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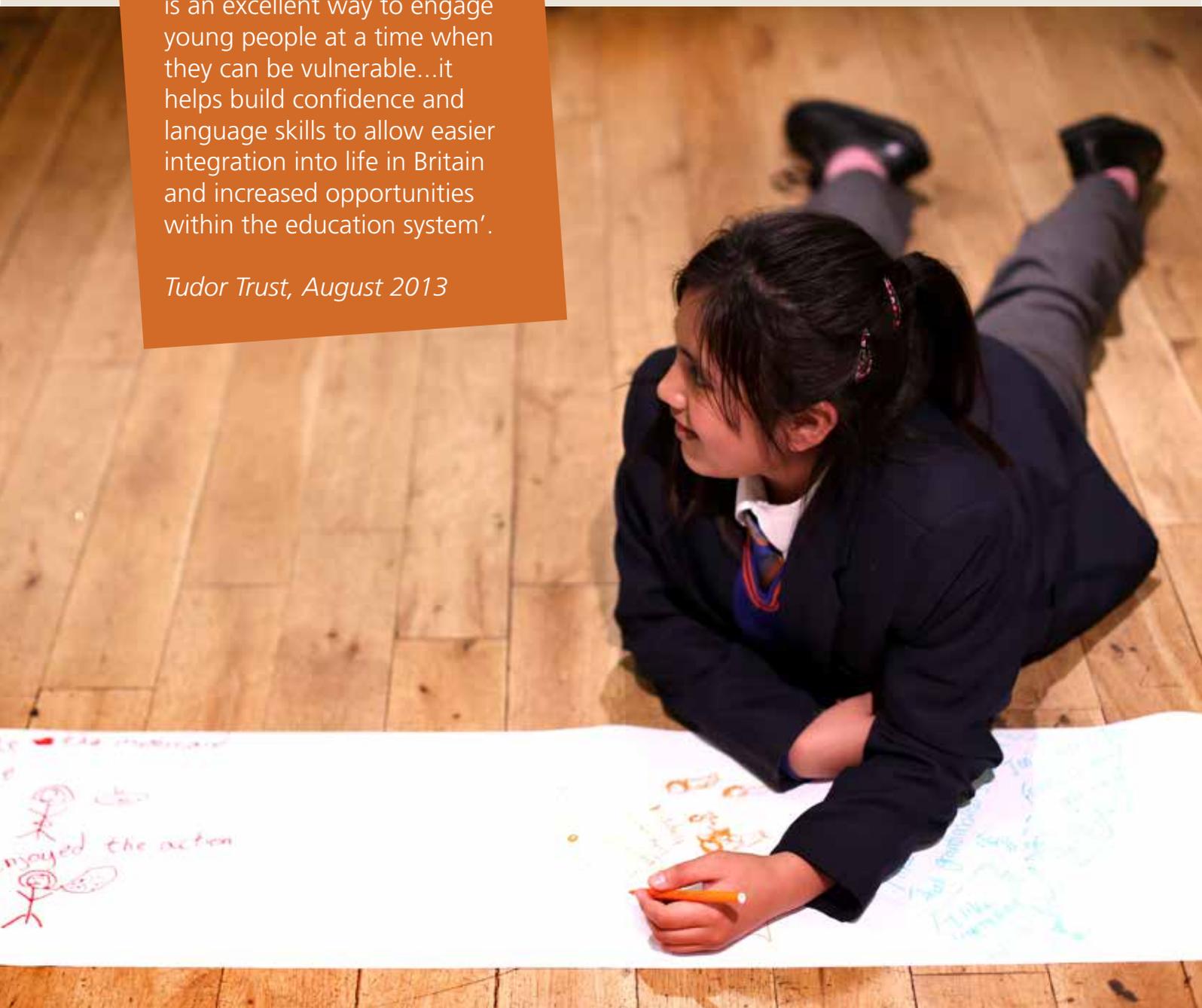


Creative ESOL

A participatory approach to language learning and integration

'The Creative ESOL approach is an excellent way to engage young people at a time when they can be vulnerable...it helps build confidence and language skills to allow easier integration into life in Britain and increased opportunities within the education system'.

