

WE CANNOT

WALK ALONE



Refugee Week
14–20 June 2021

Refugee Week 2021 Overview & Selected Highlights



Contents

Intro	p3	Case Study: The Role of Arts in a Palestinian Refugee Camp	p15
What is Refugee Week?	p4	Schools and Young People	p16
Key Stats	p5	Case Study: St Mary the Virgin Primary School, Cardiff	p17
Resources and Inspiration	p6	Media	p18
We Cannot Walk Alone	p7	Social Media	p20
Misan Harriman portraits	p8	Merchandise	p23
Events	p9	A Growing Movement	p24
The Great Walk Together	p12	Learning	p25
Case Study: 'Whose Land?' at Imperial War Museum	p13		
Case Study: Refugee Week at St Helen's	p14		



National Partners



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



Following the first ever entirely digital Refugee Week in 2020, Refugee Week 2021 was a hybrid programme of mostly online and some in-person events.

The Refugee Week network responded to ongoing uncertainty around Covid with its customary passion, commitment and ability to adapt, with 2020's 350 events almost doubling to over 600 events held across the UK. These included Refugee Week Wales, Refugee Festival Scotland, which returned for 2021, and ten city-wide festivals across England.

2021 marked the 50th anniversary of the UN Refugee Convention and the beginning of the Nationality and Borders Bill, with its unprecedented proposal to discriminate against people seeking safety based on how they arrive in the UK.

It was against this backdrop that an incredible range of organisations and groups – arts venues, schools, local councils, grassroots groups, to name a few – came together to celebrate Refugee Week. As always, Refugee Week was both globally-minded and locally-focused, and you can see this local pride reflected in the headlines on p19.

We look ahead to 2022 with a hunger to get together in person again, but also grateful for the way that working digitally has brought us closer together across the UK and internationally, a positive lasting legacy of this uncertain time.

We hope you'll find inspiration in this report, and join us in being part of the growing Refugee Week movement, for 2022 and beyond.

This report is based on:

- Information submitted to the Refugee Week online events calendar
- Information about activities shared in media reports and media
- A survey of event organisers
- Debriefs with national partners, the Refugee Week Advisory Group and other stakeholders
- A round-up of media coverage, by IMIX
- Social media analytics from Union Metrics

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 and people seeking sanctuary.

Founded in 1998 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, sports and educational events alongside media and creative campaigns, Refugee Week enables people from different backgrounds to connect beyond labels, as well as encouraging understanding of why people are displaced, and the challenges they face when seeking safety.

Refugee Week is a platform for people who have sought safety in the UK to share their experiences, perspectives and creative work on their own terms.

Refugee Week's vision is for refugees and asylum seekers to be able to live safely within inclusive and resilient communities, where they can continue to make a valuable contribution.

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.

Refugee Week is for everyone, and we welcome participation by all individuals, groups and organisations that share Refugee Week's core beliefs.



Key Stats



Southbank Centre Refugee Week DJ Set (c) Marcia Chandra

2021

700+ organisations took part

500+ events in England

27+ in Wales

86 for Refugee Festival Scotland

Every region of England

100s of schools

120+ pieces of media coverage

51K Tweets

2020

500+

330+

15+

On hold

Every region

100s

100+

73K



Resources and Inspiration

We offered these resources to event organisers:

Simple Acts: Eight activities that can be built into events, or done 'spontaneously' during the week

Moving Worlds: A selection of films available to watch online during Refugee Week, with discussion resources

The Great Walk Together: An invitation to hold a walk as part of Refugee Week and The Great Get Together

Refugee Voices by NaTakallam: the opportunity to host a refugee speaker living around the world (funded by Ben & Jerry's Foundation)

'Slow Conference': Online workshops offering practical guidance and deeper discussion, available afterwards as videos and written resources

