



How do we change the way we see refugees?

Through Small Actions!

Here are some examples of Small Actions that people across the UK have sent to us. We've used these ideas as the basis for the Small Actions Campaign which will be launched in 2009!

The campaign suggests small ways in which to change people's perceptions of refugees and create better interaction between refugee and host communities. The idea is not that we "move mountains" but to come up with small things that can easily be done by anyone - with every individual joining the campaign and doing a small thing for and with refugees, we get a bit closer to removing barriers between host and refugee communities and creating a more tolerant society.

If you have an idea that you would like to be included [Tell us Your Idea!](#)

Learn to say some basic things in a new language.

Christian, London

Learn to cook a dish from another culture

Hannah, London

Talk to them & get to know them.

School child, Glasgow

Convince all frontline staff to wear a Refugee Week T-Shirt as often as possible during Refugee Week.

Celine Scwob, London

Don't judge people without knowing them.

School child, Glasgow

Send a "Thinking of You" card to refugees in detention centres.

Alex, Youth social worker, Cornwall

Every family in UK should be encouraged to eat fish and chips – brought here by Portuguese refugees - during Refugee Week.

Chip shop owner, Swiss Cottage

All churches in the UK should be asked to say a prayer for refugees on the Sunday of Refugee Week.

Rebecca, Mother, Somerset

Invite a group of your friends to watch a refugee/asylum seeker themed movie and have a 'potluck' where everyone must bring a dish from another country.

Monica, London

Show them around the Scheme.

School child, Glasgow

Find out the difference between refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants.

Spend a day in Brick Lane and do some 'ethnic shopping'.

Celine Scwob, London

Lend a camera to a refugee family for a day so that they can take pictures of a day in their life and then use them in a small exhibition in your local library on myth busting.

Chris Gore, London

Show them respect.

School child, Glasgow

Spend a whole evening in town without spending any money.

Simon C, Hayfield

Invite your refugee neighbour over for a barbeque (in the summer). Worth making sure that you have halal...

Richard, Writer, London

Go to www.timetogether.org.uk and take a quiz to test your tolerance

Respect their religion.

School child, Glasgow

Next time you listen to Bob Marley, Wyclef Jean, M.I.A or Mika with your mates - tell them that they're listening to refugees!

Geraint, Administrator, London

Organise a speed dating event for people from different cultures

Offer people your help.

School child, Glasgow

Take your refugee friend to have a tea with your grandpa.

Sit with a stranger on the bus and strike up a conversation (start with the weather!)

Innocent, Writer/Journalist, London

Read a book about the refugee experience such as The Kite Runner or Refugee Boy.

Attend a Refugee Week event, take photos and post them on flickr.

Chris Gore, London

Find out what countries refugees are currently coming from. What is happening in these countries?

Have a party with lots of different people and cultures.

School child, Glasgow

Send a letter to your local paper asking people to rethink their refugee stereotypes.

Mix more with people from other countries.

School child, Glasgow

Go and see the Asylum Monologues

TimeBank

Find out which character in 'Fawlty Towers' was played by a refugee – Clue: it's not Basil!

Angharad, Artist, Llanfyllin

Share a story about the contribution of refugees

Learn to be friendly in a different language

Listen to music from another country, ask what the lyrics mean (especially young people)

Innocent, Writer, London

Spend some time with people who happen to be refugees

Arrange for people from different countries to talk about themselves.

School child, Glasgow

Forward a podcast/refugee's story to five people who don't know much about refugees.

Melanie, London

Find out how to say hello in another language to someone you know who doesn't speak English as their first language.

At the Airport, have a big screen up showing people meeting different people and shaking hands.

School child, Glasgow

Add a pro refugee statement to the bottom of your email signature during Refugee Week; perhaps a myth-busting fact about the real number of refugees in the UK or a more personal statement such as why you believe refugees are an asset to this country.

Everyone who visits this website could simply encourage others to visit it to increase awareness of all the various events and assist and join in the celebration of the contribution of refugees to the UK.

Chris Gore, London

Respect different cultures.

School Child, Glasgow

Talk to people who talk to lots of people - taxi drivers, hairdressers, pub landlords and bar staff. Better still introduce them to a refugee or asylum seeker.

Richard Byrne, Leeds

Not everyone will be living somewhere where they can meet a refugee, but everyone has a family tree. We all come from somewhere, and most of us have ancestors who will have migrated at some point or other – for example, 40% of people in the UK have Huguenot links. Understanding where your family comes from, and the decisions they made to come here will encourage empathy with those who have come to the UK more recently.

