



OUR SECOND HOME



EVALUATION REPORT 2023-2025



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INTRODUCTION TO OSH BY YOUNG LEADERS



OSH is a charity that supports young refugees and asylum seekers to find their place in the UK by helping them build a community, confidence and a sense of belonging. Most young refugee's experiences are made up of trauma, isolation, disrupted education and many other barriers. So, if there are no support plans in place, a lot of them will face challenges in accessing opportunities and feeling part of society.

OSH is a diverse community based on integrity, identity and inclusion that represents a big part of our lives in the UK. From the first day you are welcomed with care, respect and warmth. It does not matter where you come from or what your story is. There is a strong sense of unity. You feel part of something. That atmosphere makes it easier to be yourself and to grow alongside others who also understand what it means to rebuild your life.

The new experiences and memories created on every trip and programme are really the soul of OSH. The camps end, but the shared moments stay with us and shape us. They show how powerful it is when young people come together to learn, laugh and support each other, regardless of our differences.



This report matters because it shows this work in a clear and strategic way. It shares numbers and statistics, but also a strong commitment to values. It highlights how serious OSH is about supporting young people seeking asylum and refugees, and about reaching many more in the future. It explores the impact and influence that OSH is having on the lives of young people. It also gives OSH more visibility and credibility when working with partners and funders, and we hope it educates people in power on how they can get involved.

After reading this report, we hope you do not just close it and move on. We hope you feel inspired to take action. You can donate to and support OSH so it can grow and reach more young people like us. You can learn more, raise awareness about the mission and share it with your community. You can join as a volunteer, start a project, or help in practical ways.

Thank you for reading and for your support.

**Mayyah, Loujein, Maryama,
Wintana, Mishkat & Alvaro**



WHAT IS OUR SECOND HOME

Our Second Home (OSH) is a peer-powered youth movement that supports young people from refugee backgrounds (aged 14-25) to build lasting relationships, gain leadership skills, and create a thriving community. OSH believe that if young refugees have access to transformative experiences, strong peer networks, and leadership opportunities, they will develop the confidence, skills, and agency needed to navigate and shape their futures.



WHY OSH EXISTS

Displaced young people face considerable challenges in establishing and rebuilding their lives in the UK. Accessing education has proven to be a challenge: where many did not have formal education prior to arriving in the UK, resettled refugee children are academically over 1.5 years behind their peers by age 16, while unaccompanied asylum-seeking pupils are over 3 years behind. They are 6 times less likely to go to university according to global averages.

Later in life, displaced people are 22% less likely to be in a job, and those who are working tend to earn less and work fewer hours than the UK-born workforce. This combination of basic English, low confidence, and limited family support, results in a higher susceptibility to social and financial exploitation.

WHY OSH EXISTS

Rates of anxiety, PTSD and depression vastly outstrip their peers, as does acute mental health distress. This has been exacerbated by the disproportionate impact of the isolation and digital poverty highlighted by COVID-19.

Further, as anti-migrant sentiment grows in both politics and media, the need to build resilient and supportive communities increases significantly.

A positive experience in a youth movement can be transformative for these young people.

They experience joy and fun, gain social and employability skills, grow confidence in English, a strong and resilient community, and build connections with new and relevant role models.

These are crucial for OSH's participants, who, since fleeing violence and persecution from their country of birth, have been robbed of their adolescence.



OSH'S APPROACH

OSH's approach is built on a **cycle of leadership development**:

- **Engagement:** Young people join OSH through residential trips and local youth hubs, where they experience belonging and develop friendships.
- **Growth:** Through mentorship and skill-building programmes, participants gain confidence, communication skills, and leadership experience.
- **Leadership:** Many return as peer leaders, running programmes and mentoring new participants, ensuring a self-sustaining, community-led movement.

This theory of change not only supports individual development but also fosters long-term, systemic change by equipping young refugees with the tools to become advocates, professionals, and leaders in their communities.

OSH delivers a range of programmes that support young refugees in **overcoming the barriers of displacement**:

- **Residential Experiences:** Intensive, community-building trips where participants form friendships and step into leadership roles.
- **Youth Hubs:** Regular peer-led activities in London and Bristol, providing a space for ongoing support and development.
- **Leadership Training:** A nationally certified course that equips young people with the skills to lead, advocate, and contribute to society.
- **Mentorship and Advocacy:** One-to-one support that helps young people navigate challenges and access education and employment opportunities. These are delivered in collaboration with over 30 referring organisations, including youth clubs, local authorities, and housing providers.

OSH ACTIVITIES: 2023-2025

Between 2023 – 2025, OSH delivered:

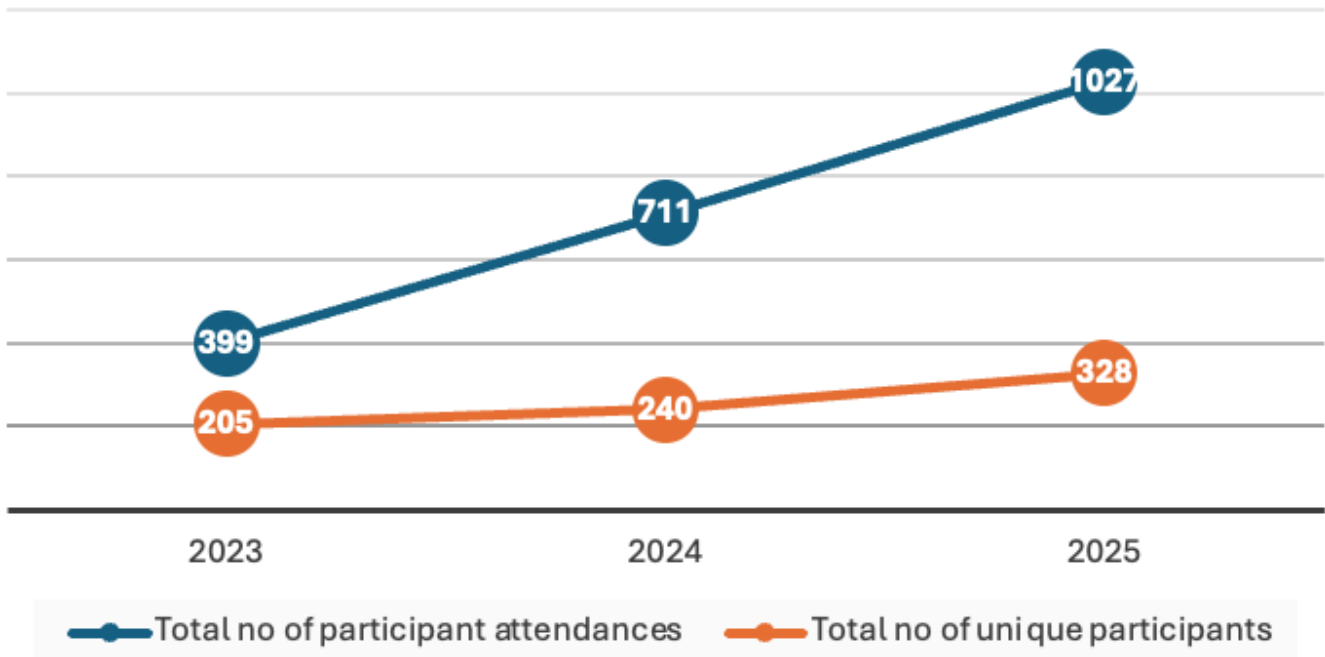
18 residentials (4 girls only residentials)
9 leaders weekends
5 Leaders in Training weekends
78 Bristol Hub sessions
26 London Hub sessions.

There was a total of **2,137 participant attendances**, which represented **773 unique participants**, and this significantly grew each year (see chart below). A total of 46 young leaders with lived experience attending training, with 87% progressing to lead activities. OSH worked with 52 referral / partner organisations, and 229 volunteers with 36% of these volunteers having lived refugee experience themselves.

Programmes on residentials were designed by leaders and typically involved a combination of activities including: creative, physical, skills building, educational and fun. Examples include outdoor pursuits to encourage teamwork, discussing identity through collage, understanding positive relationships through the medium of boxing, learning to cook new foods, poetry writing, camp fires or drumming workshops. Workshops also covered information, advice, guidance and signposting to support young people to live in the UK. Examples of these are 'Understanding the Education system' and 'How to access University'.



Attendees over time



EVALUATION APPROACH

OSH worked with independent evaluation consultant Abigail D'Amore to objectively review and assess:

- the organisation's approach to data collection
- a sample of data collected by the OSH team during 2023-2025
- test a series of evaluation tools at OSH activities
- collect a sample of data to more deeply explore potential impact

and to produce an evaluation toolkit for OSH to use in the future.

This evaluation therefore adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative, qualitative and creative design, that combined both primary and secondary data sources to ensure that multiple perspectives were represented.

Primary data was collected by the external evaluator and the OSH team during the evaluation period through the following methods:

- Feedback gathered from 74 young people through 'interactive surveys' (rating agreement on statements by mark-making on large sheets of paper) and reflective worksheets completed at the end of activities
- Semi-structured interviews and creative modelling exercises with 28 participants and young leaders, designed to encourage storytelling and deeper reflection
- Informal peer-led interviews conducted by young leaders with 10 participants during activities
- Baseline and endpoint surveys with 8 leaders in training
- Surveys completed by 16 referral organisations and 8 volunteers.

The evaluation also drew upon secondary data collected by OSH staff between 2023 and 2025 which included: participant, young leader and referrer surveys; interview transcripts with young people; and feedback from OSH team.

Data was analysed using an inductive coding approach, mapping individual experiences and comments against the organisational outcomes defined in the **Theory of Change**. Young people as co-evaluators reviewed a sample of analysed data, challenging evaluator interpretation and bias and making changes as a result.

CO-PRODUCTION

Young people were actively involved as co-evaluators throughout the evaluation process. This included primarily young leaders, alongside some participants. Their involvement comprised:

- An interactive workshop with 13 young people to inform the evaluation framework, including identifying areas of impact and shaping data collection tools.
- Two online sessions with 6 young people to collaboratively analyse selected data (see above)
- An online report-writing session in which young people contributed to framing the introduction and recommendations.

ETHICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The evaluation was informed by the principles of the **Equitable Evaluation Framework**, recognising that evaluation processes should advance equity and challenge structural inequities rather than reinforce them.

A trauma-informed approach underpinned all engagement with young people. This recognised that many participants had experienced trauma and ensured that data collection methods prioritised safety, choice, agency and emotional wellbeing. Raghad Haddad acted as an advisor and critical friend to this evaluation. Raghad has extensive experience working as a musician and workshop leader on programmes with displaced young people, and has lived experience of displacement herself having left Syria in 2016.



REASONS FOR JOINING OSH

Young people shared many reasons for joining OSH. Most commonly to have fun, relax, feel 'stress free' and spend time with others. Some shared that they joined to make new friends, meet people from similar backgrounds and connect with others their age and others reported joining to improve their English, learn rules about life in the UK and understand more about British culture and other cultures. Some young people signed up after hearing about OSH through friends or siblings, others attended following referrals from social workers, foster carers or other organisations, and some described returning multiple times after the first trip.

