



# CREATING BIG CHANGE TOGETHER

To set up every young person to thrive and prepare them well for their futures, the old ways will not do.

OUR IMPACT STORY  
2020 - 2024

**BIG**  
**CHANGE.**

# THANK YOU

Our achievements and impact are made possible because of the dedication of the leaders, changemakers and projects we back, and the incredible support of Big Change Strivers, donors, and partners.

As a charity, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations who are inspired by our vision and approach. If you're excited by what you read here, please get in touch by emailing [info@big-change.org](mailto:info@big-change.org).

Together we make Big Change possible. *Thank you!*

“

*Big Change's work fills me with hope for the future. There is never one solution to solving big problems, so supporting early-stage ideas that tackle systemic issues from many different angles is a brilliant way forward.*

**HOLLY BRANSON**

Big Change Founder and Trustee



“

*It's exciting to see an organisation genuinely working hard to support changemakers and using such a brave model. This kind of funding creates the conditions for the radical shifts that we so badly need to start taking place. And it's exciting to see the Challenge creating room for young people to make those radical shifts! Because they will!*

**ELIZA-REID PERKS**

Education Activist and Big Education Challenge Judge



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*Big Change's willingness to take a chance on a new founder, with a bold idea, has been a huge contributor to the initial and enduring success of The Difference. Five years on, The Difference is a thriving charity working with hundreds of schools and helping thousands of students to feel safe, included and successful.*

**KIRAN GILL**

The Difference Founder and CEO



## MESSAGE FROM ESSIE NORTH, CEO

The great privilege of working at Big Change is supporting the growth of incredible leaders who dare to dream about a different kind of future for all young people. These are not your typical hero leaders. Their vision, insights, and actions are all about the collective. They choose to work on the deep and lasting change that is created by people coming together to achieve more than they ever could alone.

The power of the collective is embedded across all areas of our work; in our dedicated and talented team, in the community of leaders whose bold ideas we support, among the philanthropists who come together to support Big Change, and the global network of innovators and partners from whom we learn so much.

I am proud that Big Change is doing more and more to directly support the leadership and ideas of young people who see the world in all its complexity, with all its challenges, and for all its possibilities. They, and every other 'big changer', keep me hopeful for a future in which every young person can thrive.

Big Change is about imagining and committing to that different future - with and for young people. But imagining, let alone achieving, significant and lasting change is not easy. We are all confronted by systems that are difficult to move and in them we can feel frustrated, stuck, and powerless. Yet, time and time again, we see that great things happen when we trust the experience and ideas of those closest to the problems. Magic happens when you build connections, trust, and relationships between people and organisations to grow and learn together.

The last four years have been a time for growth and diversity in our work and impact. Since 2020, we have:

- 1 Continued to grow our **community of changemakers** and back projects working on new ways to support the next generation to thrive in life, not just exams.
- 2 Designed and launched the **Big Education Challenge**, an ambitious £1m prize fund to surface, support and back leaders with early stage ideas that have the potential to transform education and learning.
- 3 Enabled thousands of young people, teachers, parents, and communities to come together through the **Big Education Conversation**, in the UK and globally, to reimagine education, make their own commitments to change locally, and shape national policy proposals.
- 4 Convened and connected experts with diverse views and experiences, co-creating and **sharing new insights and ideas** that shape our ways of working and inspire others.

As we look to the future, we are applying all we have learned about the role we need to play, leaning into our strengths and developing our organisation to be more intergenerational.

We look forward to continuing this journey with you.

Big love,

**Essie**

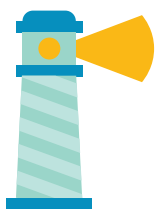


# OUR VISION

At Big Change we are unashamedly hopeful for a future in which all young people can thrive in life, not just exams.

We believe in the power and potential of people - individually and collectively - to create deep and lasting change. We keep our sights on the horizon and bring together people with ideas, energy and wisdom who can show the way there.

## WE ARE ON A MISSION TO:



### SHOW A NEW WAY IS POSSIBLE

Find and back leaders with bold ideas and projects that positively impact thousands of young people.



### CREATE CHANGE WITH, NOT TO, YOUNG PEOPLE

Listen to young people, support them and their ideas, and ensure their needs are at the centre of every project we back.



### LEARN WITH OTHERS AND SHIFT MINDSETS

Bring together and learn with diverse experts and leaders who are working to transform education and learning, to inform our work and champion change together.

