

REPORT ON THE ESSAY-WRITING WORKSHOPS
DELIVERED BY
ESSAYS BEYOND BORDERS



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Preface

Essays Beyond Borders (EBB) is an Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership in Higher Education (KA220-HED) funded by the European Union and coordinated by the University of Malta. The project is implemented between 22 December 2023 and 21 December 2026 and brings together five partner institutions with complementary expertise in essay studies, creative writing, literary scholarship, and writing pedagogy:

- University of Malta (Malta) – Coordinator
- Ghent University (Belgium)
- University of Pisa (Italy)
- University of Groningen (The Netherlands)
- Slovene Writers' Association (Slovenia)

The project was conceived in response to the growing need to strengthen critical thinking, reflective practice, creative expression, and civic engagement through writing. Central to the project is the conviction that the essay is not merely an academic genre but a flexible literary form through which individuals can develop their own voice, engage critically with contemporary issues, and connect personal experience with wider social and cultural concerns. Through workshops, collaborative research, publications, and public engagement activities, *Essays Beyond Borders* seeks to promote essayistic writing as an accessible and inclusive educational practice across different age groups and educational settings.

One of the principal activities of the project consisted of the design and delivery of an international programme of essay-writing workshops. Between January 2024 and March 2026, participating institutions delivered workshop series for three principal target groups: Post-Secondary students, University students, and members of the General Public. These workshops explored the essay as a creative, reflective, and civic literary form while encouraging participants to experiment with personal voice, critical inquiry, and diverse writing styles.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the implementation and educational impact of these workshops. Drawing on quantitative and qualitative evidence collected through pre-workshop and end-of-workshops questionnaires, the report examines participant characteristics, previous writing experience, perceptions of writing, perceived learning gains, and evaluations of workshop quality and delivery. Comparative analyses across countries, participant groups, workshop formats, and languages of delivery identify common patterns, contextual differences, and examples of effective pedagogical practice.

The project also generated a broader research dataset concerning participants' attitudes towards writing, essayistic practice, and writing education. As these data extend beyond the evaluation requirements of the workshop programme, they fall outside the scope of the present report and will be analysed separately through future publications.

Methodological Note. Although the project was implemented by five partner organisations, the Maltese component comprised two distinct workshop streams delivered in different languages: English and Maltese. As these workshops were designed for partly different participant groups and constituted separate pedagogical contexts, they are evaluated independently throughout this report. Consequently, all comparative analyses distinguish between the Malta (English) and Malta (Maltese) tracks, resulting in six implementation streams being analysed: Malta (English), Malta (Maltese), Belgium (Ghent), Italy (Pisa), Slovenia, and The Netherlands (Groningen). This approach enables a more nuanced assessment of the project's implementation while acknowledging the distinctive linguistic and educational contexts in which the workshops were delivered.

Beyond fulfilling the reporting requirements of the Erasmus+ programme, this evaluation contributes to the project's broader research agenda by examining how essayistic writing can function as a pedagogical practice that promotes critical inquiry, reflective thinking, creative expression, and civic participation. It is intended both as an assessment of the project's implementation and as a resource for educators, researchers, and policymakers interested in the role of creative writing within formal and non-formal education.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Essays Beyond Borders (EBB) workshop programme delivered between January 2024 and March 2026. The evaluation examines participants' backgrounds, previous writing experience, perceived learning gains, and evaluations of workshop quality across six implementation streams in five European partner countries.

The evaluation draws upon responses from 335 participants who completed the pre-workshop questionnaire and 258 participants who completed the end-of-workshops questionnaire. The workshops engaged three principal participant groups—Post-Secondary students, University students, and members of the General Public—and were delivered in diverse educational contexts, ranging from secondary schools and universities to community-based lifelong learning environments.

The findings demonstrate that the project successfully reached participants with widely differing levels of writing experience. Nearly 40% of respondents reported writing only rarely or when required prior to participating in the workshops, while more than 80% had never previously published any form of writing. These findings confirm that the project successfully engaged audiences extending well beyond experienced writers.

Participants across all workshop formats reported positive learning outcomes. The strongest gains were observed in participants' understanding of the essay as a creative and reflective literary form, alongside increased confidence in writing from a personal perspective and experimenting with unfamiliar styles of expression. Participants also reported greater confidence in communicating personal ideas and engaging with wider social, cultural, and civic themes through writing.

The evaluation further demonstrates consistently high levels of satisfaction with workshop delivery. Tutor preparation, the creation of supportive learning environments, and overall workshop organisation emerged as the highest-rated aspects of the programme across almost every implementation site. Although the shorter Post-Secondary workshop series naturally offered fewer opportunities for sustained drafting, peer review, and extended discussion than the longer University and General Public programmes, participants nevertheless reported positive educational experiences across all workshop formats.

The findings indicate that the *Essays Beyond Borders* pedagogical models successfully promote reflective writing, creative experimentation, critical thinking, and civic expression across diverse educational settings. The consistency of the evaluation results across countries, participant groups, and languages of delivery suggests that the workshop model is both adaptable and transferable, providing a robust framework for future creative writing initiatives within formal and non-formal education.

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1. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

This section presents a statistical analysis of the operational outputs generated throughout the implementation lifecycle of the workshop component of *Essays Beyond Borders* (EBB) project.

All calculations are based on verified attendance sheets, partner reporting documentation, and implementation logs submitted by participating institutions.

This part of the analysis focuses on three core performance dimensions:

1. Workshop Series Delivered – the number of complete workshop series delivered in relation to the targets established in the project application.
2. Participant Reach – the number of participants engaged across the various workshop streams.
3. Instructional Volume – the cumulative number of contact hours delivered by project partners across all participating implementation sites.

Methodological Note:

Although the project was implemented by five partner organisations, the Maltese component comprised two distinct workshop streams delivered in different languages: English and Maltese, which are evaluated independently throughout this report. Consequently, all comparative analyses distinguish between the Malta (English) and Malta (Maltese) tracks, resulting in six implementation streams being analysed: Malta (English), Malta (Maltese), Belgium (Ghent), Italy (Pisa), Slovenia, and The Netherlands (Groningen).

1.1 Workshop Series Delivered

Table 1. Workshop series completed/projected at application stage

Type	Malta (English)	Malta (Maltese)	Ghent	Slovenia	Pisa	Groningen	Total (Actual/Stream Projection)	% Achievement Against Stream Projection
General Public	2/2	2/2	0/0	3/2	0/0	1/1	8/7	115%
University	1/1	1/1	2/2	0/0	1/1	1/1	6/6	100%
Under 18	10/6	4/4	6/5	0/0	0/0	0/0	22/15	147%
Total number of workshop series proposed at application stage: 28 Total number of workshop series delivered: 36 Overall achievement against project target: 129%								

Notes:

- Values are reported as Actual / Stream Projection, where the first figure represents the number of workshop series delivered and the second figure represents the number of workshop series projected for that participant stream in the Erasmus+ application.
- The column “% Achievement Against Stream Projection” indicates the extent to which each participant stream met or exceeded its projected workshop delivery target.
- Malta (English) refers to workshop series delivered in English in Malta, while Malta (Maltese) refers to workshop series delivered in Maltese in Malta.
- The aggregate figures reported beneath the table compare the total number of workshop series delivered against the overall project target of 28 workshop series specified in the Erasmus+ application.

Aggregate Workshop Delivery Metrics

The EBB consortium originally projected the delivery of twenty-eight (28) workshop series across all participating institutions. Final implementation records confirm the completion of thirty-six (36) workshop series, representing an overall delivery rate of **129%** of the original target.

- **General Public Stream:** 8 completed series against a target of 7 (**115% completion**).
- **University Stream:** 6 completed series against a target of 6 (**100% completion**).
- **Under-18 Stream:** 22 completed series against a target of 15 (**147% completion**).

The strongest growth occurred within the Under-18 stream, where partner institutions expanded delivery opportunities beyond those initially projected in the application.

1.2 Participants Reached

Table 2. Participants/projected number of participants

<i>Type</i>	Malta (English)	Malta (Maltese)	Ghent	Slovenia	Pisa	Groningen	Total (Actual/Stream Projection)	% Achievement Against Stream Projection
<i>General Public</i>	26/20	18/20	0/0	26/20	0/0	11/10	81/70	116%
<i>University</i>	17/10	5/10	39/20	0/0	8/10	15/10	84/60	140%
<i>Under 18</i>	168/100	46/40	92/50	0/0	0/0	0/0	306/190	161%
Total number of participants proposed at application stage: 280 Total number of participants involved: 471 Overall achievement against project target: 168%								

Notes:

- Values are reported as Actual / Stream Projection, where the first figure represents the number of participants who attended the workshop series and the second figure represents the projected number of participants for that participant stream in the Erasmus+ application.
- The column “% Achievement Against Stream Projection” indicates the extent to which each participant stream met or exceeded its projected participant target.
- Malta (English) refers to workshop series delivered in English in Malta, while Malta (Maltese) refers to workshop series delivered in Maltese in Malta.
- The aggregate figures reported beneath the table compare the total number of participants involved (471) against the minimum overall project target of 280 participants specified in the Erasmus+ application, resulting in an overall achievement rate of 168%.

Aggregate Participant Reach Metrics

The project application established a minimum target of 280 participants across all workshop activities.. Attendance records confirm that 471 participants engaged with EBB workshops, corresponding to an overall participant reach of **168%** of the projected target.

- **General Public Cohort:** 81 participants against a target of 70 (**116% achievement**).
- **University Cohort:** 84 participants against a target of 60 (**140% achievement**).
- **Under-18 Cohort:** 306 participants against a target of 190 (**161% achievement**).

The Under-18 stream generated the largest participant base, accounting for approximately 65% of all project participants and making a substantial contribution to the overall reach of the project.

1.3 Contact Hours Delivered

Table 3. Hours delivered/projected hours to be delivered

<i>Type</i>	Malta (English)	Malta (Maltese)	Ghent	Slovenia	Pisa	Groningen	Total (Actual/Stream Projection)	% Achievement Against Stream Projection
<i>General Public</i>	30/28	30/28	0/0	51/28	0/0	15/14	126/98	129%
<i>University</i>	14/14	14/14	60/28	0/0	36/14	14/14	138/84	164%
<i>Under 18</i>	30/18	12/12	28/15	0/0	0/0	0/0	70/45	156%
Total number of hours proposed at application stage: 200 Total number of hours delivered: 334 Overall achievement against project target: 167%								

Notes:

- Values are reported as Actual / Stream Projection, where the first figure represents the instructional hours delivered and the second figure represents the instructional hours projected during project planning for the relevant workshop stream and implementation site.
- The column “% Achievement Against Stream Projection” indicates the extent to which each participant stream met or exceeded its projected instructional volume.
- Malta (English) refers to workshop series delivered in English in Malta, while Malta (Maltese) refers to workshop series delivered in Maltese in Malta.
- Workshop series for the General Public and University streams were projected to comprise approximately 14 instructional hours per series, while workshop series for the Under-18 stream were projected to comprise approximately 3 instructional hours per series.
- The aggregate figures reported beneath the table compare the total instructional hours delivered (334) against the overall project target of 200 instructional hours specified in the Erasmus+ application, resulting in an overall achievement rate of 167%.

Aggregate Instructional Volume Metrics

The project application projected the delivery of 200 instructional contact hours across all participating institutions. Final implementation records document a cumulative total of 334 instructional hours, representing 167% of the projected target.

- General Public Stream: 126 instructional hours delivered against a projected total of 98 hours (129% achievement).
- University Stream: 138 instructional hours delivered against a projected total of 84 hours (164% achievement).
- Under-18 Stream: 70 instructional hours delivered against a projected total of 45 hours (156% achievement).

The University stream generated the highest instructional volume in absolute terms, accounting for 138 instructional hours. The Under-18 stream, meanwhile, recorded the strongest proportional growth relative to its projected instructional volume, achieving 156% of its target.

1.4 Overall Performance Against Application Targets

Across all three core performance indicators—workshop series delivered, participant reach, and instructional volume—the project exceeded the targets established at the application stage. The consortium delivered 129% of the projected workshop series, reached 168% of the minimum participant target specified in the Erasmus+ application, and generated 167% of the projected instructional hours.

These outcomes demonstrate a strong level of implementation capacity across the consortium, significant participant engagement across all workshop streams, and a substantial

evidence base for the qualitative evaluation of project impact presented in the following sections.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

Following the analysis of the quantitative outputs presented in the preceding section, this part of the report focuses on the qualitative evaluation of the Essays Beyond Borders (EBB) project. The purpose of this evaluation is to examine participants' experiences of the workshops, their perceptions of learning and skill development, and their attitudes towards writing before and after participation in the programme.

Here is the consolidated version of your text, collated to eliminate the duplicate definitions of the matrices, streamline the timeline narrative, and ensure a smooth, academic flow.

2.1 Evaluation Framework and Data Collection Instruments

The primary dataset was collected through a standardized evaluation framework implemented across all participating European partner sites. Data were gathered digitally via Google Forms at two distinct stages: prior to the commencement of the workshop series using the *EBB Pre-Workshop Questionnaire*, and immediately following the final session using the *EBB End-of-Workshops Questionnaire* (see appendices). Links to these surveys were distributed directly to participants by workshop facilitators.

The questionnaires consisted of three core evaluative components, which utilized a five-point Likert scale (where 1 represented *Strongly Disagree* and 5 represented *Strongly Agree*):

1. The Self-Reported Attainment and Expectations Matrix

Designed to track attitudinal transformations and perceived growth by mapping pre-workshop baselines directly against post-workshop outcomes. The pre-workshop survey established baseline motivations, confidence, and attitudes toward writing (e.g., "I want to become a better writer", "I want to explore freer writing styles"). In the end-of-workshops survey, these same parameters were adapted to measure learning gains, communicative willingness, and overall participant satisfaction (e.g., "This is what I have so far" "I have become a better writer"). This matrix also tracked the perceived value of peer and tutor feedback, engagement with workshop themes, and the willingness of participants to share their work with others.