Event Organiser Pack

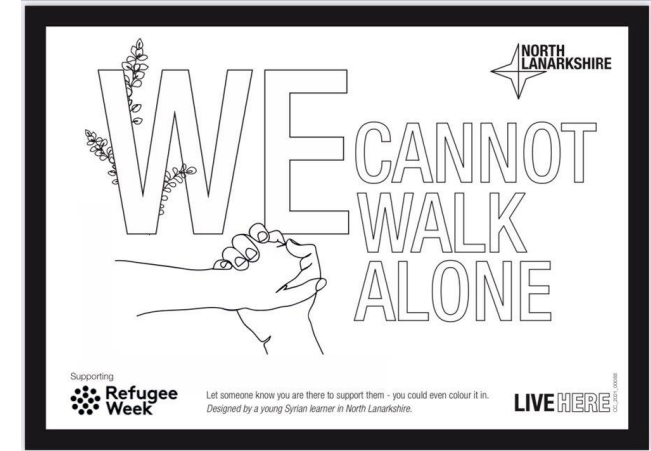
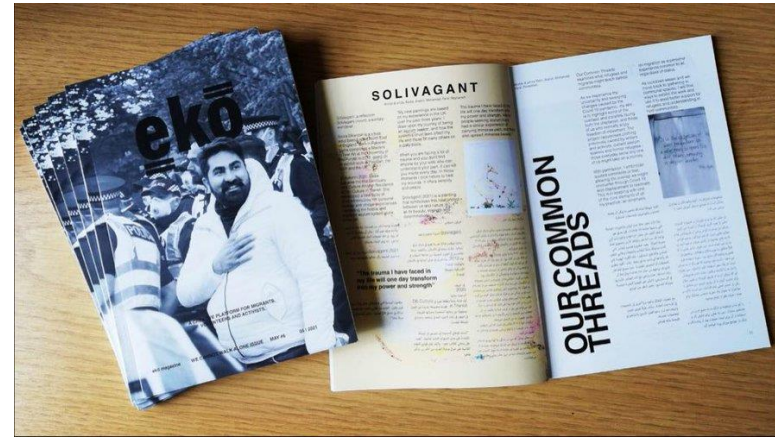
Schools and Young People's Activity Pack

Media and Social Media Resources

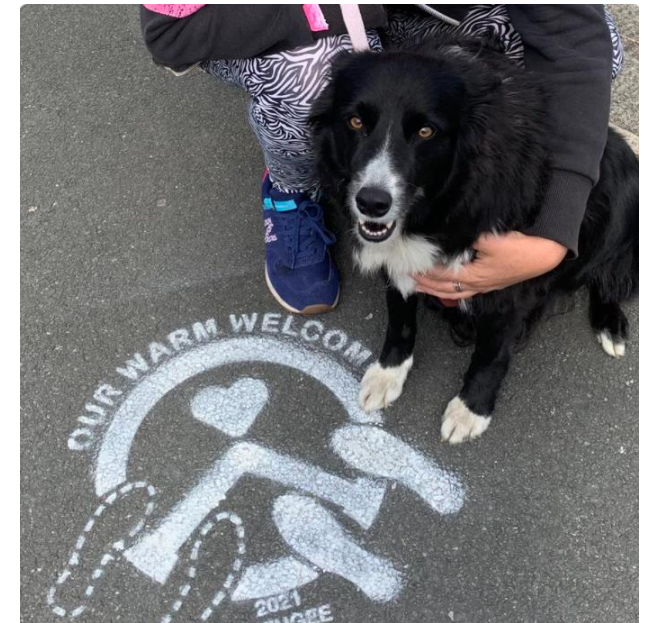


We Cannot Walk Alone

Taken from Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' speech, the theme of Refugee Week 2022 was an invitation to extend a hand to someone new. It inspired a wide range of creative responses



Clockwise from top left: ekō magazine 'We Cannot Walk Alone' edition; colouring sheet by Yara, a Syrian girl living in North Lanarkshire; street art in St Helens in Merseyside; mural by Maha al-Omari commissioned by SBC theatre in Bradford; pupils at Sunnyhill primary school in Streatham



We Cannot Walk Alone: Misan Harriman Portraits



“I had to get involved with Refugee Week because... the ability to raise a family safely with a roof over your head, being taken away from you... is unacceptable in 2021.”