# A SNAPSHOT OF OUR IMPACT

**Big Change began with a question: how can we be a catalyst for long-term, positive change in young people's lives?**

A decade on, we have grown our work and impact, whilst always learning and being inspired by our community of changemakers, our team, partners and incredible supporters.

Numbers only tell a part of the story - here is a snapshot.

## IN THE UK

**OVER 8M**

children and young people engaged through Big Change funded projects.



**63**  
PROJECTS

identified and backed with Big Change funds.

**£5M of funding** directed to projects, which has led to

**OVER £60M IN FOLLOW-ON FUNDING.**

In other words, for every £1 we give, a further £12 has been unlocked.

**OVER**

**2,000**

**Big Education Conversations** bringing communities together.

## GLOBALLY IN PARTNERSHIP

**35**

**countries** have held Big Education Conversations to unite generations in discussing the purpose of education.

**60 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

from **26 countries** are actively contributing to Big Change's global insight network and making the case for transforming education.



**17M**

**40 cross-sector experts and leaders across education, business, and policy**, have published influential articles sharing key insights about transforming education that have reached over **17m people**.

# WHY WE NEED BIG CHANGE

Young people, parents, teachers and employers all agree that the education system too often fails to prepare young people for life. In many cases, it has a negative impact on wellbeing.



Youth Leads Big Education Conversation in Manchester

“

*It's not a one size fits all. We are all different, yet our knowledge is being tested the same way. It doesn't work and it doesn't make sense.*

**YOUNG PERSON, BIG EDUCATION CONVERSATION**

“

*We need a much bigger focus on the skills for life young people actually need, rather than a narrow focus on exam results.*

**TEACHER, BIG EDUCATION CONVERSATION**

“

*There is a danger that we just ask schools and teachers to do more and more... I think there is room for parents, the wider community, and employers to support.*

**EMPLOYER, BIG EDUCATION CONVERSATION**

## THROUGH IN-DEPTH RESEARCH AND LISTENING TO THE PUBLIC WE KNOW THAT:



### YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT THRIVING

They want and need more balanced holistic support to learn and thrive, in life, not just exams.

Happiness and confidence young people feel in their mental health has seen the biggest decline over the last **15 years**, while happiness with their work, education, qualifications, and money are at an all-time low.

*The Prince's Trust Youth Index 2024*

**73% of young people think school subjects don't reflect what young people want and need** to know for their lives.\*



### ONE-SIZE DOESN'T REALLY FIT ANYONE

Too many young people feel left out, left behind, and labelled as failures by our narrow, out-of-date, standardised education system.

**71% feel the 'one size fits all' approach to education is failing** too many young people.\*

At the current rate, **it will take over 500 years to close the attainment gap for poorer pupils**, who are an average of 18 months behind their wealthier peers.

*Education Policy Institute (2020)*



### CHANGE IS HAPPENING TO, NOT WITH, YOUNG PEOPLE

They want and need agency over their lives yet feel like they don't have a voice.

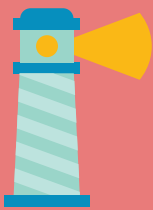
**77% of young people, parents, teachers and employers agree that it is time to rethink the purpose of education and change the system for the better.**\*

**76% say that ideas about improving education need to come from grassroots communities** including teachers, parents and students.\*

*\*Polling by Parent Ping, Teacher Tapp and You Gov, 2021, and Opinium, 2022*

# HOW BIG CHANGE HAPPENS

## WE SHOW A NEW WAY IS POSSIBLE



We find and back leaders with bold ideas and projects that positively impact thousands of young people.

**2020-2024 Highlights** - We designed and launched the first £1m **Big Education Challenge**, supporting and funding 15 Finalists and their bold ideas.

We have grown our **community of changemakers** by supporting 10 additional leaders and projects, taking our portfolio to 63.

## WE CREATE CHANGE WITH, NOT TO, YOUNG PEOPLE



We listen to young people, support them and their ideas, and ensure their needs are at the centre of every project we back.

**2020-2024 Highlights** - We listened to and brought together diverse voices calling for change through a **national listening exercise** during the pandemic, thousands of **Big Education Conversations** in communities and around the world, and an intergenerational approach to **shaping policy**.

We supported **13 young leaders** with capacity building and funding through the Big Education Challenge.

