

We teach performing arts
to disadvantaged children.



Swiss Cottage Workshop Series Evaluation Report - Summer 2019

SUMMARY

In the summer of 2019 Performers Without Borders (PWB) delivered a series of 8 circus skills and performance arts workshops at the Swiss Cottage Special Needs School in North London. The series ran weekly from 10am to midday on Friday 17th May to Friday 12th July 2019 to an average of 15 participants between the ages of 12 and 16 in two one hour classes. At the first and last workshops, *Before* and *After* questionnaires were completed by the participants. Additionally, at the last workshop, 8 participants were audio interviewed, some Adult Helper feedback videos were made and Adult Helper Questionnaires were completed in order to assess the impact of our work. The workshops were funded by a Network for Social Change (NSC) grant and were delivered by the PWB Manager South Jamie Moore. The evaluation materials were collected and compiled by the author, PWB Manager Dr Peter King.

The workshops were delivered on time and within budget and achieved their predicted goals. The participants reported enjoying the workshops and benefiting a lot from them. Although the Participant Questionnaires yielded ambiguous results, the Adult Helper Questionnaires & Video Interviews & Participant Audio Interviews confirmed that learning circus skills was widely accessible and inclusive and good for the participants physical and psychological wellbeing. In general, the evaluation found evidence that the workshop series improved the participants physical coordination, their confidence, sociability and positive outlook, as well as giving them a new enjoyable hobby to practice in the future.

Please see the video summary of this project for more - <https://vimeo.com/367617119>

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1. Introduction

In March 2019 Performers Without Borders (PWB) was awarded a Network for Social Change (NSC) Grant of about £7000. Half of the grant was designated as funds to deliver and evaluate a series of performance arts and circus skills workshops to disadvantaged young people in the UK. £1500 was used to pay for the workshop leader Jamie Moore to deliver the classes, a further £1500 was reserved to pay for the evaluation and £500 was designated to admin, travel and equipment costs. The project was delivered on time and on budget and was a great success.

The workshop series was delivered at Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre in N. London for young people with special needs (<http://swisscottage.camden.sch.uk/>). The workshops took place on Fridays from 10 to 11am and from 11am to 12pm, to two different classes of 12 to 13 and 13 to 16 year olds. There were between 7 and 10 children in each class with a variety of complex and sometimes overlapping special needs. The classes were accompanied by 2-3 adult helpers for each class, who also took part in the activities as well as helping out the main participants.

The evaluation took place on the first and last workshops, with “before” Participant Questionnaires being filled out on the first day with the assistance of the adult helpers. On the last day “after” questionnaires were filled out by all participants and 8 audio interviews were conducted. Some of the adult helpers were also video interviewed and all filled in an Adult Helper Questionnaire at the end. This document presents the results and evaluates the impact of the workshop series based on the qualitative data collected.

During this series we also purchased and introduced some new accessible equipment to our repertoire, such as: juggle boards, hover boards, walking globes & novel team games. We will write up a separate assessment of how these worked and the theory behind them and link it on our webpage soon: www.pwb.ngo/research

2. Method

When planning for the evaluation of the course Peter and Jamie explored a few options with the help of a PWB-Evaluations email working group. At first we had ambitions to do some quantitative research in line with the Physical Literacy movement which tests things like how long a child can do the plank before and after the course¹. We also tried to devise new ways to measure changes in coordination and competency of movement (eg: using motion tracking devices). However we soon realised that the presumption that all individuals could undertake the same before and after physical tests did not hold when working with the special needs demographic. For example, not all children could do a plank. We also realised that devising any novel methods of quantitative measurement were beyond the scopes and means of the project.

In order to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the course, we devised two questionnaires and a fixed set of audio interview questions that would assess the key indicators of achievement and measure the degree of improvement as a result of participation in the workshop series. The evaluation was aimed at assessing the following general key indicators:

- 1) Self-assessed psychological wellbeing and outlook.
- 2) How physically active and physically competent they thought they were.
- 3) How accessible they find physical activities.

¹ See for example the Canadian Assessment of Physical Literacy - <https://www.capl-eclp.ca/>

- 4) How accessible they find circus activities when compared to general sports.
- 5) Whether they felt circus skills was valuable to them.
- 6) What range of circus activities they took part in.

These measures aimed to corroborate results coming from Physical Literacy movement suggesting that teaching circus skills is more effective than teaching traditional sport to improve physical activity, inclusion and accessibility. Furthermore, evidence suggests that taking part in an enjoyable physical activity at a young age leads to improvements in physical and mental wellbeing, as well improving academic achievement and making it more likely to do physical activity in the future². See www.pwb.ngo/research for more information and links to other peer-reviewed evidence sources.