Tudor Trust, August 2013



Creative ESOL – An Introduction

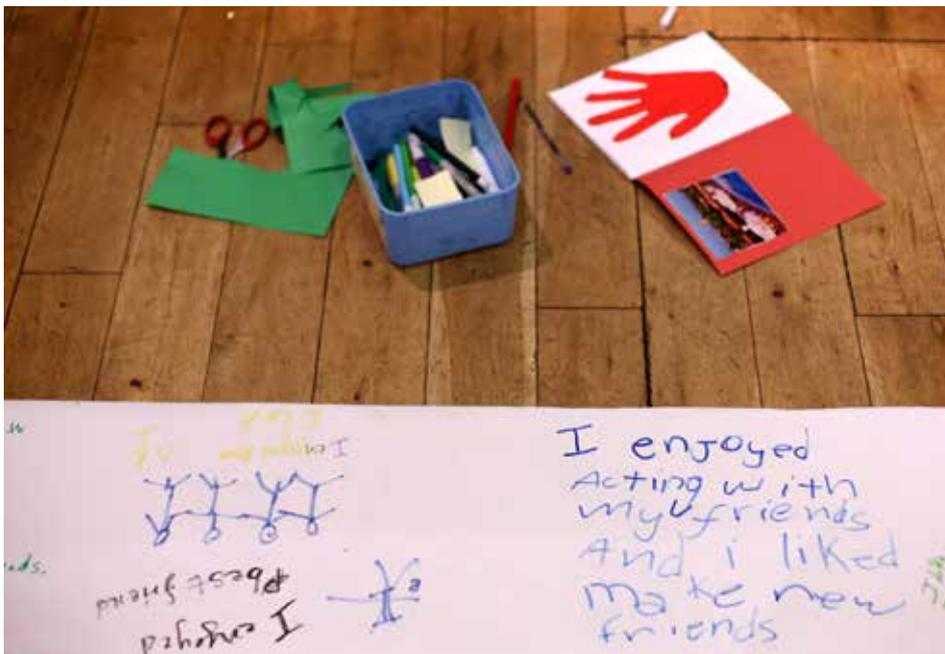
Creative ESOL is one of the core programmes of Rewrite, an organisation founded in October 2000 by Emily Hunka and Sian Perez to raise awareness about issues surrounding refuge and asylum and to challenge prejudice and racism. Through Creative ESOL, Rewrite has pioneered a unique approach that brings young people from migrant backgrounds together to develop language ability and participant well-being through drama and the arts. Rewrite's strong track record in this sector is gaining increasing national recognition. In 2006 Rewrite won the Capital Community Foundation's Award for outstanding work with young people and in 2012 the Global Fund for Children acknowledged our work through a Rising Star Award.

'Thank you for your wonderful work in providing a platform for young people of different cultural and social backgrounds to express their ideas and opinions creatively and to break down barriers of prejudice and racism'.

Kristin Lindsey, CEO, Global Fund for Children, May 2012

The Creative ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) programme was first successfully piloted in 2007-2008 and is designed for newly-arrived young refugees and migrants aged 11 – 16 who want to improve their English language skills. The programme gained grant-funding status from the Tudor Trust to deliver out-of-school projects from 2009. It is now over-subscribed with an increasing number of referrals from local schools.

In this document, we share core information on our work, including previous research findings and key outcomes from the recent external evaluation of our Summer 2013 project.



Increasing opportunities for vulnerable young people...

'It was like a nightmare, in a way...You just come from your country and you come to another country and you think can it get worse than that? You can't speak to other people. You're alone, you're in school. You can't manage to get friends because you are unable to communicate with them.... When Rewrite came, it was like, there's something there. You can learn. You can actually do it if you have the commitment and desire to learn English... you have something to boost your motivation and get to the next level....'