## WE LEARN WITH OTHERS AND SHIFT MINDSETS



We bring together and learn with diverse experts and leaders who are **working to transform education and learning, to inform our work and champion change together.**

**2020-2024 Highlights** - We co-created and shared the influential **New Education Story research and framework** by working with global partners to understand the why, what and how of transforming education systems.

We inspired and influenced **global best practice on intergenerational collaboration.**

Our partners include Teach for All, OECD, The Brookings Institute, Salzburg Global Seminar, YouthXYouth, and Restless Development.



## BIG CHANGE TAKES TIME

Following our early support, many projects go on to change the system by transforming opportunities for young people on a national scale and influencing policy.

- In 2013 we backed **Frontline** which is now England's largest social work charity and has trained 2,400 new social workers who reach over **150,000 families across England**. The social workers they train also have staying power - with 82% of graduates staying in the profession. Frontline's founder, Josh MacAlister, went on to chair the government's Independent Review of Children's Social Care.
- In 2014 we were an early supporter of **Voice 21** when they were piloting an oracy education program in just one school in East London. Nine years on they now work with **203,000 students** from Jersey to Dundee, in 852 schools. Through their advocacy work and their Big Change-funded Oracy All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), oracy has featured in cross party education priorities.
- In 2017 we provided early-stage funding to **50 Things To Do Before You're Five**. They now have a presence in 22 local authorities, and are working with approximately 1 in 8 under 5s in these areas. They have also secured over **£1m in follow-on funding** from the Department for Education.



*Big Education Conversation in Blackpool  
with Bridget Phillipson MP, 2023*

SHOWING A

NEW

WAY

*IS* POSSIBLE



## We find and back leaders with bold ideas and projects that positively impact thousands of young people.

Together, these leaders are helping create a future where all young people are set up to thrive in life, not just exams. There is no easy solution to problems that are complex and ingrained, and our portfolio of partners is made up of a wide range of projects that are expanding learning opportunities within and beyond schools. For example, by supporting wellbeing, developing youth agency and life skills, and rethinking assessment.

- Big Change plays a unique role by focusing on **early-stage support** for intergenerational leaders with ideas and projects that support young people to thrive.
- We work with cross-sector experts and young people to find and select leaders. We then take a **trust-based approach** by giving leaders space and flexibility to grow their skills, learn by doing, and adapt their projects as they go.
- By targeting our support where other sources of funding are hard to come by, many Big Change leaders and projects go on to have **impact on a larger scale** by unlocking government funding, growing nationally, and influencing policy.

In the UK, total philanthropic grants to education have remained stagnant over the last five years, with **spending on innovation and new approaches consistently only 3-4%** of the total.

[360Giving](#)



“

*I am yet to see anything like Big Change's Big Education Challenge. It specialises in being able to change the education system by going to the people who have just been through it.*

**CAITLIN GLOVER, COGNEXUS**  
Big Education Challenge Finalist

## THE BIG EDUCATION CHALLENGE

In 2022 we designed and launched the Big Education Challenge: a £1m prize fund to back people and ideas with the potential to transform education and learning. Piloting this new approach to finding leaders with early stage ideas that are tackling the issues that matter most to young people, allowed us to identify and support leaders with lived experience - including many young people - who bring great insight into both problems and solutions.

Fifteen young people and experienced innovators were provided with seed funding and a bespoke programme of learning and support to test, develop and prepare their ideas for pilot. These finalists are addressing the things that really matter to young people, including neurodiversity, gender and identity, disability, racism, climate, food poverty, loss and trauma, creative skills and leadership. Their ideas span geographies and support students both inside and outside of school. Some are using AI and digital technology, others working alongside teachers, or looking to change policy.

## THE CHALLENGE IN NUMBERS

**£1M**

in support and funding over a total of 3 years



winners and 3 runners-up awarded 1-2 years funding to pilot their ideas



**HOURS OF SUPPORT**

each finalist took part in workshops, residential and coaching and received seed funding to develop and test their ideas

**1,000+ REGISTRATIONS**

& 283 submissions from across the UK

13 of the finalists aged

**18-25**

131 expert judges spent

**1,000+ HOURS**

selecting 15 finalists

“

*I am privileged to play my part in the Big Education Challenge as part of the judging panel. What excites me the most about this fund is the impact that it will have in terms of unleashing so much unrecognised talent and untapped potential through some of our most innovative young minds - talent and potential that is under-served and disregarded by current structures.*

**BECKY BAINBRIDGE**

CEO Reclaim, Big Education Challenge Judge



## WINNERS

### **FORCE OF NATURE, CLOVER HOGAN, 24**

addresses students' climate anxiety by providing training pathways to help young people build their confidence, develop their skills, prepare for roles in a green economy, and help them find the climate solutions they wish to lead.