Jonathan Cox, London

Organise a picnic where everyone brings a dish of their own nationality.

Student from Royal Academy of Music and drama, Glasgow

Read one story from the book "From There to Here" (or similar) each day for a week.

Melanie, London

Do things to make the place better for more people.

School child, Glasgow

Watch something other than a Hollywood movie – Iraq and Iran are known for their high quality cinema. One successful film is Persepolis.

Find out about your family history. Did any of your relatives come from different countries?

Put up a big banner when they come in to Glasgow Airport, with "welcome" written in every language.

School child, Glasgow

Take 1 person who's never heard about Refugee Week to one event.

Almir, Writer, London

If someone has never went to a football match, why don't you go?

School child, Glasgow

Buy and donate a copy of 'We left because we had to' to my stepdaughters secondary school. Take in with any other literature re Refugee Week to accompany the gift.

Laura Wilks Sloan, Marketing Officer, London

Do not simply believe what you read in the papers about refugees. As a question - find out more.

Lynne, London

Clear out closet and donate men's clothes to charity

Start own (peace loving) Refugee Group on Facebook to educate/inform

Take a refugee to the Imperial War Museum - see the effects of our history.

Bob, Campaigner, London

Read a fairytale from another country to school aged children.

Laura, London

Give them access to education.

School child, Glasgow

Start a meet up group and have regular (monthly) meet ups and do activities relevant to refugee issues. Do something different each time (watch movies about refugee experiences, read books, have dinner etc).

Cristiana, Fundraiser, London

Spend five minutes imagining being in fear of your life and having to pack and leave your home and family within the next hour. What would you do? How would you feel?

Tell a friend a fact from the Refugee Week website.

Pictures without Borders' - travel to Refugee Week events and take pictures of positive images of refugees. Share them as much as possible.

Rawan, London

Read the 'world' section of a newspaper and take a few minutes to remind yourself where refugees come from and why they are forced to flee their homes.

Anelie, London

Write to newspapers on days when there's lots of negative press about refugees. Use facts from myth-busting packs like Refugee Council's 'Tell it Like it Is'.

Lynne, London

Writing messages of peace to fly on balloons.

Alex Backhouse, Teacher, Meadowfield Primary School

Live out of your handbag only for a weekend

Simon D, Beckenham

At any election or voting opportunity send out an email saying something like this "Remember to vote today and make use of this opportunity to have your say. All over the world people live under regimes where voting is impossible. Some are brave enough to stand up and are forced to flee to survive. Democracy is precious and so are refugees."

Emma N, Bromley

Cut out lots of negative press articles. Put them on a board at church with a banner across the middle saying 'What would Jesus say?'

Heather, Beckenham

Look at the list of famous people who are or were refugees on wikipedia, share it with your friends to challenge the stereotype of what a refugee looks like.

Emily Keaney, London

Encourage your children to play with all children and to be respectful and sympathetic towards cultural differences.

Fabiane, Artist/Designer, London

Give present to poor.

Ikra

Enjoy stories and dances that originate from the refugee nations!

Tricia George, Storyteller

Leave your house at least once a week with an intention to take notice of other people. Lots of people you will be noticing will be refugees.

Dijana, London

Put up a map of the world in our parish church and have pins for people to put where there grandparents came from. We loved it and it generated a lot of interest and also showing how many people came from different countries.

Paul Gruzalski, Retired Teacher, Ashted, Surrey

Smile at everyone you pass in the street - regardless of their ethnicity, gender, class and dress.

Matt, Projects Coordinator, PhotoVoice, London

Organise a quiz and send it round to your email contacts/ colleagues to challenge perceptions and raise awareness

Rachel, Hartlepool

Is your bicycle lying unused in your garden? Why not lend it to an asylum seeker friend for a while to save them transport costs.

Ally, London

Request a track by a refugee to be played on the radio

Kiri, Student, London

Wear a T-shirt saying 'Being European is being in Europe'

Manuel Arroyo-Kalin, Archaeologist, Cambridge

Find out about some celebrities who were or still are refugee's e.g. football players, actors, singers.

Bob Geldof, Sik guy, full time, Leicester St Pauls

Become a pen pal with a refugee or even better make friends with one nearby to your home. Involve them in your games and with your friends. They deserve the respect we show each other.

Aidan Robinson, St Pauls RC Leicester

Put up awareness posters in your local church

Waterman's Group, Bristol

Join an organisation that sends DIY tools to poorer communities to refurbish/build houses

Waterman's Group, Bristol

Set up talk groups to raise awareness about refugees

Waterman's Group, Bristol

Join in cultural festivals

Listen to music from other countries

Buy ethnic/world music CDs

Give time to refugee children to share some of their stories at the assembly with others.

