

the jamaica national language supplementary school evaluation report 2024

An internal evaluation report

11 - 15 / march
10am - 5:30pm



www.blemme fatale.com

the jamaica national language supplementary school evaluation report 2024

BLEMME FATALE PRODUCTIONS

Creative Director

Lamesha Ruddock

FREELANCERS

Facilitator

Danielle Taylor

Facilitator

Maxine Palomino

Facilitator

Kesha Christie

Facilitator

Judith Shaw

Facilitator

Sashoya Simpson

Caterer

The Island Caribbean Cookshop, Lena's Doubles

P.E.A.C.H. TEAM

Executive Director

Tiffany Ford

Program Manager

Jelani Nias

Sound Engineer

Dura David

BLEMME FATALE PRODUCTIONS

Blemme Fatale Productions Ltd is a theatrical and events producing company with a focus on weaving Black Diasporic historical research throughout the creative process to create authentic and representative theatre and cultural events. We offer exemplary theatre productions, events and educational programmes.

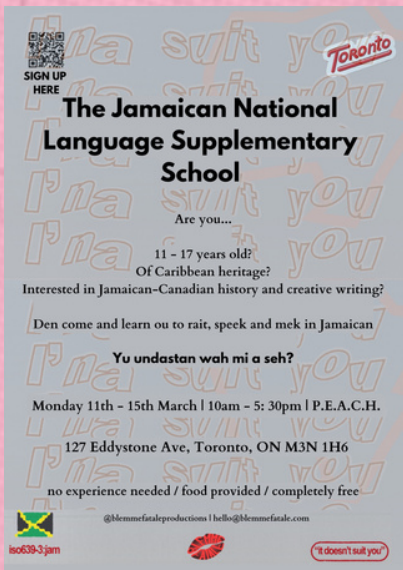
Blemme Fatale Productions is committed to healing the cultural and historical knowledge gap across the Black diaspora through creativity.

Consequently, our mission is to:

- To offer inclusive, progressive alternative routes of education
- To demystify an elitist and hard to reach industry
- To create local and community focused mechanisms to serve those who aren't normally included
- To nurture and facilitate cross-generational and cross-disciplinary relationship

The I'NA SUIT YOU programmes continues in Toronto! For the March break, we are hosting Jamaican National Language Lessons, Jamaican-Canadian History Lessons and Creative workshops.

- 📅 11th - 15th March 2024
- 🕒 10 - 5:30pm
- 📍 P.E.A.C.H (127 Eddystone Ave, North York, ON M3N 1H6)



SIGN UP HERE

The Jamaican National Language Supplementary School

Are you...

- 11 - 17 years old?
- Of Caribbean heritage?

Interested in Jamaican-Canadian history and creative writing?

Den come and learn ou to rait, speak and mek in Jamaican

Yu undastan wah mi a seh?

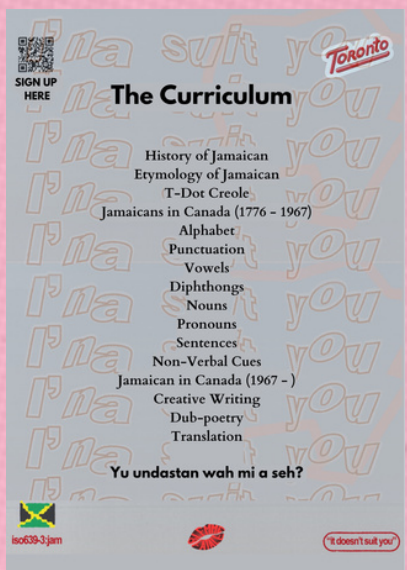
Monday 11th - 15th March | 10am - 5:30pm | P.E.A.C.H.
127 Eddystone Ave, Toronto, ON M3N 1H6

no experience needed / food provided / completely free

@BlemmeFataleProductions | hello@BlemmeFatale.com

iso639-3:jam

! doesn't suit you!



SIGN UP HERE

The Curriculum

- History of Jamaican
- Etymology of Jamaican
- T-Dot Creole
- Jamaicans in Canada (1776 - 1967)
- Alphabet
- Punctuation
- Vowels
- Diphthongs
- Nouns
- Pronouns
- Sentences
- Non-Verbal Cues
- Jamaican in Canada (1967 -)
- Creative Writing
- Dub-poetry
- Translation

Yu undastan wah mi a seh?

iso639-3:jam

! doesn't suit you!

RECRUITMENT AND CRITERIA

Blemme Fatale Productions aimed to work with 30 young people of Black heritage. 18 people signed up. All with varying experience and interest in history, language and poetic writing.