For the before and after Participant Questionnaires we devised 8 questions and an “open comments” section Participants completed responses on a Likert scale rating system ranging from 1 ‘strongly disagree’ to 9 ‘strongly agree’ – see below:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| 1) Learning circus skills made me happier..... | | | | | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | | disagree | | not sure | | agree | | strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

In future program evaluations we will simplify the grading with a range from 1-5, and further simplify the questions to ensure universal comprehension among participants with special needs. The full questionnaire and unprocessed results are found in **Appendix A**.

The Adult Helper questions were designed to assess the observations of the adult helpers regarding the impact the workshops had on the participants. As people who spend significant time with the participants, adult helpers are in a strong position to observe and record changes over the course of the 8 weeks; evidence which can corroborate the feedback received from participants. We consider this aspect of the evaluation to be valuable as it comprises data collected from independent observers who interact closely with the participants. The Adult Helper Questionnaire and results can be found in **Appendix B**.

The participant audio questions used were (see **Appendix C** for full transcripts of responses):

- 1) What different things have you learnt over the circus workshop series?
- 2) What is your favourite thing and will you keep practicing afterwards?
- 3) Did the workshops make you feel happier?
- 4) Can you do more in circus skills lessons than in sports lessons?
- 5) Do you feel more confident because of learning circus skills?
- 6) Do you want to learn more circus skills?

Due to time restrictions of how long the participants were available to us, it was not possible to set aside extra time for the evaluation. Instead we had to ask the participants and adult helpers to take time out from their workshops to fill in the questionnaire or to take part in the audio interviews. This added additional challenges to the data collection, especially on the first session where the kids were not keen to stop what they had just started doing, but it nevertheless completed successfully with the assistance of the adult helpers.

² See Public Health England 2015 report “What works in schools and colleges to increase physical activity?” - accessible through our website – www.pwb.ngo/research

3. Results

On the whole we collected some valuable data and the Adult Helper feedback was particularly useful and reliable. However, due to the range in learning abilities of the children and the variation of their special needs, the questionnaire devised to collect data from participants was not as accessible to everyone as we intended. As such, we believe the Participant Questionnaire results to be relatively unreliable. The results of each evaluation method are discussed in more detail below.

3.1 - Participant Questionnaires

See Appendix A for the full tabulated results, especially Figure A2 which has the calculations comparing the before and after averages to yield the overall results, which are summarised next:

Results Summary – responses to each question as percentage change

- 1) I am generally a happy person: +2%
- 2) I am generally a positive person: +6%
- 3) I like taking part in physically active games: +10%
- 4) I am good at physical activities: -5%
- 5) It is easy for me to find physical activities that I can take part in: +2%
- 6) I think I am (I think I will be) good at doing circus skills: +6%
- 7) There were (I think there are) lots of different circus skills I could take part in: -11%
- 8) (I think) Learning circus skills (will make) made me happier: +5%

Table 1 – After minus Before averages summary
(Before Questionnaire wording in brackets)

Although these results are mixed, with some positive outcomes (eg: Q3= +10% & Q8= +5%), there are also some negative outcomes reported (Q7= -11% & Q4= -5%). However, we have reason to doubt the accuracy of the self-report data for a variety of reasons, explained below. Of course, it was hoped that we would see positive outcomes to all questions, with circus skills leading to a more positive outlook generally (Q1,2,8), including a more positive attitude towards their physical competence and abilities (Q3,4,5,6,7). We also hoped that when learning circus skills the participants would report a more positive attitude towards finding physical activities they can access generally (Q5) and finding they could access, and be included in, a wider variety of physical activities within the circus skills workshop (Q7).

However, from further analysis and also subjective first-hand experience collecting the data and also from discussions with the Adult Helpers, there are several things that might confound the reliability of these results.

1. It is not certain whether the participants fully understood the questions. In devising the questions it was hard to predict the capacity and linguistic ability levels of the participants without meeting them first, and the evaluation may have benefited from simplifying the questions and the numbering system (eg. having only 5 options instead 10).
2. Even if the participants understood the questions, it's possible that their responses were heavily influenced by how they were feeling on the day, rather than a good reflection of the impact before and after of the course.
3. Participants were not consistent with their answers, as witnessed by course leaders and adult helpers. Some answers were inconsistent (see for example Participant L's after results compared to their before results – see Appendix A).
4. Finally, it is hard to tell, given all these influences, whether even a difference of 10% is reliable and not the result of random variation within the small sample size of 11 participants, where small perturbations in the individual answers given can change the overall results significantly.

Therefore, in summary, not much weight is put on the veracity of these results, and we will refine the methods and tools used to collect pre/post data from participants with special needs in future evaluations. A much larger sample size, a more refined questionnaire and a longer study would be required in order to collect more reliable results.

