A study on the self-efficacy of refugee and host-community children in a theater-based educational program in Mafraq, Jordan

Kaitlin Allsopp, Andrew Haas, and William La Pietra

Teachers College, Columbia University

17 December 2019

Introduction

In 2019, the UNHCR reported that over half of the estimated 25.4 million refugees globally are children, with the Syrian refugee crisis accounting for almost a quarter of this population (UNICEF, 2018; UNHCR, 2019a). These macro-level statistics can obscure the internal and external impact of conflict and displacement in children's daily lives. A study of more than 6,000 displaced Syrian children in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey revealed that roughly 54% suffer from a "severe emotional disorder" (CDC, 2016). Once relocated, they face the challenge of navigating intense social stigma from their host-communities, overcoming poverty, and accessing quality education (Buckner, Spencer, & Cha, 2018; UNICEF, 2018). In Jordan alone, 85% of displaced Syrian children live in poverty and 38% do not attend school (UNICEF, 2018). Trapped in exile with limited economic and educational opportunities, many Syrian refugee children are forced into early marriage or child labor (Krafft, Sieverding, Salemi, & Keo, 2018). Even with a high school diploma, refugee youth still face difficulty finding employment as non-citizens and live in poverty (Bellino, 2018; Buckner et al., 2018). Arguably, children need more than traditional academic preparation to succeed in the face of these challenges.

Experts acknowledge the ability of arts-based educational programs, both in formal and non-formal educational (NFE) settings, to enhance the emotional well-being and a sense of confidence in refugee children (Burde, Wahl, Guven, & Skarpeteig, 2017; Martin et al., 2013; Vettraino, Linds, & Jindal-Snape, 2017; Edmunds, 2017). This type of pedagogy utilizes the arts-drama, music, and creative workshops, to provide participants with the skills necessary to not only express themselves, but also overcome life's challenges. The benefits of arts-based education are not contained to the domain of artistic expression. Instead, emotional wellbeing,

defined by reduced anxiety and depression and an increased sense of confidence and resilience, extends into other areas of children's lives (Buriel, Morais, & Loquet, 2019). In addition, a systematic review of 21 studies on creative arts-based workshops for refugee children showed a unanimous improvement in participants' mental health (Burde et al., 2017).

However, few studies have used self-efficacy, an individual's perceived sense of ability and confidence, to measure the emotional well-being of children in arts-based educational programs for refugees (Scholz, Doña, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002). Even more astounding, none of the studies have measured the self-efficacy of Syrian refugee children, which account for 25% of the population of displaced children globally, in arts-based educational programming ("UNHCR - Figures at a Glance," n.d.). The General Self-Efficacy Index (GSE) offers a proven method for gauging the socio-emotional health, confidence, motivation, and development of positive coping mechanisms of refugees (Scholz et al., 2002; Schwarzer, Hahn, & Jerusalem, 1993; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2013). Research shows that higher levels of self-efficacy in individuals often accompany decreased stress levels, increased motivation, positive decision making, and improved academic performance (Bandura, 2006; Scholz et al., 2002; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2013). Indicators of self-efficacy not only align with the developmental aims of arts-based education, but also offer insight to governments, non-governmental organizations, and charity-based organizations seeking to chart educational strategies for improving the well-being of refugee children.

Since research suggests that arts-based education positively influences the socio-emotional health of refugee youth, and GSE levels can indicate well-being, our study will measure the perceived self-efficacy of Syrian refugee and host-community children in a drama-based educational program (Millar & Warwick, 2018; Buriel, Morais, & Loquet, 2019). We

located our research in Jordan since arts-based education is not officially incorporated into the MoE's curricular strategy for Syrian refugee youth (Ministry of Education, 2018). Our findings suggest that they should promote and ensure access to the arts for their displaced youth. Furthermore, Seenaryo, a UK based non-profit, was selected as the research site given the organization's relevant programming in arts-based education, location in Mafraq, Jordan, and service to Syrian refugee youth.

Our team specifically asked the following research question: *what are the perceived self-efficacy levels of children participating in Seenaryo's child and youth theater programs*? As Seenaryo's programming in Jordan serves a smaller population, survey research was conducted through a census of 28 children and youth theater participants to measure children's perceived GSE via a mixed methods questionnaire.

Ultimately, this study's purpose is twofold. Firstly, we seek to add to the knowledge base concerning the adaptation and distribution of the universal GSE questionnaire amongst children in vulnerable contexts. Secondly, we aim to evaluate the perceived self-efficacy of Syrian refugee and host-community children in arts-based educational programs. Admittedly, the research findings are descriptive and preclude inferences about the influence of arts-based education on perceived self-efficacy for Syrian refugee children. However, this study's significance lies in the lack of previous research on GSE in arts-based education, and relevant location and sample population to current day events.

Context

I.   *Location and History*

Positioned between Syria, Israel, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, Jordan is a relatively small country located at the center of the Middle East and North African region (MENA). The country declared its independence in 1946 and became a member state to the United Nations in 1955 (United Nations Member States, 2006). Beginning in 2011, Jordan experienced a massive influx of Syrian refugees due to the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War (Yahya, Kassir, & el-Hariri, 2018). Now, roughly eight years later, the Syrian refugee population in Jordan is estimated at 654,995 individuals, over half of which are children, accounting for one-tenth of the total Jordanian population (UNHCR, 2019a, 2019b). Additionally, Jordan already accommodates large numbers of Palestinian refugees following Israel's war for independence in 1948 and again in the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 (Yahya et al., 2018).

II.   *Arts-based Education*

The absence of the arts from Jordan's educational strategy is foundational to our interest in understanding children's perceptions of self-efficacy in Seenaryo's drama programs. The Hashemite Kingdom's[1] educational campaign for vulnerable children predominantly focuses on developing reading and math skills (*Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education 2018-2022*, 2018). However, in 2017, the MoE added citizenship, social, and life skills to the educational agenda through the creation of the Nashatati program for youth and development of Makani centers (UNICEF, 2019b). These serve as non-formal educational centers for psychological

---

[1] Another term for referring to Jordan stemming from the ethnic background of its royal family

wellbeing and personal development for vulnerable children (UNICEF, 2019b; Younes &

Morrice, 2019).

