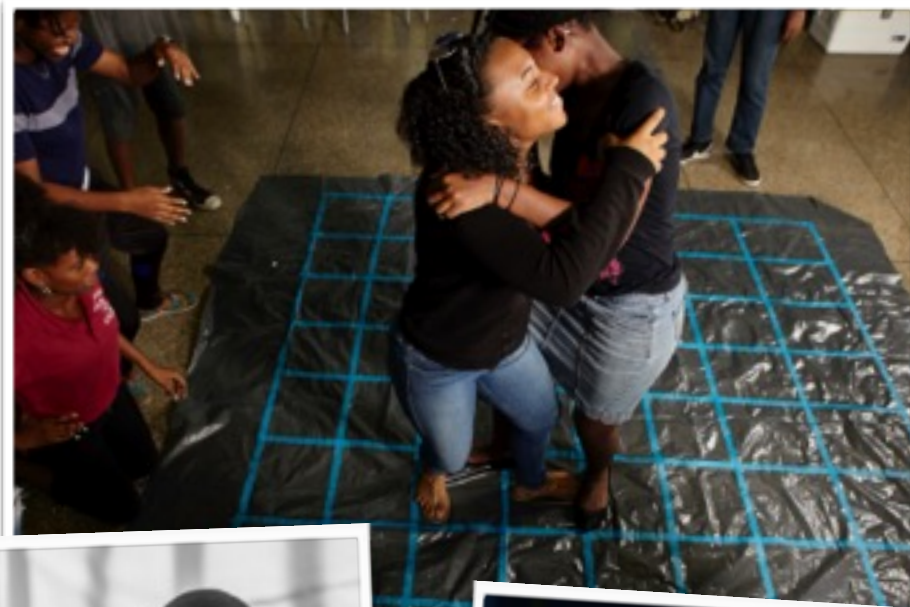


# B Studio Project

## Education for the Next Generation of Problem



Solvers

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background	3
Anticipated Benefits	4
Evaluation	5
Interviewees & Responses	5
Challenges	8
Recommendations for Educators Program	9
Recommendations for Youth Program	9
Conclusion	10

# B Studio Project

## Education for the Next Generation of Problem Solvers

### Executive Summary

B Studio project has commissioned PK Consulting to conduct an independent evaluation of our B Studio Project (B Studio). B Studio is a pilot educational program, which equips participants with tools to contribute to a better world. Participants are guided through the curriculum which helps them discover techniques for more effective problem-solving and critical thinking. It is designed to develop these skills by introducing participants to a variety of “thinking tools”. Through “thought-provoking dialogue” B Studio aims to increase “their capacity for in-depth synthesis”. The curriculum promotes fun learning about leadership, problem solving, creativity, innovation and collaboration.

Over the course of three months, an assessment of the B Studio Project was made by analyzing the background of the program from planning to completion of all workshops, inclusive of participant interviews from individual workshops. Overall, B Studio Project has had a positive impact on both educators and youth participants between 2012 and 2016. The program was highly recommended by a range of interviewees.

In order to increase the scalability of B Studio, it is suggested that the program be targeted at educators as they impart gained knowledge which can then be transferred to the students in and around the country. As a result, there will be a much higher yield of young people being exposed to this type of education program.

### Background



In 2012, B Studio Project held their first summer studio. With the help of Social Innovation Generation, BG Group, Demming Communications, Unit Trust and other corporate entities, they were able to host this workshop for 19 boys between the ages of 15-20.

In the B Studio Project Summer Studio, participants learned through activities and games that encouraged teamwork, conversations and dialogue. In debriefing, facilitators used these activities as a way of highlighting various concepts around the following core content:

1. Systems Thinking
2. Integrative Thinking
3. Design Thinking

B Studio Project has taken shape into two types of workshops- one titled 'Train the Trainers' and the other, a youth studio. The objectives of these programs are to provide participants with the tools and techniques to be better problem-solvers, have thought-provoking dialogue, and increase their capacity for in-depth synthesis and critical thinking.

An additional objective of the 'Train the Trainers' program is for educators and teachers to have the ability to utilise this program in future teaching endeavours. Most recently there was a 3-day 'Train the Trainers' program over the course of five months with hand picked, committed teachers currently in the local education system. They are interested in using creative problem solving within the existing education system in Trinidad & Tobago.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Students Impacted</b>	<b>Tutors/ teachers Trained</b>	<b>Studio Counselors Trained</b>
2012	18	2	0
2013	20	14	3
2014	19	13	4
2015	17	19	5

### Anticipated Benefits

**“Creates a think outside the box learning opportunity” - 2015 Educator**



Asking Powerful Questions, Perspective Taking, Generative Reasoning, Leadership, Collaboration, Decision Making, Conflict Resolution, Developing Strong Arguments

- Increased participant engagement that fosters a learner-centered environment
- Enhanced educational environments that are cooperative, interdisciplinary, and relevant
- Easier facilitation and integration of rigorous thinking in instruction, which is key to achieving proficiency
- Provides structure for social and emotional development, leading to a decrease in disciplinary problems
- Provides a common language and a set of tools that facilitate collaborative problem- solving
- Helps to determine high-leverage actions and solutions to problems

**Evaluation**

Since inception, B Studio Project pilot educational program has been evaluated in-house to keep track of its progress. 868 Change felt that an external evaluation would be beneficial to determine their effectiveness. Over the course of three months, an assessment of B Studio Project was made by analysing the background of the program from planning to completion of all workshops, inclusive of participant interviews from individual workshops.

### **Evaluation Questions**

1. Where have you used this content?
2. What concept would you take away from these sessions?
3. What is the most significant impact this program has had on you?
4. How likely are you to recommend this program to another educator/ youth?
5. Why would you recommend this program?

### **Logistics Questions**

1. When were you a part of B Studio Project?
2. What was the biggest challenge you faced with this program?
3. What would be your recommendations to improve this program?

### **Interviewees & Responses**

Over a two-week period, 35 phone calls were made and telephone interviews were scheduled with past participants from 2012 to 2014. Participants were randomly selected, 11 educators and 12 youth agreed to telephone interviews. 28 video interviews and 15 recorded notes from the most recent 2016 'Train the Trainers' workshop were reviewed. 12 feedback forms and workshop material were also assessed during this time.



**Below is a sample of responses from telephone interviews from randomly selected participants, from the Educator workshops:**

The program was interesting, and provoked critical thinking. Mental models, triangles and mapping systems showed me how things interconnect. Now I ask myself what are motivating factors, and how things might be connected. I use what I learnt on a daily basis as I try to exercise a higher level of thinking. I don't accept things at face value anymore, now I ask questions before I act or make a decision."  
- 2012 Educator

"I was very impressed with the program. It was practical and captivating especially since I am an educator. All educators should go through this program- the concept of team should filter down. It gave me ideas to connect with students and it broadened my scope. Currently I am furthering my education and I still use some of the exercises for my own assignments."- 2012 Educator

"It was great to interact with students and teachers in this program. Getting feedback was important because I saw the impact it was had as a student. I was able to encourage them because I stopped and listened to them. It gave me more confidence in my teaching ability."- 2014 Educator

**Summary of Interview Responses from Educators**

All educators responded positively to B Studio Project. They all use what they learnt in workshops and applied it to their daily lives, as it was practical. The experience of this program has not only been applicable to their classroom, and that speaks volumes for impact. It is difficult to measure tangible effectiveness, however, based on these interviews, especially from as far back as 2012, these participants have been positively impacted by this project.

When asked about take away concepts, educators spoke about the core concepts from a holistic perspective.

They all want to see B Studio Project expand its reach to all schools in Trinidad & Tobago because they genuinely believe that it has potential to change the way educators teach in a classroom, as well as how young people learn through these experiences. The majority understands that sustainable funding is an issue, which is why they suggest that it is incorporated into the national school system.

Every interviewee highly recommended B Studio Project to other educators. Some participants stated that travel logistics were an issue if they did not live close to where the workshops were held, but understood the importance of attending and tried their best.

