



Weapon of Choice Schools Project Report

September 2023 - July 2024

Prepared by Alesha Pryce (Project Manager)

Beachcroft is an Alternative Provision (AP) Academy. This a temporary education setting for students who are unable to attend their mainstream school because they are excluded, ill, or need to improve their behaviour. AP is intended to help students address barriers to education and prepare them to reintegrate into school.

This project report provides a comprehensive overview of the sessions, outcomes, and impacts of the initiatives conducted during the 2023-2024 academic year. The year saw the implementation of two distinct yet complementary projects targeting the same cohort of young people: the In School Project and the After School Project.

The In-School Project, integrated into the school timetable, commenced in October 2023. It concentrated on enhancing creative writing, drama, and poetry skills among students from Key Stage 3 to Year 11. This project aimed to foster self-expression, communication, and emotional regulation within the classroom setting.

The After School Project, held on Tuesdays, extended beyond regular school hours and focused specifically on developing leadership skills alongside creative expression. This component provided students in Years 10 and 11 with additional opportunities to engage in personal and artistic growth outside the formal school environment.

Throughout the year, 35 participants engaged in both projects, benefiting from a range of activities designed to bolster their creative and personal development. This report details the activities conducted, assesses the outcomes achieved and reflects on the impacts observed across both projects.

Over the course of the year, the project engaged 7 participants who regularly attended through a total of 35 sessions, which ran from 4th October, 2023, to 17th July, 2024. These sessions were split between weekly in-school workshops and after-school activities, focusing on poetry, drama, and creative writing. The participants explored self-expression through various mediums, worked on individual and group projects, and had the opportunity to perform their work. The project also included additional activities such as peer mentorship, facilitation skills and a final showcase event, where participants presented their work to an audience of peers, teachers, and parents.

**In-School sessions**

No of sessions: 35

No of students: 33

Average no of student per class: 7

Age group : KS3- KS5 (11-18)

Ethnicity for both In-School and After School: 60% Mixed 20% Black 5% Asian 15% White

After-School sessions

No of sessions: 16 sessions

No of students: 15 max

Average no of students per session: 6

Age group : KS3- KS5 (11-18)

Summary (both projects):

The objective of this project was to engage learners in a series of creative workshops designed to enhance their confidence, teamwork, and self-expression through interactive activities, character development, and discussions on important themes such as reputation and bullying. The project aimed to create a safe and supportive environment where participants could gradually overcome shyness, develop their creative skills, and prepare for a poetry event, ultimately showcasing their growth and collaborative efforts.

The project involved a series of creative workshops aimed at engaging learners through interactive activities, character development, and discussions on themes such as reputation and bullying. Over the course of several sessions, participants were introduced to exercises like "Word Tennis", freeze frames, and the creation of original characters, which helped build their confidence and teamwork skills. Despite some disruptions and challenges in maintaining focus, particularly with certain learners who were initially shy or easily distracted, the sessions were largely successful in fostering a safe and imaginative environment. Learners gradually became more comfortable and expressive, with notable progress observed in individuals like H* and C*, who initially showed low confidence. The project culminated in preparation for a poetry event, where the learners' creative growth was evident, though some hesitancy around performing live led to a contingency plan of showcasing their work through a video collage if they were not prepared to perform live; however, this was not needed. Overall, the project was effective in promoting creativity, confidence, and collaboration among the learners, even in the face of occasional setbacks.

Evaluation Methodology (both projects):

The evaluation of the project was conducted through a multi-step process designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of the sessions. The steps included:



- Weekly Observational Session Notes: These were recorded by the entire team, with the Project Director leading the discussions and logging key observations. This approach ensured that insights from every facilitator were captured, providing a holistic view of each session's effectiveness.

- Monthly Observations by Project Manager: The Project Manager conducted monthly observations to monitor the project's progress against its objectives. This regular monitoring helped in identifying any issues early on and allowed for timely interventions.

- Biannual Observational Monitoring: The Project Director and Artist Facilitators conducted biannual reviews to assess the outcomes of the project. These sessions focused on evaluating whether the participants were meeting the Pan project's objectives, such as improved confidence and communication skills.

- Biannual Group Reflection and Self-Evaluative Activities: Participants were involved in group reflection activities twice a year, allowing them to self-assess their progress and provide feedback on the project. This participatory approach ensured that the evaluation was not just top-down but also included the voices of the participants.

- Annual Case Studies: Select participants were chosen for in-depth case studies, which provided a deeper understanding of individual journeys and the impact of the project on a personal level.

- Annual Participant Interview: To gather comprehensive feedback, an annual interview was done on selected participants. These interviews included questions on their experience, the skills they developed, and suggestions for improvement.