Nousheen Khan

Research led by Rewrite director, Eleanor Cocks and co-facilitator Theah Dix has established that most participants in the programme have only recently arrived in the UK, some as unaccompanied minors. These young people will often experience bullying or discrimination of some kind in school and will find the curriculum hard to access. (The research paper, 'Creative ESOL: the power of participatory arts in language acquisition' was published by the British Council in *Innovations in English Language Teaching for Migrants and Refugees* (2012). Report accessible at: http://www.rewrite.org.uk/Creative_ESOL_Chapter_7.pdf).

Recent participant interviews as part of our external evaluation have also confirmed that the initial social challenges of isolation and low confidence are key obstacles to academic progress. Young participants interviewed for the evaluation were also equally clear that they could make rapid progress when their learning was supported through play, drama and art activities and a social environment that contributed to building their confidence and motivation to speak.

'You don't understand anything, you get scared sometimes... Most of the time when you say something wrong, they take the mick, it's not good... here you can understand more because they pay more attention to you...' *Luccas*

'It's a very good experience. You can have more friends. You can speak more. Like me, look! You can practise drama. You can do everything...when I'm speaking I lost my embarrassment and I can speak more.' *John*



Who takes part in Creative ESOL programmes?

The Creative ESOL programme has offered a total of 252 participant places to young people on its out-of-school programme since 2010. (The majority of participants will attend more than one term's activity). The programme also offered 99 places on theatre or cultural visits. These visits offer both insights into performance and wider worlds of cultural experience as well as providing a valuable route to develop friendships and encourage social interaction.

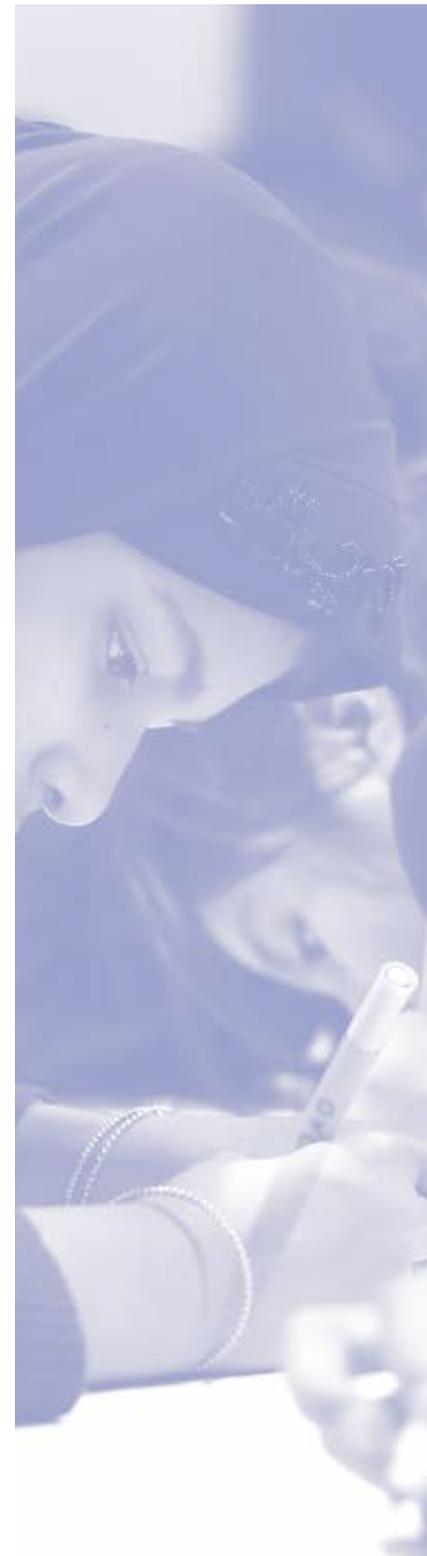
The ethnic breakdown of participants reflects the diversity of the London Borough of Southwark with over 23 first languages spoken and over 24 countries named by participants in relation to ethnic background.