Although the country never signed the 1951 Refugee Convention,[2] Jordan ratified the

Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1990. Significant implications and

responsibilities for the treatment of refugees and inclusion of the arts in education accompany

their ratification of the UNCRC. The Convention obligates signatories to respect the human

rights of every child and to ensure children's right to basic education, without discrimination,

under the age of eighteen within their jurisdiction (UNCRC, Article 1 and 2). This provision

applies to every child within the borders of a member state, including refugee children (UNCRC,

Article 22).[3]

Of special significance to Jordan's educational policy is the UNCRC's statute that not

only entitles children to the right to play, but also obligates State Parties to:

> *respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.* (Article 31, 2)

The UNCRC mandates active state promotion of equal access to creative expression in and

through the arts. Jordan's inclusion of arts-based activities and education for refugee youth as

---

[2]The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as an individual outside of their home country, unable to return due to a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (Article 1, Section a2). Originally, the 1951 Convention only applied to those affected by the World Wars in Europe; the 1967 Optional Protocol broadened this interpretation and removed "the geographical and time limits that were part of the 1951 Convention" (UNHCR, 2011), expanding protection to all refugees globally. These human rights instruments entitles refugees the right to non-refoulement (Article 33), nondiscrimination (Article 3), as well as other rights concerning the welfare and protection of refugees. In regards to refugees' right to education, the Convention obligates State Parties to treat refugees the same as nationals "with respect to elementary education" (Article 22, Section 1). The obligation of State Parties to provide all other forms of education, including secondary education, to refugees is substantially weaker: instead of requiring equal treatment to nationals, the Convention requires only "treatment at least favorable as that given to non-refugee aliens" (Ogato, 1994). The enforcement mechanisms of the 1951 are arguably weak: State Parties are obligated to cooperate with the office of the UNHCR, respect their supervisory duty and power, and actively assist the UNHCR in order to achieve the full realization of refugees' rights (Kälin, 2001).
[3]Article 22 of the CRC specifically requires States Parties to ensure the human rights and protections of refugee children residing within their borders.

optional is not fully compliant with its treaty obligations. As a signatory of the CRC, the question

for Jordan is not if it should include arts-based education for refugee children, but how.

III.   *Seenaryo Children and Youth Theater Program*

Located in Mafraq, Jordan, a city where 161,933 Syrian refugees account for 24.8% of

the population, Seenaryo's theater programs serve a vulnerable population of both Syrian refugee

and Jordanian host community children (Seenaryo, 2019; UNHCR, 2019c). The children's

theater consists of children mainly between 8 and 11-years-old, and the youth theater serves

individuals 12 to 16-year-old. Generally, 20 children register for each respective theater

program, but attendance numbers are in continual flux and often 15 students remain by the end

of each 12 week term (McIvor, personal communication, 2019).

Our study intercepted Seenaryo during the initial rollout of their theater programming in

Jordan. Over the past 5 years the organization has operated in Lebanon (Seenaryo, 2019). Their

12 week program guides children through the process of creating and acting in their own

production. In the first three weeks, students learn the basics of performance skills, play drama

games to build group cohesion, and practice different forms of expression (McIvor, personal

communication, 2019). In weeks two through four, staff supports children in creating their own

sketches and performing them back to the group (McIvor, personal communication, 2019). After

week five, program administrators synthesize the children's ideas and work with participants to

draft a storyboard for a final production. Facilitators then write scene descriptions and assign

roles, which children utilize to devise their own scenes complete with movements and dialogue

(McIvor, personal communication, 2019). By week 12, the children have created a new play

through the skills of teamwork, creativity, and self-expression.

Literature Review

I.   General Self-Efficacy Theory

Bandura (1994) developed the idea of self-efficacy as a cornerstone of his Social Cognitive Theory. Within the theory, he defined self-efficacy as an individual's perceived sense of control over their life circumstances including their ability to achieve desired outcomes (Cássia Martinelli, Bartholomeu, Caliatto, & Grecci Sassi, 2009). Social Cognitive Theory purports that this perception of personal influence develops via four key processes: direct experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and emotional state (Bandura, 1994; Cássia Martinelli et al., 2009). The degree to which an individual develops self-efficacy depends on their experience of success or mastery in a given domain - whether personally perceived or communicated to them by another person.

Once thought to be domain specific, researchers now consider these benefits generalizable to multiple areas of a person's life, especially in difficult circumstances in which an individual is uprooted from their normal context including displacement due to conflict (Scholz et al., 2002; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2013). This applicability carries into the school setting, and studies find self-efficacy to correspond with motivation and academic achievement across traditional school subjects (Cássia Martinelli et al., 2009). This is likely due to the sense of capability experienced by those with self-efficacy, leading these individuals to view difficulties in life as challenges to overcome as opposed to impenetrable barriers (Bandura, 2006; Bandura, 1994; Scholz et al., 2002).

In 2002, a psychometric study of 19,100 participants across 25 countries contextualized the GSE questionnaire to evaluate whether researchers could consider GSE a universal construct

(Scholz, Doña, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002). Their findings, collected via the distribution of the quantitative GSE questionnaire, found self-efficacy an applicable measurement across all 25 countries including Syria (Scholz et. al, 2002). A later study published in 2018, however, focused on a similar set of data and strongly argues that there is considerable discrepancy in data pertaining to the test (Barahona, García, Sánchez-García, Barba, & Galindo-Villardón, 2018). However, it remains a widely used tool for measuring self-efficacy. Considering that this study localizes its results and will not involve comparison of test results from surveys disseminated in multiple languages, the debate over this aspect of GSE is minimally concerning.

Of special significance to refugee contexts, researchers found that these perceptions of ability and agency in the face of obstacles generally lead to lower levels of stress and better emotional well-being (Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2013; Schwarzer, Hahn, & Jerusalem, 1993). Given the vulnerable situations and hardships that displaced children and young adults face, perceived self-efficacy could prove a significant factor in overall refugee health and achievement (Bellino, 2018; Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2013). In a mixed-methods study of 186 resettled Afghan and Kurdish refugees in Australia, researchers selected participants via snowballing and utilized the GSE questionnaire and qualitative interviews to study the effect of self-efficacy on resettlement (Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2013). They found a positive relationship between self-efficacy and reduced stress-levels leading to better personal health (Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2013). However, the research on the effects of self-efficacy in the lives of young refugees remains in its nascent stages and in need of further study.

