



TENT

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# PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS: PHASE II

## QUALITATIVE INSIGHT FOR SWEDEN

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PREPARED BY AUDIENCENET FOR TENT

# METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH



The TENT Tracker is a multi-phased study seeking to understand public opinion on the refugee crisis:

- **Phase 1:** Multi-territory **quantitative research** (via an online survey) with representative samples of the population in 11 countries across North America, Europe and Australia. The findings from this phase **established key trends in public opinion**, and were also used to segment the population based on whether their attitudes were ‘overtly positive’, ‘overtly negative’ or ‘mixed.’
- **Phase 2:** In-depth **qualitative research** (via online communities) to better **understand the rationale behind, and to identify the strength of, trends** highlighted in the surveys. This phase also tested the effectiveness of different types of call to action messages. **Five countries** were included: Canada, Germany, France, Sweden, Turkey, with **approximately 40 participants in each, split across the three population segments** identified in Phase 1 (‘overtly positive’, ‘overtly negative’ or ‘mixed’). It comprised two rounds of research, in April and June 2016.

This report documents the findings from Phase 2 and focuses on the Swedish Online Community.

Segment	Segment
Overtly Positive	13
Mixed Views	12
Overtly Negative	13
Total	38

## Social and Political Context:

- During the week of the April online qualitative community in Sweden and in the weeks leading up to the community the main international stories on refugees concerned the “one-in-one-out deal” signed between the EU and Turkey as well as the terror attacks in Brussels on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.
- Within Sweden, there were reports of increased levels of xenophobia and problems of refugee children going missing.
- This followed a decision by the Swedish government, in cooperation with the Danish government, to reduce the number of refugees entering Sweden by reinstating ID control at the border for the first time since the 1950’s, prompting refugees to risk their lives by walking through the tunnel between Sweden and Denmark.

# OVERVIEW



Most Swedes were relatively well informed about the refugee crisis. They said it was one of the main topics on the news and most felt that refugee and immigration policy would to some extent influence their vote. Those with negative views and some with mixed views would vote for a party that would prevent such a high number of refugees from continuing to enter Sweden, while those with positive views would vote for parties on the left, who they described as having more humanitarian views.

Community participants were selected based on their age, gender and on the basis of the segments they were allocated during the quantitative survey. From the qualitative community it was made clear that those overtly negative in Sweden were not necessarily negative to all refugees or some refugees entering the country, but rather they were negative towards the 'open door' policy Sweden had been pursuing for several years.

Although Swedes are informed about the refugee crisis, this qualitative community suggests that in order to change opinions in Sweden, more information needs to be disseminated about Sweden's capacity to handle the large number of refugees it has taken in and how it will affect the economy. People with negative and mixed views were especially worried about this and indicated that they felt Sweden's 'open door' policy had been naïve and unrealistic.

In spite of the online community taking place shortly after the Brussels terror attacks most participants did not think of refugees as a security threat, provided they were integrated into society and their potential war traumas adequately dealt with. Some argued that the real security threat is the division being created in Swedish society and the recent vandalism at refugee camps, thought to have been carried out by anti-immigrant groups.





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ONLINE COMMUNITIES

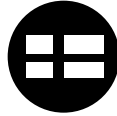
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SECTION 1

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# AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEES



# AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCE OF REFUGEES

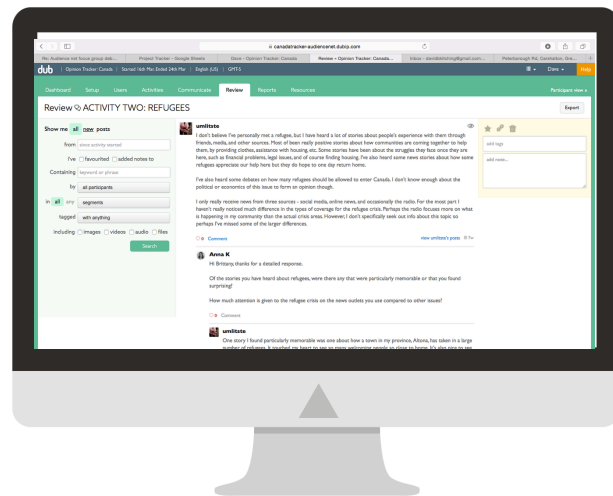


## OBJECTIVES

This activity sought to understand participants' direct and indirect **experiences with refugees**, other means by which they attained their (varying levels) of **knowledge on the issue**, and **experiences/perceptions of media coverage**.

## DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Have you ever met a refugee yourself or heard any **first hand stories about refugees**?
- Have you **heard anything in the news/media** lately about refugees coming to Sweden?
- Have you noticed **any differences in the type of coverage** of the refugee crisis depending on the media source?



# KEY THEMES



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## POSITIVE PARTICIPANTS TRUST TRADITIONAL MEDIA

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Participants with overtly positive and overtly negative views differed greatly in their opinions of news sources. Those with positive views tended to trust what they heard in the traditional news media more. Although several participants with overtly negative perspectives felt the news media were biased and thought social media were a better source for truthful news on the refugee crisis.

*"I think that traditional media are trying to highlight the refugee situation objectively, while the tone of social media is rougher. There it is mostly about creating an "us and them" feeling to whip up sentiments."*

*Male, 35-44, Overtly positive*

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## NEGATIVE FOCUS ON FEARS & PROBLEMS

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Overtly negative participants tended to focus on the coverage they had seen that reflected negative or undesirable outcomes within refugee centers and with the overall handling of the situation.

*"Yes, mostly on fights, beatings, killings, grievances on asylum accommodation, for people who earn big money on asylum accommodation but also a lot about the ever large refugee wave. Partly through DN and SVT/ TV4 but also through polisen.se (what happens) and foreign media (Guardian, CNN, etc.)"*

*Male, 35-44, Overtly negative*

# AREAS OF DISCUSSION



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## PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF MEETING OF REFUGEES

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Many said that they had met refugees in Sweden, either some who had been in the country for some time or those who have recently arrived in the country. However, several people said the meetings they had had with refugees had been superficial.

People with mixed and positive views who were more likely to have had in-depth conversations with refugees, said they fought it was a positive experience and that it had broadened their understanding.

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## THE EXTENT OF NEWS COVERAGE

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Most Swedes agreed that there was a lot of coverage about the refugee crisis, but there was a difference in the stories they said they had heard on the news.