IMPACT OF OSH

Through the process of developing the evaluation framework, we identified a set of outcomes that the evaluation would seek to evidence as potential results of participation in OSH.

This process led to the identification of five intended areas of change for young people:

- Improved emotional health
- An increased sense of agency
- Improved motivation and greater aspiration beyond the programme
- The development of life skills, knowledge and understanding
- A stronger sense of belonging and community.

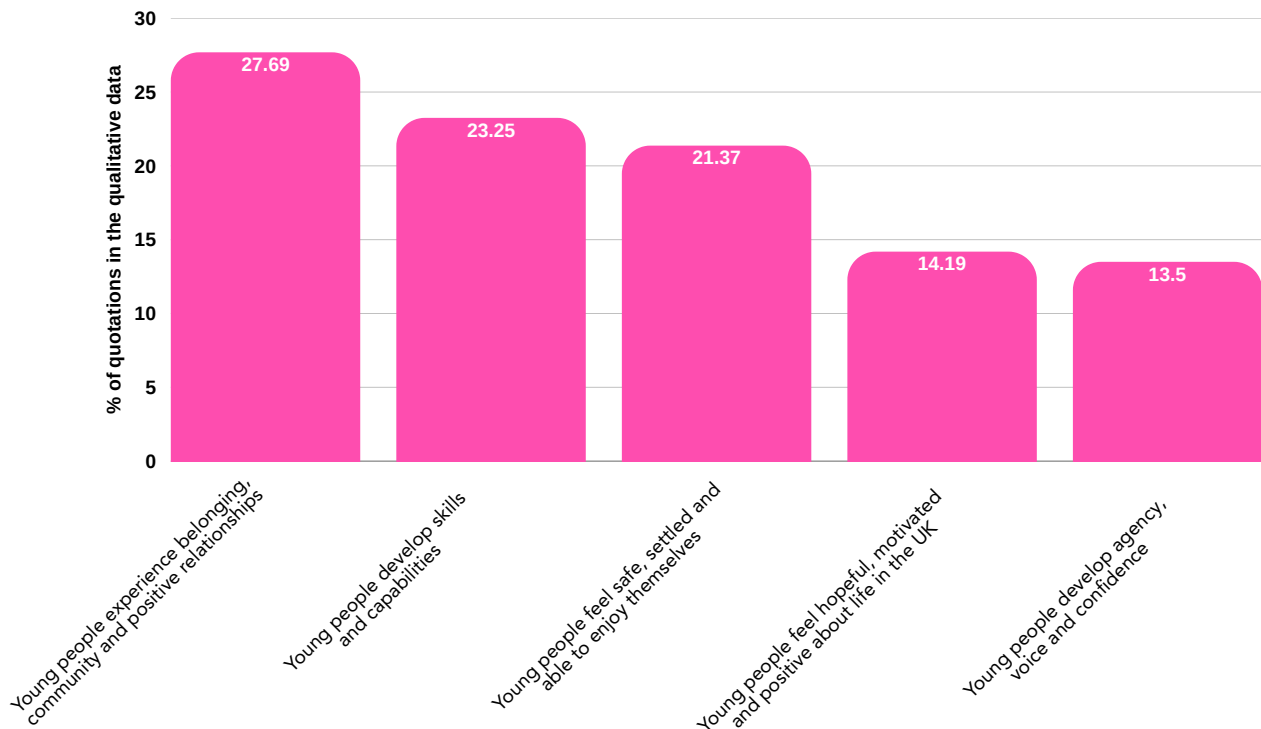
Over the longer term, these outcomes are intended to contribute to wider impacts beyond OSH, including sustained improvements in wellbeing, increased opportunities and success in education and employment, and a stronger sense of social solidarity and collective responsibility among OSH young people within their communities.

As part of the analysis process, we reviewed the data collaboratively with a group of young co-evaluators. Through these discussions, a number of clear patterns began to emerge. Young people consistently shared experiences and reflections that grouped around themes relating to emotional health, belonging, agency, skills/capabilities, and motivation/progression.

In response, the young co-evaluators suggested that organising the evidence under these five thematic areas for this report better reflected how they understood and made sense of their and their peers' experiences. The analysis presented below therefore follows this structure.

“Young people feel safe, settled and able to enjoy themselves”

OUR QUALITATIVE DATA



FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES

This diagram illustrates the frequency with which experiences and reflections in the data related to each of these thematic areas. While this approach does not represent a precise measure of impact as it relates to frequency of comments not unique participants, it provides a useful indication of where young people most consistently described positive changes associated with OSH. In particular, emotional health, belonging, and skills and capabilities emerged strongly across the data.

The analysis also highlights areas where there may be opportunities for further development, particularly in relation to motivation and progression, and young people's sense of agency.

ANALYSIS

84% of participants agreed that they enjoyed the activities and had a good time, with 100% of referrers (88% strongly agreement) agreeing that their young person/young people had fun at OSH; and 88% of volunteers observing most participants having fun at OSH sessions. 69% of participants felt relaxed and comfortable at OSH; and 100% of leaders felt calm and relaxed during the LiT course. 100% of leaders felt good about themselves while leading others.

50% of volunteers observed most young people having a positive attitude to OSH activities, and 100% of referers agreed (88% strong agreement) that their young person/young people had a positive attitude towards OSH activities.

Experiencing Happiness, Fun and Enjoyment

Many young people described enjoying the activities, using terms such as 'exciting' or 'amazing'. Activities mentioned as particular highlights included archery, musical chairs, walking, bonfire, boxing, high ropes, swimming, trampoline basketball, kite making, spa activities and fashion shows. Some shared a specific description of a particularly enjoyable activity, or aspect of the event (for example the food), while others described liking everything or just generally enjoying the atmosphere, or general 'vibe' and 'energy'.

"Everything is good, every activity is fun, but the most I like it is the arrow, that's the best one – archery. That's the best one, but everything is fun." - Participant

Young people generally willingly engaged in activities and were keen to take part, with young leaders describing not needing to force anyone.

*"Young people participated and made trip very calm and organised."
- Young Leader*

Many young people described feeling happy during and after attending OSH activities. Some referrers reported that young people returned happy and in some cases did not want to leave the OSH activities. Happiness was often described in relation to spending time with others and having positive moments with new friends.

"I'm so happy I came to here, I like everything."- Participant

"I would advise it, the children love it. P wasn't sure, but once she came back she was very happy." - Referrer

"Well there's no negative comments, he enjoys it, that's why he goes back. I think the whole arrangement is good, it gives the young person the chance to try different opportunities. Overall it's a positive experience." - Referrer

Some young people shared the OSH activities relieved boredom during school/college holidays. Another described looking forward to the trip instead of staying at home.

"So I'm quite bored at home, So I didn't want to just stay at home and spend my time at home." - Participant

One young leader described young people experiencing a sense of freedom and others that OSH felt much different from school or college.

"Created sense of freedom - young people didn't feel like they were in school." - Young Leader

Feeling Calm, Relaxed and Comfortable

Many participants described feeling relaxed and comfortable during OSH activities with some feeling calmer. Some shared they were comfortable in the environments OSH created – for some this was in relation to feeling relaxed personally, for others it was being relaxed within the group atmosphere and dynamic.

*"Everyone was relaxed and had a really good level of humour with each other."
- Young Leader*

Some young people reported that OSH helped to take them away from - or providing a temporary distance from - other challenges they were facing in their lives, and being a distraction to problems, for example:

*"I like to go there and leave the world behind me and just be there with games and with everything and music."
- Participant*

86% of participants agreed that they made new friends and connections, with 65% of participants agreeing that they felt seen and heard. 100% of referrers (88% strongly agreement) agreed that their young person/young people made friends at OSH; and 50% of volunteers observed most participants respecting each other and other cultures at OSH. 100% of young leaders agreed (88% strong agreement) that they felt listened to by other people at the LiT course; and 100% of young leaders agreed (88% strong agreement) that they will keep in touch with other leaders because of the LiT course.

Feeling Less Isolated or Lonely

Loneliness was described as being something that participants and young leaders experienced and that OSH helped them to overcome. One participant described their motivation for joining as wanting to connect with people and not wanting to feel alone. Another participant described not liking seeing others on their own, and noticing others trying to include them and bring them into the group.

"I don't like somebody to stay alone or be lonely that's not nice innit. The good thing is some people try to bring them inside." - Participant

Connecting with Others

Many participants reported making new friends, meeting new people and feeling connected with others. Some described meeting people from different countries and cultures, and learning from others. Several felt that having shared activities (notably sports) was a good route to integrate and connect with others. A few referrers and leaders also described young people making friends and enjoying being with others.

"It is a fantastic opportunity for the young people I work with who otherwise don't get many opportunities to leave London and make new friends from similar backgrounds." - Referrer

"I learned that there's so much to learn from everybody else." - Young Leader

Some young people shared how they have stayed in contact with people they met and reported meeting up beyond OSH i.e. socialising or through volunteering. A few described friendships becoming close:





"I've made friends on OSH who are now, like, sisters to me and help me in some tough situations." - Young Leader

A Sense of Belonging

Many participants described feeling included, accepted and able to be themselves. This included for example feeling able to speak/share, participate freely and feel part of the group. Some referred to the atmosphere as friendly and welcoming, and described leaders particularly as contributing to this. A few young people suggested that being welcomed was indicated through how newcomers were treated.

"I felt welcomed" - Participant

"I felt like I could be myself" - Young Leader

Being Part of a Family or Community

Many participants expressed that OSH is like 'a big family' or a home, including some sharing that 'Our Second Home' is an accurate description for the organisation. Some described a strong sense of community with people from different backgrounds, where they felt comfortable and familiar with each other. Some emphasised friendships and a sense of belonging helped them to feel this sense of community, whereas other emphasised the care and kindness shown and the act of living and working together through OSH activities such as residential.

Feeling Supported By Others

"The vibe here is really nice. I feel like this is my second home" - Young Leader

"I find OSH as a family and that's why I do it." - Participant



Some participants described people – young leaders, OSH staff, other participants – as being supportive and available to talk to when needed. This included descriptions of people checking in, offering help, providing information, being patient and providing encouragement. Some participants shared they felt 'believed in' or supported when they were feeling sad. Equally some young leaders highlighted the effective support received from wellbeing/welfare staff.

"It's just like, you got it in you, just knowing someone's out there that believes in you." - Participant

Feeling Respected and Respecting Others

Some young people felt respected and listened to by others. Some described learning about how to respect others and respect different cultures, with others describing respect as something that they learnt during the course of OSH. One young leader shared they had learnt balancing being friendly while still showing respect for those in leadership roles. Young people also felt not feeling ignored was important.