II. *A Valuable Addition to Refugee Education*

Within the area of refugee education, the selection of content cannot be overvalued as it forms the backbone of educational programming. Poorly designed curriculum may not only be

ineffective, but can actively cause harm by way of cultural repression, reinforcement of

inequality, and politicization of history (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Although the discussion of

what constitutes a strong curriculum is ongoing, one aspect remains absent from this

conversation, especially when concerning crisis contexts. The research which has been done on

the value of arts-based education for displaced/refugee communities is still in its nascent stages,

and this oversight could be leading education efforts to overlook a multi-faceted, effective

approach to helping refugee students develop social and emotional competencies for success.

Many studies illustrate the various connections between engagement with the arts and

improvements in academic, social, and emotional achievements for students (Martin et al., 2013;

Vettraino, Linds, & Jindal-Snape, 2017; Edmunds, 2017; Buriel, Morais, & Loquet 2019). In her

thesis, Edmunds (2017) explores the ways in which participation in theater programs interacts

with self-efficacy in a positive manner. The study utilized a mixed methods approach, including

semi-structured interviews with both theater students and parents and questionnaires for

participants based on the standard GSE scale model. The collected data was then analyzed

through a variety of means, including an inductive process with axial coding for the

transcriptions of the interviews, and *T*-tests and a multiple linear regression for the quantitative

data. With this data set, Edmunds (2017) states that these programs correlated with improved

self-efficacy scores across her sample population. Notably, scores improved more steeply for

adolescent women, helping to close the gaps in scores between gender groups (Edmunds, 2017).

Vettraino, Linds, & Jindal-Snape (2017) explore similar themes through a program with

marginalized indigenous youth in Canada. After conducting a three day theater workshop and

interviews including seventh and eighth grade students and community members, the team

analyzed both the interviews and a recorded session of the workshop to gather preliminary data

through an undisclosed framework. From this, the authors conclude that students experienced

growth in a variety of social and emotional areas, specifically including self-efficacy (Vettraino,

Linds, & Jindal-Snape, 2017).

Researchers have conducted similar studies across different content areas and grade

levels, but a dearth of research exists when the context shifts from the American and Canadian

school systems to refugee education. While the direct relevance of Vettraino et al.'s (2017) and

Edmunds's (2017) studies is limited, in that the learners were of different cultural backgrounds

than the participants of this project, they do show that learners of varying backgrounds and

statuses of marginalization can benefit from such programs. By extension, they indicate that it is

unlikely that refugee students could be so dissimilar as to not benefit from similar theater-based

programs.

III.   Arts-based Programs and Refugee Youth

Aforementioned research shows multiple links between theater-based programs and

improvements in self-efficacy, but still does not address the impact refugee status may have on

these effects. Millar and Warwick's (2018) study of the relationship between music practice and

refugee well-being lends additional credence to the idea that these theater-based projects can be

aligned with refugee learning. Over the course of a five week period, they collected data through

participant observation and semi-structured interviews with a small group of Yazidi refugee

youth. The authors concluded, among other ideas, that musical activities can provide an

opportunity for a sense of enfranchisement to these marginalized communities (Millar &

Warwick, 2018). This idea fits into the same general vein of empowerment as self-efficacy, if

with different verbiage, and further strengthens this paper's hypothesis. Additionally, Albane

Buriel, Sylvie Morais, and Monique Loquet (2019) recently published a paper based on an art

program for internally displaced youth in Iraqi Kurdistan. Through a participatory, ethnographic

approach and interview processes, they collected data which indicated that the program provided

a space in which children could collaborate across tense boundaries between ethnic groups.

Unfortunately, they state that the breadth of data they were able to collect was curtailed by

regional tensions and methodology (Buriel, Morais, & Loquet 2019). As stated, research at this

specific intersection of arts, education, and refugee support is in its early stages. This research

helps fill the gaps between these elements and GSE, and adds to the impetus for further research

in this topic as an important angle to approaching refugee education and well-being.

Methodology

This research project is an individual-level analysis of the perceived self-efficacy of

Seenaryo's children and youth theater participants in Jordan. Utilizing a mixed methods design,

we added demographic and a free-response question to the standardized GSE questionnaire and

supplemented our results with qualitative interviews of Seenaryo program leaders. The

questionnaire contains three sections: the ten question GSE test, a portion pertaining to the

demographics of the respondents, and a free response question. Researchers then analyzed the

quantitative data results of the questionnaire through descriptive analysis and T-tests. The

qualitative free-response answers were segmented and coded and then analyzed for common

themes.

Due to the limited sample size of 28 children, we distributed our questionnaire to all of

the program participants that chose to take part in the study. Program staff distributed the

questionnaire during the fifth week of the twelve week program at the conclusion of Scenario's

weekly session. Aligning the study's methods with official protocol, staff instructed participants to answer the questions based on how they felt at the moment (Bandura, 2016); this step ensures that the results correspond to the respondents' sense of self-efficacy after participating in the theater session. Seenaryo staff read instructions and questions aloud in order to provide support for students with lower reading comprehension skills. For primary school age students, staff conducted an oral focus group to record students' answers to the final qualitative free response question.

The GSE portion of the questionnaire is derived from the general self-efficacy (GSE) scale, developed by Ralph Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem in 1979, which was later adapted into a ten question quantitative questionnaire (Scholz et al., 2002). The questionnaire now exists in over twenty-eight languages; researchers have administered this questionnaire across both the global north and south including Syria (Scholz et al. 2002), which is especially pertinent to our study because the majority of the Seenaryo program participants are Syrian refugees. Following Bandura's (2006) guidelines, we refrained from directly mentioning *self-efficacy* throughout distribution and administration of the form; instead, we communicated the importance of respondents' answers in contributing to knowledge on how to help children and teenagers "feel confident and solve difficult problems in life" and enhance theater classes like Seenaryo.

