

KiCARTS

(Kids as Catalyst- Arts)

St. Pius X Primary, West Heidelberg 2017

Evaluation Report

Introduction

This report presents a summative evaluation of the KiCARTS program provided in 2 class groups at St Pius X Primary, in West Heidelberg – a low SES suburb of Banyule, 40 mins NE of Melbourne.

Kids Thrive received funding from the Packer Family Foundation and Crown Resorts Foundation to deliver the KiCARTS program to the West Heidelberg region during 2017.

KiCARTS Pilot

KiCARTS is an arts-based learning program, starting in the classroom and extending into the community – focusing on child-led community arts projects. KiCARTS 2017 partnered Grade 5/6 students from SPX with Kids Thrive artists and local community members to: Identify and embrace their personal values; explore community issues that concern them; forge community partnerships with local groups that share their concerns or interests; and create meaningful arts projects together, expressing their shared concerns.

Final outcomes involved children, artists and community members in arts presentations for their community.

KiCARTS engaged students in real-world, real-time community arts projects: using the arts to find creative solutions to local challenges; creating partnerships for social change; learning arts project design and management; and enacting community leadership.

KiCARTS is a profound arts-based learning experience focusing on empathy, personal engagement with social issues and the 'lives of others'. It develops students' resilience and leadership skills, through social awareness, community engagement and arts project development.

Involvement in this pilot project ignites students' capacity to lead positive change through creative approaches.

In 2017 the first term of delivery KiCARTS was a weekly program - with direct training delivered by the Kids Thrive team, and follow up activities led by the teachers. Students connected with their personal values; researched, identified and engaged with local community groups as project partners; conceived, co-designed and budgeted a series of community arts projects to benefit their local communities.

In the second term of the program students worked with Kids Thrive artists and community partners to develop their arts projects, and shared responsibility for delivering their community arts projects in partnership with their artist and selected community organisation. The program

culminated in a Community Celebration event at the Banyule Community Health Centre at which students performed and presented their arts projects to an audience of family and community members.

The program also delivered professional development for teachers in arts-based learning, community engagement and project development, establishing the groundwork to enable teachers to step into the program leader role in 2018.

KiCArts engages children in the later years of primary school - a vital time in a child's development known as the 'middle years', characterised by rapid emotional, physical, social and cognitive development. This is a time when young people require deeper experiences of themselves and of connections to others to keep them educationally and socially engaged. KiCArts closely matches the needs of children in this age group, which have been summarised as 'to have good self-esteem; belong, feel connected and supported; have increasing independence in a safe environment; be able to achieve, learn and feel competent; and be heard, participate, and be listened to' (Committee on Children and Young People, 2009: 17). Promotion of resilience is key to supporting mental wellbeing at this time of transition; and factors promoting resilience are central to the program. These include developing individual attributes such as self-efficacy, social competency, and problem-solving skills; and supportive relationships with family, other caregivers, peers, teachers, and members of the broader community (Hunter, 2012; Luthar and Cicchetti, 2000). KiCArts also builds a suite of skills young students' need to be ready for the future of work. Foundation for Young Australians notes : "Immersive, project-based and real-world learning experiences that go beyond the classroom, such as working with local businesses and facilitating art and film projects" are the ground-breaking education styles required for young people to succeed into the future. (FYA, 2017). Australia needs smart learners, thinkers and doers who remain educationally engaged to have every opportunity for employability and to reach their potential.

A logic model is attached, describing the theory of change underlying the KiCArts program. In summary, the intervention comprises an innovative, child-led community arts as social change program that empowers children to engage in, and take the lead in arts-based social change activities. It is delivered by Kids Thrive facilitators in partnership with educators, community partners and children, and uses the arts as a learning and community engagement strategy. It explicitly:

- Builds links and relationships between children, schools and their community.
- Develops the skills of teachers and children to investigate and understand themselves, others and their community from a philanthropic/social action perspective.
- Inspires and equips children to use the arts to lead change at a community level.

Program outputs include partnerships between children, schools and community organisations to co-design and deliver arts-based philanthropic projects. The project logic maps outcomes onto a socio-ecological framework at individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels. Individual level outcomes include increased self-esteem, self-confidence, resilience and expanded social networks for children; interpersonal outcomes include increased connectedness between children, teachers, schools and communities; at a community level, children become active participants in addressing local issues; and at a societal level, we expect to see improved cohesion and wellbeing with children better equipped to be contributing members of society.

This evaluation of *KiCArts 2017* is based on teacher-observed data sets measuring demonstrated change in individual student competencies, plus interviews with teachers, principals, community partners and students. These demonstrate that students respond positively to the program, with schools noticing key improvements in children's learning, creative thinking, leadership, agency, self-esteem and mental wellbeing. The evaluation also

includes a simple pre-and post-test to understand students' community connections emerging from involvement in the program.