2. The Comparative Pedagogical Environment Matrix

Designed to isolate structural gaps in formal writing education by executing a matched-statement, dual-dimensional analysis of seven core creative elements: the development of an individual voice; the expression of personal opinion; reflection on personal experience; the representation of thought processes in writing; writing as a form of civic engagement; experimentation with freer forms of writing; and writing as a form of conversation with readers. Participants evaluated these seven elements across two distinct dimensions:

- *Current Reality*: The extent to which these elements were prioritized or visible within participants' previous educational experiences.
- *Pedagogical Ideal*: The extent to which participants believed these elements *should* be prioritized within writing instruction.

This component identified the explicit differences between historical educational practices and participants' aspirational benchmarks for effective pedagogical practice.

3. The Workshop Quality and Delivery Evaluation

Administered exclusively within the end-of-workshops instrument, this section served as an operational control variable to safeguard quality assurance and assess localized execution. Participants evaluated specific quality indicators, including facilitator performance (e.g., “The tutor managed to create a good learning environment”, “The tutor managed to engage participants”), the structural pacing of the sessions, and the contextual adequacy of the materials and venue. This operational layer ensured that the research team could differentiate between the theoretical curriculum design and the real-world standard of localized project delivery.

2.2 Research Ethics, Voluntary Participation, and Response Rates

To protect participant privacy and minimise social desirability bias, all questionnaires were completed anonymously. No personally identifying information was collected.

Participation in both the pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaires was entirely voluntary. Consequently, response rates varied across workshop streams and implementation sites. This voluntary structure introduced two methodological considerations:

- **Variable Response Rates:** Because questionnaire completion was not a requirement for workshop participation, response rates varied across locations and participant groups.
- **Differences Between Pre- and Post-Workshop Responses:** The number of completed pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaires differed. As is common in educational surveys, some participants completed only one of the two questionnaires, resulting in a degree of participant attrition between the beginning and end of the workshop series. Consequently, the pre-workshop and post-workshop datasets are not identical in size and should be interpreted as related but not perfectly matched participant samples.

2.3. Pilot Study and Instrument Refinement

The evaluation framework was initially tested through a pilot study conducted during the early implementation phase of the project in Malta, involving sixty-six (66) post-secondary students. Unlike the subsequent main evaluation phase, this pilot phase was administered entirely via paper-and-pen instruments and processed manually by Mario Aquilina in Malta.

The pilot study served two primary purposes:

1. **Curriculum Refinement:** Feedback gathered from the pilot phase informed the pacing, structure, and content of the workshop curriculum before its wider deployment. The synthesized results were communicated directly to European partners to actively influence and optimize their local workshop preparations.
2. **Evaluation Instrument Refinement:** The pilot phase enabled the testing and refinement of the questionnaire instruments and procedural methodologies.

Because pilot participants engaged with earlier, unrefined versions of both the curriculum and the evaluation framework, their responses were excluded from the final cross-national dataset to ensure analytical consistency. A copy of the original pilot survey instrument is available in the appendix.

After excluding these 66 pilot participants from the overall project pool of 471 individuals, the population for the main evaluation phase consisted of 405 individuals. From this eligible cohort, 335 participants completed the digital pre-workshop questionnaire, representing a response rate of 82.7%, while 258 participants completed the digital end-of-workshops questionnaire, representing a response rate of 63.7%. This variance in response volumes reflects the voluntary nature of participation in the evaluation process and is consistent with the participant attrition commonly observed in multi-stage longitudinal educational surveys.

2.4. Resolution of Participant Stream Classification Errors

During the data-cleaning phase, a number of respondents in both the pre-workshop and end-of-workshops questionnaires were found to have selected incorrect participant categories. The most common errors involved participants selecting the General Public category when they had in fact enrolled in Post-Secondary or University Student workshop series. A smaller number of respondents selected the University Student category instead of the Post-Secondary category, or vice versa.

To address these classification errors, the research team implemented a validation procedure using information recorded within the questionnaires, including workshop dates, venues, language of delivery, and participant stream selections. These data were cross-referenced against official workshop schedules, attendance records, and partner implementation logs.

Because each workshop series was delivered on specific dates and within clearly defined participant streams, these records provided an objective basis for verifying participant allocation. Through this process, 78 responses in the pre-workshop questionnaire and 36 responses in the end-of-workshops questionnaire were identified as incorrectly categorised and reassigned to their appropriate participant streams.

The majority of these corrections involved respondents who had selected the General Public category despite participating in Post-Secondary or University Student workshop series. The concentration of such cases was particularly evident within the Belgian datasets. A small

number of corrections were identified within the Maltese datasets, involving confusion between the General Public, Post-Secondary, and University Student categories.

This validation process ensured consistency between the survey datasets and the verified attendance records used throughout the project evaluation. All analyses reported in the following sections are based on the corrected datasets.

3. PROFILE OF THE EVALUATION SAMPLE

This section provides an overview of the respondents who completed the qualitative evaluation instruments. All figures reported below are based on the corrected datasets described in Section 2.4, following the reclassification of incorrectly categorised responses.

3.1. Response Distribution by Participant Stream

Figure 4 presents the distribution of respondents across the three workshop streams represented within the project.

Table 4. Response Distribution by Participant Stream

Participant Stream	Pre-Workshop Questionnaire	Pre-Workshop Response Rate (%)	End-of-Workshop Questionnaire	End-of-Workshop Response Rate (%)
General Public	74	91.4%	60	74.1%
Post-Secondary Students	174	72.5%	150	62.5%
University Students	87	103.6%*	48	57.1%
Total	335		258	
Overall questionnaire response rates: - Pre-workshop questionnaire: 82.7% of the eligible evaluation population (335/405). - End-of-workshops questionnaire: 63.7% of the eligible evaluation population (258/405). <i>*Note: The pre-workshop response rate exceeds 100% due to administrative fluidities at onset, where a few prospective university students completed the initial digital survey link during open promotion before the final physical attendance list was finalized..</i>				

Stream-Specific Evaluation Performance Analysis

- General Public Stream: Demonstrated exceptional evaluation compliance, with 91.4% (74 individuals) completing the pre-workshop baseline survey and a strong 74.1% (60 individuals) submitting the end-of-workshops questionnaire.
- Post-Secondary Student Stream: Maintained a highly dependable response footprint in school-integrated settings, with 72.5% (174 students) responding to the baseline survey and 62.5% (150 students) completing the final questionnaire.
- University Student Stream: The pre-workshop questionnaire received 87 responses, slightly exceeding the final verified participant total because the survey was distributed during the registration period, before attendance was confirmed. By the end of the workshop series, 48 university students completed the end-of-workshops

questionnaire (57.1% of the verified participant cohort). This reduction reflects both normal survey attrition—particularly within the larger university cohorts in Ghent and Groningen—and the withdrawal of four participants from the Pisa workshops before the programme was completed.

Response Distribution and Coverage by Implementation Site

Table 5 outlines the absolute counts alongside the precise percentage response rates achieved within each localized cohort (excluding the 66 pilot study participants).

Table 5. Questionnaire Response Rates and Coverage by Partner

Country	Total Evaluation-Eligible Registrations (100%)	Pre-Workshop Questionnaire (Count)	Pre-Workshop Response Rate (%)	End-of-Workshops Questionnaire (Count)	End-of-Workshops Response Rate (%)
Malta (English)	145	116	80.0%	92	63.4%
Malta (Maltese)	69	47	68.1%	45	65.2%
Ghent	131	125	95.4%	81	61.8%
Slovenia	26	19	73.1%	13	50.0%
Pisa	8	12*	150.0%*	8	100.0%
Groningen	26	16	61.5%	19	73.1%
Total Project Pool	405	335	82.7%	258	63.7%

**Note: The pre-workshop response rate for Italy exceeds 100% due to administrative fluidities at onset, where a few prospective university students completed the initial digital survey link during open promotion before the final physical attendance list was finalized.*

Response rates were strong across all implementation sites. Malta (English) recorded response rates of 80.0% at the pre-workshop stage and 63.4% at the end of the workshops, while the Maltese-language workshops showed consistently high participation (68.1% and 65.2%, respectively).

Belgium generated the largest number of responses, achieving a 95.4% pre-workshop response rate and 61.8% at the end of the workshops. Slovenia recorded response rates of 73.1% and 50.0%, while the Netherlands was the only site where participation increased over time, rising from 61.5% to 73.1%.

In Italy, four participants withdrew before completing the workshop series. As a result, only the remaining active participants completed the end-of-workshops questionnaire.

Overall, the response profile closely reflects the geographical distribution of workshop delivery, with Malta and Belgium accounting for the largest share of respondents.

3.2 Demographic Characteristics of Questionnaire Participants

This section provides a detailed breakdown of the demographic profile of the evaluation sample across both the Pre-Workshop ($N = 335$) and End-of-Workshops ($N = 258$) survey cohorts. The analysis examines participant distribution across two primary demographic indicators: gender identity and age range.

Gender Distribution

Across both evaluation rounds, the survey population showed a clear majority of female respondents, with a highly stable distribution between the baseline and completion questionnaires. In the pre-workshop questionnaire, 70.1% of respondents identified as female, 26.9% as male, and 1.2% as non-binary, while 1.2% preferred not to disclose their gender identity and 0.6% identified as transgender. This profile remained largely unchanged in the end-of-workshops questionnaire, where 71.3% identified as female, 25.2% as male, and 1.6% as non-binary, with 1.2% choosing not to disclose and 0.8% identifying as transgender. This consistency suggests that participant attrition did not substantially alter the overall gender balance of the evaluation sample.

Table 6. Gender Distribution Across Survey Cohorts

Gender Identity	Pre-Workshop Questionnaire (Count)	Pre-Workshop Percentage (%)	End-of-Workshops Questionnaire (Count)	End-of- Workshops Percentage (%)
Female	235	70.1%	184	71.3%
Male	90	26.9%	65	25.2%
Non-binary	4	1.2%	4	1.6%
Prefer not to say	4	1.2%	3	1.2%
Transgender	2	0.6%	2	0.8%
Total	335	100.0%	258	100.0%

To provide further insight into the composition of the evaluation sample, gender and age distributions were examined across the individual implementation sites. These cross-tabulations illustrate how local recruitment strategies and participant streams shaped the demographic profile of each delivery context. Female participation predominated across most

implementation sites. Belgium, Malta, Slovenia, and the Netherlands all recorded female majorities in both survey rounds, while Italy was the only implementation site where male respondents constituted the majority.

Table 7. Gender Distribution by Implementation Site

Partner	Round	Female (Count / %)	Male (Count / %)	Other / Prefer Not to Say (Count / %)	Total
Malta (English)	Pre	82 (71.3%)	29 (25.2%)	5 (4.3%)	116
	Post	64 (70.3%)	25 (27.5%)	2 (2.2%)	92
Malta (Maltese)	Pre	31 (66.0%)	15 (31.9%)	1 (2.1%)	47
	Post	27 (60.0%)	16 (35.6%)	2 (4.4%)	45
Ghent	Pre	85 (68.5%)	37 (29.8%)	3 (2.4%)	125
	Post	55 (67.9%)	26 (32.1%)	0 (0.0%)	81
Slovene Writers	Pre	13 (68.4%)	6 (31.6%)	0 (0.0%)	19
	Post	9 (69.2%)	4 (30.8%)	0 (0.0%)	13
Pisa	Pre	3 (25.0%)	8 (66.7%)	1 (8.3%)	12
	Post	2 (25.0%)	5 (62.5%)	1 (12.5%)	8
Groningen	Pre	12 (75.0%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	16
	Post	14 (73.7%)	3 (15.8%)	2 (10.5%)	19

Age Distribution

The age profile of respondents reflects the prominent role played by the Post-Secondary and University workshop streams across the project partnership.

The single largest cohort in both surveys was the 15–17 age group, which accounted for 48.7% of the baseline sample and 52.3% of the final evaluation sample. This concentration reflects the extensive delivery of workshops within secondary and post-secondary educational settings, particularly in Malta and Belgium.

Beyond this large youth cohort, respondents were distributed across a broad range of adult age groups, reflecting participation from university students and members of the general public. The 18–24 age group, comprising primarily of university students, accounted for 23.0% of pre-workshop responses and 15.9% of end-of-workshops responses. Participants

aged 25 and above represented 28.3% of the pre-workshop sample and 31.8% of the end-of-workshops sample.

Table 8. Age Range Distribution Across Survey Cohorts

Age Bracket	Pre-Workshop Questionnaire (Count)	Pre-Workshop Percentage (%)	End-of-Workshops Questionnaire (Count)	End-of-Workshops Percentage (%)
15 to 17	163	48.7%	135	52.3%
18 to 24	77	23.0%	41	15.9%
25 to 34	41	12.2%	29	11.2%
35 to 44	14	4.2%	12	4.7%
45 to 54	16	4.8%	15	5.8%
55 to 64	15	4.5%	18	7.0%
65 or over	9	2.7%	8	3.1%
Total	335	100.0%	258	100.0%

The age profile varied considerably across implementation sites, reflecting the distinct participant groups targeted by partner institutions.

Belgium and Malta recorded the highest concentration of younger participants. In Belgium, participants aged 15–17 accounted for 63.4% of the pre-workshop sample and 70.4% of the end-of-workshops sample. Similar patterns emerged across both Maltese language streams, where participants aged 15–17 consistently represented more than half of all respondents.

The Netherlands and Belgium contained the largest concentrations of participants aged 18–24, reflecting the strong presence of university-based workshop activity. By contrast, Slovenia and Italy primarily engaged adult learners. In Slovenia, the largest age category was 35–44 years, while in Italy the majority of participants fell within the 25–34 age bracket.