Some people focused on facts about how many people they had heard had come to the country, while others were more focused on events and stories. Those with overtly positive views tended to focus on harassment of refugees and vandalism on refugee camps.

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## DIFFERENCES IN THE COVERAGE

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People mentioned that they saw big differences in the coverage of the refugee crisis, especially when comparing social media and traditional news media sources.

People with positive or mixed views tended to say that they thought the tone on social media was quite harsh, while those with negative views said they thought the traditional media was biased and social media could sometimes be more informative.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS



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“I meet many refugees because I lead a couple of workshops in Swedish in an asylum accommodation. Nationalities are many and so are the hardships to get here. The people I meet are happy and thankful for the treatment they receive.”

*Male, 35-44, Overtly negative*

“Last it was Aftonbladet who stated that 140 000 asylum seekers, including 27,000 unaccompanied children, can come to Sweden this year, according to the Migration Board.”

*Female, 35-44, Mixed views*

“

“I have to chosen to avoid [national] news of all refugees as much as possible because I feel so terribly bad for them. I follow, however, the local news because I want to be informed about what happens to all those newcomers in my neighborhood. There have been people driving past asylum accommodations and shooting on the houses and a leisure center was closed after an incident at a disco. It was someone that had groped a girl, but it has actually more to do with the age, not where you come from!”

*Female, 25-34, Overtly positive*

“

“All traditional Swedish media are concerned with it. It doesn't matter if it is Aftonbladet, SVD, DN, news on any Swedish channel on radio and TV. Everyone rights from the same faulty angle. They mislead the Swedish population.”

*Female, 25-34, Overtly positive*

“Yes! and it has been rewarding and has given me a broader understanding.”

*Female, 35-44, Mixed views*



SECTION 2

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# THE SWEDISH POLITICAL LANDSCAPE



# THE SWEDISH POLITICAL LANDSCAPE



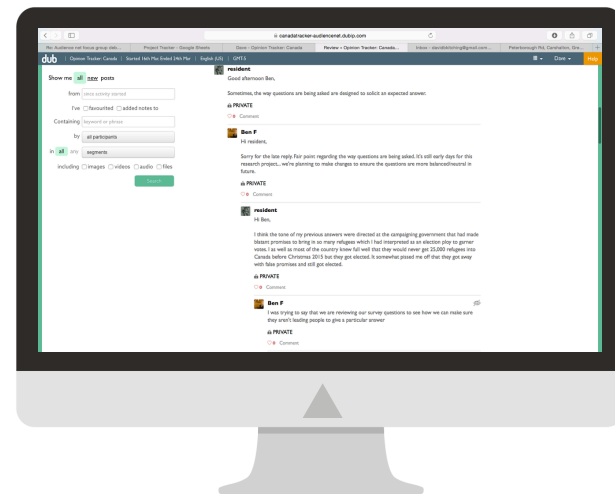
## OBJECTIVES

This activity gathered views on the **political landscape of each country in relation to the refugee crisis**. For example, refugee and immigration policies.

It also examined the extent to which government actions on the refugee crisis **informed voter behavior**.

## DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Did you **vote** in the recent election?
- If you did vote, to what extent, if at all, **did refugee and immigration policy have an impact on how you voted?**
- How do you feel about the **Swedish government's policies** concerning refugees?
- What do you think people in **other countries think** about Sweden's refugee policy?



# KEY THEMES



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## PERCEPTION OF NAÏVETÉ

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When asked what they thought other countries thought of Sweden's refugee policy the word "naïve" came up several times. Many people thought that Sweden had been naïve in taking in so many refugees and thought it was not healthy for the economy or society. This view was especially prevalent amongst those with mixed and negative views.

*"That we have been naïve for several years and that reality has caught up with us and now we must face the verdict, rejecting people. But they probably think we are still a rich country that can handle more refugees than they."*

*Male, 45-54, Mixed views*

*"Many countries think that Sweden is very naïve and gullible and gives too much without any control. Sweden is probably very much respected also because we have taken great responsibility in the refugee crisis, but one has to also row the boat ashore, and it is a huge responsibility to receive so many people and make sure they get a good life and start in Swedish society."*

*Female, 35-44, Mixed views*

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## BUT PRIDE IN SWEDEN'S ROLE

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There were also some amongst the overtly positive who felt the same, but the majority of them felt that Sweden had acted correctly and pulled their weight in helping to solve the international refugee crisis.

*"They can not be anything but impressed by the large number of refugees we have received. Sweden is a small country... I think others are impressed and appreciate what we do."*

*Female, 75+, Mixed views*

*"My friends in England and Germany think we are very naive, they are laughing at us. They say "Do you not know what the future cost will be and what tax increases you will be suffering from?"*

*Male, 65-74, Overtly negative*

# AREAS OF DISCUSSION



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## REFUGEE CRISIS & VOTING INTENTION

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Most Swedes, regardless of their opinion of refugees, thought refugee policy would influence how they would vote, but for most it was just a minor issue compared to the economy for example.

Both those mixed and overtly negative views were concerned about the number of refugees entering Sweden and many said they would vote for a party that wished to stop immigration.

Those with overtly positive views were more likely to say they would vote for parties on the left who they thought had more 'humane' refugee policies.

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## A TOUGH ISSUE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO GET RIGHT

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Stefan Löfven's government received criticism from all sides on their refugee policy. Those with overtly positive views did not think they had done enough to accommodate refugees, while those with negative views thought they had not done enough to stop the refugee flow.

Some with mixed and positive view thought Löfven was doing the best job possible, but many said he was not reacting fast enough to the situation.

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## EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS OF SWEDEN

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Some thought that the international communities perception of Sweden's refugee policy was slowly changing, from thinking of them as a very open and helpful country, to a more closed and restrictive country, after the re-installment of border control.

How people thought the outside world thought of them was very subjective, with those with mixed and negative views saying they think the outside world see Sweden's policy as being naïve, whilst those with positive views think the international community are impressed with the amount of refugees Sweden has taken.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS



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“I would vote for the Feminist Initiative. Refugee and immigration policy would affect what I think.”

*Female, 55-64, Overtly positive*

“Obviously, I would vote and I would be influenced by migration politics but it would not be my fundamental impact, we must look at the big picture. The economy, the environment etc.”

*Male, 45-54, Mixed views*

“I always vote! I see it as a duty and a privilege. Yes, refugee policy would certainly be a factor.”

*Male, 35-44, Overtly positive*

“

“As a person, I think he acted loyally, but as the party and government, they have been passive when I think they could have been more prepared when the Syria crisis began, with IS, etc.”