Arman Mohajeri, Civil Servant, Home Office

The World In My Garden – find out where have your favourite flowers have come from.

Try a dance from another culture

Everyone in the UK should learn about their family tree - they may well discover refugees in their history.

It is wrong to treat asylum seekers as second class citizens. Equal status should be given to them.

Offer them education. Speak with them – integrate them

Compare the number of Australians to the number of Asylum Seekers

Invite a play group made of refugees to perform at your local theatre

Waterman's Group, Bristol

Refugees should have quick attention and help by really listening to them.

London

1. Look in your wardrobe, find the cheapest garment

2. Find the label “Made In...”

3. Ask yourself “How much does the person who made this get paid?”

Simon, Croydon

Stop the brand/title 'Refugee'. The brand itself is humiliating

Join a local 'buddy' scheme.

Kirti, Croydon

UKBA often gain a negative view of refugee issues. Since the Home Office actively encourage their staff to volunteer their time for a max of one week per year, as paid special leave, this type of mutual voluntary engagement can only be beneficial to both parties.

Next time you hear a negative thing being said about immigrants or refugees challenge it in a non-confrontational way

Amy Pedder, Senior Project Worker, Worthing

See the planet as a micro spec in the universe so it becomes easy to see all mankind as brothers and shake their hands!

Paulo, Civil Servant, Croydon

Organise a competition to design a poster to promote Refugee Week 2009 and display them in your school to raise awareness.

C Brown, Assistant head teacher, Leeds

Help asylum seekers by buying £35 supermarket vouchers and giving them to a day centre working with refugees so they can then give the asylum seekers cash so they can buy cheaper food from the markets, as these vouchers are all they have to live on each week. It is very simply - you buy supermarket vouchers from them, and they give asylum seekers cash instead.

Claudia Demuth, Consultant, London

Give food and medical supplies

Joseph Moore, Unemployed, England

Empower women refugees by attending a compulsory educational programme where if illiterate they would learn a craft.

Arman Mohajeri, Civil Servant, Home Office

Facilitate for professional refugees to 'work shadow' at workplace, where they can familiarise themselves with work patterns/expectations and get more possibilities have finding a job in their new country.

Arman Mohajeri, Civil Servant, Home office

Take a couple of hours and use the internet as a tool to search for information about this subject. blogs, videos, articles online do give some general understanding.

Ghislaine, Student, Nijmegen

EVERY university city in the country to organise a City of Sanctuary. Students are always best at ACTIVATING these groups. From there cities and towns of S. could be formed until WE ARE ALL INFORMED ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THESE ABUSED PEOPLE

Mim Umney-Gray, Oxfordshire

Get involved in your local City of Sanctuary group - if there isn't one, start one!

www.cityofsanctuary.com

Gill Buttery, Development Worker, Leicester

Give a week's holiday to a client of the Medical Foundation for victims of torture. It's great or volunteer to host a destitute asylum seeker for a week.

Pat Bryden, retired teacher/lecturer, Edinburgh

Step into the shoes of a famous refugee [e.g. Einstein, Pissarro or Michael Marks] and be interviewed in Assembly.

Jackie Bowie, Teacher, St. Joseph's College

Visit a world market

London

Try a restaurant from another part of the world.

London

Make your own t-shirts which have one word in a different language so that people ask and learn about a new culture.

Waterman's Group, Bristol

Watch a film from another part of the world.

London

Give us another bank holiday and make it a celebration of refugees

London

Try a craft from another country

London

Ask someone from a refugee country to talk at your school.

London

Learn about refugees on the internet

London

Awareness posters around schools, hospitals, bus stops with inspiring quotations:

'The Earth is but One Country and Mankind its Citizens'

Arman Mohajeri, Civil servant, Home Office

Learn more about the asylum system

London

Have a pub quiz about refugees in 1000s of pubs across the UK

London

Invite someone home to cook a meal with you.

London

Say hello, how do you do?

London

Tell a child a story of a country in plight.

London

Spend an afternoon once a month or every 2 months with an asylum seeker/ refugee or with a family of asylum seekers/refugees – lunch, a day in the park etc.

London

Volunteer one evening to help out at a night shelter for homeless asylum seekers.

Pete, London

With a smile, with a hug, with a welcoming face.

Shirley, London

Exchange handicrafts (jewellery, knitting etc)

Discover different instruments and their origins.