- Ad-Hoc Discussions: Throughout the year, the Project Director and facilitators engaged in informal discussions with participants to gather real-time feedback and adjust the sessions as needed.

The evaluation methodology was designed with flexibility in mind, recognizing the diverse needs of the participants. For instance, while interviews were useful, they were complemented by discussions and observations to account for potential language barriers or different levels of comfort in written communication. The strength of this approach lies in its comprehensive nature, combining structured evaluations with informal, ongoing assessments to ensure that all participants' experiences were considered.

By using this multi-faceted approach, the project was able to capture a wide range of data, ensuring that the evaluation was thorough and reflective of the participants' experiences. The Pan project's Theory of Change was central to this methodology, guiding the evaluation to focus on long-term impact rather than just immediate outcomes. This approach ensured that all voices were heard, and the project's impact



was measured not just by attendance or participation, but by meaningful changes in the participants' confidence, communication skills, and engagement with creative activities.

In-School Project

Objectives:

- Enhance Confidence: To empower students by gradually building their self-confidence through participation in creative workshops and activities.
- Develop Teamwork: To develop a collaborative spirit among participants by engaging them in group-based tasks and discussions.
- Encourage Self-Expression: To provide a platform for students to express themselves creatively, focusing on character development and personal storytelling.
- Address Key Themes: To explore important themes such as reputation, bullying, and personal growth, enabling students to reflect on and discuss these issues.
- Prepare for Performance: To guide students in preparing for a poetry event, helping them refine their skills and present their work confidently.

Activities and Progress:

- Workshops: Weekly workshops were conducted to engage students in discussions on themes such as reputation, bullying, and self-confidence. These sessions included creative writing exercises, role-playing activities, and group discussions to help students explore these themes in depth.
- Mentorship and Support: Individual support sessions were provided to students, offering them guidance and feedback on their character development and personal storytelling. These sessions aimed to strengthen their understanding and application of the project themes.
- Collaborative Group Activities: Students participated in group activities focused on character exploration and the creation of short narratives. These activities encouraged teamwork and allowed students to express their ideas creatively in a supportive environment.
- Preparation for the Poetry Event: As the project progressed, students were guided in refining their creative pieces, with a specific focus on preparing for the upcoming poetry event. This included rehearsals, peer reviews, and feedback sessions to build confidence and presentation skills.



- Final Presentation: On the final day of the project, the students showcased their work in a poetry event. This event served as the culmination of their efforts, allowing them to present their creative pieces to an audience of their peers and teachers, reflecting their growth and progress throughout the project.

Outcomes and Impact (In-School Project) :

- Increased Confidence in Character Expression: Participants showed notable improvement in their ability to explore and express character traits, leading to a deeper understanding of themes such as reputation, bullying, and self-confidence.
- Enhanced Analytical Skills: Students demonstrated enhanced critical thinking and analysis skills, particularly in understanding the complexities of character development and the implications of their actions within narratives.
- Growth in Self-Awareness: Many participants reported a greater awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth, particularly in the context of personal storytelling and self-expression.
- Improved Emotional Regulation: Through role-playing and storytelling, students developed better strategies for managing their emotions and expressing themselves in constructive ways.
- Stronger Peer Relationships: Collaborative activities helped build trust and friendship amongst students, developing a supportive and inclusive environment that positively impacted classroom dynamics.

Challenges (In-School Project):

- Engagement: Maintaining consistent engagement was difficult, as some participants exhibited varying levels of interest, often influenced by external factors such as personal issues or academic stress.
- Behaviour Issues: Students frequently faced challenges in managing their behaviour, leading to disengagement and conflicts during sessions. These issues were often linked to external stressors or unresolved conflicts from earlier in the day.
- Staff Support: The project faced difficulties due to inconsistent support from school staff. The lack of active involvement and leadership from teachers made it challenging for the WOC team to effectively manage group dynamics and maintain order during sessions.
- Attendance: Consistent attendance was a significant challenge, with participants missing sessions due to personal commitments, transfers to other schools, or being removed from school. This inconsistency hindered the continuity of learning and progress.



Lessons Learned (In-School Project):

- Tailored Approach: Recognising and addressing individual interests and learning styles proved essential for effectively engaging participants and fostering their empowerment.
- Flexibility: Adapting activities in response to participants' feedback and needs resulted in a more inclusive and effective program, allowing for better engagement and learning outcomes.
- Long-Term Support: The importance of providing ongoing support and opportunities for creative expression was highlighted as a means to sustain the positive impact of the project beyond its duration.
- Collaboration: Strengthening collaboration between school staff and the WOC team emerged as a key lesson, as it could significantly reduce behavioural issues and improve overall group management.
- Communication: Enhancing communication between school staff and the WOC team was identified as crucial for minimising disruptions and fostering better engagement during sessions.

