

Kids as Catalyst

A social action program promoting
creative leadership and resilience

2017 Outcomes Evaluation Report



This report presents a summative evaluation of the **Kids as Catalyst** program provided in four upper primary schools in three regions of Victoria
Wyndham (outer western metro)
Benalla (north east regional)
Goldfields (north west regional).



Kids as Catalyst 2017 received funding from the Victorian Department of Education and Training, William Buckland Foundation, Sidney Myer Fund, Newsboys Foundation, Collier Charitable Fund, Helen McPherson Smith Trust, WCF Thomas Charitable Trust, Tomorrow Today Foundation, Benalla City Council, and the VicHealth Research Innovation Program.

Kids as Catalyst received the **2017 Vichealth Improving Mental Wellbeing Award** for strengthening connections between children and community groups, and empowering children to become changemakers in their communities.



The Kids as Catalyst Program

Kids as Catalyst is a six-month creative leadership and resilience program. It aims to ignite and skill young people to become catalysts for positive change in their local communities. *Kids as Catalyst* builds young people's resilience, educational engagement, community connections and mental wellbeing, whilst engaging literacy, numeracy and teamwork skills. The program is delivered in upper primary and middle schools, through direct training and self-directed, action-based learning over two school terms. Program outputs include partnerships between young people, schools and local community organisations, co-designing and delivering philanthropic projects to benefit the local community. The program has been delivered to over 30 Victorian schools since 2011.

Kids as Catalyst aims to increase young people's confidence and capacity to identify issues of importance to them and their local communities, and to take action to address these issues. It also aims to build students' resilience, self-esteem, social connections and sense of agency by:

- Using creativity 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 young people and communities in environments with few perceived options
- Exploring creative approaches to transforming challenges and obstacles into opportunities for growth.

Kids as Catalyst engages young people in their 'middle years' (8-12) - a vital time in their development, characterised by rapid emotional, physical, social and cognitive development.

Kids as Catalyst addresses the needs of young people 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). Promotion of resilience is key to supporting mental wellbeing at this time of transition; and factors promoting resilience are central to the program, including developing individual attributes such as self-efficacy, social competency, and problem-solving skills; plus supportive relationships with family and other caregivers, peers, teachers, and members of the broader community (Hunter, 2012; Luthar and Cicchetti, 2000).

Evaluation

This summative evaluation identifies the impact of the *Kids as Catalyst* program in 2017 - the second year of delivery into these participating schools. It also provides comparative outcomes for 2016. Data is based on teacher-observation data-sets measuring demonstrated change in individual student competencies; a pre- and post-test for students to understand the breadth of their trusted community connections before and after the program; and young people's visual evaluations of how they perceived themselves and their world prior to participation in the *Kids as Catalyst* program, and after the program finished.

Based on the project logic, program outcomes were mapped 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; interpersonal outcomes include increased connectedness between young people, teachers, schools and communities; at a community level, young people become active participants in addressing local issues; and as a result, at a societal level we can expect to see improved cohesion and wellbeing with young people better equipped to be contributing members of society.

Summary of Evaluation Results 2017

Question

Outcome

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 To what extent have young people, teachers, and community members participated in Kids as Catalyst? | 164 young people participated
525 community members were directly engaged as project participants, event participants or beneficiaries of student projects. Teachers and Principals were fully engaged |
| 2 What has Kids as Catalyst delivered? | 96 Workshop / training sessions
6 community engagement events
29 community projects fully realised by young people |
| 3 To what extent have young people demonstrated improved self-confidence, and positive social and emotional skills? | 98% of students increased their confidence
98% demonstrated improved social awareness
95% improved teamwork
94% show improved empathy |



Question

Outcome

4 To what extent have young people learnt and applied creative learning skills?

97% of students improved their educational engagement (willingness to participate)
92% improved perseverance
87% improved self-directed learning
83% improved literacy
79% improved numeracy

5 To what extent have young people learnt and applied leadership and community engagement skills?

95% of students improved their community engagement
89% improved leadership skills