Misan Harriman

Photographer and Chair of Southbank Centre Misan Harriman is known for his striking portraits of public figures, among them the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, as well as his photos of Black Lives Matter protestors, which earned him the cover of Vogue’s ‘Activism’ issue in September 2020.

Counterpoints Arts commissioned Misan Harriman to take portraits of eight artistic and cultural figures, ranging from children’s author Michael Rosen to aspiring pilot and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Maya Ghazal, who have chosen to ‘walk alongside others’ in inspiring ways.

The portraits were displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum, featured in The Guardian and shared widely on social media, including by Misan Harriman to his over 100K Instagram followers.



Events

Over 600 events were held across the UK

City-wide festivals took place across England, including in Bristol, Oxford, Plymouth, Brighton, Coventry, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bradford, Manchester and Sheffield. Refugee Festival Scotland (coordinated by Scottish Refugee Council) returned for 2021 with 86 events, while at least 27 events were held for Refugee Week Wales (coordinated by Welsh Refugee Council).

While most activity took place online due to the ongoing Covid situation, there were also a number of in-person events. Over 60% focused on arts and culture*, with others including community, campaigning and discussion events.

For more information on Refugee Festival Scotland, visit the Scottish Refugee Council website and for more information on Refugee Week Wales, contact the Welsh Refugee Council.

*of events uploaded to the Refugee Week website



Organisers and Venues included:

British Museum Mafwa Theatre **Haven Coffee** V&A **The Old Vic** Southbank Centre **VOICES Network** St Ethelberga's **Turner Contemporary** Music Action International **Imperial War Museum** Curious Monkey **Canterbury Cathedral** CARAG **Collective Ma'louba** Islington Council **St Augustine's Centre, Halifax** Citizens of the World Choir **Compass Collective** Journeys Festival **Bradford Friendship Choir** Museum of London **Giant Dolls' House Project** Socially Engaged Arts Salon **Phosphoros Theatre** Anglia Ruskin University **Migrants Organise** Liverpool Museums **Seenaryo** Horizons Festival **Norfolk City of Sanctuary** Nottingham Refugee Week **National Archives Gaming Against the Hostile Environment** London Migration Film Festival **Tamasha** Maokwo **BookTrust**

Artists and Speakers included:

Misan Harriman Sita Brahmachari **Michael Rosen** Ibrahim Fanous **Shappi Korsandi** Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilson **Noma Dumezweni** Yasmin Khan **Ayanna Witter-Johnson** BLKBRD **Stella Graham** Juliet Stevenson **Issam Kourbaj** Viet Thanh Nguyen **Inua Ellams** Natasha Walter **JJ Bola** Hadil Tamim and Adrian Lawson **Lord Alf Dubs** Maria Igwebuike **Ikram Abdi Omar** Robin Hammond **Majeda Khoury** Maya Ghazal **Bumi Thomas** Waad Al-Kateab **Susie Dent** Ian Wolter **Mira Naddaf** Joanna Lumley **Medulla** Anqa Collective **Dina Nayeri** Alim Kamara **mandla rae** Abdulwahab Tahhan



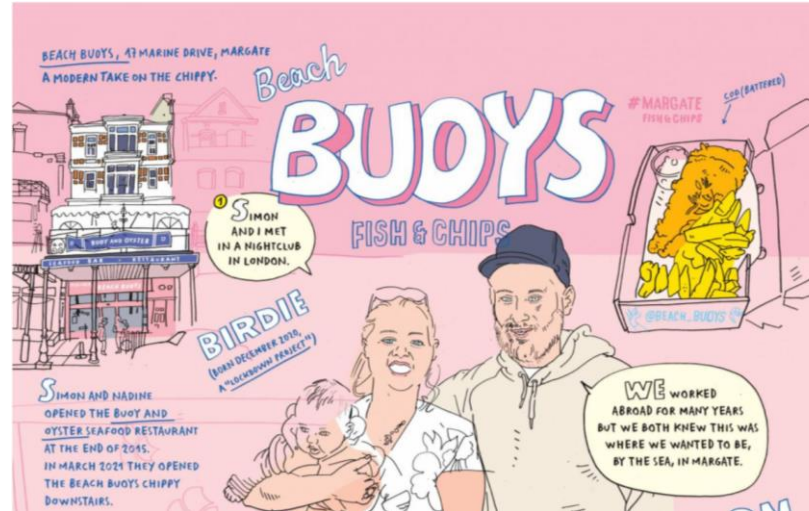
Events: Four Examples

Events of all shapes and sizes enabled connection, celebration and greater understanding of refugee experiences

