



FIGHTING WORDS

Story Seeds 2023

Evaluation

Paula Phelan
Traverso Ltd

Introduction

This is an evaluation report for Fighting Words (FW) and Fighting Words Northern Ireland (FWNI) on their Story Seeds 2023 project. The report supports the thinking and learning for both organisations in relation to the development of Story Seeds and the nuance associated with co-delivering projects across both jurisdictions.

Fighting Words provides free tutoring, mentoring, and publishing across all forms of creative writing throughout the island of Ireland. Workshops, projects, and creative activities are overseen from the Fighting Words headquarters in inner city Dublin and the Fighting Words Northern Ireland headquarters in East Belfast. FW saw engagement of over 35,000 people in 2023 with FWNI delivering over 7500 creative engagements.

Fighting Words delivered the first version of Story Seeds in 2021/22 with primary and secondary schools, and a wide range of youth and additional needs organisations, in Dublin's north inner city, Dublin south inner city, Dublin west, Cork city, Limerick city, Bray/Wicklow and Drogheda/Louth.

The original Story Seeds programme focused on DEIS schools, youth groups and additional needs groups in situations of disadvantage and marginalisation. The programme engaged with more than 19,000 participants over 18 months, and resulted in multiple book publications, podcasts, performances, and film.

The project focused on the community and locality, and it used the creative writing workshop format to support young people to write a story about their own place, in a creative way, with one group starting the story and passing it on to the next group for development.

Following on from the successful Story Seeds project (2022), FW saw the potential to expand the delivery to Northern Ireland and the border counties in the Republic, and in response, Story Seeds 2023 was developed.

In line with the aims of the Shared Island Initiative, and the Shared Island dimension to the Creative Ireland programme, Story Seeds 2023 sought to increase cross-community activities with children and young people through engagement in shared creative writing activities. Working with community-based partners, schools, local libraries, arts centres, and with cross-community volunteer mentors and skilled facilitators, FW and FWNI delivered creative activities that aimed to connect children across communities, across traditions and across the border.

This evaluation looks at the work of Story Seeds 2023 and seeks to support the thinking for future projects.

Context

FW and FWNl work in a unique cultural, geographical, political, social, and economic climate. A full examination of these factors is beyond the scope of this evaluation but their potential to influence the success of any joint project is notable. Although both organisations exist in different contextual spheres they operate from a shared artistic and behavioural value base that allows for the ambition of the work to be achieved. A history of success in delivering projects across both organisations formed a solid foundation for the scale of Story Seeds 2023 to be achieved, these projects included Crosswords, All-Island Young Playwrights, and the Decade of Centenaries 100 Years Project.

The Story Seeds approach involves a number of groups working together – school classes, youth groups, or clubs – to write a shared story. The process is facilitated by artist facilitators or by a FW staff member. The facilitators are supported by volunteer mentors, helping with typing, illustration and supporting the young writers. The workshops happen in local libraries, arts centres, and in the schools. The first chapter is written by one group and is passed on for the second group to build and evolve the story in chapter two and so on. The emphasis is on local places and community, but the story can go wherever the young writers wish. As the story grows from chapter to chapter there are opportunities for the diverse groups to share their chapters and discuss the common elements where there is a coming together. In addition to the story writing workshops, the publication of the stories in print and online is important. This brings a sense of pride and confidence for the young authors, together with the visible recognition of the connected stories.

Rationale

FW and FWNl are committed to a continuous improvement cycle. To ensure learning is fed back into the cycle of strategic and artistic development, the executive appointed an independent consultant to listen to participants, teachers, community leaders and staff, to reflect on the work and data, evaluate the stated aims and outcomes, and document the learning.

Limitations

Due to limited resources and time, a small sample of participants was available for consultation.

Methodology and methods

The evaluation was carried out in March 2024. The methodology was both quantitative and qualitative. A survey to gather feedback from primary, secondary/post-primary school participants, teachers, community group participants and leaders was disseminated and can be found in Appendix C. The response to the survey was low, so to allow for a more robust

evaluation further data collection methods were designed, this included interviews and focus groups with key people.