*Male, 18-24, Overtly positive*

“Löfven could be more open to accept more refugees. EU's agreement with Turkey is unpleasant. But Löfven as Prime Minister is responsible for the entire country, he is not only the leader of his party, and thus has not so broad freedom of action.”

*Female, 55-64, Overtly positive*

“

“I think Stefan Löfvens refugee policy is good from a moral perspective, although I do not think that it goes together with what the Swedish economy can handle.”

*Male, 18-24, Overtly negative*

“It is both good and bad, bad because it has been neglected for years, we have not done enough to get the refugees into society, too many are still standing outside. Good that they finally understood that we can not accept all the refugees who want to come here, we do not have enough resources to take care of everyone.”

*Male, 45-54, Mixed views*



## SECTION 3

# AWARENESS OF EXISTING PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS



# AWARENESS OF EXISTING PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS



## OBJECTIVES

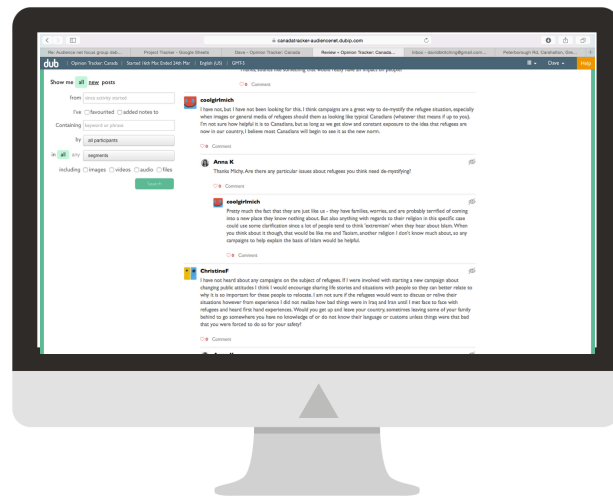
This activity looked in detail at the **specific refugee-related campaigns** (information and activism) that participants had been exposed to.

Participants were asked their **general opinions** on the campaign(s), including the tone, impact, likes, dislikes etc.

It also aimed to **identify the most effective means to communicate** to as wide an audience as possible, both in terms of **content and dissemination channels**.

## DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- **Have you heard about/ seen any campaigns on the subject of refugees?**
- **What do you think about the campaign(s)?**
- If you were involved with **starting a new campaign** about changing public attitudes towards refugees, how would you go about it?



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## ALTERNATIVE IDEAS

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Several participants questioned whether TV and traditional charity campaigns were the most effective way to change people's perception of the refugee crisis. Some suggested creating events where refugees and Swedes could meet and socialize.

*"It does not affect the perception among residents in Sweden, where about 95% in the last election voted for parties that now want to limit the proportion of residents who are in Sweden. Do not know the issue of new campaign. Depends on who the sender is and what the target group consists of."*

**Male, 35-44, Overtly positive**

*"I don't know if campaigns are a good way to change people's attitude; invite refugees and Swedes to meet instead. If you offer food, people use to come, sports associations can of course invite people to look for more participants to their teams..."*

**Male, 45-54, Mixed views**

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## TV CAMPAIGNS

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Several participants shared ideas for TV campaign in which they would show videos with refugees telling their story.

*"I would do some kind of TV commercial where you show a portrait of them as human beings wanting to live in a better country. I haven't seen what the other campaigns do but this is what I think anyway."*

**Male, 18-24, Mixed views**

*"Try to record videos on how people are driven to flee and without much involvement (except editing) broadcast it on television and online"*

**Male, 35-44, Overtly negative**

# AREAS OF DISCUSSION



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## KNOWLEDGE OF EXISTING CAMPAIGNS

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Most people said they did not have any knowledge of existing campaigns on the topic of refugees. The few campaigns that were mentioned were charity campaigns by UNHCR and the Red Cross and the anti-immigration article posted by the Danish Ministry of Immigration.

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## PERCEPTIONS OF CAMPAIGNS

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The few that said they had heard of campaigns said they did not believe they had much effect in changing peoples perceptions. Some said they did not think campaigns were necessary, but rather thought the focus should be on increasing security checks or setting up events where refugees and Swedes can meet each other.

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## WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

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If Swedes were to run their own refugee campaign they would play on peoples emotions, creating videos and telling the stories of refugees. Suggestions for how to run a campaign were similar regardless of people opinions towards refugees.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS



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“I would not just say: ‘refugees’ but describe them more as ‘fleeing from Iran’, ‘fleeing from Iraq, fleeing from Syria etc.’ And check directly if they truly have fled from the war, or have done something illegal and fleeing penalty. Then I would send home immediately.”

*Female, 75+, Mixed views*

“The church, the Red Cross that provide a better overview of what is happening but also volunteering like sports clubs that are welcoming you, offer activities and donate toys, etc.”

*Female, 45-44, Mixed views*

“

“I get a wild idea and think that we should make a campaign film with big budget with lifelike effects. I imagine a Swedish terraced area. Red house with white trim. Idyllic. Beautiful weather. Then the bombs begin falling and people fleeing in panic. Cut to real scenes of people fleeing, of the sort we have seen too many already recently. Fade out, and add the text “it could have been you.” I think one must resort to drastic means for people to begin to try to understand how it would be to have to flee. Completely free gazed and perhaps not so well thought out, yet.”

*Male, 35-44, Overtly positive*

“

“Promotions are quietly going on all the time, with language cafes etc. to welcome and integrate. I think all of us who are actively involved in welcoming activities spread a positive attitude towards refugees among our acquaintances and that again gives ripples on the water.”

*Female, 65-74, Mixed views*



SECTION 4

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**IDENTITY  
AND OPINION  
FORMATION**



# IDENTITY AND OPINION FORMATION



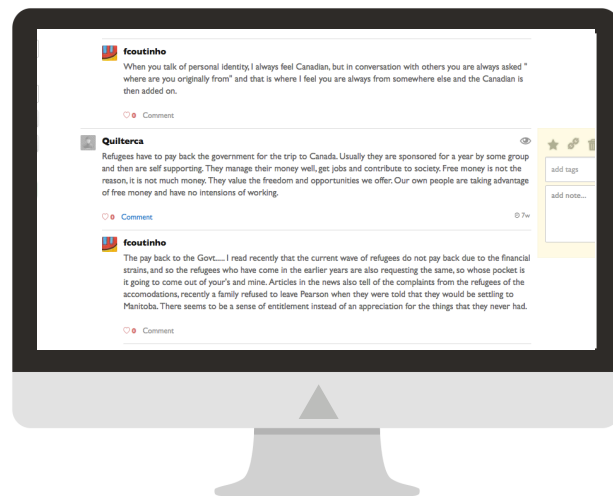
## OBJECTIVES

This activity looked to uncover the **influence of identity on opinion formation**. It looked at both **personal and national identity**, and whether these framed participants' views in relation refugees.