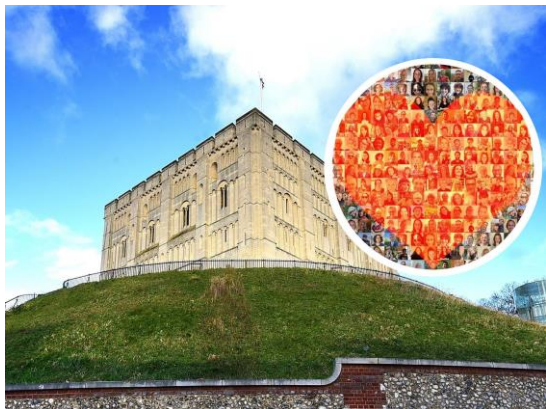


Piece Hall in Halifax marked the Great Get Together and Refugee Week with free food, family activities and live music for over 1000 people.

“Refugee Week is a week to bring people together to build communities that would otherwise not find each other.”
Jennie Cole, Enfield Centre, Leeds City College



The Great British Fish and Chips by Oliver Kugler and Andrew Humphreys explored the hidden stories of migration in our national dish. Commissioned by Counterpoints Arts, the illustrations were shown at Turner Contemporary for Refugee Week, and later at Canterbury Cathedral.



Norwich castle was illuminated with the faces of 100s local people celebrating Norwich as a place of welcome, thanks to Norwich City of Sanctuary. It was one of at least three major buildings lit up orange in support of Together With Refugees.



Part of Coventry City of Culture, Coventry Welcomes held a programme of online and in person events including film, theatre comedy, and outdoor public events and activities.



Events: The Great Walk Together

In partnership with the Jo Cox Foundation, we invited people to take part in The Great Walk Together, to celebrate both Refugee Week and the Great Get Together 2021.