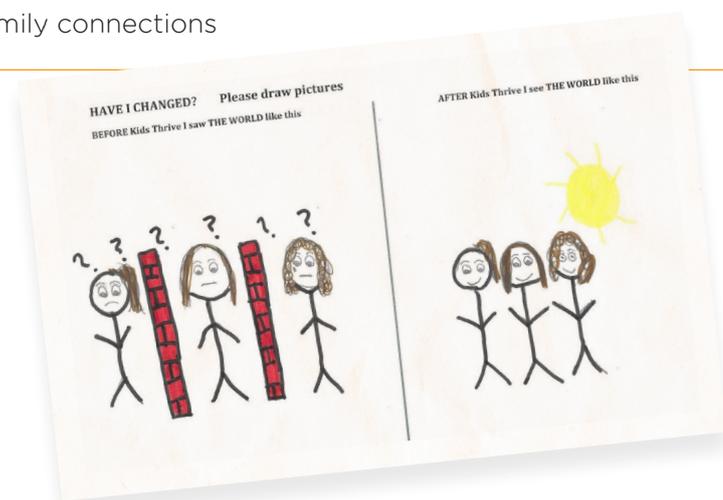
6 To what extent has the community had a positive engagement and improved participation with the school?

Schools and students built new connections / relationships with:
28 local community groups
525 community members

7 To what extent did young people build their community networks?

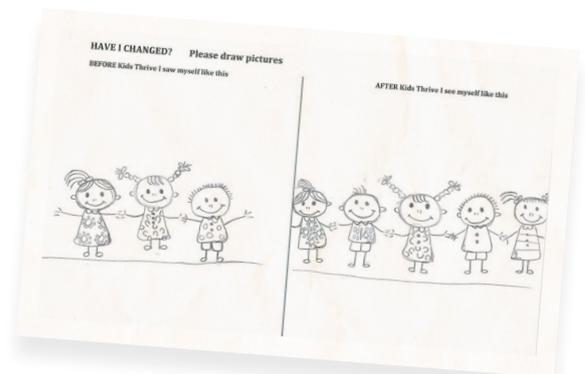
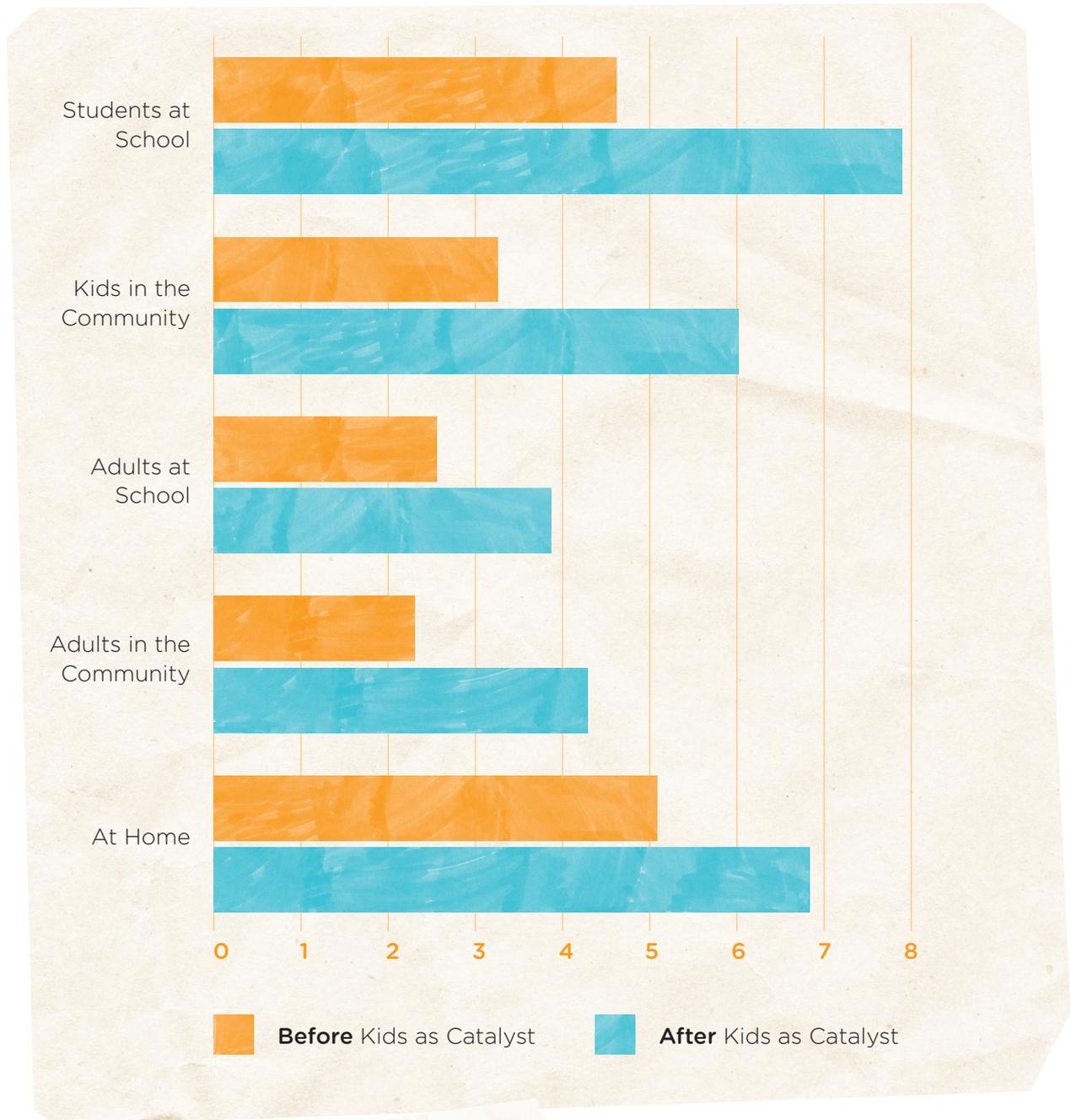
Students demonstrated the following increases in trusted connections with:
87% - increase connections with adults in the community
75% - young people outside school
71% - young people at school
52% - adults at school
35% - family connections