To be eligible to apply for the programme participants had to:

- Be aged 10 - 18
- Be of Caribbean heritage
- Have an interest in Jamaican-Canadian history, dub-poetry, Jamaican National Language
- Live in Toronto or the GTA
- Complete the Typeform sign up



We advertised The Jamaican National Language Supplementary School on the Blemme Fatale website, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter. In addition, the Creative Director conducted targeted outreach to ensure this project reached those it would benefit most.

The programme was shared with:

- Black community organisations such as the Jamaican Canadian Association, Black Urbanism TO, Black Creek Youth Initiative
- Organisations that focus on Black creatives such as OYA Black Arts Coalition, BAND Gallery, All Black TO, Black Is Now Canada
- Organisations that focuses on working with young people such as Youth Unlimited, Jane and Finch Club, VO Youth Network,

“NOW IF I’M TALKING TO A JAMAICAN PERSON I KNOW HOW TO CHANGE MY TONE”

Participant

Candidates were asked to sign up via Typeform. Candidates were asked to fill out their details, where they are based and why they wanted to take part in the Supplementary School. Anyone who signed up automatically received a place on the program.

WE HAD 18 PARTICIPANTS WHO ENGAGED WITH THE JAMAICAN NATIONAL LANGUAGE SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL.

HAVE THE NEEDS STATED IN YOUR APPLICATION BEEN ADDRESSED?

The program successfully addressed the needs outlined in the application. One significant requirement was to tackle the cultural and language barriers faced by 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants from the Jamaican diaspora. Through the initiative, a group of Toronto teenagers with Caribbean roots learned how to write and speak Jamaican National Language, delved into the history of Jamaican Canadians from 1776, and honed their skills in creative writing and dub-poetry in the language.

'I attend ... so I could learn how to speak Patois and to understand others' - Participant

Furthermore, the program enriched the participants culturally by engaging them in activities such as enjoying Caribbean music together, savoring traditional Caribbean dishes like patties and doubles, and partaking in outdoor activities like races and football matches.

To cater to the evolving needs and interests of the group, we utilised the various facilities available at P.E.A.C.H. One notable collaboration involved working with a Sound Engineer to record our poetry and music.

OVERALL OUTCOME OF THIS PROJECT?

The overall outcome of the TNA SUIT YOU* project has been highly positive, meeting and even exceeding the projected outcomes stated in the application. Through a combination of workshops, performances, and interactive sessions, the project has made a significant impact on the participants and the broader community.

First and foremost, the project successfully engaged 18 teenagers from Toronto of Caribbean heritage, providing them with opportunities for cultural preservation, celebration, and empowerment. Feedback from participants indicates a deepened sense of pride in their cultural heritage and increased confidence in expressing themselves through Jamaican National Language and creative arts.

'I attend this programme because I wanted to find out more about my roots on the Jamaican side' - Participant

The workshops, which included history lessons, creative writing, and dub-poetry sessions, were instrumental in increasing participants' civic engagement, leadership, and life skills. Many participants reported feeling more connected to their community and were able to have a honest and candid conversation about suiting styles whilst being perceived as Black youths. This aligns with the project's goal of empowering BIPOC youth and fostering a sense of agency and belonging.

Furthermore, the project has had a significant impact on the broader community, particularly in terms of cultural awareness and understanding. By showcasing Jamaican Patois and culture in a meaningful and educational way, the project has helped bridge cultural gaps and fostered a greater appreciation for Canada's diverse heritage.

In terms of long-term impact, the project has laid the foundation for continued cultural exploration, skill development, and community building. Participants have expressed a desire to stay involved in the initiative and the next iteration which will be a production of TNA SUIT YOU in Toronto.

WHAT SUCCESSES CAN YOU HIGHLIGHT FROM THE PROJECT?

One of the key successes of the project was the empowerment of BIPOC youth, particularly those of Caribbean heritage to instill confidence in expressing themselves through Jamaican Patois. On the Friday, we recorded all dub-poetry and creative writing we had produced that week - doing the English and Jamaican National Language version. It was a success that by the end of the week the cohort were able to perform in the language in front of each other and support each other through the process.

Engagement for the project was high, with participants actively participating in workshops, performances, and interactive sessions. Success stories emerged from the project, with participants showcasing their newfound skills and knowledge in various ways. For example, some participants shared that they were originally born in London (UK) and moved to Toronto and that sparked a whole conversation about what the diaspora is even though all the participants didn't know the word beforehand. Participants really took the opportunity to speak their mind.

A success from the project was how it was used as a third space for family members to connect further. On the programme we had two cousins who had only met for the first time and through the programme they got to know each other better.

In addition to the intrinsic rewards of participation, the project also offered incentives such as awards and cash prizes to recognise and motivate participants. For instance, participants were encouraged to participate in tournaments of dominos, a popular Jamaican pastime, where the winner would receive a cash prize of \$5. This not only added an element of fun and competition to the project but also provided participants with an opportunity to showcase their skills in a culturally relevant context.