In order to protect the privacy and ensure the confidentiality of the respondents of the questionnaire, questions directly identifying the respondent, such as their first or family name, are omitted from the questionnaire; securing the confidentiality of children helps to further protect our student participants. Since formal consent to participate in this research project has not been obtained from the children's parents, Seenaryo program staff have obtained the assent of each child completing the questionnaire. Further, the children are informed of the

confidentiality of their answers and given the option to not take part in the study or abstain from answering certain questions. All possible precautions are taken to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the children participating in the study.

Pursuant to the guidelines for administering the GSE scale, the questionnaire is contextualized for the sample population reflecting the distinct experiences of Syrian refugees and Jordanian nationals in the program (Bandura, 2006). With the assistance of Seenaryo staff, the questionnaire is translated from English to the language of instruction, Levantine Arabic. The phrasing of each GSE question is simplified in order to be more understandable for displaced and vulnerable children with varying levels of educational attainment and grade completion. Seenaryo staff proved instrumental in ensuring that each question was appropriate to the context of program participants. For instance, one question is simplified from "I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough" to "I can always solve difficult problems if I try hard." Examples are then provided in order to illustrate the meaning of this statement, such as "tricky homework" or "dealing with a bully," which helps appropriately situate the question into familiar contexts for the children.

Following traditional GSE questionnaire format, the questions pose a statement to which there are four possible responses depending on what degree the statement applies to the respondents: "not true at all," "hardly true," "moderately true," or "exactly true." The theater program participants are directed to check only one box depending on how they are feeling at that moment. These responses are ranked one through four respectively. For each response to the questionnaire, the answers to the ten questions are tallied to determine a GSE score from ten to forty. A total GSE score of ten indicates that the respondent does not relate to the statements provided and has a low sense of self-efficacy, meaning they are not confident in their ability to

overcome difficult tasks and challenging circumstances, whereas a GSE score of forty indicates the opposite.

In addition to finding the total GSE score for each respondent, the responses for each question are tallied for the frequency of answers and averaged for the mean GSE score for each question. Separating the responses by individual questions provides insight into specific areas in which the children's perceived sense of self-efficacy is either weaker or stronger.

The demographic portion of the questionnaire collects data concerning the nationality, gender, age, and enrollment and school completion information of each respondent. Comparing the mean GSE to these variables provides insight into whether there are any significant differences in the sense of self-efficacy between age groups, boys and girls, Syrian refugees and Jordanian nationales, and children that have completed more formal education compared to children that have completed less. This data, for each theater program, is then organized into tables of descriptive statistics, displaying the frequency of responses for the GSE questionnaire, the range of responses, and the mean response score. These tables exhibit the frequency of responses chosen and average GSE scores for each answer of the questionnaire. Separating this data by each question allows for more specific and thorough analysis of the quantitative results.

There is also a qualitative portion of the questionnaire: a free response question that allows the children to further elaborate on their experience in the theater program and provide information that quantitative questions and analysis may not otherwise capture. The qualitative open-ended question asks: "Has Seenaryo changed what you think you can or cannot achieve? If so, how?" This question further investigates whether the children perceive a relationship between their participation in Seenaryo and their perceived sense of self-efficacy. It is worth noting that

not all students responded due to several factors. One participant left early, one elected not to respond, and several participants did not have the literacy skills to write a response.

However, it is important to note that no causal relationship can be determined between the general sense of self-efficacy and the participation in Seenaryo child and youth theater programs. Since the data is collected from this one small sample population of children participating in the two Seenaryo theater programs, this research project offers no comparison of GSE scores of children in theater programs and those that are not. Also, this particular study does not control for other factors that possibly affect the children's perceived sense of self efficacy; the questionnaire responses simply show how the Seenaryo participants feel at the end of their weekly programming, which still may be influenced by other situations and circumstances the respondent is facing. Thus, the quantitative results of the questionnaire cannot be ascertained to be a direct effect of the respondents' participation in the theater programs.

The questionnaire results are supplemented by two interviews of Seenaryo program leaders: Oscar Wood, Co-Director of the Seenaryo organization, and Lara McIvor, the Country Director in Jordan. These interviews were conducted over email correspondence and provide further explanation of the Seenaryo organization and its child and youth theater programs, as well as information regarding relationships and interactions between participants in the two programs and the socio-economic conditions of the participants and the surrounding community.

Findings

I.   *Quantitative Results*

There are eighteen respondents in the child theater program and ten respondents in the youth theater program; keeping the children's identity confidential, GSE questionnaire responses

are labeled 1 through 18 and 1 through 10 respectively. Once again, the highest GSE score possible to self-report is 40 reflecting a perfect perceived GSE. Table 3 displays each respondent's answers to each question, demonstrating the frequency of each response. All of the participants have answered the questionnaire in full except the sixth participant in the youth theater program who abstained from answering the eighth question. For both programs, the majority of answers for each question are either moderately true or exactly true, indicating generally high levels of perceived self-efficacy.

Also, one of the questions in the demographic portion of the questionnaire asks respondents whether or not they are enrolled in formal school: all of the children's theater program participants confirmed their enrollment. On the other hand, only six of the ten youth theater program participants responded to this same question; still, all six responded that they were enrolled in formal school in their host country, Jordan.

The GSE scores for each questionnaire respondent are compared to the answers of the demographic portion through descriptive statistics displaying the total number of respondents, the range of GSE scores, and the average GSE. In the children's theater program, the majority of the respondents are Syrian refugees, but there are also three Jordanian nationals that participate in the program as well. The two Jordanian respondents average GSE score was 34.33. There is near gender balance in this program with ten girls and eight boys. There is no significant difference between the average GSE scores of girls with 31.4 and boys with 31.125. The majority of the respondents are between the ages of nine and eleven, with the range of six years old to twelve years old. The youngest children in the age group of six to eight years old exhibit the highest average GSE score at 35. The length of formal education completed does not seem to affect the GSE scores of the respondents: the last school grade completed for the respondent with

the highest GSE score, at 40, is second grade and the last grade completed for the respondents

with the lowest average GSE, at 27, score is fifth grade.

