

Case Study

Students Union University of the Arts

What was your interfaith project?

SUARTs Interfaith Project, run in collaboration with LSE Students Union, consisted of two events to mark Islamophobia Awareness Month: a 3 week exhibition of UAL students work and an evening of discussion about Islamophobia.

How did you ensure students were involved in the development of your project?

Both events were entirely student led in their content and delivery and were very well attended by students from across both universities.

The exhibition titled "IAM" featured work of 20 students in a number of mediums including photography, sculpture, illustration and provided an insight into Islam and religious practice from the perspective of a wide range of members of the Islamic community at UAL. Subjects examined included identity, sexuality, religious practice, cultural signifiers and discrimination.

The second element of our project was an event we held at LSE called "Confronting Islamophobia." The evening was split into two panel discussions; the first focusing on "Islamophobia on campus" and the second focusing on "Islamophobia in the UK." This event was entirely organized and produced by student – including the selection of the speakers.

What impact did this project have on students you work with and within your students' union or college?

- How did it deliver one of the following outcomes:
 - o Encourage engagement between faith societies
 - o Increase understanding amongst students about different religions and beliefs
 - o Increase dialogue and collaborative action
- Were there any other outcomes from the project?

The exhibition was visited by UAL and LSE students of all different faiths and backgrounds. It was situated in a prominent area of LCF College so it was also seen by a high number of people who were passing by.

The private view and the talks were attended by members of faith societies from both institutions (for example presidents of ISOC and JSOC). The Q&A after the talks allowed for debate and discussion between a whole cross section of the student population.

We were especially pleased with how, through our collaboration with LSESU, we were able to engage students from a range of academic and creative disciplines on the issues of both religious discrimination and tolerance. Following on from the success of these events we are now exploring how we can expand our collaborative work on interfaith projects further.

The exhibition was also featured on the Arts and Culture section of an international broadcast new channel which gave our students the opportunity to talk about the issue of Islamophobia to an even wider audience.

What lessons did you learn in delivering the project that might be useful to other students' unions?

Collaborating with other students union or organization allowed us to run events that approach the issue from a totally different perspective. Our events explored the issue of Islamophobia using a number of different practices and this is something we never could have done on our own.

Do you have any feedback from participants at your event?

We received a lot of positive feedback from students about the event, especially from artists who took part in the exhibition and were very pleased to have been given the opportunity to exhibit their work.

Photo/Video evidence of your event:

A video of the talks can be found here http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yqt2_Y1kyn8