Participation in Creative ESOL and Cultural Visits

Project	Participant Breakdown	Number of programme participants	Number of participants in cultural trips and visits
Taster Session 2010	30 mixed	30	-
Spring 2010	10 F 5 M	15	10
Summer 2010	10 F 5 M	15	9
Autumn 2010	18 F 6 M	24	12
Taster Session 2011	30 mixed	30	-
Spring 2011	6 M 6 F	12	7
Summer 2011	4 F 7 M	11	6
Autumn 2011	16 F 11 M	27	16
Taster Session 2012	30 mixed	30	-
Spring 2012	11F 10M	21	6
Summer 2012	8 F 8 M	16	9
Autumn 2012	11F 3 M	14	7
Spring 2013	12 F 3 M	15	10
Summer 2013	12F 3 M	15	7
Additional Taster Session 2013	15 mixed	15	-
Total	290	290	99

In addition, Rewrite runs a Creative ESOL in-school programme for the Harris Girls Academy, East Dulwich. The programme began as a pilot in 2012 and has worked with 28 girls aged 11 to 16.

Creative ESOL participants from both groups are encouraged to progress into other core Rewrite programmes including React, a youth theatre group and Free Writers, a young writers group. These opportunities enable former Creative ESOL participants to meet with other local young people from diverse and established communities and identify and explore issues that are important to them.



What happens on the Creative ESOL programme?

Rewrite's four-year experience in running the programme has established a model which is distinctive, flexible and builds participant confidence incrementally. The programme is planned through collaboration between a qualified ESOL teacher and experienced drama practitioner and a 10-week scheme of work is devised in response to individual learning goals. The Creative ESOL model is informed by applied drama approaches (described in detail in the British Council publication): engaging the body, the imagination and spontaneity to create an emotional investment in situations and encourage informal language learning. Art and creativity are the key stimuli for sessions and form an arc of activity for the term, leading from processes of play and art-making to story-telling and performance. These activities are linked in the planning for each session with clearly defined objectives in relation to language learning.

Warm-Up Activities and Games

Each session begins with a warm-up. Competitive games such as 'Dragon's Tail' prove highly popular as icebreakers, particularly for new arrivals to the group. They also create emotional investment, and above all, a motivation for participants to speak out, to explain the rules or dispute them!

'The two times I came here to observe, I was very impressed by the combination of how they were made to speak and play at the same time with balls and movement – kinaesthetic and at the same time auditory. That helps them a lot to loosen up and to speak in a way that they don't in the classroom'.

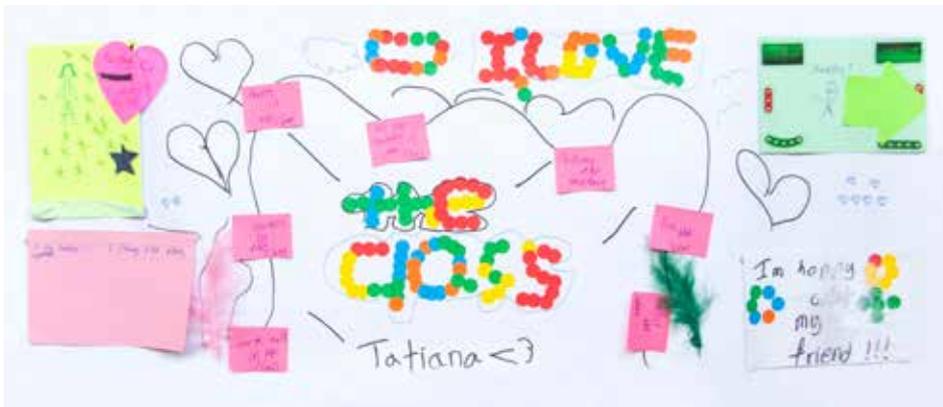
Mariely Toro, EAL Co-ordinator, Globe Academy



Art-Making and Story-Building

Creative activities are used as a stimulus for participants to practise and acquire language in relaxed and informal ways. In the Summer Term 2013 programme, participants created a 'magic bird' with recycled materials which they took into an outside environment to construct group stories that were then developed through writing and rehearsal. Facilitators observed that:

'Everyone was really engaged in finding vocabulary from outside area. They looked at the environment using all types of senses, then linked limestone from science lessons to objects such as the church tower, showing links to prior learning'.