"The respect is there." - Young Leader

59% of participants agreed that they could share their feelings with the staff and leaders, with 55% of participants agreeing that they could make choices about what to do. 100% of leaders agreed (75% strongly agreed) that they could share their ideas at the LiT course, with 48% agreeing that they felt more confident with leading; and 100% of leaders (75% strongly agreeing) agreeing that the LiT course has helped them to get better at communicating with other people. 50% of volunteers observed most participants actively participating in the activities, with 63% observing most participants being more confident with speaking. 94% of referrers agreed (75% strongly agreed) that their young people/person is more confident at speaking since OSH.

Feeling They Have Choices

Some young people described having choices about whether and how to take part in activities. A few shared being offered alternative activities or options to do and not being forced to participate. One reported the benefit of having time during evening meetings to share thoughts and ideas. A young leader described observing participants choosing where they wanted to be and what they wanted to do.

"If they do want, we can't force them... we don't want to force them to feel like bored and to feel like they're controlled or over controlled." - Young Leader

A small number of young people described taking increased responsibility for their actions through shared tasks including through cleaning, washing dishes and tidying up.

Having a Voice in Activities

Some participants valued being asked what they wanted to do and having their ideas listened to and acted on. Several described appreciating meetings where there was time and space for everyone to speak. One young leader gave an example of a request for female-only residentials being raised as an idea and later becoming something that happened therefore feeling empowered by their voices leading to programme change.

Opening Up to Others & Asking for Help

Many young people shared the importance of having someone to speak to and being able to talk about things that were bothering them. A few described not usually feeling comfortable opening up, and this being something that was new and difficult, but that OSH helped them do this. Some described valuing the availability of having volunteers and young leaders to talk to. One young person described leaving OSH feeling better after speaking to someone.

Some participants described being able to ask for help and having people respond and support with finding solutions or giving advice. One young leader described learning to ask for help through OSH:

"I don't like to ask people for help, but being a leader in OSH helped me to if I need help, I can ask for it and people don't hesitate to help me." - Young Leader

Increased Social and Self Confidence

Many young people described an increased confidence, particularly social confidence. Some reported feeling less shy and being more prepared to approach and speak with new people more freely with less fear of judgment, including those outside OSH. Several described improvements in communication, particularly English language speaking.

Referrers also described young people opening up, socialising more and gaining confidence. For some this confidence shift was over a long period of time (i.e. years), for others it was an immediate direct result of OSH activities. A few described this confidence as carrying into work or daily life beyond OSH.

"I wouldn't step out. I was scared. But with OSH, I just feel a whole complete different person now." - Young Leader

Personal Growth + Resilience

As a result of OSH some young people described changes in perspective, skills and how they handle situations, for example dealing with difficulty and when plans go wrong. A few shared they learnt patience, calm, open-mindedness and accepting differences. Others shared recognising their own skills and feeling more capable, and being more open to taking risks and trying new things. One young person described living alone as 'stressful' and that following the trip they felt stronger and more ready to return to college.

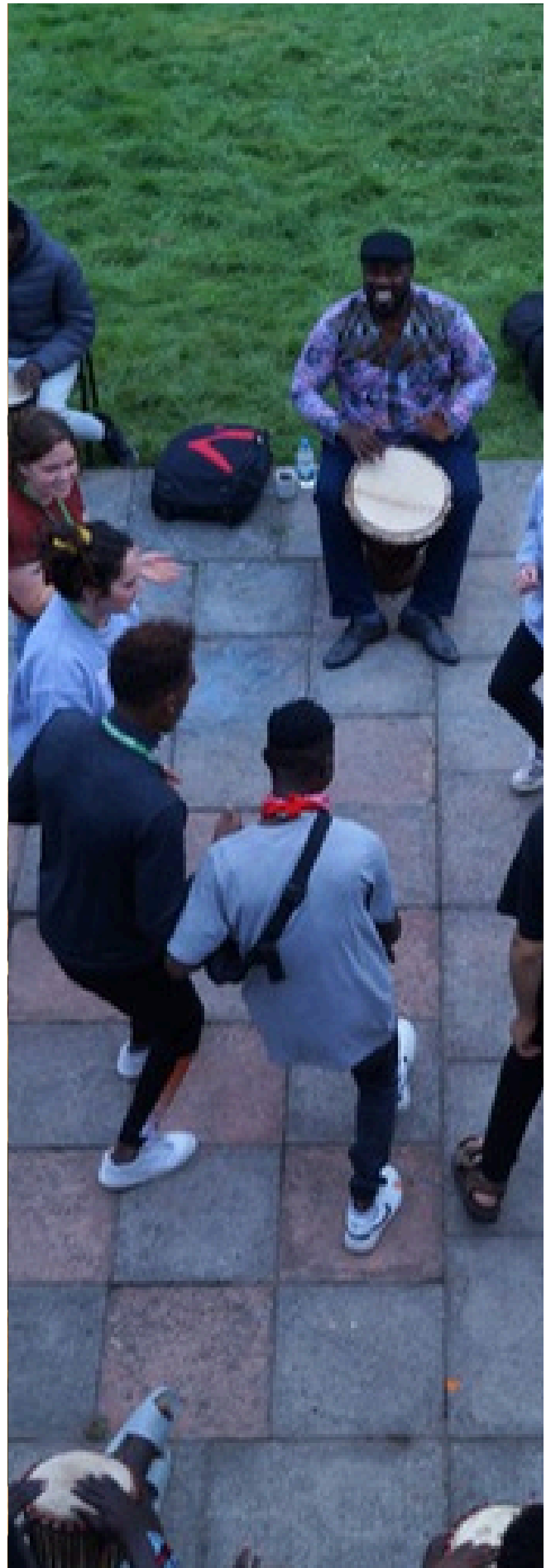
"[I feel] I am capable of anything"
- Participant

One referrer reported a young person seeming more independent after attending an OSH activity.

Some young people stated feeling more able to explain and advocate for themselves themselves or even have difficult conversations as a result of OSH. One young leader described an increased confidence to challenge how people talk about refugees and asylum seekers, and this referrer shared a further example of this:

"He has made friends that he still speaks with today... which has put my young person in a place to better advocate for himself and his rights." - Referrer

49% of participants agreed that their English speaking improved as a result of OSH; with 100% of leaders agreeing (75% strongly agreeing) that the LiT course helped improve their English speaking; 63% of volunteers observing most participants developing their English language skills; and 100% of referrers (81% strongly agreeing) agreed that their young person/young people developed their English language skills.





63% of participants agreed they learnt new things, and 74% of leaders agreed that they learnt more about being a leader. 100% of referrers agreed (81% strong agreement) that their young person/young people learnt something new at OSH; 50% of volunteers observed most participants trying new things and 63% of volunteers observed most participants working well as a team.

Improved English Language

Some young people reported improvements in English speaking and listening. This included practising English through conversations, learning new words and generally feeling more equipped to communicate. Some linked this to spending time with others and taking part in activities. A few described improved English as part of a broader increase in social confidence.

"My experience it was like er meeting new people as well and practice my English."
- Participant

Learned or Tried Something New

Many young people described learning or trying new activities for the first time because of OSH. Examples of this included learning creative and practical skills for example new games, crafts, sports and cookery skills. Some described learning from other leaders, other participants or specific individuals.

"I learnt so many things about art... and movements to calm myself down with yoga" - Young Leader

Some young people described learning about diversity, power, privilege and different people's stories and perspectives.

Teamwork Skills

Participants and young leaders alike described teamwork as an important part of their learning and skills development. Several young leaders shared supporting each other and planning together effectively, with pre-event or planning days helping people get to know each other and how to work together.

"Loved the teamwork amongst the leaders. They kept the energy high throughout and encouraged each other."
- Participant

Improved Leadership Skills and Confidence

Many young leaders reported developing leadership skills through practice ('doing it for real') and ongoing training. Some described learning boundaries, responsibility, how to deal with certain situations and participants, and how to communicate with participants and other leaders. Several shared gaining confidence in their own leadership approach particularly when participants listened and activities went well. Others learnt that leaders can have different styles and that leadership is learned step by step.

"I thought leaders need to be loud, but there are also quiet leaders - made me more confident that I can be a leader."
- Young Leader

Influencing and Inspiring Others

Some young leaders felt they were able to influence or encourage others through leadership – both within OSH and in wider contexts for example college and work. Examples of this included young leaders reassuring young people and sharing their lived experiences. Some described wanting to help participants feel comfortable and included, and give them the same sort of help they received themselves as participants. Some young leaders encouraged and inspired participants to consider leadership/volunteering roles within OSH.

"[I learnt] to feel confident in leading and to reassure YP that it does get better."
-Young Leader

Wanting to Help Others

Many young leaders and participants reported wanting to help others. Several young leaders shared they had become leaders in order to support participants, particularly those who had recently arrived in the UK. A few described helping refugees outside OSH with practical tasks, advice and guidance and encouraging people to join OSH.

"I wanna help those who can't help themselves" -Young Leader

Applying Skills & Capabilities Elsewhere

Many young people described applying skills from OSH in education and work contexts. Some felt more assertive and had increased confidence in presentations, public speaking and communication. Some described using OSH games for example in other leadership contexts beyond OSH. Several reported adding leadership or volunteering to their CVs and linking this to jobs or other opportunities. A small number described their leadership experience with OSH contributing to getting a job.

"I added OSH to my CV as well, and I got a job with it" - Young Leader

69% of participants agreed that they were inspired by somebody or something at OSH; and 90% of participants agreed they wanted to come back to an OSH activity. 100% of leaders agreed (50% strongly agreed) that the LiT course has given them ideas about what they want to do in the future. 94% of referrers agree (81% strong agreement) that their young person/young people was inspired by someone or something at OSH; and 96% of referrers agreed (75% strong agreement) that their young person/young people learnt more about other cultures/living in the UK because of OSH. 25% of volunteers observed most young people setting goals and targets for themselves; and 75% of volunteers observed most participants trying their best in activities.

Motivation to Attend OSH

Many young people reported being keen to attend, return or do more OSH activities. Some wanted to attend more trips, or to continue involvement in some way. Others were reluctant for the activities and experiences to end, wanting to attend again and stay connected to OSH.

"I count my days. We do a whole counting down to the trip." - Young Person

ANALYSIS



Feeling Inspired

Some participants described feeling inspired and motivated, particularly by young leaders, OSH staff and volunteers. Some reported being influenced by positive role models and wanting to follow other examples, for example the way that young leaders handled situations and solved problems.

"The older people are acting like I'm they're younger brother, teaching you to do something good."

- Participant

Increased Sense of Purpose

A small number of young people shared how OSH helped them reconnect to a sense of purpose, or helped them feel a clearer sense of purpose, for example related to community work or activist work:

"Something different activated in me that felt in line with my purpose in life."

-Young Leader

Feeling More Hopeful + Optimistic

Some young people shared changes in how they felt about their futures, describing feelings of hope and 'not giving up'. This was often prompted by seeing resilience from others who had experienced similar situations. One referrer described a young person as having a better attitude and being more open. Some young people described OSH as helping them prepare for the future.