Semi structured interviews were conducted with one of the project coordinators and the project officer. Interviews were held with 3 primary aged children accompanied by their teachers. An online focus group was held with 3 facilitators that represented the work carried out in both jurisdictions and 1 volunteer was also interviewed. Alongside this, planning and reflective conversations were had with CEOs of both organisations. Desk-based research formed part of the process and the evaluator observed the presentation of the work at a showcase event in Belfast on February 29th.

Interview and focus groups sessions lasted between one and two hours and were centred around these questions:

- What worked well?
- What would you change about the process?
- What were the greatest challenges?
- What did you learn?

Overall findings are listed below and categorised, followed by a discussion and recommendations. Appendix A includes a list of all the schools and centres that participated, Appendix B has quotes from children, facilitators and volunteers that back up the discussion and Appendix C has an overview of the survey results from schools and teachers.

Findings

Outputs

- FW and FWNi worked with 9030 participants as part of the programme
- 59 new volunteers were trained
- 16 professional facilitators worked across the programme, with additional project delivery supported by staff teams at FW and FWNi
- 121 groups (both school and community) availed of the programme
- The project worked across the following settings: primary and secondary/post-primary schools, youth groups and additional needs groups across Northern Ireland and with schools, youth groups, and additional needs group of all ages in the border regions north and south
- The stories were published in a range of platforms, including newspaper zines, books, digital publications, and podcasts
- Documentation happened through the production of a short film
- The project coordination was led by two full-time Coordinators, one employed by each organisation

- Other staff provided additional delivery, to facilitate workshops and provide volunteer training. For FW this was managed with existing staff capacity. For FWNl, additional delivery support was provided by a second staff person, a project officer (part-time)

Outcomes

- The programme was provided at no cost to participants
- The comprehensive application gave the project coordinators a clear understanding of the ambition and trajectory of the work
- Cross-border interactions and engagements for participating schools and groups were facilitated
- Children, young people, and adults worked with peers from different traditions and backgrounds across both jurisdictions
- Primary and secondary/post-primary school children/young people stated the workshops were too short
- Project coordinators noted the complexity of training new facilitators to do work that may be new to them in terms of values and pedagogy
- Project coordinators noted an expanded training process for facilitators may be helpful
- Most children asked for more of the work to happen more often
- Teachers noted the workshops were well organised
- Differing operational systems across FW and FWNl proved difficult to navigate for effective information sharing at times
- Facilitators found the length of the workshops too short at times
- Project coordinators felt supported and capable of delivering on the goals and objectives of the project
- Primary and secondary school children/young people enjoyed collaborating with their class and with a "visitor" the most
- Participation from schools and centres from disadvantaged and diverse communities were prioritised with 28 DEIS schools in Southern Ireland and 14 schools in Northern Ireland participating through the Extended Schools Programme.

Impact

- Facilitators felt valued and well informed by leaders of the organisation
- Facilitators felt inspired by the work and the participants creativity
- Facilitators greatly appreciated the support of other facilitators in the room
- New facilitators appreciated the opportunity to observe more experienced facilitators
- Facilitators appreciated the FW/FWNl approach, and the flexibility allowed to work in diverse ways with groups when needed
- Facilitators carry stories of impact from their interaction with participant's that may be important to gather as part of the process

- Some children expressed frustration at their stories being passed to younger groups
- Some children and young people expressed a curiosity in authoring their own stories
- Teachers noted that there was an impact for their own pedagogy and that the FW and FWNi methods were useful in their day-to-day teaching
- Teachers commended the child-centred approach of the facilitators and the values-based approach of the organisation
- The previous work both FW and FWNi carried out together has served this project well as values and culture are aligned
- Participants are listened to, and their ideas acted on as a pedagogical priority
- FW and FWNi are in a unique position to deliver ambitious work across both jurisdictions once resourced to do so

Discussion

The discussion section is divided into two parts, the first addresses the outcomes and outputs for the project that were stated in the application, and the second, the themes that emerged from the qualitative data.