Language Development

Subsequent sessions then focused on developing the stories and the term's specific language focus areas. In Summer 2013, activities were constructed to develop participant use of adjectives and skills of adjective order, as well as building oracy and writing skills.

Facilitators assessed progression in language skills after each session noting in their final report that: 'there has been definite progression in pronunciation and clarity with young people, in particular those observed in detail for the project'.

Performance

Evaluative comments from different observers of the Summer 2013 project indicate a very high co-relation between participation in performance and rapid improvements in language ability:

*'Being outside gave them a creative spark and energy. Stories are really imaginative. Performance level has raised straight into acting and performance mode with bodies and voices'.
Facilitator Evaluation*

Engaging artists and performing arts students has been a consistent feature of Rewrite's model. For the last two years, participants have worked with students from the B.A. Drama, Applied Theatre and Education (DATE) course run by the Central School of Speech and Drama (CSSD). In their evaluation, project leaders noted the positive impacts on young people of performing in a theatre venue with professional lighting, design and costume:

*'They showed a massive leap in their confidence to articulate themselves and be understood in English'.
Robert Lehmann, Student Facilitator*

The external evaluator observed how 'young people were particularly enthused by being able to work in a professional theatre and to have friends and family attend the performance. In the following class, young people were more animated and seemed to be better at retaining vocabulary that was being introduced'.

*'The performance was really great...The whole programme has boosted their self-confidence'.
Teacher, Walworth Academy*

Peer support is an important part of this collaborative success. Our evaluations demonstrate how young people, and particularly older mentors, encourage greater participation from new arrivals and continue to support the engagement of those who may struggle at times during the rehearsal process.



External Evaluation and Teacher Perspectives

Teachers were interviewed for our evaluation to gain their perspectives on the benefits of participation and also to establish their assessments of impacts on learning and academic achievement. Our evaluator observed: 'Evidence of very high levels of support and enthusiasm for the programme can be seen in feedback from all participants and from teachers, facilitators and families. Participants demonstrated support through high levels of attendance in session workshops, through their pride in their performances and expressed intention to return to the programme in the next academic year'.

The Value of Extra-Curricular Support

While all partner schools offer intensive classes for their students with dedicated EAL sessions, teachers regarded the further extra-curricular support offered through Creative ESOL as an essential part of their students' academic progress:

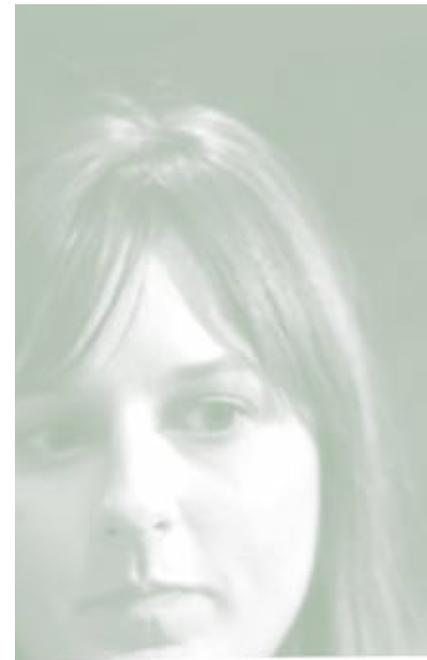
'When someone learns a language it's a very long process... we're limited in schools by the amount of hours and we have to teach other subjects so it's important that the students have something else after school. This was perfect. It's helped them improve their confidence, their writing and learning skills but especially where they have to say something, where they have to express themselves... that's one of the most important ways they are supported'.

Natalia Manso, EAL Co-ordinator, Globe Academy

Learning Through Play...

'The combination of play and learning is great. We can't always reproduce that in the classroom. We have to keep certain standards and formality. When they come here, they learn while playing which is the best thing. It's helping them with oracy'.

Mariely Toro, EAL Co-ordinator, Globe Academy



Impacts on Attainment in Literacy

'I have noticed that the students who joined this project... their levels went up because they were gaining the confidence'.

Mariely Toro, EAL Co-ordinator, Globe Academy

Teachers were asked to collect data or to give assessments in interview in relation to attainment in Literacy. *Our external evaluation established clear evidence of gains in attainment in literacy with the majority of participants in Creative ESOL exceeding teachers' pre-identified targets.*

One participating teacher describes how two of her students who had just arrived in the country in September 2011 were then working at level 1a and then level 1b in Y8. They struggled with classroom tasks and homework for a year or so and appeared sometimes disengaged. Gains in their attainment were noted in Spring 2012 which was when the girls began their engagement with Creative ESOL. Both girls moved to level 3c in English in Summer 2012 and to level 4b in Summer 2013. Both girls have, in the teacher's assessment, made 'remarkable' progress in written and spoken English'. (External evaluation 2013).

'I can see that their confidence and language ability develops through a holistic approach. What I never know is does it carry through into schools. We know now it does'...

Eleanor Cocks, Rewrite Director and Creative ESOL Co-facilitator



Impacts on Personal Development, Social and Creative Skills

Teacher feedback indicates, in addition to gains in attainment, that participation in Creative ESOL has brought other social benefits to group members including:

- Increased intercultural understanding between young people of different cultural groups.
- Increased participation in school activities and widening social networks for participants.



Halima, a refugee from Somalia, who has been attending the programme for a year and has been in the country for two years, takes pride in her recent achievement. She said when she arrived her English levels were at 1a. In 2012 her target set in September was to reach 3b. In summer 2013, she has reached 3b in Writing and 4c in Reading.

Her teacher noted that, while she has always been assertive, she is now far less shy and willing to ask questions. She has also formed more friendships, is less wary of people from other cultures and is now also an enthusiastic football player'. (External Evaluation).

Teacher Recommendations

'I wish there was more space for our students and there are loads more students who want to do it....'

Melissa Corrie, EAL Co-ordinator, Harris Girls Academy East Dulwich

All teachers from Rewrite's partner schools, Globe Academy, Harris Girls Academy, East Dulwich and Walworth Academy, have expressed strong levels of support for the continuation of Creative ESOL. Rewrite is also developing new proposals in response to their suggestions for future work, including more training and tools to support teachers in mainstream ESOL classes.

'I would recommend this to any academy that has students coming from abroad'.

Mariely Toro, EAL Co-ordinator, Globe Academy



Young People's Perspectives...

Young people are Rewrite's strongest advocates. They frequently recruit new arrivals in their school to the programme or, like Nousheen Khan, return to the programme as peer mentors.

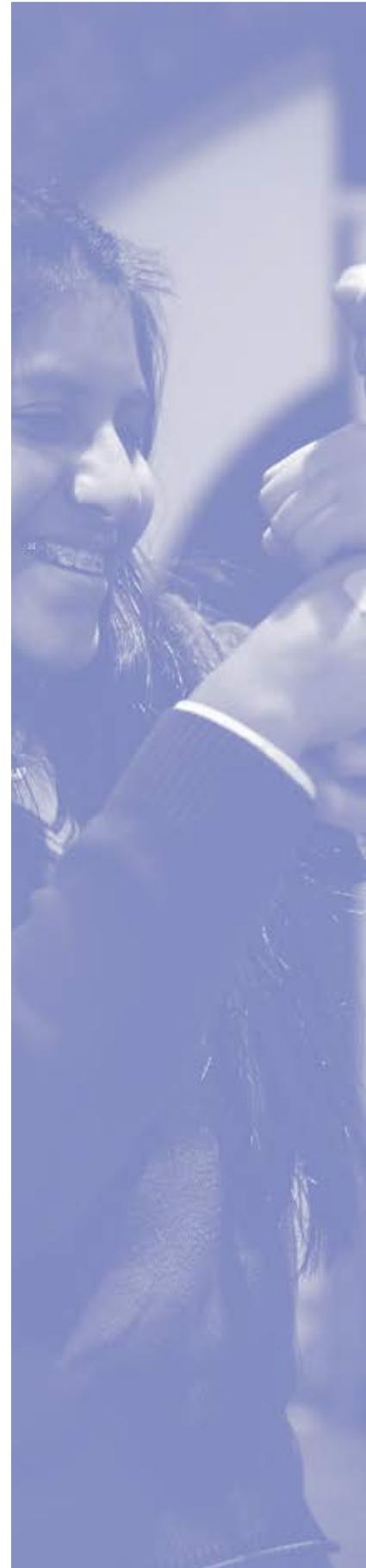


Nousheen joined a Rewrite programme in Y7 after a taster session run at Harris Academy, following her arrival from Pakistan the previous year. She has now finished A-Levels and is starting university later in the year. She identifies her work with Rewrite as a key part of her achievement as it gave her the confidence to go forward and speak more – a vital first step, she argues, to further academic progress.

'Once you are able to verbally speak, you are able to write that down on paper. Rewrite gave me the skills. I did my English GCSE. Skills, grammar and spelling, they helped me pass. Also for GCSE English you have to do presentations and Rewrite as a group, building up my confidence, helped me with that'.

Nousheen commented that school support is important. She attended a weekly additional class for EAL pupils but the focus in these classes was academic rather than 'individual and on normal communication'. She is clear that additional Rewrite support with a focus on confidence-building and oral skills was a key part of her progress. She also believes that she achieved more, as a result, than other students who did not attend Rewrite sessions.

'I had an advantage. I was putting more hours into learning the language. Some other people weren't. Every Monday for 3 hours, I had help with my communication but it wasn't just that. It was basically building up your skills, your confidence and helping you with your writing and if there was homework you needed help with they would do that too... Some girls in my school weren't allowed to for her own reasons. If you look at the performance of hers and mine, you will see the difference in level and I think that comes from the skills that Rewrite provided you'.



The external evaluator for Creative ESOL in 2013 led final reflections for young people through creative mapping exercises which demonstrated 'a very high level of fluency and accuracy. They also illustrate the affective cycles of shyness and lack of confidence and how these emotion states shift through project activity and performance'.

- When I start this term I feel very nerves and I don't know the names of people.
- Two sessions later I feel happy and confident.
- Then I feel very very confident because I know I can the people understanding English.
- Then I started to talk to people working with them asking questions to teachers.
- Then I started to worry about the play.
- Then I feel better because I practice more, more, more.
- I feel very confident.



What others say...

The Creative ESOL programme is achieving an increasing level of recognition as an excellent model of practice which delivers high-value outcomes for those who take part in its workshops.

*'An innovative project that uses drama and creative writing to help children integrate by building their skills in English'.
Financial Times*

*'fascinating and effective'.
Tudor Trust*

*'Creative ESOL is grounded in critical pedagogy, recognising that young people should become active agents in their own learning'.
British Council*

Increasing Demand for Rewrite Programmes

We have discovered that there is great interest in our innovative model of practice from EAL teachers, ESOL tutors and participatory arts facilitators.

After participating in our Creative ESOL taster sessions EAL staff at Southwark schools have requested training around the model and we were recently asked to deliver presentations on our practice for Croydon and Islington Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) networks. From our work with other arts organisations and practitioners we are also aware that many drama practitioners have a limited understanding of the needs of participants who have English as a second language and are therefore keen to engage in relevant training. Rewrite sees the Creative ESOL model as highly adaptable to different contexts and age groups, including primary schools and family learning settings.

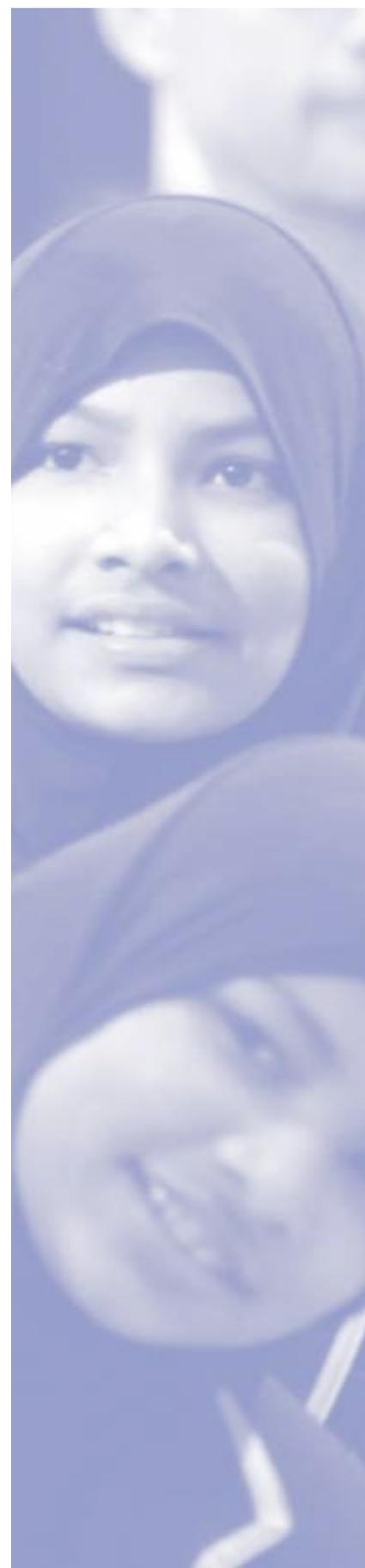


Plans for 2013 – 2014

From September 2013 to July 2014 Rewrite will continue to deliver the on-going out of school programme in Southwark. Creative ESOL projects will also be delivered at Harris Girls Academy East Dulwich and in three cluster secondary schools for the Islington Council School Improvement Service (reaching students from a total of 9 schools in the borough).

In 2014 we will begin a dissemination phase of the Creative ESOL programme, funded by the Tudor Trust. We will produce a training handbook and resource pack and deliver an in-depth training course for English language teachers and arts practitioners in how to deliver the Creative ESOL model. We will also hold a national conference bringing together practitioners and organisations working in the field of language teaching through the arts. In May 2014, we will deliver a seminar for the British Council to introduce the Creative ESOL model to ESOL and EFL (English as a Foreign language) teachers in the north of England.

If you are interested in either hosting a Creative ESOL project or training in how to deliver the model please contact Rewrite at info@rewrite.org.uk.



Fundraising

We are keen to develop relationships with a diverse range of funders and sponsors to ensure the sustainability of the Creative ESOL programme. Please contact us to discuss opportunities to get involved.

Individuals can support our work by making regular or one-off donations.

Help us reach our goals

You can make donations to support our work.



Online: To make one-off or regular donations, go to www.localgiving.com/charity/rewrite



Via text message: Just text RWRT00 and the amount you want to donate to 70070. So if you text 'RWRT00 10' this will be a £10 donation.



Via standing order: To make regular donations simply fill out the form at the back of this brochure.

For further details please contact:

Eleanor Cocks (Director)
Rewrite, 5 Elephant Lane
London SE16 4JD
Tel: 07575 743103

Email: info@rewrite.org.uk
www.rewrite.org.uk

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Thank you so much for helping us Rewrite the future!

Please post this form to: Ben Martin, Treasurer, Rewrite, c/o 6-22 Kempton Court, Durward St, London E1 5BD



Our Vision for the Future



Rewrite is an expanding organisation with a commitment to delivering high quality work and offering long-term progression for young people. Our new five-year business plan identifies key goals for the future including:

- Rewrite Hub: establishing a new creative venue housing both our office and workshop space.
- Centre of Excellence: delivering high quality training on innovative arts practice with young people.
- Prejudice Busting: a new core strand of work challenging myths surrounding refuge and asylum.

We are proud of our achievements in relation to the Creative ESOL programme and passionate about the need for this work. We are determined to sustain and develop our provision and excited about the future expansion and dissemination of the programme. Creative ESOL has the potential to meet the needs of many more newly arrived young migrants and refugees throughout London and the UK and we look forward to furthering this aim.

Eleanor Cocks, Rewrite Director



'It was lovely – creative and refreshing. Your project has really given wings to the children (like the birds they chose to feature in their stories) and it has made them blossom'.

Mariely Toro, EAL Co-ordinator, Globe Academy