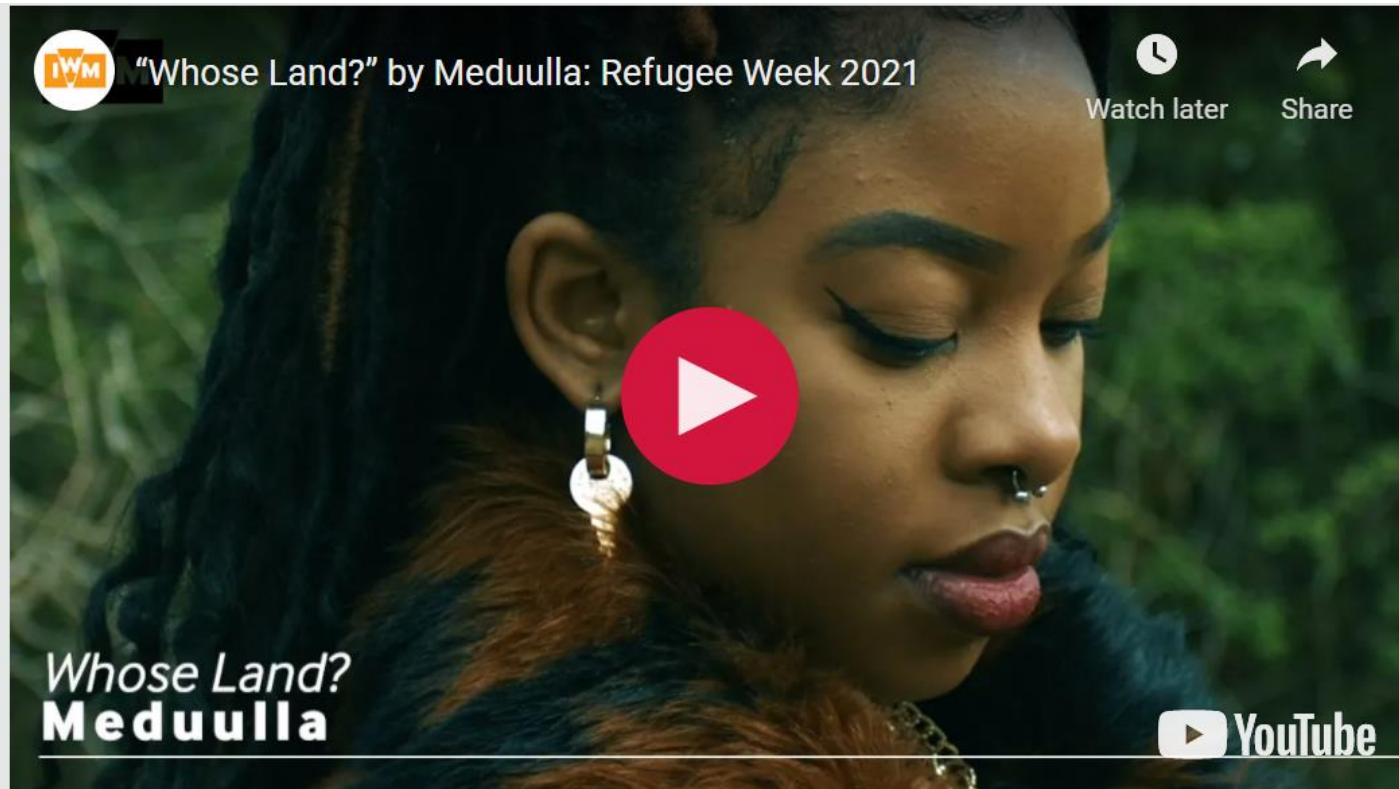


Groups across the UK were encouraged to come together to make new community connections and reflect on the journeys that refugees face.

A wide range of groups took part in the walk, with the toolkit downloaded over 1000 times.



Case Study: 'Whose Land?' at Imperial War Museum



“To those thinking about getting involved in Refugee Week I’d definitely say do it, and I’m quite passionate about that because you learn so much as an organisation.”

Claire Shaw, Senior Producer at Imperial War Museum

As part of the Refugee Week Leadership Project, Imperial War Museum worked with writer, performer and curator mandla rae on a ten-day placement as a creative producer, resulting in a new commission for Refugee Week 2021, the spoken word piece ‘Whose Land?’.

Written by Zimbabwean-born and Manchester-raised artist, poet and rapper Meduulla, ‘Whose Land?’ draws on the history of Zimbabwe, referencing the land reform bill, conflict and migration and considering the ongoing legacy of this conflict on young people today.

Originally planned to be a live performance, Covid restrictions meant that ‘Whose Land?’ became a digital piece, with a video and conversation between mandla and Meduulla shared across Imperial War Museum’s website and social media channels.

The collaboration was an opportunity for Imperial War Museums to reach new audiences and, by listening to and amplifying underrepresented voices, to gain a richer understanding of its collections.



Case Study: Refugee Week in St Helen's, Merseyside



St Helen's Council's Resettlement Service worked with local charity Our Warm Welcome on a programme of inclusive events for Refugee Week.

Inspired by the theme 'We Cannot Walk Alone' footsteps were painted around the borough to signify the journeys people have made, with the words 'Our Warm Welcome'.

Newton Sports Club and Thatto Heath Crusaders hosted two friendly football matches between councillors and local refugees, crafts, classes and reading sessions were held at local children's centres and community café Café Laziz hosted events at The Hope Centre inviting visitors to learn how to make tabbouleh and share cups of Arabic tea and coffee with locally settled refugees.

Local schools took part in a variety of online dance and creative writing workshops. Council leader David Baines wrote with pride about Refugee Week, in local newspaper, St Helens Star, linking to the borough's proud history of immigration.

“In the last year our community has shown incredible kindness and compassion. Those qualities are the best of us, and it is what we saw in abundance last week during a range of events to mark Refugee Week.”