A key objective was to ascertain whether people from particular sub-groups or holding certain worldviews are likely to be more **hospitable or hostile** to refugees.

## DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- When thinking about your personal identity, do you talk in terms of **local area, region, nationality or something else?**
- What does **being Swedish** mean to you?
- What do you think are the **best and worst attributes** of Swedish society?
- **Why do you think many refugees want to come to Sweden** above other developed Western countries?



# KEY THEMES



## THE SWEDISH WAY OF LIFE

There were very mixed views on what it means to be Swedish. Many thought that to be Swedish you should speak Swedish, but there were mixed views on whether you had to be born in Sweden or adopt Swedish norms in order to call yourself Swedish.

*“Being Swedish is living in Sweden. To work, study or do any other sort of work that contributes to the wellbeing of Swedish citizens. Being Swedish doesn’t necessarily mean having a certain skin color, speak perfect Swedish or have registered Swedish citizenship. Most often citizenship is achieved when the government, who usually work slowly and un-personably, grant it. Being Swedish is to be proud of living in a relatively safe and organized country. In some instances, I am ashamed of being Swedish, when the authorities in the who rule the country make ill thought through decisions – which has happened often in the past year.”*

*Male, 55-64, Mixed views*

## MORE NUANCED VIEWS

Interestingly, younger participants looked to more abstract forms of identification than geographical, ethnic or socio-economic delimiters. Many looked to interests, hobbies and values and embraced what might be described as their “social tribes”.

*“Being Swedish” is so complex. Someone who has lived in the country for ten years can be “less Swedish” than someone who has lived here for ten months. If you are born in Sweden, I will automatically count you as Swedish. If you are born anywhere else, but live here and speak the language than you choose whether I speak of you as Swedish or the country you are from.”*

*Female, 25-34, Overtly positive*

*“It means that you speak the language, have a Swedish passport (so you are a Swedish citizen).”*

*Female, 18-24, Overtly negative*

# AREAS OF DISCUSSION



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## BEING SWEDISH

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There were many different opinions on what being Swedish meant. Some felt that being Swedish meant to have Swedish roots and be a Swedish citizen. Others thought it meant being able to speak the language, follow Swedish norms and to contribute to society by working and paying taxes. A last group were more flexible and said being Swedish simply meant that you feel Swedish. There were mixed views within each of the three opinion segments.

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## THE BEST AND WORST PARTS OF SWEDISH SOCIETY

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Many people said they thought the best part of Swedish society was the willingness to help people in need. However, others argued this was also one of the worst parts, as they said it had led to too many refugees in the country. Other aspects people liked were the level of equality, nature and security. People thought the worst aspects were the Swedes reserved nature, fear of confrontation and growing xenophobia.

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## DO MORE REFUGEES WANT TO COME TO SWEDEN?

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There was general consensus amongst those with overtly negative views of the refugee crisis that more refugees wanted to come to Sweden than other developed countries.

Those with overtly positive views were most likely to say that they did not think refugees wanted to come to Sweden especially. They thought that refugees just wanted to go some where safe and did not care to much about which country they were going to.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS



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“The best is that we care for each other, have a social sector that helps if you get into difficulties. The worst is the income gap which means there are more poor people than previously.”

Male, 45-54, Mixed views

“The best part of Swedish society is that we are an open minded country. The worst part is that we are not as open towards one another as for example the English. I see Sweden as a great country where all nationalities are welcome, although we also have many racists.”

Female, 25-34, Overtly positive

“

“The unique network of social security means that many people want to come here. We have much empty land here, but there are not enough homes. Even though we have great safety and livelihood, there are not jobs for everyone today. Sweden is a popular country. Not because of the weather, but for the friendly people – even though we in Sweden are famous for being a bit stiff. A bit of Dutch homely culture would help, in the Netherlands people are surprisingly open and friendly towards everyone. I am surprised every time I visit the country and ask for help. They put their heart and soul in to helping you. In Sweden it is more difficult to get contact in certain situations. We are more quiet.”

Male, 55-64, Mixed views


“

“I think that most refugees want to come to our country, we are a nice country, where you can live well and coming here as an asylum seeker/ refugee it is easy to receive benefits and a place to live, so from that point of view it is gold to them. Our criminal penalties are laughable when compared to other countries, so why wouldn't you want to come here.”

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

“I think more will come to Sweden, but they have been misinformed about the country. They have received information from the people smugglers. That it is nice and there are many jobs and homes in Sweden.”

Female, 65-74, Overtly positive



SECTION 5

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# ATTITUDES TOWARD REFUGEES



# ATTITUDES TOWARD REFUGEES

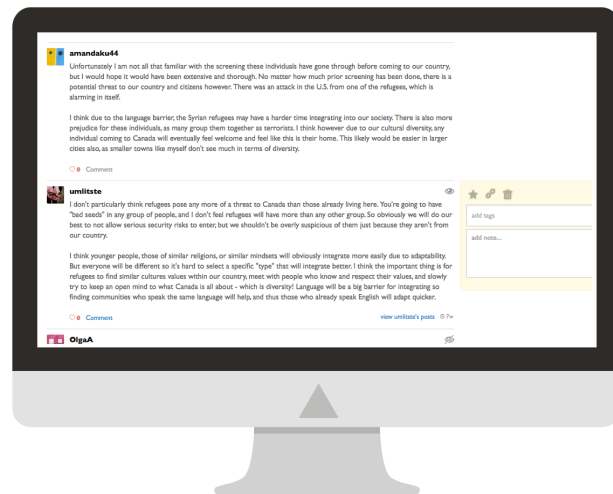


## OBJECTIVES

This activity sought to establish the **strength (if any) of negative sentiment** towards refugees, as well as **what drives it** (e.g. fears and anxieties). It also looked at whether negative sentiment or prejudice was more common in relation to **particular ‘types’ of refugees**.

## DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- To what extent, if at all, do you think refugees arriving to Sweden pose a security threat?
- Do you think some groups of refugees are better than others at integrating into Swedish life?



