The Duchess o... · Jun 17, 2020

Replying to @ClarenceHouse

For #RefugeeWeek2020, @RESCUE_UK is sharing the stories of refugees who have been volunteering and working on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read their stories here

bit.ly/3d2UfuU



Social Media

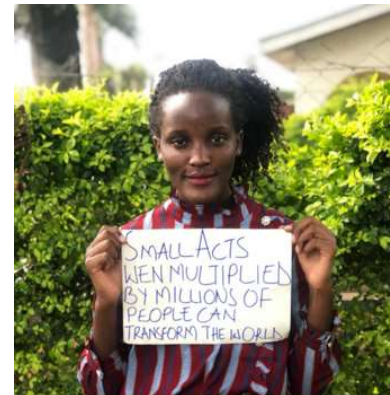


This week's [#Letsmakewednesdays](#) is celebrating the creativity, resilience and contributions of refugees. What can you design to make a better world? Let's make Wednesdays (and every day), more inclusive. [#RefugeeWeek](#) fal.cn/38FKi



Melanie Brammer @inkandgrass · Jun 17

Isobel wanted to raise awareness of [#RefugeeWeek2020](#) so created a poster for our front window and created a visual story of the journey a refugee child may go through. [#SimpleActs](#)



Green Squirrel @BeMoreSquirrel

Thank your climate hero ❤️

This is [@vanessa_vash](#) & she's a [#climatejustice](#) activist from Uganda. She campaigns to raise awareness of the disproportionate impacts of climate change on communities in Africa.

[#climateheroes](#) 1/3

11:11 AM · Jun 18, 2020 · Twitter Web App

6 Retweets 11 Likes



Lived Experience Leadership

Refugee Week 2020 marked the second year of the Refugee Week Leadership Project, funded by Ben & Jerry's Foundation. The project supports five emerging leaders under 30 from refugee backgrounds, through a programme which includes mentoring, a leadership placement and opportunities to input into Refugee Week nationally. In the run up to and during Refugee Week 2020, the group:

- Led workshops and activities and delivered the keynote speech at the Refugee Week Conferences in February 2020
- Wrote pieces for the 'Imagine' digital anthology
- Spoke to national media, supported by IMIX
- Took part in public speaking training and shared their views on asylum policy via a Facebook live discussion and series of video messages on the theme of 'Imagine'

Following Refugee Week, planning began for the group's leadership placements (postponed due to Covid), including roles at Imperial War Museum, Migration Museum and Student Action for Refugees.

We are committed to supporting and embedding lived experience leadership in Refugee Week at the national and local levels, recognising that this is a long-term process and that we have much to learn. One legacy of the leadership project will be a new national advisory group for Refugee Week made up of people from a range of professional and creative backgrounds, with a strong representation of people with lived experience of displacement.



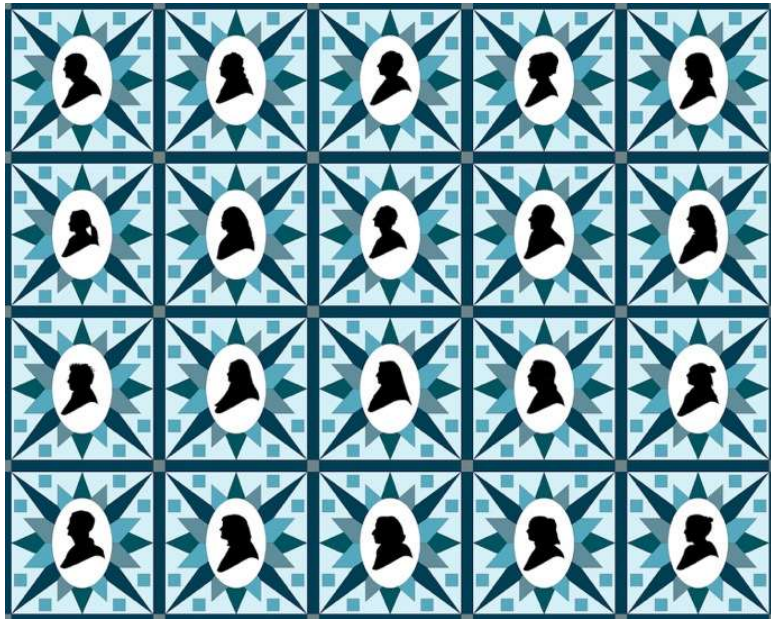
The leadership group led activities at the Refugee Week Conferences in February 2020. Photo © Ambrose Musiyiwa

55% of organisers surveyed said their event was either 'refugee-led' or partially refugee-led



Join Us

Refugee Week 2021 is 14-20 June, and everyone is welcome to take part. We hope to see you there.



Refugee Week is coordinated by Counterpoints Arts
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www.refugeeweek.org.uk

COUNTERPOINTS.

We asked event organisers:
‘What does Refugee Week mean to you?’

“Time to listen. To realise our common humanity”

“Togetherness”

“It meant that we could discover a world that was not in our view before”

“I feel like I’m alive that week”

“An opportunity to celebrate everyone, from all walks of life, as equals”

Image: portrait of Refugee Week network Zoom session by artist Aida Silvestri, part of Art Refuge’s Coronaquilt project.

