Migration news roundup 26 June 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

To mark Refugee Week, UNHCR shared a series of short videos about inspiring people with a refugee background, including Bemeriki who is a permaculture expert, teacher and refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo and is now living in Uganda. Here in the UK three inspiring people were interviewed about overcoming the challenges of forced displacement and making the UK their home, including Gaida Dirar from Hull. (Sources: UNHCR, YouTube, Big Issue)

Here are a few highlights from local Refugee Week events - St Augustine's Centre in Halifax created a giant 'Compassion' themed outdoor artwork and Theatre of Sanctuary Opera North in Leeds hosted a concert featuring performers with personal experience of displacement. (Sources: Counterpoints Arts, Yorkshire Bylines)

International news

As the demand for skilled workers increases, New Zealand is set to simplify their immigration rules and create a faster route to securing permanent residency. Meanwhile in Australia, migrant advocacy and service groups call for reform of the Australian skills and qualification recognition system to improve migrant access to more suitable employment and to address the labour

supply issues. (Sources: Reuters, the Guardian)

The USA has condemned the recent law passed in Uganda that extends existing anti-LGBTQ legislation to now include the death penalty, and it imposed travel restrictions on Ugandan officials (Source: Al Jazeera)

Mass migration could rise as climate related issues become more common. For that reason author Gaia Vince proposes that we should embrace migration and 'ditch outdated border controls'. Additionally, this podcast calls for an urgent review of our overall attitude toward migration in order to avoid what is described as one of the worst refugee disasters in the Mediterranean. (Sources: Euronews, Al Jazeera)

UK borders and migration policy

A Refugee Manifesto, spearheaded by Lord Roberts of Llandudno , accuses the government of 'making a mockery of human dignity' and calls for changes to the way the UK treats people seeking sanctuary. (Source: Independent)

Gang members who allegedly charged people between £2,500 and £7,500 to facilitate Channel crossings, were arrested this week. Meanwhile in Birmingham there have been arrests as part of enforcement action targeting undocumented workers. (Sources: National Crime Agency, BBC)

There is a new briefing on the seasonal worker visa and here is an overview of the term 'refugee' from a legal perspective.

(Source: Free Movement)

Specific migrant groups

A new briefing on the latest Home Office statistics looks at the state of the asylum system. And a private firm have won a £1.1m contract to deliver health services at a RAF site set to be used as asylum accommodation in Essex. (Sources: Free Movement, Independent)

Writers from migrant or refugee backgrounds can win £15,000 as part of a new literary prize. (Source: the Guardian)

This article examines the argument that refugees should claim asylum in the first safe country they arrive in. (Source: Free Movement)

A new Homelessness Escalation Service has been set up to support non-UK national individuals who are houseless and waiting for a decision on their immigration application. (Source: Home Office)

On the EU Settlement Scheme, Kari-Ann Moller, the wife of a Roxy Music musician, who has lived in the UK for 74 years has been caught up in aftermath of Brexit. The Home Office stated there was no evidence she had ever lived in the UK, so the couple submitted a photo of her on the cover of a Roxy Music album from the 1970's. (Source: the Guardian)

Welcome Churches hosted a Friendship Festival in Sheffield in partnership with Sheffield Chinese Christian Church. Over 500 Hongkongers attended the event and were welcomed by the Lord Mayor of Sheffield. (Sources: On Your Side UK, Welcome Churches)

On Young People, the Illegal Migration Bill has been rejected by the Welsh Parliament, stating the Bill 'completely disregards children's rights'. A joint letter has also been sent to the Home Secretary from the UK's top medical institutions, warning of 'unimaginable levels of harm' that would be caused if children are locked up indefinitely. Meanwhile, health professionals have reported that an increasing number of children are being diagnosed with malnutrition in asylum hotels and there is evidence young people with a refugee background struggle to access higher education in the UK due to a lack of understanding of their eligibility. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian, Times Higher Education)

On modern slavery:

- This briefing considers the impact of the Illegal Migration Bill and proposes amendments to facilitate access to early legal advice for people affected by modern slavery. (Source: Anti Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit)
- This advice for journalists about interviewing survivors shares some useful insights. (Source: openDemocracy)
- There's new guidance for businesses on the vulnerability of displaced people. (Source: Anti-Slavery International)

- There’s a new report on labour exploitation in London. (Source: Young Foundation)

On Windrush:

- The latest data on Windrush compensation suggests by the end of May 2023, the amount paid and offered to individuals through the scheme was just above £75 million, with 66% of claims having had a final decision. However, some sources suggest that so far only one in four of the 6,348 applications submitted have received payment and the unit in charge of reforming Home Office after the Windrush crisis may be closing at the end of this month. (Sources: Home Office, the Guardian)
- Recent analysis of documents in the National Archives reveal further injustices experienced by the ‘Windrush generation’, showing that between 1958 and 1970 at least 411 individuals with mental and physical conditions were sent back to Commonwealth nations in the Caribbean. (Source: BBC)
- As events continue to mark the 75th anniversary of Windrush, read about the influence of the Windrush generation on British music and learn how to gather oral family history by speaking to older relatives from the Windrush generation and others, to record their stories and experiences. (Source: The Conversation)

Cohesion and integration

Refugee Week Ambassadors Gaida and Mayas Dirar share their experiences of involvement in Refugee Week and how advisory groups encourage participation and help amplify refugee voices. (Source: Migration Yorkshire)

The Scottish Refugee Council has created a new website dedicated to the real-world impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, featuring over 50 projects supporting refugee integration across Scotland. (Source: Scottish Refugee Council)

Actor David Harewood delivered the annual Richard Dimbleby lecture for the BBC focusing on Windrush and exploring the challenges faced by his parents' generation and his own personal experience of being Black and British. (Source: BBC)

A Lake District Tour boat firm has been accused of preventing tour guides from mentioning the link between some shoreline grand houses and the historic slave trade. (Source: the Guardian)

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