The following outcomes were stated at the application stage.

Stated outcome	Was it achieved?	How do we know it was achieved?
To replicate the Story Seeds project with schools, youth groups and additional needs groups across NI, and with schools, youth groups, and additional needs groups of all ages in the border regions north and south.	Yes	The project was replicated across all the schools/centres listed in Appendix A
To provide these services free at the point of access to all participants, in all communities, and aiming specifically to reach marginalised young people and those with additional needs	Yes	The project was provided at no cost to participants
To ensure that the programme provides targeted support to the hardest to reach children and young people, and those at risk of disadvantage.	Yes	Schools and centres with a disadvantaged and diverse profile were given priority

Children and young people will have worked with peers from different traditions and backgrounds, collaborated on joint stories, and met together to share their writing and discuss the experience.	Yes (partially)	All schools and centres were intentionally paired with others from different traditions and backgrounds. Schools and centres were offered the opportunity to meet on zoom with their Story Seeds partners. (The interest in attending a meeting over zoom was not as strong as originally thought due to COVID zoom fatigue)
To facilitate cross-border interactions and engagements for participating schools and groups.	Yes	Schools and centres had the opportunity to interact with cross border peers through zoom or in person gatherings

The following project outputs were listed in the application.

Outputs	Was it achieved?
To engage with at least 120 schools, primary and post-primary, and work with 10,000 participants.	yes, list of schools in appendix A
To work in 10 locations across NI and the border counties north and south.	yes, including Belfast, Newry, Armagh, Derry~Londonderry, Coleraine, Louth, Monaghan, and Donegal
Employ dedicated coordinators in both Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland to jointly coordinate delivery of this programme.	yes, both were internal employments
Contract a range of professional artists in NI to input into the programme.	yes, 16 new facilitators were contracted
To publish the stories, in a range of platforms, including newspaper zines, books, digital publications, and podcasts.	yes, stories were published across all stated platforms, examples available HERE (zine) and HERE (podcast)
To document the roll out of the programme in film, and on social media.	yes, the film is available HERE

100 additional volunteer mentors will be recruited and trained.	partially met, 59 were recruited and trained
To bring the children together in groups on zoom at the outset and bring together physically for collective events when stories are completed	partially met, the opportunity to meet over zoom was offered but the interest in attending a meeting over zoom was not as strong as originally thought due to COVID-19 zoom fatigue)
To review the project and use the learnings to inform future funding applications	yes, an evaluation was commissioned

The vast majority of the outcomes and outputs for the project were met and are evidenced through the quantitative and qualitative data provided by interviews, statistics gathered and survey feedback. Where outcomes were not fully met e.g. the number of volunteers trained, it is clear from discussions with staff that these decisions were made in a collaborative way and will be delivered on in the future.

The initial idea to bring groups together on zoom, a format frequently used during the COVID-19 pandemic proved unpopular as post-pandemic there was a much greater appetite for meeting in person for groups. Timetable scheduling differences of schools and community groups who met at different days and times proved an additional challenge to synchronise workshops. Whilst in person and asynchronous scheduled activity improved the quality of engagement and experience for the groups, logistically connecting the groups via video call was not an effective use of project coordination resource and instead the focus was kept on delivering high-quality workshop experiences.

Reflections on themes and learning

Interviews were based around questions that considered the experience and learning that occurred for participants, leaders/teachers, and staff of FW and FWNI. This learning is reflected below under a number of themes that emerged.

➤ Organisation

“the organisation was clear we were really well supported, and timing is crucial in the delivery of the workshops not Friday nights for youth groups” (Facilitator)

The qualitative data revealed that both organisations used different operating systems, this proved difficult for coordination at times. Staff and facilitators noted that a system where files, updates and information could be shared more easily would better serve the work.

The project needed additional coordination and administrative capacity, and this was allowed for in November 2023. The person chosen to deliver this support was from within the organisation and as a result the onboarding phase was efficient. Both project coordinators were also chosen from within the organisation, and this allowed for a timesaving approach to roll out and the retention of valued staff.