Having said that if we were to take these results at face value, and triangulating from the other results which showed evidence that the workshops had a positive impact, we could perhaps give the following interpretations. The large negative value of -11% for Q7 was the participants reporting that they just specialised in a few things, rather than taking part in a lot of different props, even though these were accessible to them. For Q4 the small negative value of -5% may just reflect that they are new to learning circus skills and that they don't feel competent in them yet. The +10% for Q3 might reflect that the circus skills course made them enjoy physical activities more because they had found fun circus props that they could do. And the positive values for Q6&8 of +5 & +6% respectively could reflect that doing an accessible and inclusive course in circus skills made them feel positive about their abilities and made them happier in general. But it would be difficult to promote these conclusions with much confidence on their own. However, when supported by the other evaluation methods they might gain more of a solid foundation.

3.2 - Adult Helper Questionnaires and Video Interviews

Only a brief summary is included here but see **Appendix B** for full results. In general the Adult Helpers were very positive about the impact of the workshop series on the participants. Many of them during their video interviews spontaneously reported features that are well known in the literature, such as improvements in: sociability, confidence, physical coordination and psychological wellbeing.

Perhaps the easiest way to show this is from the answer to Question 4 which is tabulated below, where people could tick a box to show what features they think had been improved by the workshops:

Q4: Do you think any of these features were improved by [the circus skills workshops series] and why?

| Respondent Number | Wellbeing | Confidence | Sociability | Physical coordination | Fitness | Access to a new physical activity | Any other? |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| 2 | | | x | x | | x | |
| 3 | | x | | x | | x | |
| 4 | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| 5 | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| 6 | | x | x | x | | | |
| 7 | x | x | x | x | x | x | |

Table 2 – Adult Helper Question 4 results summary

From this and generalising from the full results we can see that, in terms of **Confidence** several Adult Helpers cited the performance (a show-and-tell on the last day) as a way of building confidence, as well as more generally just persevering with a new skill that they found difficult at first. In terms of **Sociability** some cited the way learning circus skills facilitates positive interactions and allowed young people from different classes to mix together who normally wouldn't have. In terms of **Physical Coordination and Fitness** the adult helpers reported visible improvements in hand eye coordination, concentration and focus and identified it as a giving access to a novel and fun fitness activity. Finally, in terms of **Wellbeing** feelings of success, achievement, self-expression and just having fun led to positive psychological outcomes.

Below are a few representative quotes. Please also watch the video of this project to hear directly from some of the adult helpers in person - <https://vimeo.com/367617119>

3.2.1 - Adult Helper Questionnaire Selected Quotes (for full results see Appendix B)

Q1: Do you think the circus skills workshop series was helpful and why?

- 3) The workshop provided the students with a new set of skills they also learnt how to be still when needed and concentration.
- 5) Yes, circus skills has been helpful in loads of different ways: it's helped the students learn how to improve their own self-awareness, work in teams, explore different creative abilities.
- 6) It was helpful increasing the student's confidence by performing in front of their friends and trying new skills.
- 7) It helps with physical coordination and also gives confidence to try new activities in a safe and friendly environment.

Q5: What other benefits do you think that circus skills provides (or could provide) for special needs kids?

- 2) Regular workshops helped improve learners' coordination, balance, hand eye coordination and timing, as well as being a massive boost to self-confidence.
- 6) Allowing them to express themselves and build confidence and try different experiences out of the usual.

Q4: Do you think any of these features were improved by it and why? (tick the circle on the left and elaborate on the right of the dotted lines).

- **Sociability:**
2) The three class groups that accessed the workshop don't usually interact with one another during the sessions they got to work, play and socialise together.
- **Wellbeing:**
5) Feeling of success when they complete a skill.
- **Physical coordination:**
2) I saw some improvements in the coordination of our learners over the weeks, I saw learners juggling and balancing and other types of multi-tasking.

3.2.2 - Adult Helper Video Interviews

The highlights of these can be seen on the video of the workshops series on the website – www.pwb.ngo/swisscottage

There you can see the Adult Helpers re-affirming much of what they said in the Adult Helper Questionnaire and identifying many positive aspects of learning circus skills. Below is a selection of quotes from the video (added italics):

Catherine (Deputy Head): "What's been striking from the beginning is the way that Jamie has been able to *engage* the pupils in his sessions. How well they've responded to being engaged in things that they have never tried before. And the kind of element of *fearlessness* that they've shown.... There is a lot of thought behind the activities that you're presenting. So while the pupils are engaged in, what seemed very playful, actually they're developing their *coordination, hand eye coordination, motor skills, confidence, self-esteem*. They've done really well."