### **PAIGE CONNECT, SERGIO GOSALVEZ, 23**

supports young blind and partially-sighted people to connect with learning and work independently or alongside others. By using technology to upgrade existing braille writers, Paige Connect enables better communication and collaboration with sighted teachers, family, and friends.



### **CANTEAM, JONATHAN HARPER, 42**

transforms school canteens into vibrant community hubs. Equipping schools to offer nutritious and delicious food after school, with events co-designed and delivered with young people, their families and the local community, CanTeam creates a sustainable solution to food insecurity and opportunities for young people to learn and thrive.



“

*The Big Education Challenge learning and support programme has provided me with the time and space to consult and listen, allowing us to co-create a solution with young people and stakeholders. It has been inspiring to be a part of a cohort of changemakers who are facing similar challenges and the peer support has been invaluable in helping us to navigate them.*

**JONATHAN HARPER**

CanTeam, Big Education Challenge Winner

## RUNNERS UP

### THE FIREFLY PROJECT, JENNA MAUDLIN, 38

supports schools to help young people understand and deal with loss and trauma, developing their social and emotional skills through design-based workshops and resources.



### STUDIO SELF-MADE, EMMA REDFERN, 24

is an online education platform that offers digital internships for young people who might struggle to access creative careers. These young people enhance their creative portfolios with practical work experience through a network of small businesses.



### POTENTIAL, FARHAD GOHAR, 18

provides mentorship and support to young people at risk of joining gangs or of exclusion from school, helping them to develop entrepreneurship skills and create legitimate enterprises.



## THREE PROJECTS RECEIVED SPECIAL RECOGNITION:

**Emoco, Andrew Speight, 21**, sets out to improve mental health in schools by working with young people, teachers, parents/carers, and school leaders to co-produce a white paper which sets out their collective ambitions for improving wellbeing.

**See Her Potential, Sophie Koumides, 26**, empowers young girls by addressing gender stereotypes, discrimination, and harassment. They are supported to reimagine their futures through school-based interactive performance and workshops.

**The Big Mouth, Emmanuella Okha, 22, and Zoe McGhee, 26**, amplifies the voices and perspectives of marginalised young people through creative arts, dismantling the barriers that block their pursuit of education and a better quality of life.

## GROWING OUR COMMUNITY OF CHANGEMAKERS

Since 2020, Big Change has identified and backed a further 10 projects, taking the total in our portfolio to 63.

There is no fast fix to long standing and complicated issues. Our community of Big Changers see the bigger picture. They don't only want to solve problems they see now, but to create and share solutions that can pave the way towards a different future.

## YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE THROUGH EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

We are supporting projects that are creating new ways of learning, with and for young people.

### CHILDREN'S UNIVERSITY TRUST

believes in limitless learning beyond the classroom, and helping children develop a love of learning and create a sense of wonder in the world around them. Big Change supported them to collect and share evidence about the impact that learning outside the classroom has on young people's educational attainment, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes.



- During the funding period Children's University Trust saw 28,000 new children (127% increase) set up with accounts on their online platform which encourages, tracks and celebrates their participation in learning beyond the classroom.
- Their activities featured in 64% of the Government's Levelling Up or Education Investment Areas, and they increased this to 78% by the end of 2023.
- Their 2022 State of the Nation report on learning outside of the classroom collated data from 313,500 hours of learning recorded on Children's University Trust's online platform.
- Since the funding period Big Change's impact continues to be felt. Children's University's 2023 State of the Nation report saw them analyse participation in more than 704,000 hours of learning. In 2024 there are more than 83,000 children with accounts on their online platform.

### CYMBROGI FUTURES

designs unique learning journeys for educators and young people to empower them to take on their futures with confidence. Their programmes focus on sustainability, wellbeing, creative skills and collaboration, and are delivered online and at their beautiful site in Wales.



- Cymbrogi's Tomorrow's Changemaker programme (TCM) was designed and piloted with 400 secondary school learners in Wales in 2023. Since then it has doubled its reach and by 2025 will be reaching over 2000 teachers and learners. The programme has a unique blended learning delivery across a full academic year involving both teacher-led online modules plus an interdisciplinary and experiential 'enterprise challenge' (focused on a 'wicked problem' rooted in local/global contexts). It has attracted the wider interest of business, exam boards and qualification bodies.

