

EMBODIED STORIES

Physical Theatre Workshop and Performance Project

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT





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Title:

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Physical Theatre Workshop and Performance Project

Dates:

3-15 July 2026

Venue:

**Bodousa Senior Secondary School (BSSS)
Makum, Tinsukia, Assam**

Organised by:

Bodousa Foundation

in Collaboration with

AANK_A Creative Line



1. Background

Embodied Stories was conceived as a physical theatre workshop for school students, with the aim of introducing them to performance through movement, rhythm, gesture, space, voice and visual composition. The project was organised by **Bodousa Foundation** in collaboration with **AANK_A Creative Line** and conducted at Bodousa Senior Secondary School, Makum, Tinsukia, under the facilitation of Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami with assistance Bristirani Hazarika and Mallika Kalita.

The programme was initially planned for 30 students and structured as an 11-day workshop. The response from the school was much larger than expected: 62 students of Class IX joined the process. The completed workshop ran from 3 to 15 July 2026, and 56 students participated in the final performance. The larger participation made the project a substantial school-based theatre initiative rather than a small training programme.

The workshop treated the body as the primary instrument of storytelling. Dialogue was used only where necessary. Students were encouraged to discover how a story can be communicated through physical action, ensemble rhythm, stage images, music, objects and the relationship between performers and space.

2. Objectives

The project had both training and production objectives. It aimed to introduce the students to the basic language of physical theatre while guiding them towards the creation of complete performances. The principal objectives were:

- to develop body awareness, concentration and physical discipline;
- to introduce movement-based and non-verbal storytelling;
- to improve confidence, stage presence and ensemble coordination;
- to encourage collaborative creation and shared responsibility;
- to explore rhythm, voice, space, objects and symbolic imagery in performance; and
- to create performance material that could be developed further for future theatre festivals.





3. Workshop Process

The workshop followed a practice-based approach. Each session combined physical preparation, technique exercises, improvisation, group work, rehearsal and discussion. The students worked with walking patterns, stillness, levels, tempo, rhythm, body percussion, spatial awareness, voice and breath. They also explored how ordinary objects and familiar stories could be transformed through theatre.

Because 62 students joined, the work was organised through group-based activities. This allowed the participants to learn ensemble discipline and to take responsibility for collective performance. The training gradually moved from basic exercises to character work, dramatic conflict, scene construction and full rehearsal. The final phase focused on the two student productions created during the workshop.

The students were not asked merely to repeat fixed movements. They were encouraged to contribute ideas, test possibilities and understand why a movement, sound or stage image was being used. The facilitator shaped the overall structure while retaining the students' involvement in the creative process.

4. Final Persentation

The final presentation was held on 15 July 2026. Of the 62 students who joined the workshop, 56 participated in the final performance. The programme brought together four works in different forms:

- Iluti Hiluti - a site-specific performance by the students;
- Dapoon - a musical play by the students;
- The Body as Border - a solo performance by Malaya Baruah; and
- The Moonlight of the Island - a solo performance by Bristirani Hazarika.

The combination of site-specific theatre, musical theatre, ensemble performance and solo physical theatre gave the students and the audience an opportunity to experience different approaches to performance-making within one programme.



4.1 Iluti Hiluti

Iluti Hiluti was developed from the familiar Assamese children's song "O Phul, O Phul, Nuphula Kiya." The production was designed as a site-specific performance rather than a conventional stage play. The selected school space became part of the performance, and the students used movement, group formations, rhythm and the surrounding environment to reimagine the source material.

The site-specific form helped the students understand that theatre does not always require a proscenium stage. The relationship between the performers, the audience and the physical location became central to the work. The familiar song offered a common cultural starting point, while the performance process gave it a new visual and spatial form.





4.2 Dapoon

Dapoon was created as a musical play from a humorous story about a young man who buys a mirror at a fair. Having never seen a mirror before, he mistakes his own reflection for another person. He believes that the person in the mirror is his friend, keeps the mirror inside a box in the drawing room and repeatedly visits it to spend time with the supposed friend.

His unusual behaviour makes his wife suspicious, and the misunderstanding develops into a series of comic situations. The production used songs, music, rhythmic movement, stylised acting and ensemble scenes to tell the story. Music was integrated into the dramatic action and helped organise the changes of mood, character and situation.

Through Dapoon, the students worked with humour, timing, exaggeration, character relationships and musical coordination. The play also showed how a simple narrative can be expanded into a collective theatrical performance without losing its accessibility.





4.3 The Body as Border

School teacher Malaya Baruah performed *The Body as Border*, a solo physical theatre production developed as an outcome of the present workshop process. The work was created in collaboration between Bodousa Foundation and AANK_A Creative Line.

The performance explores the body as a site on which political, social, cultural and geographical borders are imposed. Transparent plastic changes its meaning throughout the production: it becomes a line, wall, wound, shelter, prison, mask, flag and burden. Through movement and minimal speech, the performance addresses restriction, identity, displacement, memory and resistance.

The Body as Border will be presented at the Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF) 2026 as a collaborative production of AANK_A Creative Line and Bodousa Foundation. Its development demonstrates how a workshop process can lead to a focused solo performance with a future festival life.





4.4 The Moonlight of the Island

Bristirani Hazarika performed *The Moonlight of the Island*, a solo physical theatre work that emerged from the previous year's Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival (BBITF) workshop. The performance follows an island woman who returns to the memory of her village and recalls prayer, childhood games, paper boats, swimming, her father and the tradition of Bhaona.

Flood, erosion and displacement gradually destroy the remembered world. The performance also connects natural disaster with the mechanical pressure of modernity. A lamp, a bag and masks carry the ideas of home, ancestry, loss and continuity. The work ends with the woman carrying the lamp forward, suggesting survival and the possibility of return.

The Moonlight of the Island will be performed at the Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF) 2026. Its inclusion in the final programme gave the students an example of how a performance first developed in a workshop can be refined for an international festival.





5. Outcomes

The project produced clear and practical outcomes. Sixty-two Class IX students were introduced to physical theatre and group-based performance creation, and 56 of them completed the process through the final presentation. Two student productions were created, rehearsed and presented. The students gained direct experience of movement training, ensemble work, music, use of space, character, rehearsal discipline and public performance.

The project also established a connection between school-level theatre activity and larger festival platforms. The presentation of *The Body as Border* and *The Moonlight of the Island* showed two different stages of workshop-based development: one work emerging from the present process and another continuing from an earlier BBITF workshop towards CITF 2026.

The collaboration between Bodousa Foundation and AANK_A Creative Line was strengthened through the project, creating a practical base for future training, production and festival participation.





6. Future Plan

The workshop has been treated as the beginning of a continuing theatre-development process. One short play emerging from the workshop will be selected for further development and considered for presentation at the Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF) 2027. The selection will be followed by additional rehearsal, editing and performance training.

In addition, selected students from the two student production groups will be brought together to create one performance for presentation at the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival (BCITF) 2026. This will provide the students with an opportunity to continue their training and perform beyond the school setting.





7. Conclusion

Embodied Stories developed beyond its initial plan. What began as a workshop for 30 students finally involved 62 Class IX students, with 56 participating in the concluding performance. The project combined training, collective creation and public presentation, and resulted in two student productions as well as the presentation of two solo physical theatre works.

The workshop introduced the students to theatre through the body, music, space, rhythm and collaboration. It also created a clear path for further development through BCITF 2026 and the proposed selection of a short play for CITF 2027. In this sense, the project was not only a completed workshop; it also became the foundation for a continuing programme of theatre education and performance development at the school.



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