David Baines, leader of St Helens Borough Council, in St Helen's Star



Case Study: The Role of Arts in a Palestinian Refugee Camp

"EACH ONE OF US HAS A ROLE TO SHIFT THE NARRATIVES ABOUT REFUGEES AND OTHER MARGINALISED GROUPS, TO BUILD BRIDGES OF HOPE AND NOT WALLS, TO WELCOME AND OPEN DOORS."

- Basma, UN humanitarian practitioner,
Palestinian refugee camp, Lebanon



Refugee Week, 14-20 June

Basma El-Doukhi, Humanitarian and Development Worker and our first Refugee Week Ambassador based outside of the UK, held a live streamed event in Rashadieh Palestinian Camp in Lebanon, about the role of arts in the camp.

With the help of a live interpreter, audiences in the UK heard from young female artists and a football coach about what sports and creativity mean to them as Palestinian refugees.

The event overcame challenges of the language barrier and unreliable internet and electricity in the camp, and was a valuable learning experience for future international online events.

The well-attended event was an opportunity for audiences to understand more about the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and to hear from those directly affected. For the speakers, the event provided a bridge to refugees and those supporting them in the UK, and encouraged them to seek out further opportunities and platforms to share their work.

"I was very grateful that I had that opportunity to bring the voices of my camp, of my community, of my people, to different audiences."

Basma El-Doukhi



Engaging Young People

Reaching children and young people enables Refugee Week to engage a wide cross-section of society, and build understanding among the opinion-formers of the future.

Hundreds of primary and secondary schools across the country took part in Refugee Week, exploring refugee experiences and showing their support through a range of creative activities inside and beyond the school gates. In the East of England, over 120 schools took part in Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary's 'Day of Welcome' on 11 June.

With Schools of Sanctuary, we held an online meetup for teachers in May and a well-attended online event with authors Michael Rosen and Sita Brahmachari during Refugee Week. This collaboration led to a marked increase in schools seeking to become Schools of Sanctuary.

At universities, ten STAR groups held 15 events, including STAR Sussex, which responded to 'Simple Acts' by doing a trail of refugee-owned businesses in Brighton to celebrate local refugees, and covered Brighton's largest public library with printouts from conversations shared between volunteers and people seeking asylum in Calais.

100s of schools took part

National Education Union and Schools of Sanctuary (City of Sanctuary) are national Refugee Week partners



**Refugee Week
Family Event**

MICHAEL ROSEN
&
SITA BRAHMACHARI



Case Study: St Mary the Virgin Primary School, Cardiff



St Mary the Virgin Primary School engaged children of all ages in Refugee Week through a range of activities, including:

Learning: Using storybooks as a starting point for discussion about refugee experiences, including 'Paddington Bear' for the youngest pupils

'Sitting and sharing': Whether or not they were from a refugee background, children reflected on their experiences of living or having family in other countries. Linking to the theme 'We Cannot Walk Alone', every pupil was given a 'I have a dream...' footprint to share their hopes and dreams.

Making the school a welcoming environment: As part of Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary 'Day of Welcome', children made self-portraits celebrating their individuality, which were used to create 'Welcome' signs in every room. Pupils brought in 'hello' and 'welcome' in their home languages which were used to create a display in the foyer.

The wider community: The school posted activities on Twitter and proactively reached out to their local community, sharing with parents the value they place on embracing the school's community.

"The week encouraged St Mary the Virgin Primary School to continue to make their school a place which recognises that we cannot walk alone and that a warm welcome to everyone in the community, and beyond, is at the heart of all that is done at St Mary's."

Schools of Sanctuary website



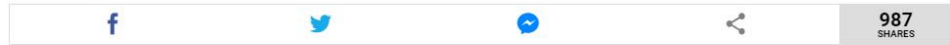
Despite the challenging news environment, Refugee Week achieved even more media coverage than in 2020.

Media pieces ranged from mainstream to niche, local to national, and spanned the political spectrum. IMIX led the press campaign and supported 12 people to share their experiences in the media, mostly for the first time, through the Refugee Week Ambassador Project. Outlets included a series in the Metro, the Mirror, National Geographic Kids, BBC Sunday Morning Live and extensive local coverage.



