

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF ART-BASED ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN-2019-2020



Table of Contents

Introduction to The Art Outreach society
Objectives of the study
Part I: Art Education Methodology Analysis
Part II: Artistic Expression Methodology Analysis
Recommendations Annexure -Declaration



Introduction

The Art Outreach Society (TAOS) is a non-profit organisation which works towards using art as a tool for personal and social change. TAOS provides a platform to show how creativity can transform lives, can connect peoples from across the world and create positive change.

We create a platform where through creativity we can transform lives and lead to positive changes. The exposure to develop innovative thinking is provided and our primary focus is on the use of creativity to heal, enhance and facilitate the lives of others. As a part of our mission, we want to promote art education amongst the less privileged in order for them to achieve their maximum potential through exploring art education. It is also a tool for emotional healing and better social and communal integration. It engages with several categories of marginalised communities with art as a medium as well as impact. While working with the youth from the contingent situation especially those falling under the domain of children in need of care and protection, the broad objectives are to facilitate and introduce are as a medium of expression of diverse impending issues and to positively and constructively channelise their energies through artistic expression.

Objectives of the study

The Impact study is meant to assess the extent to which art has played importance in the lives of the children especially with the focus on diverse development indicators. It has been conducted through qualitative data analysis and the descriptive research design. The indicators were designed with respect to the outputs of engaging in an artistic activity.

The TAOS follows the binary approach of working with two main groups of children based on the needs and the context of the group.



The Art education is focussed on the curriculum and providing scaffolding to the existing curriculum, it is facilitated for children attending schools and are largely held in schools and related institutions with focus on sketching, colouring, contouring and aspects that substantial ether academic learning. Artistic Expression on the other hand is therapy based activities with focus on expression of children’s psychological constructs especially conflicts, anger, fear etc. The target group are Children with Disabilities, Children in conflict with law etc. Both the aspects were studies in depth for analysing the impact of the activities on the target group.



Part I: Art Education

Art has been recognised and upheld as a significant aspect of children’s development not just for recreational purpose but intellectual, social, emotional and for physical development as well including fine and gross motor skills, eye hand coordination. In this regard, major educational systems, educational boards and school systems focus on artistic and aesthetic well-being of students and invest in the aspect. TAOS strongly believes and works towards artistic expressions and goes a step beyond in inculcating art in everyday life and focussing on art being used a medium of therapy to ensure mental well-being.

Methodology of the Study

The study collected the narratives/interviews of children, educators, art facilitators and TAOS Team to assess the impact. Here is the methodological plan:



An input from the sketching activity facilitated in school, self portraits are the stepping stone to Self-Awareness-A key component of Socio-Emotional learning.

The list of the schools/institutions, frequency of classes and the number of students in each group for art Education segment of TAOS is as follows:

Schools and Institutions	Frequency of classes in a year	No. of classes 2019-20	Age-group of the participants	No. of students in the each session
St. Thomas Girls School, Tevara	Monthly	12	9-12 yrs	35
St. Joseph's L. P School, Kumbalangi, Boys	Monthly	12	7-9 yrs	30
St. peter's School, Kumbalangi, Mixed group	Monthly	12	9-12 yrs	38
Amaravathy Govt. School, Mixed group	Monthly	12	7-9 yrs	35
Amaravathy Govt. School, Children with Disability	Monthly	12	7-9 yrs	42
Udayanagar Colony Informal Group, Mixed	Monthly	12	8-13 yrs	30
Total No. Of Students targeted for Art education				210

The emergent themes

On application of Grounded theory to the interviews some of the emergent themes were derived , they are as listed, the children and educators mentioned the changes the given aspects by engaging in art over a period of time.

1. Better school turnout

Children reported that they “feel like coming to school’, they have shared that though they were attending school regularly they would look forward to attending school specially on the days when art sessions are planned, the children seemed excited and enthusiastic about attending the classes. A child shared that though there are art classes in school, we are often judged and scored and this sometimes incites fear, the teacher scolds for not getting colours but the TAOS classes were reported to be playful and there were no elements of fear.