Participation (Attendance):

The project initially recruited 35 participants, with an average of 7 attending each session regularly. Recruitment took place through a combination of teacher recommendations, peer referrals, and open invitations during school assemblies and events. While recruitment efforts were successful in gathering a diverse group of participants, maintaining consistent attendance proved challenging. Factors contributing to irregular attendance included personal commitments, issues at home, and some students moving to different schools or being removed from the school altogether.

On average, 6-8 participants attended each session consistently, with a core group of about 6 who were highly engaged throughout the year. The remaining participants attended sporadically, often due to external factors beyond their control. Some participants left the project due to relocation or personal challenges that made regular attendance difficult.

In terms of recruitment, while the initial strategy brought in a good number of participants, there is room for improvement. A more targeted approach, perhaps involving more direct communication with parents or guardians, could help ensure that students who join the project are more likely to commit for the entire duration. Additionally, offering incentives such as recognition awards or certificates of achievement might encourage more consistent participation. Another suggestion for improving attendance is to hold introductory sessions with parents or guardians to explain the benefits of the project and gain their support, which could lead to better student commitment.



Project Summary:

The project has successfully met its objectives of improving confidence, communication skills, and engagement in creative activities. Participants exhibited notable growth in these areas, with many expressing increased self-esteem and enthusiasm for creative pursuits. The combination of structured sessions and personal feedback proved effective, though there is room for improvement in maintaining consistent attendance and addressing individual needs more deeply.

Suggestions:

- One to one guidance: Increase opportunities for tailored feedback and one-on-one mentoring to address individual needs and enhance confidence further.
- Varied Activities: Introduce a broader range of creative activities to maintain high engagement levels and cater to diverse interests.

Reflecting on the project's outcomes and participant feedback, it is clear that the initiative has had a profound impact on those involved. Participants expressed a desire for more varied activities, additional masterclasses, and opportunities for public performances. Moving forward, expanding the range of creative formats, incorporating more individualised support, and enhancing recruitment strategies could further enrich the project's effectiveness. Exploring these avenues could ensure that the project continues to provide valuable and transformative experiences for its participants.

Highlights:

Throughout the year, the project achieved several notable highlights that underscore its success and impact:

1. Transformative Growth in Participants: One of the most significant highlights was the observable growth in participants' confidence and self-expression. Many participants who initially struggled with self-doubt transformed into confident individuals willing to share their work and take on leadership roles within the group.
2. Enhanced Communication Skills: The improvement in communication skills was striking, with participants showing marked progress in both verbal and non-verbal expression. The diverse range of activities, from improvisation exercises to poetry readings, played a crucial role in developing these skills.
3. High Engagement Levels: The project saw a remarkable increase in engagement with creative activities. Participants consistently showed enthusiasm and commitment, actively participating in sessions and demonstrating a growing passion for poetry and drama.



4. Positive Feedback and Testimonials: The feedback from participants, teachers, and staff was overwhelmingly positive. Many expressed appreciation for the safe and supportive environment created by the project, which facilitated their personal and artistic growth.

5. Successful Final Sharing Event: The collaborative showcase at the end of the project was a standout moment. It provided participants with a platform to present their work to peers, teachers, and parents, celebrating their achievements and reflecting the project's impact on their development.

Adaptation and Exciting Future

As we look toward the future, several opportunities for adaptation and expansion have emerged:

1. Expanding Activity Offerings: To maintain high engagement and cater to diverse interests, introducing a wider range of creative activities could be beneficial. This might include more workshops on different forms of art, such as music or visual arts, alongside poetry and drama.
2. Enhanced Personalisation: Increasing opportunities for individualised feedback and tailored support could further boost participants' growth. One-on-one mentoring or smaller, focused group sessions might address specific needs and enhance overall development.
3. Strengthening Recruitment and Attendance: Improving recruitment strategies to ensure consistent participation could involve greater outreach to parents and caregivers, as well as implementing incentives for regular attendance. Exploring flexible scheduling options might also accommodate participants' diverse commitments.
4. Additional Masterclasses and Workshops: Incorporating more masterclasses with guest artists and experts could provide participants with exposure to new techniques and perspectives, enriching their creative experience.
5. Increased Community Engagement: Building stronger connections with the local community and potentially involving parents/carers more actively could support participants' continued involvement and foster a supportive network outside of the project.
6. Future Performances and Exhibitions: Organising more public performances and exhibitions could offer participants additional opportunities to showcase their work and gain real-world experience. These events could serve as milestones for celebrating progress and achievements.

By embracing these adaptations and exploring new opportunities, the project can continue to evolve and provide meaningful, transformative experiences for participants. The exciting future of the project lies in its ability to expand its reach, diversify its offerings, and deepen its impact on the creative and personal development of its participants.