The coordination of the project benefited from the clear ambition, scale, stated outcomes and outputs outlined in the original application. The scale of the project was commented on by coordinators, facilitators and volunteers with some facilitators concerned that occasionally the quality of the interaction between FW and the participants was being compromised by the ambition for scale. All facilitators noted the project was designed to be easily implemented at scale and as such more time for delivering was not possible and understandable. Facilitators were curious about being involved in more long-term work with fewer participants over longer periods of time.

The data revealed that the totality of the resource required to recruit and train volunteers was greater than allowed for initially. The complexity of training freelance facilitators on the FW and FWNI pedagogy and approach was noted. More time to develop a training process that allows for the newness of this way of working for facilitators to be fully understood may be beneficial.

More time and energy were needed to coordinate community groups than schools, and primary schools were the most eager to engage in the programme. Secondary/post-primary schools were extremely interested but the nature of their timetable proved a barrier at times. Additional

time and energy to coordinate community participation was noted as a key factor for any future work in those settings.

➤ Creative process

“So many students spoke and shared their ideas. I don't think so many may share in a creative writing class run by the respective English teacher. There was a freedom to speak and go beyond perceived convention.” *(Teacher)*

The child centred approach of the project was observed and commented on by teachers, children, young people, and volunteers. The skilled scaffolding of the children's ideas supported their voices to be heard and acted on and is aligned to the ways of working with children set out in the National Participation Framework for Children and Young People. The skill of the facilitators to be flexible and to allow for unexpected story trajectories to unfold was observed.

All facilitators and volunteers commented on how having the opportunity to work with another facilitator to deliver the workshops as transformative for their experience. All facilitators noted having the support of the typist in the room as crucial to project success. (See Appendix B)

Children enjoyed the experience and asked for more, and young people expressed a desire for the sessions to be longer. Some children stated they were frustrated when their stories were passed to younger children because they *“ruined a good story”*. Some children expressed a curiosity about authoring their own individual stories. (See Appendix B)

Teachers in schools spoke about how experiencing the creative, child centred pedagogy of FW and FWNi has influenced their own teaching choices. Some teachers spoke about trying the process out for themselves. Teachers also noted how observing the process has allowed them to be a little braver to try more child-centred approaches in their day-to-day teaching. (See Appendix B)

➤ Connectedness

“there's great learning in sharing” (Volunteer)

Volunteers fed back that they enjoyed the process and are inspired by the work of the facilitators and the creativity of the children. Volunteers welcomed the chance provided by FW and FWNi to connect with other volunteers to see and hear about the work, (see Appendix B).

Facilitators described being deeply committed to the work and commended FW and FWNl on the coordination and administration of the project.

All facilitators noted how well informed they were during all stages of the project, and this led to a feeling of being valued which is important to them. Facilitators expressed the desire to connect with others and share learning and experiences more by meeting more regularly in person or online, (see Appendix B.)

➤ Legacy

“I loved the cross-border element it opened up the conversation and the opportunity to talk about geography I appreciated the open and honest conversations we had with fighting words and the fact that we were allowed mould the workshops to suit the needs of the group” (Facilitator)

Across all data, both quantitative and qualitative, the desire to engage in more of the work from participants was strong. Alongside this there is concern from facilitators, volunteers, and staff as to how projects of this size can be sustained and how the quality of the work can be assured, (see Appendix B).

There is potential for FW and FWNl to think about how participants can be signposted to locally available FW and FWNl Write Clubs to ensure participants have access to support for their creative writing beyond the project end, (see Appendix B).

Many moments of inspiration were described. There is potential for FW and FWNl to think about how to gather these stories of inspiration and impact. Facilitators are often the people carrying these stories as trust with participants is built over time. The gathering of these stories would build evidence for the impact of the work.

FW and FWNl are in a unique position to deliver across jurisdictions. The organisations have managed to overcome potential barriers that may have presented themselves across differing geographical, political, social, and economic contexts by working through and aligned vision and value base to bring high quality work to 9030 participants.