Paul (Teaching Assistant): "They've been *learning new skills* and trying different experiences. I've seen their *confidence* being built up; it's an important thing to have."

Billy (Teaching Assistant): "The sessions have been brilliant; the kids really look forward to them. They get really *engaged and involved*. It's been a lot of *fun*. They've *experienced new things*."

In summary, the first-person experience of the adult helpers collated in terms of qualitative evidence, confirmed that learning circus skills had many benefits to key features that would be extremely valuable to special needs kids. This is especially valuable when access to these kinds of fun and engaging activities may be more limited for this demographic.

3.3 - Participant Audio Interviews

Below is a selection of representative quotes that illustrate the participants own perceptions of the benefits of the course. For full transcripts of the audio interviews please see **Appendix C**.

Participants Selected Quotes from Audio Interviews

1) Did the workshops make you feel happier?

- A) Yes during and after (nodding).
- B) Yes, because I like learning how to do new cool things, tricks... and that makes me very happy. [Pete: Good! What about afterwards?] Yes, even if I am not doing them I think. "Oh I want to go on the hover boards because it's sooo cool!" [Pete: So it makes you happy even thinking about them?] Yes. It's very amazing.
- G) It made me feel happier than ever.

2) Can you do more in circus skills lessons than in sports lessons?

- A) Yes I do sports but I like them both. [Doesn't feel there is much she can do in circus skills, but can do Pedal-go.]
- B) I love sports and there is more to do in sports, but I like circus skills too cause it's a sport too basically.
- C) I can do more in circus skills than sports. [Pete: Are there more options or is it the same?] If there were more options then yes. [Pete: Do you play sports?] Yes my parents support play badminton. [So you don't find circus skills more accessible, or sports or it's about the same?] Yes. [So it's about the same.]

5) Do you feel more confident because of learning circus skills?

- A) Yes because I can speak with the others.
- B) Yeah I feel more confident. Because it's a good lesson and it's a fun thing to do and you can enjoy yourself having fun and learning new tricks. [Pete: And does that give you confidence so you do other things?] Yeah, I feel like I can do other stuff. I feel like I can walk on the walking ball [Pete: and that gives you confidence to tackle other challenges?]. Yeah.
- C) Yes. I feel like I'm confident because I am basically socialising as well.

6) Do you want to learn more circus skills?

- A) Yes more lessons and Jamie was a good teacher.
- B) Yes I do I hope you can come back.
- E) Yes more and more [walking] globe please.

In summary, from the audio interviews we can confirm much of what the Adult Helpers reported; that the participants feel the workshop series has improved their confidence, sociability and were fun and accessible. On the whole, the circus workshops were well enjoyed and participants felt happier and more positive as a result of their participation. Although most people found that learning circus skills was accessible, there wasn't a strong opinion on whether it was better than other sports or not in terms of accessibility. All wanted more circus workshops, except Participant T (H) (see Appendix C) who reported not enjoying it at all, even though they did take part and is clearly seen enjoying themselves in the workshops and in general showed mostly positive improvements in the before and after questionnaire. That said, it is fine if circus skills aren't appealing to everyone, as long as most people enjoyed it that is enough to show its value for being taught as a physically engaging activity and as a valuable alternative to mainstream sport or other physical hobbies.

4. Conclusion & Discussion

From the range of evaluation materials we gathered during this project we can conclude that, in line with other research in this field, teaching circus skills to young people, including special needs participants, is very beneficial across a range of personally valuable themes, such as:

- physical fitness and coordination,
- socialisation,
- confidence and self-esteem,
- positivity and wellbeing,
- having fun.

Given that circus skills has such a range of props to engage with and also so many ways to engage with each of them, from the most basic to advanced, this means it is very accessible to people with a range of physical and mental abilities. Additionally, the different ways of accessing circus skills also means it is very inclusive: from learning on your own; to non-competitive team learning; to group games; means there are many different ways of being included under its broad umbrella. This variety of ways of accessing circus skills means it is more likely that different young people with different personalities will find a mode of engagement that suits their sensibilities more. Please see www.pwb.ngo/research for other evidence backing up these claims.

In future we will design the before and after Participant Questionnaires differently, which is a useful learning point for PWB-UK when working with special needs groups. According to participants and adult helpers, the project was a great success and left the participants and our partner organisation wanting more. We hope that the results of this report will help other organisations to appreciate the positive outcomes which circus can contribute to special needs learners and encourage them to support further projects. PWB-UK will apply the lessons learned and best practices identified from teaching these workshops, and the introduction of some new equipment (eg: juggle boards, hover boards, walking globes & novel team games), to improve our delivery and engagement with disadvantaged young people in the future.