2. Happiness: While school boards

such as CBSE and schools are focussing on happiness curriculum, any efforts in making classrooms and school space 'happy' is to be encouraged, the children have reported the classroom and school to be happier, even during the sessions the children were found to be happy and have come to classrooms under volition.

3. Balancing: A students of Grade 8 in a school reported that they learnt the art of balancing by learning to mix colours and the feel and use of texture adits composition were clear to them. The team member form TAOS reported that it will have positive effects on children’s high order skills.

4. Fine and gross motor skills: Almost all the students reported that they are able to hold different sizes of writing instruments and grasp them firmly and that free handing drawing and writing has enhanced the grip. The age group that the program caters is crucial for the development of fine and gross motor skills, the more exposure to such activities will enhance the skills to the maximum.

5. Improved academic record: Of all the students attending the classes in different schools, the teachers and school authorise have shared that there is also a significant improvement in academic performance, there are established studies to indicate the positive effects of art education and activities on general academic wellbeing as children gain more confidence and art engagements help in calming down the children.

6. Enhanced concentration: almost all children reported better concentration skills and better ability to focus on the task which they practiced form their art classes. The art instructed shared that since sketching and several other activities involve concentration and focus, the children tend to focus on a task for a longer duration and this helps them in focussing on academic and others tasks also.

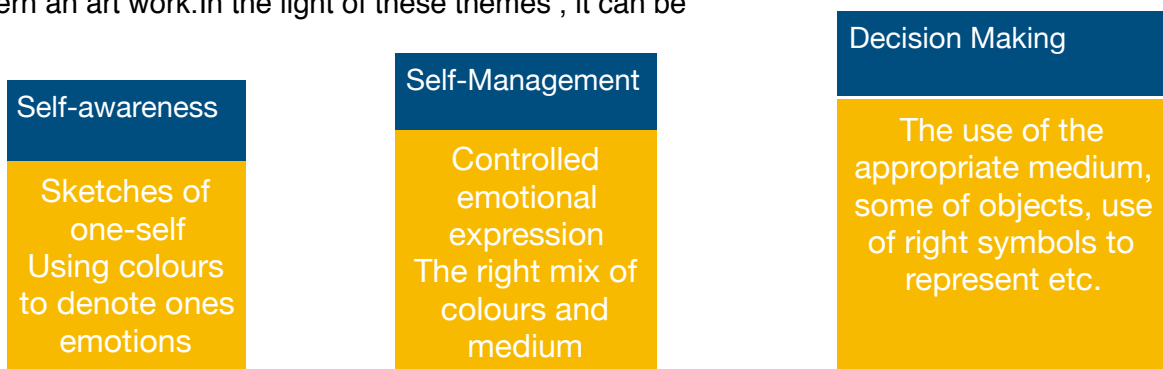
7. Controlled emotional expression: the children have reported to be experiencing positive feelings while engaging in the activity and meanwhile they have reported to have less of anger outbursts. The emotional upheavals common in children in the age group of 12 years onwards are found to be lesser and a teacher reported that they have got into the habit of drawing or painting whenever they are angry. Another teacher shared that, hyperactivity which was evident in the children have also reduced over a period of time, the teachers in regular classroom when confronted with hyperactivity by children often resort to encouraging children to draw or paint so as to craetrvel channelise their energy.

8. Decision making skills

The educators and students both share that higher order faculties like decision making capacities are also enhanced due to engagement in art based activities, the decision to use the appropriate colour, mixing colours and deciding to use the right medium has all impacted the student’s skills to make decisions from the childhood itself.

9. Collaboration: the students were of the opinion that their team building skills have enhanced over a period of time. They were not only sharing the resources but also helping each other in competing their art work.