There is the potential for both organisations to examine this success and ask what the key factors in driving a cross-border initiative are. That research may enable a story of effective practice for other arts-based organisations to learn from. Alongside this, the capacity for peace building outcomes may be worth exploring as this evaluation observed moments of increased understanding of varying contexts through the

work. Children observed commented on unfamiliar places they did not know about, "*I never knew there was a town hall in Monaghan*" and facilitators spoke about working in cross-border contexts with enthusiasm, (see Appendix B).

Recommendations

The following is a list of questions for consideration:

- How can FW and FWNl signpost participants to other after-school projects and opportunities required
- How can FW and FWNl plan for the greater resource needed to recruit, support and coordinate facilitators and volunteer mentors in cross border projects
- How can FW and FWNl resource their facilitators to gather stories of impact and/or change from participants
- How can FW and FWNl develop a shared platform/system for cross border work that allows for efficient access by staff and contracted facilitators
- How can FW and FWNl extend their community of practice work to include facilitators to enable connection, reflection, and learning
- How can FW and FWNl seek support to continue to build ongoing research and evaluation processes that honour the potential for learning
- How can FW and FWNl investigate further the concept that high quality creative pedagogy is inspiring classroom teachers
- How can FW and FWNl know if it is becoming a permanent presence in the communities it serves
- How can FW be supported to highlight its unique capacity for cross border work
- How can FW and FWNl further build evidence and share learning on effective practice for cross boarder initiatives

Conclusion

"this work was like a pebble that has created ripples, I'd love to be able to do more" (Facilitator)

Fighting Words Story Seeds 2023 delivered a quality experience for those who participated with the vast majority of all stated aims and objectives being met. This evaluation process has acted as an activator in terms of allowing staff, facilitators, volunteers, and participants the time to reflect on the success of the programme but also to explore the challenges and possibilities.

This evaluation has found that FW and FWNl are in a unique position to work across the island of Ireland to deliver high quality artistic programming in an efficient and inspiring way.

The buy-in and the enthusiasm present in all participants in this consultation is a powerful base to ensure that programming emerges from a connectedness with the diverse community of FW and FWNI. New cross border contexts are allowing for fresh perspectives to think about the best possible version of Fighting Words for the future. FW and FWNI can only be enhanced from these new perspectives alongside the committed level of community buy in and high standards of the artistic experience.

Appendix A Lists of schools and community groups that participated

Northern Ireland:

Primary Schools

1. Knockbreda Primary School
2. Cranmore Integrated Primary School
3. Rathcoole Primary School
4. Holy Child Primary School
5. St Malachy's Primary School
6. Jonesboro Primary School
7. Windsor Hill Primary School
8. St Joseph's Convent Primary School
9. St Michael's Primary School, Killeen
10. Dromintee Primary School
11. Hart Memorial Primary School
12. St Anthony's Primary School
13. St Patrick's Primary School
14. Model Primary School
15. Long Tower Primary School
16. Cumber Claudy Primary School
17. St John's Primary School
18. Millburn Primary School
19. Gaelscoil Neachtain
20. St Patrick's Primary School, Burrenreagh

Post-primary schools

21. Aquinas Grammar School, Belfast
22. Bloomfield Collegiate School, Belfast
23. Tandragee Junior High School
24. St John the Baptist's College
25. Newhamilton High School
26. St Columb's College, Derry
27. St Genevieve's High School
28. St Mary's High School, Newry
29. Our Lady's Grammar School, Newry
30. St Patrick's College, Maghera
31. St Colm's High School

- 32. Blessed Trinity College
- 33. Lagan College
- 34. Ashfield Girls High School

Community groups

- 35. 1st Mounthorris Rangers
- 36. Concorde Community Centre
- 37. Connswater Men's Shed
- 38. Donegal Pass Community Centre
- 39. Drumcree Community Trust
- 40. Epicentre, Armagh
- 41. Give & Take Project, Include Youth
- 42. Markethill Cubs and Scouts
- 43. Newry Hockey Club
- 44. Damolly Football Club
- 45. Newry Beavers & Cubs
- 46. Newry Scouts & Venturers
- 47. North-West Home Education Group
- 48. R.E.A.C.H. Across
- 49. Southern Regional College, Newry
- 50. Windsor Women's Centre
- 51. Connswater Shopping Centre public events