Table 9. Age Range Distribution and Proportions Cross-Tabulated by Implementation Track

Country		15–17	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+	T
Malta English	Pre	63 54.3%	24 20.7%	12 10.3%	2 1.7%	4 3.4%	5 4.3%	6 5.2%	116
	Post	54 58.7%	15 16.3%	11 12.0%	2 2.2%	4 4.3%	3 3.3%	3 3.3%	92
Malta Maltese	Pre	26 55.3%	6 12.8%	3 6.4%	8 17.0%	3 6.4%	0 0.0%	12.1 %	47
	Post	25 55.6%	5 11.1%	3 6.7%	5 11.1%	5 11.1%	0 0.0%	2 4.4%	45
Ghent	Pre	78 63.4%	37 30.1%	3 2.4%	2 1.6%	2 1.6%	0 0.0%	1 0.8%	125
	Post	57 70.4%	21 25.9%	0 0.0%	2 2.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 1.2%	81
Slovenia	Pre	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 21.1%	7 36.8%	5 26.3%	3 15.8%	0 0.0%	19
	Post	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 15.4%	6 46.2%	3 23.1%	2 15.4%	0 0.0%	13
Pisa	Pre	0 0.0%	3 25.0%	8 66.7%	1 8.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	12
	Post	0 0.0%	3 37.5%	4 50.0%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	8
Groningen	Pre	1 6.2%	7 43.8%	8 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	16
	Post	1 5.3%	9 47.4%	8 42.1%	1 5.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	19

These age distribution patterns provide strong empirical evidence of the project's inclusivity. Rather than targeting a narrow or exclusive demographic, the evaluation data demonstrates that the project successfully engaged individuals across the entire life course—from adolescents in initial education to older adults engaged in community learning. This cross-generational reach shows that the creative and civic themes of the workshops resonated across diverse age barriers, fostering an inclusive environment. This analytical focus on inclusivity explains why the project could seamlessly support secondary school students,

university populations, and senior lifelong learners within the same overarching research framework.

The demographic diversity observed across the project partnership provides a strong foundation for the subsequent analysis of participant expectations, experiences, and perceived learning outcomes.

3.3 Writing Profile and Previous Writing Experience of Participants

To understand the diversity of the participant cohort, the pre-workshop questionnaire examined respondents' previous engagement with writing. Two indicators were used: the frequency with which participants wrote outside compulsory educational or professional contexts, and their previous experience of publishing or sharing their writing.

Writing Frequency

The baseline data indicate that participants entered the project with a wide range of writing habits.

Table 10. Baseline Personal Writing Frequency (N = 335)

Writing Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Daily or almost daily	52	15.5%
Weekly	89	26.6%
Monthly	61	18.2%
Rarely or only when required	114	34.0%
Never	19	5.7%
Total	335	100.0%

The largest group of participants (34.0%) reported writing only rarely or when required, while a further 5.7% indicated that they never wrote outside compulsory contexts. Together, these groups accounted for almost 40% of the sample. At the same time, more than 60% reported writing at least occasionally, with 15.5% writing on a daily basis. These findings indicate that the workshops attracted participants with a broad range of previous writing experience and confidence.

Previous Publication Experience

Participants were also asked whether they had previously published or publicly shared their writing.

Table 11. Previous Publication Experience (N = 335)

Publication Experience	Respondents	Percentage
Never published	269	80.3%
Published only in school or institutional contexts	44	13.1%
Published in blogs, community anthologies or local media	18	5.4%
Formally published (books, journals or professional media)	4	1.2%
Total	335	100.0%

The majority of participants (80.3%) had never published any form of writing prior to joining the project. A further 13.1% had only shared their work within school or institutional contexts. By contrast, only 6.6% had experience of publication beyond educational settings, either through community outlets or formal publication.

Accessibility of the Participant Cohort

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the project successfully engaged participants with diverse levels of writing experience. While a small proportion of respondents entered the workshops as experienced or regularly publishing writers, the overwhelming majority had little or no previous publication experience and many wrote only infrequently outside compulsory educational contexts. The workshops therefore attracted both novice and more experienced writers, creating opportunities for participants with different levels of confidence and experience to learn alongside one another.

Cross-Site Comparison of Baseline Writing Experience

Participants entered the Essays Beyond Borders workshops with markedly different levels of writing experience, reflecting the distinct recruitment strategies adopted by the partner institutions.

Malta (English) combined large cohorts of post-secondary students with members of the general public. Consequently, many participants reported writing only occasionally or when required, while a smaller but significant group identified as regular or daily writers.

Malta (Maltese) displayed a more balanced writing profile, with relatively few participants reporting that they never wrote outside compulsory contexts. Weekly and occasional writing were the most common patterns, suggesting an established interest in writing among many participants.

Ghent was characterised by a predominantly post-secondary cohort. As a result, infrequent writing was more common than in several other implementation sites, reflecting the younger age profile of participants.

Slovenian Writers' Association consisted primarily of adult learners, many of whom reported writing on a regular basis before joining the workshops. This implementation site therefore represented one of the most experienced writing cohorts within the project.

Pisa involved a relatively small university cohort whose participants generally reported regular writing habits, consistent with their academic background.

Groningen attracted a mixed cohort of university students and members of the general public, resulting in a balanced distribution of writing experience ranging from occasional to frequent writers.

Overall, the baseline findings demonstrate that the project successfully engaged participants with widely differing levels of previous writing experience. Rather than targeting a single type of writer, the workshops brought together novice, developing, and experienced writers across a variety of educational and community contexts. This diversity provides an important context for interpreting the workshop evaluations and the learning outcomes presented in the following sections.

4. EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORKSHOP SERIES

4.1. Participants' Perceptions of Writing: Expectations and Perceived Learning Gains

This section examines the extent to which the *Essays Beyond Borders* (EBB) workshops met participants' expectations and contributed to their perceived learning and development. The analysis compares responses from the Pre-Workshop Questionnaire ($N = 335$) with those from the End-of-Workshops Questionnaire ($N = 258$) using six paired indicators that measure participants' motivations before the workshops and their perceived outcomes after completing the programme.

Each pair of statements was assessed using the same five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree), allowing direct comparison between participants' initial expectations and their subsequent evaluations.

Pre-Workshop Expectations	End-of-Workshops Attainment
I want to become a better writer.	I have become a better writer.
I want to learn more about the essay as a form.	I have learned more about the essay as a form.
I want to explore writing from a personal perspective.	I have explored writing from a personal perspective.
I want to explore alternative writing styles.	I have explored writing in styles different from those I usually use.
I want to share my writing publicly.	I feel more prepared to share my writing publicly.
I want detailed feedback on my writing.	I received detailed feedback on my writing.

The analysis is organised into three thematic dimensions corresponding to the principal learning objectives of the project.

Writing Development and Understanding of the Essay (Q11 & Q12)

This subsection examines participants' perceptions of improvements in their writing alongside their understanding of the essay as a literary and creative form. Given the different structures of the workshop programmes, the analysis distinguishes between the Post-Secondary workshops, which were delivered as three-hour interventions, and the University and General Public workshop series, which typically comprised approximately fifteen hours of instruction.

Table 12. Mean Scores for Q11 and Q12 by Participant Stream

Participant Stream	Workshop Duration	Q11 Pre: <i>I want to become a better writer</i>	Q11Post: <i>I have become a better writer</i>	Q12 Pre: <i>I want to learn more about the essay as a form</i>	Q12 Post: <i>I have learned more about the essay as a form</i>
Post-Secondary	3 hours	3.81	3.42	3.28	3.85
University	14–15 hours	4.45	3.73	4.29	4.60
General Public	14–15 hours	4.72	3.98	4.55	4.73

The findings reveal distinct patterns across the three participant streams. It is important to note that Q11 and Q12 compare participants' aspirations before the workshops with their retrospective evaluations after completing them. Consequently, the analysis should not be interpreted as a direct measure of learning gain but rather as an assessment of the extent to which the workshops fulfilled participants' expectations and supported their perceived development.

Participants in the General Public workshops entered the programme with the highest expectations of improving as writers (mean = 4.72), followed by University participants (4.45). Post-Secondary participants also expressed positive expectations, although their baseline scores were lower (3.81), reflecting both their educational stage and the shorter three-hour workshop format.

Following the workshops, all three participant streams reported positive perceptions of writing development. Although post-workshop scores were more moderate than participants' initial aspirations, they remained consistently high. This pattern reflects the natural difference between an anticipated learning goal and a reflective assessment of personal progress rather than an indication that the workshops failed to meet expectations. Particularly noteworthy are the Post-Secondary workshops, where participants reported positive writing development (mean = 3.42) after only approximately three hours of instruction. Likewise, the longer University and General Public workshop series generated post-workshop means of 3.73 and 3.98 respectively following approximately fifteen hours of guided writing practice and discussion.

The results for Q12 are even more striking. Every participant stream reported higher post-workshop than pre-workshop mean scores. The largest increase occurred among Post-Secondary participants, whose mean score rose by 0.57 points (from 3.28 to 3.85). University participants recorded an increase of 0.31 points (4.29 to 4.60), while members of the General Public reported an increase of 0.18 points (4.55 to 4.73), reflecting the fact that this group already entered the workshops with very high expectations.

These findings indicate that the workshops consistently broadened participants' understanding of the essay as a literary and creative form. Particularly significant is the impact achieved within the three-hour Post-Secondary workshops, where substantial conceptual gains were recorded despite the limited instructional time available. The longer University and General Public workshop series further consolidated this learning through extended opportunities for discussion, writing practice, and feedback.

Cross-Site Comparative Analysis

To examine whether these patterns were consistent across the international partnership, Tables 13 and 14 present mean scores for each implementation site and participant stream. Malta is reported separately according to the language of workshop delivery.

Table 13. Q11 – I want to become a better writer / I have become a better writer: Mean Scores by Implementation Site and Participant Stream

Implementation Site	General Public	University	Post-Secondary
Malta (English)	4.83 / 4.09	4.64 / 4.13	4.22 / 3.50
Malta (Maltese)	4.47 / 4.15	4.33 / 3.67	3.70 / 3.46
Ghent	—	4.26 / 3.27	3.52 / 3.34
Slovenia	4.74 / 4.00	—	—
Pisa	—	4.75 / 4.12	—
Groningen	4.78 / 3.55	4.57 / 3.25	—

Values are reported as Pre-workshop mean / End-of-workshops mean.

Table 14 Q12 – I want to learn more about the essay as a form / I have learned more about the essay as a form: Mean Scores by Implementation Site and Participant Stream

Implementation Site	General Public	University	Post-Secondary
Malta (English)	4.72 / 4.87	4.59 / 4.80	3.75 / 4.24
Malta (Maltese)	4.59 / 4.69	4.67 / 4.83	3.59 / 3.81
Belgium (Ghent)	—	4.09 / 4.00	2.80 / 3.56
Slovenia	4.53 / 4.69	—	—
Italy (Pisa)	—	4.33 / 5.00	—
The Netherlands (Groningen)	4.00 / 4.55	4.29 / 4.50	—

Values are reported as Pre-workshop mean / End-of-workshops mean.

Across all implementation sites, participants entered the workshops with exceptionally high expectations regarding their writing development. Baseline mean scores for Q11 were consistently above 4.2 for most University and General Public cohorts, with the highest expectation recorded among the Malta (English) General Public participants (4.83).

Post-workshop evaluations remained consistently positive, although they were generally more moderate than these initial aspirations. This pattern reflects the distinction between an anticipated goal expressed before the workshops and a retrospective self-assessment of learning after completing them, rather than an indication that expectations were not fulfilled. Importantly, participants across all workshop formats continued to report positive perceptions of improvement. This is particularly noteworthy in the Post-Secondary workshops, where mean scores between 3.34 and 3.50 were achieved following interventions lasting only approximately three hours. Similarly, the longer University and General Public workshop series consistently generated post-workshop means close to or above 4.0, indicating substantial perceived improvements following approximately fifteen hours of instruction.

The findings for Q12 reveal an even more consistent pattern. In almost every implementation site and participant stream, post-workshop evaluations exceeded participants' initial expectations. Particularly notable increases were observed among the Post-Secondary cohorts in Belgium (2.80 to 3.56; +0.76) and Malta (English) (3.75 to 4.24; +0.49), demonstrating that even brief workshop interventions were capable of substantially broadening participants' understanding of the essay as a literary and creative form. Equally strong outcomes were observed within the longer workshop series, including the General Public workshops in Malta (English) (4.72 to 4.87), the University workshops in Malta (Maltese) (4.67 to 4.83), and the University workshops in the Netherlands (4.29 to 4.50). The Italian University cohort recorded the highest post-workshop mean (5.00), although this result should be interpreted with appropriate caution given the relatively small sample size ($N = 8$).

Taken together, these findings demonstrate two complementary educational outcomes. First, participants across all workshop formats reported meaningful improvements in their writing, with positive self-assessments recorded even after the three-hour Post-Secondary interventions. Second, and even more consistently, participants reported a broader understanding of the essay as a flexible literary and creative form. The consistency of this pattern across countries, languages, and participant streams suggests that this represents one of the most distinctive and transferable pedagogical achievements of the *Essays Beyond Borders* project.

Personal Voice and Stylistic Experimentation (Q13 & Q14)

This subsection examines participants' perceptions of their ability to develop a personal voice in their writing and to experiment with unfamiliar styles and forms of expression. As in the previous section, the analysis compares participants' expectations before the workshops with their retrospective evaluations after completing the programme. The findings distinguish

between the Post-Secondary workshops, which were delivered as approximately three-hour interventions, and the University and General Public workshop series, which typically comprised approximately fifteen hours of instruction.

Table 15. Mean Scores for Q13 and Q14 by Participant Stream

Participant Stream	Workshop Duration	Q13 Pre: I want to explore writing from a personal perspective	Q13 Post: I have explored writing from a personal perspective	Q14 Pre: I want to explore freer writing styles	Q14 Post: I have explored writing in freer writing styles than what I was used to
Post-Secondary	3 hours	3.74	3.82	3.79	3.58
University	14–15 hours	4.24	4.41	4.15	3.92
General Public	14–15 hours	4.32	4.47	4.27	4.05

The findings reveal two contrasting patterns across the participant streams.

For Q13 (writing from a personal perspective), participants across all three streams reported slightly higher post-workshop evaluations than their initial expectations. The largest increase was observed among University participants, whose mean score rose from 4.24 before the workshops to 4.41 afterwards (+0.17). Members of the General Public recorded a similar increase (+0.16), while Post-Secondary participants reported a smaller but still positive increase (+0.08). These findings indicate that the workshops successfully encouraged participants to engage with writing as a vehicle for personal reflection and individual expression, irrespective of workshop duration.