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## GENDER RELATIONS

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Several participants mentioned gender equality as one of the best things about Swedish society and this came up during conversations about integration. People thought it would be difficult for both men and women from societies where there was less gender equality to adjust to Swedish society.

*“It has been shown that some of them (men) are a threat to our security, especially women’s safety, unfortunately. I therefore assume that it is because there is a completely different view of women in the countries they come from. So therefore women and children are much less of a threat.”*

*Female, 18-24, Overtly negative*

*“The biggest job will be with the women. Most refugees come from areas where women have very low status. So, you have to lift women and they’ll lift the family situation.”*

*Female, 55-64, Overtly positive*

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## YOUTH ADAPTING TO LESS TRADITIONAL NORMS

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While there was a perception of traditional norms informing the attitudes of prospective refugees, there was an assumption that younger arrivals would find it easier to adapt

*“How well you can adapt to a life in Sweden depends on the individual, depends on how you choose to interpret religion. Probably harder for men than women. Tradition, upbringing in their home country about what they have been about how to treat women etc. If you come to another country for help, you owe it to conform to Swedish society. The younger generation of refugees are probably easier to influence and they find it easier to assimilate. It is clear on the internet and people know that you can do well without war and misery and women are given space.”*

*Female, 35-44, Mixed views*

# AREAS OF DISCUSSION



## SHOULD WE FEAR THE REFUGEES OR THE SWEDES?

The majority of those with mixed and overtly positive views did not think that refugees posed any major security threat to Sweden. Many with negative views mentioned ISIS and that some refugees entering the country could be extremists.

However, for Swedes, the threat seems to be twofold. There were also those who thought that the biggest threat was that of people burning down refugee camps in Sweden. This was seen as a threat to security by people across segments.

## INTEGRATION

Most people had quite clear views about which groups of refugees would find it easier to integrate. Some mentioned that the Syrian refugees arriving at the moment would find it easier to integrate as many of them are highly educated and come with skills which are in demand on the Swedish job market.

It was also a commonly held opinion that younger people would find it easier to integrate, as they would learn the language and adopt new norms more quickly. Many argued that ensuring all refugees integrate well was a job for the government.

## DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN RELIGION AND CULTURE

Many held the opinion that Muslims were both a bigger threat to Swedish society and would find it more difficult to integrate. However, people did not seem to distinguish between culture and religion. Participants did not distinguish between Muslims of different denominations or ethnicities, but described all Muslims as a homogenous group.

Despite just 21% of Swedes saying they believed there was a God in a recent Demoskop survey, there were a few heated discussions between participants on how big a part Christianity played in Swedish society.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS



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“Why should they pose a threat? Surely they are all people just like us! Then the threat should be that they might take some of the jobs are youth need.”

*Female, 75+, Mixed views*

“I think that the more Sweden-like a country you come from the easier it will be to join our society, and the other way around. It should also be easier for younger people to adjust. Gender probably plays a minor role. I think it is also easier for Christians than Muslims, but we should be becoming so secularized that, that plays a minor role.”

*Male, 35-44, Overtly positive*

“

“I hope it doesn't get more unstable than it is now. For example, refugee homes are burnt down and I think that's awful. I live in Northern Sweden and I feel fairly safe, but even here they have burnt down refugee homes. I don't think it is the refugees that are burning down the houses, it is probably youths or some older people that are a bit racist. And want refugees to live on their land. And it is sad that it has become like this and how to deal with our fear of terror is a difficult task. But, integration is important and I think that there are many Swedes who want to help out.”

*Female, 45-54, Overtly negative*

“

“There are definitely differences in education between for example Syria and Somalia, for example how good you are at English, but also differences in how long it takes to integrate depending on your prior life (war, family situation etc.). If you're young it's easier to learn things, but at the same time you might find it difficult to process the horribleness which has at times helped create difference, compared to older people who are more used to it.”

*Male, 18-24, Overtly positive*



TENT



SECTION 6

# WALKING IN A REFUGEE'S SHOES



# WALKING IN A REFUGEE'S SHOES



## OBJECTIVES

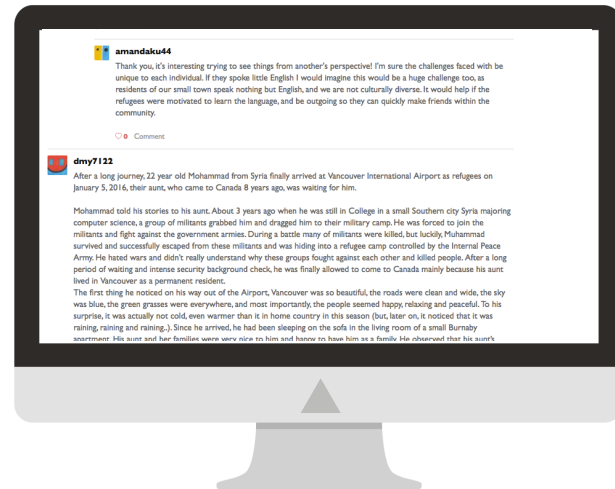
This activity looked to determine the extent to which participants could **empathize with refugees**, putting their stories into their own words.

Participants were free to write in the first or the third person and to base their story on wherever they felt appropriate.

## DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

**Create a story about a refugee's journey to Sweden:**

- **Where** did they come from?
- **Why** did they come to Sweden?
- How are they finding **life in Sweden**?
- What are their **hopes for the future**?



# KEY THEMES



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## A NARRATIVE OF GRATEFULNESS

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Those with mixed and positive view were more likely to think that refugees would be happy in Sweden, purely based on the fact that they were able to live in peace and plan for the future.

*"Thank you Sweden for letting us come to this fine country. I love my Syria, but want to live in peace and which there is no longer in my home. My family are the most important I have and I want to see my children grow up in a safe environment, without risking that they are hurt when walking to school. It has been a long journey, I borrowed money from my closest friends and family, in order to complete the expensive but vital journey. I want to establish good contact with Swedes, to learn the language, understand how they live and provide for my family with a work for the future."*

Male, 55-64, Mixed views

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## PROBLEMS ALONG THE WAY

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When writing stories about fictional refugees who had made the journey to Sweden, the main difference between those with overtly negative views and those with mixed and positive views, was that those with negative views were more likely to think that refugees would be unhappy with the level of support provided in Sweden. Some thought they would be unhappy with the level of support because Sweden had taken in many refugees for whom they were unable to provide.

