



# CULTURAL BONDING THROUGH THE ARTS



Application Pack – Project Officer



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**BELFAST  
MELA**

ArtsEkta are the proud  
organisers of the Belfast Mela

Charity No. XR 96726  
Company Ltd No. NI060389



cultural bonding through the arts

Dear Applicant

Thank you for expressing interest in the post of **Project Officer - Dockside Stories** with ArtsEkta – an award winning social enterprise passionate about promoting our cultural diversity.

In this pack you will find:

- A job description and person specification which will be used to shortlist your application
- An application form
- An equal opportunities monitoring form

Please ensure that all forms are completed and returned by **12noon on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026**  
Late, incomplete or ineligible applications will not be considered.

Completed applications should be returned by email only to [admin@artsekta.org.uk](mailto:admin@artsekta.org.uk). ArtsEkta will acknowledge receipt of applications via email however due to anticipated high volumes of applications we will provide feedback to shortlisted candidates only.

In the event of a large number of applications being received, ArtsEkta reserve the right to enhance criteria in order to effectively shortlist candidates.

**Interviews are expected to take place week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026**

If you require any assistance with completing the application form or require in an alternative format, please contact us on 028 9023 1381 or email [admin@artsekta.org.uk](mailto:admin@artsekta.org.uk)

We look forward to receiving your application.

Yours sincerely

**Nisha Tandon OBE**  
Chief Executive

**This project is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players**





## **Introduction**

ArtsEkta is a multi-award winning social enterprise that works to develop intercultural relationships at the heart of the community and is home to the Belfast Mela - the largest celebration of cultural diversity on the island of Ireland.

The brainchild of Indian-native Nisha Tandon, ArtsEkta was founded in 2006 on the principles of inclusivity, creativity and openness in all aspects of society – Ekta means 'uniting' in the Indian language.

Bringing together communities of Belfast and beyond, we create projects that inspire audiences to engage with the diversity, tastes, rhythms and sights that make up the multicultural life of Northern Ireland.

Over the last decade we have grown dramatically in size and scope and are now recognised as one of the region's leading arts charities and a pioneer in the development of intercultural arts for Northern Ireland.

## **Our Vision**

### **VISION**

An inclusive society that respects different cultures and communities in Northern Ireland

## **Our Mission**

### **MISSION**

Encourage understanding by delivering innovative cultural programmes in the heart of the community

## **Our Beliefs & Values**

The way we pursue our vision is shaped by our values – the things we believe in and which shape our decisions and relationships

### **OUR BELIEFS & VALUES**

- We believe that arts and heritage are powerful facilitators of exchange and learning
- We believe in empowering people and communities to tell and exchange their own stories
- We value all people and believe no one should face barriers to participation
- We believe that a strong intercultural community of skilled artists, staff and governors is essential to pursuing our mission
- We believe that quality, evaluation, learning and impact are linked and underpin success
- We value and recognise the dedication and commitment of our team
- We value collective action and working with others to improve intercultural understanding
- We believe in openness, transparency and honesty in all we do.

## **What we are looking for**

Our rapidly growing cultural organisation is looking for a new Project Officer to lead the delivery of Dockside Stories, an ambitious heritage initiative exploring Belfast's history of trade, migration and cultural exchange.

Candidates should be highly organised with the ability to coordinate multi-strand projects while supporting our values of inclusion, storytelling and community empowerment.

We're especially looking for someone with excellent communication and engagement skills, as you'll be expected to work closely with local communities, partners and stakeholders to ensure their voices shape the project's narrative.