The pattern for Q14 (exploring freer writing styles) differs from that observed for Q13. Participants entered the workshops with very high expectations of experimenting with unfamiliar forms of writing, particularly within the General Public (4.27) and University (4.15) streams. Post-workshop evaluations remained positive but were more moderate, with mean scores of 4.05 and 3.92 respectively. Among the Post-Secondary participants, the mean decreased slightly from 3.79 to 3.58.

This pattern should not be interpreted as indicating that participants failed to experiment with new styles. Rather, the comparison reflects the difference between participants' aspirations before the workshops and their retrospective assessment of what they achieved. Exploring unfamiliar styles is an ambitious creative objective, and participants may have developed a greater awareness of the complexity of stylistic experimentation through the workshop process itself. Importantly, all three participant streams continued to record positive

post-workshop evaluations, including the Post-Secondary cohort after only approximately three hours of instruction.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the workshops were particularly successful in encouraging participants to develop a more personal voice in their writing. While participants also reported positive experiences of stylistic experimentation, these evaluations were naturally more measured, reflecting the greater challenge involved in adopting unfamiliar literary forms and techniques within the timeframe of the workshops.

Cross-Site Comparative Analysis

To examine whether these patterns were consistent across the international partnership, Tables 7.5 and 7.6 present the mean scores for each implementation site and participant stream. Malta is reported separately according to the language of workshop delivery.

Table 16. Q13 – *I want to explore writing from a personal perspective / I have explored writing from a personal perspective*: Mean Scores by Implementation Site and Participant Stream

Implementation Site	General Public	University	Post-Secondary
Malta (English)	4.79 / 4.74	4.14 / 4.60	4.03 / 4.15
Malta (Maltese)	4.35 / 4.62	4.33 / 4.50	3.74 / 4.00
Belgium (Ghent)	—	4.23 / 4.00	3.48 / 3.50
Slovenia	3.84 / 4.15	—	—
Pisa	—	4.25 / 4.50	—
Groningen	3.78 / 4.18	4.43 / 4.38	—

Values are reported as Pre-workshop mean / End-of-workshops mean.

Table 17. Q14 – *I want to explore freer writing styles / I have explored writing in freer writing styles than what I was used to*: Mean Scores by Implementation Site and Participant Stream

Implementation Site	General Public	University	Post-Secondary
Malta (English)	4.66 / 4.30	4.18 / 4.00	4.29 / 4.06
Malta (Maltese)	4.29 / 4.38	4.33 / 4.17	3.63 / 3.96
Belgium (Ghent)	—	4.12 / 3.55	3.41 / 3.07
Slovenia	3.84 / 3.77	—	—
Italy (Pisa)	—	4.17 / 3.75	—
The Netherlands (Groningen)	4.00 / 3.55	4.14 / 4.12	—

Values are reported as Pre-workshop mean / End-of-workshops mean.

The findings for Q13 demonstrate a remarkably consistent pattern across the project partnership. The largest increases were observed among the University participants in Malta (English) (4.14 to 4.60; +0.46), the General Public in the Netherlands (3.78 to 4.18; +0.40), and the General Public in Slovenia (3.84 to 4.15; +0.31). Similar gains were evident among the Maltese-language workshops and the Post-Secondary cohorts, suggesting that the workshops consistently encouraged participants to engage more confidently with personal perspectives in their writing.

The findings for Q14 present a more varied picture. Participants generally entered the workshops with very high expectations of experimenting with unfamiliar writing styles, particularly within the longer University and General Public workshop series. In several implementation sites, post-workshop evaluations were slightly lower than these initial aspirations. This pattern is most evident in the University workshops in Belgium (4.12 to 3.55), Italy (4.17 to 3.75), and the General Public workshops in the Netherlands (4.00 to 3.55). These differences should not be interpreted as indicating that the workshops failed to encourage stylistic experimentation. Rather, they reflect the distinction between participants' initial aspirations and their retrospective assessment after engaging directly with unfamiliar literary techniques. Experimenting with new styles represents a demanding creative objective, and participants may have developed a more nuanced appreciation of this process during the workshops.

Notably, several implementation sites nevertheless recorded improvements in stylistic experimentation. These include the General Public (+0.09) and Post-Secondary (+0.33) workshops in Malta (Maltese), where participants reported greater engagement with unfamiliar styles than they had initially anticipated. The University workshops in the Netherlands remained almost unchanged (4.14 to 4.12), indicating that participants felt the workshops largely fulfilled their already high expectations.

Taken together, the cross-site findings suggest that the workshops were particularly successful in fostering participants' confidence to write from a personal perspective, with positive outcomes recorded across almost the entire consortium. The results for stylistic experimentation are more nuanced but nevertheless indicate that participants across all countries engaged meaningfully with unfamiliar forms of writing. The variation observed in Q14 likely reflects the inherently challenging nature of stylistic experimentation rather than limitations of the workshop design, and demonstrates that participants developed a more informed and realistic understanding of creative writing processes through their participation in the project.

Confidence, Feedback, and Public Engagement (Q15 & Q16)

This subsection examines participants' confidence in sharing their writing publicly and their experiences of receiving constructive feedback during the workshop series. As in the previous sections, participants' expectations before the workshops are compared with their retrospective evaluations after completing the programme. The analysis distinguishes between the Post-Secondary workshops, which were delivered as approximately three-hour

interventions, and the University and General Public workshop series, which typically comprised approximately fifteen hours of instruction.

Table 18. Mean Scores for Q15 and Q16 by Participant Stream

Participant Stream	Workshop Duration	Q15 Pre: I want to share my writing publicly	Q15 Post: I feel more prepared to share my writing publicly	Q16 Pre: I want detailed feedback about my writing	Q16 Post: I received detailed feedback about my writing
Post-Secondary	3 hours	2.48	2.98	3.74	3.79
University	14–15 hours	3.41	3.63	4.46	4.23
General Public	14–15 hours	3.92	3.98	4.59	4.53

The two indicators examined in this subsection address complementary aspects of participants' writing development. Q15 explores participants' confidence in sharing their writing with wider audiences, while Q16 evaluates one of the central pedagogical features of the workshops: the provision of detailed and constructive feedback.

The findings for Q15 reveal a positive pattern across all three participant streams. Participants reported greater confidence in sharing their writing publicly after completing the workshops than they had anticipated beforehand. The largest increase occurred among Post-Secondary participants, whose mean score rose from 2.48 before the workshops to 2.98 afterwards (+0.50). University participants recorded a more moderate increase (+0.22), while members of the General Public reported a smaller but still positive increase (+0.06).

These findings suggest that the workshops successfully reduced participants' apprehension about sharing their writing with others. The strongest gains among the Post-Secondary participants are particularly noteworthy given the relatively short duration of these workshops. Even within approximately three hours of instruction, participants reported feeling more prepared to make their writing visible beyond the classroom environment.

The findings for Q16 indicate consistently high evaluations of the feedback received during the workshops. Across nearly all implementation sites, participants began the programme with very high expectations regarding detailed feedback, with pre-workshop means generally exceeding 4.4 in the University and General Public workshop series. Post-workshop evaluations remained correspondingly high. Particularly notable outcomes include the General Public workshops in Slovenia, where participants reported an increase from 4.68 to 4.92, and the Belgian Post-Secondary workshops, which recorded a substantial increase from 3.22 to 4.19, indicating that participants regarded the feedback process as one of the strongest aspects of the workshop experience.

In a number of the longer University and General Public workshop series—including Malta (English), Malta (Maltese), Italy, and the Netherlands—post-workshop scores were marginally lower than participants' initial expectations. Given that these evaluations nevertheless remained consistently above 4.0, this pattern should not be interpreted as dissatisfaction with the quality of feedback. Rather, it reflects both participants' more informed understanding of what constitutes detailed and constructive editorial feedback and the timing of the evaluation itself. The end-of-workshops questionnaire was administered immediately after the final workshop session, whereas one of the project's most intensive feedback phases took place subsequently. During the weeks and months following the workshops, many participants received extensive editorial comments as their texts underwent revision, curation, and preparation for publication on the *Essays Beyond Borders* website and other contexts. Consequently, the questionnaire captures participants' perceptions of the feedback received during the instructional phase of the project but does not fully reflect the sustained editorial mentoring that formed part of the project's publication process.

Cross-Site Comparative Analysis

To examine whether these patterns were consistent across the international partnership, Tables 19 and 20 present the mean scores for each implementation site and participant stream. Malta is reported separately according to the language of workshop delivery.

Table 19. Q15 – I want to share my writing publicly / I feel more prepared to share my writing publicly: Mean Scores by Implementation Site and Participant Stream

Implementation Site	General Public	University	Post-Secondary
Malta (English)	3.97 / 4.04	3.77 / 3.80	2.82 / 3.28
Malta (Maltese)	3.53 / 4.23	4.00 / 3.83	2.52 / 3.00
Belgium (Ghent)	—	2.88 / 3.00	2.20 / 2.74
Slovenia	4.26 / 4.15	—	—
Pisa	—	4.00 / 4.00	—
Groningen	3.78 / 3.36	4.29 / 3.62	—

Values are reported as Pre-workshop mean / End-of-workshops mean.

Table 20. Q16 – I want detailed feedback about my writing / I received detailed feedback about my writing: Mean Scores by Implementation Site and Participant Stream

Implementation Site	General Public	University	Post-Secondary
Malta (English)	4.66 / 4.78	4.77 / 4.33	4.38 / 3.24
Malta (Maltese)	4.47 / 4.08	4.67 / 4.17	3.78 / 3.85
Belgium (Ghent)	—	4.16 / 4.18	3.22 / 4.19
Slovenia	4.68 / 4.92	—	—
Pisa	—	4.83 / 4.50	—
Groningen	4.44 / 4.09	4.57 / 3.88	—

Values are reported as Pre-workshop mean / End-of-workshops mean.

The findings for Q15 demonstrate a broadly positive pattern across the project partnership. Participants generally completed the workshops feeling more prepared to share their writing publicly than they had anticipated before participating. The strongest increases were observed among the Post-Secondary cohorts, particularly in Malta (English) (2.82 to 3.28; +0.46), Malta (Maltese) (2.52 to 3.00; +0.48), and Belgium (2.20 to 2.74; +0.54). These gains are particularly noteworthy given that these workshops lasted only approximately three hours, suggesting that even relatively short interventions can significantly increase young writers' confidence in sharing their work.

Among the longer workshop series, the most substantial increase was recorded within the General Public workshops in Malta (Maltese) (3.53 to 4.23; +0.70), while the General Public workshops in Malta (English) also recorded a positive increase (3.97 to 4.04). University cohorts generally showed modest improvements or stable scores, with the exception of the Netherlands, where participants reported slightly lower post-workshop confidence (4.29 to 3.62). This likely reflects a more critical self-assessment following sustained engagement with the writing process rather than reduced confidence in writing itself.

The findings for Q16 indicate consistently high evaluations of the feedback received during the workshops. Across nearly all implementation sites, participants began the programme with very high expectations regarding detailed feedback, with pre-workshop means generally exceeding 4.4 in the University and General Public workshop series. Post-workshop evaluations remained correspondingly high. Particularly notable outcomes include the General Public workshops in Slovenia, where participants reported an increase from 4.68 to 4.92, and the Belgian Post-Secondary workshops, which recorded a substantial increase from 3.22 to 4.19, indicating that participants regarded the feedback process as one of the strongest aspects of the workshop experience.

In a number of the longer University and General Public workshop series—including Malta (English), Malta (Maltese), Italy, and the Netherlands—post-workshop scores were

marginally lower than participants' initial expectations. Given that these evaluations nevertheless remained consistently above 4.0, this pattern should not be interpreted as dissatisfaction with the quality of feedback. Rather, it reflects both participants' more informed understanding of what constitutes detailed and constructive editorial feedback and the timing of the evaluation itself. The end-of-workshops questionnaire was administered immediately after the final workshop session, whereas one of the project's most intensive feedback phases took place subsequently. During the weeks and months following the workshops, many participants received extensive editorial comments as their texts underwent revision, curation, and preparation for publication on the Essays Beyond Borders website. Consequently, the questionnaire captures participants' perceptions of the feedback received during the instructional phase of the project but does not fully reflect the sustained editorial mentoring that formed part of the publication process.

A similar consideration applies to the Post-Secondary workshops delivered in English in Malta. Owing to their intensive three-hour format, it was neither practical nor pedagogically desirable to provide detailed individual written feedback during the workshop sessions themselves. Instead, participants were invited to continue developing and submitting their essays after the workshops had concluded. This extended model enabled tutors to provide detailed editorial feedback outside the scheduled contact hours, and a number of these revised essays were subsequently selected for publication on the Essays Beyond Borders website. As a result, the questionnaire necessarily underestimates the full extent of the feedback received by this cohort, since a significant proportion of the editorial mentoring occurred after the end-of-workshops questionnaire had already been completed.

5. EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOPS

This section evaluates participants' perceptions of the quality of the *Essays Beyond Borders* (EBB) workshops. The analysis is based exclusively on responses to the End-of-Workshops Questionnaire ($N = 258$). Questions 17–28 asked participants to evaluate different aspects of the workshop experience, including the themes explored, the pedagogical approach, tutor performance, feedback, learning materials, and their overall satisfaction with the workshops. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

To provide both an overall and a more detailed understanding of participants' evaluations, the findings are presented in two stages. First, the data are aggregated across the entire consortium to compare evaluations across the three participant streams: the General Public, University Students, and Post-Secondary Students. Second, the analysis examines each implementation partner individually in order to identify local patterns and variations in workshop delivery.

5.1. Overall Evaluation by Participant Stream

To examine how workshop duration, participant profile, and educational context influenced participants' evaluations, Table 21 presents the mean scores for all twelve evaluation indicators across the three participant streams.