We would like to conclude by thanking the Network for Social Change for their generous support, without which these successes would not have been possible. We look forward to providing similar projects across the UK in partnership with other funding bodies and partner organisations working with disadvantaged young people.

Please see the video summary of this project for more - <https://vimeo.com/367617119>

See below for:

Appendix A - Before and After Participant Questionnaires Data

Appendix B - Adult Helper Questionnaires Data

Appendix C - Participant Audio Interview Transcripts

Appendix A

Before and after Participant Questionnaires – results first and original questionnaire below.

| BEFORE THE WORKSHOP SERIES QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Name | Consent | Age | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 |
| Class 1 - 10am | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | y | 13 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 7 |
| B | y | 17 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| C | y | 17 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 5 |
| D | y | 12 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| E | y | 12 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 9 |
| F | y | 12 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 7 |
| G | y | 12 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 3 |
| Averages | y | 13.6 | 6.7 | 6.6 | 7.3 | 7.0 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 6.9 | 5.9 |
| Class 2 - 11am | | | | | | | | | | |
| H | y | 13 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| J | y | 14 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| K | y | 15 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| L | y | 14 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| M | y | 16 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| N | y | 16 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| O | y | | 6 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| P | y | 14 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 5 |
| Q | y | 14 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| R | y | 14 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 |

| AFTER THE WORKSHOP SERIES QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Name | Consent | Age | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 |
| Class 1 - 11am | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | Y | 13 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| E | Y | 12 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| G | y | 12 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| Averages | y | 12.3 | 8.0 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 5.7 | 6.7 | 8.3 | 7.0 | 7.7 |
| Class 2 - 10am | | | | | | | | | | |
| H | y | 13 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 9 |
| J | y | 14 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| K | y | 15 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 8 |
| L | y | 14 | 1 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 1 |
| M | y | 16 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| N | y | 16 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| P | y | 14 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Q | y | 14 | 9 | 7 | - | 5 | - | 4 | - | - |
| R | y | 14 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 9 |
| S | Y | 13.0 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Averages | | 14.3 | 6.6 | 6.8 | 5.7 | 5.3 | 5.4 | 4.9 | 4.9 | 5.1 |
| Total Averages | | 13.3 | 7.3 | 7.2 | 6.7 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 6.6 | 6.0 | 6.4 |

Figure A1 – Before and After Questionnaire Results – raw data

Notes on results: All names have been anonymised and participants marked in green were removed from the final analysis, because they didn't attend both the before and after classes (eg: B & S), or they didn't fully complete the survey (eg: Q). Numbers were low for Class 1 on the last day because many of the students had to go on a day trip that unfortunately coincided with our final day of evaluation. Below are the actual results that the final averages were based on:

| BEFORE THE WORKSHOP SERIES QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS - ANALYSIS | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|
| Name | Consent | Age | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 |
| Class 1 - 10am | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | y | 13 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 7 |
| E | y | 12 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 9 |
| G | y | 12 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 3 |
| Averages | y | 12.3 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 6.3 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 7.7 | 6.3 |
| Class 2 - 11am | | | | | | | | | | |
| H | y | 13 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| J | y | 14 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| K | y | 15 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| L | y | 14 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| M | y | 16 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| N | y | 16 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| P | y | 14 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 5 |
| R | y | 14 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 |
| Averages | | 14.5 | 7.5 | 6.8 | 5.9 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 6.3 | 7.0 | 6.3 |
| Total averages | | 13.4 | 7.1 | 6.7 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 7.3 | 6.3 |
| AFTER THE WORKSHOP SERIES QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS - ANALYSIS | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name | Consent | Age | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 |
| Class 1 - 11am | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | Y | 13 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| E | Y | 12 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| G | y | 12 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| Averages | y | 12.3 | 8.0 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 5.7 | 6.7 | 8.3 | 7.0 | 7.7 |
| Class 2 - 10am | | | | | | | | | | |
| H | y | 13 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 9 |
| J | y | 14 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| K | y | 15 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 8 |
| L | y | 14 | 1 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 1 |
| M | y | 16 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| N | y | 16 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| P | y | 14 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| R | y | 14 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 9 |
| Averages | y | 14.5 | 6.5 | 6.9 | 6.5 | 5.4 | 5.9 | 5.1 | 5.4 | 5.9 |
| Total averages | | 13.4 | 7.3 | 7.3 | 7.1 | 5.5 | 6.3 | 6.7 | 6.2 | 6.8 |
| Difference (After - Before) | | | 0.2 | 0.6 | 1.0 | -0.5 | 0.2 | 0.6 | -1.1 | 0.5 |

Figure A2 – Before and After Questionnaire Results – refined data

The key result of this analysis is the final line of the after questionnaire in Fig A2, where the averages from *before* are subtracted from those *after* to show any increase (positive values) or decrease (negative values) in these features.