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*It was one of the most inspiring days I've had at work. It was crystal clear that the learners had really engaged and felt empowered to be part of the solution.*

Tomorrow's Changemakers Judge, Wales 2023



## LONDON INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOOL



is a new kind of university that teaches students how to tackle complex, real-world problems by applying knowledge and skills from a range of disciplines. Big Change funded them to develop and pilot an interdisciplinary programme in schools for students aged 16-18.

- 20 schools are part of the programme and the pilot supported 320 students.
- Students' understanding of complex problems in the world grew from 6.4% to 49.6%. 100% of teachers said that they would like the programme to be delivered in their school the following academic year.

“

*Our education system rewards excellence in subject specialisms; yet life's problems and the world of work require interdisciplinary solutions. Problems are interdisciplinary, and so our curriculum should be too.*

Ed Fidoe, Chief Executive at London Interdisciplinary School

## GESHER TRUST

is transforming the way children and young people with special educational needs are educated in the UK using an evidence-based model of teaching and learning. Gesher believes that education should focus on the whole young person, be personalised to their aptitudes and passions, and enable them to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives. Big Change supported the team to share their practice across the UK by developing an academic journal and a community of practice.



- The community of practice developed has led to the development of a new Life Skills scheme for SEND students and advising Pearson Assessment on accessibility and inclusion.
- The blueprint of Gesher's model has been shared widely in the UK and globally, and their learning journal 'The Bridge' is received by over 500 schools with a growing online readership.

## THE NEW SCHOOL



is on a mission to positively change the way we educate children in the UK. Their successful school model goes beyond attainment to support self-esteem, agency, engagement and life satisfaction. With Big Change's support, the team is developing "blueprints" of their model that will help Local Authorities adopt the approach.

- The New School's pupils have an overall attendance rate of 94% (some of their students had under 45% attendance at previous schools), and 82% have progressed on the Boxall scale which captures social, emotional and behavioural development.
- In-depth research with University College London has validated The New School model and generated deep insights into the key ingredients of their approach.

“

*We can only change the outcomes, when we change the rules of the system. I've created The New School, because I believe we can do things differently. I think that education can be inclusive of all young people.*

Lucy Stephens,  
Founder, The New School

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*Quite simply, Gesher School is an outstanding example of what can be done for SEND children - our child is a totally different child, and I always feel as though you have her best interests in mind.*

Parent

## THE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE

We are supporting projects that bring organisations together to create, campaign for, and accelerate change.

### #BEEWELL

believes young people's wellbeing is as important as their academic attainment. Founded in Greater Manchester, using a co-designed survey, they listen to the voices of as many young people as possible; publish the results privately to schools and publicly by neighbourhood; and drive action across society to improve young people's wellbeing. Big Change provided funding to support a Youth Steering group to directly commission solutions in response to the survey findings.



- Over three years, #BeeWell heard the voices of 63,000 young people across 192 secondary schools in Greater Manchester. In 2023, they expanded to Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton and #BeeWell's Mission is to see this approach implemented nationally by 2030.
- The Youth Steering group used insights from the survey to commission activities to get young people active, and to strengthen feelings of community connection.

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*We are so pleased to see that so many young people have taken part in #BeeWell. This project is all about powerful young people creating their own futures and it's fantastic that young people and schools across Greater Manchester are seizing the chance to do so.*

Meera, #BeeWell Youth Advisor

### PLACE MATTERS

is a partnership of organisations with a shared ambition to build the practice of place-based working so all communities experiencing inequality of opportunity can access the help they need to make change happen. They do this by supporting communities directly to enable place-based projects to thrive, by connecting peers and creating learning opportunities to inform the development of the work and by influencing policy makers and funders to create the environment that supports place-based working.



- Big Change's funding has supported the initial pilot, including building a learning community of 300+ practitioners, convening a group of 17 place-based funders resulting in the development of a database of place-based work, an interactive online map and an insights report into place-based work across the UK to be published in 2024.

### JOINEDUP

is a collaboration of award-winning education and youth organisations who recognise that there is a mismatch between the siloed structure of the system and the joined up support needed for children to thrive. Big Change has supported national youth work charity UK Youth with funding to develop the Joined Up Institute. UK Youth wants Joined Up to be the place young people and professionals come together to learn, turn evidence into action and solve key issues, with the aim of developing a joined-up approach across the key sectors supporting young people, including education, health and youth work.



