



*The arts in  
refugee camps:  
ten good reasons*

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source: [www.unhcr.org/4def858a9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4def858a9.html)

UNHCR May 2013

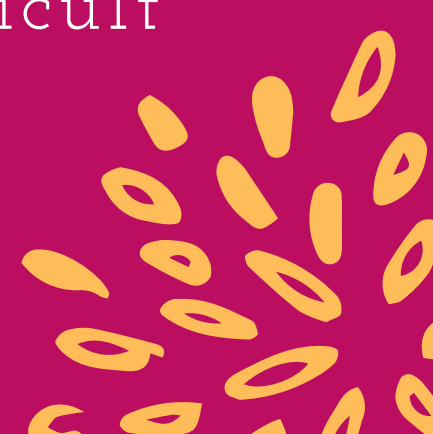





Artistic activity may

1. help you **use your time creatively** focusing energy and talent toward **meaningful ends**. It can also keep you engaged in the cycles of time from which you can be easily disconnected in camp life.


2. help **cope with the psychological and emotional stresses**. Although artistic activity cannot substitute for psychiatric therapy, it provides a means to express emotions and may help confront difficult memories.





3. help **connect you with your spiritual tradition and the religious community** you may have left behind. Rituals include artistic components that can help connect you with it.

4. help **reinforce your sense of power and agency**, especially if you lead it yourselves. Besides it can offer the possibility of joy even within the context of camp life.






Habibi and Sports with Refugees, an project in Katsikas Ioannina, empowers refugees and asylum seekers as professionals and teachers in many activities.








5. help **preserve your traditional culture** while away from your native land, as well as **pass on your cultural heritage** to children, who may have never seen or no longer remember their homeland.


6. help **children learn more effectively**. Educational activities can be enhanced with participatory practices, artistic and creative learning techniques to engage them as **active agents in their own (fun) learning process**.






7. help create a **sense of community with other refugees**, as the arts can provide opportunities to share your culture with others and learn from theirs. Moreover, stories, songs, dances, visual arts and other means can be used to bring up sensitive issues and open them up for public consideration and discussion.





8. help create a **relation between refugee and host communities**, which are complex and often tense. Personal and cultural interactions may play a role in engendering mutual respect, challenging stereotypes held by both sides, and fostering cooperative ventures.







9. present **opportunities for adult education and social development.**

Non-text-based means of communicating information (songs, poems and visual images) may be more effective and hence they are most likely to affect their behaviour.

10. help you **prepare for life beyond the camp.** The learnt skills (e.g. self-discipline, creativity and patience) may serve you well while building a new life.







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