10. Visual Appreciation Skills: While the abstract thinking develops in children at a later stage (Berk, 2013), children are able to learn, understand and appreciate other’s art work and the make use of indicators such as colour themes, the central idea and media to discern an art work. In the light of these themes , it can be



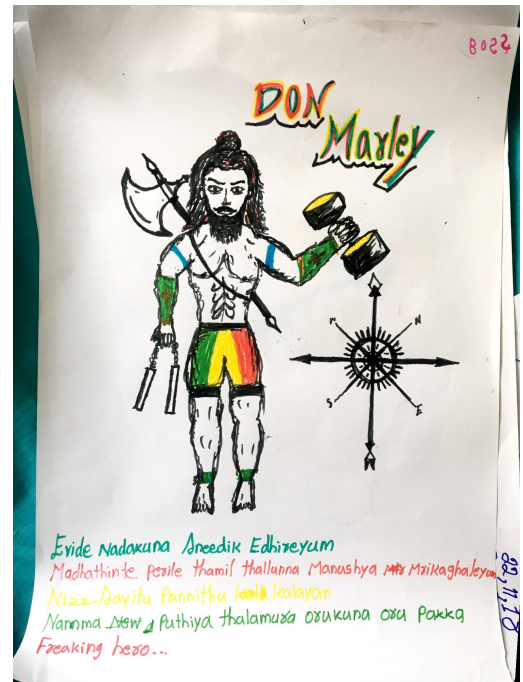
ascertained that the following Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) components were enhanced.

Part II: Artistic Expressions

The Juvenile Justice Act (2002) clearly states that children in conflict with law are to be treated a social constituency keeping in mind the child rights and child protection, this is in line with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. We are working towards the need for ensuring effective and right based justice system for juvenile offenders. Therefore juvenile homes where there are specialised systems for engaging youth in correctional services are structured in each district.

The structuring is based on the philosophy of community living and acknowledges the play and influence of factors such as poverty and social-economic factors in determining the actions of juveniles/children which are in conflict with law. The conflict or offence therefore is assessed on a spectrum based on their socio-economic context and the context in which the offence had been committed rather than compartmentalisation which emanates from the bundle of child rights. Within this structure grows the need for expression and innovative practices to help children work towards genuine introspection and self-efficacy.

Studies indicate that children in conflict with law are exposed to a multitude of psychological and social issues common across institutionalised children, in such a scenario there is a need for providing and facilitating platforms for emotional expressions. While TAOS is dedicated to work with emotional expression through art with various special constituencies, the work with the children in conflict with law is crucial from various standpoints of mental health-anxiety, anger, frustration, guilt and trauma.



An image by youths in conflict with law-the image is the output of a superhero activity

Objectives of the Prison Art Workshops

Through the medium of workshops, TAOS attempts to work towards these determinants by introducing them to art activities/forms and practices. The activities are planned by practitioners and community experts including psychologists, art therapists and art facilitators. The objectives are based on theoretical paradigms and form the session with children’s participation.

The objective is to enhance self-efficacy, self-esteem, and the overall wellness index. While the output is defined, the process of engaging in expressions is also the focus.

Institution	Frequency of classes in a year	No. of classes 2019-20	No. of students in the each session
Bristol Home for Boys, Kakkannad Sub-Jail	Monthly	12	80-90

Participatory Matrix
ranking of all the

84 youths gave
ranking for all
the art activities
conducted

Methodology of the Study

Interviews collected from
educators and TAOS
team

10 educators/
therapists were
interviewed

The study collected the matrix ranking scores and narratives/ interviews of the adolescents, educators, art facilitators and TAOS Team to assess the impact. Here is the methodological plan:

Grounded theory
applied to derive
dominant themes

Measuring impact: Participatory Matrix ranking

Indicators based on Objectives of the project	Scores
1. Planning and facilitation of the activity	3.6
2. Self-reliance	4.1
3. Creativity and Innovation	3.7
4. Participation of the entire group	3.4
5. Decision making	4.2

The scores indicate the average of the scores given by 82 adolescent boys for each category.

Score	Description
1	High Scope for Improvement (not satisfactory)
2	Average
3	Good
4	Very Good
5	Excellent

The youths have given high scores to decision making and self-reliance which is a crucial aspect with regard to children in conflict with law. They also gave good scores for creativity and innovation and participation of the entire group.