Few people had recommendations, mainly to find sustainable funding for a continued effort. They felt that the small group setting was ideal; facilitators were time conscious and well managed. One person suggested that the workshops could have been longer for full immersion, but understood the constraints of that.

**Below is a sample of responses from telephone interviews from randomly selected participants, from the Youth workshops:**

"I am a Prefect in school and the program helped me get along with others. It was good to get along with all students especially some who had a different attitude or point of view. It allowed me to become a mediator."- *2012 Youth Participant*

"It was eye opening. I started to think in different ways, looking at the world differently. It was fun and interactive. It made things that seemed complicated very simple. I have used the 'iceberg' exercise for a project in school."- *2012 Youth Participant*



**Summary of Interview Responses from Youth Participants**

Participants responded positively and seemed to be very receptive to B Studio Project. Even during telephone interviews, it was obvious that they thought about their answers before they spoke. They also stated that they use core content in their daily lives.

The impact on young people that have been exposed to this type of education seemed to be significant, especially as they attended the workshops during their formative years.

When asked about take away concepts, the majority mentioned the 'Iceberg' exercise, specifically relating to mental models. This was interesting to note as this specific application has the potential to be expanded further in the context of youth development.



They would recommend this program to their peers, because they felt that it taught them how to think differently and it is important to have different perspectives.

The biggest challenge noted was that some youth participants took longer time to understand the concepts than others. One participant suggested that the facilitators incorporate more 'real life' examples, however by the end of the workshop, the participant fully understood all exercises.

Logistics were not an issue for most of the telephone interviewees and either had full attendance or only missed one session.

### Challenges

- Interviewing participants who have already been exposed to previous rounds of evaluations. Each workshop has a built-in evaluation, through use of 'B Studio Reflection Notes', evaluation questions such as 'What learning has stayed with you from B Studio Project?' and other daily reflection questions. There was also an in-house videographer that posed questions to the majority of participants during the latest 'Train the Trainers' 3 day workshop. This makes it challenging for an external evaluation to be as effective as participants have already been exposed to evaluative methodology
- Diversity of participants. In the recent 'Train the Trainers' workshop, participants were hand picked because of their interest in creative problem solving. This meant that B Studio Project facilitators targeted a stakeholder group that had some capacity on this type of education
- Sustainable funding from sponsors. Having a 3-5 year sponsor would allow for further opportunities to observe the impact of B Studio Project
- Lack of awareness of the program from potential participants. The more people that understand the benefits of this program, is the higher the demand, which would aid to the overall expansion this project
- Encouraging participants to commit to minimum 90% attendance
- Lack of communication (post program) among graduates
- Creating an opportunity to pilot this program in Trinidad & Tobago's current education system
- Training more facilitators to be able to host individual workshops
- Scaling the program while maintaining quality
- Creating an effective monitoring & evaluation plan
- Determining the impact and effectiveness of the program

### Recommendations for Educators Program

- Hold workshops minimum 3 times a year
- Ensure that each workshop has no more than 20 participants
- For every 5 participants, there should be 1 facilitator
- Have program graduates meet every quarter. As they graduate, they should be introduced to past graduates to network and share ideas
- Create a marketing and communications strategy to advertise these two programs. To be promoted by school networks, part participants and various forms of media
- Engage with graduates to promote program at their educational institutions. Request that they host informal meetings with fellow educators and teachers to relay information from B Studio Project

### Recommendations for Youth Program

- Hold workshops minimum 3 times a year, during school holidays
- Ensure that each workshop has no more than 20 participants
- For every 5 participants, there should be 1 facilitator
- Create a marketing and communications strategy to advertise this program. To be promoted by school networks, part participants and various forms of media



## **Conclusion**

B Studio Project has had a positive impact on both educators and youth participants between 2012 and 2016. The program was highly recommended by a range of interviewees.

There are further long term benefits of B Studio Project if targeted to educators through the 'Train the Trainers' program, as there will be more educators in Trinidad & Tobago available to implement this program in schools around the country. As a result of this, there will be a much higher yield of participants being exposed to this type of education program. This enhances the overall sustainability of B Studio Project.