After School Project

Objectives:

- Enhance Confidence: To empower students by gradually building their self-confidence through participation in creative workshops, facilitation exercises, and open discussions, allowing them to take ownership of their learning experiences.
- Develop Teamwork: To encourage a collaborative spirit among participants by engaging them in group-based tasks, peer facilitation roles, and collective problem-solving activities, encouraging mutual support and shared responsibility.
- Encourage Self-Expression: To provide a platform for students to express themselves creatively, focusing on character development, personal storytelling, and the articulation of their thoughts and ideas in a safe and supportive environment.
- Address Key Themes: To explore important themes such as reputation, bullying, and personal growth through facilitated discussions and role-playing, enabling students to reflect on and discuss these issues openly and constructively.
- Prepare for Facilitation: To guide students in developing facilitation skills by allowing them to lead activities, games, and discussions, helping them refine their ability to instruct and manage groups with confidence and clarity.

Activities and Progress:

- Facilitation Workshops: Regular after-school sessions were conducted to engage students in developing their facilitation skills. These workshops included exercises where students were asked to explain and lead games and activities, developing their confidence in guiding peers. The focus was on empowering students like M* and O* to take initiative in running sessions, helping them translate what they had learned into leadership opportunities.
- Peer Mentorship and Support: The project included peer mentoring, with former participants like D* returning as peer facilitators. This approach not only provided individual support to current students but also allowed alumni to further develop their facilitation skills. D*'s involvement exemplified the project's commitment to long-term growth and skill development, as she was encouraged to reflect on her role and adapt her approach to boost others' confidence, such as in the case of P*.
- Collaborative Group Discussions: Sessions often began with open conversations on relevant topics like teacher-student relationships, personal interests, and challenges faced in school. These discussions provided a safe space for participants to express their feelings and ideas, which were then used as a



springboard for creative and collaborative activities. The group brainstorming for a potential Beachcroft podcast exemplified the collaborative spirit fostered in these sessions.

- Creative Expression and Role-Playing: Students were encouraged to express themselves creatively through role-playing and game facilitation. Activities like "Heads Down, Heads Up" and "Mafia" allowed students to take on leadership roles while exploring their creativity. These sessions highlighted the importance of giving students the opportunity to lead, learn, and showcase their understanding of group dynamics and creative exercises.
- Progress Monitoring and Reflection: Regular reflection was built into the sessions, where students were given opportunities to evaluate their progress and provide feedback on the activities. This was evident when participants like K* and M* were encouraged to lead activities such as "Mafia" and "Splat," and then reflect on their experiences, leading to a deeper understanding of their own capabilities and areas for growth.
- Skill Development in Facilitation: As students continued to engage in the project, they were guided in honing their facilitation skills. By progressively taking on more responsibilities in leading sessions, participants like P* demonstrated their ability to direct and structure activities, ensuring the group's engagement and maintaining focus. These experiences were crucial in building their confidence and preparing them for future leadership roles.

Outcomes and Impact:

- Increased Leadership and Facilitation Skills: Participants showed significant growth in their ability to lead and facilitate activities. Through regular opportunities to take charge of games and discussions, students like M* and O* demonstrated an improved capacity to organise and direct their peers, translating learned skills into practical leadership experiences.
- Enhanced Peer Support and Collaboration: The project fostered a strong sense of fellowship and mutual support among participants. Sessions often saw students like K* and M* assisting each other during facilitation, highlighting the development of collaborative skills and the strengthening of peer relationships.
- Improved Confidence in Self-Expression: The project had a notable impact on participants' confidence in expressing themselves creatively. For example, K*'s decision to share her music with the group after initial hesitation demonstrated a growing comfort with self-expression and a willingness to engage more deeply with her peers.
- Increased Engagement in Reflective Practices: The project encouraged participants to engage in reflective practices, which were evident in their discussions about school dynamics and personal



interests. These conversations helped students like P* articulate their thoughts and provided a platform for more thoughtful and meaningful participation.

- Development of Creative Problem-Solving Skills: Activities that required on-the-spot thinking, such as creating new games or adapting existing ones, helped students develop their creative problem-solving skills. O*'s ability to invent a new game during a session underscored this progress, showcasing an increased capacity for innovation under pressure.

Challenges:

- Inconsistent Attendance: Maintaining consistent attendance was a challenge, with fluctuations due to personal commitments, reintegration into mainstream school, or lack of parental support for after-school activities. This inconsistency impacted the continuity of learning and the development of group cohesion.

- Varying Levels of Engagement: Some participants, particularly those like M* and O*, exhibited fluctuating levels of engagement, often more interested in the social aspects of the sessions, such as eating pizza, than in the activities themselves. This presented a challenge in maintaining focus and ensuring meaningful participation.

