

OPENING ARCHIVES CASE STUDY

QISETNA

Tasjeelat



HERITAGE DOMAIN:

Community Archives.

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Qisetna collect stories from the Syrian diaspora living in the UK. For their project, they set about conducting research across several UK regions and contexts, both rural and urban, to understand the current situation of the Syrian diaspora better, and reach Syrians from the older generation. They then sought to create new content online by producing a series of podcasts under themes such as music, food, places and proverbs, in collaboration with Syrian diaspora in the UK, particularly those from the older generation. This new collection was uploaded on a bilingual website to make it available to younger audiences through social media networks.

PROJECT STATS (data accurate as of April 2022):

- 12 participants took part in 5 core workshops.
- Two public sharing events, which 180 individuals participated in.
- 534 visits made to the DDA project page on Qisetna's website.

SUCCESSES:

- The involvement of artists (musicians, novelists and poets) has been a huge success, which supports cultural understanding and co-operation between Syrian migrants and the host communities.
- Adapting to a virtual and digital environment very quickly.
- The final event was a big success. It was a crucial platform for sharing experience and knowledge about culture with wider audiences. It also served as a tool to reduce the generational gap between migrants (old and young), and to speed up inclusion into their host communities.

LEARNINGS:

- It is important to have Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound (SMART) indicators at the initial stage of the project, and to let partners understand the specific and targeted objectives, in order to make the project more focused.
- It is important to have clear criteria for the implementation of the project and selection of beneficiaries, especially at community level. Involve every stakeholder and follow up with visits, phone calls and email correspondence (copying in every stakeholder involved). This is to enable transparency and commitment.
- It takes time to build dialogue and meaningful relationships with communities, particularly those who have experienced trauma. Through this project, Qisetna are learning a methodology and tools for approaching and building relationships with Syrian communities in the UK.

TOP TIP FOR WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES AND ARCHIVES:

The project has laid good foundations for socio-cultural and behaviour change, and the empowerment of vulnerable cultures. However, additional time may be needed to yield a lasting result. Behaviour change may take place over a longer period.

LINK TO DIGITAL OUTPUTS:

<https://www.qisetna.com/project/tasjeelat/>

qisetna
قستنا

 the audience agency



Made possible with
Heritage Fund

 Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

Opening Archives was an action research project, designed and led by The Audience Agency, supporting 10 organisations to explore archives, community engagement and digital tools. It was funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2021/22.