Southern Ireland Primary Schools

- 52. St. Brigids & St. Patrick's National School Drogheda
- 53. Presentation Primary School Drogheda
- 54. Marymount National School Drogheda
- 55. St. John's National School Drogheda
- 56. Realt Na Mara National School Dundalk
- 57. St. Brigids & St. Patrick's National School Drogheda
- 58. Redeemer Girls National School
- 59. Donagh National School Carndonagh
- 60. Scoil An Aingil Choimhéadaí Burtonport
- 61. Drumfad National School Kerrykeel
- 62. Glenmaquin National School Letterkenny
- 63. Drumoghill National School Manorcunningham
- 64. Niall Mór National School Killybegs

- 65. Dromore National School
- 66. St. Tiarnach's Primary School Clones
- 67. Scoil Éanna Ballybay
- 68. Scoil Naomh Padraig Oram
- 69. St. Louis Girls National School Monaghan
- 70. Scoil na gCailini, Castleblaney

Secondary Schools

- 71. Castleblaney College
- 72. Our Ladies Secondary School,
- 73. Beech Hill College
- 74. St Joseph's High School, Crossmaglen
- 75. Inver College
- 76. St. Patrick's Keady (North)
- 77. Ardee Community School Ardee
- 78. St. Oliver's Community School Drogheda
- 79. Bush Post Primary
- 80. St. Mary's College (The Marist)
- 81. Errigal College Letterkenny
- 82. Moville Community College
- 83. Mulroy College Milford
- 84. Deelee College, Raphoe
- 85. Abbey Vocational Donegal Town
- 86. Finn Valley

Community Groups

- 87. Iontas Summer Camp Castleblaney
- 88. Castleblaney Scouts
- 89. Castleblaney Cubs
- 90. Castleblaney Beavers
- 91. Rise - Monaghan Town
- 92. Monaghan Youth Theatre Monaghan
- 93. Carrick Scouts (Continuation of Newry Scouts)
- 94. Castleblaney Youthreach
- 95. Include (Youth Support - Youth at Risk)

- 96. Letterkenny CDP
- 97. Rehab National Learning Network
- 98. Milford Resource Centre Youth Project
- 99. An Grianan Theatre Group
- 100. Youth Reach Ardee
- 101. Youth Reach Laytown
- 102. Youth Reach Drogheda
- 103. Youth Reach Dundalk
- 104. Red Door (Addiction centre)
- 105. Irish Wheelchair Association
- 106. Able Vision
- 107. St. John of Gods Drogheda
- 108. Little Juke Theatre¹

¹ Some schools/centres acted as spaces for more than one group, the total amount of groups worked with is 121

Appendix B Quotes from children, facilitators, and volunteers

Children

"I love this I just wanted more; it was just too short"

"I got annoyed when some of the younger children took our stories and they didn't follow on from what we'd written that was really annoying"

"I'd like to write my own stories on my own"

"I really enjoyed getting out of class, it was cool to do something with somebody else"

"I didn't know anything about Belfast, and I do now"

"I liked the way we got to vote on how the story developed but I didn't get what I wanted in the end"

"it got a bit noisy at times I didn't really mind that, but my friend found it too noisy"

"I'd like to do more of this it was really good fun"

"I liked finding out what happened to our story"

"I loved getting the book at the end, it was cool to see our story in the book"

Facilitators

"I felt inspired by the children!"