*"Unfortunately our picture has changed since we arrived. We share a room and they say there are no available apartments. This we would have liked to know before we came here. Originally we had great expectations for a good future in Sweden, but we don't believe in that anymore. We wonder why they let so many people in, when they can't offer a place to live or work in the near future? It is not the quantity of reception that is important if the quality isn't present, something the Swedish government and authorities should have thought of. We don't want to live in a segregated suburb, where we risk experiencing the same problems as we did at home."*

Female, 65-74, Overtly negative

# AREAS OF DISCUSSION



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## WHERE ARE THE REFUGEES COMING FROM?

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This activity sought to determine the extent to which participants could empathize with refugees, putting their stories into their own words.

It will come as little surprise that the majority of participants said their fictional family came from Syria. Other countries chosen included, Somalia, Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq.

War was the main reason people thought refugees were leaving their homes and they thought that refugees would have heard of Sweden and would think it was a nice and welcoming country for refugees.

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## RECEPTION AND LIFE IN SWEDEN

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There were varied perceptions of how people thought refugees would experience life in Sweden. People with overtly negative views were likely to write stories where refugees did not integrate and felt disappointed by the lack of support, jobs and opportunities in Sweden.

Those with positive and mixed views were more likely to focus on the refugees' plight and thought they would be happy to have made it to a safe country, where they would be able to live in peace, far away from the wars in their home countries.

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## HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

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In many stories the main reason the refugees had come to Sweden was that they wanted better future for their children. They thought refugees would hope for their children to get good education and stable careers in the future.

There were also some who said they thought refugees were happy to be in Sweden, but would like to return home if the war in their home country ended.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS



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“When we arrived at Sweden’s border we felt complete happiness, we had reached our goal and our family had survived. Now we “just” had to get asylum too. We were lucky enough to get it and were transferred to a refugee camp. We were there for some weeks and then we got our own home in a small town and we feel welcome here. Now it is up to us and with the help of friendly people, to try and create a secure future for the family. We hope to be able to contribute with skills in the future.”

*Female, 55-64, Mixed views*

“We come to Sweden because we have heard that we will be well and very generously taken care of here.”

*Female, 65-74, Overtly negative*

“

“I sometimes think that in the future we might be able to return home, but that seems very distant at the moment. Now we just wish to be granted stay in Sweden, me and my beloved family, we have fought for so long now to reach our goal.”

*Female, 35-44, Mixed views*

“He comes from Syria because of war and has started to adjust to his new life in Sweden. Hopes to get a job in the future and have a family here. He’s started to enjoy being here. Because there’s no war.”

*Male, 45-54, Overtly positive*

“

“After several years of exhausting war experiences – fighting, food shortage, interrupted studies, no hope of change – a Syrian family from Damascus decide to try to go to Europe. They travelled by train, boat, by foot, could by some food and received help from Red Cross and slowly ended up in Austria.”

*Female, 55-64, Overtly positive*



SECTION 7

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# YOU'RE IN CHARGE: APPROACH TO POLICY



# YOU'RE IN CHARGE: APPROACH TO POLICY



## OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this activity was to get participants to offer **pragmatic ideas and solutions by getting them into policy makers' mind-sets.**

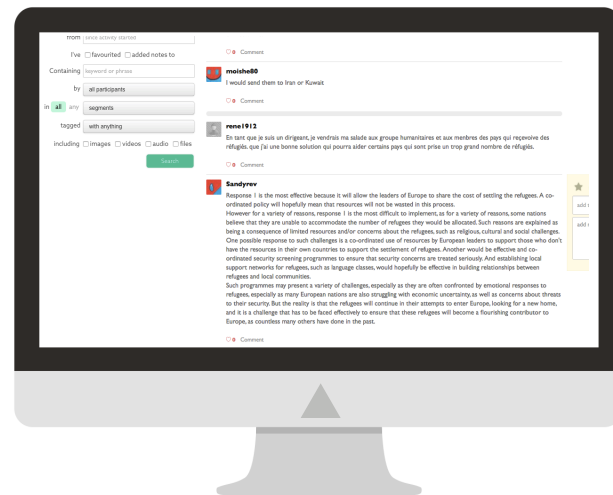
To achieve this, it placed them in a position of substantial power but where they were also in the midst of bureaucracy.

## DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

Imagine you are representing Sweden at a world leaders' summit discussing the refugee crisis. The leader of another country presents you with a proposition:

If the movement of refugees is effectively coordinated between all of the countries represented at the summit, it will be possible for each country to manage the incoming refugees effectively. If some countries do not constructively contribute and accept a fair quota of refugees, it will be left to just a few countries who will find it increasingly difficult to provide sufficient resources.

- **What would you do** and why?
- Are any of **the other world leaders** being particularly helpful or unhelpful?



# KEY THEMES



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## NEED FOR BETTER EU COORDINATION

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A majority of participants thought that the EU need to step up their role in the refugee crisis. Some with overtly positive views said they were not proud of the measures Sweden had taken in recent months, such as reinstating the border control between Denmark and Sweden, but said they thought it was necessary due to the high amount of refugees Sweden had received and the lack of cooperation within the EU.

*"In the EU we must all work together. All countries in the EU have chosen to be a part in our assembly where our values of respect for all apply. The countries who want to prevent people in crisis who are trying to get a roof over their head, live in peace in Europe until the problems can be solved in their home country, should rethink their membership of the EU. All people who come to our Europe must feel safe, get a friendly welcome and respect for their situation."*

*Male, 55-64, Mixed views*

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## SWEDEN CAN STILL HELP

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With exception of those with overtly negative views, most thought that Sweden should still take in refugee, but wanted to see other EU countries help too. They thought the most supportive country would be Germany, who they felt had shared the burden with Sweden.

*"As the representative of Sweden I would say "I am not proud of the measures we have been forced to impose in recent months. ID-control at the Oresund bridge is one such measure. We saw no other way with the heavy stream of refugees we have had. All of our housing is full and everyone must get their asylum tried in reasonable time. It is therefore the day for all EU countries to take responsibility!"*

*Male, 35-44, Overtly positive*

*"The leader I would trust the most would be Angela Merkel in Germany. She would be my right hand and that is based on her actions."*

*Female, 25-34, Mixed views*

# AREAS OF DISCUSSION



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## EQUAL DIVISION OF REFUGEES

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Across segments people agreed that there needed to be a more equal division of refugees in developed countries. There were mixed views, however, on what an 'equal division' meant. Most people did not think it was synonymous with every country taking in the same amount of refugees, but rather that there should be an assessment of each country's resources and that they should take as many refugees as they were able to. There was little mention of setting strict quotas for how many refugees each country should take.