"Many leaders actually gave me that hope. Don't give up on yourself."

- Participant

Interest in Volunteer Leading with OSH

Many young people reported interest in becoming a leader, volunteering or taking on more responsibility within OSH and beyond. The main motivating factors for this appeared to be wanting to help other people, wanting to contribute and wanting to give something back.

"I've never ever thought about being a youth worker in my life... OSH totally changed my mind."

- Young Leader



Increased Knowledge of Progression Routes+ Opportunities

Some young people stated finding out more about routes into or through education (for example university), and other opportunities that may be available (for example jobs fairs).

"I learned about my education, like, the right path what I'm supposed to do to go to university or work."
- Young Leader

Increased Knowledge of Life in the UK

Some young people increased their knowledge about life in the UK through OSH with examples of this including culture, traditions, food, religion, rules and the education system. Some learnt more about their rights and asylum status, and explained that they were able to ask questions of young leaders and OSH staff if they were unsure. One young leader described sharing knowledge about the education system with others.

"We talked about asylum status, lifestyle, stuff like that and I found it really really interesting."
- Participant

Pride in Own Culture and Understanding Other Cultures

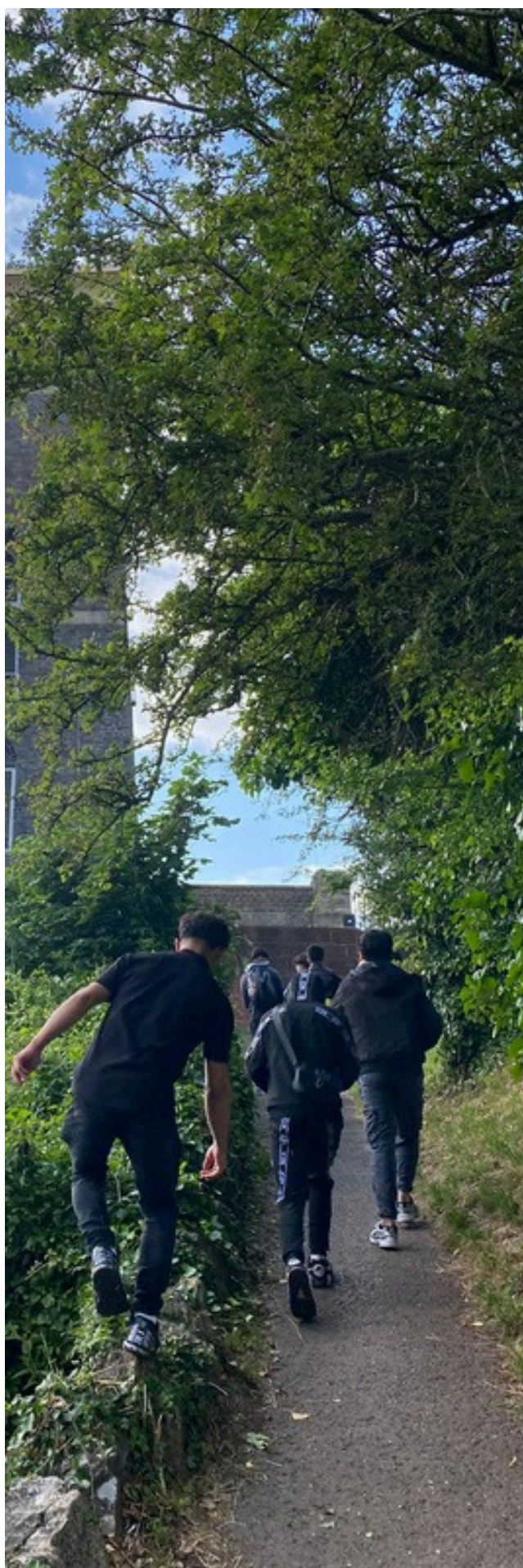
Some young people described learning about other cultures from participants/young leaders with different cultural backgrounds to them. This included learning about language, religion, language, music, dance and food.

"I felt like I learnt so much.. particularly from conversations with the other leaders who were all from such diverse backgrounds."
- Young Leader

Working Towards Goals

Some young people reported that OSH helped or inspired them to work towards goals and intentions, particularly in relation to public speaking and using their voice more, confidence, conversation, patience, empathy and being more social.

"I want to practice public speaking more and learn more games."
- Participant



CASE STUDY: MARYAMA'S STORY

Maryama is 16. She came to the UK 5 years ago to be reunited with her father.

Initially she was finding English hard so was struggling socially and with her confidence. She was also finding her large secondary school, and London as a whole, overwhelming.

A leader from the refugee youth club she was attending told her about OSH, so in October 2023 she attended her first residential.

"I was very nervous, but everyone was so welcoming. The leaders helped me to meet other people by acting as translators and explaining things I didn't understand. I really loved the rules about everyone respecting everybody which made it a really safe place to just relax, have fun. After going once, I was hooked and kept going back. Now I want to be a leader for sure!"

Joining Our Second Home really changed things for me; I stopped being so shy and scared and being so anxious about speaking to people. It helped me to come out of my shell. The English sessions really helped, especially being with others who struggled too. They especially helped me with my GCSEs, which I've just finished.

At OSH I got a group of friends who understand each other. I love that we come from so many different backgrounds, but connect on a deep level. OSH opened my eyes to the world, different cultures, traditions, religions, ways of life and now I really want to travel as an adult.

My dream as a child was to become a sonographer, but I thought that wasn't possible anymore. Then I met one of the leaders, Tomi, who is at university in Saudi Arabia (where my mum grew up). She is helping me to connect with universities out there and find scholarships. They were impressed with my GCSE predictions and said I'm on course for a scholarship. So, OSH's help to get settled in the UK, grow in confidence, improve my English and with my GCSEs means that I am on course to go to university in Saudi Arabia to study to become a sonographer. I can't actually believe it!

I'm also really hoping to become a leader in OSH - I look up to my leaders so much and I want to become just like them. OSH is like a family to me, so I will definitely be leading residentials.

I'm also proud that I brought more people, especially girls, to OSH - other refugees from school and my cousins. Some of them are even leaders now!"

PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS



Alongside exploring the impact of OSH, we also gathered feedback on programme effectiveness. This was intended to help build a deeper understanding of the conditions that enable effective practice to emerge and be sustained within OSH. The insights presented in the following section draw on perspectives from across the programme, including participants, young leaders, volunteers, referrers and members of the OSH team.

The Leaders and Volunteers

Many participants felt leaders and volunteers were key to their positive experiences, describing them as kind, supportive, respectful and friendly. Some participants explained how leaders helped them with practical needs - communication, English speaking, translation - helped them feel listened to and included, and being available if someone needed help. A few accounts described the OSH team working well together and having good communication.

"The leaders are so nice, they make me feel so comfortable." - Participant

"They really did treat me amazing... not as showing that they're leaders or they're, like, controlling us." - Participant

Adaptable and Flexible Structure and Activities

Some young people reported the programme activities were flexible and adaptable to their needs, wishes and interests. Others described the activity structure itself as engaging and well organised, sharing that having breaks was important. Young leaders felt the programme activities were able to adapt for different energy levels.

*"D gave everyone good breaks- didn't seem that anyone got overly tired."
- OSH Team*

PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS



The Food, Accommodation, Transport

Many young people commented on food, rooms and the sites/venues where activities took place as being effective. Some described the food as healthy and accommodating for different dietary requirements, while one noted food had improved compared to previous trips. Some shared positive elements about the accommodation, for example comfortable rooms, heating and bedding, and others shared they liked the outdoor areas particularly the woods. Some commented on how the transport (pick up/return) was organised smoothly on residential.

"I'm not gonna lie, the food used to be bad but now they do better." - Participant

"Transportation (pick-up from the station and return) was well-organised" - Participant

The Training/Preparation for Leaders and Volunteers

88% of volunteers felt supported and prepared by OSH to be a volunteer; with 100% of volunteers stating that they learnt new skills through their volunteering experience. 100% of leaders agreed following the LiT course that they knew what it means to be a leader; with 100% agreeing (50% strong agreement) that they are confident to lead activities and 100% (75% strong agreement) that they believe they can inspire other young people who have had similar life experiences to them. 100% of young leaders agreed (88% strong agreement) that they would like to do further leadership roles in the future.

Many young leaders described the training they received as supportive, well organised and useful preparation for leadership. Some felt the training helped with building their confidence over time, particularly through gaining hands-on practical leadership experience for example on residential. Some reported the training helped with specific aspects of leadership, for example different leadership styles and approaches, facilitation techniques, public speaking, team work, cultural understanding and self-confidence. Some described learning about leadership being about empowering others, and others that the training helped them to better understand other young people's needs.

*"Leadership isn't about changing yourself to become the 'ideal leader', but about being yourself and empowering others."
- Young Leader*

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

We also gathered feedback on areas where the programme could be strengthened. Much of this related to activity-level improvements i.e. practical tweaks and adjustments that could enhance the experience for participants. However, some feedback pointed to deeper considerations relating to participant experience and inclusion. These insights have been reflected and explored further in the recommendations section of this report.

Activities including structure and pace

While there were many positive comments about the structure and pace of the activities, the opposite was also true. Some young people described residential as too intense, rushed or tiring and long days. Others wanted more breaks, more free time and a better balance of activities, including more variety and creativity to avoid boredom.

"The program was engaging but felt very packed, especially on Saturday."
- Participant

Some Young Peoples' Needs Weren't Met

Some young people felt that their needs weren't always fully considered, for example not having others who shared their language, needing more rest or being shy to share their views in a group. Some described feeling isolated or excluded, including when new to a group or feeling they weren't being listened to by leaders. Several described wanting later wake-up times and fewer disturbances to their rest. Some young leaders reported needing time out or breaks but not wanting to let others down. Some young leaders described feeling uncomfortable due to other participant's behaviour.

"Didn't enjoy it, no one spoke his language... wanted to go home."
- Referrer

Some participants and leaders raised issues related to the venue and accommodation, including rooming arrangements. Some reported noise at night and temperature disturbed sleep, and suggested changes could be made to improve comfort.

"Noise at night was an issue - need to set clear expectations and ground rules around keeping quiet at night."
- Young Leader

Some young people didn't enjoy the food quality and variety. Some reported wanting more meat options and more diverse food from different cultures. Some raised concerns about cooking quality, including food not being cooked properly.

Behavioural Concerns

Some young leaders shared difficulties managing participant behaviour while running activities, including rudeness towards leaders, inappropriate language and participants not listening to instructions.