## **Employee Benefits**

- The chance to join a highly motivated, creative and fun team dedicated to making Northern Ireland a more diverse and inclusive place
- Be part of an ideas-driven organisation with an opportunity to contribute to future development
- Bespoke training and professional development opportunities
- Easily accessible city centre offices with free parking
- Flexible and hybrid working policy
- Pension benefits
- 35 days annual leave (inclusive of bank holidays) and Time Off In Lieu

**ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

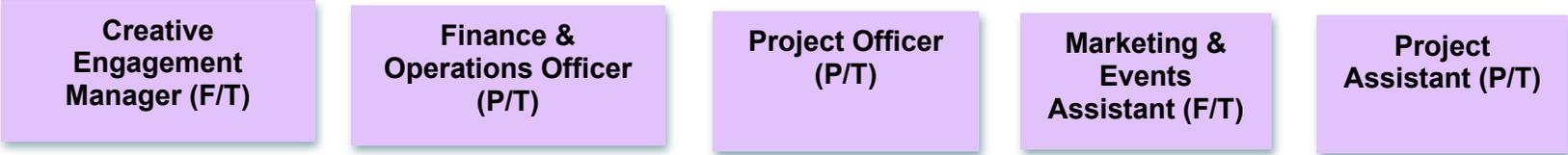
**Level 1**  
Governance



**Level 2**  
Executive Leadership



**Level 3**  
Operations



**Level 4**  
Production



**NB: ArtsEkta’s organisational structure is currently under review and may be subject to future change.**



## ARTSEKTA PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Dockside Stories is a three year community-led heritage initiative uncovering Belfast's history of trade, migration, and cultural exchange through its port. Once a global hub of commerce, the docks were a place where goods, people and cultures converged, leaving a lasting mark on the city's identity.

Working with local communities, historians, artists, and volunteers, the project will bring to life the stories of dockworkers, migrants, and traders whose experiences have often been overlooked. Through oral histories, digital storytelling, pop-up museums, creative workshops, and educational programmes, Dockside Stories will explore Belfast's mercantile heritage and its connections to colonial trade, migration and cultural diversity.

Themes include:

- Belfast's growth as a merchant city through commodities such as linen, tea, and tobacco
- The heritage of Sailortown, Little Italy, and the Half Bap — neighbourhoods shaped by global trade and migration
- Links to slavery and exploitation through Belfast's role in the rum and sugar trade
- The migration stories of Italian, Jewish, Indian, Vietnamese and other communities

By uncovering and preserving these narratives, Dockside Stories seeks to make heritage more inclusive, accessible, and relevant today, sparking dialogue about identity, diversity and social justice while ensuring Belfast's rich port history is celebrated for future generations.

Key tasks include:

- Recruitment of 10 external members to an independent project steering group to provide strategic direction for the project
- Work collaboratively with independent evaluators Thrive to measure the impact of the project
- Support the development of a marketing and communications plan to engage all stakeholders in the project effectively
- Carry out further desktop research of the core project themes and narratives with academic and community partners
- Further develop project co-design to conceptualise frameworks for training, capacity building and interpretation
- Recruit 15 volunteers to complete training in oral history and interpretation
- Work with Quarto Collective to skill up recruited volunteers in oral history. This will include preparation of the programme, consent form, training facilitation and 1 to 1 support for oral history gathering and interpretation
- Work with Belfast Met to deliver Level 2 OCN tour guide training to 5 trainees to embed local skills in the community
- Oversee the development of a creative hub at Barrow Square
- Ensure completion of 30 oral history interviews with a diverse range of residents across Belfast and beyond
- Interpret collected stories into a 'knitted village' of the Belfast docks areas
- Deliver educational workshops to pupils at KS2 and KS4 level through 4x 2hr workshops across 4 schools. It will also involve the development of a wider resource kit for schools

- Deliver new music commission working with 15 professional and community musicians
- Deliver 3D mapping projection experience at St Joseph's Church which would be launched as part of the Belfast Maritime Festival 2027
- Deliver professional theatre heritage trail which would be launched as part of the Belfast Maritime Festival 2027
- Curating all project outcomes into a pop up museum
- Formalising all the collected material in one final digital archive to preserve in the longer term with PRONI
- Deliver project closure event
- Collating all the project outcomes into one final evaluation report to assess impact and future recommendations

