

WHAT NEXT?

What Next? Refugee Crisis briefing

DRAFT

KB and EC 07/06/2016

#WNCulture

#Refugeeswelcome

Over the last six months the What Next? Young Vic Group has been working with Citizen's UK, Migrants Organise, Good Chance Theatre, Counterpoint Arts and others to talk about the ways that the arts and cultural sector can get involved in supporting refugees and other partners working in this area.

This draft briefing document sets out a menu of different ways that What Next? colleagues can take action and get involved.

Over the next few weeks we aim to develop this briefing further with more links, activity, case studies, training offers and actions.

Please contact Elizabeth Crump: lizzie@culturallearningalliance.org.uk if you'd like to add or amend something (and usual apologies if you've been misrepresented!).

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What we want to do

- 1. Support the many colleagues and experts in the cultural sector that have been working in this area for many years: notably [Counterpoint](#) (who run Refugee Week) and [Platforma](#).**
- 2. Contribute to a national narrative around refugees that is humanising, energising and positive.**
We want to help to humanise the stories of refugees and migrants currently in the press – giving voice and a platform to refugees and migrants themselves wherever possible and encouraging the general public to engage with the crisis in fresh ways to counter the ‘compassion fatigue’ that is the result of the on-going nature of the situation. One of the ways we can do this is by activating the **What Next? Grid**.
- 3. Provide practical support** to refugee and migrant communities and those working with them.
- 4. Support our colleagues at Good Chance Theatre who are working in the Jungle in Calais**
- 5. Mobilise political action in support of refugees and migrants**

How we plan to do this

Summary of actions

- Engage in Refugee Week
- Activate the What Next? Grid in the week of July 29th – use your comms footprint to change this narrative
- Produce a fringe meeting at a Party Conference
- Create an artistic response / programme in one of the three key dates
- Create a new partnership with specialists working in this area – both arts and non-arts
- Signpost to others working in this area
- Host a debate
- Create welcoming signage
- Become a building of sanctuary
- Join or create a local Refugee Welcome Group
- Reach out to local refugee communities
- Offer space to local groups
- Be a part of a pilot scheme with the Home Office researching the possibility of the arts and cultural sector creating a consortium for Private Sponsorship of Syrian Refugees.
- Help find homes for Syrian Refugees

- Take political action – particularly on unaccompanied minors
- Use press, PR, awards and events to ask government to resettle refugee children.

Giving a platform to positive, human stories

The refugee and migrant crisis is on-going and through our discussions, What Next? colleagues have felt that it would be useful to identify a **number of different moments throughout the year** where we can collectively engage with this issue.

Key moments

We have initially agreed on the following (though we can add to these over time):

1. Refugee week (20th – 26th of June

How to engage in Refugee Week: <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/getinvolved/>

Refugee Week runs from **20th – 26th of June** this year.

It will be [launched](#) as part of the Meltdown Festival at the Southbank Centre:

You can:

- **organise an event** in Refugee Week. Here [are examples and ideas](#) of events you could hold
- **attend an event** (here is the [calendar](#) of events), promote it, tweet about it
- [volunteer](#)
- [donate](#)
- **join the ‘Simple Acts of Welcome’ Campaign** and perform a personal/organisational act of welcome such as creating and broadcasting a message of welcome, learning a few words in a new language or sharing a meal with someone.

If you are taking any action, then use the hashtag: **#refugeeswelcome**

Counterpoint also runs a number of on-going projects including Platforma – the national Arts and Refugee network: <http://www.platforma.org.uk/about/>. The website includes lots of **examples of existing and inspiring practice**.

The Platforma network is run by regional contacts/lead organisations (who would be good links for interested What Next? Chapters <http://www.platforma.org.uk/contact/>).

Considerations – EU Referendum

Refugee Week (which, this year, has a theme of 'Welcome') falls in the same week as the European Referendum. It is already clear that the issue of migration is central to campaigning strategies, with a strong anti-migrant rhetoric. It will therefore be doubly important that the 'Welcome' message is clearly heard and expressed.

For advice and guidance on any Press and PR issues, or for help placing and managing stories, please do contact lottie_morris@outlook.com

2. **The week of the 29th July to 9th of August**

The [Good Chance Theatre](#) team will be in the country this week as part of the [Southbank Centre's Festival of Love](#), and we will all have had a chance to digest and respond to the outcome of the EU referendum.