- By 2025, Joined Up will bring together 10,000 professionals, from across the different sectors, with young people, to work together to tackle issues including mental health, outdoor learning, employability and social action.

## THE FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (FED)



believes that strategic, long-term education planning is vital to the success of countries and people. They bring together stakeholders from education, business, and politics in a neutral space to discuss, debate and develop solutions that address the short-term nature of education policy. Big Change supported the development and launch of their 2022 National Consultation Report, which analysed perspectives from across the education system.

- Launched at the House of Lords, the report was based on the largest ever qualitative consultation on education in England.
- FED has also launched a Learners Council to bring the voices of young people into education policy making and an annual National Education Summit which convenes global educators, business leaders and politicians to shape the long-term future of education.

## RETHINKING ASSESSMENT (RA)



Rethinking Assessment (RA) is a coalition of school leaders, researchers, policymakers, employers and higher education representatives. Their mission is to recognise the breadth of strengths of every young person so that no one leaves school with just a set of exam numbers and letters. Big Change supported Rethinking Assessment to develop the Learner Profile and pilot this approach with schools and colleges. Teachers are now working on developing profiles and personal portfolios with students which focus on measuring and celebrating their achievements in education and beyond, giving full recognition to the strengths of every young person.

- RA has developed and launched the Learner Profile Starter Kit and is supporting schools and colleges across the UK to apply it in their settings and learn together as a community.
- The coalition is a growing voice and agent for change, with their work being featured in numerous reports, including The Independent Assessment Commission, Professor Louise Hayward's review of assessment reform in Scotland, the Times Education Commission recommendations, and the cross party APPG for Schools, Learning & Assessment.

“

*Education is about developing the knowledge, skills, ingenuity, and empathy to become a human being with the capacity to leave the world in a better place. Our assessment and exams system does not help us to achieve this - it stifles the creativity of young people rather than liberating it. It causes unnecessary pressure rather than supporting the transition to adulthood. We want young people to leave school with a rounded digital Learner Profile that shows all the different things that they can do.”*

Peter Hyman, Co-Founder Rethinking Assessment

CREATING CHANGE

**WITH,**

**NOT TO,**

YOUNG PEOPLE



## We listen to young people, support them and their ideas, and ensure their needs are at the centre of every project we back.

We recognise we are not the experts, so we take time to research with, and listen to, those closest to the problems in education and learning - young people and those on the frontline. We use this insight to inform our work and to champion the inclusive approach to education and learning that we need.

- We **listen to and elevate voices** from across the education ecosystem, especially those of young people, to understand and influence the change that is needed.
- We **back young changemakers** - supporting them and their ideas through the Big Education Challenge, and working with a youth-led Project Council to shape and lead Big Education Conversations in their communities and with policymakers.
- We advocate for the principles and practices of **intergenerational collaboration** - working with global partners to learn, and share the learning and apply it to our work.

“

*I joined Big Change's Youth Advisory Group when I was just 14, it was my first time volunteering in an organisation of this kind. Suddenly my world was not just Newcastle! I learned more about educational disparities across the country and globally. I got to engage with a range of organisations and get a deeper understanding of the issues they were tackling.*

**AMINAH HAIDER**

Big Change Youth Advisory Group



## CHANGING THE CONVERSATION TO REIMAGINE EDUCATION

Since 2020, we have elevated voices from across the system - especially young people - to understand their ambitions for change and ensure their ideas shape the national debate about the future of education.

### A NATIONAL LISTENING EXERCISE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Starting in 2020 we worked with partners to design and deliver a year-long national listening exercise to shape the future of education and learning post-Covid.

It included extensive qualitative and quantitative research, including focus groups, polling, social media listening and desk research, and led to the publication of two key reports.

- The “New Normal” - The future of education after Covid-19 was published in partnership with the Institute for Public Policy Research, City of London Corporation and Parentkind, has so far engaged 13,000 active readers.
- Subject to Change: An insights report - was the result of engagement with over 40 partners. It made the case for rethinking the purpose of education, and broader youth and public involvement in shaping a new direction for learning in the UK.