KiCArts aims to increase child and youth confidence and capacity to identify issues of importance to them and their local communities, and to take creative action to address these issues. It also aims to build students' resilience, self-esteem, social connections and sense of agency by:

- Using the arts to explore their personal values and to rehearse key social and community development skills
- Promoting social inclusiveness and community connectedness
- Encouraging community cooperation and participation
- Fostering awareness and understanding of community issues
- Enacting alternative, positive pathways for children and communities in environments with few perceived options
- Exploring creative approaches to transforming challenges and obstacles into opportunities for growth.

Student Community Arts Projects

'Save the Earth'

Grade 5/6.

Concern - This group of students was concerned about the environment. They were worried about the amount of rubbish in the community, and the role plastic bags are playing in killing wildlife in the local creek and beyond.

Community Partner - They sought out and partnered with volunteer group - Friends of Darebin Creek, who also connected them with the Darebin Creek Water Management Committee.

Aim – Encouraging West Heidelberg to become plastic bag-free.

Arts Project – the students worked with Kids Thrive visual artist/photographer Carla Gottgens. They first used plastic bags to create sculptures of wildlife that can be found in the creek and environs. They then photographed their sculptures, and designed colourful images with slogans encouraging litter free behaviours. These were printed onto heavy duty vinyl sheeting and affixed outside around the local Banyule Community Health Centre – on bins, the footpath, and around the stormwater drains. These environmental art works were 'launched' at the Banyule Community Health Centre event – with students parading in costumes, carrying illuminated dragon fly sculptures on poles, and leading the audience to each site where they shared stories and facts about the local creek and local wildlife.

'The Includers'

Grade 5/6

Concern – that everyone in their diverse community should feel included

Community Partner – Community Planning and Social Planning Team, Banyule City Council

Aim – raising awareness of personal experiences of being included and excluded and the role we each play in making others feel included or excluded.

Arts Project – with Kids Thrive performance artist Alex Walker, the students created a 'travelling movement piece' using actions and words capturing the feelings of being included or excluded. This was partnered by recorded voices of community members telling stories of times when

they have felt excluded or included. The performance also included a sequence with students using a series of placards reflecting their differences and similarities; and a period where the audience was invited to participate (included) in a game of 'Yes No Maybe' – where they walked through the space, responding to simple personal questions, revealing who they shared similarities and differences with – and how these change continually.

To develop this piece, students travelled to a local community centre - Shop 48 in the local mall - to interview community members who use this as a place to 'belong'. Here they met and talked with locals from a range of cultural backgrounds, different abilities, and differing genders and sexualities. The students' conversations after this experience were deeply affecting and empathetic.

'3081 Angels'

Grade $\frac{3}{4}$

Concern – the environment

Community Partner – 3018 Angels – a local community group who gather donations of unwanted baby goods, which they repurpose, repair and redistribute to mothers in need.

Aim – encouraging community to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' and raise awareness of 3081 Angels.

Arts Project – the students worked with Kids Thrive performance artist Alex Walker and costume designer Katherine Branch to create a 'Catwalk Trashion Parade'. They designed and made flash outfits from collected 'rubbish' that would otherwise be thrown out – including cornflakes packets, roadside bunting and tinfoil trays. With their community partner they wrote a rap song reflecting their ideas for reusing and recycling, and the work of 3018 Angels. They sought out donations of second hand prams and baby car seats. They then brought these elements together in a fashion parade – wearing their costumes and parading with prams.

'Cultural Ninjas'

Grade 3/4

Concern - Community Diversity

Community Partner - Salt Foundation – local group providing emergency food relief and community meals. "These are people who help everyone in the community be happy through food." (Simon – student)

Aim – to explore the many things we share as different people.

Arts Project – with Kids Thrive visual artist Carla Gottgens the students visited the Salt Foundation community lunch and took the time to talk with people and take photographs of them – focusing on their faces and details such as their feet and shoes, and their hands holding a favourite cup. They then worked with Carla to create a series of 3-D 'Exquisite Corpse' installations – wooden boxes with different images on each surface of the boxes. This installation was 'launched' at the Banyule Community Arts Centre event – where the audience was encouraged to 'play' with the boxes – stacking them on top of each other to create diverse collections of faces, hands and feet.

The Evaluation

This evaluation identifies the impact of the *KiCArts* program in St Pius X Primary school, West Heidelberg in 2017.

Project Logic

The evaluation has been guided by a project logic. The project logic is included as Appendix 1 at the end of this document. The project logic makes the thinking that underlies the project explicit and exposes the underlying 'hypothesis' on which the program is based. The purpose of the project logic is to be clear about the activities, outputs and expected outcomes of the project so that the correct evaluation questions are identified.

Evaluation Approach

This evaluation uses a summative approach aimed at determining the impact of the KiCArts program during 2017. Summative evaluation is a method of judging the worth of a program at the end of the program's activities. The focus is on the outcomes achieved, changes observed in participants, and differences that have been demonstrated.

Evaluation Questions

Based on the project logic the following summative evaluation questions have been developed for this evaluation. The questions are based on the project outputs and short-term outcomes identified in the project logic:

1. To what extent have children, teachers and community members participated in *KiCArts*?
2. What has *KiCArts* delivered?
3. To what extent have children demonstrated growth in positive social and emotional skills?
4. To what extent have children learnt the use of creativity for communication, applied creative learning skills and improved their educational engagement?
5. To what extent have children learnt and applied leadership and community engagement skills?
6. To what extent has the community had a positive engagement and improved participation with the school?
7. To what extent have children built their community networks?

These questions form the framework for the presentation of the Evaluation Results in the next section.

Data Collection

Key documents and data sources for this evaluation have included:

- Minutes of meetings with teachers and principals
- Student Progress Reports - detailed reports completed by teachers for each child in their class, detailing demonstrated levels of change against each domain as a result of participation in *KiCArts*
- Student interviews and reflective activities
- Teacher and Principal Evaluation interviews and surveys

Data has been analysed using a constructivist approach - based on the understanding that the "truth" of a situation is individually and collectively constructed by the people who experience it¹. In constructivist evaluation it is assumed that there are many different ways of interpreting or understanding the intent and impact of an activity and that to understand the activity the

¹ The other major approaches to evaluation are positivist or post positivist. These approaches start from an understanding that truth is objectively knowable (positivism) or able to be accurately approximated (post-positivism).

evaluator must gather together those understandings from a range of sources. For a constructivist evaluator the truth of the situation is what the people who experience it describe.

Evaluation Results

In this section each evaluation question is answered based on an analysis of the data. A summary of the results is provided at the end of this section.

1. To what extent have children, teachers and community members participated in *KiCArts* – West Heidelberg?

Data collected by Kids Thrive indicates that the program directly involved:

- 39 students in grades 3-6
- 1 Catholic Primary Cchool
- 2 teachers
- 1 school principal
- 3 Kids Thrive Artists
- 4 local community organisations (see Appendix 2)
- 337 local community members – 7 engaged as partners in developing and delivering students' community arts projects; up to 50 community interviewed, photographed and engaged as project participants; 280 engaged in school and community events and performances.

2. What has *KiCArts* delivered?

During 2017 *KiCArts* delivered:

- 36 workshops with Kids Thrive Artists
- 2 half day performance and technical rehearsals
- 2 community engagement events (Assembly presentation and Community Arts Event)
- 4 community arts projects realised by children with artists and community partners

3. To what extent have children demonstrated growth in positive social and emotional skills?

Teachers provided Student Progress Reports identifying their perception of the impact of *KiCArts* on each child. The progress reports include four areas of relevance to this evaluation question. The progress reports indicate that:

- 86% of children demonstrated improved self-confidence as a result of their participation in *KiCArts*;
- 78% demonstrated improved teamwork;
- 83% demonstrated improved empathy;
- 90% demonstrated improved social awareness.

4. To what extent have children learnt and applied creative learning skills, and improved their educational engagement?

Student Progress Reports include five dimensions of relevance to this evaluation question: 'willingness to participate', 'self-directed learning', 'perseverance', 'literacy' and 'creative communication skills'.

The Student Progress Reports indicate that:

- 81% of children showed improved willingness to participate jn class through their

involvement in KiCArts.

- 98% of children demonstrated improvement in self-directed learning;
- 93% demonstrated improved perseverance;
- 83% demonstrated improved in literacy;
- 93% demonstrated increased engagement with using creative skills to communicate ideas.

It is important to note that KiCArts is not delivered as a literacy program. However, Kids Thrive has included this data at the request of participating teachers, who wish to understand the impact of the program on this core curriculum.

5. To what extent have children learnt and applied leadership and community engagement skills?

Two dimensions in the Student Progress Reports are relevant to the development and application of 'leadership' and 'community engagement' skills by children.

The Student Progress Reports indicate that:

- 95% of children demonstrated improved understanding and practice of leadership skills;
- 95% demonstrated improved understanding and capacity to participate in community engagement.

6. To what extent have children engaged with their community, and the community had a positive engagement with the school?

Data shows the schools developed new or stronger relationships with:

- 4 local community groups
- Approximately 57 community members directly
- Over 200 family and community participants in celebratory events.
- Plus innumerable community members benefiting from the outcomes of student community arts projects.

7. To what extent have children built their community networks?

Children filled in a simple graphic representation of their community support networks both pre- and post-program, responding to the question: 'How many people can you talk to about things that matter to you?' The following graph represents a median of their before and after responses, revealing significant increases in children's perception of and access to community support networks, including:

- 128% increase in positive connections with other students at school
- 59% increase in connections with kids outside school
- 49% increase in trusted connections with adults at school
- 34% increase in trusted connections with adults in the community
- 55% increase in positive family connections.

NB – It is important to note that teachers marked 7 of the 41 participating students as demonstrating low or zero change on many domains on the Student Data Sheets as they entered the program with good skills in these areas already. These students excelled in the program, but due to prior skill levels did not contribute to measures of 'significant change'.

Summary of Evaluation Results 2017

Question	2017 Result
1. To what extent have children, teachers, and community members participated in Kids as Catalyst?	<p>39 students in grade 3-6 participated</p> <p>4 local community organisations participated</p> <p>7 community members engaged as project partners</p> <p>up to 50 community members interviewed, photographed and engaged as project participants</p> <p>280 school and community members participated in the community event</p> <p>Broader community were beneficiaries of student projects.</p>
2. What has Kids as Catalyst delivered?	<p>36 workshop sessions – at school and in the community</p> <p>2 half day rehearsals</p> <p>2 performances by children – one assembly-based; one community engagement event;</p> <p>4 community arts projects created by children.</p>
3. To what extent have children demonstrated growth in positive social and emotional skills?	<p>86% increased confidence;</p> <p>78% show improved teamwork;</p> <p>83% show improved empathy;</p> <p>90% demonstrated improved social awareness.</p>
4. To what extent have children learnt and applied creative learning skills, and improved educational engagement?	<p>81% improved willingness to participate;</p> <p>98% improved self-directed learning;</p> <p>93% demonstrated greater perseverance;</p> <p>83% improved literacy;</p> <p>93% increased their engagement with using creative skills to communicate ideas.</p>
5. To what extent have children learnt and applied leadership and community engagement skills?	<p>95% improved leadership skills;</p> <p>95% improved community engagement.</p>
6. To what extent has the community had a positive engagement and improved participation with the school?	<p>Schools and students have new connections / relationships with:</p> <p>4 local community groups,</p> <p>Approx 57 community members directly</p> <p>Over 200 other community members</p>
7. How many people can you talk to about things that matter to you?	<p>128% increase in number of students at school;</p> <p>59% increase in kids outside school;</p> <p>49% increase in adults at school;</p> <p>34% increase in adults in the community;</p> <p>55% increase in people at home.</p>

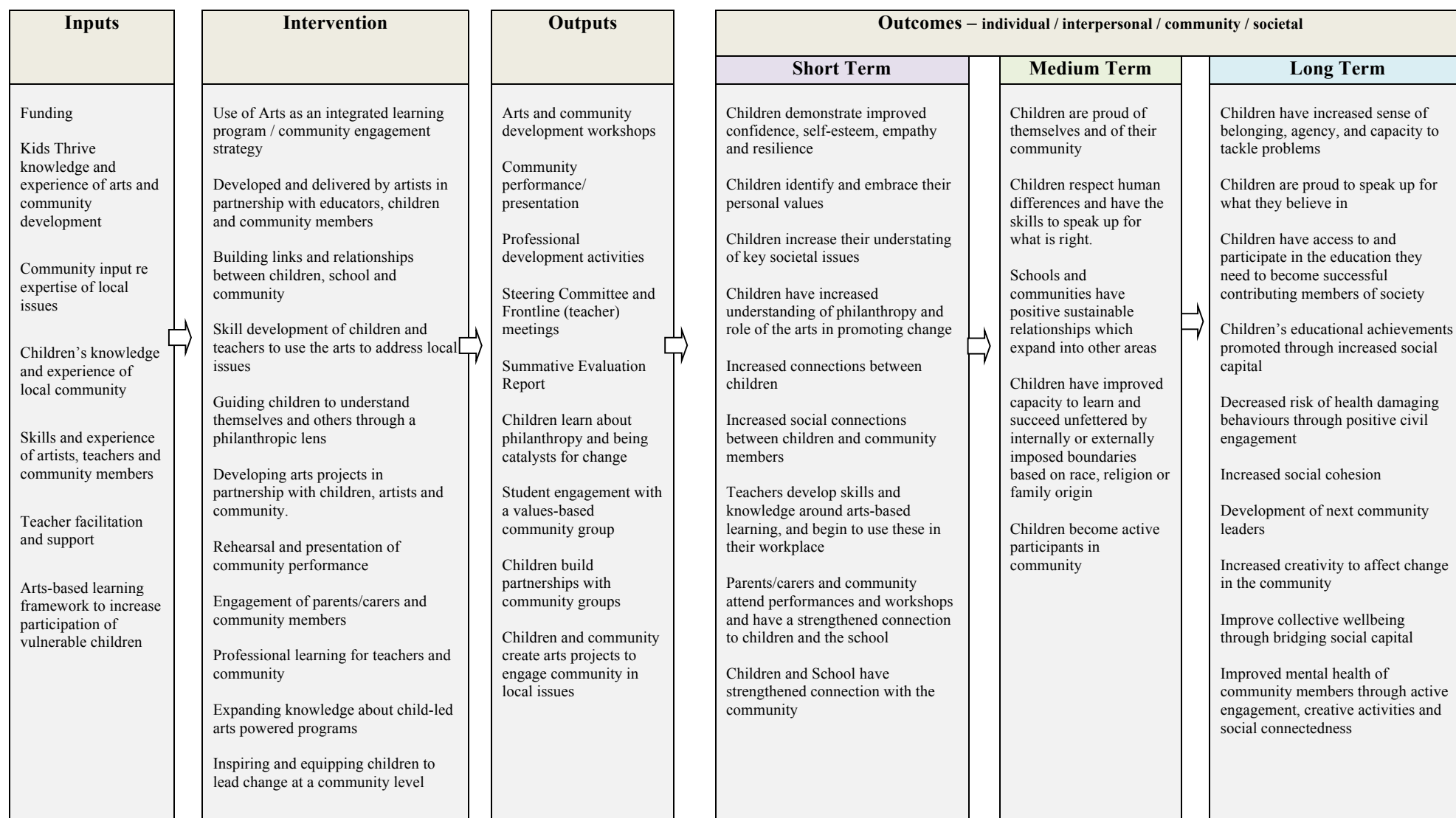
CONCLUSION

Based on the above results, it is possible to conclude that:

<p><i>KiCArts</i> – West Heidelberg builds children’s resilience by significantly improving their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-confidence• Teamwork• Empathy• Social awareness• Self-directed learning• Educational engagement• Perseverance• Literacy• Leadership skills• Community engagement• Creativity and communication	<p><i>KiCArts</i> also makes a significant contribution towards improved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement of families with schools• Connection between schools and local community groups• Children’s safe community networks
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KiCArts is based on sound evidence of the value of the arts in engaging and educating young children. *KiCArts* delivered a successful program in a small primary school in a significantly disadvantaged region of the north-eastern region of Melbourne. The evidence from this evaluation suggests that the program has significantly improved children’s creativity, learning skills and community capacities, built links between families, schools and community groups, and extended children’s safe community networks. From these results we can draw the conclusion that *KiCArts* contributes significantly to building children’s resilience and creativity.

APPENDIX 1: KiArts Project Logic



APPENDIX 2: KiCArts – Student Community Arts Projects

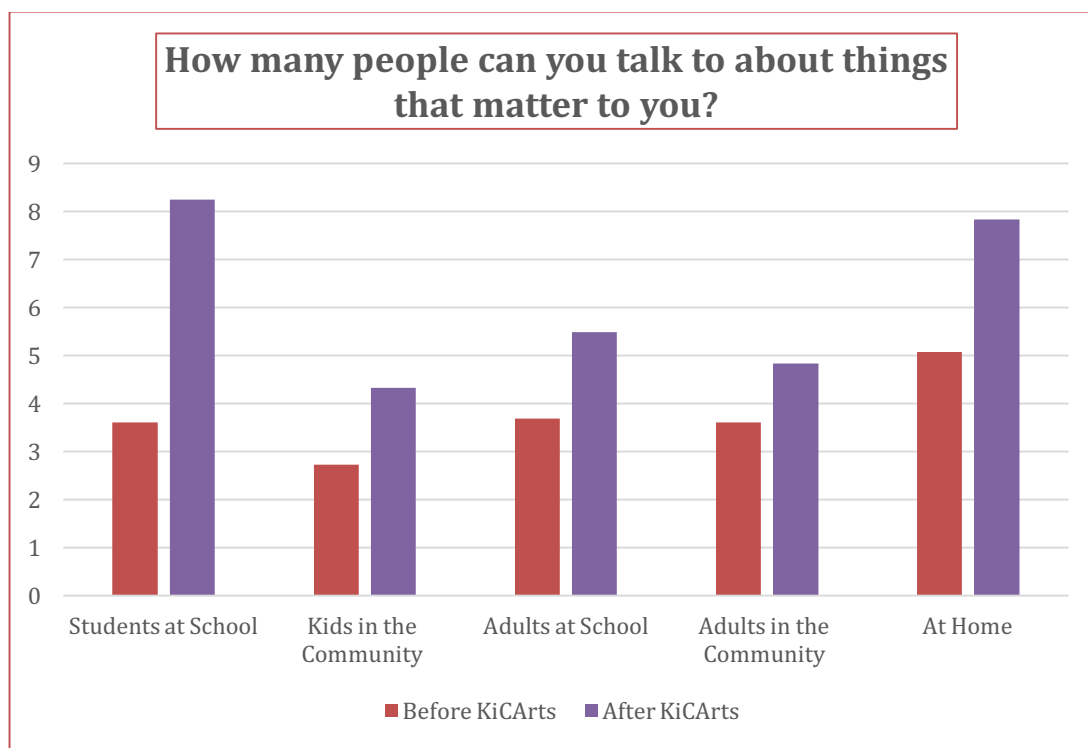
Community Partner	Issue	Project
Save the Earth	Grade 5/6	
Friends of Darebin Creek; Darebin Creek Water Management Committee.	This group of students was concerned about the environment. They were worried about the amount of rubbish in the community, and the role plastic bags are playing in killing wildlife in the local creek and beyond.	<p>Encouraging West Heidelberg to become plastic bag-free.</p> <p>Students worked with Kids Thrive visual artist/photographer Carla Gottgens – using plastic bags to create sculptures of wildlife. They photographed sculptures, and designed colourful images with slogans encouraging litter free behaviours – printed onto heavy duty vinyl sheeting and affixed these on bins, footpath, and stormwater drains outside the Banyule Community Health Centre. These environmental art works were ‘launched’ at the Banyule Community Health Centre event – with students parading in costumes, carrying illuminated dragon fly sculptures on poles, and leading the audience to each site where they shared stories and facts about the local creek and local wildlife.</p>
The Includers	Grade 5/6	
Community Planning and Social Planning Team, Banyule City Council	That everyone in their diverse community should feel included.	<p>Raising awareness of personal experiences of being included and excluded and the role we each play in making others feel included or excluded.</p> <p>Students worked with Kids Thrive performance artist Alex Walker, creating a ‘travelling movement piece’ using actions and words capturing feelings of being included and excluded. This was partnered by recorded voices of community members talking about times they had felt excluded or included. Students also used a series of placards reflecting their differences and similarities; and included the audience in a game of ‘Yes No Maybe’ – walking through the space in response to simple personal questions, revealing who they shared similarities and differences with – and how these change continually.</p> <p>To develop this piece, students travelled to a local community centre - Shop 48 in the</p>

		<p>local mall - to interview community members who use this as a place to 'belong'. Here they met and talked with locals from a range of cultural backgrounds, different abilities, and differing genders and sexualities. The students' conversations after this experience were deeply affecting and empathetic.</p>
3081 Angels	Grade 3/4	
<p>3018 Angels – local organisation collecting used baby goods to upcycle and distribute to families in need.</p>	<p>The environment</p>	<p>Encouraging the community to 'reduce, reuse and recycle', and raising awareness of 3081 Angels recycling program for baby goods.</p> <p>Students worked with Kids Thrive performance artist Alex Walker and costume designer Katherine Branch to create a 'Catwalk Trashion Parade'. They designed and made flash outfits from collected 'rubbish' – including cornflakes packets, roadside bunting and tinfoil trays. With their community partner they wrote a rap song reflecting ideas for reusing and recycling, and the work of 3018 Angels. They sought out donations of second hand prams and baby car seats for the Angels. They then brought these elements together in a fashion parade – wearing their costumes and parading with prams.</p>
Cultural Ninjas	Grade 3/4	
<p>The Salt Foundation - local group providing emergency food relief and community meals.</p>	<p>Community Diversity</p>	<p>Exploring the many things we share as different people.</p> <p>Students worked with Kids Thrive visual artist Carla Gottgens - visiting the Salt Foundation's community lunch - interviewing community members and taking photographs – focusing on their faces and details such as their feet and shoes, and their hands holding a favourite cup. They then created a series of 3-D 'Exquisite Corpse' installations – wooden boxes with different images on each surface of the boxes. This installation was 'launched' at the Banyule Community Arts Centre event – where the audience was encouraged to 'play' with the boxes – stacking them ontop of each other to create diverse collections of faces, hands and feet.</p>

APPENDIX 3:

Students' Trusted Social Networks Data

KiCArts, West Heidelberg 2017.



Appendix 4: Kids Evaluation Drawings – How I saw MYSELF BEFORE and AFTER KiArts

HOW HAVE I CHANGED? Draw pictures

BEFORE Kids Thrive I saw MYSELF like this



AFTER Kids Thrive I see MYSELF like this



HOW HAVE I CHANGED? Draw pictures

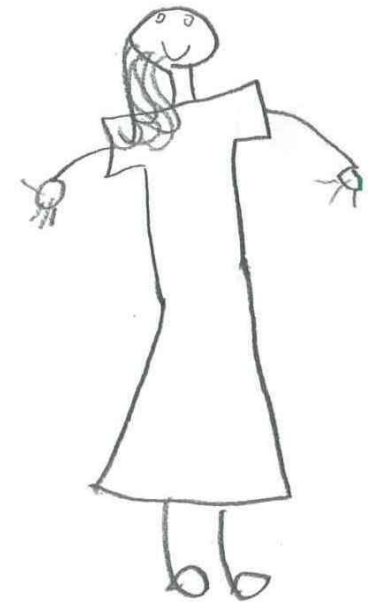
BEFORE Kids Thrive I saw MYSELF like this

I saw myself
Scared



AFTER Kids Thrive I see MYSELF like this

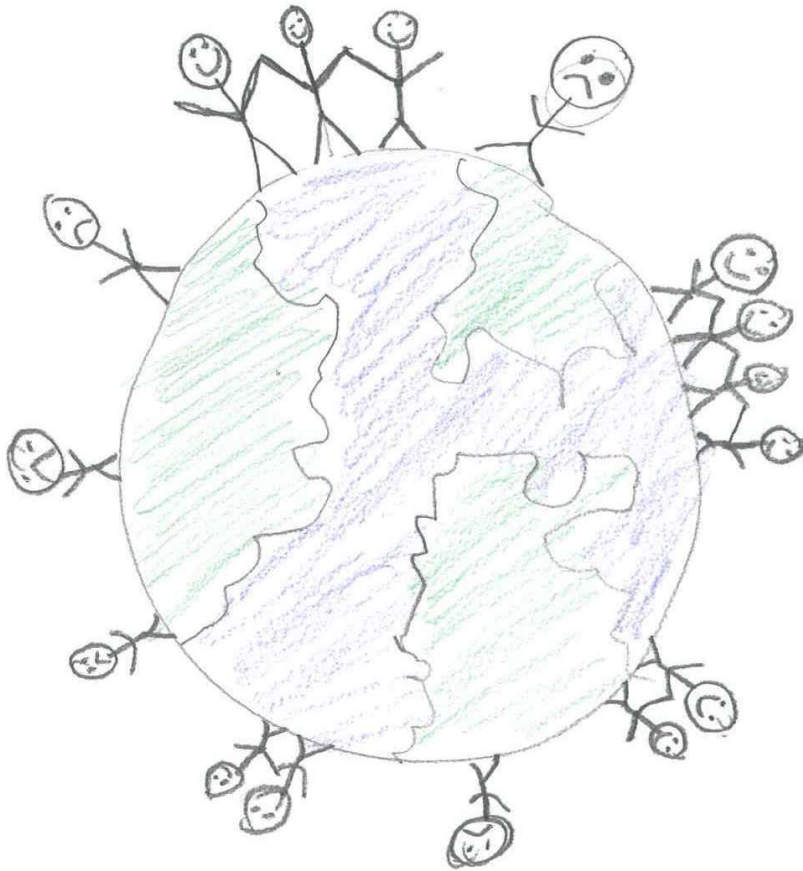
Now I am
Not



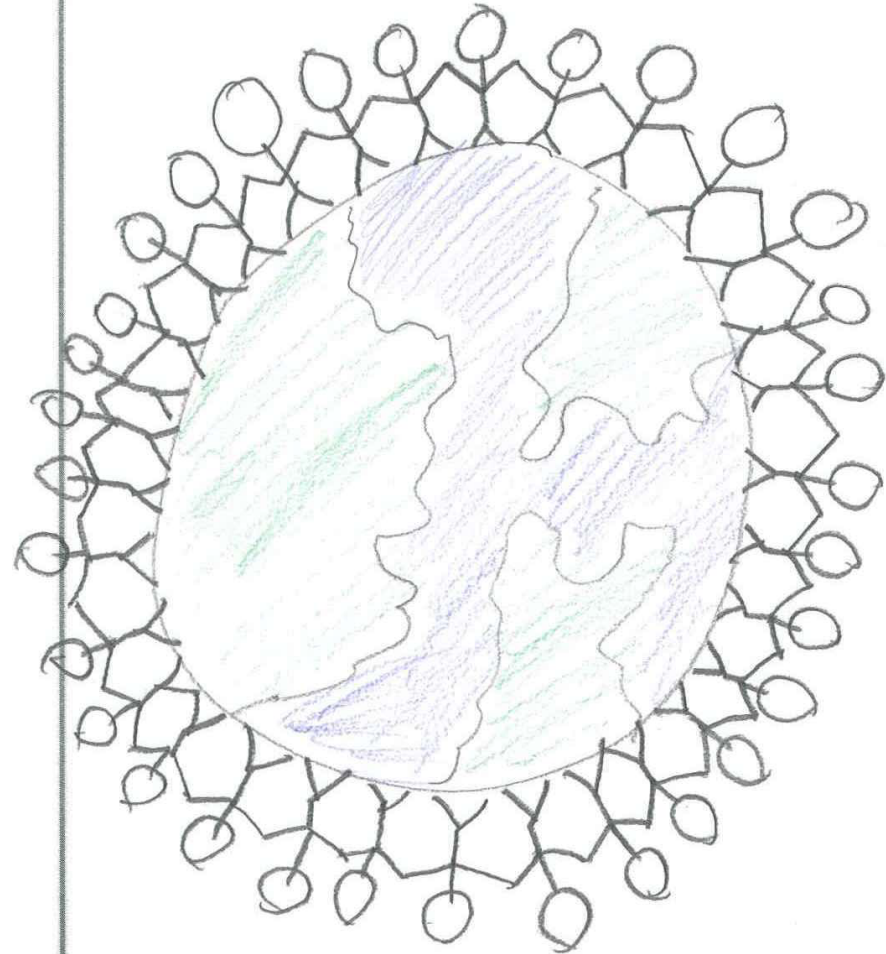
APPENDIX 5: STUDENT EVALUATION DRAWINGS – How I saw THE WORLD BEFORE and AFTER Kids Thrive

HAVE I CHANGED? Please draw pictures

BEFORE Kids Thrive I saw THE WORLD like this



AFTER Kids Thrive I see THE WORLD like this



HAVE I CHANGED? Please draw pictures

BEFORE Kids Thrive I saw THE WORLD like this



AFTER Kids Thrive I see THE WORLD like this



Appendix 5: Student reflections *(spelling as received)*

My discovery about myself is:

I can do something even if I don't want to do it or I'm not good at it.

That I can change the world.

I can be who I want to be.

I learnt how to become a catlester. And change the world.

I can bliv (*believe*) in my self.

I love performing and talking on stage and I like doing and making things that are going to help making our world a better place.

I am not alone.

I can be honest about others and myself.

I can be creative and think of ideas other people agree with.

I felt more deep about people in the community.

My discovery about my community is:

There are many different cultures.

We need a change for good.

There are a lots of organisations in our community helping people.

That we could change how we recycle and how we respect people from different cultures. I never knew we could do this.

My community is bigger than I thought.

There is a lot of people being treated differently but theyre not different.

There are many types of human beings in 3081 like gay, trans, disables etc.

