



## **Social Audit Report**

**Up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015**

Asfar CIC is a dynamic CIC working in the international development and youth sectors, to provide opportunities for Communities and Young People in the UK and the Middle East, through Volunteering; an e-Journal; Educational programmes; Cultural activities; and Youth Exchanges, to: Engage, Inspire and Develop themselves.

Asfar also provides Development and Capacity Building services to fellow Voluntary and Community sector organisations including Charities, Social Enterprises and NGOs to grow.

### **e-Journal 2014**

Throughout 2014, Asfar's e-Journal developed.

A key area of development, was the launch of a new e-publication interface, via Asfar's new website and new look e-Journal. Another key area, was the decision by Asfar's Director to launch the Senior Editor Stipend scheme to encourage the e-Journal sustainment. From 2015, a new Senior Editor, initially a graduate from Durham University will receive a small stipend of £100 to encourage their long term commitment to the project.

The e-Journal also changed from a strictly voluntary to a participatory programme in 2014. Over 30 young people joined the e-Journal programme and developed a wide range of new skills, experiences and opportunities while creating a unique e-publication throughout their tenure.

Support included: Information, Advice and Guidance; CV building; Interview advice; and a guaranteed Reference representing their contribution to the Asfar e-Journal. All participants benefit from other events and activities, including free places on Youth Exchanges, Career talks, Training and Networking opportunities. Through these activities, Asfar, is not only supporting young people to gain publication, but to also develop wider skills, work experience and increase their readiness for employment.



## Youth in Action

In March 2014, Asfar completed its' first Youth in Action programme in UK Universities.

The Asfar University Programme, encouraged the inclusion of young people, students and graduates from a range of different backgrounds - educational, cultural and socio-economic - with the objective to develop their key creative and entrepreneurial skills in research, writing, publishing, social media and education, through active participation in investigating Democracy, their EU Citizenship and key themes in relation to the Middle East.

Over 30 young people took part in a number of workshops delivered by Asfar, at key UK Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and Youth Centres in order to develop inter-cultural understanding; skills; develop and explore citizenship; and youth in politics, promoting the development of participants' own volunteering or social change projects.

Participants explored:

- **Political/Civic responsibilities and EU Citizenship**
- **Cross-cultures and Cultural awareness**
- **Comparative Middle Eastern cultures**

Skills development will include:

- **Communication and Inter-personal skills**
- **Project management**
- **CV building and Interview techniques**
- **Social change and Volunteering project design**
- **Proposal writing and Fundraising skills**

The key emphasis focused on developing young peoples' existing skills and learning new skills in a non-formal learning environment and included Cultural awareness; Political and Civic responsibilities; Fundraising and Project management, the Asfar University programme improved Young People's employability, confidence in society and interaction with wider communities and cultures.

Workshops focused on:



- **Europe vs. the Middle East**
- **Skills development and Employability**
- **Volunteering and Social action**

The most popular workshop was 'How to Get into the Media' with guest speaker BBC Arabic journalist Abubakr Al-Shamahi, who provided a range of essential information for young people interested in working in the Media sector, with specialist focus on international affairs.

Key programme achievements included:

- **10 Young People entered employment**
- **Over 30 Young People achieved their EU Youthpass**
- **Peer-to-peer Mentoring**
- **Increased participation in Volunteering**
- **Development of Young Peoples' Skills and awareness of their EU Citizenship**

### **Erasmus+**

In 2014, between June and December, Asfar gained confirmation that 3 Erasmus+ programmes were awarded funding: Inspire Europe; Dynamo Youth Exchange; and Euro-Med.

Euro-Med, a Youth and Youth worker programme between the UK and Palestine, unfortunately, was cancelled due to the Gaza War and FCO Travel Advice confirmed against all travel in Gaza and Palestine. This resulted in a sharp loss both of funding and committed expenditure. The most significant element of this loss, was that Asfar could no longer work with the partner, we had identified.

**Inspire Europe:** is a one-way Youth Exchange for young people aged 18 to 30 to Istanbul, in partnership with Takim Yildiz. It involves both cultural understanding, through learning about Turkey, its' Ottoman and Islamic past and Islamic revivalism. Furthermore, young people will meet with over 10 of their peers. The programmes also includes Skills development; Conflict Resolution workshops; Human Rights; Scavenger Hunts; and a wide range of other informal and cultural learning activities over 7 days. UK participants will be from a wide range of backgrounds, with a significant number from the BAME backgrounds, all from economic strand backgrounds and all with mixed views on the Middle East. The Youth Exchange occurred between 26<sup>th</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.



Over 18 participants from the UK and Turkey, engaged over a period of 7 days in Istanbul, Turkey.

Information on the activity, including photos are available here - <http://www.asfar.org.uk/erasmus-inspire-europe-istanbul-2015/> furthermore, project manager, Sheniz Tan published a diary in the April 2015 e-Journal - <http://www.asfar.org.uk/erasmus-inspire-europe-march-2015/>

To learn more about Inspire Europe, visit <http://www.asfar.org.uk/erasmus/turkey-inspire-europe/>

**Dynamo Youth Exchange:** is a two-way, youth exchange between London, UK and Amman, Jordan between young people aged 18 to 30 years old from BAME backgrounds, with particular focus on second generation Migrants and Refugees. Young people learn about different cultures, in a historical and creative setting, while learning about Arabic and English language, participate in artistic activities and physical activities such as hiking in Wadi Rum. This programme is still in progress and is due to occur in May 2015 and September 2015.

### **Development Consultancy Services**

Asfar continued to offer Development Consultancy Services for NGOs; Charities; and other Voluntary and Community sector organisations. For all organisations in the Voluntary and Community Sector, rates were offered at reduced levels and for longer term development projects, further reduction were made.

For instance:

<b>Small/Medium Enterprise</b>	<b>Day Rate</b>	<b>£150 per day</b>
<b>VCS organisation</b>		<b>£130 per day</b>
<b>VCS organization long-term project Rate (minimum of 4 days per week for 3 months)</b>		<b>£115 per day</b>

Through Development Consultancy, the income has subsidized the implementation of our Erasmus+ programmes including advanced planning meeting costs and the appointment of a freelance Youth Officer to lead on recruitment.



## **Grant giving in 2014-2015**

Asfar gave one grant in 2014. The grant was given in December 2014 to the UN World Food Programme towards the Syrian Crisis. The grant was valued at £50.00. The decision was taken to provide the UN World Food programme this grant due to a real identified shortage in the UN's food budget in December 2014 and January 2015 for those affected by the Syrian Civil War.

## **Objectives for 2015-2016**

Asfar is committed to both its' development as an organisation, to avoid reliance on charitable grants, as well as providing real opportunities for Young People aged 18 to 24 and Young Adults aged 25 to 30 as well as wider groups such as Women from Ethnic Minorities and Refugees and those who are Displaced. Asfar is also committed to supporting the Syrian Refugee Crisis and from August 2015, aims to develop a strategy to achieve this goal.

Key objectives for the forthcoming year include:

- 1. Obtain Core funding either via Development Consultancy or an alternative source;**
- 2. Start delivery local projects for local communities more longer term;**
- 3. International Partnership Development;**
- 4. Founding of an Asfar Trust funded solely by Asfar CIC to benefit all Young People in need;**
- 5. Wider Development Consultancy projects to offer paid work experience to Young People;**
- 6. Development of more diverse and inclusive programmes.**