“

*I will continue listening to young voices in how we can ensure their education is fun, engaging and inspiring. And help educators involve “real life” experiences and examples in their teaching.*

**PARENT, BURY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following a Big Education Conversation led by HeadsUp

“

*We believe that shared purpose is a critical lever for transforming education. Big, inclusive conversations - that bring together policymakers and civil society leaders, alongside students, parents and teachers - are a critical part of that process.*

**ALEX BEARD**

Teach for All



## BIG EDUCATION CONVERSATIONS IN COMMUNITIES AND AROUND THE WORLD

Since 2021 we have encouraged and supported thousands of Big Education Conversations in England that have created collective hope and new actions in communities. These inclusive conversations create space and time for different groups, including young people, to come together and discuss the purpose of education and how it should change for the better.

### Highlights of this work include:

- Over 25,000 people have taken part in more than 2,000 Big Education Conversations in England since 2021.
- In 2022, we took the Big Education Conversation to a global stage at the UN Transforming Education Summit in New York at an event with over 500 youth leaders and activists, policymakers, civil society organisations and education ministers.
- In 2022, a Big Education Conversation at the Blackpool Tower involving 200 young people, teachers and employers, was facilitated by 10 young people.
- The global resource platform contains tools in seven languages that are being used by 18 partners across 35 countries.

“

*The Big Education Conversation opened up the discussion in Blackpool between young people and adults about a different scale of change that was needed. Key themes from the data collected helped persuade Blackpool schools to rethink their Key Stage 3 curriculum.*

**RIGHT TO SUCCEED IMPACT REPORT**

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*Working closely with Big Change on the Big Education Conversation has reinforced a shift in my own leadership style to collaborative, intergenerational leadership – recognising that systems are made up of people, change moves at the speed of trust, and that all stakeholders must have genuine ownership over collaborative solutions to affect real change.*

**ANDREW SPEIGHT**

Youth Advisor, Blackpool Council and Big Education Challenge Finalist



## AN INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACH TO SHAPING POLICY

Working closely with our partner the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), the UK's leading progressive thinktank, we have developed a strong evidence base for new education policy proposals that will shift the system towards a broader purpose of young people thriving.

Bringing together academic research, young people's views, and data from Big Education Conversations, we published an evidence review and a policy report that is shaping the thinking of parties across the political spectrum.

- 1 Out of Kilter: How to rebalance our school system to work for people, society and the economy, was launched in Autumn 2023 in Blackpool at a Big Education Conversation with Bridget Phillipson MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, and stakeholders from across the town.
- 2 The report has been used to influence policy-makers, for example shaping the Labour Party's Opportunity Mission, which calls for an "education system that builds confidence and resilience, knowledge and skills and a love of learning to carry throughout life. So that all young people will get the chance to thrive in a rapidly changing world."
- 3 Young people have been inspired to take up other policy influencing opportunities, such as engaging their local MPs in Big Education Conversations and contributing to the House of Lords Select Committee on Education for 11-16 year-olds.

“

*This report proposes the first steps on a journey to a school system that ensures every young person is able to thrive in school, work and life. This work has embraced young people as experts in shaping these proposals. The ideas that have emerged from this present a rallying call to the government and wider society: we must listen to and act with young people to support their ideas and ambitions, and break down the barriers they face in fulfilling their potential.*

**SAEED ATCHA MBE DL**

Founder and Chief Executive, Youth Leads UK  
and former UK government social mobility commissioner



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*It was a real pleasure hearing from children from around Blackpool about their ambitions and what they want from education: too often the voices of our young people aren't heard, despite being the most important voices of all.*

**BRIDGET PHILLIPSON**

Shadow Secretary of State for Education







*Young people have inherited the climate crisis. With support from the Big Education Challenge, Force of Nature is piloting training pathways to help young people upskill in public speaking, advising decision-makers, and supporting peers and teachers within schools.*

“

**CLOVER HOGAN**

Founder of Force of Nature,  
and Big Education Challenge Winner



# LEARNING WITH OTHERS AND **SHIFTING** MINDSETS



## Creating long-term changes within complex systems like education is not easy.

Big Change understands that this involves challenging old beliefs and assumptions about what education is for - its goals and purpose - and how change happens.

To set up every young person to thrive - to prepare them well for their futures - the old ways will not do, which is why we work with global partners to understand the why, what and how of transforming education. We convene and connect leading experts and changemakers to make the case for the long-term transformation, as opposed to incremental improvement, of education and learning.

- We seek out **diverse and brilliant thinkers and doers** who are transforming education and learning in different contexts around the world.
- We work with them to understand how to transform, not just incrementally improve, existing systems by **addressing the drivers of purpose, power and practice**.
- We **translate and share these insights** in accessible ways - influencing the strategies and approaches of other organisations and applying it to our own.

