

COUNTRY

United States of America

PROJECT TITLE

Shifaa Women's Empowerment Drum Circle

DESCRIPTION

This project is run by UpBeat Drum Circles in collaboration with License to Freedom, Musical Ambassadors for Peace, and The Center for World Music. Its purpose is to train refugee women from Iraq to lead drum circles for empowerment, healing (shifaa), cultural adjustment, and community building across divisions of religious groups. Many of the women are survivors of abuse from their husbands and have survived the war and numerous refugee camps.

The Center for World Music produced the series "Songs and Stories: Refugee Artists in San Diego," was designed to give a voice to a silent population in Southern California. The central goal was to create bridges between San Diego's public with its growing refugee population and their various cultures. More than 20 refugee performers displaced from Congo, East and Central Africa, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Syria were brought to audiences across San Diego. The series culminated on World Music Day and also observed World Refugee Day. The final gathering titled "Transformation through Rhythm & Word" included Shifaa: Iraqi Refugee Women's Drum Circle. Shifaa shared songs, rhythms, and dance not as a performance, but as an invitation to engage in a shared unity through sound. The series demonstrated the capacity of music to create community, bridge differences, and heal trauma.

NEEDS ADDRESSED

The project was created to help refugee women adapt to America using the dances and rhythms from their culture, and help build bridges across religious groups. The project helps the women have the support of other women.

"Songs and Stories: Refugee Artists in San Diego" was a series of events designed to give a voice to a silent population in Southern California. Federal partnerships with local humanitarian organizations rightly prioritize basic needs such as housing, health, and jobs. Yet, there are needs just as fundamental to all human life that remain a daily struggle for these families: the need for community, a sense of belonging, and the opportunity to speak their voice and be heard in their new home. Music and storytelling are vehicles through which the participants communicate their struggle, longing, resilience, and hope.

VALUES AND ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING THIS PROJECT

- Scientific evidence of the benefits of group drumming for mind, body, spirit;
- Empowerment of women;

- Cultural adaptation and integration into new society promotes well-being; and
- Creative expression of women sharing poems strengthens healthy networking.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Community building between Muslim and Christian Iraqi women;
- Healing from the wounds of war, from loss and abuse; and
- Drumming, singing, and dancing become ritual sources of healing.

HOW MUSIC ACHIEVES THESE OUTCOMES

Musical activities:

- Drum Circles: an evidence-based protocol for cultural sharing and wellness is used, based on the work of HealthRHYTHMS;
- Entrainment of rhythms for community building; and
- Cultural sharing of songs, dances, and rhythms maintains a connection to the culture of home.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE TO THIS PROJECT

Many of the women suffer from post traumatic stress disorder and have symptoms that are hard to treat without language skills; and talk therapy or talk therapy groups are not typical in the Arabic culture. Through the use of an evidence-based protocol, inter-woven with cultural rhythms and traditional Sufi poetry, dramatic change in mood states, community building, and bonding amongst the women are evidenced in exchange of contact information, sharing of food, hugs, and inter-generational healing.

Some things noticed are:

- Consistent attendance;
- Leadership being exhibited;
- Women bringing their poems;
- Women bringing their children;
- Sustainable new leaders;
- Positive impact on home-life; and
- Women taking drums to picnics and family gatherings.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Foundations and private donations.

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS RELEVANT TO THIS PROJECT



RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:

Dr. Barry Bittman, Research on immune system impact of group drumming.

Link: <https://remo.com/experience/post/healthrhythms-research/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<https://youtu.be/pgLH1pbAtP4>

<https://ubdrumcircles.com/1079-2/>

MESSAGE ABOUT MUSIC'S CURRENT AND FUTURE GLOBAL ROLE

"Drumming is universal. It is the element of music that can be shared and joined, no matter what language or melodies. The healing and peace-making benefits are well documented and extend across cultures, ages, and races."

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Organization: UpBeat Drum Circles Inc.

Contact Person: Christine Stevens

Address: PO Box 1245, Wilson, WY, 83014, USA

Email Address: info@ubdrumcircles.com

Website: www.ubdrumcircles.com