

INGO TRACKER

BRANDS • AUDIENCES • ISSUES

HOT TOPIC

Public sympathy for refugees

March 2017

Introduction

The refugee crisis is never far from the headlines. We've used data from the INGO Tracker to investigate links between public sympathy for refugees and charitable support.

We've found:

- **A strong link between sympathy for refugees and support for international NGOs** – especially among a core group of younger, relatively affluent people who are politically aware and active on social media.
- **Feeling sympathetic doesn't necessarily translate into a willingness to accept more refugees.** While almost half of people (46%) say they're sympathetic to refugees, there is a significant subgroup within this – equivalent to one third of the UK population – who don't think we should allow more to remain.
- **Most people** – whatever their view of refugees – over-estimate how many asylum applications are granted in the UK. Those with least sympathy for refugees were most likely to over-estimate when asked how many applications were granted in 2016 (the actual figure is 8,466).

What the public think

Almost half of UK adults (46%) say they are sympathetic toward refugees who have arrived in Europe in recent years, compared with 25% who are unsympathetic and 28% who are neutral.

Only 18% think we should allow more refugees into the UK than at present, compared with more than half (55%) who think there should be fewer, and 27% who say current levels are about right.

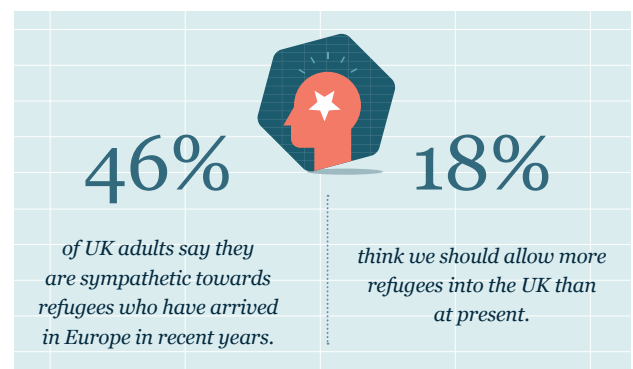


FIG 1 • I FEEL SYMPATHETIC TO THE REFUGEES THAT HAVE ARRIVED IN EUROPE IN RECENT YEARS

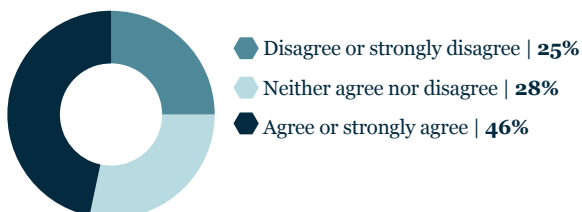


FIG 2 • DO YOU THINK THE UK SHOULD ACCEPT MORE OR FEWER REFUGEES SEEKING ASYLUM?

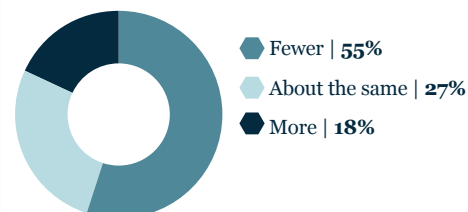


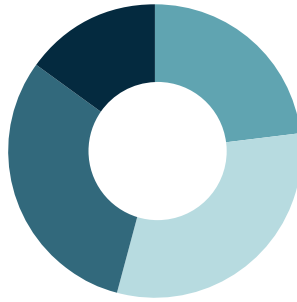
FIG 3 • THREE KEY GROUPS (AS PERCENTAGE OF UK ADULTS)

Welcoming Sympathisers | 15%

More likely than average to be male, younger, Labour or Green Party voter and an EU remain voter.

Distance Sympathisers | 31%

More likely than average to be female and younger.



Unsympathetic Rejectors | 23%

More likely than average to be male, older, less affluent, Conservative or UKIP voter and an EU leave voter.

Indifferent to the issue | 31%

Neither sympathetic or unsympathetic to refugees. We've excluded this group from the the rest of this report.

Our data yielded three groups with similar views on refugees, who also share other attitudes in common.



Welcoming Sympathisers (15% of UK adults)

This group is sympathetic to the plight of refugees and would like to see more allowed into the UK. They engage in international causes and are politically aware, though more likely than the general population to under-estimate how many refugees are granted asylum (63% vs 47%).