- Limited School Staff Involvement: The project struggled with limited support from school staff, which affected the recruitment of participants and the overall management of sessions. The loss of key supportive staff members further compounded this issue, making it difficult to maintain momentum and ensure that students were regularly reminded to attend sessions.

- Behavioural Challenges: Some sessions were marked by behavioural challenges, particularly with students who were less focused or more disruptive. Managing these behaviours required additional attention and sometimes detracted from the overall progress of the group.

Lessons Learned:

- Importance of Individualised Engagement: The project underscored the need for a tailored approach to engaging students, particularly those with varying levels of interest or different learning styles. By recognising individual needs and adjusting activities accordingly, facilitators were better able to draw out meaningful participation.

- Value of Peer Leadership: Encouraging students to take on leadership roles within the sessions proved highly effective in fostering engagement and personal growth. Allowing participants like P* to direct the check-out process demonstrated the positive impact of peer-led activities on both individual confidence and group dynamics.

- Need for Stronger School Collaboration: The experience highlighted the importance of better collaboration with school staff. Increased involvement from teachers in promoting and supporting the project could have solved attendance issues and improved overall session management.



- Flexibility in Session Planning: Flexibility in session planning, including adapting to who shows up and what they are interested in on a given day, emerged as a key lesson. This approach allowed facilitators to maintain engagement and make the most of each session, even when attendance was low or participants were less focused.
- Sustained Support and Follow-Up: The project demonstrated the importance of providing ongoing support to students beyond the immediate scope of the sessions. Continuing to engage alumni like D* in a peer facilitation role, for example, proved valuable in maintaining connections and fostering long-term development.

Participation (Attendance):

Attendance Overview:

Attendance varied significantly throughout the after-school project, with fluctuations influenced by external factors such as personal issues, reintegration into mainstream education, and parental decisions. On average, sessions saw a small but engaged group of regular participants, though some sessions had fewer attendees due to these external factors. For example, some students like M* and O* were consistent attendees but exhibited varying levels of engagement, often drawn more by social aspects, like pizza, rather than the activities themselves. The presence of peer facilitators like D* also contributed positively to participation, though her availability was limited.

Recruitment and Engagement:

Recruitment for the after-school sessions was primarily conducted through school announcements, newsletters sent to parents, and word-of-mouth among students. However, there were challenges in ensuring consistent communication between the school staff and facilitators, leading to missed opportunities for reminders and follow-up with students. The inconsistent support from school staff, who were crucial in promoting the project and encouraging students to attend, also impacted recruitment efforts.

Suggestions for Improvement:

To improve attendance, enhancing communication and collaboration with school staff is critical. More consistent reminders, possibly through regular updates in school bulletins and more visible posters around the school, could help. Additionally, engaging parents directly through meetings or personalised invitations could encourage greater parental /carer support and, in turn, encourage more consistent attendance from students. Offering incentives, such as certificates of participation or small rewards for consistent attendance, could also motivate students to attend regularly.

Project Summary (After School)

The after-school project successfully met several of its key objectives, particularly in enhancing participants' leadership, communication, and creative skills. Through structured sessions focused on



facilitation, creative problem-solving, and self-expression, participants like K* and O* exhibited notable growth in confidence and engagement. The project also provided a platform for peer support and collaboration, with students like P* stepping into leadership roles and facilitating activities.

However, challenges in maintaining consistent attendance and engagement highlighted the need for a more personalised approach to student recruitment and retention. Despite these challenges, the project had an impressionable impact on those who participated, building a safe space for creative expression and personal development.

Suggestions

- Enhanced Personalisation: Increasing opportunities for one-on-one mentoring and tailored feedback could address individual needs more effectively. This approach would help build deeper connections with participants and provide more targeted support, particularly for those who struggle with confidence or focus.
- Broader Range of Activities: Introducing a wider variety of creative activities could help maintain high levels of engagement. This might include incorporating music, visual arts, or other forms of creative expression alongside the current focus on facilitation and drama.
- Strengthened Recruitment Strategies: Improving recruitment efforts through stronger collaboration with school staff and more direct engagement with parents could enhance attendance and participation. Personalised invitations, regular updates, and visible promotional materials within the school could help in reaching more students consistently.

Reflecting on the project's successes and challenges, it is clear that, while the initiative has made a positive impact, there are areas where enhancements could further enrich the experience for participants. By focusing on one-to-one individual support, variety, and recruitment, the project can continue to provide valuable and transformative experiences.