'I'm not dying without a fight': Nigerian man who fled home because being gay is a crime

EXCLUSIVE
Elisa Menendez
Tuesday 15 Jun 2021 1:01 pm



Despite Victor Iringere's hardship, he wants his story to be one of hope (Picture: Supplied)



Marie-Lyse's family were from Rwanda (Image: Copyright Albanpix.com.)



'I fled machetes at age 12 but Patel's plan means I couldn't live in safety here'

Marie-Lyse Numuhoza fled the Rwandan Genocide while Steve Ali refused to kill other Syrians - both would now not be allowed into the safety of the UK under Priti Patel's plans, due to how they arrived here...

120+ pieces of coverage | 100+ in 2021
12 people with lived experience supported to speak to media



A selection of local and regional headlines:

Cheshire West and Chester residents ‘walking together’ with those fleeing violence and persecution

Refugee Week: Wigan residents who fled Zimbabwe see their life stories turned into artwork

The incredible kindness on show in St Helens during Refugee Week

A welcome in the hillsides for Syrian refugees

Mafwa Theatre: Using theatre to bring diverse communities together in Leeds this Refugee Week

Dorking Waste Collection Team Celebrates Refugee Week

Croydon community groups join in support of Refugee Week 2021

How Calderdale will be shining a light on Refugee Week

Warwickshire residents make collective journey to support and mark Refugee Week

St Michael’s CE Primary School children learn why people are forced to leave their homeland as they celebrate Refugee Week

Harrogate group to celebrate refugees contribution to British life in Refugee Week

Solidarity for Refugee Week at St Paul’s Church in the heart of Bedford

Social Media

A wide range of figures and organisations engaged on social media, enabling Refugee Week content and messages to reach new audiences.

Despite a drop compared to 2020, possibly due to algorithm changes and 'online fatigue', the level of engagement remained impressive. Social media content was shared across social media platforms and included messages of support and welcome, Misan Harriman's portrait graphics, content featuring the Refugee Week Ambassadors, responses to Simple Acts and posts promoting Refugee Week events.

Lewisham Council
@LewishamCouncil

#SanctuaryBorough @LewishamCouncil is celebrating #RefugeeWeek 14 – 20 June. We're welcoming those fleeing war and persecution and want to make a home here. Our borough celebrates its diversity, and is stronger for it. @RefugeeWeek #RefugeesWelcome Visit: lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil...

and a promise to bring
100
unaccompanied children
to safety.

291 views 0:16 / 0:22

V&A
@V_and_A

Discover our latest V&A Family Trail, 'Refugee Stories,' created as part of #RefugeeWeek2021. Explore the museum through six hand-selected objects and celebrate the contribution of refugees through history.

Find out more: fal.cn/3g9dn

خوش آمدگی

Waterstones
@Waterstones

'I am a refugee'
To mark #RefugeeWeek2021 we asked writers who have experienced displacement first-hand to share how it shaped their writing. Our special blog features @hassan_akkad @hamedamiri1989 @JJ_Bola @GhazalMia @DinaNayeri and more: waterstones.com/blog/i-am-a-re...

258 views 0:37 / 0:59

French and Music at Phoenix
@PhoenixFrench1

As part of Refugee Week, the whole school has been learning "You'll never walk alone". I was so impressed with Year 3's rendition today. @year3phoenix @LFC @RefugeeWeek

258 views 0:37 / 0:59

Glyndŵr Chaplaincy
@WGU_Chaplaincy

For #RefugeeWeek2021 we are sharing quotations from 7 different faiths and beliefs – one each day – all reflecting the spirit of "We Cannot Walk Alone".

To learn more about Refugee Week, and the "Simple Acts" you can do to get involved, please visit refugeeweek.org.uk.

"He is not a believer who eats his fill whilst his neighbour beside him goes hungry."
The Prophet Muhammad (Book 6, Hadith 112)
#Muslim
#RefugeeWeek2021

Leicester City in the Community
@LFC_Community

This week is #RefugeeWeek and we strive to ensure Leicester refugees and people seeking asylum can thrive in the UK ❤️

We are working with a women's group that are helping each other become healthier by taking part in fitness activities 🏃‍♀️

51K Tweets | 73K in 2020
23.5 million potential impressions across Instagram, Facebook and Twitter | 46 million in 2020

Merchandise

For the first time, we collaborated with Anqa Collective, who produced a line of special edition products for Refugee Week 2021.