It felt like after you volunteer for a while your work can be taken for granted."
- Volunteer

Some described a lack of participant motivation or engagement, and others shared challenges with physical behaviours and difficulty gathering people together particularly during sports activities. Some felt over use of phones was sometimes a barrier to participation. Some also described leader behaviour as uncomfortable or unsupportive for example:

"Some British leaders were quite forceful with participants which was a bit uncomfortable, not in the OSH spirit"
- Young Leader



AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Communication/Coordination

Some young people and leaders felt that there was a lack of clarity around communication, for example participants not always being sure what they were meant to be doing. Some described coordination and communication challenges when team members were in multiple places at once. Some young leaders also described a lack of communication about changes to activities, last minute or rushed planning and unclear expectations around roles and responsibilities.

Other areas for improvement noted by a minority of individuals included: issues with the sign-up process; long waiting list; there being a divide between leaders and participants including eating separately; and volunteers not always feeling appreciated.

"There have been occasions when I didn't feel appreciated as a volunteer, it felt like after you volunteer for a while your work can be taken for granted." - Volunteer

Training, support and care for leaders + volunteers

While there were multiple positives about the training and support provided, many young leaders wanted more training especially relating to what may happen in the role. Several described needing more support around logistics, safeguarding and handling difficult behaviour or incidents. A minority felt unsupported or excluded, and that they didn't have clear expectations particularly before their first residential. Some shared they found volunteering tiring, with limited breaks and quiet spaces for time out. One described leaders weekends feeling repetitive and wanting to learn more.

Some young leaders felt there wasn't enough structured time to communicate, plan and work together. Others reported not having time to ask questions in appropriate moments, rather than during busy times. Some shared planning felt rushed and ideas weren't always practical or thought through.

Some suggested more days for leaders to come together to plan, and shared that having meetings late at night wasn't always productive and they would preferred them to be spread out over weekends.

"Planning felt quite rushed, like we had to come up with stuff as quick as possible." -Young Leader



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This evaluation sought to understand the extent to which participation in OSH contributes to positive outcomes for young refugees and asylum seekers, while also exploring the conditions that support effective programme delivery. The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods design drawing on surveys, interviews, creative methods and programme monitoring data. Importantly, young people were involved as co-evaluators throughout the process, contributing to the development of the evaluation framework, participating in data analysis sessions and shaping the interpretation of findings.

Through this collaborative process, five key outcome areas were identified as the most relevant lenses through which to understand the impact of OSH: **emotional health, belonging, agency, skills and capabilities, and motivation and progression.**

Across these outcome areas, the strongest evidence of change was observed in relation to wellbeing, belonging and skills development. Many young people reported feeling safe, relaxed and able to enjoy themselves during activities, with 84% of participants agreeing that they enjoyed the activities and had a good time and 69% reporting feeling relaxed and comfortable. Experiences of belonging and connection were also widely reported: 86% of participants said they made new friends and connections, and qualitative accounts described OSH as a welcoming environment where young people felt accepted, supported and less isolated.

Evidence of skills and capabilities development was also notable, particularly in relation to English language speaking, leadership development and teamwork. In comparison, evidence relating to agency and motivation was present but less consistent.

For example, 59% of participants reported being able to share their feelings with staff and leaders and 55% felt able to make choices about activities. While many young people described increased confidence, inspiration from role models and greater awareness of future opportunities, fewer participants described setting goals or articulating clear future plans.

Overall, the findings suggest that OSH is providing environments in which many young refugees and asylum seekers experience enjoyment, connection and opportunities for personal development. In particular, the programme appears to play an important role in supporting social connection, reducing isolation and enabling young people to build confidence and skills through shared activities and peer relationships.

The evaluation also highlights areas where further development may strengthen outcomes. These include creating more consistent opportunities for young people to exercise agency and voice, strengthening support for motivation and longer-term progression, and addressing practical aspects of programme delivery such as pacing of activities, communication and increased support for leaders and volunteers.

Continued attention to inclusion, participant needs and participant-led programme design may support OSH to build on its existing strengths while enhancing its potential for longer-term impact on the wellbeing, opportunities and social participation of young refugees and asylum seekers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OSH is already creating environments that support young people to thrive, feel safe, feel a sense of belonging and hope, and provide opportunities and progression. The recommendations below are designed to strengthen what is already working well, while encouraging increased consistency, clarity and sustainability as the organisation/programme grows. Many of these may already be underway, the emphasis is on embedding them consistently and making implicit strengths more explicit. These recommendations are heavily influenced by suggestions from participants and young leaders.

Recommendation 1: strengthen participant knowledge and expectation pre-activity

Review the information shared with participants in advance of residentials and activities so they have more clarity around what to expect. This may include:

- A simple overview of day-to-day structure and what activities will take place
- Information about food, accommodation and sleeping arrangements
- Clear expectations around behaviour
- Presenting this as a visual easy to follow chart as a plan

Increasing predictability may reduce anxiety and support inclusion (particularly for newly arrived young people).

Recommendation 2: build more rest and quiet time into activities

While activities were consistently enjoyed, sometimes participants and young leaders described the pace as too intense. Consider embedding rest as a core feature by:

- Building structured downtime within activities
- Having designated quiet spaces where participants and leaders can take time out
- Set clear night-time expectations (on residentials) to reduce sleep disturbance, and if appropriate provide earplugs and sleep masks.

Recommendation 3: Clarify roles and communication during activities

To improve overall communication and coordination, consider strengthening:

- Clarity around who is doing what before residentials/activities
- Agreed communication systems (particularly across sites with multiple buildings)
- Include structured daily briefings and debriefs
- Have a clear communication protocol for when plans need to change last minute.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 4: Strengthen and enhance leader training and support

While Leaders in Training support is widely valued, young leaders have suggested ways in which this could be improved including:

- Increased focus on leader wellbeing, including ensuring time out and reducing pressure to always 'be on top of things'
- More scenario-based examples (particularly around managing behaviour, inclusion, safeguarding)
- Clearer preparation and expectations for first-time leaders
- Opportunities to shadow other leaders
- Structured opportunities for team reflection and celebration of effective leadership.

As part of leader/volunteer training consider introducing a specific inclusion planning step before residentials to identify the following about participants (if appropriate):

- Language and communication needs
- Accessibility considerations
- Mental health and trauma
- What additional support might be required for new participants.

Recommendation 5: Develop a shared approach to resolving challenges

Following on from Recommendation 4, and providing a further layer of support for young leaders and volunteers, consider developing a simple, ideally co-designed, shared framework for young leaders, volunteers and OSH team that outlines for example:

- Behaviour expectations for everyone including what is acceptable
- Processes and protocols for managing challenging situations
- How to support one another in the event of a challenging situation / incident
- Allocated people to support leaders and volunteers in the case of a challenging situation / incident



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 6: Increase participant co-design

OSH already provides much space for young people's voices to be heard. One young leader suggested that this could be strengthened by treating each residential as a co-designed 'project', for example:

- A short participant brainstorm before or at the start of the residential to propose new activities
- Discussion around how participants would like to balance structured activities with rest and down-time
- Having reflection sessions with participants that inform future planning

Recommendation 7: Review volunteer and young leader skillset

As the programme evolves, consider annually auditing and identifying the skills from volunteers and young leaders needed to meet participant needs (e.g. facilitation, behaviour management, safeguarding, language support). Recruitment could then focus on building a balanced team mix of skills alongside warmth and friendliness.

Recommendation 8: Embed light-touch, young people involved evaluation

As part of this evaluation consultancy OSH has involved young people in the co-design and co-analysis of evaluation tools and data, which has significantly enhanced the relevance and robustness of the evaluation approach. Consider continuing with this commitment by embedding simple, consistent evaluation practice into all OSH activities, and where feasible involve young leaders as 'young researchers' or co-analysts to strengthen ownership and reduce interpretation bias.

Continue to explore and test the current outcomes in the Theory of Change, with a review point one year after the release of this report.

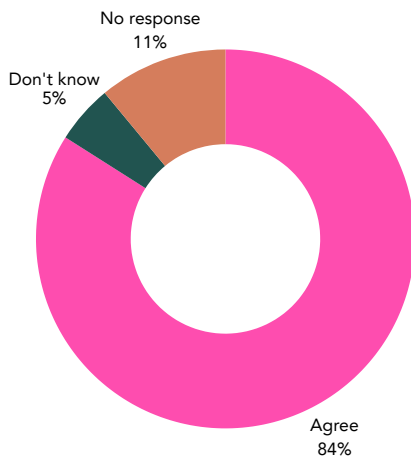




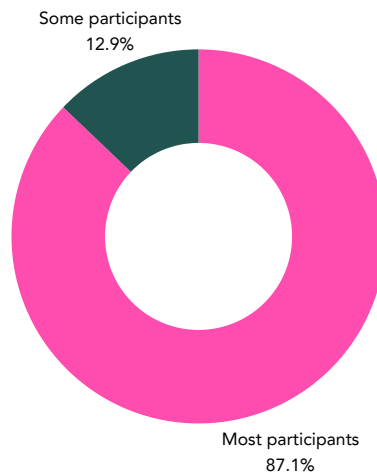
APPENDICES

YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL SAFE, SETTLED AND ABLE TO ENJOY THEMSELVES

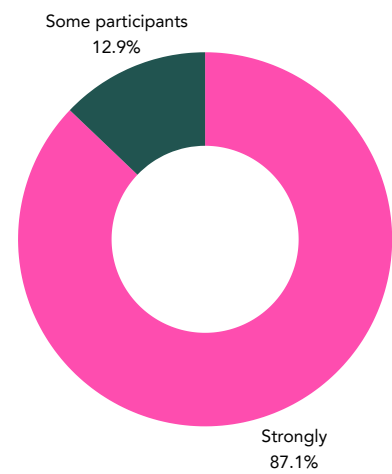
Participants: I enjoyed the activities and had a good time



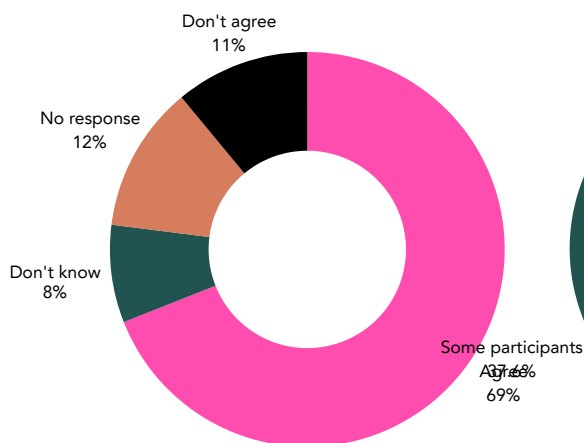
Volunteers: How many participants did you observe having fun



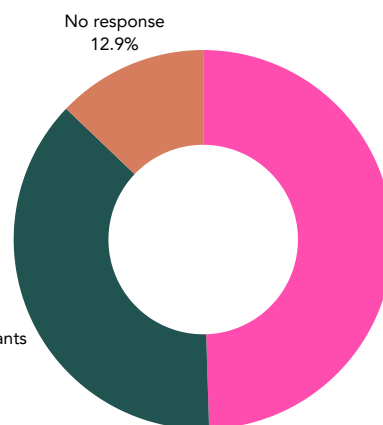
Referrers: My young person/people had fun



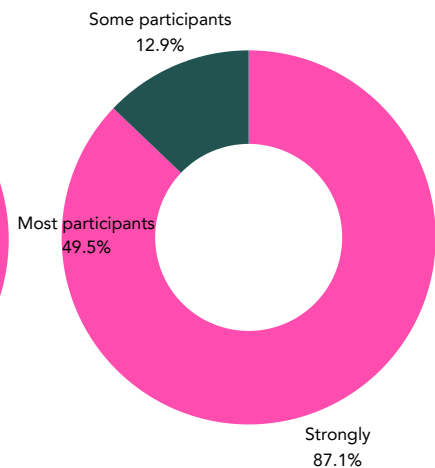
Participants: I felt relaxed and comfortable



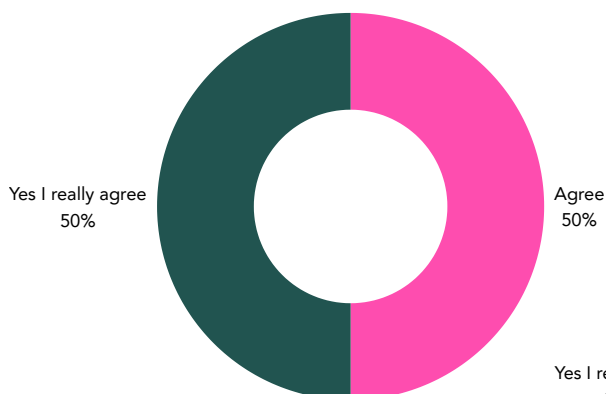
Volunteers: How many participants did you observe having a positive attitude



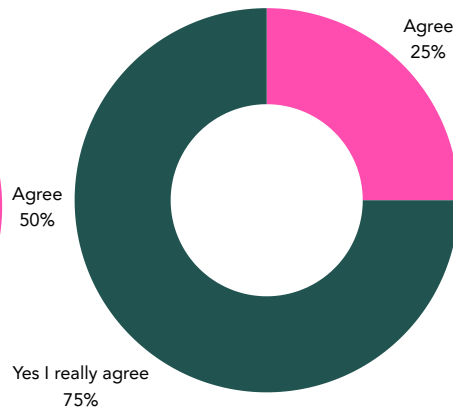
Referrers: My young person/people had a positive attitude



Young leaders: I feel good about myself when leading others



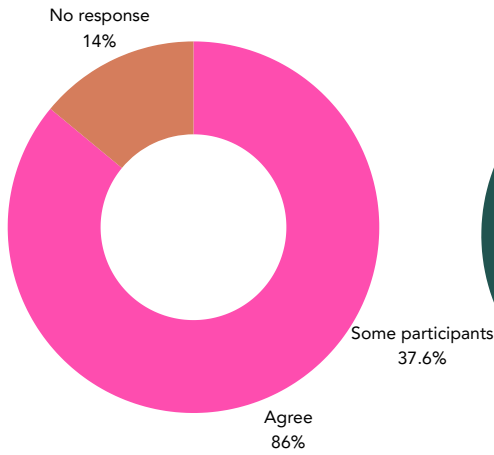
Young leaders: I felt calm and relaxed at the LiT course



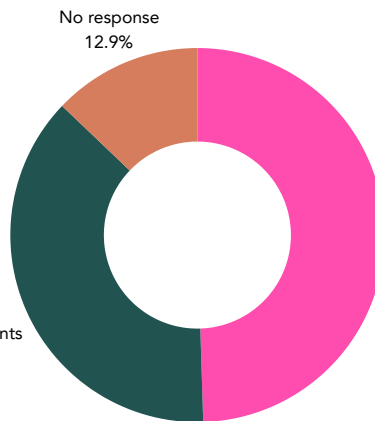
Data collected from: 74 Interactive survey responses (participants); 8 Leaders in Training endpoint survey responses; 16 Referrer survey response; 8 Volunteer survey responses

YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCE BELONGING

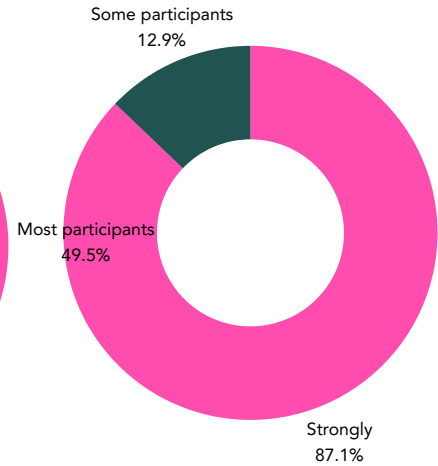
Participants: I made new friends and connections



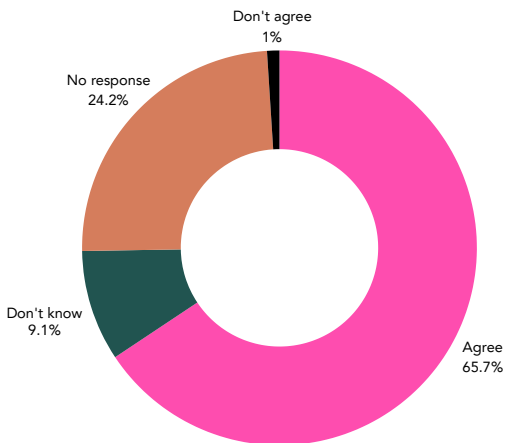
Volunteers: How many participants did you observe respecting each other / other cultures



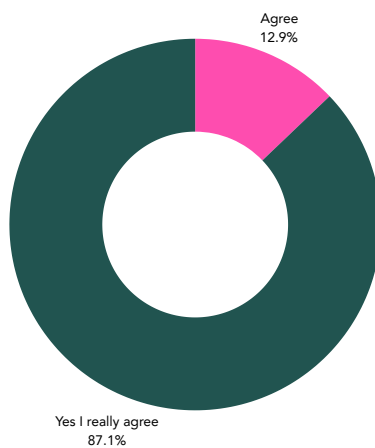
Referrers: My young person/people made friends at OSH



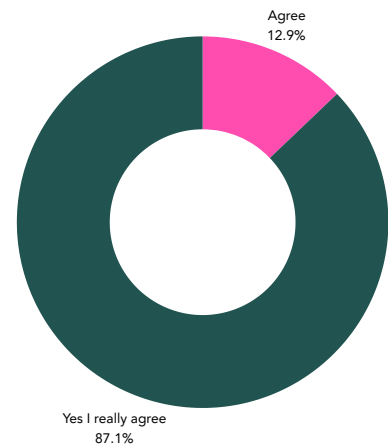
Participants: I felt seen and heard enough



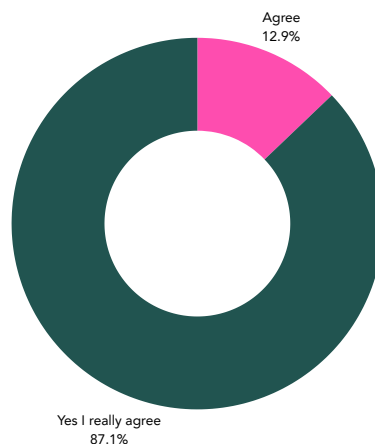
Young leaders: I felt listened to by other people at the LiT course



Young leaders: I felt welcomed at the LiT course



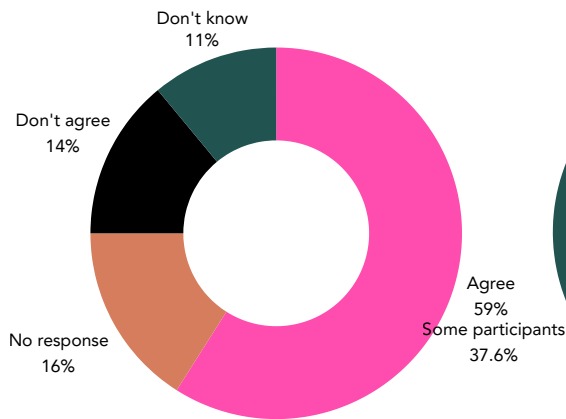
Young leaders: I will keep in touch with other leaders because of the LiT course



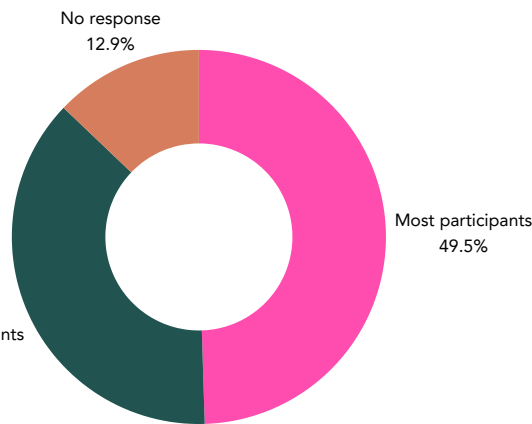
Data collected from: 74 Interactive survey responses (participants); 8 Leaders in Training endpoint survey responses; 16 Referrer survey response; 8 Volunteer survey responses

YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOP AGENCY, VOICE AND SELF CONFIDENCE

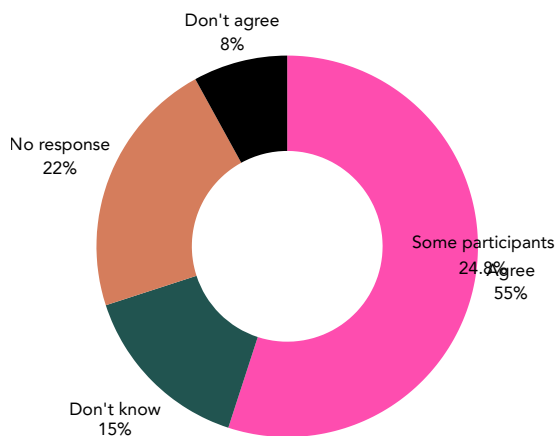
Participants: I could share my feelings with the staff and leaders



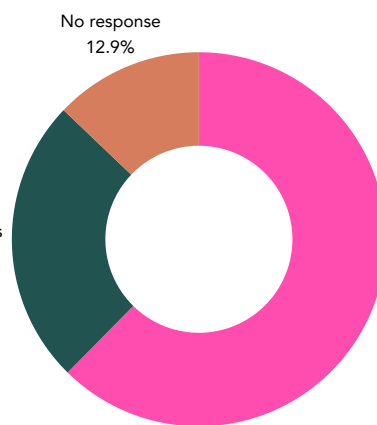
Volunteers: How many participants did you observe actively participating in the activities