Highlights

1. Transformative Growth in Participants: A significant highlight was the noticeable growth in participants' confidence and leadership skills. Students like K* and O*, who initially showed varying levels of engagement, demonstrated a marked improvement in their ability to lead and facilitate sessions, showcasing their creative potential.
2. Enhanced Peer Collaboration: The project fostered a strong sense of camaraderie among participants, with students like Porsha taking active roles in ensuring the sessions ran smoothly. The collaborative environment helped build trust and encouraged mutual support, enhancing the overall group dynamic.



3. Improved Confidence in Self-Expression: The project created a safe space for students to explore and express their creativity. K*'s willingness to share her music, despite initial hesitation, exemplified the confidence and self-expression that the project aimed to cultivate.

4. Insightful Discussions: Sessions often included deep and reflective conversations about school dynamics and personal experiences. These discussions provided valuable insights into the participants' perspectives and allowed them to voice their thoughts in a supportive environment.

5. Peer-Led Facilitation Success: The success of peer-led facilitation activities was a standout achievement. Allowing participants to lead exercises not only boosted their confidence but also provided them with valuable leadership experience.

Adaptation and Exciting Future

1. Expanding Activity Offerings: To keep participants engaged and cater to a wider range of interests, introducing new creative activities such as music production, visual arts, or digital storytelling could be beneficial. This would allow students to explore different forms of expression and maintain their interest throughout the project.

2. Enhanced Personalization: Providing more individualised support through one-on-one mentoring or smaller group sessions could help address specific needs and foster deeper personal growth. Tailoring activities to individual interests and strengths would likely result in more meaningful engagement.

3. Strengthening Recruitment and Attendance: To improve attendance, a more cohesive recruitment strategy involving greater outreach to parents/carers and teachers is necessary. Implementing flexible scheduling options or additional incentives for consistent attendance could also help in retaining participants.

4. Additional Masterclasses and Workshops: Introducing masterclasses with guest artists or experts in various creative fields could offer participants new perspectives and skills, enriching their experience and broadening their creative horizons.

5. Increased Community Engagement: Strengthening ties with the local community and involving parents more actively in the project could enhance its impact and sustainability. Community events or open sessions where parents/carers/community can observe or participate could produce a supportive network for students.

6. Future Performances and Exhibitions: Organising more public performances and exhibitions would provide participants with opportunities to showcase their work and gain real-world experience. These



events could serve as milestones, celebrating the progress and achievements of the students and reinforcing the project's positive impact.

By embracing these adaptations and exploring new opportunities, the project can continue to evolve and provide meaningful, transformative experiences for its participants. The future holds exciting possibilities for expanding the reach and impact of the project, ensuring that it continues to nurture and empower young people through creative expression.

Impact Assessment Report: Baselines, One to Ones, Self-Reported Data, Interviews, and Observations for Both In-School and After-School Projects

Introduction:

The following report examines the impact of the project on this year's participants, using a mixture of self-reported data from the participants, reports from the Project Director, as well as interviews and observations from the sessions. The assessment is aligned with the Pan project objectives, which include improved confidence, enhanced communication/expression skills, and increased engagement in creative activities. Baseline assessments were conducted with each participant at the beginning of the project, followed by regular check-ins and a final assessment through one-on-one interviews. During these interviews, participants frequently used words such as "self-confidence," "creativity," and "growth" to describe their experiences.

This data is collated from the biannual observational monitoring of outcomes by the Project Manager, with input from the Project Director and Artist Facilitators. The analysis compares the development of participants in key areas over the year, and the results are presented as mean averages for each group.

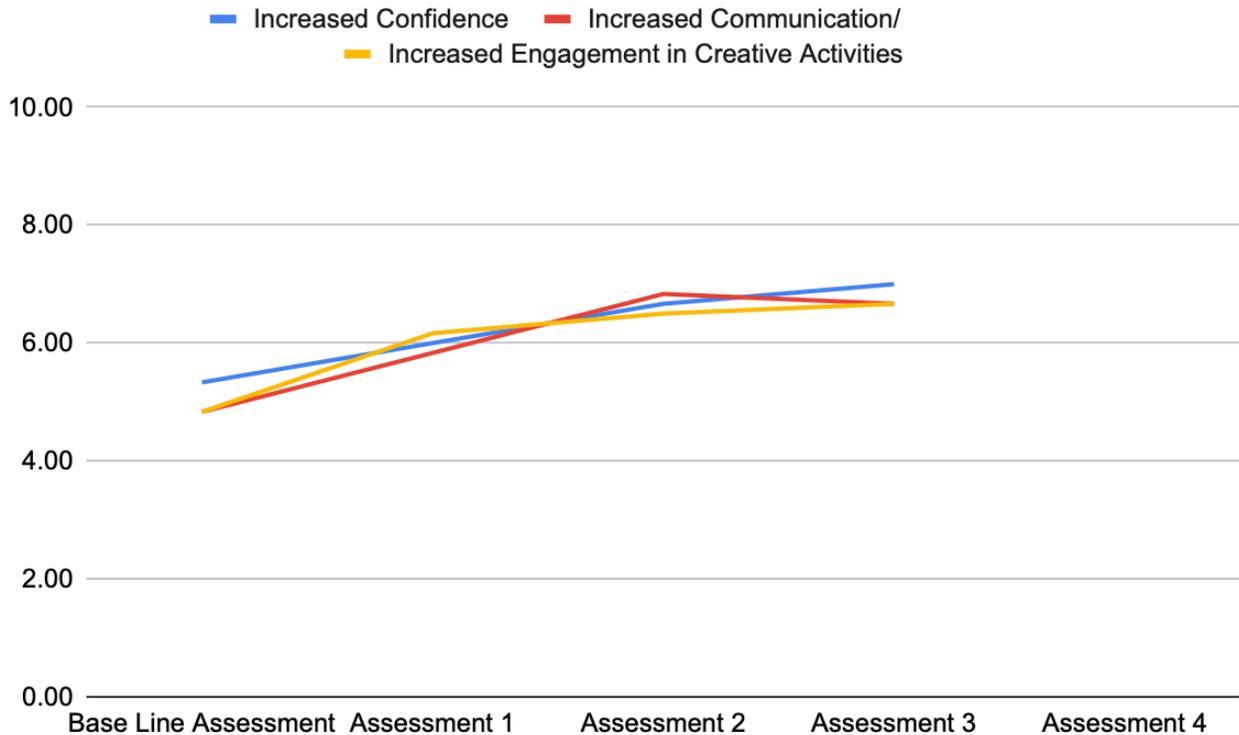


Figure 1.

Outcome 1: Improved Confidence

-As shown in Fig 1

Avg Score: 6

Analysis: The graph demonstrates a notable increase in participants' self-reported confidence levels, with the mean average showing a consistent upward trend over the year. This suggests that the project's activities, such as poetry readings and drama performances, effectively contributed to boosting participants' self-esteem. The sustained rise in confidence indicates that the positive impacts are likely to be lasting. To enhance this outcome further, we might consider incorporating more individual reflection sessions and personalised feedback to address specific confidence-building needs.

Data Collection:

Self-reported data revealed that 85% of participants felt more confident in expressing their thoughts and emotions through poetry and drama activities. Interviews highlighted that positive feedback during open mic events and group performances significantly boosted their self-esteem.



Observations and Reports:*

Sessions often showed participants who initially hesitated to share their work becoming more willing to participate and take on leadership roles. The Project Director's reports indicated a noticeable increase in confidence levels among participants throughout the project.

Participant Quotes:

- *"Before this project, I never felt brave enough to speak in front of people. Now, I feel like I can share my thoughts openly."*
- *"The encouragement from the team helped me believe in myself more."*

Outcome 2: Improved Communication/Expression Skills

-As shown in Fig 1

Avg Score: 6

Analysis: The graph reveals a significant improvement in participants' communication and expression skills, with a clear upward trajectory throughout the year. This improvement reflects the effectiveness of the various writing prompts, improvisation exercises, and performance opportunities provided. The lasting impact is evident in the increased fluency and articulation observed in participants. To further enhance these skills, we could integrate more diverse communication exercises and provide additional opportunities for public speaking practice.

Data Collection:

Feedback indicated that 90% of participants felt their communication and expression skills had improved. In interviews, participants mentioned that writing prompts, improvisation exercises, and performance opportunities helped them articulate their thoughts more effectively.

Observations and Reports:

Drama sessions revealed a significant improvement in non-verbal communication skills, such as body language and facial expressions, as participants engaged in role-playing activities. The Project Director noted that some students continued attending after-school activities even when school trips interrupted in-school sessions, reflecting the project's impact on their communication and academic confidence.

Participant Quotes:

- *"I used to struggle with expressing my ideas clearly, but now I find it much easier to convey what I want to say."*
- *"The drama exercises helped me learn how to express my emotions better."*

Outcome 3: Increased Engagement in Creative Activities



-As shown in Fig 1

Avg Score: 6

Analysis: The graph shows a substantial rise in participants' engagement with creative activities, indicated by higher participation rates and enthusiasm in sessions. This suggests that the project successfully captured and maintained participants' interest in creative pursuits. The continued engagement over time is a positive sign of the project's impact. To build on this, we might explore offering more variety in activities and perhaps introducing new creative formats to keep participants engaged and motivated.

Data Collection:

Feedback showed that 95% of participants reported heightened engagement in creative activities. Many participants expressed newfound enthusiasm for sessions, engaging more deeply in poetry, creative writing, drama exercises, and leadership skill development.