Activating the What Next? Grid

If we add up our audiences, members, participants and staff, websites and resources the What Next? membership has an incredible reach.

In the past we have each agreed in principle to use these channels of communication in a co-ordinated way to turn up the volume on specific issues (like the EBacc or about public funding of the arts).

Over the last six months we have talked about doing this to change the national narrative about refugees and migrants.

We are suggesting that in the **week of 29th July – 9th August** we each engage in some of the following actions:

- **Celebrate any work you are doing in this area and make it visible.** If your education, participation or community team are doing a project – celebrate it. Consider writing a paragraph about the work and sharing it with your mailing list or audiences. Consider sending it to the press.
- **Write a few lines** on why you care about giving refugees and migrants a platform and why you want to share real stories. Send this out to all your staff and colleagues. Consider putting it up in your building or printing it on the back of tickets.
- **Publish a blog post or article** by yourself or a refugee/migrant on your website. Consider giving it some space in your newsletter or in your brochure.
- **Shout about someone else** – signpost to some great work that is happening locally or nationally with refugees and migrants.
- **Tweet about great refugee and migrant work** with the hashtag #refugeeswelcome (we will set up a Thunderclap).
- **Hold a staff meeting** where you discuss the current crisis and how you can respond to it – use this memo as a starting point if useful.

- **Brief your board** on the organisation's stance and activity.

3. 25th September – 6th of October: Party Conference Season.

We are suggesting we explore the possibility of creating two fringe events on this subject at the Conservative and Labour Party Conferences.

If you want to lead on this strand of work, let us know.

Actions we can take to create a platform for refugee stories at these three key moments

1. Research what is going on in your area

Check Platforma and talk to colleagues to uncover local work and then support it – signpost to it in your newsletter, tweet about it, take a board member or a colleague to see a piece of work.

2. Programme / create work around the issues of migration and refugees.

This can be done directly with refugees themselves, in collaboration, or by giving refugee artists a platform. There are important considerations and principles for working with individuals who have been through this kind of experience that need to be considered when making this kind of work. There is a great deal of excellent practice already existing in his area with organisations like [Pan Intercultural Arts](#), [Oval House](#), the [Young Vic](#) happy to share ideas and approaches. Partnership with experts is a key principle of effective arts practice with refugee and migrant communities.

There are also guidance documents like this one:

<https://refugeesupportnetwork.org/sites/default/files/InclusionThroughArt2013.pdf>

3. Host public debates/discussions/ conversations around the issues of migration with local groups working in this area.

4. Create signage in your building showing that you are a welcoming and safe space

5. Become a building of sanctuary

<https://arts.cityofsanctuary.org/theatres>

West Yorkshire Playhouse are a Theatre of Sanctuary and have worked with city of sanctuary to create a process for other Theatre's to follow suit. If you're not a theatre but another kind of arts or cultural organisation, these principles apply and it is definitely worth contacting the City of Sanctuary to talk about broadening the scope.

Theatre of Sanctuary process:

When a theatre expresses interest in becoming a theatre of sanctuary, a small group representing the theatre community should be appointed to gather evidence and consult service users. This group will work with the local City of Sanctuary group and

trustees and produce a portfolio of evidence showing:

- The actions taken to promote a culture of sanctuary within the theatre.
- The plans to make this an on-going and sustainable endeavour.
- The ways that the theatre plans to make its services more accessible for refugees and asylum seekers.
- The commitment of the community of the theatre (including staff in all areas of theatre life, actors and producers, patrons and client representatives) to promoting sanctuary at all levels of theatre life.
- The plans to take the concept of becoming a theatre of sanctuary to other theatres and partners within the world of the arts

Providing practical support for refugee communities

1. Join or create a local Refugee Welcome Group

You can find the list of existing groups here <http://www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/refugeeswelcome-groups-training-action/> and if there is no existing local group then you can receive free training on how to set one up and sustain it.

2. Reach out to local refugee communities and ask what you can do to support them.

Welcome them to your building if you have one -possibly on a specific night in conjunction with audiences and colleagues, or as a general offer of welcome and support.