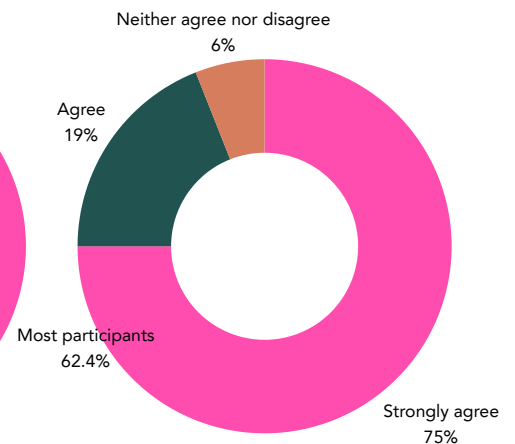
Participants: I could make choices about what to do



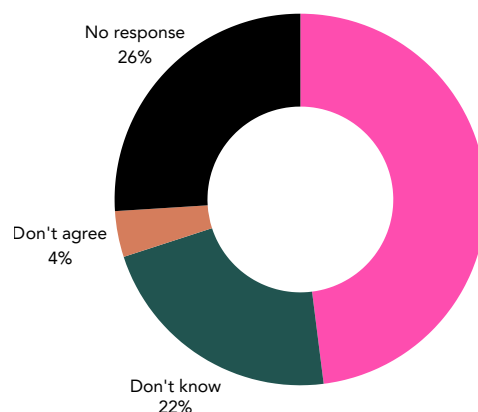
Volunteers: How many participants did you observe being more confident with speaking



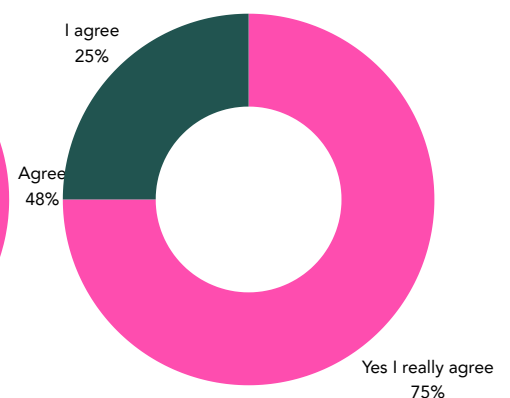
Referrers: My young person/people is more confident at speaking since OSH



Young leaders: I feel more confident to be a leader



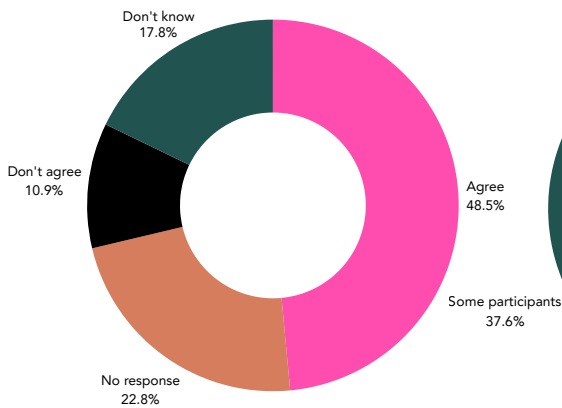
Young leaders: The LiT course has helped me get better at communicating with other people



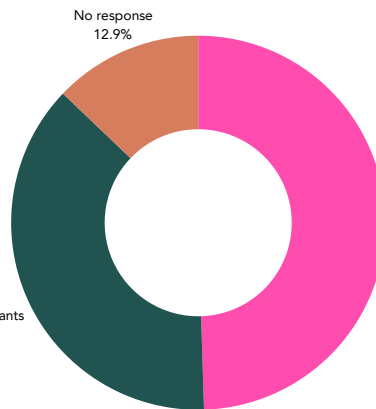
Data collected from: 74 Interactive survey responses (participants); 8 Leaders in Training endpoint survey responses; 16 Referrer survey response; 8 Volunteer survey responses

YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOP SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

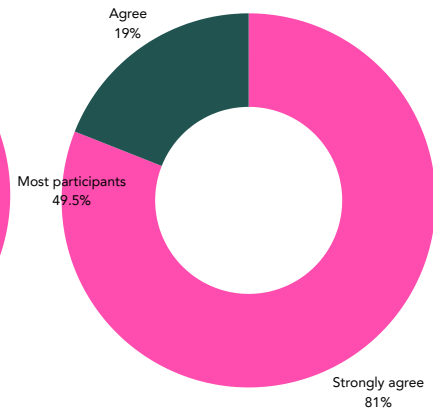
Participants: My English speaking has got better



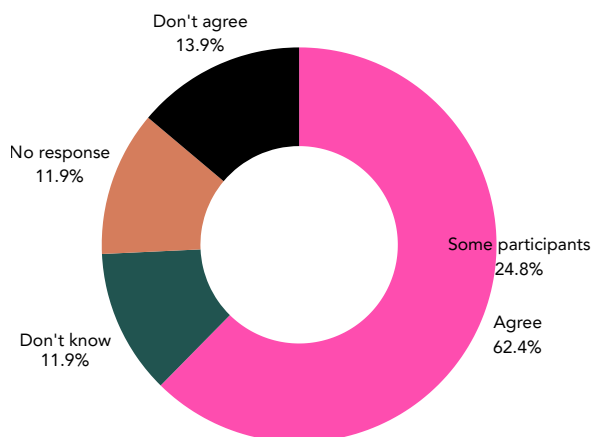
Volunteers: How many participants did you observe trying new things



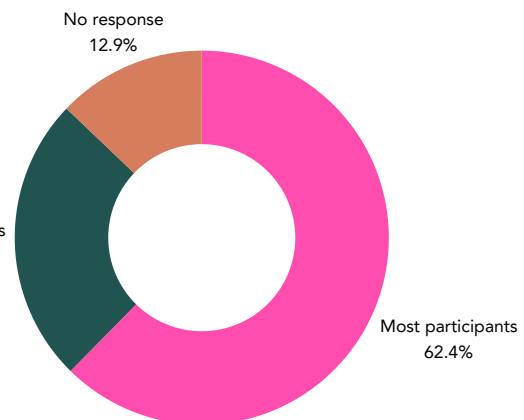
Referrers: My young person/young people learnt something new at OSH



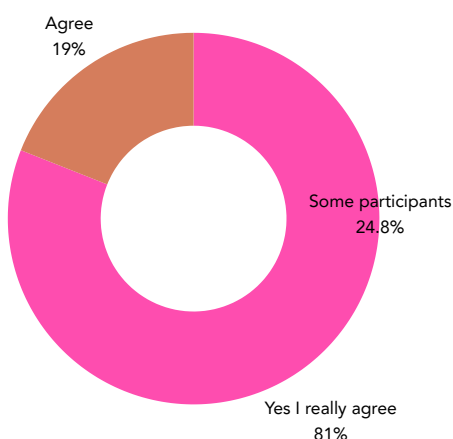
Participants: I learnt new things



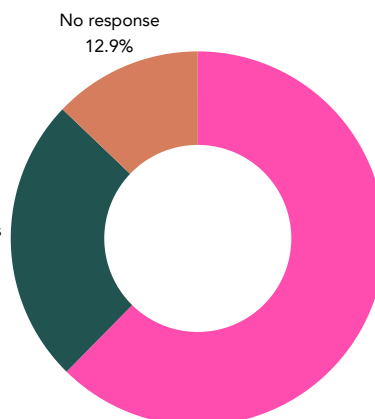
Volunteers: How many participants did you observe working well as a team



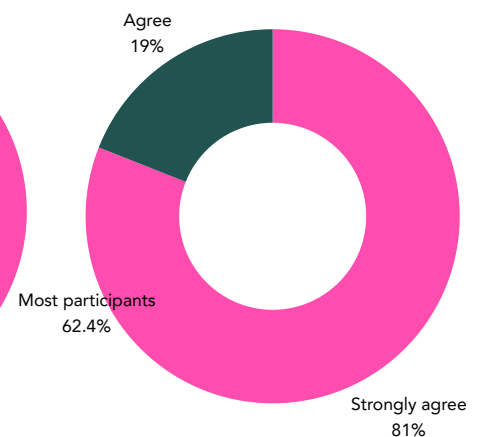
Young leaders: The LiT course has helped improve my English speaking



Volunteers: How many participants did you observe developing their English language skills



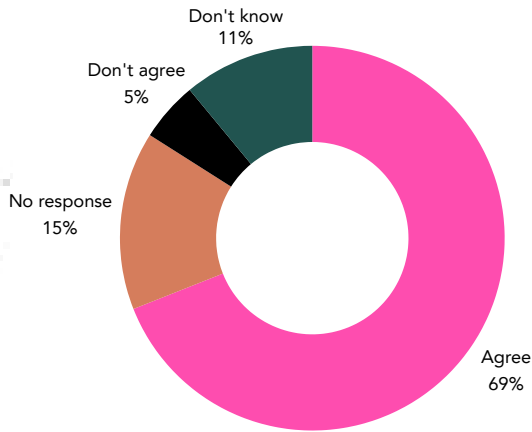
Referrers: My young person/young people developed their English language skills at OSH



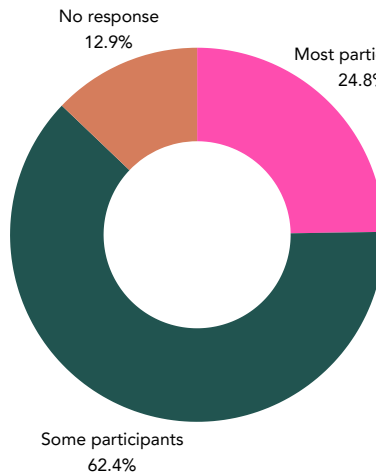
Data collected from: 74 Interactive survey responses (participants); 8 Leaders in Training endpoint survey responses; 16 Referrer survey response; 8 Volunteer survey responses

YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL HOPEFUL, MOTIVATED AND POSITIVE ABOUT LIFE IN THE UK

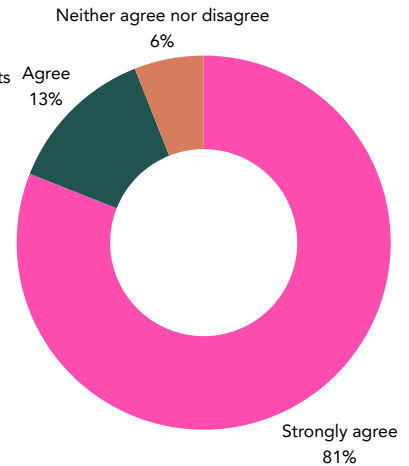
Participants: I was inspired by somebody or something



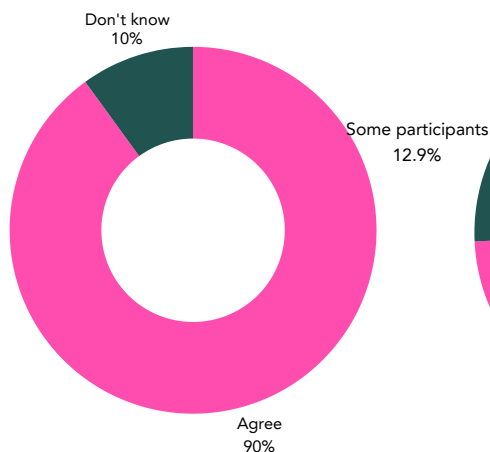
Volunteers: How many participants setting goals and targets for themselves



