

Drum Works: A Qualitative Exploration of Social Impact

Kantar TNS has been commissioned to conduct an independent qualitative research study for the London-based non-profit organisation Drum Works.

The goal of the research was to help Drum Works understand how its activities impact the lives of those involved in its projects.

The research evaluates Drum Works' impact against its **three main objectives**: (a) inspire creativity, (b) build social cohesion and (c) empower young people to direct their own futures.

To highlight how the Drum Works project functions and the impact it has had, interviews with a variety of **different stakeholder groups** were conducted.

Sample details:

- Primary Stakeholder Group (30 minute DI)
 - 14 Students, aged 12-21, from 3 secondary schools in London
- Secondary Stakeholder Group (40 minute DI)
 - 1 Head Teacher
 - 3 Heads of Music
 - 1 Parent
- Independent Expert Interviews (60 minute DI)
 - CEO of Youth Music
 - Executive Director of Investec UK
- Drum Works Team (90 minute group discussion)
 - Managing Director
 - Artistic Directors
 - Chair of the Board

Inspiring Creativity

Drum Works inspires creativity through producing original music with students and providing access to students from all backgrounds.

- Creating the music Drum Works plays involves a **participatory creative process**, encouraging students to share their own ideas and giving them a sense of ownership, originality and pride.
- Drum Works is **easily accessible to all students**, since it does not require an investment in expensive musical instruments or music lessons from parents. As a result, individuals can develop their creativity and make music regardless of their previous experience and background.
- While entry barriers to Drum Works are low, Drum Works manages to keep students engaged through providing **a challenging route of progression**.
- Through participating in Drum Works, many students realise the importance of having a creative outlet in their lives and plan on **practising music beyond school**.

“We are just holding the space for young people to work in the way they want to work.”

Jo, Artistic Director of Drum Works

“We are quite a diverse school but there is a tendency for some of the music aspects to appeal to the more middle class pupils and Drum Works is quite successful at cutting across that and appealing to all the pupils. [...] There are different skill levels, so we have got some people who are very skilled musicians and who are fantastic drummers who play, and then also people who aren’t skilled musically who won’t make music, that don’t have that background, who can also access it.”

Head Teacher

“Drum Works has definitely led me to think more about having a creative side route, maybe not specifically music but something creative. Because doing something that is inspirational or creative is like brain food to me.”

16 year-old student

Building Social Cohesion

Drum Works builds a close community that is independent of age and background. This community can provide students with support and teach them important social skills.

- Drum Works is perceived to be a **close community** and it is often described as a second home or family.
- Drum Works operates in schools over a long period of time. The consistency of the project provides a sense of **security, support and structure** to students.
- Through mixing students of different groups during Drum Works sessions, students will form friendships across year groups, backgrounds and schools, **expanding their social circle** beyond their immediate environment.
- **Team work** is an important aspect of Drum Works. Students see themselves as a unit and make each other feel valued. They believe Drum Works has taught them to respect other people's opinions and find compromises.
- Drum Works **impacts the school communities**. There seems to exist a real sense of pride about Drum Works in the schools where it operates.

“With Drum Works, we are like one big, happy family, one big group of friends.”

12 year-old student

“These tutors have been like the ropes, keeping the students going and not cutting them off because they have not shown up for weeks or they have had an issue. The tutors keep wanting to re-engage them and that has had a big impact on students.”

Music Teacher

“School trains you to think older people boring and younger people uncool but in Drum Works you learn that this is not the case.”

21 year-old student

“Other schools are definitely jealous. It's one of the things we are proudest of in recent years”

Music Teacher

Empowering Young People

Drum Works empowers young people by providing them with a chance to experience excellence and acquire confidence.

- The participatory and inclusive environment of Drum Works fosters a sense of belonging and ownership and **builds confidence** in young people.
- Individuals can **experience personal achievement and excellence** through performances, which can motivate them to strive for achievement in their academics and is especially important for students who struggle in other areas of education.
- Drum Works provides students with **novel experiences** through performances in different parts of London. Geographical movement is believed to ‘*broaden horizons*’ and could feed into the choices students feel able to make in the future.
- Teachers and the Drum Works team believe that Drum Works can have an effect on overall **school attendance** of a few, at-risk individuals by engaging them in something they enjoy.

“Drum Works helps people break out their souls. Some people are really quiet and timid and then they realise that they can really shine in Drum Works. In Drum Works, they push you, they want you to do your best, they want you to do as much as you can and it kind of helps you and makes you want to do more.”

13 year-old student

“It’s like watching a different child – I can see she absolutely loves it, she loses herself in the music and she’s so much more confident in the group.”

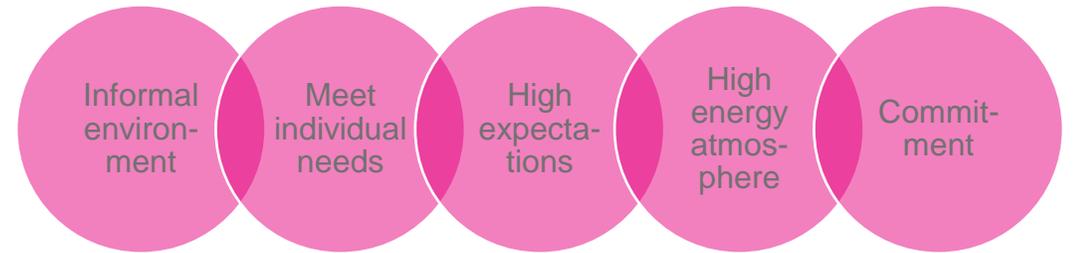
Parent of 17 year-old student

“It will help them when they make choices later on. When they come to choose universities, they will have the confidence to maybe not go to the local university but actually travel a bit further.”

Head Teacher

The Drum Works Approach

- Drum Works have developed an approach to teaching, mentoring and team building that goes beyond the technical aspects of teaching drums.
- This is achieved through creating an **informal environment**, where tutors and students are seen as equals. The environment fosters respect and a community, independent of age and background, is formed.
- Drum Works places great importance on being able to engage with students on a one-to-one basis by engaging multiple tutors per session. This allows tutors to respond to students' **individual needs**.
- Tutors communicate **high expectations** to students and place responsibility on their shoulders by putting them in charge of the creative process behind creating rhythms.
- At the same time, the **high energy, fast-paced atmosphere** of the sessions keeps students engaged and excited throughout.
- Through working with the students over extended periods of time, the tutors signal **commitment** to young people and in return, they earn the students' trust and can mentor them on issues outside of Drum Works.



Key ingredients of the Drum Works approach