They're younger than the general population (24% are aged 18-24 versus 12% of UK adults) and slightly more likely to be men. They tend to vote for parties on the left, and 77% voted to remain in the EU.

Welcoming Sympathisers are very likely to support causes like international human rights (83%), overseas development (70%) and emergency relief (86%), and more likely to share their views on good causes via social media (33% vs 21% of UK population).

They are also more likely than the wider public to support charities as part of their social life (40% vs 30%), and to be active in their local communities (32% vs 21%).

FIG 4 • ESTIMATES OF NUMBER OF ASYLUM CLAIMS GRANTED DURING 2016

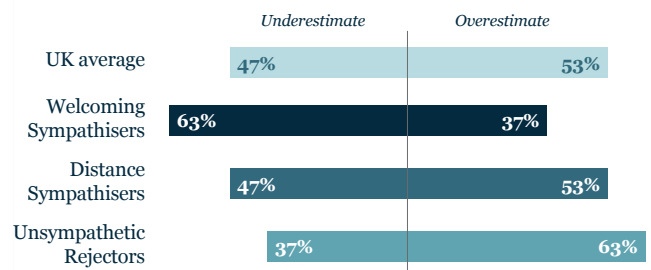


FIG 5 • SUPPORT OR CONSIDERATION BY CHARITY CATEGORY

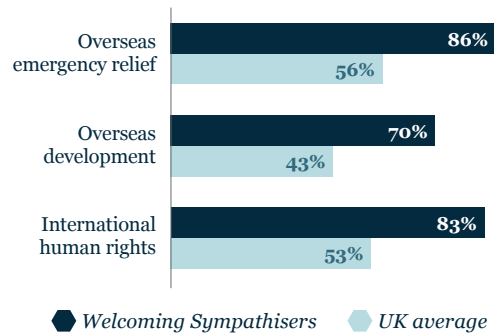
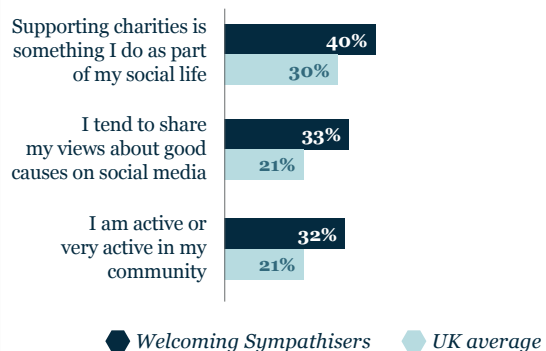


FIG 6 • AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE THAT:





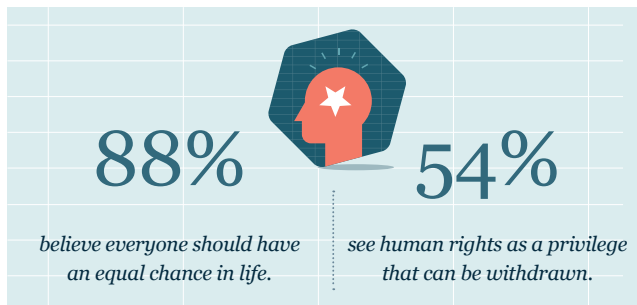
Distance Sympathisers (31% of UK adults)

This group expresses sympathy for refugees but is unwilling to see the UK accept more asylum claims – almost half (46%) would like that number to be reduced.

Compared with the general population, they're more likely to be female (58%) and somewhat younger. Just over half over-estimate the number of refugees granted asylum (53%). They appear to reflect the general population across a broad range of political and socio-economic indicators.

Many in this group find it easier to express sympathy for people overseas, but feel differently about proposed solutions closer to home.

This group is more likely than the wider public to consider supporting traditional development issues like hunger and nutrition (55% vs 43%), and clean water and sanitation (53% vs 43%). They are also more likely than the general population to believe international NGOs make lives better in developing countries (56% vs 43%).



In line with the wider UK population, almost two-thirds (61%) of this group believe we should address problems in the UK before addressing problems overseas. In common with Welcoming Sympathisers they firmly believe 'everyone should have an equal chance in life, no matter who they are and where they live' (88% vs 75% of general public). However, their support for human rights is more conditional than that of the Welcoming Sympathisers, and are more likely to see human rights as a privilege that can be withdrawn (54% vs 34%).