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*Creating space for debates and discussions is a crucial part of fostering system change. Big Change's investment in people and relationship building, and in enabling everyone to be at their best, has put them on a trajectory to contribute more than they might have ever envisioned.*

**WENDY KOPP**  
CEO, Teach For All



## CO-CREATING A NEW EDUCATION STORY

We bring together and learn with diverse experts and leaders who are working to transform education and learning, to inform our work and champion change together.

Through collaborative research and a series of publications and events, we have co-created a clear understanding of what it takes to transform education systems. We have shared this with others and applied it across our own work. [A New Education Story](#), launched at the end of 2021, identifies three linked drivers to transform education systems:

- A New Education Story was launched at the RewirEd Summit in Dubai with a panel of experts including Andreas Schleicher (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)), Wendy Kopp (Teach for All) and Vishal Talreja (Dream a Dream), alongside Big Change CEO Essie North.
- Since the launch, Big Change’s global insight network has diversified across 26 countries, with 40 experts publishing articles across different platforms as a direct result of our collaboration.
- The articles have reached over 17 million people globally, influencing and shifting the ways in which people, organisations, networks seek to transform education through policy and practice.



*Being part of this gives me access to global thought leadership, conversations, and narratives, which I can then bring back to the education ecosystem in India.*

**VISHAL TALREJA**

Co-Founder of Dream a Dream



## INSPIRING AND INFLUENCING GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE ON INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION

To transform education, people from across generations, communities and contexts must come together. We are proud to be part of a coalition of 10 global organisations that are researching and advocating for power sharing and intergenerational collaboration.

- In 2023 we co-led an intergenerational programme with Salzburg Global Seminar and then developed a [Guide to more Inclusive and Intergenerational Convening](#) which was launched alongside the UN General Assembly alongside partners.
- The guide provides practical ways to include young people in discussions about the future of education, which are being implemented by a wide range of organisations, including as part of the 2024 Learning Planet Festival.

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*Shared power multiplies strength. By distributing authority and responsibility for transforming education among individuals and groups, you unlock a collective force that far surpasses the sum of its parts.*

**ALIYAH IRABOR-YORK**

Founder of Pupil Power and Big Change Associate



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*Intergenerational collaboration and dialogue that includes parents, teachers and young people... isn't the icing on the cake. It's the cake itself. I'm not saying that to be nice, it's what the evidence says.*

**REBECCA WINTHROP**

The Brookings Institution



“

*A new approach from the government requires a new approach from all of society, demanding transformative education. Young people will be the heartbeat of this effort, leveraging their voices, experiences, knowledge, and agency.*

**ANTÓNIO GUTERRES**

UN Secretary General, Transforming Education Summit, 2022



## GLOBAL LEARNING ALLIANCES

Big Change is committed to learning with and from others - our community of changemakers and leaders, as well as global organisations who are working towards similar goals. We are proud to be learning with:

### New Education Story Research Partners

Alex Beard, Teach For All

Andreas Schleicher, OECD

Annina Mattsson, RewirEd

Emily Liebttag, Education Reimagined

Emma Dorn, McKinsey & Company

Franco Mosso, Enseña Perú

Fred Swaniker, African Leadership Group

Joann McPike, THINK Global School

Kelly Young, Education Reimagined

Michael Stevenson, OECD

Rebecca Winthrop, Center for Universal Education

Richard Culatta, International Society for Technology in Education

Saku Tuominen, HundrED

Sofie Yung, RewirEd

Steven Farr, Teach For All

Todd Rose, Populace

Vicky Colbert, Fundación Escuela Nueva

Vishal Talreja, Dream a Dream

Wendy Kopp, Teach For All

### Catalyst Learning Alliance

Dream a Dream, India

Edúcate, Uruguay

Fundació Bofill, Barcelona Spain

Innovation Unit ANZ currently working in Bermuda

Learning Creates Australia

People for Education working in Canada

Remake Learning working in Pittsburgh, USA

Zizi Afrique, Kenya

## Intergenerational Collaboration Learning Partners



SALZBURG  
GLOBAL  
SEMINAR

**Teach For All**  
A Global Network



Transforming Education Co-Action Summit,  
Salzburg, 2023



**THANK YOU FOR  
CREATING BIG CHANGE WITH US**

**BIG  
CHANGE.**

[www.big-change.org](http://www.big-change.org)

[info@big-change.org](mailto:info@big-change.org)

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