

STAR National Events

STAR took the tenth National Conference to London for the first time in 2007, with 122 delegates descending on the Human Rights Action Centre for a weekend of workshops and featuring speakers including Jon Cruddas MP, philosopher and writer Julian Baggini and writer and journalist Natasha Walter.



STAR conference delegates celebrate the tenth conference with some delectable cup cakes

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LOOKING AHEAD...

This year the STAR national support office said **farewell** to Chief Executive Katherine, Volunteering Support Officer Russell and Student Outreach Officer Natasha, all off to pastures new and...

... **A big welcome** to Emma Williams, appointed as Chief Executive in June! Emma has been working with refugees in the UK for the past thirteen years; first as coordinator of a Vietnamese refugee community organisation in East London and since 2000 as National Development Manager at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

STAR Conference 2008: 15th – 16th November 2008

The Human Rights Action Centre, London. PUT IT IN YOUR DIARIES NOW!

In September 2008, STAR will be launching the **Refugee Children's Programme** (RCP). Driven by the passions, cares and ideas of young refugees themselves (and funded by the Department for Schools, Children and Families) the RCP will offer a range of exciting opportunities for STAR Groups to develop exciting, effective and safe projects benefiting young refugees.

Still Human Still Here

The campaign against the forced destitution of refused asylum seekers was a major focus of activity for the STAR network, including:

39 STAR and Amnesty groups teaming up to hold **21** sleep outs across the UK on Action Day in March, **4009** signatures on a petition collected by the network to show the support for the campaign among students, which was presented to the Home Office in May, **500** DVDs distributed among the network and **43** other *Still Human Still Here* campaigning actions by groups.



London STAR and Amnesty groups team up for a very public *Still Human Still Here* sleep out in Covent Garden

STAR Review of the Year 2007/8



AN UPDATE FROM STUDENT ACTION FOR REFUGEES

It's been a bumper year for the STAR student network. Our 10th national conference saw a record turn out and STAR groups delivering an unprecedented number of activities. Here we have compiled a selection of the highlights from across the STAR network in 2007/8.

The asylum year in numbers...

24,345 – The number of applications for asylum in the UK in 2007 (UKBA)

4,502 – The number of additional planned spaces in the immigration detention estate (Home Office)

16 – The percentage of asylum applications granted asylum at the first decision in 2007 (Refugee Action)

100 – The percentage of those seeking asylum who are entitled to receive primary healthcare for free in the UK, following a High Court decision in April

STAR's contribution to the year

Events held at **41** different universities across the UK including STARs first activity in Northern Ireland at Queens University, Belfast. **13,695** students and young people reached with positive messages about refugees.

64 projects providing practical support to refugees supported by STAR members, including **13** conversation clubs, **5** kids clubs and **12** mentoring projects.

154 one off events and activities, including **29** freshers fair stalls, **64** campaigning events, **6** performances of Asylum Monologues, **5** weeks of living like destitute asylum seekers, **18** speaker events and **21** fundraisers, gigs and DJ nights.

556 communiqués from the STAR national support office, including **51** visits to groups, **22** STAR updates and **359** emails or texts.



STAR Conference 2007: the first person to lower your hands is the loser!

Image: Coldframe.net

STAR GROUPS AROUND THE COUNTRY

SCOTLAND, THE NORTH EAST & NORTHERN IRELAND

Back by popular demand, **Glasgow STAR** organised a summer kids club for the second year – bringing refugee and local children in Glasgow together for a week of games and outings. **Edinburgh STAR** engaged students with talks, photo exhibitions and info posters in a series of monthly campaigns focussing on different refugee producing countries, including China, Palestine and Zimbabwe. **Liverpool STAR** followed a food theme this year, teaming up with Make a Difference Day to produce 30 food parcels for destitute asylum seekers in the city as well as holding several picnics. Welcome to **Queens University, Belfast**, where students held a sleep out for Action Day 2008/9.

WALES & THE MIDLANDS

Cardiff STAR put their group on the map, presenting their activities to 120 delegates at a student development conference in March. Meanwhile, in the Midlands, **Warwick STAR** proved experts at getting their fellow students to part with their cash, fundraising for 150 bed spaces for destitute asylum seekers at Coventry Peace House. **Birmingham STARs** BUMP project – a play club for refugee children – has gone from strength to strength – doubling to 2 play sessions per week. **DeMontford STAR** have continued to provide much needed language and IT support to refugees. **Nottingham STAR** danced the night away at a successful DJ night, raising funds for Nottingham refugee Forum.

THAMES VALLEY & THE SOUTH WEST

Oxford STAR have enthusiastically supported the Independent Asylum Commission, including linking up with Asylum Welcome for a number of campaigning events. They also took the prize for the biggest sleep out for Action Day. **Reading STAR** continued their Saturday kids workshops, working with local arts collective RAVE. **Plymouth STAR** got involved with an allotment project which also saw them accompany refugee participants on a day trip to The Eden Project.

NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE

Newcastle STAR offered support to one of their members – Courage – who has been involved in an ongoing fight against his deportation. **Leeds STAR** pulled out all the stops for the Still Human Still Here campaign, spending a week living like a destitute asylum seeker and picking up the Marsh Refugee Volunteer Award for their contribution to a language support group. **Bradford STAR** employed their culinary skills to establish a soup kitchen that has proved as popular with students as with local asylum seekers. **Sheffield STAR** got their walking boots on, participating in the full length of a three day march from Sheffield to Lindholme Immigration Removal Centre. **Hull STAR** held a highly popular fundraising gig, raising £250 for The 167 Centre. And finally a warm welcome to **York University**, who are looking at establishing a new STAR group this year.

SOUTH, EAST & LONDON

LSE, SOAS and KCL STARs teamed up with Amnesty groups for Action Day, resulting in a truly mass sleep out in Covent Garden. Well done to **Cambridge STAR** who's perseverance has paid off in setting up a conversation club. Perseverance was also a virtue of **Southampton STAR**, who attended STARs Still Human Still Here mini lobby at the Houses of Parliament, pursuing a meeting with John Denham MP at all costs! **Sussex STAR** were a welcome edition to the STAR network, kicking off in the summer with a day of activities including a Journey to Safety simulation, refugee project volunteering fair, speakers and music. **Essex STARs** speaker event also went down well, with an awesome panel featuring academics, lawyers and campaigners.