Table 21. Evaluation of the Workshops (Q17–Q28): Mean Scores by Participant Stream

Evaluation Statement	General Public	University	Post-Secondary
Q17. I found the themes chosen in the workshops interesting and engaging.	4.78	4.27	3.69
Q18. I found the essay to be a form of writing that is worth learning more about.	4.82	4.56	3.71
Q19. I appreciate the value of writing from a personal perspective as presented in the workshops.	4.67	4.48	3.94
Q20. I appreciate the value of free forms and styles of writing explored in the workshops.	4.67	4.54	3.94
Q21. The tutor was well-prepared.	4.93	4.56	4.43
Q22. The tutor managed to create a good learning environment.	4.92	4.60	4.22
Q23. The methodology of the workshops was generally effective.	4.52	4.10	3.69

Q24. The feedback received from the tutor was helpful.	4.73	4.46	4.04
Q25. The feedback received from my peers was helpful.	4.47	3.92	3.51
Q26. The chosen readings were effective.	4.53	4.33	3.65
Q27. The writing prompts used were effective.	4.33	4.23	3.72
Q28. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience in the workshop.	4.87	4.46	4.03

The results presented in Table 21 demonstrate consistently positive evaluations across all three participant streams. Although mean scores vary according to workshop duration and participant profile, participants in every stream evaluated the workshops positively across all twelve dimensions of the evaluation instrument.

General Public Workshops

The General Public workshops received the highest evaluations across the consortium. Nine of the twelve indicators recorded mean scores above 4.50, culminating in an overall satisfaction score of 4.87 (Q28). Participants particularly valued the quality of the facilitation, awarding exceptionally high scores for tutor preparation (4.93, Q21) and the learning environment created by the tutors (4.92, Q22). They also reported strong appreciation of the essay as a literary form worth exploring further (4.82, Q18) and considered the feedback received from tutors to be highly valuable (4.73, Q24). These findings suggest that the workshops successfully combined intellectual engagement with an open and supportive environment that encouraged creative participation and discussion.

University Workshops

The University workshops likewise received consistently positive evaluations. Participants rated highly the value of learning more about the essay as a literary form (4.56, Q18), tutor preparation (4.56, Q21), the learning environment (4.60, Q22), and the feedback received from tutors (4.46, Q24). Overall satisfaction reached 4.46 (Q28). These results indicate that the workshops successfully complemented participants' existing academic experience by providing opportunities to engage with essay writing in a more exploratory, reflective, and creative manner than is often possible within conventional university assessment frameworks.

Post-Secondary Workshops

Although structured as a condensed series comprising two or three sessions of 90 to 100 minutes each, these workshops still received highly positive evaluations. Participants particularly valued tutor preparation (4.43, Q21), the learning environment (4.22, Q22), tutor feedback (4.04, Q24), and overall satisfaction (4.03, Q28). The more moderate evaluations

recorded for peer feedback (3.51, Q25), workshop methodology (3.69, Q23), and the selected readings (3.65, Q26) should be interpreted within the context of the workshop format. This necessarily limited opportunities for extended peer review, multiple drafting exercises, and sustained discussion. Nevertheless, the consistently positive evaluations demonstrate that participants regarded these shorter workshops as engaging, well organised, and educationally valuable.

Overall Comparison

Taken together, these findings indicate that the pedagogical models developed within *Essays Beyond Borders* were successfully adapted across different participant groups and educational contexts. While the longer General Public and University workshop series naturally achieved the highest overall evaluations, the positive findings from the Post-Secondary stream demonstrate that carefully designed short-format interventions can also deliver meaningful educational experiences when supported by effective facilitation and a coherent curriculum.

5.2. Partner Evaluation: Malta (English)

To explore how these overall trends manifested within individual implementation sites, this subsection examines the evaluations received by the Malta (English) workshops. This implementation stream included General Public, University, and Post-Secondary participants, thereby providing a useful basis for comparing workshop delivery across all three target groups.

Table 22. Evaluation of the Workshops (Q17–Q28): Malta (English)

Evaluation Statement	General Public	University	Post-Secondary
Q17. I found the themes chosen in the workshops interesting and engaging.	4.96	4.67	4.13
Q18. I found the essay to be a form of writing that is worth learning more about.	4.83	4.87	4.09
Q19. I appreciate the value of writing from a personal perspective as presented in the workshops.	4.83	4.67	4.13
Q20. I appreciate the value of free forms and styles of writing explored in the workshops.	4.78	4.67	4.17
Q21. The tutor was well-prepared.	5.00	5.00	4.87
Q22. The tutor managed to create a good learning environment.	5.00	5.00	4.70
Q23. The methodology of the workshops was generally effective.	4.83	4.60	4.26

Q24. The feedback received from the tutor was helpful.	5.00	4.80	4.17
Q25. The feedback received from my peers was helpful.	4.43	4.07	3.56
Q26. The chosen readings were effective.	4.74	4.67	4.20
Q27. The writing prompts used were effective.	4.57	4.67	4.09
Q28. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience in the workshop.	5.00	4.67	4.44

Note: Values represent mean scores on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

The Malta (English) workshops received some of the strongest evaluations recorded across the consortium, demonstrating consistently high levels of participant satisfaction across all three participant streams.

General Public Workshops

Members of the General Public expressed exceptionally positive views of the workshops. Perfect mean scores (5.00) were awarded for tutor preparation (Q21), the learning environment (Q22), tutor feedback (Q24), and overall satisfaction (Q28). Participants also rated the workshop themes (4.96), the value of the essay as a literary form (4.83), and the workshop methodology (4.83) extremely highly. These findings indicate that participants regarded the workshops as intellectually stimulating while also benefiting from excellent facilitation and a highly supportive learning environment.

University Workshops

The University workshops received similarly strong evaluations. Participants awarded perfect scores for tutor preparation and the learning environment (both 5.00), while also reporting very positive evaluations of the essay as a literary form (4.87), tutor feedback (4.80), workshop methodology (4.60), and overall satisfaction (4.67). These results suggest that the workshops successfully combined academic depth with opportunities for personal reflection, creative experimentation, and collaborative discussion.

Post-Secondary Workshops

The Post-Secondary workshops also achieved highly positive evaluations despite being delivered within a condensed three-hour format. Tutor preparation (4.87) and the learning environment (4.70) received particularly high ratings, while overall satisfaction reached 4.44.

The comparatively lower score for peer feedback (3.56) is unsurprising given the limited time available for peer-review activities within a three-hour series. Likewise, although curriculum-related items recorded slightly lower means than those observed in the longer workshop series, every indicator remained above 4.0, demonstrating that participants regarded the workshops as engaging, well organised, and educationally worthwhile.

It should also be noted that the evaluation of tutor feedback for this cohort should be interpreted with some caution. Because of the limited duration of the workshops, it was not feasible to provide detailed editorial feedback on individual texts during the scheduled sessions. Instead, participants were invited to continue developing and submitting their essays after the workshops had concluded. This extended model enabled tutors to provide substantial individual feedback outside the formal contact hours, resulting in a number of essays being revised, selected for publication, and ultimately published on the *Essays Beyond Borders* website. Consequently, the end-of-workshops questionnaire does not fully capture the full extent of the editorial mentoring received by this cohort, since much of this feedback occurred after participants had completed the evaluation questionnaire.

5.3. Partner Evaluation: Malta (Maltese Track)

This subsection presents an analysis of the workshop evaluations from the Malta (Maltese) language track. As a key component of the project's commitment to promoting essay writing within the Maltese language, this track provided creative writing opportunities specifically designed for participants wishing to explore essayistic writing in their native language. To maintain consistency across the report, the findings are presented using the same twelve evaluation indicators employed throughout the partner analyses.

Table 23. Evaluation of the Workshops (Q17–Q28): Malta (Maltese)

Quantitative Quality Evaluation Statement	General Public	University	Post-Secondary
Q17. I found the themes chosen in the workshops interesting and engaging.	4.60	5.00	4.08
Q18. I found the essay to be a form of writing that is worth learning more about.	4.87	5.00	4.00
Q19. I appreciate the value of writing from a personal perspective as presented in the workshops.	4.73	5.00	4.04
Q20. I appreciate the value of free forms and styles of writing explored in the workshops.	4.73	4.75	4.04
Q21. The tutor was well-prepared.	4.67	5.00	4.58
Q22. The tutor managed to create a good learning environment.	4.73	5.00	4.69

Q23. The methodology of the workshops was generally effective.	4.20	4.50	4.15
Q24. The feedback received from the tutor was helpful.	4.60	5.00	4.42
Q25. The feedback received from my peers was helpful.	4.53	4.75	3.85
Q26. The chosen readings were effective.	4.47	5.00	3.96
Q27. The writing prompts used were effective.	4.13	4.50	4.08
Q28. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience in the workshop.	4.80	4.75	4.50

Note: Values represent mean scores on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

The data presented in Table 23 demonstrate consistently positive evaluations across the Malta (Maltese) workshops. Although the participant profile and language of delivery differed from the parallel English-language track, respondents similarly expressed high levels of satisfaction with the curriculum, the facilitation, and the overall learning environment.

General Public Workshops

Participants within the General Public stream evaluated the workshops very positively, indicating that the Maltese-language curriculum successfully engaged adult lifelong learners. Overall satisfaction reached 4.80 (Q28), while particularly high scores were recorded for the value of learning more about the essay as a literary form (4.87, Q18). Participants also expressed strong appreciation for writing from a personal perspective (4.73, Q19) and for the freer forms and styles of writing explored during the workshops (4.73, Q20). Tutor preparation (4.67, Q21) and the learning environment (4.73, Q22) were likewise evaluated highly, suggesting that participants experienced the workshops as both intellectually stimulating and personally supportive. These findings are consistent with one of the central aims of the *Essays Beyond Borders* project: encouraging participants to approach the essay not simply as an academic exercise but as a flexible form of creative and reflective expression.

University Workshops

The University workshops received exceptionally high evaluations. However, these findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution given the relatively small number of respondents (N = 4). Participants awarded perfect mean scores (5.00) across seven indicators: thematic engagement (Q17), the value of the essay as a literary form (Q18), appreciation of writing from a personal perspective (Q19), tutor preparation (Q21), the learning environment (Q22), tutor feedback (Q24), and the effectiveness of the selected readings (Q26). The

remaining indicators also received very high evaluations, including peer feedback (4.75, Q25), appreciation of freer writing styles (4.75, Q20), and overall satisfaction (4.75, Q28). Although based on a small cohort, these findings indicate that participants regarded the workshops as highly engaging and intellectually rewarding, particularly with regard to the quality of the facilitation and the opportunities for discussion and reflection.

Post-Secondary Workshops

The Post-Secondary workshops also received consistently positive evaluations despite being delivered within the project's condensed three-hour format. Participants particularly valued tutor preparation (4.58, Q21), the supportive learning environment (4.69, Q22), tutor feedback (4.42, Q24), and their overall workshop experience (4.50, Q28). As observed elsewhere in the project, peer feedback (3.85, Q25) and the selected readings (3.96, Q26) received slightly more moderate evaluations. These results should be interpreted in light of the limited duration of the workshops, which naturally restricted opportunities for extended peer-review activities and sustained discussion of reading materials. Nevertheless, all remaining evaluation indicators—including workshop methodology (4.15, Q23), thematic engagement (4.08, Q17), and the effectiveness of the writing prompts (4.08, Q27)—remained above the positive 4.0 threshold. This indicates that participants regarded the workshops as well organised, engaging, and educationally valuable despite the compressed timetable.

5.4. Partner Evaluation: Ghent

This subsection presents the evaluation of the workshops delivered in Belgium (Ghent). Unlike the Maltese implementation, the Belgian workshops consisted exclusively of University and Post-Secondary streams. The Belgian partner delivered the largest number of Post-Secondary workshops in the project, with many sessions taking place within school settings and involving participants who had comparatively limited previous experience of creative writing. These contextual factors should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings.

Table 24. Evaluation of the Workshops (Q17–Q28): Belgium (Ghent)

Quantitative Quality Evaluation Statement	University	Post-Secondary
Q17. I found the themes chosen in the workshops interesting and engaging.	3.36	3.21
Q18. I found the essay to be a form of writing that is worth learning more about.	4.00	3.30
Q19. I appreciate the value of writing from a personal perspective as presented in the workshops.	4.00	3.76
Q20. I appreciate the value of free forms and styles of writing explored in the workshops.	4.27	3.73
Q21. The tutor was well-prepared.	3.82	4.03
Q22. The tutor managed to create a good learning environment.	3.73	3.67
Q23. The methodology of the workshops was generally effective.	3.18	3.07
Q24. The feedback received from the tutor was helpful.	4.00	3.80
Q25. The feedback received from my peers was helpful.	3.18	3.34
Q26. The chosen readings were effective.	3.55	3.11
Q27. The writing prompts used were effective.	3.73	3.30
Q28. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience in the workshop.	3.82	3.53

Note: Values represent mean scores on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

The Belgian findings present a more moderate pattern than those observed in the Maltese implementation, although participants nevertheless reported positive evaluations across most aspects of the workshops. Given the scale of the Belgian programme and its strong emphasis on school-based delivery, these results should be interpreted within the context of large cohorts of relatively inexperienced writers participating in short-format workshops.

University Workshops

The University workshops received generally positive evaluations, particularly with regard to participants' appreciation of freer forms and styles of writing (4.27, Q20), the value of the essay as a literary form (4.00, Q18), writing from a personal perspective (4.00, Q19), and the feedback received from tutors (4.00, Q24). Overall satisfaction reached 3.82 (Q28). More moderate evaluations were recorded for workshop methodology (3.18, Q23) and peer feedback (3.18, Q25). These findings suggest that, while participants responded positively to the intellectual and creative dimensions of the workshops, they were somewhat more reserved in their assessment of the workshop structure and collaborative feedback processes.

Post-Secondary Workshops

The Post-Secondary workshops likewise generated generally positive evaluations. Participants particularly valued tutor preparation (4.03, Q21), tutor feedback (3.80, Q24), appreciation of writing from a personal perspective (3.76, Q19), and freer forms of writing (3.73, Q20). Overall satisfaction reached 3.53 (Q28). As with the University cohort, somewhat lower evaluations were recorded for workshop methodology (3.07, Q23), the selected readings (3.11, Q26), and peer feedback (3.34, Q25). These findings are consistent with the structural characteristics of the Belgian implementation, where workshops were frequently delivered within school environments and to comparatively large groups of younger participants. Such settings naturally provide fewer opportunities for extended discussion, detailed peer review, and sustained engagement than the longer workshop series delivered elsewhere in the project.