London

Encourage employed people to take a day (voluntary day by which they get paid anyway by their employer) off and work with refugee centres around UK. By offering this manpower, projects can easily take place during refugee week.

Arman Mohajeri, Civil Servant, Home Office

A photography exhibition which could display through images and text the way a refugee used to live in his/her country.

London

Invite a refugee to join your facebook

London

Start a community service project with refugee teens who want to help out in the community.

Waterman's Group, Bristol

Support a sports team from another country.

London

Artistic endeavours human element.

London

Get rid of the name refugees.

London

Email your MP and ask them what they are doing to support asylum seekers.

Laura, London

During school talks have children research 5 key points to a culture. Make a poster project out of this information.

Waterman's Group, Bristol

Wear badges, have an appropriate member of Parliament, stop being racist, have a foreign food day! New culture day! Love my neighbour.

Small business loans for refugees to set up restaurants, shops etc with openings and events to involve local communities. Restaurants - food is a great way to learn about other countries and people and people would come.

Hattie and Janis, London

Weekly refugee column in local free newspaper (metro, London paper, London Lite etc) about their observations of life in London etc.

Anna, London

Football team in local league.

Hot refugee of the week in London newspapers.

Alex, London

Just see them as human beings.

London

"Come on" she said, "I'll give you shelter from the storm"

B. Dylan

Put women in power, hence no wars, hence no refugees.

London

Invite a few newspaper/TV editors along to a Refugee Week event.

London

Write to the Daily Mail telling them the truth about asylum and immigration. Prosecute the Mail and the Express for their lies and prejudice.

London

Promote ethnic fashion. Bring back Afghan coats!

London

Help integrate a new asylum seeker/ refugee individual/family by inviting them to your house regularly for a meal through the refugee council or similar charity.

London

Talk to the people opposite you or adjacent to you on all forms of public transport no matter what they look like or where they look like or come from.

London

Smile at a stranger and help others no matter where they are from.

Lesley, Scotland

Celebrate the similarities as well as the differences.

London

Ref-huge-eee Week!!

London

Use all the money usually spent on cappuccinos at Starbucks and send to Refugee Week! Add it up!

London

Share your sweets.

London

Get to know refugees better through (culture and food) open events.

London

Cook food and listen to music from different countries.

London

Make the present government inform the British people about other people suffering in their country.

London

More public discussions in media to promote awareness historical contribution of refugees.

London

Organise a dance party with jive, ceroc and rock 'n' roll. Everyone participating. All types of music.

London

Show interest in other cultures. Ask questions.

London

Have a Refugee Week every week.

London

Share your wardrobe with a refugee.

London

Take a basket filled with lovely things to give to a new family of refugees.

London

Pass through harsher anti-terror legislation until this country becomes more like the places current refugees flee from. Then the British people will have more apathy towards people fleeing a homicidal and totalitarian government.

William, music teacher, Powys

Everyone should go to an evening of entertainment organised by people from different countries e.g. Indian dancing, theatre. It can bring so much happiness and fun.

Jayne, London

Don't look at them, talk to them.

Sid, London

A number of young refugees and asylum seekers are now successful at sports especially football: one of them could become a campaigner, helping with changing the image of refugees and asylum seekers.

London

Hold out hands and share warmth from our hearts.

London

Keep an open heart to all human beings and leave them their value.

London

Organise a cooking workshop with refugees and people from the "host" community, where participants learn to cook food from a different country (and at the same time learn more about each other's cultures; improve British ...)

London

Workshops for schools with a film to show the kids the reality of refugees leave their country of origin and here. Show also pictures and do games with kids about their culture, food, histories, clothes...

London

Dance and sing in a language that you don't understand!

Marina, Psychologist, Athens, Greece

Tell people about some famous refugees like Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Emile Zola, Victor Hugo, Joe Slovo ... who were welcomed to the UK and made a great contribution to our lives in all kinds of ways.

London

When someone speaks negatively of refugees, remind them that Einstein (and many other great human beings) are refugees.

London

Big Brother / Sister project where individuals / families from immigrant communities welcome / invite new arrivals from other countries.

Big idea, London

Encourage refugees whose children attend primary schools to share their traditional stories and songs in the classroom.

London

Encourage the work that refugees have done: Persians, the Huguenots, the Kenyan Asians, the Jews. Blow that trumpet fortissimo and let the current asylum seekers get a life.

London

Turn the preconception in the tabloids that welcoming refugees is a strength not a weakness in the UK.

London

Don't call refugees "refugees" – call them people.