Five entrepreneurs from refugee backgrounds created 22 items, which were sold on the Refugee Week and Anqa Collective websites. Inspired by the theme 'We Cannot Walk Alone', the products range from baklava and coffee to clothing, art prints and more.

We also produced a new Refugee Week t-shirt, inspired by the new logo, designed by BCMH and printed and distributed by Print4Good, an initiative of Plymouth Hope.



Hoodie by Teem Khan, coffee from Haven Coffee and print by Tasala



Mario Callisto headwraps for Refugee Week 2021



A Growing Movement

Refugee Week lasts just seven days, but the network is connecting, learning and growing all year round.

This was particularly true in the run up to Refugee Week 2021, as we harnessed the power of working digitally to network and collaborate across the UK and internationally.

Refugee Week Slow Conference: With Covid restrictions ruling out the in-person conference(s) we usually hold in preparation for Refugee Week, we ran a ‘slow conference’ February-March, six weeks’ of workshops ranging from the practical (running online and hybrid events) to deeper questions about practice (supporting lived experience leadership; the politics of storytelling). Over 760 people signed up and most workshops had over 100 attendees, from across the UK and also internationally. Attendees said the workshops helped them with their Refugee Week programming, and would also inform their work all year round.

Advisory Group: In November 2021 we founded the Refugee Week Advisory Group to broaden the range of voices that inform Refugee Week at the national level. The group brings expertise from fields including arts, education, sports and media, and represents a step forward (although not an end point) in our journey to embedding lived experience leadership in Refugee Week nationally.

Theory of Change: In early 2021 we updated the Refugee Week Theory of Change, which sets out the change we want Refugee Week to make, and how we believe Refugee Week can make that change. For the first time, we also published a set of values that we share as a network. This process involved consultation with Refugee Week partner organisations, advisory group and event organisers.

Monthly Meets: In addition to the Slow Conference, we held (and continue to hold) Refugee Week and Platforma* ‘Monthly Meets’: spaces for learning and networking for those engaged in arts, culture and social change. Meet-ups for specific groups included a session for teaching staff (with Schools of Sanctuary), attended by over 100 people, a meetup for faith groups and several sessions in Arabic, encouraging engagement in Refugee Week by key sectors and groups.

*Platforma Arts and Refugees Network, coordinated by Counterpoints Arts

“We found the on-line discussions to prepare for Refugee Week extremely helpful.”
Barbara Dinham, Wandsworth Welcomes Refugees



Based on what we learned over Refugee Week 2021, next year we would like to:

- Return to in person events (we hope!), but continue to use digital to reach new audiences and support collaboration across the UK and internationally
- Continue online workshops and ‘sector specific’ meetups to encourage participation by key audiences
- Support event organisers to connect more, between and within regions
- Continue to support event organisers through ongoing online workshops and sharing resources as early as possible
- Continue to build strategic partnerships to reach new audiences
- Increase communications capacity to grow audiences and raise profile of Refugee Week as one of the biggest arts and cultural festivals in the UK
- Increase capacity of Refugee Week coordinators in order to maximise impact of partnerships and content
- Develop mechanism for monitoring key non-public facing activities (e.g. schools, faith groups), in order to set effective targets for growth
- Continue to support the growth of Refugee Week internationally



Join Us

Refugee Week 2022 is 20-26 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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emily@counterpointsarts.org.uk
www.refugeeweek.org.uk

COUNTERPOINTS.

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

"Support, solidarity and coming together (plus some fun activities)"

"An opportunity to celebrate refugee contributions and make it known they are welcome"

"An opportunity to raise awareness, create understanding of the refugee situation that challenges media representation and a chance to value members of our community who don't always have a voice"

"An opportunity to celebrate and connect with people seeking sanctuary"

"Working to create a more equitable society where everyone is valued and cared for in the same way"

Image: Still from Refugee Week Ambassador 'We Cannot Walk Alone' video