WHAT CHALLENGES CAN YOU HIGHLIGHT FROM THE PROJECT?

One major challenge was finding and maintaining participant engagement. Despite the project's compelling objectives, attracting and retaining participants, particularly BIPOC youth, posed initial difficulties. To address this challenge, several strategies were implemented. Firstly, the project offered \$25 for travel expenses, recognizing the potential financial barriers that participants might face in attending the workshops and events. This incentive helped alleviate transportation costs and made participation more accessible to a wider range of individuals.

Additionally, the project recognized the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive environment to keep participants engaged. Hot Caribbean food was provided during sessions, not only as a cultural touchpoint but also as a means of fostering camaraderie and connection among participants. The provision of culturally relevant meals helped create a sense of community and belonging.

Furthermore, the project implemented a flexible schedule that evolved based on the needs and preferences of the cohort. As the week progressed, participants were given opportunities to provide feedback and shape the schedule according to their interests and availability.

Moreover, recognizing the value of volunteerism and community involvement, the project offered volunteer hours to participants. By providing tangible benefits such as volunteer hours, participants were incentivized to actively participate in the project and contribute their time and skills to meaningful endeavors. This not only helped maintain engagement but also fostered a sense of ownership and investment in the project among participants.

HOW DID YOUR PROJECT CONTRIBUTE TO AN INCLUSIVE CANADA?

The "TNA SUIT YOU" project made significant contributions to fostering an inclusive Canada through various avenues. Firstly, by focusing on Jamaican Patois, language, and culture, the initiative celebrated the diversity inherent within Canadian society. Through this celebration, BIPOC youth were provided a platform to explore and express their cultural heritage, enriching the cultural fabric of Canada and promoting a more inclusive understanding of Canadian identity.

Moreover, the project empowered marginalised communities, particularly BIPOC youth, by offering opportunities for skill development, leadership, and community engagement. By equipping participants with tools and confidence to share their stories and perspectives, the project amplified marginalized voices, contributing to a more inclusive representation within Canadian society.

Furthermore, through workshops, performances, and interactive sessions, the project fostered a sense of community and belonging among participants and the broader community. These activities created spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and mutual support, strengthening social bonds and promoting a more inclusive and cohesive society.

Additionally, the project addressed knowledge gaps about Black history in Canada by incorporating historical research into its creative processes. By sharing untold stories and historical insights, the initiative raised awareness about the contributions of BIPOC communities to Canadian society, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions in the process.

Lastly, the project ensured accessible participation by offering incentives such as travel expenses, hot Caribbean food, and flexible scheduling. By removing barriers to participation, the initiative ensured that individuals from diverse backgrounds could engage and contribute to the project, promoting inclusivity at every level.



IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE MARKETING

Organizing a program faced hurdles in participant recruitment, with many unable to commit to the entire week, complicating logistics. To address this, a robust marketing strategy targeting young black communities would be developed, utilizing social media, community centers, and local events for outreach. Partnering with reputable organizations would elevate the program's profile, enhancing recruitment efforts. Offering volunteering opportunities from the outset would incentivize commitment and foster a sense of ownership among participants. Careful consideration of the location, ensuring accessibility for the majority, would ease logistical challenges and encourage attendance. Additionally, responding to requests for a Scarborough-based version of the program highlights the importance of diversifying offerings to meet community needs. By implementing these strategies, the program can overcome recruitment hurdles, broaden its reach, and better serve its target audience

DEVELOPING SCRIPT

The next step in the evolution of our program involves collaborating closely with one of our language facilitators to integrate the dub poetry created by the young participants into the larger script of "I'NA SUIT YOU." Originally premiered in the UK, this project aims to infuse new voices and perspectives into its narrative. Scheduled for June, this collaborative effort will invite back participants to engage in a theatrical workshop where their contributions will be woven seamlessly into the fabric of the script. By intertwining the authentic voices and experiences of our participants with the existing framework of the play, we aspire to create a rich and dynamic theatrical experience that resonates deeply with audiences. This process not only celebrates the creativity and talent of the young individuals involved but also amplifies their voices on stage, fostering a sense of empowerment and ownership over their narratives.

THEATRICAL PARTNER

In preparation for Winter 2025, the next phase of our project entails seeking a theatrical partner to facilitate a research and development (R&D) or workshop performance. Our aim is to bring the vision of "I'NA SUIT YOU" to life on stage, enriching its narrative with the voices and experiences of our participants. To accomplish this, we're actively exploring partnerships, with a particular interest in collaborating with Obsidian Theatre, renowned for their commitment to showcasing Black voices and stories.

Securing funding is pivotal to realizing this vision, and we're pursuing support from the Canada Council for the Arts to ensure the project's viability. With their backing, we can allocate resources towards production costs, artist fees, and venue rentals, ultimately enabling us to mount a compelling and impactful performance.