

### Youth Peacebuilding Through Art Project

*Arts activities are about expression and communication, enabling us to share our unique personal experience of life. They enable us to connect with the identity and values that are formed through that experience. Arts activities are also about creativity – that wellspring from which we find new and original pathways to the future. And they are about participation, about joining with others, and sharing our humanity in an inimitable way. Through the creative processes of expression, communicating, connecting, imagining and sharing we learn and grow.*

Helen Gould, Creative Exchange (UK), introducing 'A Sense of Belonging' report (2005)

The arts and artistic expression can play an important role in personal and community development. Self-expression through the arts can help articulate and share specific histories, shape our social and cultural agendas, explore our complex identities and address the issues that are relevant to today's diverse communities.

It is a form of expression that is often beyond and independent of language. Participatory arts works are a way to create access to cultural production for people who are excluded or on the fringe of mainstream cultural resources.

Arts programmes open up opportunities for creative, culture sharing projects within refugee and asylum seeker communities and between refugee, asylum seeker and broader communities. Participation in the arts can help connect new communities to their new society and to introduce the wider community to newly arrived cultures.

It is in this context that EastWeb is pleased to support a new youth arts initiative being run by Victorian Arabic Social Services – the Youth Peacebuilding Through Art Project.

The project was the idea of a couple of young Palestinian artists who wanted to create a space for the creative expression of young Arabic people who feel marginalised and without a voice to share their experiences. An artist/art therapist will facilitate the group and the group will display their work at public forums and exhibitions.

Contact Eastweb for more information.

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