The Silent University

Visible Award 2013 - WinnerThe Silent University is an autonomous knowledge exchange platform by and for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. It is led by a group of lecturers, consultants and research fellows. Each group is contributing to the programme in different ways which include course development, specific research on key themes as well as personal reflections on what it means to be a refugee and asylum seeker. This platform will be presented using the format of an academic program.

In 2012 the Silent University has involved those that have had a professional life and academic training in their home countries, but are unable to use their skills or professional training in the UK due to a variety of reasons related to their status. Working together, the participants have developed course topics connected to their qualifications. The Silent University started initially in London in 2012 in collaboration with Delfina Foundation and Tate and later hosted by The Showroom. It is currently being established in the Sweden in collaboration with Tensta Konsthall and ABF Stockholm, and in France, at Le 116 in Montreuil, Greater Paris region.

The Silent University aims to address and reactivate the knowledge of the participants and make the exchange process mutually beneficial by inventing alternative currencies, in place of money or free voluntary service. The Silent University's aim is to challenge the idea of silence as a passive state, and explore its powerful potential through performance, writing, and group reflection. These explorations attempt to make apparent the systemic failure and the loss of skills and knowledge experienced through the silencing process of people seeking asylum.

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