



# DYNAMO YE

□ London and Amman  
2015



Asfar

## Who is Asfar?

Asfar is a dynamic NGO, established in 2012 by young people, designed to inspire, provide a platform and offer a support network to fellow young people, students and graduates specialising in and interested by the Middle East.

Since 2013, Asfar has mobilised to support more young people, especially those seeking employment and who would benefit from cultural and skills engagement.

Asfar works locally & internationally, to offer opportunities for Communities, especially Young People in the UK and the Middle East, through Volunteering & Social Action; an e-Journal; Educational & Enterprise programmes; Cultural activities; and Youth Exchanges, to: Engage, Inspire and Develop themselves.

With a particular focus on Youth mentoring, Careers Advice and Skills development, Asfar has been delivering projects to promote social inclusion, develop cultural awareness and encourage Civic participation and Citizenship through Volunteering and Social Action.

Through a quarterly e-Journal, skills, cultural and youth projects, Asfar supports young people and other communities to

develop, engage and connect on an international basis, encouraging peer to peer support and volunteering opportunities. Asfar also offers employability training, careers advice, support and life changing experiences through informal learning activities.

With a focus on the history, society, culture, development and politics of the Middle East, Asfar introduces new ideas, innovative articles and magnificent images of the region through our e-Journal platform and promoting other digital tools. Remaining politically neutral and non-partisan, Asfar's youth projects and e-Journal cover a full range of areas: from geography to art, languages to society and from history to cookery.

Asfar is a unique organisation aimed at promoting the study of different cultures, the curiosity and personal development of individuals and ensuring opportunities for all involved. This aim is designed to counter the decline in Cultural, Language and Regional studies of subjects in Further and higher Education, caused by the promotion of only political, international relations and economic subjects, which are the fashion in most UK FE and HE Institutions, resulting in the decline of the cultural sector and young peoples' knowledge of the world and the skills they require to embark on further studies, travel and the opportunities to be individuals, while learning about different people, communities, cultures and regions.





## What is Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport. It runs for seven years, from 2014 to 2020, with organisations invited to apply for funding each year to undertake creative and worthwhile activities.

Erasmus+ aims to modernise education, training and youth work across Europe. It is open to education, training, youth and sport organisations across all sectors of lifelong learning including school education, further and higher education, adult education and the youth sector.

The Erasmus+ programme in the UK falls under the authority of the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS). The programme itself is managed in the UK by the UK National Agency, a partnership between the British Council and Ecorys UK.

**Changing lives, opening minds:** Erasmus+ will help participants at all stages of their life, from school through to adulthood, to pursue stimulating opportunities for learning. It will help them to gain the valuable life-skills and international experience they need to succeed in today's world. It offers pupils, students, young people, adults, professionals, lecturers, youth workers and teachers a unique opportunity to obtain education, training, development and work experience in another European country and beyond, both inside and outside the classroom. Benefits include personal and professional development, the opportunity to broaden cultural horizons, boost confidence, and develop language skills and many more. These are felt not only at an individual level, but also among the education, training and youth support systems of all the participating countries and their wider communities.



# Dynamo Y.E

**Dynamo YE** an Erasmus+ Youth Exchange designed and organised by Asfar and partner Youth Spirit, brought together young people from the UK and Jordan to participate in an two-way inter-cultural youth exchange, focusing on the differences within our societies and cultures, the development of artistic & enterprise skills, informal language skills, active citizenship, and the promotion of cultural tolerance, with the aim of fostering an international platform for social cohesion between EU states and Mediterranean's neighbours, especially during these difficult times.

**Erasmus+ Dynamo YE** provided an opportunity for unemployed, students and graduate young people from the UK and Jordan to develop a youth network of mutual understanding between diverse cultures in Europe and the Middle East, while also encouraging inter-cultural investigation in a range of key topics including: Society; Culture; Arts; Literature; Politics; and Democracy; EU Citizenship; Social Action; and Cultural similarities and differences. Young people developed their language skills in English and Arabic, while also developing key personal, life and employability skills, through informal and fun activities, with a focus on culture, art, literature, enterprise and education.

Asfar and Youth Spirit mobilised a range of informal Workshops which focused on promoting creative skills, while also learning about different cultures. Themes included: Digital Arts; Enterprise; Photography skills; Silk Screen Printing skills; Writing Skills, resulting in dynamic articles and producing unique photographs for Asfar's own e-Journal and final Film.



# Amman, May 2015

The activities started in May 2015, when Asfar sent a group of Young People to Amman, Jordan on the first leg of the Erasmus+ Dynamo YE project.

UK Participants met and engaged with Jordanian Participants, while also learning about Jordan, the difficulties of the region and making new friends. It was a difficult activity for Asfar to mobilise, especially on the recruitment of participants' front, with many young people fearful about visiting Jordan due to the issues in the wider region.

On day one, UK Participants got involved in a youth-led Arabic class, while also providing advice on how to Speak English. This was followed by a tour around Amman.

The following days included learning traditional Arab Silk Printing skills, Enterprise skills and a Scavenger Hunt around Amman.

Participants also learned about Jordan's history from its' creation as Transjordan out of the First World War and the Arab Revolt, to its' modern history, as well as its' past.

All participants learned about their Citizenships, the differences between the UK, Jordan and the EU.

Participants were also able to develop their Digital Skills, ethnic minorities and visit key historical sites such as Darat Al'fonon.

# London, Sept 2015

The UK visit occurred in September 2015, when Jordanian participants visited London. The first day kicked off with Asfar's staff and participants meeting Jordanian and having a welcome lunch in Notting Hill. This was followed by an evening of informal engagement and sightseeing.

The next day participants visited Europe House to learn about the EU, EU citizenships, and participated in a range of role plays, such as being MEPs and debating on whether Turkey should be given entry to the EU. Participants were able to meet EU Staff and Involved Staff to discuss their ideas in an informal learning setting.

Other cultural activities included a visit to Brixton, to learn about ethnic minorities, the Brixton riots and an artistic tour led by Michael Groce. It also included a visit to the Black Archives. Participants were also able to meet with another youth exchange group from Italy, visiting London and Asfar's partner's Momentum World.

Further activities included a visit to Shakespeare Globe to see Edward II, historical and digital workshops and a wide range of informal learning activities.

Erasmus+ Dynamo YE offered a unique opportunity to provide young people from the UK and Jordan to engage with different societies, learn about different countries, cultures and ethnic minorities, including practicing their Arabic and English language skills, while learning about the EU, Citizenship and Democracy and a range of artistic and digital skills.

Ultimately, Erasmus+ Dynamo YE promoted cultural tolerance between young people in the EU and Jordan in a period when inter-cultural understanding is difficult between Europe and the Middle East.











To learn more, visit the Erasmus+ Dynamo YE page:

<http://www.asfar.org.uk/erasmus/jordan-dynamo-ye/>



**www.asfar.org.uk**  
**CAN Mezzanine Borough**  
**7-14, Great Dover Street**  
**London**  
**SE1 4YR**  
**0203 096 7850**  
**info@asfar.org.uk**

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