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## CARROT AND STICK

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To ensure that all countries do their part in the refugee crisis, many thought there should be a system in place where more financial support is given to countries who take in more refugees and those who do not do their part should be sanctioned. There were also suggestions that countries like Sweden and Germany who have taken in a large number of refugees should send some of the refugees they have already received to other countries in order to decrease the number residing in their countries. For many, the EU would have a strong role to play in enforcing these sanctions and benefits.

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## THE BLAME GAME

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There were very few who thought Sweden should be taking in more refugees than they already do, most agreed that Sweden had done its part in the crisis and argued that other countries needed to step up their game. There were a few mentions of specific countries who could take in more refugees or be more helpful in the crisis, such as Saudi Arabia and Hungary. However, most people were less specific and blamed the EU for a lack of coordination and thought that they, along with other international organizations, needed to do more to ensure all countries took some responsibility for the situation.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS



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“I would have worked for getting suggestion one passed. Without a division a small country like Sweden can't handle taking more refugees. The reception of refugees puts big requirements on the countries economic resources.”

*Female , 35-44, Mixed views*

“The best would be if all countries in the whole world would help. It would naturally be better if the refugees could decide themselves where they want to live, but if there is no other alternative then it plays a minor role, as long as it is better than where they come from.”

*Male, 25-34, Overtly positive*

“

“I would recommend that all countries who were at the meeting should contribute with a certain amount of resources, that are fitting for the countries size, should contribute with to help the countries the refugees come from to help make them safer and more politically stable, even make it so there are more functioning refugee camps in or as near the war area as possible (I see it as being worse for those who are still actually in the war zone than those who have managed to flee)”

*Male, 18-24, Overtly negative*

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“Naturally all developed countries must help, but so far very few countries with the same culture/ religion as the refugees have chosen to open their arms, in spite of the countries being very well off financially. How to get the countries near the war-torn countries to help do their part – is a difficult task as the countries have had a negative view of their poor neighbors.”

*Male, 55-64, Mixed views*



SECTION 8

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**POSITIVELY  
INFLUENCING  
PUBLIC OPINION**



# POSITIVELY INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION



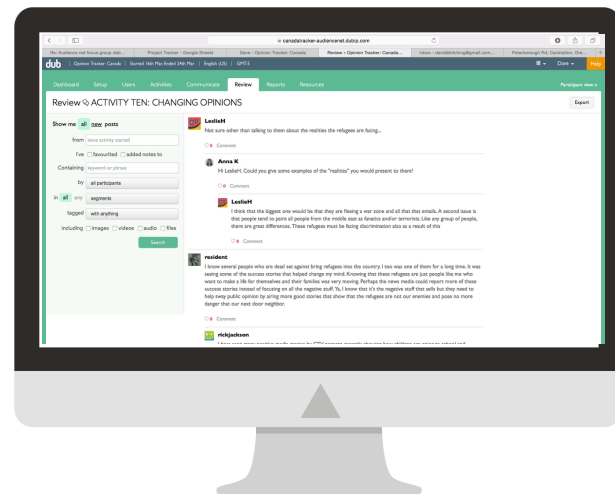
## OBJECTIVES

The objective of this exercise was to **establish the most effective types of discourse** when seeking to positively influence public opinion towards refugees.

Participants were asked to imagine/ recollect their approach to **convincing friends/ family to take a positive stance towards refugees**.

## DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Can you think of a **friend or family member who might disagree** with you about the refugee crisis?
- How have you/ might you go about **trying to change their perspective**?
- How have/ would you go about convincing people who are **undecided or have no strong opinions**?



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## LOOK AT THE BENEFITS

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The main way Swedes would try to convince people to agree with their view was to present facts. It was clear that they thought that people with negative views of refugees would think that taking in refugees would be disadvantageous to Swedish society and they therefore wanted to show them some of the benefits of taking in refugees.

*"In my local area there are many amazing volunteers, but also several people who are extremely negative towards refugees, and everything between the two. I have in several cases tried to reassure them that there are also positive sides of immigration:*

- *Many well educated (e.g. doctors, teachers, nurses which we are in shortage of)*
- *More people of a working age who can weigh up the ageing Swedish population.*
- *Many unemployed Swedes and former immigrants get jobs at refugee centers, or as translators, helpers etc, e.g. many new jobs that didn't previously exist are created."*

*Female, 65-74, Mixed views*

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## EMOTION AND EMPATHY

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Some would also take a more emotional approach talking about how many refugees are fleeing and how many refugees have died. For these participants, an appeal such as this would be much more effective in bringing people over to a more positive position.

*"It is easier with the ones who are undecided. Show pictures, explain what happens and how many are fleeing and how many have died in the horror that is taking place now. I think people who are undecided are more likely to feel empathy than to oppose."*

*Female, 25-34, Overtly positive*

# AREAS OF DISCUSSION



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## CHANGING THE OPINIONS OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY

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Swedes were quite fact oriented when it came to changing the minds of their friends and family. They would tell them the ways in which taking in refugees might benefit Swedish society and the Swedish economy. They would argue that many refugees would be able to do jobs that Sweden was in need of and that it might even create new jobs. There were also those who thought it would be difficult to change people's opinions and felt that everyone was entitled to their own opinion.

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## THE NEGATIVE TURN POSITIVE

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Interestingly when asked to change the opinions of someone they disagreed with many of the participants with overtly negative views said they would talk about the positive aspects of taking in refugees, suggesting they would try to convince people to take in more refugees or at least provide some support for refugees. This suggests that some of the overtly negative in Sweden have some sympathy to the refugees' situation, but feel that Sweden has taken in more refugees than they could handle and in order to change their opinions they need to be convinced that Sweden is able to take care of their own and all the refugees entering the country.

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## THE UNDECIDED ARE MORE EASILY CONVINCED

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People generally agreed that those who were undecided or not quite sure where they stood on the refugee issue would be easier to convince. People said they would show pictures and videos in order to convince them. They would also tell them their views and maybe inform them about the general refugee situation in Sweden and around the world. It seemed to be a general assumption that those who are undecided are also uninformed and all you need to do to change their mind is to give them more information.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS



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“I can imagine it very well, but I think it is very hard to try to change other people's views about the refugee question. Don't really know why, just feel that. I guess you can try to show concrete examples and how bad it is in their home countries etc. give them a bit of perspective.”

*Female, 18-24, Overtly negative*

“You can try to put yourself in the situation of there being war here.”

*Male, 45-54, Overtly positive*

“

“Yes, I know many who think that “it's enough now!”. It is difficult to argue against people who already know what they think and think “they're right”. I don't have that many concrete ideas about how you can change perceptions, without continuing as I normally do (but can't always be bothered to). That means, to ask them to think of it in a historical perspective, not long ago we Swedes moved, on a big scale to America. I try to make them understand that very few of those that those who come left of their own free will or to live at our expense, deliberately.”

*Male, 35-44, Overtly positive*

“

“If they don't have particularly strong views you can show them the effects it has on our country and/or show them video clips, pictures and texts pictures and texts, so they can in some way experience what is happening or potentially talk to a refugee to hear their words and experience.”

*Female, 25-34, Mixed views*

“Those who don't have a clear opinion are quite easy to convince. Those you can maybe just ask to actively follow the reporting and try to think about how it would be if they needed help themselves.”

*Male, 35-44, Overtly positive*



## SECTION 9

# INCREASING THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEER EFFORTS



# INCREASING THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEER EFFORTS



## OBJECTIVES

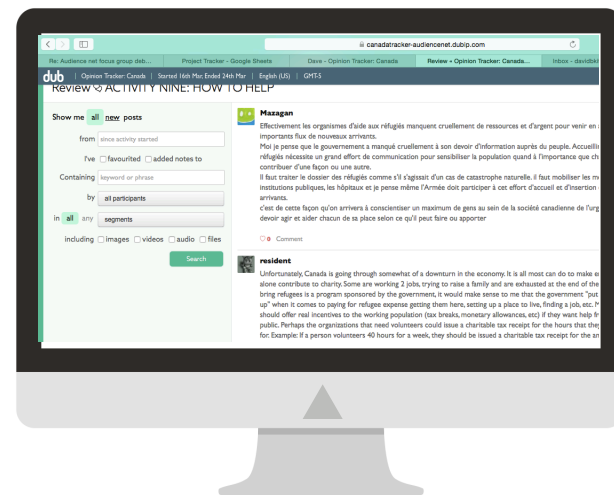
This exercise looked specifically at practical ways of increasing volunteering and donations to charitable causes linked to refugees.

It asked participants to come up with ways to overcome commonly cited **obstacles** (e.g. time and money), as well as any others they could identify.

## DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

Several refugee organizations are finding it difficult to raise money and recruit volunteers in Sweden. People say they don't have enough money, time or knowledge about how they can help.

- How do you think these organizations could **overcome these obstacles** and increase donations and volunteer numbers?



# KEY THEMES



## CONVENIENCE

Some concrete suggestions of how charities and NGOs could gain more support for their work with refugees in Sweden involved ways of making it easier for people to donate to charities or volunteer. Added to this, competition from other causes and charities also diminishes the available catchment of people who could assist.

*"You can invite people in so they can see for themselves what is happening behind the scenes so to say. This way they can also see first hand what would happen with their money and how helpful it is. Regarding the mixing money, you could for example would with shops like ICA [(supermarket chain)]. When you buy something there, you can choose that a certain amount of the money goes to charity instead."*

*Male, 25-34, Overtly positive*

## LESS DEMANDING ACTIVITIES

People suggested that ways of helping at the moment were too demanding of people who have their own families and jobs to take care of and their own financial problems to deal with. Others suggested that volunteers should be reimbursed for their time in some way.

*"I think that to get more volunteers you must create undemanding activities. Many have enough responsibility at work and at home for then to also taken on a new set of activities. Be inviting to the community in some way. Association/ organizations can invite refugees to tell their stories and experiences of how Sweden and the local community have welcomed them. If you invite more refugees to the same events there will be an automatic interaction between Swedes and you can even hear their story at a subsequent conversation over coffee."*

*Female, 65-74, Mixed views*

# AREAS OF DISCUSSION



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## HUMANIZE REFUGEES

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Among people with overtly positive views it was especially popular to suggest that, in order to make people want to help refugees, you need to humanize them and their situation. Some suggested that if people were placed in situations where they could meet and talk to refugees in every day situations, they would be more likely to want to help them. Others suggested making campaigns asking for money in a more personal way, asking people to put themselves in the refugees shoes.

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## MORE INFORMATION

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For those with negative views, but also amongst some with mixed and positive views, the best way to make people more willing to help refugees would be for charities to give better information and be more transparent about what donations are used for. Some wanted to know how they could volunteer and others wanted to know what sort of donations were actually needed. Some suggested that big organizations and government institutions should do more to inform people about the crisis.

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## LOCAL INITIATIVES

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Several mentioned that they would be willing to help if they knew more about local initiatives and how to volunteer locally. Some suggested that local newspapers should publish adds telling people how they could help, sort of like the newspaper Metro did in September 2015, but at a localized level. Others suggested sending volunteers to towns to try to explain the situation to people and maybe get them engaged in volunteering too.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS



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“Maybe send some volunteers to town to try to engage more people or maybe send something out with the post so that more people open their eyes to it and maybe they want to help.”

*Female, 18-24, Overtly negative*

“An idea I got could be to run a campaign ‘Will it be cozy Friday [(fredagsmys)] tonight? How much money have you spent on it? Fine. Can we have that money next week? Then a family in need can experience this next Friday. Thanks for your effort.’”

*Female, 35-44, Overtly positive*

“

“When it comes to the money, it isn't that people can't afford it, it's that they don't want to spend the money. Giving a little sum of money via the mobile makes you barely notice it when the bill comes. 50 kroner a month is just 600 kroner in a year, which most people can actually afford. When I started giving via the phone I got a thank you message and that makes it easier to give a little. You could maybe see if you have anything to sell on for example on Tradera and give the sum directly. Then you're the same off money wise, get more space at home and help someone at the same time.”

*Female, 25-34, Overtly positive*

“

“I think more information from refugee organizations to the public and more is reported about the situation. Then there are people in Sweden who don't give anything when asked, they think it is easiest to keep the resources to themselves. More is required from international powers I think, the view varies in each country and the UN and EU's voices are not heard enough and concrete action from them is missing. When a concrete plan for how refugees can get a good life is presented, then I think many will know more and contribute. Just giving clothes and so on is too little, much bigger plans are needed.”

*Male, 25-34, Overtly positive*



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