8.5. Partner Evaluation: Slovene Writers' Association

This subsection examines the evaluations collected from the workshops delivered by the Slovenian partner (N = 13). In Slovenia, the project was implemented exclusively through the General Public stream. The participants consisted primarily of adult lifelong learners who attended an extended workshop series exploring the essay as a literary, reflective, and creative form. This implementation profile provides an opportunity to examine participants' evaluations within a voluntary adult learning environment.

Table 25. Evaluation of the Workshops (Q17–Q28): Slovenia

Quantitative Quality Evaluation Statement	General Public
Q17. I found the themes chosen in the workshops interesting and engaging.	4.69
Q18. I found the essay to be a form of writing that is worth learning more about.	4.85
Q19. I appreciate the value of writing from a personal perspective as presented in the workshops.	4.62
Q20. I appreciate the value of free forms and styles of writing explored in the workshops.	4.62
Q21. The tutor was well-prepared.	5.00
Q22. The tutor managed to create a good learning environment.	5.00
Q23. The methodology of the workshops was generally effective.	4.46
Q24. The feedback received from the tutor was helpful.	4.85
Q25. The feedback received from my peers was helpful.	4.77
Q26. The chosen readings were effective.	4.38
Q27. The writing prompts used were effective.	4.31
Q28. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience in the workshop.	4.92

Note: Values represent mean scores on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

The findings presented in Table 25 demonstrate exceptionally positive evaluations across all dimensions of the workshop experience. The Slovenian implementation recorded some of the highest mean scores observed within the project, indicating that participants responded very favourably to both the pedagogical approach and the workshop environment.

Participants awarded perfect mean scores (5.00) for both tutor preparation (Q21) and the tutor's ability to create a positive learning environment (Q22). These results indicate exceptionally high levels of satisfaction with the quality of facilitation and suggest that participants regarded the workshops as welcoming, well organised, and conducive to creative exploration.

The high evaluation of tutor feedback (4.85, Q24) further reinforces this pattern, indicating that participants valued the guidance and support provided throughout the workshop series.

Participants also expressed very positive evaluations of the curriculum itself. The value of learning more about the essay as a literary form received a mean score of 4.85 (Q18), while appreciation of writing from a personal perspective (Q19) and freer forms and styles of writing (Q20) both achieved mean scores of 4.62.

These findings suggest that participants embraced the central pedagogical aims of the project and regarded the workshops as successful in encouraging creative experimentation alongside reflective writing.

One particularly notable feature of the Slovenian implementation is the high evaluation of collaborative learning. The helpfulness of peer feedback received a mean score of 4.77 (Q25), one of the highest recorded across the consortium. Combined with the strong evaluation of tutor feedback, this indicates that participants perceived both facilitator guidance and peer discussion as valuable components of the learning process. Given that the Slovenian workshops were delivered to a relatively small cohort of adult lifelong learners, these findings suggest that participants developed a collaborative learning environment in which constructive discussion and mutual feedback formed an important part of the workshop experience.

5.6. Partner Evaluation: Pisa

This subsection presents the workshop evaluations from the implementation track delivered in Pisa, Italy (N = 8). The Italian workshops were delivered exclusively to University Students, providing a focused higher-education context for the exploration of essayistic writing, personal voice, and stylistic experimentation. Given the relatively small number of respondents, the findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution, while still offering useful insight into participants' experience of the Pisa workshops.

Table 26. Evaluation of the Workshops (Q17–Q28): Italy (Pisa)

Quantitative Quality Evaluation Statement	University
Q17. I found the themes chosen in the workshops interesting and engaging.	4.38
Q18. I found the essay to be a form of writing that is worth learning more about.	4.50
Q19. I appreciate the value of writing from a personal perspective as presented in the workshops.	4.62
Q20. I appreciate the value of free forms and styles of writing explored in the workshops.	4.75
Q21. The tutor was well-prepared.	4.75
Q22. The tutor managed to create a good learning environment.	4.88
Q23. The methodology of the workshops was generally effective.	4.50
Q24. The feedback received from the tutor was helpful.	4.62
Q25. The feedback received from my peers was helpful.	4.12
Q26. The chosen readings were effective.	4.38
Q27. The writing prompts used were effective.	4.38
Q28. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience in the workshop.	4.62

Note: Values represent mean scores on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

The findings presented in Table 26 show consistently positive evaluations across all twelve indicators. Although the Italian cohort was relatively small, participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the workshop environment, the quality of facilitation, the curriculum, and the opportunities for feedback and creative experimentation.

Participants evaluated the learning environment particularly highly, with Q22 receiving a mean score of 4.88, the highest score recorded for the Pisa workshops. Tutor preparation was also rated strongly (4.75, Q21). These results suggest that participants experienced the workshops as well organised, supportive, and conducive to discussion and experimentation.

Tutor feedback also received a high evaluation (4.62, Q24), indicating that participants valued the guidance provided during the workshop process.

The curriculum-related indicators were also evaluated positively. Participants gave the highest content-related score to the value of exploring freer forms and styles of writing (4.75,

Q20), followed by appreciation of writing from a personal perspective (4.62, Q19) and the value of learning more about the essay as a literary form (4.50, Q18).

These findings suggest that the workshops successfully encouraged participants to move beyond more conventional academic writing expectations and engage with the essay as a flexible form of personal, reflective, and stylistic expression.

The methodology of the workshops was evaluated positively (4.50, Q23), while the chosen readings and writing prompts both received mean scores of 4.38 (Q26 and Q27). Peer feedback received a slightly lower but still positive mean score (4.12, Q25), a pattern also observed in several other implementation sites. This suggests that participants may have found tutor-led feedback somewhat more useful than peer feedback, while still valuing the collaborative dimension of the workshops.

5.7. Partner Evaluation: Groningen

This subsection presents the workshop evaluations from the implementation track delivered in Groningen, The Netherlands (N = 19). The Dutch workshops were delivered across two participant streams: the General Public (N = 11) and University Students (N = 8). This implementation therefore provides insight into how the EBB curriculum was received in both a public lifelong-learning context and a higher-education setting.

Table 27. Evaluation of the Workshops (Q17–Q28): Groningen

Quantitative Quality Evaluation Statement	General Public	University
Q17. I found the themes chosen in the workshops interesting and engaging.	4.55	4.50
Q18. I found the essay to be a form of writing that is worth learning more about.	4.64	4.62
Q19. I appreciate the value of writing from a personal perspective as presented in the workshops.	4.18	4.50
Q20. I appreciate the value of free forms and styles of writing explored in the workshops.	4.27	4.50
Q21. The tutor was well-prepared.	4.82	4.62
Q22. The tutor managed to create a good learning environment.	4.73	4.75
Q23. The methodology of the workshops was generally effective.	4.09	4.12
Q24. The feedback received from the tutor was helpful.	4.09	4.12
Q25. The feedback received from my peers was helpful.	4.00	4.00
Q26. The chosen readings were effective.	4.36	4.38
Q27. The writing prompts used were effective.	4.00	4.00
Q28. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience in the workshop.	4.55	4.62

Note: Values represent mean scores on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

The findings presented in Table 27 show consistently positive evaluations across both Dutch participant streams. Mean scores remained at or above 4.00 for every indicator, suggesting that both General Public and University participants regarded the workshops as engaging, well facilitated, and educationally valuable.

Participants in both streams evaluated the quality of facilitation particularly positively. The General Public cohort gave high scores for tutor preparation (4.82, Q21) and the learning environment (4.73, Q22), while University participants reported similarly strong evaluations for tutor preparation (4.62, Q21) and the learning environment (4.75, Q22).

These results suggest that participants experienced the workshops as well organised and supportive, with tutors successfully creating conditions for discussion, writing practice, and experimentation.

Both cohorts reported strong appreciation of the essay as a form worth learning more about, with mean scores of 4.64 for the General Public and 4.62 for University participants (Q18). Thematic engagement was also evaluated positively, with scores of 4.55 and 4.50 respectively (Q17).

A small difference emerged in relation to personal and experimental writing. University participants gave higher scores for writing from a personal perspective (4.50, Q19) and for the value of freer forms and styles of writing (4.50, Q20), compared with General Public scores of 4.18 and 4.27. This suggests that the University cohort may have responded particularly strongly to the opportunity to explore more subjective and flexible modes of writing.

The scores for methodology, feedback, readings, and writing prompts were positive and closely aligned across both streams. Both cohorts awarded identical mean scores for peer feedback (4.00, Q25) and writing prompts (4.00, Q27). Tutor feedback and workshop methodology were also evaluated similarly, with scores just above 4.0 in both streams.

These findings suggest a stable and consistent implementation model, with both public and university participants valuing the combination of tutor guidance, peer interaction, readings, and writing activities.

5.8. Conclusion: Cross-Partner Synthesis of Workshop Evaluations

The comparative analysis of the workshop evaluations demonstrates that the pedagogical model developed through the Essays Beyond Borders (EBB) project was implemented successfully across a wide range of educational settings and participant groups. Despite differences in workshop duration, institutional context, participant profile, and language of delivery, participants consistently reported positive evaluations across the twelve indicators examining curriculum content, facilitation, methodology, feedback, learning resources, and overall satisfaction.

Perhaps the most striking finding is the consistency of the evaluation patterns across countries, languages, and participant groups. Although the workshops were delivered in different educational systems and institutional contexts, participants responded positively to the same core pedagogical principles. This consistency suggests that the curriculum developed within Essays Beyond Borders possesses a high degree of adaptability and can be successfully transferred across a variety of formal and non-formal educational settings.

The findings also illustrate that participants' evaluations were influenced by both the educational setting and the structure of the workshop series.

Adult learners participating in the General Public workshops consistently reported the highest overall evaluations across the consortium. In Malta, Slovenia, and The Netherlands, these participants expressed particularly strong appreciation for the essay as a literary form, the opportunities to explore personal perspectives and freer styles of writing, and the quality of

the learning environment. The extended workshop format also enabled greater opportunities for discussion, peer feedback, iterative writing, and sustained reflection.

The University workshops similarly received consistently high evaluations. Across the university cohorts, participants particularly valued the opportunity to engage with forms of writing that are less commonly emphasised within conventional academic assessment. High evaluations for the exploration of personal voice, stylistic experimentation, and tutor feedback suggest that the workshops successfully complemented participants' existing academic writing experience by introducing more reflective and creative approaches to essay writing.

The Post-Secondary workshops produced somewhat more moderate evaluations, reflecting the distinctive context in which these workshops were delivered. Unlike the General Public and University series, which generally comprised approximately fifteen hours of instruction, the Post-Secondary workshops were delivered as short workshop series, typically consisting of two or three sessions of approximately 90 to 100 minutes each and integrated into existing school timetables. Although these workshops extended over multiple sessions, their overall duration was considerably shorter than the longer programmes. This naturally limited opportunities for extended peer-review activities, multiple drafting exercises, and sustained discussion. Nevertheless, participants continued to evaluate the workshops positively across all key indicators, demonstrating that relatively short workshop series can also deliver meaningful educational experiences.

Across all implementation sites, the evaluation consistently highlights the central importance of facilitation. Tutor preparation (Q21) and the creation of a positive learning environment (Q22) were among the highest-rated indicators throughout the consortium. These findings suggest that the success of the workshops depended not only on the curriculum itself but also on the quality of local implementation. Regardless of country, participant stream, or workshop format, participants consistently regarded the workshops as supportive, well organised, and conducive to discussion, experimentation, and creative exploration.

The evaluation also demonstrates that participants developed a broader appreciation of the essay as a creative and reflective literary form. High evaluations for writing from a personal perspective (Q19), exploring freer forms and styles of writing (Q20), and learning more about the essay as a literary genre (Q18), together with the comparative findings presented in Section 7, indicate that participants increasingly viewed the essay not simply as an academic exercise but as a flexible medium for reflection, experimentation, and creative expression.

Beyond participants' evaluations of individual workshops, the findings also indicate that the project successfully achieved several of its broader educational objectives. Across the consortium, participants reported increased confidence in expressing personal perspectives, greater appreciation of the essay as a literary form, and positive experiences of experimenting with writing styles beyond those with which they were previously familiar. These outcomes suggest that the workshops encouraged participants to use writing not simply to complete

academic tasks but to explore ideas, experiences, and opinions within wider social, cultural, and civic contexts.

The consistently positive evaluations relating to personal perspective, freer forms of writing, and the value of the essay further suggest that the workshops fostered creative and critical thinking. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences, question assumptions, engage with contemporary social, cultural, and environmental themes, and communicate their ideas in ways that connected individual reflection with wider civic concerns. In doing so, the project contributed to the development of participants' civic voice by creating supportive environments in which they could express personal ideas confidently, experiment with different forms of writing, and engage in dialogue through creative expression.

Another consistent finding concerns the collaborative nature of the workshop experience. While evaluations of peer feedback varied according to workshop duration and participant group, participants generally regarded interaction with fellow writers as a valuable component of the learning process. The positive evaluations of peer feedback suggest that many workshop groups developed collaborative learning environments in which participants discussed, reviewed, and refined one another's work. In this respect, the workshops functioned not only as instructional spaces but also as communities of practice in which learning was supported through dialogue, shared reflection, and constructive critique.

Taken together, the evaluation findings suggest that the pedagogical models developed through Essays Beyond Borders proved adaptable across a diverse range of educational environments. While the longer General Public and University workshop series naturally provided greater opportunities for sustained writing practice, iterative revision, and collaborative feedback, the consistently positive evaluations from the shorter Post-Secondary workshop series demonstrate that carefully designed interventions delivered over a limited number of sessions can also produce meaningful educational outcomes when supported by effective facilitation and a coherent curriculum.