Banyule is a loving community.

My buzz about our project is:

How fun it was on stage for once and talking because Im usually shy a bit.

It was fun and tricky at the same time.

Showing all of our community what we have worked on. And making our project.

I got to take pictures.

That it was fun and that we got to do it as a whole team and we also included everyone.

That everyone joined in and that we made people feel happy.

It was fun to become a catalyst and change the world.

My buzz is how we, the kids got to plan our performance and our costume.

I got to learn different methods of helping my community.

That people will see our project even after the performance.

I got to make a change in my community.

Before KiArts	After KiArts
I was really scared and afraid	I was brave and happy
Wasn't good at putting my hand up and answering a question	Now I'm good at that
Was so excited to see what it was all about	Was so sad that kids thrive ended
I was sad	Now I'm not
Never knew how to make a change in our community for good	Respect the community much more than I used to
I was sarked (<i>scared</i>)	a now I am very covfeds (<i>confident</i>)
I didn't know how to take photo	Now I know how to take a photo
Didn't know much about cultural respect and I wasn't sure about doing big things	I learnt that it is not so scary to show people our work
I didn't really think about what I was really passionate about	Now think more about what I'm passionate about
My opinion on some other people different to me were not what people thought they were	My opinion on other people different to me has changed now I don't care about what they look like
I have changed my attitude a little. I wasn't very social with people from my class and only played with four people	Becoming more social with people
Was not as aware of the amounts of pollution on/in our world	Am more aware of the effect our actions can have on others and the environment.