Table 1			
Child Theater: Demographic Variables in Relation to GSE Scores			
Control Variable	**Total Number of Responses**	**Range of GSE Scores**	**Mean GSE Score**
Nationality	18	(19-40)	30.83
Syrian Jordanian	15 3	(19 - 40) (28 - 40)	30.13 34.33
Gender	18	(19 - 40)	30.83
Female Male	10 8	(19 - 40) (27 - 33)	31.4 30.125
Age Group	18	(19 - 40)	30.83
6-8 9-11 12-14	3 11 4	(32 - 40) (19 - 40) (22 - 37)	35 29.63 31
Last Grade Completed	16	(19 - 40)	31
First Second Third Fourth Fifth	2 1 5 4 4	(32 -33) (40) (19 - 40) (27 - 37) (22 - 30)	32.5 40 31.6 31.25 27

In the youth theater program, there are no Jordanian respondents; however, one

participant did abstain from answering the nationality question. Only six youth theater

participants responded to the gender question, with five girls answering and one boy. While this

data is limited, there is a smaller difference between their average GSE scores as compared to the

child theater program. There is also a smaller range of ages in the youth theater program, from

twelve to fifteen years old; the majority of the mean GSE scores for each age are above 32 except for fourteen-year-olds, whose mean GSE score is 29.5. The last grades completed for the respondents in the youth theater program are fourth, fifth, seventh, and ninth grade; the length of formal education does not seem to affect the mean GSE score as they are all above 32. It is also notable that a group of children between the ages of twelve and fifteen only completed up to fourth and fifth grade, which is behind the expected completion level.

Table 2 — Youth Theater: Control Variables in Relation to GSE Scores			
Control Variable	**Total Number of Responses**	**Range of GSE Scores**	**Mean GSE Score**
Nationality	9	(29 - 35)	32.2
Syrian Jordanian	9 0	(29 - 34)	31.89
Gender	6	(29 - 35)	32.33
Female Male	5 1	(29 - 35) (33)	32.2 33
Age	10	(29 - 35)	32.2
12 13 14 15	4 1 2 3	(30 - 35) (32) (29 - 30) (32 - 34)	33 32 29.5 33
Last Grade Completed	10	(29 - 35)	32.2
Fourth Fifth Seventh Ninth	2 2 3 3	(30 - 35) (30 -34) (29 - 33) (32 -34)	32.5 32 32.33 33

The purpose of the T-tests is to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the groups within the demographic categories. The null hypothesis for these tests is that the respondents' mean GSE score are statistically similar. T-tests only proved effective for gender and nationality for the child theater program. Between girls and boys in the child theater program, the T test is not significant: the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, meaning the mean GSE scores are not significantly different. Between Syrian refugees and Jordanian nationals, the T-test is also not significant and the mean GSE scores are not significantly different. The lack of significant difference could result from the limited sample size and even smaller sub-samples.

II.   *Qualitative results*

The children's positive qualitative responses further strengthen the validity of the their quantitative scores on the GSE questionnaire. Once again, our qualitative question asked participants, "Has Seenaryo changed what you think you can or cannot achieve? If so, how?" As stated, the qualitative responses were reviewed and through inductive coding, three themes emerged: "Growth in Confidence", "Fun and Excitement", and "Investment in Theater Arts". Many of children's responses reflected the experience of personal enjoyment and fun, such as *"Yes, I changed because I'm having fun and enjoying myself in the trainings,"* (Syrian boy, age 11). Another child expressed their positive experience in Seenaryo's workshops in responding, "*Yes, it helped to me change because the trainings are fun and we all work together*" (Syrian girl, age 9). This response also aligns with the teambuilding aspect of Seenaryo's program.

Other statements from children developed the thread of "Growth in Confidence," such as "*Yes, I have more confidence in myself,*" (Syrian girl, age 12) and "*Yes, it has helped me become*

a stronger person and enjoy speaking more with others" (Syrian girl, age 12). Both statements reveal newfound self-perceptions of personal strength and social confidence – two key components of self-efficacy.

Maybe one of the most exciting quotes, however, captures the essence of the third theme, "Investment in Theater Arts". A Syrian boy, age 12, responded *"Yes, because I want to become an actor."* This quote indicates that the child not only felt capable in the present moment, potentially relating to what Bandura would consider mastery experiences, but is also looking ahead and envisioning a future for himself (Bandura, 1994). Other quotes from children echoed this sentiment of a love for theater.

Between the two programs, all three themes were represented. It's interesting to note, however, that the children's group had approximately even representation across the three themes, whereas the youth group responses weighed much more heavily in the "Growth in Confidence" category and more lightly in "Fun and Excitement." Whether differences in programming, developmental level, or other factors account for the discrepancy between the programs, 70% of the older participants indicated that they perceived a shift in themselves. Confidence and GSE are not entirely synonymous; however, this statistic could indicate that a large number of older participants described perceiving self-growth in ways that could roughly be approximated as within the domain of GSE.

Discussion

With more than one billion dollars flowing into the educational response for the Syrian refugees and international treaties entitling *all* children to participate in creative arts, this study offers insight into the emotional well-being of refugee children in an arts-based program

(UNCRC,1989; GOV.UK, 2017). Prior to this study's measurement of the level of perceived self-efficacy, no formal research had been conducted to date on the experience of self-efficacy amongst Syrian refugee children in arts-based education programs in Jordan.

The study's methodology of adapting the universal GSE Index for Syrian refugee children further provides a replicable research design for evaluating arts-based programming (Bandura, 2006; Scholz et. al, 2002). The contextualization of the questionnaire into appropriate scenarios and language for primary school-aged youth also expands the applicability of the 10 question GSE Index providing space to conduct new research amongst populations below the age of 12.

The children's GSE scores and optimistic free-response themes begin to fill the knowledge gap concerning vulnerable adolescents' experiences of self-efficacy in arts-based education. The study's quantitative findings, that theater participants, on average, reported strong levels of confidence in their ability to manage difficult situations, suggests that arts-based educational programming, like Seenaryo's, positively influences self-efficacy. Furthermore, children's written responses expressing that Seenaryo's theater programs provide them with a sense of confidence, a fun experience, and a newfound pursuit contributes to the current consensus on the benefits of self-efficacy and arts-based education (Scholz et. al, 2002; Edmunds, 2017; Schwarzer et. al, 1993; Millar and Warwick, 2019; Martin et. al, 2013; Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson, 2013; Vettraino et al., 2017).

No doubt, possible confounding factors and sample size limit the scope of our findings to non-inferential descriptive statistics. Future studies could benefit from including questions concerning the livelihoods of students' family members, their socio-economic status, their psychological state and emotional well-being, and their level of hunger and nutrition at the time

of research. Further research into longitudinal factors like the extent of variation of children's

perceived self-efficacy throughout the duration of their time as refugees would add to the

existing body of knowledge (Scholz et al., 2002; Schwarzer et al., 1993; Sulaiman-Hill &

Thompson, 2013). Inferential findings might also prove possible given a larger sample size,

random sampling methods, and periodic distribution of the GSE questionnaire.

Conclusion

This paper set out to contribute knowledge to existing scholarship on self-efficacy and

measure the levels of GSE in arts-based education for Syrian refugee youth. As the population of

child refugees continues to grow, governments, NGOs, and international institutions have need

of data-backed solutions for children. Given the almost unanimous ratification of the UNCRC,

governments have agreed to include room for self-expression and the arts in programs for not

only host-country children, but also refugee youth (UNCRC, 1990; People > Rights of the Child

Convention > Signatories: Countries Compared, n.d.). This study's results, that children and

youth theater participants reported a mean GSE of 30.83 and 32.2 respectively, implies that arts-

based education is not only increasingly mandated for children, but also related to a child's well-

being and sense of confidence (Table 1; Table 2). In situations of emergency, like the refugee

crisis facing vulnerable Syrian youth, the GSE questionnaire offers a non-invasive and adaptable

method for collecting data on children's wellbeing. Ultimately, this study's findings that

Seenaryo's participants on average reported strong feelings of self-efficacy suggest that arts-

based education for Syrian refugee youth is an area deserving of further research.

References

Bahou, L. (2015). Addressing issues of (in)justice in public schools within postwar Lebanon:

Teachers' perspectives and practices. International Journal of Educational Development,

43, 63–76. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2015.05.004

Bandura, Albert. (1994). Encyclopedia of mental health. In Encyclopedia of human behavior, 4,

pp. 71–81). Retrieved from http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/BanEncy.html

Bandura, Albert. (2006). Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents. In T. Urdan & F. Pajares (Eds.),

Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents (pp. 307–337). Information Age Publishing.

Bellino, M. (2018) Youth aspirations in Kakuma Refugee Camp: education as a means for social,

spatial, and economic (im)mobility. Globalisation, Societies and Education, 16:4, 541-

556, DOI: 10.1080/14767724.2018.1512049.

Buckner, E., Spencer, D., & Cha, J. (2018). Between policy and practice: The education of

Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Journal of Refugee Studies, 31(4), 444–465.

https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fex027

Buriel, A., Morais, S., & Loquet, M. (2019). *Arts education in emergency humanitarian aid:*

educational issues with young people living in camps in conflict areas in the Middle East.

Retrieved from: https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-02300007/document

Bush, K. D., Saltarelli, D., & UNICEF. (2000). The two faces of education in ethnic conflict:

Towards a peacebuilding education for children. Florence, Italy: UNICEF, United

Nations Children's Fund, Innocenti Research Centre.

Cássia Martinelli, S., Bartholomeu, D., Caliatto, S. G., & Grecci Sassi, A. (2009). Children's

Self-Efficacy Scale: Initial Psychometric Studies. Journal of Psychoeducational

Assessment, 27(2), 145–156. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282908325551.

Convention on the Rights of the Child. (1990). United Nations.

Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. (1951) United Nations.

Dryden-Peterson, S. (2016). Refugee education: The crossroads of globalization. Educational

Researcher, 45(9), 473-482.

Edmunds, S. L. (2017). The relationship between participation in theatre arts and self-efficacy in

adolescent women (Order No. 10276246). Available from ProQuest Dissertations &

Theses Global. (1896954759). Retrieved from

https://tc.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-

com.tc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1896954759?accountid=14258

GOV.UK. (2017). PM dedicates £1bn in aid money for Syrian refugees and host countries.

Retrieved December 7, 2019, from Government UK Press Releases website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-dedicates-1bn-in-aid-money-for-syrian-

refugees-and-host-countries

Kälin, Walter. (2001). Supervising the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees:

Article 35 and Beyond. *Global Consultation on International Protection*, 613-666.

Martin, A. J., Mansour, M., Anderson, M., Gibson, R., Liem, G. A. D., & Sudmalis, D. (2013).

The role of arts participation in students' academic and nonacademic outcomes: A

longitudinal study of school, home, and community factors. Journal of Educational

Psychology, 105(3), 709–727. doi: 10.1037/a0032795

McIvor, Lara. (2019). Personal email interview.

McSweeney, Karen A. (1993) The Potential for Enforcement of the United Nations Convention

on the Rights of the Child: The Need to Improve the Information Base. *Boston College

International and Comparative Law Review*, 16(2). 467-469.

Middle East: Jordan. (2019). The World Factbook. *Central Intelligence Agency*. Retrieved from

https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/jo.html.

Millar, O., & Warwick, I. (2019). Music and refugees' well-being in contexts of protracted

displacement. Health Education Journal, 78(1), 67–80.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0017896918785991.

Ministry of Education (2018). Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education 2018-2022. Amman,

Jordan.

Ogata, Sadako. (1994). *Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care*. Geneva: United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 1-76. Protocol Relating to the Status to

Refugee. (1967). United Nations.

People > Rights of the Child Convention > Signatories: Countries Compared. (n.d.). Retrieved

December 16, 2019, from Nation Master website:

https://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/People/Rights-of-the-Child-

Convention/Signatories

Scholz, U., Doña, B. G., Sud, S., & Schwarzer, R. (2002). Is general self-efficacy a universal

construct? Psychometric findings from 25 countries. European Journal of Psychological

Assessment, 18(3), 242–251. https://doi.org/10.1027//1015-5759.18.3.242.

Schwarzer, R., Hahn, A., & Jerusalem, M. (1993). Negative affect in east german migrants:

Longitudinal effects of unemployment and social support. Anxiety, Stress, & Coping,

6(1), 57–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/10615809308249532.

Seenaryo (2018). Seenaryo Impact Report 2018.

Sulaiman-Hill, C. M. R., & Thompson, S. C. (2013). Learning to Fit in: An Exploratory Study of

General Perceived Self Efficacy in Selected Refugee Groups. Journal of Immigrant

Minority Health, 15, 125–131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-011-9547-5.

United Nations Member States. (2006). United Nations. Retrieved from

https://www.un.org/press/en/2006/org1469.doc.htm.

UNHCR. (2019). Jordan - 2019 - FACT SHEET. Retrieved from www.unhcr.org/jo

UNHCR. (2015). State Parties to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the

1967 Protocol. Retrieved from https://www.unhcr.org/en-

us/protection/basic/3b73b0d63/states-parties-1951-convention-its-1967-protocol.html

UNHCR. (2011). The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

Retrieved from https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/about-us/background/4ec262df9/1951-

convention-relating-status-refugees-its-1967-protocol.html

UNHCR. (2010). *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*.

UNHCR. (2019). *Jordan - 2019 - FACT SHEET.* Retrieved from www.unhcr.org/jo

UNICEF. (2019). *Syria Crisis Mid-Year 2019 Humanitarian Results.*

Vettraino, E., Linds, W., & Jindal-Snape, D. (2017). Embodied voices: using applied theatre for

co-creation with marginalised youth. Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties, 22(1), 79–

95. https://doi-org.tc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/13632752.2017.1287348

Villegas Barahona, G., González García, N., Sánchez-García, A. B., Sánchez Barba, M., &

Galindo-Villardón, M. P. (2018). Seven methods to determine the dimensionality of tests:

application to the General Self-Efficacy Scale in twenty-six countries. Psicothema, 30(4),

442–448. https://doi-org.tc.idm.oclc.org/10.7334/psicothema2018.113

Wood, Oscar. (2019). Personal email interview.

Yahya, M., Kassir, J., & El-Hariri, K. (2018). Unheard Voices: What Syrian Refugees Need to

Return Home. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Younes, M. and Morrice, L. (2019) Summary of Challenges Relevant to Refugees' Education in

Jordan. Centre for International Education and Development, University of Sussex,
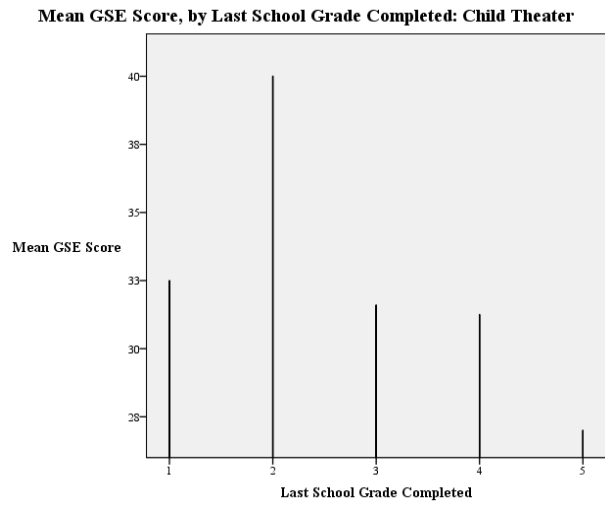
Brighton UK.

Tables

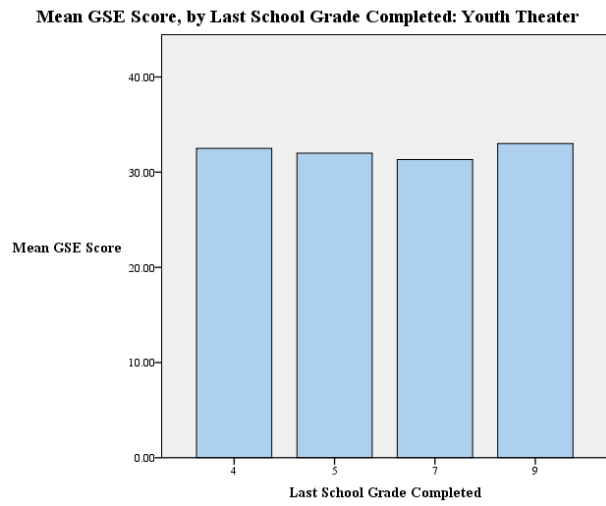| Table 3 Frequency of Questionnaire Responses: Child Theater [C] and Youth Theater [Y]				
Question	**Not True At All (1)**	**Hardly True (2)**	**Moderately True (3)**	**Exactly True (4)**
1. I can always solve difficult problems if I try hard (e.g. tricky homework, dealing with a bully)		C: 4, 17	C:1, 2, 6, 7, 8,14, 15	C:3,5,9,10, 12,13,18
			Y: 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9	Y: 1, 5, 6, 10
2. If someone opposes me, I can always find a way to get what I want			C: 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 16, 17	C: 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18
			Y: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10	Y: 1, 6
3. It is easy for me to work on my goals and achieve them (e.g. finishing my work in school, doing a play with Seenaryo).		C: 1	C: 2, 3, 8, 10, 14, 15, 17	C: 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 16, 18
			Y: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10	Y: 1, 2, 6, 9
4. I can deal easily with unexpected things (e.g. if school is cancelled one day, if friends or family move away).			C: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14	C: 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 18
		Y: 1	Y: 3, 7, 8, 10	Y: 2, 4, 5, 6, 9
5. I can rely on my ability to deal with situations even if they are sudden (e.g. if there is an emergency, if someone hurts themselves).		C: 2, 15	C: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11	C: 1, 5, 9, 12, 13, 14, 18
		Y: 8	Y: 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10	Y: 4, 6
6. I can solve most problems if I make the necessary effort (e.g. my work, or a problem with a friend… even with an adult).			C: 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 16	C: 2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18

			Y: 3, 5, 8, 9	Y: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10
7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I am good at dealing with things.		C:16	C: 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 15	C: 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 18
			Y: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Y: 1
8. When there is a problem, I can usually find several solutions.			C: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17	C: 5, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18
			Y: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10	Y: 1
9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.		C:14	C: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17	C: 5, 7, 12, 13, 18
			Y: 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10	Y: 1, 3, 6, 7
10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.		C:15	C: 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	C: 2, 12, 14, 18
			Y: 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10	Y: 1, 2, 3, 7

Table 4 **T-Test Results**				
Child Theater Program				
Gender	Lavene's Test		T-test for Equality of Means	
Girls	F value	14.811	T value	-.503
Boys	P value	.001	df	10.534
			P Value	**.625**
Nationality				
Jordanian	F value	.000	T value	1.160
Syrian	P value	.987	df	16
			P value	**.263**

Graph 1

Mean GSE Score, by Last School Grade Completed: Child Theater

Graph 2

Mean GSE Score, by Last School Grade Completed: Youth Theater

Graph 3

Mean GSE Score, by Age Group: Child Theater

Graph 4

Mean GSE Score, by Age Group: Youth Theater
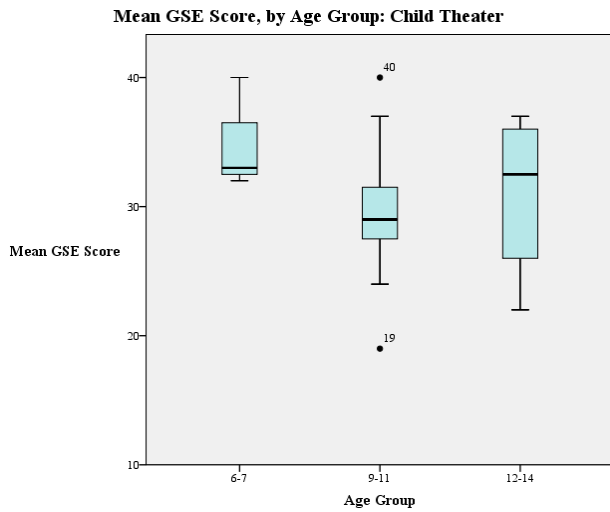
Appendix

General Self-efficacy Questionnaire: Arabic and English

النص للمسؤول

هدول الأسئلة رح يساعدنا بفهم شو إللي بساعد الأطفال والمراهقين زيكم/مثلكم تشعرو بالثقة وتحللو المشاكل الصعبة بالحياة. اجوبتكم إكتير مهمة ليساعدنا نحسّن صف المسرح زي/مثل سيناريو.

كل اجوبتكم حتكون سر. مش رح نعرف اساميكم. معليش إذا ما بدكم اتجاوبو أي سؤال أو إذا ما بدكم تتشاركو. إذا ما بدكم تتجاوبو سؤال إتركو فراغ

تعليمات الدراسة

جاوبو الأسئلة بناءً عشعورك الآن. بعد ما نقرأ كل سؤال اختار جواب إلّي بمثّل شعورك. إختار جواب واحد فقط. استنه المعلّم/المدرّس لقرأة السؤال التالي قبل ما تكمّلو. المعلّم/المدرّس سيجمّع الأوراق بعد ما يخلس الصف.

شكراً

تاريخ:_____

جنسية:_____

جنس(اختيار واحد): رجل // امرأة

عمر :_____

هل تذهب الي مدرسة ؟ (اختيار واحد):لا // نعم

مرحلة لها في المدرسة؟:_____

كم مسرحية عملت أنت مع سيناريو؟ _____

السؤال الأخير :هل برنمج (سيناريو)تغيّر شو تعتقد يمكنكَ تحقيقه؟ إزا نعم ,كتب كيف؟

دائما	غالباً	نادراً	لا	العبارات	ت
				انا دائما استطيع ان أحل المشاكل الصعبة اذا أعطيت جهدا أكبر (مثال: الوظيفة الصعبة، التعامل مع التمرد)	
				أذا وقف أحد، فأنني دائما أجد الطرق لأصل للهدف المرغوب	
				من السهل علي تحقيق أهدافي ونواياي. (مثال: انهاء واجابتي المدرسية في المدرسة، او أقوم بمسرحية مع سيناريو)	
				أعرف كيف أتصرف مع المواقف الغير متوقعة. (مثال: اذا المدرسة عطلت يوما ما، أو اذا صديقي او عائلتي إنتقلت الى مكان آخر)	
				اعتقد بأني قادر على التعامل مع الأحداث حتى لو كانت مفاجئة لي. (مثال: اذا كان حدث شيئ طارئ، او اذا أحد قد جرح نفسه)	
				أستطيع ان أحل المشاكل اذا أعطيت جهدا أكثر (مثال: العمل، مشاكل مع الأصدقاء)	
				أكون هاذئا عندما أواجه المشاكل، لانني أستطيع ان أتعامل معها	
				عندما تكون هنالك مشكلات أستطيع ان أجد الحلول لها.	
				أذا واجهت مشكلة ما، فأنني استطيع ان أفكر بحل	
				من السهل التعامل مع أي موقف أواجهه	10

Administrator script:

These questions will help us to understand what helps children and teenagers, like you, feel confident and solve difficult problems in life. Your answers are very important in helping us to improve theater classes like Seenaryo (no need to translate this word).

All of your answers will be kept secret. We will not know your names.

It is okay if you do not want to answer any of the questions, or if you do not want to participate. If you do not want to answer questions, leave the answers blank.

Instructions for taking the survey:

Please answer the questions based on how you are feeling right now. After we read out each question, pick one answer that represents how you feel. Only check one box. Wait for the teacher to read out the next question before you continue. The teacher will collect the papers after the everyone has finished.

Thank you!

Date:_____

Nationality:_____

Gender: _____

Age:_____

Do you attend school?:_____

What is the last grade you completed?:_____

How many plays have you done with Seenaryo?:_____

Has seenaryo changed what you think you can or cannot achieve? If so, how?

	Not at all true	Hardly true	Moderately true	Exactly true
1. I can always solve difficult problems if I try hard. (e.g. tricky homework, dealing with a bully)	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. If someone opposes me, I can always find a way to get what I want.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. It is easy for me to work on my goals and achieve them. (e.g. finishing my work in school, doing a play with Seenaryo).	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I can deal easily with unexpected things (e.g. if school is cancelled one day, if friends or family move away)	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I can rely on my ability to deal with situations even if they're sudden. (e.g. if there's an emergency, if someone hurts themselves)	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I can solve most problems if I make the necessary effort. (e.g. my work, or a problem with a friend…even without an adult)	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I'm good at dealing with things	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. When there's a problem, I can usually find several solutions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.	☐	☐	☐	☐