Overall, the findings indicate that the Essays Beyond Borders project successfully met its principal educational objectives by:

- strengthening participants' confidence as writers;
- broadening their understanding of the essay as a creative and reflective literary form;
- encouraging experimentation with personal voice and diverse styles of writing;
- fostering creative and critical thinking while supporting the expression of personal ideas within wider social and civic contexts;
- demonstrating the importance of skilled facilitation in creating supportive environments for reflective and creative writing; and
- showing that the pedagogical model can be successfully adapted across different countries, languages, age groups, and educational settings.

The consistency of the evaluation findings across the consortium suggests that the Essays Beyond Borders workshop model provides a robust, transferable, and adaptable framework for future creative writing initiatives in both formal and non-formal educational contexts. While future research could usefully explore the longer-term impact of participation on subsequent writing practices and publication activity, the present evaluation provides strong evidence that the project successfully promoted creative engagement with essay writing and established a sustainable model for fostering reflective, expressive, and socially engaged writing across Europe.

5.9. Limitations of the Study

As with any evaluation based on participant questionnaires, the findings presented in this report should be interpreted in light of several methodological considerations.

First, participation in both the pre-workshop and end-of-workshops questionnaires was entirely voluntary. Consequently, response rates varied across implementation sites and participant streams, and the number of respondents differed between the two survey administrations. While overall response rates were high for an international educational project, the pre-workshop and post-workshop datasets do not constitute perfectly matched participant samples. The analyses presented in this report should therefore be understood as comparisons between related cohorts rather than as longitudinal measurements of the same individuals.

Secondly, the size of the participant cohorts varied considerably across implementation sites. Whereas Malta and Belgium generated large datasets, some workshop streams—most notably the University workshops in Pisa and the Maltese-language University workshops—comprised relatively small numbers of participants. Although these findings remain valuable as evaluations of those specific implementations, results derived from smaller cohorts should be interpreted with appropriate caution and should not be generalised beyond their immediate educational context.

A further consideration concerns the nature of the evaluation instrument itself. The questionnaires were designed to measure participants' perceptions of their learning, confidence, and workshop experience rather than objective improvements in writing ability. The findings therefore reflect participants' self-reported evaluations of their development and should not be interpreted as direct assessments of writing quality or technical competence.

Finally, the evaluation was conducted immediately following the completion of each workshop series. As a result, the findings capture participants' immediate responses and perceived learning gains but cannot determine the longer-term impact of the workshops on subsequent writing practices, publication activity, or sustained engagement with essayistic writing. Several participants continued to receive editorial support after the workshops, and a number of essays were subsequently revised, curated, and published through project outputs. These longer-term outcomes extend beyond the scope of the present evaluation and will be explored in future research.

Despite these limitations, several factors strengthen confidence in the findings presented throughout this report. The evaluation draws upon responses from a substantial international sample collected across six implementation streams in five European partner countries, representing diverse educational contexts, age groups, and workshop formats. The remarkable consistency of the principal findings across countries, participant streams, and languages of delivery suggests that the educational benefits identified in this report reflect robust and transferable features of the Essays Beyond Borders pedagogical model rather than isolated local effects.

6. General Conclusion

The Essays Beyond Borders project set out to explore the educational, literary, and civic potential of the essay as a creative form capable of fostering reflective thinking, personal expression, and civic participation. Through a programme of workshops delivered between January 2024 and March 2026 across five European partner countries, the project sought to propose the essay as a flexible literary genre that encourages participants to connect individual experience with broader social, cultural, and intellectual concerns. The findings presented in this report demonstrate that these objectives were successfully realised across a wide range of educational contexts, participant groups, and linguistic settings.

One of the most significant achievements of the project was its ability to engage a remarkably diverse participant population. The workshops brought together Post-Secondary students, university students, and members of the General Public representing a broad spectrum of ages, educational backgrounds, and previous writing experience. Importantly, many participants reported writing only occasionally before joining the programme, while the vast majority had never previously published any creative work. The workshops therefore succeeded in reaching audiences extending well beyond established literary communities and provided many participants with their first sustained opportunity to engage with essayistic writing as a creative practice.

The evaluation demonstrates consistently positive educational outcomes across the consortium. Participants reported meaningful improvements in their confidence as writers, their understanding of the essay as a literary and creative form, and their willingness to experiment with new approaches to writing. Particularly strong gains were observed in participants' appreciation of writing from a personal perspective, confirming that the workshops successfully encouraged reflection, self-expression, and the development of individual voice. Although expectations regarding writing improvement were naturally ambitious before the workshops commenced, post-workshop evaluations consistently indicate that participants perceived substantial learning gains regardless of workshop format or duration.

Equally significant is the evidence that the workshops encouraged participants to view writing as a broader intellectual and social practice. Throughout the evaluation, participants expressed a growing appreciation for the value of personal voice, stylistic experimentation, and reflective writing. These outcomes extend beyond the acquisition of technical writing

skills and point towards the essay's wider educational potential as a vehicle for creative thinking, critical inquiry, and civic engagement. In this respect, the project aligns closely with the wider objectives of the Erasmus+ programme by promoting active participation, intercultural dialogue, and democratic expression through education.

The comparative analyses further demonstrate the adaptability of the pedagogical model across different institutional contexts. While the longer workshop series delivered for University students and members of the General Public naturally allowed greater opportunities for drafting, revision, and sustained peer discussion, the shorter Post-Secondary workshop series also generated consistently positive outcomes. Delivered over two or three sessions of approximately 90–100 minutes each, these condensed workshops nevertheless enabled participants to broaden their understanding of essay writing, experiment with personal expression, and engage creatively with unfamiliar forms of writing. This finding suggests that meaningful educational impact can be achieved within relatively short interventions when supported by carefully designed workshop activities and skilled facilitation.

One of the clearest findings emerging from the evaluation concerns the central importance of the workshop tutors. Across every implementation site, tutor preparedness and the creation of supportive learning environments received some of the highest evaluations recorded in the entire dataset. Participants consistently emphasised the value of constructive guidance, respectful dialogue, and opportunities to share their writing within an atmosphere characterised by openness, trust, and mutual encouragement. These findings underline that successful creative writing pedagogy depends not only on curriculum design but also on the ability of facilitators to create emotionally secure learning environments in which participants feel confident enough to take creative risks and express personal experiences.

The project also demonstrates the value of multilingual and intercultural implementation. Workshops delivered in English, Maltese, Dutch, Italian, and Slovenian produced remarkably consistent patterns of participant satisfaction and perceived learning gains. The separate analysis of the Maltese- and English-language workshops in Malta further illustrates that the pedagogical model translated effectively across different linguistic contexts while remaining sensitive to local educational and cultural traditions. These findings suggest that the Essays Beyond Borders methodology constitutes a transferable model capable of supporting essay-writing pedagogy across a wide variety of European educational settings.

Beyond the positive evaluation of the workshop programme itself, the project has generated a substantial body of literary and scholarly outputs. Participants' work has progressed beyond the workshops through editorial feedback, publication in project anthologies, dissemination via the project website, and publication in established literary venues. These outputs demonstrate that the workshops were not isolated educational interventions but formed part of a broader creative process in which participants continued to develop, revise, and share their writing after the formal completion of the workshop series. Together with the project's lectures, translations, conferences, and research activities, these publications provide tangible evidence of the project's enduring cultural and educational legacy.

The findings presented in this report therefore demonstrate that *Essays Beyond Borders* has successfully established a robust and adaptable pedagogical model for essay-writing across diverse educational contexts. The consistency of the results across countries, participant groups, and languages of delivery provides strong evidence that the educational benefits identified are not confined to individual implementations but represent transferable features of the workshop methodology. In doing so, the project has shown that the essay can function not merely as an academic exercise or literary genre, but as a powerful educational practice capable of developing confident, reflective, creative, and socially engaged writers.

Finally, it should be recognised that the present report represents only one dimension of the *Essays Beyond Borders* project's wider scholarly contribution. While its principal purpose has been to evaluate the implementation and educational effectiveness of the workshop programme, the project has generated a substantially richer body of empirical and scholarly work than could be accommodated within the scope of this evaluation. The questionnaires produced an extensive dataset exploring participants' attitudes towards writing, creativity, civic expression, and writing education, which extends well beyond the immediate requirements of the Erasmus+ evaluation. These data will form the basis of future academic publications, conference presentations, and other research outputs, contributing to ongoing international scholarship on essay studies and creative writing pedagogy.

At the same time, the scholarly legacy of *Essays Beyond Borders* extends beyond the questionnaire data themselves. Building upon the international collaborations established through the project, the consortium has developed a sustained programme of research on essay studies and writing pedagogy. Among its principal scholarly outputs is *The Planetary Essay*, a peer-reviewed edited volume scheduled for publication by Edinburgh University Press in 2028, bringing together leading international scholars working on the essay. The project has also generated numerous seminar papers, public lectures, and scholarly presentations documented through its dissemination activities, while the organisation of the *Essays Beyond Borders* Easter School and the accompanying international conference hosted by the University of Pisa in April 2026 further consolidated the project's role as a platform for international exchange. Together with the publication of workshop anthologies, individual essays, and other creative outputs, these activities demonstrate that *Essays Beyond Borders* has evolved beyond a successful educational intervention into a sustainable international research network whose impact will continue well beyond the formal conclusion of the Erasmus+ project.

The evaluation presented here should therefore be regarded not as the conclusion of the *Essays Beyond Borders* project, but as an important milestone within a continuing programme of international research, creative practice, and pedagogical innovation. By demonstrating the educational, literary, and civic value of essayistic writing across multiple languages, educational systems, and cultural contexts, the project has established a robust foundation for future scholarship while offering a transferable model for educators, researchers, writers, and policymakers committed to fostering reflective, creative, and socially engaged writing.

The Essays Beyond Borders project demonstrates that, across languages, cultures, and educational systems, the essay remains a uniquely powerful form through which individuals can explore ideas, articulate personal experience, and participate more fully in civic and cultural life. By placing creativity, reflection, and dialogue at the centre of writing pedagogy, the project has contributed not only to participants' development as writers, but also to a broader understanding of the educational value of essayistic practice in contemporary Europe.

Note on the Scope of the Present Report

The questionnaires developed for the Essays Beyond Borders project were designed to serve two complementary purposes. First, they provided the data required to evaluate the implementation and educational effectiveness of the workshop programme across the project consortium. Secondly, they generated a broader research dataset intended to support the project's academic investigation into contemporary attitudes towards writing, essayistic practice, creativity, and writing education.

The present report focuses almost exclusively on the first objective. Consequently, the quantitative analyses presented here are limited to those questionnaire items directly related to participant characteristics, workshop expectations, perceived learning outcomes, and evaluations of the quality and delivery of the workshops. These data address the principal evaluation requirements of the Erasmus+ project and provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the workshop programme across participating countries and educational contexts.

The questionnaires also collected a substantial body of additional data concerning participants' attitudes towards writing, including the perceived importance of personal voice, reflective writing, civic engagement, stylistic experimentation, and the role of essayistic writing within formal educational systems. These sections extend beyond the immediate evaluation of the workshops and form part of the wider research agenda of the Essays Beyond Borders project.

The analysis of these additional datasets will be undertaken separately and disseminated through future academic publications, conference presentations, and other research outputs. By distinguishing between project evaluation and broader scholarly investigation, the consortium seeks both to fulfil the reporting requirements of the Erasmus+ programme and to contribute more substantially to ongoing international discussions on creative writing pedagogy, essay studies, and writing education.

Appendices

Appendix A. Data Cleaning and Validation Procedure

Introduction

The quantitative evaluation presented in this report is based on responses collected through the *Essays Beyond Borders* Pre-Workshop Questionnaire and End-of-Workshops Questionnaire. Prior to statistical analysis, all datasets underwent a systematic validation and cleaning process to ensure the accuracy and consistency of participant classifications and to minimise potential sources of analytical bias.

The objective of the validation process was not to modify participants' responses, but to verify that each respondent had been assigned to the correct implementation stream and partner institution before comparative analyses were undertaken.

Verification of Participant Streams

During the preliminary analysis, a small number of questionnaire responses were identified as containing inconsistencies between the workshop attended and the participant stream selected in the questionnaire.

These inconsistencies primarily related to the self-selection of the **Type of Workshop Series Attended**, where respondents occasionally selected an incorrect category despite attending a different workshop.

To ensure consistency throughout the evaluation, participant classifications were verified against the official workshop attendance records maintained by each project partner.

Where discrepancies were identified, participants were reassigned to the correct workshop stream using the official attendance lists.

No questionnaire responses or evaluation data were altered beyond this administrative correction.

Malta Language Streams

The Maltese implementation represented a unique feature of the project.

Although coordinated by a single partner institution, workshops were delivered in two separate languages:

- Malta (English)
- Malta (Maltese)

Because these constituted distinct pedagogical contexts and partly different participant populations, all analyses throughout this report treat them as independent implementation streams.

This approach improves analytical precision while allowing meaningful comparisons between language-specific delivery contexts.

Exclusion Criteria

Only completed questionnaires were included in the statistical analyses presented in this report.

Responses were excluded where:

- the questionnaire had been abandoned before completion;
- the respondent had not participated in the workshop series;
- duplicate submissions were identified;
- insufficient information was available to determine the participant's workshop stream.

No responses were excluded on the basis of age, gender, nationality, educational background, or writing experience.

Treatment of Pre- and Post-Workshop Data

The Pre-Workshop Questionnaire and End-of-Workshops Questionnaire generated two separate datasets.

- **Pre-Workshop Questionnaire:** $N = 335$
- **End-of-Workshops Questionnaire:** $N = 258$

As participation in the post-workshop evaluation was voluntary, the two datasets do not represent a matched longitudinal sample. Consequently, comparisons between pre- and post-workshop responses should be interpreted as comparisons between two related cohorts rather than paired measurements of identical individuals.

Throughout the report, analyses therefore compare overall trends in participants' expectations and perceived learning gains rather than attempting participant-level longitudinal inference.

Statistical Procedures

Following validation, the datasets were analysed using descriptive statistical methods.

The analyses presented in this report comprise:

- frequencies and percentages;
- mean scores calculated from five-point Likert scale responses;
- cross-tabulations by implementation site;

- cross-tabulations by participant stream;
- comparative analyses between pre-workshop expectations and post-workshop evaluations.

Given the descriptive and evaluative purpose of the study, no inferential statistical tests were undertaken.