3. Offer space to local groups who might need a room for general resources, meetings/workshops/language classes etc.

4. Be a part of a pilot scheme with the Home Office researching the possibility of the arts and cultural sector creating a consortium for Private Sponsorship of Syrian Refugees.

We are particularly looking for;

- a. A company to be the face/charitable arm of this project
- b. Colleagues who can assist with finding accommodation
- c. Colleagues who can assist with finding tutoring for English as a Second Language.

Please get in touch with Kathryn Bilyard on kathrynbilyard@gmail.com for further details on this

5. Help find homes for Syrian refugees

http://www.citizensuk.org/help_find_homes_for_syrian_refugees

Sign up on the Homes for Resettled Refugees Register or help find others willing to do so. Sign if you:

- own a family-sized rental property in the UK;

- would be prepared to offer it as a home for a Syrian refugee family if it is vacant when there is demand in your area;
- can offer a 3 year tenancy to enable the family to have some stability when they arrive;
- are able rent out the property for the Local Housing Allowance Rate in your area. The first 12 months of the rent will be paid for by the European Union under a scheme for placing vulnerable refugees.

Mobilising political action in support of refugees and migrants

We can **consider using speeches, awards, event, press contacts to make key points in support of refugees and migrants**. Charlotte York can provide help and support if needed: lottie_morris@outlook.com

Advice from Citizen's UK is for the Arts and Cultural sector to focus any political influencing on **unaccompanied minors**.

They have produced this [pack](#) which gives key messages and suggested actions for influencing and lobbying MPs and local councils.

Citizen's UK are asking us to act in the further following ways:

1. Ask your **council to resettle 50 refugees** - sign up for a training event [here](#).
2. Ask your MP to **up the UK resettlement quota**
3. **Call on Universities** to offer places to refugees

For reference

Text of February letter from Arts and Cultural sector asking David Cameron to help refugee children in Calais

<http://www.helprefugees.org.uk/2016/02/18/please-sign-letter-to-david-cameron-asking-to-help-save-childrenofcalais/>

Key contacts

Kathryn Bilyard has offered to support and co-ordinate What Next? activity in this area.
kathrynbilyard@gmail.com

If you are doing any of these things, please do let her know. We can send you other information about what is happening in your area that you may want to include, and help connect this to the national movement.

George Gabriel, Citizen's UK: george.gabriel@citizensuk.org

Zrinka Bralo: Migrants Organise: zrinka@migrantsorganise.org

Charlotte York (Press and PR): lottie_morris@outlook.com

Kathryn Bilyard for What Next?: kathrynbilyard@gmail.com

Lizzie Crump for What Next? lizzie@culturallearningalliance.org.uk

Fenella Dawnay, Good Chance Theatre: fenella@goodchance.org.uk

Tom Green, Counterpoint and Platforma (Refugee Week) tom@counterpointsarts.org.uk

Action Case Study

Meet your new neighbour: Farnham Maltings

Contact: Nadia@housetheatre.org.uk

A programme introducing newly arrived immigrants to local people through visits to live theatre.

Meet your new Neighbour is a simple idea. To broker introductions between local hosts and newly arrived migrants who attend a live performance event together. The ambition is, in part, to facilitate the integration of newly arrived migrants into British society and address the social isolation that can be experienced by vulnerable and marginalised groups. Participating venues will work with local refugee organisations and recruit, through its audience membership and mailing lists, volunteer hosts to accompany refugees to a selected programme of performances. The intention is that host and refugee should meet for 30 minutes prior to the performance at the venue and see the show. No other expectation is placed on either.

house will pay for the refugee's ticket and a contribution towards travel. This programme is in part about the symbolism of a network of cultural venues actively engaging in their civic role intent on brokering 100 new conversations.

How will it work?

house will work with you to choose a performance that is suitable and put you in touch with a local refugee organisation. Then it's time to recruit your hosts.

Who pays for the tickets?

house will pay for the refugee's ticket and a contribution towards their travel. The host will pay for their own ticket.

What happens on the day?

The host and refugee will meet at the venue 30 minutes before the performance is due to begin. They can have a drink and a chat and then watch the performance together.

And then what?

Then it's up to the pairs! If they would like to meet again then they can take it from there. If the pilot is successful, this could be developed into a regular venue event with possible expansion into those new to the area as well as refugees.