The verbatim of the youths collected in Malayalam is as presented, it has been translated to English by the researchers.

1. On being asked about the activities conducted, there responses are as listed:

- *"The activities were new, we never did any of these sorts, we have classes on moral education but they are very boring, this way we got to understand and assimilate concepts better."*
- *"Interesting activity, especially the superman, even free scribbling was good, we found it interesting and we could do anything we want to and it was amusing that we one could use meanings out if even this."*
- *"Both the sessions were good"*
- *"Nice sessions, sessions, we should have them more often"*
- *"It was good, we should have more colours, and stationery and should be longer and more regular, the activities were meaningful and not just drawing, thats what we like about it."*
- *"Good class, have it more often."*

2. In response to their assessment of the TAOS Team's Conduction and facilitation of the activity, they said

- *"We found the activities interesting, the language was multilingual so several people understood, there are Non-Malayalees, also so the team was diverse. We want more colours and pairs for this, wish it could be longer and more regular."*
- *"It was well conducted, we were not bored, and it was good not to have our officials around, if they are around we feel restricted."*
- *"It is good we if know things in advance , then we can be prepared for this, wish out authorities also attend the same."*
- *"Well conducted wish we were put in our own groups, there was a Bihari and a Bengali in our group, we do not know the language and they don't mingle with us, we are more dominant here, we don't allow them to speak so much so having them in the group was not so comfortable."*
- *"Language was not a problem, the team was multilingual, we should not have been divided into teams and we need more of these."*
- *"It was well conducted, the activities were interesting and meaningful"*

3. Team performance

- *"The team performance was not so great, as Shyam (name changed) was the only person doing the work while Pradeep was dictating and I was trying to collect opinions form other members, the Hindi walas are one group , they were put in our group and therefore do not want to participate."*
- *"As a team we did a good job, our superhero was the best, though Rajesh did the drawing, everybody liked our Don Marley, he is a freak."*
- *"The team performance was alright, not so great."*
- *"We did well as a team, though Mukesh the boy from Bihar was not so interested in the beginning, he later coloured the drawing."*
- *"We should not have been divided into teams, if we were Malayalam and Bihari and Bengali speaking teams, then it would have been better, not. A mixed team, because those boys (Malayalees) do not mingle with us, they are a team."*
- *"Our team was the best, you should have a competition next time, and assign prizes."*



An image from mask making activity with youths in conflict with

Key assertions

Key assertions and suggestions emanating from the assessment are segregated based on the two diverse field of engagement, they are as listed:

Part I

1. Regularity of sessions is be looked into, for more pronounced outputs for children, the session are to be made weekly.
2. Resource mobilisation: There needs to be more resources both human and material to ensure wider and qualitative sessions.
3. Documentation of the session for developing literature and facilitating further learning, this is dependant on resources available.
4. Enhancing volunteerism from artists from wider fields not just visual but also performance art.
5. Could cover more schools and specialised constituencies such as children in need of care and protection and children with disability.

Part II:

1. The regularity and frequency fo the programs were stressed by the youths.
2. The youths enjoy that the art expression does not require skill and expertise but it is based on catharsis and their emotional well-being, therefore the process is more important than the
3. There are evident heterogeneity in the group but through team building activities cohesiveness can be built.
4. The youths look forward to engage with more tools and longer duration of their engagement.
5. The session could include some of the authorities as participants.



Declaration

The impact study titled '**Impact Assessment of Art Based Activities with Children-2019-2020**' has been carried out by me for '**The Art Outreach Society (TAOS)**', Ernakulam, Kerala, India. The study has been subjected to plagiarism check. The work submitted is original.



Dr. Reena Merin Cherian

011 GROUND FLOOR
V2 VAIBHAV APARTMENTS
SHANTINIKETAN LAYOUT,
AREKERE, BANNERGHATTA ROAD
BANGALORE-560076
8.3.2020

reenachrn@gmail.com
+91-8826720828