"the children were incredibly generous with how they let someone else just take over their story"

"I loved the cross-border element it opened up the conversation and the opportunity to talk about geography I appreciated the open and honest conversations we had with fighting words and the fact that we were allowed mould the workshops to suit the needs of the group"

"some of the children told me a personal story and how the workshop had impacted them it will be great to be able to have the time to work with those stories or write it down in some way"

"it boosted my confidence it taught me a different way of being with children it gave me a model and also the support I needed I had great freedom I was very much changed by the experienced and I learned so much from others"

"I will definitely bring the pedagogy into my overall practise I learned to trust in the process more I now know the participants are always going to give you gold"

"there's always something to learn from the group"

"this work was like a pebble that has created ripples, I'd love to be able to do more"

"there is no doubt that there is better quality when working with smaller groups over longer time"

"the organisation was clear we were really well supported, and timing is crucial in the delivery of the workshops not Friday nights for youth groups"

"there was some feeling of being a little bit isolated at times"

"I made an endpoint review together with all of the other facilitators would be great"

"more sharing would be great"

Volunteers

"I do this to give something back to give something back to the arts I really believe in this work"

"I value creative thinking I think it's super important for young people"

"the cross-border element is my context that's how I live that's what attracted me to this volunteer position"

"it's really important the schooler centre has the information they need in advance of the workshop things like whether the computer needs a passcode or mobile phone number shared being able to get that information really easily is really important the simple thing of getting the story back to base how was that going to happen was a little challenging sometimes"

"the typist role is so valuable it's so important to the floor of creativity for the children"

"sometimes it's a little isolated I loved working with facilitators I learned so much from them"

"I'd love to meet the other volunteers and really appreciated the opportunity fighting words gave for a soul to meet I'd love to see more of this in the future"

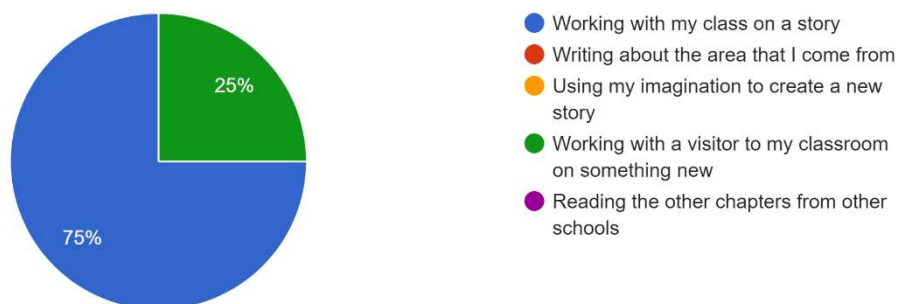
"there's great learning in sharing"

Appendix C- Survey results

Primary Children survey responses

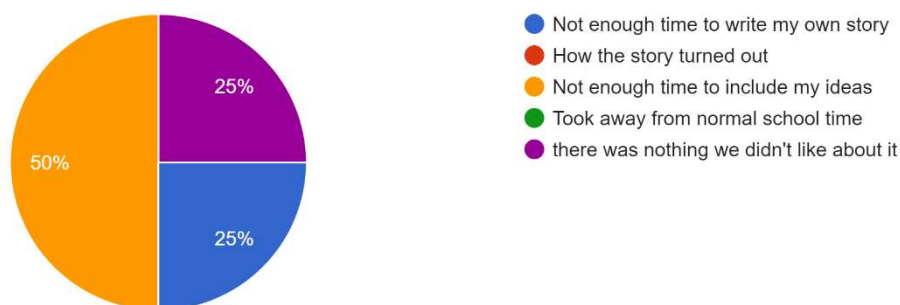
What did you like about the project?

4 responses



What did you not like about the project?

4 responses



Teachers/Organisation Leaders/Youth Workers survey responses

What worked well in this project?

- The facilitators were personable and in tune with what children like. They were open to working with the teachers and they were able to listen to the children to the children's ideas. The children enjoyed the session, and it didn't put in on teaching time.
- The project was excellent and was really well presented. The children got a huge amount out of it and have used lots of the ideas since the project.
- everything-well planned and executed
- Collaboration & children led
- Facilitators were engaging with young adult student participants, helping them to discuss their creative ideas and share them with others.
- Our facilitator had great patience and kindness with our students. She really drew their creativity out. She excelled at actively listening to our

students and putting their ideas on paper. They were so fortunate to have had their experience in writing creatively.

What would you do differently?