Based on these outcomes, it is possible to conclude that the Kids as Catalyst program has improved children's personal, social and learning skills, grown their community capacities, built links between families, schools and community groups, and extended children's safe community networks - contributing significantly to building children's resilience and leadership skills.



Students' Social Networks 2017

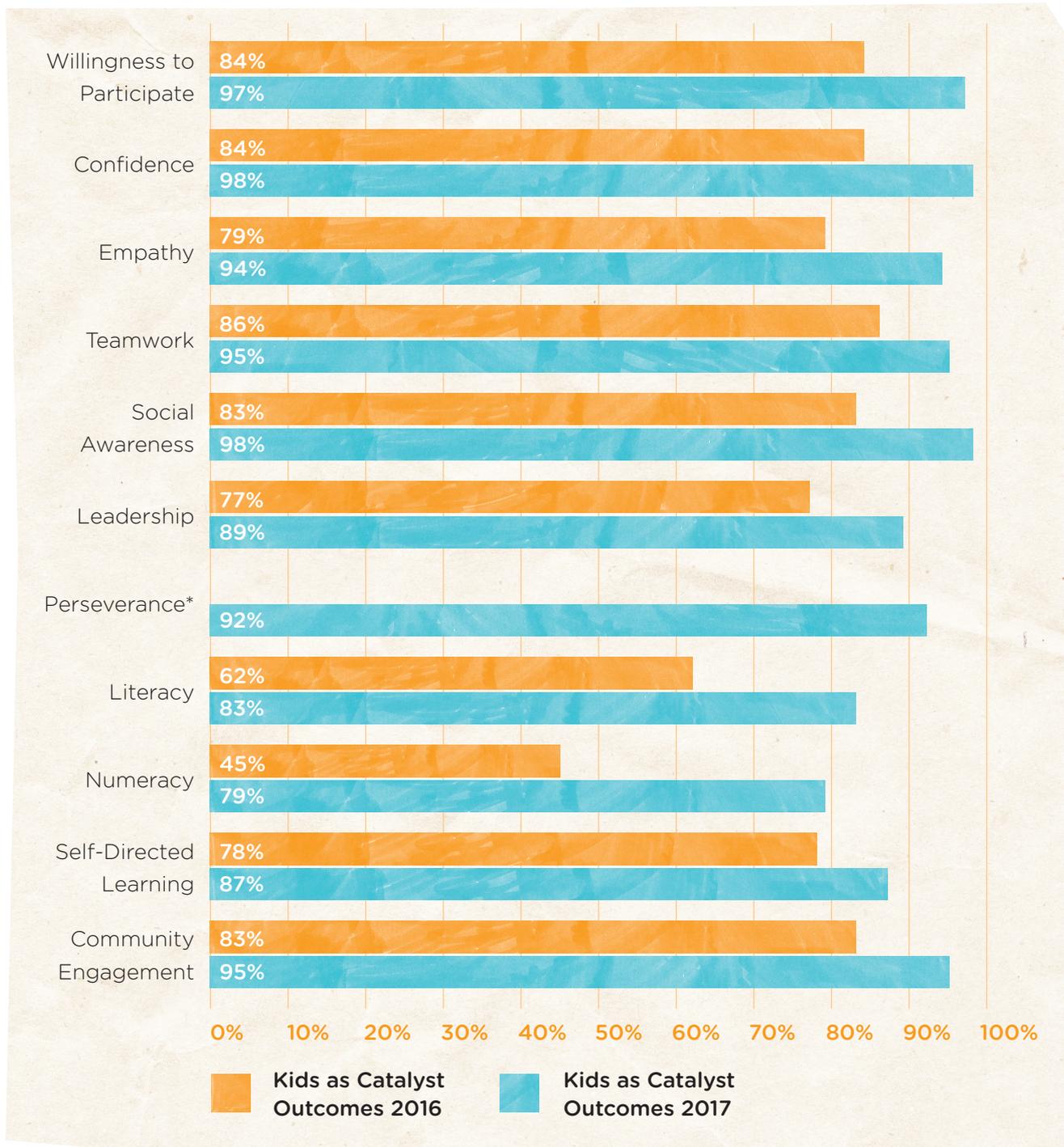
How many people can I talk to about things that matter to me?



Comparative Outcomes 2016 and 2017

Wyndham, Benalla, Goldfields

% of Students Demonstrating Change



Comparative results show a significant increase in outcomes across all domains in the second year of the program in these schools - as students, teachers, schools and communities became familiar with the program. These outcomes support continued involvement in the Kids as Catalyst program as this leads to increased outcomes.

* Data for Perseverance was only gathered in 2017

Kids as Catalyst - 2017

Student Community Projects

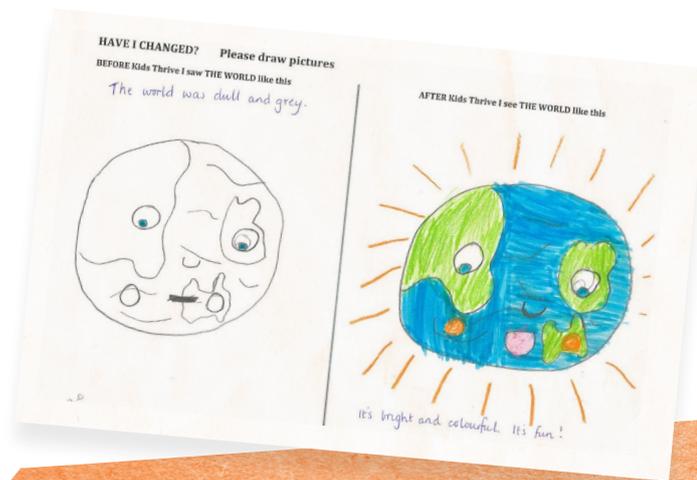
Wyndham Region

Project Title	Community Partner	Project Description	Students Concerns
Genderosity	UnitingCare - Werribee Support & Housing	Create Care Packs for women and kids leaving home due to family violence.	Family violence: Mothers with kids need to leave home in a hurry, often with nothing due to family violence.
Cultures Collide, Not Divide	Wyndham Community & Education Centre	Make a welcome sign for refugees in different languages.	Refugees not feeling welcome in the local area.
Bingo Family Fun	Estia Health	Hold a bingo and afternoon tea.	Elderly living in the aged care home needing more social inclusion.
Trash n Trees	Wyndham City Council	Plant trees and pick up rubbish.	Local native animals not having the best habitat.
Operation Wonder Women	Women of Wyndham (WOW)	Run an awareness campaign and fundraiser for WOW's work.	More awareness needed around help available for women escaping family violence.
Be Snake Smart, not Snake Stupid	Stewy the Snake Catcher	Create a video to put on Stewy the Snake Catcher's website.	Not enough awareness about human safety around snakes, and about snake wellbeing.
Kultural Kings	Doors of Opportunity	Hold a multicultural day.	Not enough local awareness of various cultures.
Karaoke Snapaoke	Uniting Age Well	Sing karaoke at retirement home, decorate and gift a framed photo of the day.	The elderly living in the local aged care facility need more variety of activities.



Goldfields Region

Project Name	Community Partner	Project Description	Students Concerns
Animals 2U	Maldon Hospital	Bring an animal visiting program to the residents.	Lack of connection to animals for elderly living in residential care.
Music 2U	Maldon Hospital	Make instruments for. Bring a music concert to the elderly and disabled residents.	Lack of access to playing music for aged care and hospital residents.
Hospital Habitat	Bushtech Ecological Land Management	Build and install nesting boxes in the local aged care facility.	Local hospital residents lack opportunities to interact with nature.
Junior Wheel Cactus	Cactus Warriors	Create a large sculpture of an Aussie raven for the Easter Float to raise awareness about the spread of the wheel cactus.	The increased spread of wheel cactus in the local area, caused by crows spreading seeds.
Signs that Save	Wildlife Vic	Design and build roadside signage for animal rescue/ awareness, warning people of local wildlife.	High number of animals killed or injured on local country roads.
Wheelchair Wonders	Windarring Disability	Lobby council to install a Liberty Swing in the local Botanical Gardens.	Disabled kids can't play and join in on the swings in the gardens.
The Kids' Circus	Maldon Neighbourhood Centre	Make a box with circus equipment for kids to use at the market.	There is nothing for the kids to do at the local markets.
Caring Calendars	Castlemaine Housing Organisation	Make and sell calendars to raise money for food vouchers for homeless women.	Increased number of homeless girls and women in the local area.
Operation Hutch Building	RSPCA	Build rabbit and guinea-pig hutches.	Pets not having suitable homes.
Coats for Animals	RSPCA	Make coats for the dogs. Donate \$300 for medicine.	Making sure that pets are warm in winter, well looked after and healthy.
Box Musicians	Maldon Neighbourhood Centre	Make musical instruments for kids to play with at the markets.	No activities for the local kids at the markets.
Savvy Sporties	Maldon Football & Netball Clubs	Promote sport to girls and boys in Maldon.	Sport enrolment numbers are falling in Maldon.
Technology on Wheels	Day Centre, Maldon Hospital	Make an IT tip sheet and help older people troubleshoot their digital devices.	Access to technology for the elderly.



Benalla Region

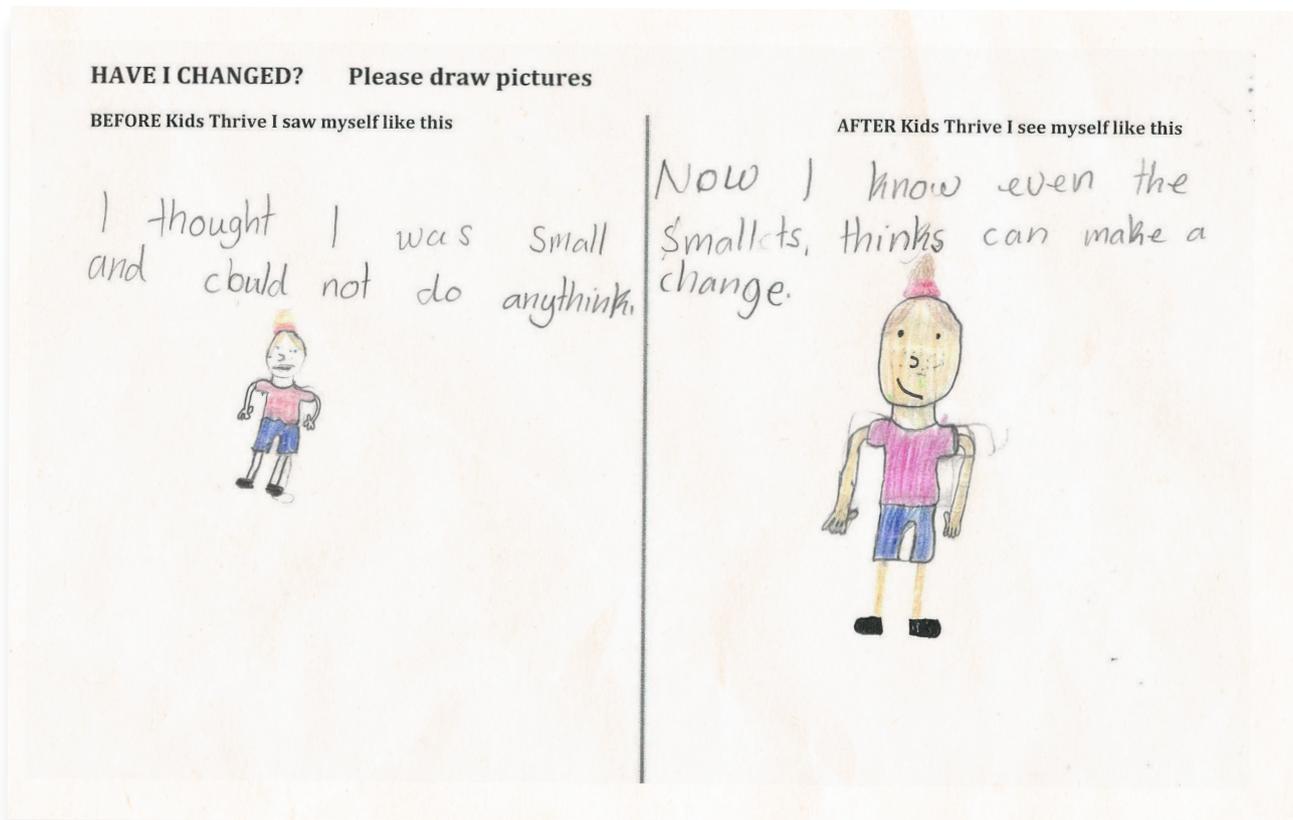
Project Name	Community Partner	Project Description	Students Concerns
Envirofighters	Hands on Learning	Educate kids to RRR waste (reduce, reuse, recycle).	High amount of rubbish and litter in Benalla.
Save the Turtles	Winton Wetlands	Make metal mesh coverings around turtle nests to protect the baby turtles from foxes.	Foxes eating baby turtles in the wetlands.
Social Gamers	Benalla P-12 College - Social Inclusion Officer	Help kids with a disability to play games and develop happy and safe friendships.	Lack of relaxation and activity space for kids with disabilities, and kids who struggle socially.
ATSI Art Kings	Koori Kids Education	Paint a mural at the school to help Koori kids to belong, learn and share their culture. Spread the word about our art-time and sharing stories through art.	Improve Koori education and wider engagement with Koori culture.
Girls Around the World	Benalla Girl Guides	Make and distribute promotional material to encourage kids to join Girl Guides.	Not many girls joining Girl Guides, numbers are running very low.
Trivia Morning	Estia Health	Lead trivia games and conversations at a local aged care facility, helping to make the residents feel like they belong, are important and feel respected.	Elders feeling like they don't belong. Elders feeling ignored.
Homework Heroes	Salvation Army, Waminda House	Helping kids with their homework. Teaching them new skills to complete their homework.	Kids not getting the help they need with homework.

Project Name	Community Partner	Project Description	Students Concerns
Project Neo	Broken Boosey Conservation Management Network	Make nesting boxes for Turquoise parrots, a threatened species. These parrots nest in tree hollows, but there has been habitat loss.	Destruction of Turquoise Parrots' nesting habitat.
Dogs and Puppies Support	K9 Support	Takes assistance dogs around to school classes and other groups to educate kids about different types of assistance dogs, how to behave around them, and which vests they wear.	People don't know what the various assistance dog vests mean.
The Crazy Chicks	Benalla Country Women's Association	Organise a craft day and community event, to promote the CWA to all ages, encouraging younger girls and women to join.	Younger women and girls are not joining the CWA.
Plastic Watch	Benalla Litter Gatherers	Do presentations at the P-4 campuses to get people to realise how bad plastic is for the environment	Plastic waste and litter in the Benalla community is causing 100's of animals to die.
The Firefighters Fire Safety Plans	Benalla CFA	Create a PowerPoint on fire safety and present to other classes at school, focusing on small devices and chargers often used by young people.	Lack of fire safety awareness around children's devices in local homes.



Children were asked to draw how they saw themselves, and **their world before** and **after** Kids as Catalyst. These drawings are a small sample of those created by children.