BEFORE PWB Learning Circus and Wellbeing Questionnaire

As part of our circus skills course Performers Without Borders (PWB) would like to know how you feel about yourself and the future and how you feel about physical activity.

So please answer the following quick questionnaire as accurately as possible. And bear in mind:

- a) There is no right or wrong answer! We only want to know what you think and how you feel.
- b) If you are not sure just choose your best guess.
- c) Don't feel embarrassed, these are anonymous so you can be honest.

I give my consent for PWB to use this information in their data evaluation (tick box for yes) []

1) I am generally a happy person.....

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | disagree | not sure | agree | strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |

2) I am generally a positive person....

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | disagree | not sure | agree | strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |

3) I like taking part in physically active games.....

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | disagree | not sure | agree | strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |

4) I am good at physical activities....

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | disagree | not sure | agree | strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |

5) It is easy for me to find physical activities that I can take part in....

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | disagree | not sure | agree | strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |

6) I think I will be good at doing circus skills...

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | disagree | not sure | agree | strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |

7) I think there are lots of different circus skills I can take part in.....

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | disagree | not sure | agree | strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |

8) I think learning circus skills will make me happier.....

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | disagree | not sure | agree | strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |

Please tell us your age and anything else you would like to comment on below: AGE.....

AFTER PWB Learning Circus and Wellbeing Questionnaire

As part of our circus skills course Performers Without Borders (PWB) would like to know how you feel about yourself and the future and how you feel about physical activity.

So please answer the following quick questionnaire as accurately as possible. And bear in mind:

- d) There is no right or wrong answer! We only want to know what you think and how you feel.
- e) If you are not sure just choose your best guess.
- f) Don't feel embarrassed, these can be anonymous so you can be honest.

I give my **consent** for PWB to use this information in their data evaluation (tick box for yes) []

2) I am generally a happy person.....

Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3) I am generally a positive person....

Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4) I like taking part in physically active games.....

Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5) I am good at physical activities....

Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

6) It is easy for me to find physical activities that I can take part in....

Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7) I think I am good at doing circus skills...

Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

8) There were lots of different circus skills I could take part in.....

Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

9) Learning circus skills made me happier.....

Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Please tell us your name and age and anything else you would like to comment on below: AGE.....

Appendix B

Adult Helper Questionnaire Results – original questionnaire below

PWB - Swiss Cottage Adult Helper Questions - RESULTS

7 respondents – not all respondents answered all questions.

Q1: Do you think the circus skills workshop series was helpful and why?

RESPONSES

- 1) Circus skills helped with team building, coordination and balance.
- 2) -
- 3) The workshop provided the students with a new set of skills they also learnt how to be still when needed and concentration.
- 4) Engagement level, ??????, confidence. Physical skill development.
- 5) Yes, circus skills has been helpful in loads of different ways: it's helped the students learn how to improve their own self-awareness, work in teams, explore different creative abilities.
- 6) It was helpful increasing the student's confidence by performing in front of their friends and trying new skills.
- 7) It helps with physical coordination and also gives confidence to try new activities in a safe and friendly environment.

Q2: What was the best thing about the course?

RESPONSES

- 1) Every element of circus was brilliant!
- 2) This was a completely new experience for our learners, they got to try to use and develop new skills with resources they have never used before.
- 3) Learning to do something new as it gave them a sense of achievement.
- 4) Engagement, enthusiasm. Enabling all to be involved through resources available. Jamie very engaging/motivating.
- 5) Seeing the students enjoy an activity that they could connect with.
- 6) Students being able to express themselves and learn new skills and different experiences.
- 7) All activities were fun-filled and the kids were engaged. Jamie is kind and motivating.

Q3: What was the worst thing about the course (what would you change)?

RESPONSES

- 1) Maybe smaller groups.
- 2) -
- 3) -
- 4) Continued! [Ed: as in would be good to be continued?]

- 5) Maybe having a motivator to get the students to work towards: e.g. – the electric Segway at the end of the lesson.
- 6) Not sure as I was only here for 2 sessions, but what I saw was good.
- 7) Sad that it's over really.

Q4: Do you think any of these features were improved by it and why? (tick the circle on the left and elaborate on the right of the dotted lines).

| Respondent Number | Wellbeing | Confidence | Sociability | Physical coordination | Fitness | Access to a new physical activity | Any other? |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| 2 | | | x | x | | x | |
| 3 | | x | | x | | x | |
| 4 | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| 5 | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| 6 | | x | x | x | | | |
| 7 | x | x | x | x | x | x | |

Elaborating on answers:

- **Wellbeing:**

- 5) Feeling of success when they complete a skill.
- 7) Fun activities.

- **Confidence:**

- 3) learning a new skill that they found difficult at the beginning.
- 5) Proud of taking part.
- 6) Performing in front of peers and adults.
- 7) To perform in front of an audience.

- **Sociability:**

- 2) The three class groups that accessed the workshop don't usually interact with one another, during the sessions they got to work, play and socialise together.
- 5) Peer work.
- 6) Mixing with students from other classes.
- 7) To facilitate positive interactions.

- **Physical coordination:**

- 2) I saw some improvements in the coordination of our learners over the weeks, I saw learners juggling and balancing and other types of multi-tasking.
- 3) Hand eye coordination
- 5) Working on hand eye coordination.
- 6) Activates focused coordination, helps in time with practice.
- 7) To improve focus and determination to succeed.

- **Fitness:**

- 7) Good exercises.

- **Access to a new physical activity:**

- 2) Everything in the workshop was new for our learners and thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of it.
- 3) Yes, most of the students
- 7) It encourages kids to try new things.

○ **Any other?:**

No further responses

Q5: What other benefits do you think that circus skills provides (or could provide) for special needs kids?

RESPONSES

- 1) Confidence and new interests.
- 2) Regular workshops helped improve learner's coordination, balance, hand eye coordination and timing, as well as being a massive boost to self-confidence.
- 3) -
- 4) Focusing attention and concentration. Taking notes???
- 5) Circus skills is another opportunity for our students to be included in a well-known activity.
- 6) Allowing them to express themselves and build confidence and try different experiences out of the usual.
- 7) It teaches kids that it's alright to try new things and that exercising can be fun too.

Q6: Any other comments?

RESPONSES

- 1) Jamie (circus skills teacher) was absolutely brilliant and inclusive.
- 2) -
- 3) -
- 4) -
- 5) -
- 6) -
- 7) -

Adult Helper Questionnaire

PWB - Swiss Cottage Adult Helper Questions

Please answer what you can to help with our evaluation report.

- 1 Do you think the circus skills workshop series was helpful and why?**

- 2 What was the best thing about the course?**

- 3 What was the worst thing about the course (what would you change)?**

- 4 Do you think any of these features were improved by it and why? (tick the circle on the left and elaborate on the right of the dotted lines).**
 - Wellbeing –
 - Confidence –
 - Sociability -
 - Physical coordination.....
 - Fitness -
 - Access to a new physical activity -
 - Any other?.....

- 5 What other benefits do you think that circus skills provides (or could provide) for special needs kids?**

- 6 Any other comments?**

Appendix C

Participant Audio Interview Transcripts

Swiss Cottage PWB Workshop Audio Interview Summary

On the 12th July 2019 Peter King (PWB Manager and author) conducted a series of audio interviews with 6 set questions to 8 students who agreed to take part. Each interview lasted about 2-3 mins. The below contains an interpreted summary of the conversation – by that I mean it is not transcribed literally, but the key points are recorded and the main thrust of the replies is preserved as much as possible. Original audio files are available on the PWB website: www.pwn.ngo/research/swisscottage.

[Peter's further questions and comments are put in square brackets below] and (physical actions, like nods, of the kids in normal brackets). Normal text is what the kids said.

For analysis please see Section 3.3

3) What different things have you learnt over the circus workshop series?

- A) **Participant H (14):** Pedal-gos, Poi and some other things
- B) **Participant N (13):** Juggling, hover board, walking globe, balance on pedal-gos, plate spinning, juggle boards were cool.
- C) **Participant N (16):** Hard to tell, not many things, hard tasks, they weren't that easy. The ones that you swing...poi. The other one was to spin the plates with a stick. [Pete: Have you had a go on all the different things?]. Yes.
- D) **Participant L (14):** The plates. Nothing else.
- E) **Participant A (13):** Hover board, walking globe, plates, clubs. Poi.
- F) **Participant E (12):** [Pete: And you are in an electric wheelchair.] Yes. [Pete asks Q1] I learn this. [finger baton]. I learnt how to do this [shows me his finger baton moves, Pete: And on the first day you were doing poi using your arm braces, did you enjoy that?] Yes.
- G) **Participant P (14):** Using one thing at once and using perfect combinations. The hoop and different equipment of things.
- H) **Participant T:** Juggling, those kind of stuff, plate spinning and those type I did. [Pete: So lots of different things?] Yeah, but then it got boring and I don't like circus.

4) What is your favourite thing and will you keep practicing afterwards?

- A) No favourites, but liked a few things. Pedal-gos.
- B) Hover board, walking globe – was scary but I love heights. I will keep practicing afterwards.
- C) Using the Poi. I am trying to master it. [Pete: Would you buy some and practice at home?] Maybe, but my room is kind of small. [Pete: So maybe outside?]. (Nods)
- D) Plates. Yes practice more.
- E) Walking globe. [Pete: That's really high up were you afraid, is it dangerous?]. No, its easy for me. [Pete: Will you practice afterwards?] Yes.
- F) Finger baton.

- G) Using combinations as one. I will practice everything I can so I will be the greatest one in the whole world.
- H) I like balls, not juggling, I mean like bouncing balls. [Pete: And why don't you like circus?] Because I don't like circus skills in here. Because I like doing trampoline, dancing but not really circus skills. [Pete: There wasn't anything that you found you liked a lot?] The whole Friday I don't like it and I want circus skills to finish now. [Pete: Oh dear. Yes, this is the last day!]

5) Did the workshops make you feel happier?

- A) Yes during and after (nodding).
- B) Yes, because I like learning how to do new cool things, tricks... and that makes me very happy. [Pete: Good! What about afterwards?] Yes, even if I am not doing them I think. "Oh I want to go on the hover board's because it's sooo cool!" [Pete: So it makes you happy even thinking about them.] Yes. It's very amazing.
- C) Uhhhh kind of. [Pete: Were you happy in the workshop? Was it better than a school lesson? You are not sure?] Well I do prefer school cause I am good at maths. [Pete: What about after the workshops do you think it helps you be a happier person?] Um, yes.
- D) Yes. (during and after).
- E) Yes. (during and after).
- F) Yeah I like it. [Pete: What about afterwards? It lifted your spirits?] Yes. [Pete: So you enjoyed it in the workshops and it left you feeling happy afterwards?]. Yes.
- G) It made me feel happier than ever.
- H) Kind of. [Pete: Even though you didn't like it, it was still a fun thing to do?] The fun thing to do was the little balls, like you know the three blue balls was kind of fun. [Pete: Like the big blue walking globe just now?] No the smaller one. [Maybe she means the juggling boards?]

6) Can you do more in circus skills lessons than in sports lessons?

- A) Yes I do sports but I like them both. [Doesn't feel there is much she can do in circus skills, but can do Pedal-go.]
- B) I love sports and there is more to do in sports, but I like circus skills too cause it's a sport too basically.
- C) I can do more in circus skills than sports. [Pete: Are there more options or is it the same?] If there were more options then yes. [Pete: Do you play sports?] Yes my parents support play badminton. [So you don't find circus skills more accessible, or sports or its about the same?] Yes. [So it's about the same.]
- D) Don't do sports lessons. [Pete: So do you find circus skills easier?] Yes.
- E) Yes. More than football.
- F) [Pete: Do you enjoy circus skills more than sports?] Circus skills. Yes. [Pete: Do you find there is more you can do in circus skills than sports?] Yes.
- G) I can do...??... I can do more than one thing at once. [Pete: So you can do sports OK and you can do circus skills OK?] Yep. [Pete: So you think they are about the same?] Yep.
- H) I wish I never got to do circus skills! [Pete: OK (sympathetic laugh)].

5) Do you feel more confident because of learning circus skills?

- A) Yes because I can speak with the others.
- B) Yeah I feel more confident. Because it's a good lesson and it's a fun thing to do and you can enjoy yourself having fun and learning new tricks. [Pete: And does that give you confidence so you do other things?] Yeah, I feel like I can do other stuff. I feel like I can walk on the walking ball [Pete: and that gives you confidence to tackle other challenges?]. Yeah.
- C) Yes. I feel like I'm confident because I am basically socialising as well.
- D) Yeah.
- E) Yes. Cause its nice and I like it and enjoy it. [Pete: And that gives you confidence?] Yes.
- F) Yes. Cause I learnt this [the baton. Pete: Makes you feel like you can do things, does it make you feel like you are more physically active?] Yes.
- G) Yep I felt confident.
- H) No it makes me uncomfortable. [Pete: Oh does it? Oh, even getting up on the globe doesn't make you feel confident] (nods)

6) Do you want to learn more circus skills?

- A) Yes more lessons and Jamie was a good teacher.
- B) Yes I do I hope you can come back.
- C) I am going to college so I don't think I will be able to, so not sure.
- D) Yeah. [Pete: Was Jamie a good teacher?] Yes.
- E) Yes more and more globe please.
- F) Yes, kind of.
- G) Yes I could. Ready!
- H) [Pete: So I think we know the answer to this one. No. OK I am sorry it wasn't a great time but thanks for helping with the survey].