London

I can't think of one specific action but something that highlights contribution to society. Too many people think refugees = drain on resources.

London

More festivals like Celebrating Sanctuary but on a bigger scale.

London

Share dinner.

London

Start educating from school age. Go into colleges and universities and educate tomorrow's people.

Valerie, London

Set up a heritage club where each club member tells a story about their country of origin.

Waterman's Group, Bristol

Find a pen-pal from another country.

London

I find food always brings people together – food, dance and song. I would encourage them to sit and eat together, learn how to cook a traditional dish together, learn a song or a national dance.

London

We could look at the advantages of refugees in our country.

London

We could go and see how life is for refugees. Maybe donate money too.

London

More events like Refugee Week to promote awareness through music, poetry and Arts. We should not rely on government to make the move or we will wait forever. We should rely on people like ourselves that are true.

El Crisis, London

Promoting the culture, the traditional outfits, their products.

London

Get together - have a street party like they used to do in the 1970's. Close off the street and enjoy just being neighbours.

Croydon

Have an international day at school where each room is a different country and people move round and experience a bit of everything.

E Appleby, Teacher, Hanwell

Watch The Killing Fields - to understand some of the things that many refugees faced.

Davina, Brighton

If you live in London, have a meal at Song Que (Vietnamese restaurant) and appreciate the flavours and recipes that refugees have brought to this country.

Davina, Brighton

Read your local newspaper - they are usually full of information about the different cultures present in your community and help to appreciate the diversity.

Davina, Brighton

Get together with mates who don't know much about refugees and say a few facts. At work, parties pubs etc...

Tony, London

Listen to different countries music.

Eat different countries foods (Cakes!).

Exchange different countries cultures (Stories).

Smile if you can't say anything else.

Vicente, Spain

Offer a smile.

In a supermarket . Crossing the road. At the swings. At the school gate. In the doctors surgery. On a bus.

Angela Cook, Mediator, Coventry

We have to provide more information about issues in refugee producing countries and why people leave their countries.

Wearing their traditional clothes

Puck Liu, student, CHINA

Think before you judge

Chris Ryder, Photographer/Librarian, Wales

Make a refugee channel on TV or a programme on a popular TV channel. This will tell millions about the truth of refugees.

A brighter future! :o)

Izaak Martin, Age 11, Derby

Start a dialogue with the High Street banks to offer refugees bank accounts and loans at reasonable rates.

Rona, Glasgow

Buy vouchers from failed asylum seekers on Section 4 support.

Why: 1) More people realise in what appalling conditions failed asylum seekers have to live 2) failed asylum seekers get some support and dignity through having cash to spend 3) it highlights the issue and puts pressure on the government to change their policy

Chris, Project Worker, London

A cultural exchange workshop in schools and businesses hosted by refugees.

The visit would allow a large number of people to humanise refugees. It would also give refugees an opportunity to see the nice side of Brits.

Mike, Teacher, London

Make a similar programme to 'Wife Swap' involving refugees.

Jack Lash, Bristol

Write to your local MP on behalf of failed asylum seekers.

Jack Lash, Bristol

Organise a huge (friendly) water fight carnival.

Rosa, Bristol

Make a friend from another culture.

Go and visit other countries.

Smile at everyone on your way to the shop.

Give everyone around a huge free hug.

Organise cooking workshops so everyone can exchange cooking skills and recipes from their countries.

Art therapy for all refugees - let art heal our hearts.

Accept everyone with love, patience, tolerance and serenity.

Get people to stay at camps like Sangate for a week – ask people to imagine leaving their country, language, culture and family for a foreign land.

Give refugees what they want - PEACE!

Sing a song from a refugee producing country.

Encourage schools to invite the parents of refugee schoolchildren to visit and raise awareness.

Say good morning to neighbours, shop people and those sitting beside you on the bus. You never know whose spirits you might lift!

Give them biscuits of love!

Anon, Oxford

Even if you can't campaign, you can still be a real friend to a refugee.

Involve refugees in community gatherings or groups.

Allow asylum seekers to work.

Organise a local auction for charity – trading one item of cultural significance for another.

Throw new shapes! Learn dance styles from different cultures.

Treat people with respect.

STOP and give space in your life to listen – really listen – to people’s stories. Then ask them “What can I do? What will make a difference in your life?”

Organise a ‘Living Library’ – borrow a ‘book’ which happens to be a person. This helps to create an understanding between people who would not meet un normal circumstances.

Carry a Refugee Week balloon around town.

[ADD AN ACTION](#)