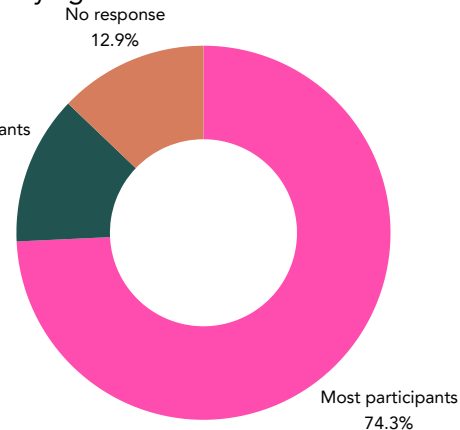
Referrers: My young person/young people was inspired by someone or something at OSH



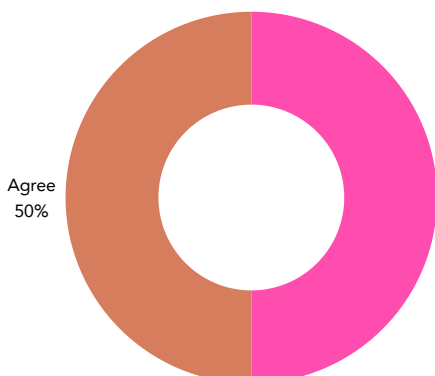
Participants: I want to come back to an OSH activity



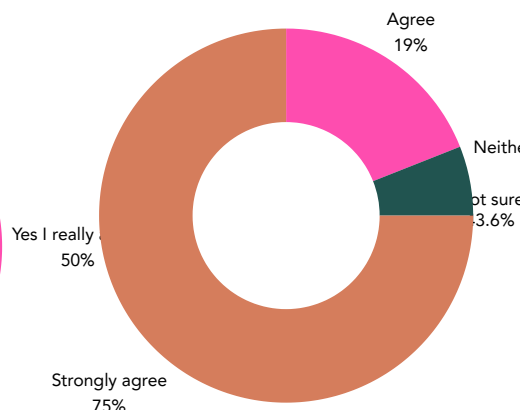
Volunteers: How many participants did you observe trying their best in the activities



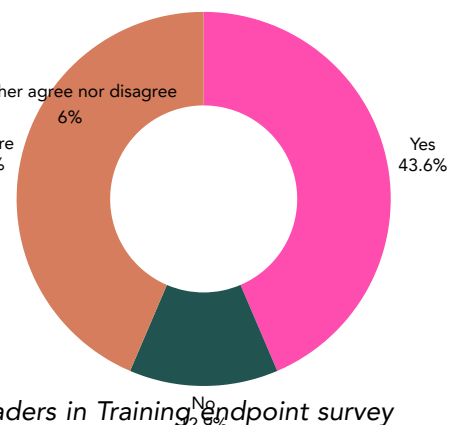
Young leaders: The LiT course has given me ideas about what I want to do in the future



Referrers: My young person/young people learnt more about other cultures / living in the UK because of OSH



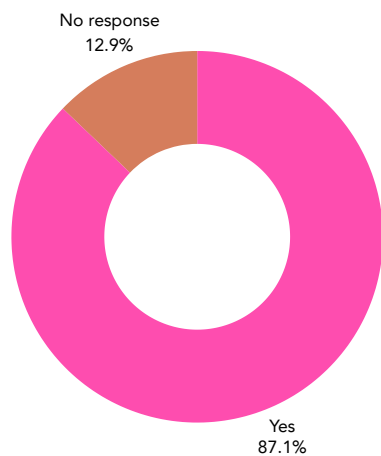
Referrers: Has attending OSH activities had any longer term impact on your young person / young people - e.g. in their education or employment?



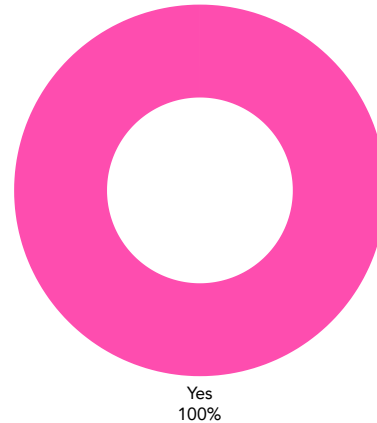
Data collected from: 74 Interactive survey responses (participants); 8 Leaders in Training endpoint survey responses; 16 Referrer survey response; 8 Volunteer survey responses

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LEADER/VOLUNTEER TRAINING

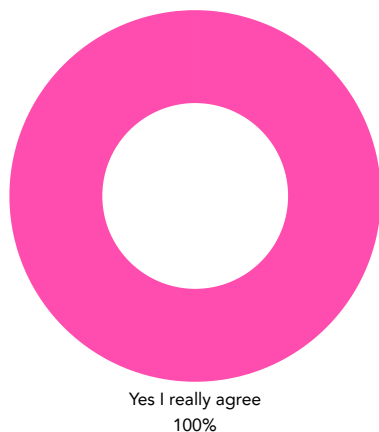
Volunteers: Did you feel supported and prepared by OSH to be a volunteer?



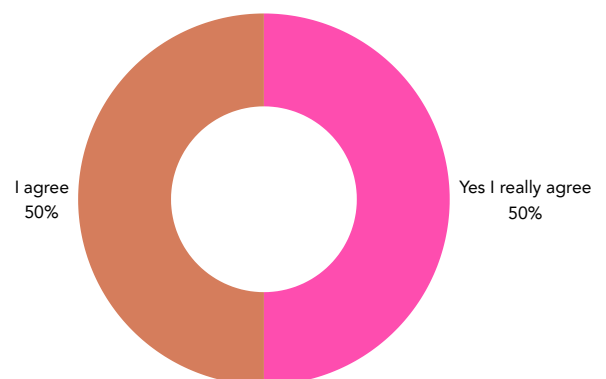
Volunteers: Did you learn any new skills through your volunteering experience?



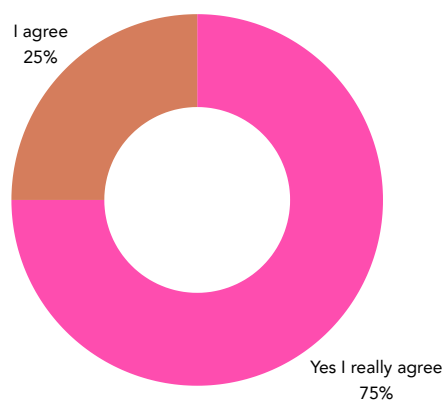
Young leaders: I know what it means to be a leader



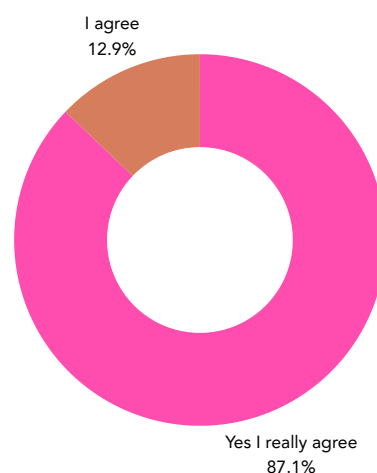
Young leaders: I am confident to lead activities



Young leaders: I believe I can inspire other young people who have had similar life experiences to me



Young leaders: I want to do other leadership roles in the future



SURVEY / INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interactive Survey

Participants were asked to rate their agreement with the following statements:

- My English speaking has got better
- I made new friends and connections
- I felt seen and heard enough
- I was inspired by somebody or something
- I could share my feelings with the staff and leaders
- I enjoyed the activities and had a good time
- I felt relaxed and comfortable
- I could make choices about what to do
- I learnt new things
- I want to come back to an OSH activity

Evaluation Worksheets

Participants were asked to colour in any of the following statements that reflected their experience during OSH:

- I can be myself
- I can talk about important things
- I enjoy the activities
- I feel proud of my culture
- I feel safe
- I feel welcome
- I laugh and smile
- I learn new things
- I make friends
- People listen to me
- People treat me with respect
- There are some things that I don't like

Participants were asked to colour in any of the following statements that reflected their perspective on whether anything changed for them because of OSH:

- I am better at sharing how I feel
- I am more confident meeting new people
- I am more positive about the future
- I believe in myself more
- I can make choices about important things more easily
- I can work better with others (teamwork)
- I feel closer to people from other cultures
- I feel happier
- I know more about British culture
- I take better care of myself
- My English has improved

Creative Modelling / Group Reflection Questions

The following semi-structured interview questions were asked to participants:

- Why did you join OSH?
- What have you enjoyed most and enjoyed least about OSH activities?
- Has anything changed about you because of OSH?
- What does OSH mean to you?
- Will you use anything you have learnt or gained at OSH in your life outside OSH?
- Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience of OSH?

Leaders in Training Survey

Young leaders were asked to rate their agreement with the following statements:

- I know what it means to be a leader
- I am confident to lead activities
- I believe I can inspire other young people who have had similar life experiences to me
- I want to do other leadership roles in the future
- I have a good social network
- I feel good about myself when leading others
- The LiT course has helped improve my English speaking
- I felt listened to by other people at the LiT course
- The LiT course has given me ideas about what I want to do in the future
- The LiT course has helped me get better at communicating with other people
- I felt welcomed at the LiT course
- I could share my ideas at the LiT course
- I felt calm and relaxed at the LiT course
- I will keep in touch with other leaders because of the LiT course

The following open questions were also asked to young leaders in the survey:

- What did you learn during the LiT course?
- How could the LiT course be improved?
- Please choose three words to describe the LiT course. For example: interesting, fun, helpful.
- Is there anything else you would like to share about the LiT course?

Group Reflection Questions: Leaders

The following semi-structured interview questions were asked to young leaders:

- What did you learn about being a leader at OSH activities? What did you find easy / difficult about being a leader?
- Did your confidence to be a leader increase? Can you explain how/why?
- Did you feel prepared and supported by OSH to become a leader? Can you explain why/why not?
- What is effective / less effective about the Leaders in training course?
- To what extent did you feel you could be yourself as a leader?
- Have you used any of the leadership skills / knowledge / confidence you gained beyond OSH? (For example in education / the workplace)
- Would you like to develop your leadership skills further? If so, do you believe OSH can help you to do this?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience of being a leader with OSH?



This report was prepared by Abigail D'Amore (of Abigail D'Amore Associates) during March 2026 with input from Raghad Haddad, OSH young people Mayyah Ahmed, Loujein Ben Khalifa, Maryama Mahamed, Wintana Mana Tekie, Mishkat, & Alvaro Rocha, OSH team members and trustee Dr Robyn Smith.

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