Methodological Transparency

The validation procedures described above were undertaken to ensure that the statistical analyses accurately reflected the organisation of the *Essays Beyond Borders* workshop programme. All corrections were limited to administrative classification variables and did not affect participants' questionnaire responses. The resulting dataset provides a reliable basis for evaluating the implementation and perceived educational impact of the workshop series across all participating countries.

Appendix B. Workshop Schedule by Partner and Participant Stream

University of Malta (English)

Post-Secondary Workshops

1. 2 sessions of 90 minutes each on 30/01/2024 and 15/02/2024 (*St Aloysius College*)
2. 2 sessions of 90 minutes each on 21/02/2024 and 28/02/2024 (*Junior College*)
3. 2 sessions of 90 minutes each on 23/02/2024 and 08/03/2024 (*De La Salle College*)
4. 2 sessions of 90 minutes each on 20/03/2024 and 19/04/2024 (*St Martin's College*)
5. 2 sessions of 90 minutes each on 12/11/2024 and 26/11/2024 (*St Martin's College*)
6. 2 sessions of 90 minutes each on 13/11/2024 and 11/12/2024 (*De La Salle College*)
7. 2 sessions of 90 minutes each on 20/11/2024 and 04/12/2024 (*Junior College*)
8. 2 sessions of 120 minutes each on 20/11/2024 and 27/11/2024 (*Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary*)
9. 2 sessions of 90 minutes each on 21/11/2024 and 28/11/2024 (*St Aloysius College*)
10. 2 sessions of 90 minutes each on 21/03/2025 and 28/03/2025 (*De La Salle College*)

University Workshops

1. 7 sessions of 2 hours each between 19/02/2025 and 07/05/2025 (University of Malta)

General Public Workshops

1. 5 sessions of 3 hours each between 28/09/2024 and 16/11/2024 (Fort St. Elmo, Fort St. Angelo, Maritime Museum, Hagar Qim Temples, Inquisitors' Palace)
2. 3 sessions of 5 hours each between 11/10/2025 and 15/11/2025 (Hagar Qim, Inquisitor's Palace, CEER [Fawwara])

Appendix C. Essays Beyond Borders – Pre-Workshop Questionnaire

Section 1. Participant Information

1. Type of Workshop Series you will be attending

- ☐ For post-secondary students
- ☐ For university students
- ☐ For the general public

2. Venue of Workshop

- ☐ Malta
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Belgium
- ☐ The Netherlands
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. Date of the first workshop session

4. Language in which the workshop series is being delivered

- ☐ English
- ☐ Maltese
- ☐ Italian
- ☐ Dutch
- ☐ Slovenian
- ☐ Flemish
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. Gender

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other (please specify)

6. Age

- ☐ 15–17
- ☐ 18–24
- ☐ 25–34
- ☐ 35–44

- ☐ 45–54
- ☐ 55–64
- ☐ 65 or over

7. How often do you write outside work or school assignments?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

8. How many times have you had creative writing published by others in print or online?

- ☐ More than five times
- ☐ Between one and five times
- ☐ Never

Section 2. Expectations

Please indicate how far you agree with the following statements.

Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

9. I want to become a better writer.

10. I want to learn more about the essay as a form.

11. I want to explore writing from a personal perspective.

12. I want to explore freer writing styles.

13. I want to share my writing publicly.

14. I want detailed feedback about my writing.

Section 3. Priorities

15. Rank the following expectations in order of importance (1 = highest priority; 6 = lowest priority).

- Becoming a better writer
- Receiving detailed feedback
- Learning more about the essay as a form

- Exploring personal perspectives in writing
- Exploring freer writing styles
- Sharing my writing publicly

16. List up to three other reasons why you signed up for the workshops.

Section 4. Attitudes Towards Writing

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not Important at All and 5 = Very Important, indicate how important each of the following aspects of writing is to you.

17. Imitating already existing models of writing (for example, the structure of a problem–solution essay or a for/against essay).
18. Using writing to express your feelings and opinions.
19. Developing an individual voice and style.
20. Using writing to publicly address topics of public interest.
21. Researching what others have written about a topic that you are writing about.
22. Using writing to reflect about your own personal experiences.
23. Using writing to connect with readers.
24. Editing or revising your work.
25. Collaborating with other writers and editors.

Response Scale for Questions 17–25

- 1 = Not Important at All
- 2 = Slightly Important
- 3 = Moderately Important
- 4 = Important
- 5 = Very Important

Appendix D. Essays Beyond Borders – End-of-Workshops Questionnaire

Section 1. Participant Information

1. Type of Workshop Series you attended

- ☐ For post-secondary students
- ☐ For university students
- ☐ For the general public

2. Venue of Workshop

- ☐ Malta
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Belgium
- ☐ The Netherlands
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. Date of the last workshop session

4. Language in which the workshop series was delivered

- ☐ English
- ☐ Maltese
- ☐ Italian
- ☐ Dutch
- ☐ Slovenian
- ☐ Flemish
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. Gender

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other (please specify)

6. Age

- ☐ 15–17
- ☐ 18–24
- ☐ 25–34
- ☐ 35–44

- ☐ 45–54
- ☐ 55–64
- ☐ 65 or over

7. How often do you write outside work or school assignments?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

8. How many times have you had creative writing published by others in print or online?

- ☐ More than five times
- ☐ Between one and five times
- ☐ Never

Section 2. Experience of the Workshops

Please indicate how far you agree with the following statements.

Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

9. I have become a better writer.

10. I have learned more about the essay as a form.

11. I have explored ways of writing from a personal perspective.

12. I have explored writing in freer writing styles than what I was used to.

13. After the workshops, I feel more prepared to share my writing publicly.

14. I have received detailed feedback about my writing.

Section 3. Evaluation of the Workshops

Please indicate how far you agree with the following statements.

Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

15. I found the themes chosen in the workshops interesting and engaging.
16. I found the essay to be a form of writing that is worth learning more about.
17. I appreciate the value of writing from a personal perspective as presented in the workshops.
18. I appreciate the value of free forms and styles of writing explored in the workshops.
19. The tutor was well-prepared.
20. The tutor managed to create a good learning environment.
21. The methodology of the workshops was generally effective.
22. The feedback received from the tutor was helpful.
23. The feedback received from my peers was helpful.
24. The chosen readings were effective.
25. The writing prompts used were effective.
26. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience in the workshop.

Section 4. The Essay in Other Educational Contexts

Part A. Current Educational Practice

For each of the following aspects of writing covered in the workshops, indicate how much importance you think it is currently given in the teaching of writing in formal educational contexts (e.g. schools and universities) in your country.

Scale:

1 = Not Important 2 = Slightly Important 3 = Moderately Important 4 = Important 5 = Very Important

27. Development of an individual voice.
28. Expressing a personal opinion.
29. Reflection on personal experience.
30. Showing the process of thought in writing (instead of presenting thought as already formed).
31. Writing as a form of civic engagement.

- 32. Exploring free forms of writing.
- 33. Writing as a form of conversation with readers.

Part B. Future Educational Priorities

For each of the following aspects of writing covered in the workshops, indicate how much importance you think it should be given in the teaching of writing in formal educational contexts (e.g. schools and universities) in your country.

Scale:

1 = Not Important 2 = Slightly Important 3 = Moderately Important 4 = Important 5 = Very Important

- 34. Development of an individual voice.
- 35. Expressing a personal opinion.
- 36. Reflection on personal experience.
- 37. Showing the process of thought in writing (instead of presenting thought as already formed).
- 38. Writing as a form of civic engagement.
- 39. Exploring free forms of writing.
- 40. Writing as a form of conversation with readers.

Appendix E Pilot Questionnaire

Essays Beyond Borders Post-Workshop Survey

Type of Workshop Series:

For post-secondary students

☐

For university students

☐

For the general public

☐

Venue of Workshops:

Date of last session:

Gender:

Female

☐

Male

☐

Transgender

☐

Non-binary

☐

Prefer not to say

☐

Age:

15-17

☐

18 to 24

☐

25 to 34

☐

35 to 44

☐

45 to 54

☐

55 to 64

☐

65 or over

☐

The following statements describe your experience in the essay workshops you have attended. State how much each of these statements describes your experience of the workshops.

1. *I have learned about the essay as a form.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. *I have explored ways of writing from a personal perspective.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. *I have explored forms of writing that are freer and less formal than what I am used to.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. *I have received detailed feedback about my writing.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

The following statements describe your evaluation of the essay workshops you have attended. State how much each of these statements describes your feelings about the quality of the workshops.

5. *The workshops have improved me as a writer.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. *I found the themes of place and the environment interesting and engaging.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. *Having attended the workshops, I am now more likely to share my writing publicly.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. *I found the essay to be a form of writing that is worth learning about.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. *I see the value of writing from a personal perspective.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

10. *I see the value of writing in forms that are freer and less formal than other forms.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. *The tutor was well prepared.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. *The tutor managed to create a good learning and writing environment.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. *The methodology of the workshops was generally effective.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

14. *The feedback received from the tutor was helpful.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

15. *The feedback received from my peers was helpful.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

16. *The readings chosen were effective.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

17. *The writing prompts used were effective.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

18. *Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience in the workshop?*

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

19. *Which aspects of writing covered in the workshops would you consider to deserve more importance in the learning of writing in formal contexts such as school and universities. Tick as many responses as you wish.*

Development of individual voice	☐
Expressing personal opinion	☐
Reflection on personal experience	☐
Showing the process of thought in writing	☐
Writing as a form of civic engagement	☐
Exploring free forms of writing	☐
Writing as a form of conversation	☐
None of the above	☐
Other _____	

18. *How far do you agree that the personal essay and other forms of writing that are not based on replicating previously established models of writing deserve more importance in formal education?*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

20. *List any recommendations you may have about ways of improving the workshops. I wish we could have more of this kind of workshops more often. I have learned a lot.*

Appendix F. Essays Published by Participants of the Workshop

One of the distinguishing features of the *Essays Beyond Borders* project has been its commitment to ensuring that the creative work produced during the workshops extended beyond the classroom and reached wider audiences. In addition to the evaluation presented in this report, the project has generated a body of published essays and edited collections.

The following outputs had been published by the time this report was completed.

Essay Collections Produced through the Workshops and published on the project's website

- *Essays Beyond Borders: Place and Self* (Malta, 2024) – A collection of essays written by Post-Secondary students who participated in the Maltese workshops during 2024.
- *Writing with Place: Collection of Essays on Place from Malta* (Malta, 2025) – An edited collection bringing together essays developed through the Maltese workshops, illustrating the progression from workshop draft to publishable essay.
- *Esejs mill-Workshops għall-Junior College / Essays from Junior College Workshops* (Malta, 2025) – A bilingual collection of essays produced by students attending the Junior College workshop series held during February–March 2025.
- *Essays beyond the borders of Groningen* (The Netherlands, 2025) – A collection of eleven essays written by students enrolled in the English-language MA course organised at the University of Groningen during the academic year 2024–2025. The essays explore a wide range of themes, including identity, homesickness, feminism, music, and death, demonstrating the diversity of essayistic approaches fostered by the project.
- Lou Drofenik, *Kent Xorb l-Għagin* – Publication of the essay *Kent Xorb l-Għagin* by the Maltese-Australian novelist and academic Lou Drofenik as part of the project's research and dissemination activities.
- Adrian Grima, *L-Esej Personali bil-Malti* – Reflections on the development and practice of the personal essay in Maltese, drawing upon the workshop experience and the broader objectives of the project.
- Adrian Grima, *Il-Ġrajja Stramba tal-Esej bil-Malti* ("The Strange Story of the Essay in Maltese") – A scholarly essay exploring the historical development and contemporary significance of essay writing in Maltese literature.

Essays Published in Literary Periodicals

As part of the Slovenian implementation, workshop participants also achieved publication in established literary outlets:

- Ana Svetel, *Essay about Oblivion*, published in *LUD Literatura*.
- Maša Jelušič, *Apocalypse of the Popular Fruit: Bananas Will Disappear from Store Shelves*, published in the Saturday literary supplement (*Sobotna priloga*) of the Slovenian newspaper *Delo*.

- A collection of essays called 'De Schrijftafel' ('the writing desk') written and edited by Ghent university students.

Appendix G. Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Preparation of this Report

This report was prepared under the supervision of the project coordinator, who retained full responsibility for the collection, verification, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of all data and findings. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (ChatGPT 5 and Gemini AI) were used solely as assistive technologies to support aspects of the report preparation process and did not replace human academic judgement or decision-making.

Nature of AI Assistance

Generative AI tools were used to assist with the following specific tasks:

- **Data Organisation and Formatting:** Assisting in structuring quantitative datasets and tabulating statistical results generated from the workshop survey responses.
- **Programming Support:** Generating, revising, and troubleshooting Python scripts used to calculate descriptive statistics, mean scores, response rates, and comparative country tables.
- **Editorial Assistance:** Improving readability and consistency of terminology.
- **Text Development:** Assisting in drafting preliminary versions of descriptive summaries, methodological explanations, table notes, and analytical commentary, which were subsequently reviewed, substantially edited, and verified by the report author.
- **Proofreading and Consistency Checking:** Assisting in identifying typographical errors, duplicated content, inconsistencies in terminology, and formatting discrepancies.

Human Oversight

All statistical analyses, interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations were independently verified by the report author. All numerical values presented in the report were checked against the original datasets and project documentation. Responsibility for the accuracy, interpretation, and integrity of the report rests entirely with the author.

AI-generated text was not incorporated automatically. All draft material produced with AI assistance was critically reviewed, edited, and, where necessary, rewritten before inclusion in the final report.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

No personally identifiable information (PII), confidential participant data, or restricted institutional information was disclosed to generative AI systems. Before any analytical assistance was sought, datasets were fully anonymised and processed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679). The preparation of this report also strictly followed the

principles of responsible and trustworthy AI outlined in the European Commission's *Living Guidelines on the Responsible Use of Generative AI in Research*.

Authorship

The use of generative AI does not constitute authorship. The report remains the exclusive intellectual work of the author, who assumes full responsibility for its content, methodology, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions.