



Role of Arts in addressing the needs of Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Belfast



ArtsEkta's first project commenced three years ago with support of PHA.

Extern were our first partners

The ladies who participated had just very basic needs

Needs were to keep their native skills alive in a very safe space and environment

To keep their mental stability and forget about the traumas

The basic needs of these participants

After getting second hand clothes how to alter and mend them

Creating special arts pieces for their friends

They met for 2hrs sessions every week and learnt basic sewing skills, embroidery and knitting skills

The women from different cultural background enjoyed the programme and created pieces of work.

They took the ownership of the programme, it was a great learning for the women.

Language being a huge barrier one of the participant from each group took a role of communicating









develop their personal skills and support their cultural identity.

Participation can be a vital and powerful ingredient in helping refugee people to change their often very negative images of themselves and, in the process, raise their sense of self-esteem.

Involving people actively as participants might help them to value themselves as people who are contributing both to their families and wider society

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Arts activities clearly contributed to the mental and physical health of the participants, suggesting that the incorporation of such activities into an organisation's engagement activities improves both key skills and overall wellbeing.

In my view as the number of arts and refugee activities continues to expand, a number of important areas have been identified by the participating artists and organisations as requiring further attention and development.

Amongst these issues is the increasing need to develop strong partnerships between institutions and organisations as well as implementing effective means of measuring projects' outcomes. While the success of arts-led initiatives with refugees may be encouraging for more organisations to take the initial steps in developing these types of projects, it is important that interested parties consider the potential means by which arts-projects can be most effectively designed and executed.

In particular, it is crucial to understand the importance of safeguarding against the potential of unintended harm when undertaking participatory projects and ensuring the best interests of the people are met at all times.



**We delivered project in partnership with THE ARK HOUSING
HOME PLUS**

**Currently the project is being delivered to HOME PLUS plus Homeless
Young People and BME further education**