

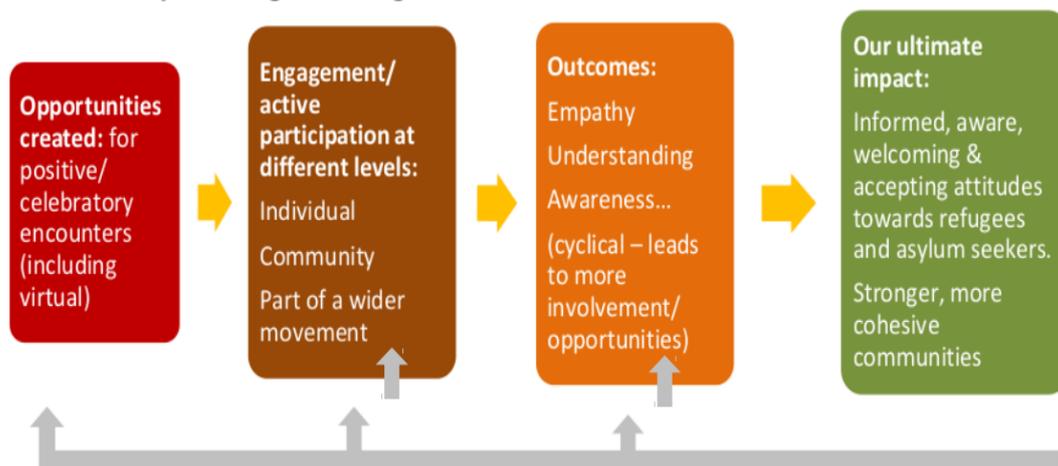


## **Key learning from the “Make a difference: reaching the fence-sitters” workshop**

Purpose of this workshop was to consider explore our key challenge of how to reach people who are not already engaged with refugee issues, and how we can tell whether our activities in Refugee Week have made any difference. Specifically:

- To consider how to engage “fence sitters” in Refugee Week events
- To find practical ways to measure the social impact of Refugee Week events

### **Outline Theory of Change for Refugee Week:**



**The Refugee Week Strategy defines “fence-sitters”:** “the main characteristic of this group is not whether they are well educated or in high powered jobs, but that if one can engage them, they are open to ideas and do not always agree with the negative stories and images they read in the press. As they are not an identifiable group as such, the assumption is that most mainstream audiences will include some fence-sitters.

### **1. How can we engage fence-sitters?**

- Key outcomes we are seeking: empathy, understanding, awareness - informed and welcoming attitudes.
- Arts and cultural activities may help positively influence attitudes by allowing many voices to be heard in the mainstream e.g. explaining why people seek sanctuary, telling sorties helps create empathy, understanding, make connections, change attitudes (confronting stereotypes of refugees and asylum seekers as victims/ benefit grabbers), dispel myths and challenge misinformation

- Important questions to consider in planning are “How do you want people to respond? Is there a simple call for action?”

Participants worked in groups and fed back their best ideas for reaching “fence-sitters” in Refugee Week:

Ideas for events	Ideas for how to engage people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor yoga event</li> <li>• Film screenings at university</li> <li>• Fish &amp; chip shop/van</li> <li>• Library van</li> <li>• Public transport advert</li> <li>• Life lottery – sharing</li> <li>• Solidarity between mothers</li> <li>• Refugee solidarity camp</li> <li>• Flashmob</li> <li>• Comedy/ singing events for teenagers</li> <li>• Food events centred around different cultures</li> <li>• Pop up exhibition (about refugees?) that can be printed and distributed</li> <li>• Sewing circle</li> <li>• Waterstones showcase – highlighting refugee authors etc.</li> <li>• Football matches – real examples in Dulwich</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Making it personal</li> <li>○ Encouraging pledges</li> <li>○ Using popular venues</li> <li>○ Uses unusual messages for positive stories – M&amp;S?</li> <li>○ Importance of accurate knowledge – myth countering/ education</li> <li>○ Test the public – give them a test on the UK citizenship test</li> <li>○ Trade school – swapping skills; refugees going lessons on Arabic, Islam etc.</li> <li>○ “What would you take with you if you had to leave in a hurry?” – possible idea for exhibition</li> <li>○ Re-interpreting the statistics...changing the narrative</li> </ul>

It was noted that research has shown that myth busting doesn’t work – the thing people remember is the myth...

## 2. How will we know if the events have made any difference?

Ideally we would like to know:

- Who is attending the events (demographic profile information)
- Find out how they came to participate in the event
- Baseline attitudes to refugees/know what they thought before and after
- Have their contact details so can keep in touch/seek longer term feedback – longer term follow up response rates not likely to be high BUT it is not possible to **assess** the long term impacts of events at all if don’t have any contact details from participants

But the context needs to be considered:

- The theory of change behind an individual’s attitude is complex, may not be linear and it may be a slow process – an experience or event can make a long-term impact that one doesn’t realise until later on...

- There is therefore a tension between the practical need to ask simple questions in order to get people to respond, and the need to understand the complexity of the attitudes and issues.
- Pragmatic approach needed e.g. is it better to ask just one question in order to get 50% of respondents answering than using a long questionnaire and getting 3 detailed responses...?
- Event organisers need to consider what is the most important purpose of their event evaluation and focus on the best way to get feedback about those aspects - don't try to do everything!

**Current evaluation form:** participants reviewed the current evaluation form and made the following comments:

- Too long
- People don't like form filling
- Too closed
- Shouldn't ask for contact details without purpose/ incentive

**Deciding what questions to ask:**

- Ask the right questions in a non-aggressive way
- Keep evaluation short and sweet – 'love it, hate it, change it'
- If it's a survey, make it not too long in length – one page max....
- Ask a question that makes people THINK about how they will act upon information provided.... "How will you know welcome a refugee in your community?"
- Before and after – what changed you mind?
- Phrasing of questions is key

**Practical ideas for getting more feedback from participants, particularly at events targeting fence-sitters:**

- Make it easy for participants and practitioners!
- Text messages to ask for feedback
- Social media quizzes
- Making things decorative – pin boards, more fun
- Asking people while they are at the venue
- Incentives – small token, voucher, raffle for hamper – something as an engagement device!
- Record people giving their feedback
- Make questions more specific/ response straight after the event to build 'legacy factor'

**Follow up after events:**

- Event planning: strategy needs to be thought out before events, so that those who become engaged during the event can access support they need to become involved with project/ refugee empowerment etc.
- Provide lists to explain how people can get involved after event – flyer? Go and tell a friend etc.