How children **saw themselves** before and after Kids as Catalyst



HOW HAVE I CHANGED? Draw pictures

BEFORE Kids Thrive I saw MYSELF like this



AFTER Kids Thrive I see MYSELF like this



How children **saw the world** before and after Kids as Catalyst

HAVE I CHANGED? Please draw pictures

BEFORE Kids Thrive I saw THE WORLD like this



AFTER Kids Thrive I see THE WORLD like this

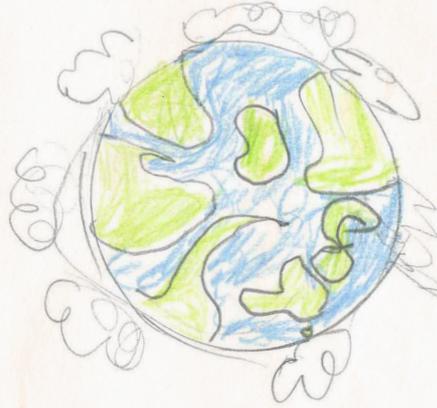


HAVE I CHANGED? Please draw pictures

BEFORE Kids Thrive I saw THE WORLD like this

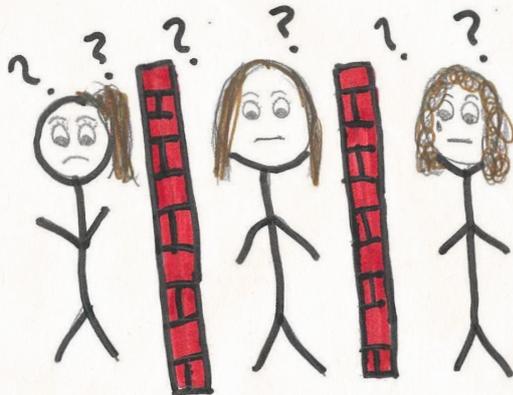


AFTER Kids Thrive I see THE WORLD like this



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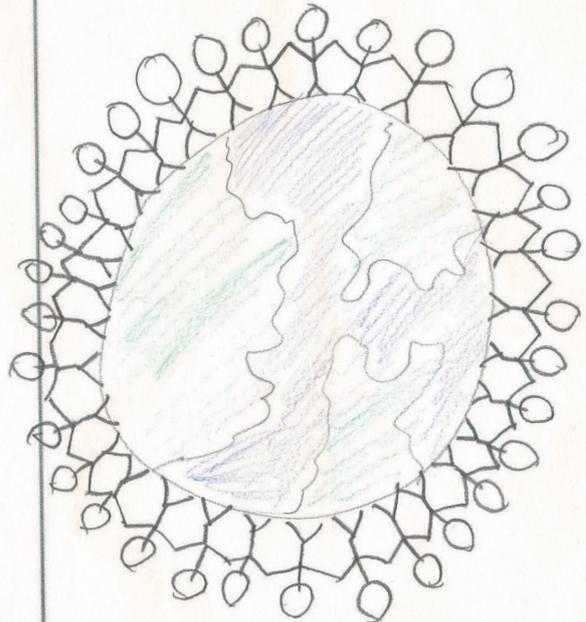


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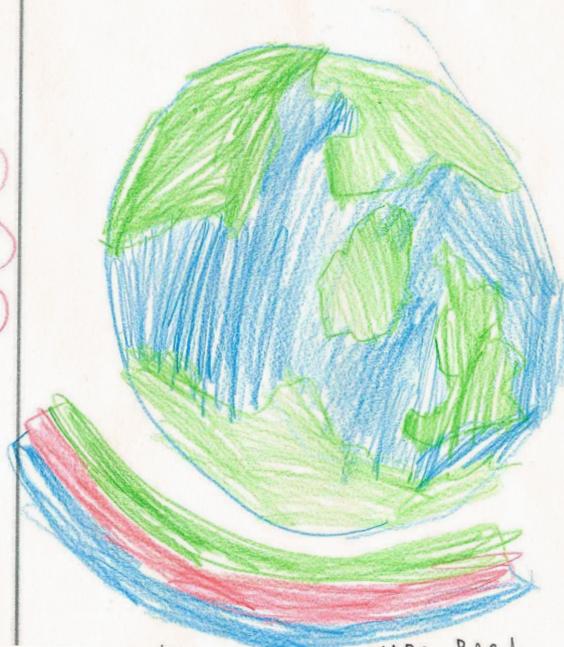


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HAVE I CHANGED? Please draw pictures

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AFTER Kids Thrive I see THE WORLD like this

Now is a place of life and where we live



kids leading creative change

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How can you make a difference?

1 Donate to Kids Thrive to support child-led change via kidsthive.org.au/donate

2 **Tell someone** about Kids Thrive and child-led change

3 **Ask someone** in leadership how they involve children in their decision-making