

*“Merit’s session at Iqra Islamic primary school had outstanding qualities”
(Margaret Griffiths, Sing Up’s National Evaluator, June 2010)*

*“The way she sings inspires us to join in ... The lesson was really fun”
(Year 3 pupil, Iqra Primary School, Slough)*

*“inspirational qualities”
(Music Co-ordinator, Iqra Primary School, Slough)*

As creative artist and leader, Merit has worked with different communities in a wide range of contexts; with children and young people, classroom teachers and music specialist, students, people with special needs and refugees. She studied on the ‘Continuing Professional Development’ (CPD) course at the *Guildhall School of Music & Drama* and holds a ‘Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Leadership’ from the *Royal College of Music (RCM)*. She now is an outreach mentor at the RCM, teaching collaborative composition and workshop skills to undergraduate students, and works as a vocal specialist, world music and composition trainer for the *Trinity Guildhall* teacher training programme. Merit has collaborated with organisations such as the *South Bank*, *the Philharmonic Orchestra*, *Britten Sinfonia*, *Guildhall Connect*, *Children’s Music Workshop*, *City of London Festival*, *Norwich and Norfolk Festival*, *Opera North*, *Lontano* and *Opera Circus*. She leads singing workshops introducing specialist and non-specialist singers to Arabic and Middle Eastern singing, a.o. with ensembles like *Joglaresa* and *The Clerks*.

Using the arts as a medium for cultural understanding is central to Merit’s work. After University, she lived and worked for one year in Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina, where she supervised the Schools Music Programme at the *Pavarotti Music Centre*. This work, funded by *War Child Amsterdam*, entailed working with traumatised children and adults as well as collaborating with the local orchestra *Mostar Sinfonieta* and visiting musicians from the *LSO (London Symphony Orchestra)*. In the UK, she continues working in ethnically diverse settings, using music, particularly the voice, as a tool for exploration and dialogue. She developed and directed the ‘World Music Vocal Project’ for *THAMES (Tower Hamlets Music and Arts Services)* and works with staff and students at an Islamic Faith School in Slough. Most recently, she was appointed as lead artist for *Seeds and Songs*, a [Sing-Up](#) funded project and a collaboration between the *Sage Gateshead*, *Oval Theatre*, *London* and *Slough Music Service*, working with refugee communities as well as training young singing leaders.

For two years, Merit led ‘Tune In’, a weekly music group at *Archway Mental Health Hospital*. She works regularly with *Papworth Special Needs Trust* and runs a private singing group with disabled young adults. She is a volunteer music leader for [Woven Gold](#), the Music Group of the [Helen Bamber Foundation](#), a charity for victims of gross human rights abuses.

“Super introduction to an unknown genre. Merit’s enthusiasm and confidence/excellence in demonstration/teaching really meant for a rewarding, useful, enjoyable workshop. Many many thanks.”

(Music teacher, Trinity Guildhall Genres & Traditions Training Workshop)