- Perhaps stronger parameters about what the children were writing about
- Nothing
- nothing I thought it was great
- More direction / area of focus. Discuss and develop before putting to paper
- Students were happy to engage in all weekly activities.
- I think the freedom is amazing. Perhaps as teachers we may a little more prescriptive or indeed limited in our own creative writing abilities and the ability to teach our young people to run wild with their flow of consciousness.

Could you tell us about any learning that you observed in your class/group during the project?

- I enjoyed seeing how the facilitator got the children to work as a class together and I have used it since but in small group settings.
- The children picked up on how to structure a piece of writing
- good listening and decision making as a team
- Roles within groups Natural talents / leadership evolved
- I enjoyed seeing teamwork between students of different classes in different learning levels, that would not normally have the opportunity to collaborate.
- So many students spoke and shared their ideas. I don't think so many may share in a creative writing class run by the respective English teacher. There was a freedom to speak and go beyond perceived convention.

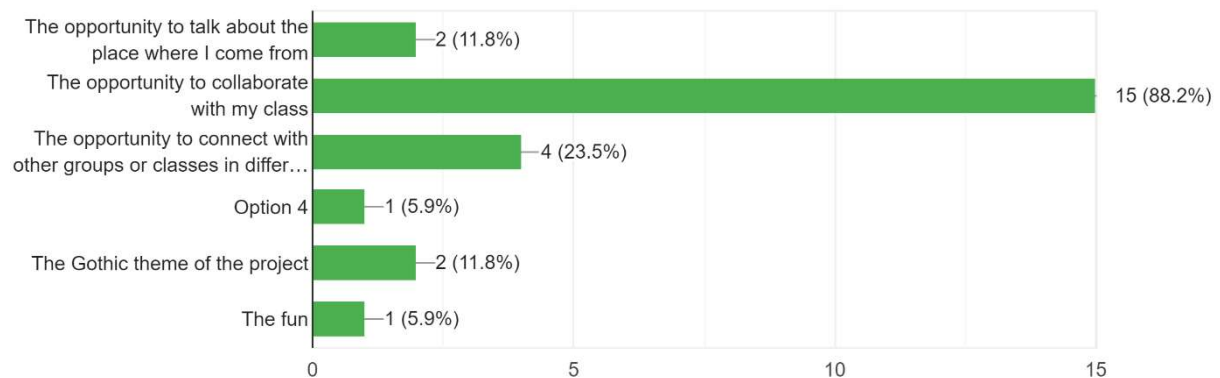
Did you learn anything yourself as a result of the project?

- I have worked on creative writing similar to this session twice since.
- Use the children's ideas more in my teaching
- secret vote on what to include kept story moving quickly
- Difficult not to "control" make it mine as opposed to the pupils
- Students have been more confident to engage in creative projects run within the centre since.
- I have learned to trust our young people. I have learned not be afraid or uncomfortable of their open minds and thoughts. It is important to go with their free thoughts and support them in processing these ideas and allow their creativity to find its way onto a page

Secondary/Post Primary School Students survey responses

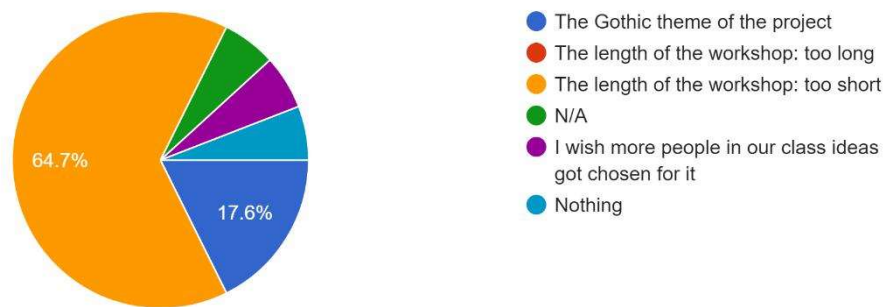
What did you like about the project?

17 responses



What did you not like about the project?

17 responses



If you were running the project what would you change?

17 responses