FIG 7 • PREFERENCE FOR INTERNATIONAL CAUSES*



FIG 8 • WHAT DIFFERENCE HAVE INTERNATIONAL CHARITIES MADE TO THE LIVES OF PEOPLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

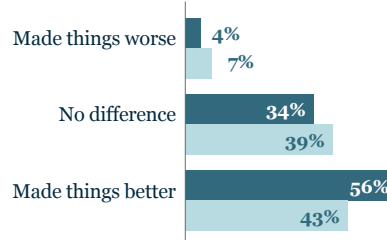
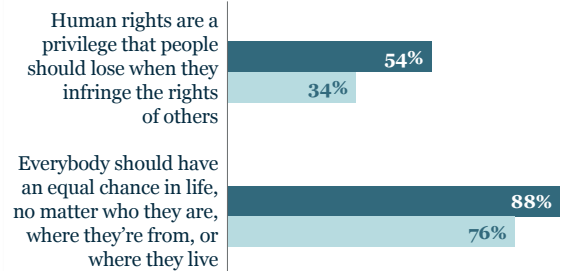


FIG 9 • AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE THAT:



Distance Sympathisers UK average

*Respondents are asked to choose from a list of 22 causes, which five they'd be most likely to support.



Unsympathetic Rejectors (23% of UK adults)

This group is unsympathetic to refugees and against more being allowed into the UK. 92% say we should accept fewer asylum claims.

Compared with the general public, they are more likely to be male and older – 46% are aged 55+ compared with 36% of the population. They are less affluent (55% C2DE vs 47% of the general public), and more likely to over-estimate the number of refugees allowed to remain in the UK (63% vs 53%).

They're more likely to vote for political parties on the right – one third (32%) are Conservative voters, while a quarter (27%) are UKIP supporters. 70% voted to leave the EU.

This group is much more likely than most to believe that charity should begin at home, with 86% agreeing that we should address problems in the UK before addressing them overseas. They're much less likely than the wider public to believe the UK has a responsibility to help people in the developing world (28% vs 45%).

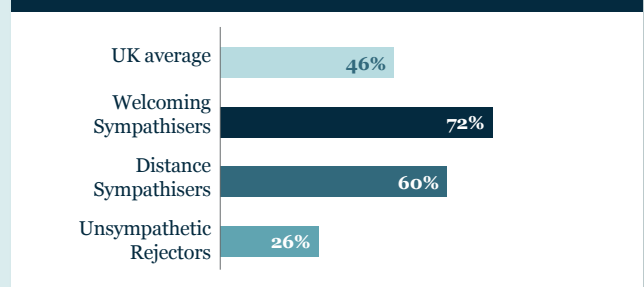
Sympathy toward refugees and engagement with INGOs

As you might expect, there is a clear correlation between sympathy for refugees and trust in international NGOs to deliver aid.

Of those who say they would welcome more refugees, 72% trust INGOs to deliver aid, compared with 46% of the general population.

Both of the sympathetic groups are more likely to agree that the UK has a responsibility to help people overseas (74% of Welcoming Sympathisers and 57% of Distance Sympathisers, compared with 45% of the general population). Most respondents in both groups say they are proud of the work the UK does to help people in developing countries.

FIG 10 • TRUST IN INTERNATIONAL CHARITIES TO DELIVER AID



Unsympathetic Rejectors distrust INGOs, and are twice as likely than average to believe they are not 'open and honest' (49% vs 26%). Half (49%) believe INGOs make no difference at all.

References

- Eden Stanley INGO Tracker, October to December 2016 waves (n=3,000 UK adults)
- Annual asylum stats for 2016 provided by Refugee Council

About the INGO Tracker

Eden Stanley's INGO Tracker is the only brand monitoring and audience segmentation tool specifically designed for international NGOs working in the UK. Our nationally-representative survey of UK adults is updated every month, and because you're in control of interrogating the data, it provides actionable insight at every stage of your strategy lifecycle. Contact us for a demo.

Suggest a hot topic

Want to know how the public feels about the issues that matter to you? INGO Tracker subscribers can suggest 'hot topics' for future research waves. As well as these key findings based on the UK population, you can also use the INGO Tracker to explore how these attitudes are represented in your own audience segments with much more detail. Get in touch with your topic suggestions.

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