**This project is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players**





## ARTSEKTA JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>POST:</b>	Project Officer – Dockside Stories
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	Creative Producer
<b>SALARY:</b>	SO1 £31,051 Pro Rata 30 hours per week
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Olive Tree House, 23 Fountain Street, BT1 5EA
<b>CONTRACT LENGTH:</b>	Fixed term, 3 years
<b>HOURS OF WORK:</b>	30 hours per week. Reasonable hours outside of this will be required to fulfil the duties of this position. This post can be fully office based, hybrid or remote. A flexible working system is in operation.
<b>LEAVE:</b>	35 days annual leave pro rata including bank holidays. The company operates a TOIL system.
<b>PENSION</b>	Employer pension contribution of 7% is offered with this post through NEST

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### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Dockside Stories is a community-led heritage initiative exploring Belfast's history of trade, migration, and cultural exchange through its port. Through oral histories, digital storytelling, exhibitions, and public engagement, the project uncovers diverse narratives that shaped the city's identity. The Project Manager will be responsible for leading the successful delivery of this initiative, working closely with partners, stakeholders, and community groups.

### ROLE OVERVIEW

The **Project Officer** will oversee the planning, coordination, and execution of Dockside Stories, ensuring smooth operations and meaningful engagement with local communities. This role requires excellent project management skills, stakeholder coordination, and a strong passion for heritage, migration stories, and community-led initiatives.

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Project Coordination & Delivery

- Lead the day-to-day management of Dockside Stories, ensuring project milestones and deliverables are met on time and within budget.
- Develop and maintain project plans, timelines, and risk management strategies.

- Coordinate research, oral history collection, digital archiving, and community-led storytelling initiatives.
- Oversee the creation of digital outputs, including a dedicated website section, online archives, and interactive installations.

### **Community & Stakeholder Engagement**

- Work closely with key project partners, including Sailortown Regeneration, Queen's University Belfast, PRONI, Quarto Collective, and heritage practitioners.
- Build and maintain relationships with local communities, ensuring their voices shape the project's narrative.
- Organise workshops, pop-up museums, and engagement activities in collaboration with artists, historians, and community facilitators.

### **Volunteer & Team Management**

- Recruit, train, and support volunteers in oral history collection, research, and storytelling.
- Collaborate with ArtsEkta's Creative Producer, Finance & Operations Officer, Marketing Officer, and Project Officer to ensure smooth delivery.

### **Budget & Reporting**

- Oversee a project budget of £200k+
- Manage project finances, tracking expenditures and ensuring compliance with funding agreements.
- Provide regular progress reports to ArtsEkta's board, steering group, and funders (e.g., National Lottery Heritage Fund).
- Support the evaluation process by collecting data, producing impact reports, and contributing to the final project assessment.

### **Marketing & Public Engagement**

- Oversee promotional activities, including website content, social media campaigns, and public storytelling events.
- Coordinate digital storytelling efforts, including 3D projection mapping and interactive heritage tours.
- Work with marketing teams to ensure inclusive and accessible outreach strategies.



## ARTSEKTA PERSON SPECIFICATION

### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- Proven experience in project management particularly within heritage sector and cultural or community-led initiatives.
- Strong background in community engagement, particularly in oral history, storytelling, and heritage interpretation.
- Ability to manage budgets, funding compliance, and reporting for grant-funded projects.
- Experience working with diverse communities, including migrant and heritage groups.
- Excellent communication and stakeholder management skills.
- Strong organisational abilities, able to juggle multiple workstreams effectively.
- Passion for heritage, social justice, and inclusive storytelling.

### DESIRABLE CRITERIA

- Knowledge of Belfast's maritime history, migration stories, and colonial trade connections.
- Experience with digital heritage projects, archival research, and multimedia storytelling.
- Familiarity with fundraising and sponsorship development.

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