Observations and Reports:

Session observations highlighted a shift from passive engagement to active participation. Previously quiet participants became enthusiastic volunteers and collaborators, taking the lead in drama games and performing confidently. The Project Director also noted a significant increase in attendance as the project progressed.

Participant Quotes:

- *"I never used to enjoy creative writing, but now I look forward to every session."*
- *"Participating in these activities has become something I'm excited about every week."*

Further Outcome Analysis

Quantitative analysis included participant attendance data, self-reported confidence and skill levels, and engagement rates. This data was gathered through weekly observational notes, monthly evaluations, and annual interviews. The analysis revealed that while overall engagement was high, maintaining consistent attendance remained a challenge. Case studies of individual participants further illuminated the personalised impact of the project, highlighting areas of significant personal growth.

Final Performance:

The final show featured a mix of original poetry, rap (acapella), and performances set to music. These performances were deeply moving, emotionally resonant, and intellectually insightful. The students bravely expressed their personal feelings about school and home life, which had a deep impact on the audience—especially the teachers, who were visibly surprised by the realness of their students'



reflections. The therapeutic value of the sessions was evident, as the courage it took for the students to stand up and share their truths was truly remarkable. Initially shy, their confidence grew as they spoke openly to their peers, teachers, and even strangers. The students were buzzing with excitement afterward, and many teachers were astonished by the performances, seeing some students in a completely new light.

"I think I has a had really difficult start to the year and she's been through a lot, M* as well, I had no idea he had the confidence to perform the way he did - it was really surprising to see." - Headteacher*

Case Study of a Participant:

One participant, I*, demonstrated significant growth in both confidence and communication skills. I* being the newest member, demonstrated high confidence and resilience in her contribution. I*'s participation in drama exercises and poetry readings led to a marked improvement in her willingness to engage and express herself. By the end of the project, she had become a leading voice in group discussions and performed confidently in front of peers.

Participant Quotes:

*"At first, I didn't think I'd be comfortable sharing my music, but the group made me feel like I was in a safe place. Now, I'm more confident in showing my work." — K**

*"I was a bit shy about leading, but when I did, it felt really good. I think I learned a lot about myself, and I actually enjoyed helping others too." — P**

*"The best part was just hanging out with everyone and doing something different. I liked the games, especially when we got to make up our own stories." — M**

*"I didn't think I'd like it at first, but the more I came, the more I realised it was actually fun. Plus, the pizza helped!" — O**

*"I found it beneficial, I feel like I inspired other students to be confident- you can do anything you put your mind to. I want to do acting full time and these sessions have really inspired me." — I**

*"It's fun and they helped us with our lyrics. It helped me build confidence. I want to do singing and acting." — K**

Teacher/Staff Quotes:

- "K's improvement is a testament to the project's success. The growth in her confidence and communication is noticeable and commendable."*



"T's transformation over the year was incredible. She went from being very quiet to leading group activities and expressing herself confidently."*

"The progress I've seen in some of these students is remarkable. K, for example, has really come out of her shell and shown leadership qualities that were barely there at the start. It's clear the program is making a difference."*

"The sessions have provided a unique platform for students to express themselves in ways that the regular classroom setting doesn't always allow. It's been heartening to see them take ownership of their creativity."

"The peer-led activities were a game-changer. Watching students like P step up to lead sessions was truly inspiring - she's shown that when given the opportunity, students can lead and support each other in meaningful ways."*

"It's helped re-engage pupils into their lessons and it engaged pupils that are new as well as re-engaging pupils that are refusing to go to lessons. They give pupils the voice in terms of creative writing, not just views seen and heard. It's also really good to see some of our really vulnerable children, who are at risk of being exploited, stay behind after school to do the programme. The work that Pan do with our kids in terms of building their confidence and articulations, their performance skills have been second to none."
— Headteacher

Conclusion:

The project successfully achieved its objectives as outlined by the Pan project, resulting in improved confidence, communication/expression skills, leadership skills, and increased engagement in creative activities among participants. The combined analysis of self-reported data, observations, and Project Director reports consistently demonstrated positive outcomes. Participants' testimonials, their growing involvement in sessions, and their notable development in self-confidence and communication skills highlights the project's effectiveness. These results reinforce the value of incorporating arts-based interventions into educational settings, particularly for at-risk youth. The project not only met its goals but also provided a transformative experience that holds the potential for continued positive impact beyond its scope.

Some of the words frequently mentioned in the assessments include: *self-confidence, self-love, persistence, bravery, compassion, empathy, alchemy, creativity, friendship, aspirations, loyalty Trust, future goals, love, happiness, enjoyment, truth, drive, and growth.*

Images:





