

Impact Report 2023

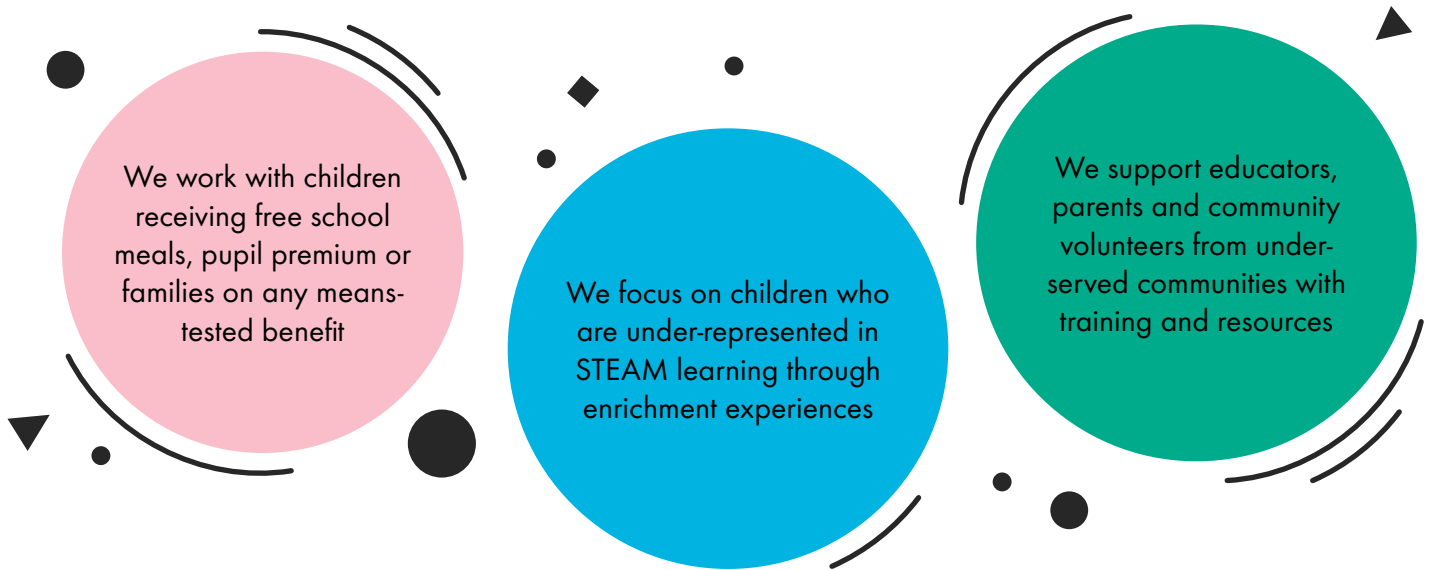
Empowering children to reimagine their future



Imagination matters

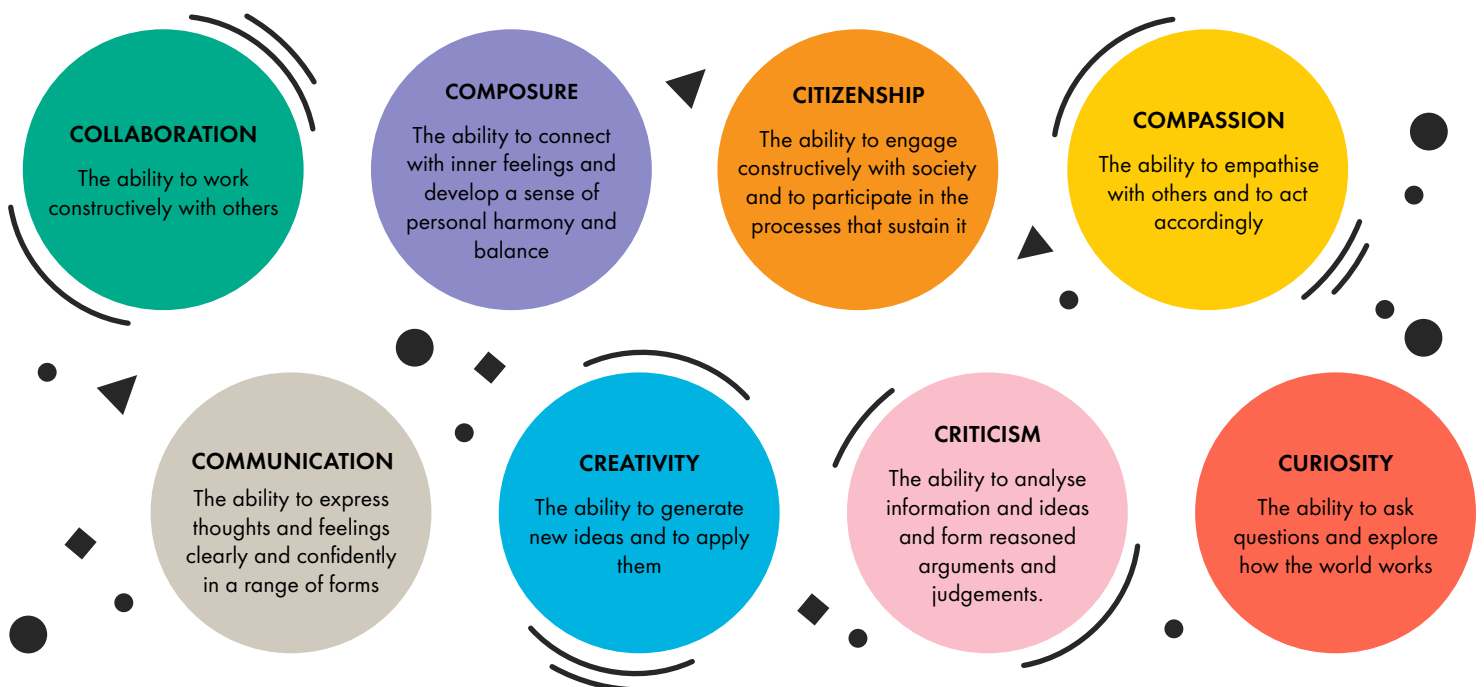
In the UK, 4 million children are navigating the challenges of poverty, often without the opportunities to create change in their lives. At the Institute of Imagination, we recognise that change begins by switching on your imagination. Yet this essential spark remains dormant for many children, limiting their ability to envision a brighter future. As a result, they face increased risks of long-term unemployment and diminished life prospects, resulting in untapped potential and lost opportunities.

In 2023, through our various activities and programmes, we flicked the imagination switch on for over 32,000 children from underserved and under-represented communities, providing transformative learning experiences that ignited their imaginations and empowered them with the potential to shape their futures.



Our learning experiences are based on a set of core competencies that empower young people to effectively navigate personal, cultural, economic and societal obstacles that they will inevitably encounter throughout their lives. STEAM, the interdisciplinary approach to learning involving Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths, provides a context through which these competencies are nurtured and applied, facilitating creativity, curiosity and collaboration in young learners.

These 8 core competencies are the result of a lifetime of work by the Institute of Imagination's founding Patron the late Sir Ken Robinson. We are proud to be continuing his legacy by applying these across our work.



Our impact

Programme: iOi STEAM Live

School curriculum-enrichment programme with live workshops broadcasted digitally into classrooms

26,490 times children participated

Places: My Big Idea

Full day event with in-person activities helping children imagine their big ideas to help their community thrive

256
people participated
149 children and
107 adults

2
library pop-ups
in Newham and
Lambeth

92

schools took part
across the UK

1,658

times teachers
attended training



Programme: Community Workshops

Immersive digital skills and digital literacy in-person programme

181

parents attended a
showcase of children's
projects

28

community staff were
trained to continue to
deliver workshops

37

community volunteers
supported workshops

526

children participated in
Newham and Lambeth

Product: Imagination Box

Letterbox-sized activity play boxes with instructions and resources

5,000

boxes distributed to families

128

children from 4 SEND schools
attended a 'Sensory story' session
with their boxes

1,991

boxes distributed to refugee
families

Research: Literature Review

Focused on imagination in education and learning

1

major research project in partnership with Bath
Spa University, Goldsmiths University of London
and Dublin City University

Thought Leadership: Talks, articles and interviews

Aiming to inform and influence the learning system

42

times appeared in, including in the FT,
Primary Times, Teaching Times, Schools
Week, BETT, FED Education Summit,
Festival of Education, Future Fwd
Conference, Create Festival, and on various
podcasts and blogs

Our outcomes

Top three competencies that children are using during our workshops

76%

identified Creativity

63%

identified Collaboration

53%

identified Communication

Top three skills that teachers ranked as most important for children to learn

Creativity

Curiosity

Communication

Children are increasing their creative thinking skills

We partnered with the team at Harvard University that developed a unique creativity measure called the Divergent Association Task (DAT).

Working with a sample of 500 children, we made the DAT both relevant and applicable for them. The result after our intervention is that we have seen an increase of 83% in children's creative thinking skills.

More children are increasing their aspirations

According to the OECD, the future aspirations of children as young as 7 are narrowing, limiting their career prospects. To raise aspirations at this age takes time. After this early phase of our programme's deployment, a quarter of children felt they could aspire to a higher level of occupational status when they grow up.

More children are choosing STEAM related jobs

The IET (The Institution of Engineering and Technology) has estimated a shortfall of over 173,000 workers in the STEM/STEAM sector, a figure that is rising. These job types are not commonly known to children. However, after our intervention almost a quarter expressed a desire to do a STEM/STEAM related job when they grow up. These are preliminary responses and we plan to continue to track the aspirations of these children as they journey through primary school and continue to work with the Institute of Imagination.

83%

increased their
creative thinking
skills through
iOi STEAM Live
workshops

We measure two key outcomes across all of our work:

1. Creativity: we measure creative thinking skills.
2. Ambition: we measure occupational and STEAM aspirations.

We focus on these two outcomes because:

- Creative thinking has been identified by major global institutions as a vital skill for children growing up in today's rapidly changing world.
- By the age of 7, the OECD estimates that children are already facing limits on their future work aspirations.

We use innovative tools such as DAT and MCS to measure the outcomes of children and teachers who take part in our activities. We also listen to children and their teachers and parents to document the stories of change that take place as a result of our work.

Mason's Story

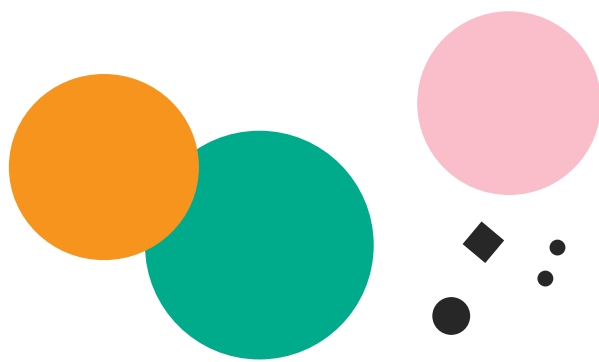
5 years on from his first interaction with us, in 2023 Mason returned to one of our in-person programmes called My Big Idea to share his story.

"School taught me the basics, the Institute of Imagination taught me to understand the future".

When Mason and his grandma Sherry first discovered the Institute of Imagination in 2018, in Sherry's words, the Institute of Imagination "blew their minds". It offered something for children that was completely different: "it opened Mason's mind to all these possibilities...to learn, to make and to do".

Mason is now 13-years-old and lives with Sherry in Lambeth. This is a borough with high rates of poverty and crime and is twice as densely populated as other areas of London. He had very limited access to technology at school but Sherry was determined to give him access to well-rounded childhood experiences. Unfortunately, most of the activities locally were very basic. If Mason were to miss out on opportunities to use technology and his creativity, he would have been more likely to leave school with poor qualifications and prospects for his future.

Fortunately, the Institute of Imagination was there for Mason. We taught him to code, giving him the ability to problem solve and work out complex puzzles. Now his mantra is "I could do that, I can do that, I will do that". Last year, he won a scholarship to a top secondary school. He says he wouldn't have got there without us. The entrance exam was full of puzzles and problems. And he aced it!



Grange Lane's journey

Grange Lane Infant Academy in Doncaster is in an area with a high proportion of households living in poverty (26.1%) and a Pupil Premium eligibility of 44%, double that of the national average.




Grange Lane Infant Academy's headteacher recognised the vital importance of growing creativity, nurturing collaboration, knowledge of environmental issues and understanding of our natural world among their students but lacked the capacity, expertise and resources to introduce this within their school. Like many other state schools across the country in deprived areas, this is a school with limited funds and resources. But thanks to our donors, our iOi STEAM Live programme was fully subsidised for them so they were able to take part.

They joined our iOi STEAM Live programmes with the first theme being Save Make Reinvent which provided circular economy-themed workshops. Our materials, teacher support and workshops with integrated STEAM disciplines, was worked seamlessly into their curriculum, enhancing and enriching this.

"The buzz in the classroom as the children were applying their imaginations to turn waste into treasure, was inspiring. Teamwork, resilience, problem-solving and collaboration were all apparent for all to see". Teacher, Grange Lane Infant Academy.

Grange Lane's participation in iOi STEAM Live has proven to be a transformative experience for both teachers and students. By integrating real-world problem-solving and environmental sustainability into their curriculum, Grange Lane Infant Academy is building a brighter future for its students and their community.



After our intervention, 100% of teachers agreed or agreed strongly with the statement "I believe thinking creatively is the most important skill for students to learn".

Feedback from another school:

"Historically absent, a newfound emphasis on creativity with the Institute of Imagination has not only filled a void but also significantly increased job satisfaction and empowered the staff at William Ford, catalysing a remarkable transformation in their teaching approach... (the Institute of Imagination) have undeniably played a pivotal role in bolstering staff retention."

David Huntingford, Headteacher,
William Ford Junior School,
Dagenham

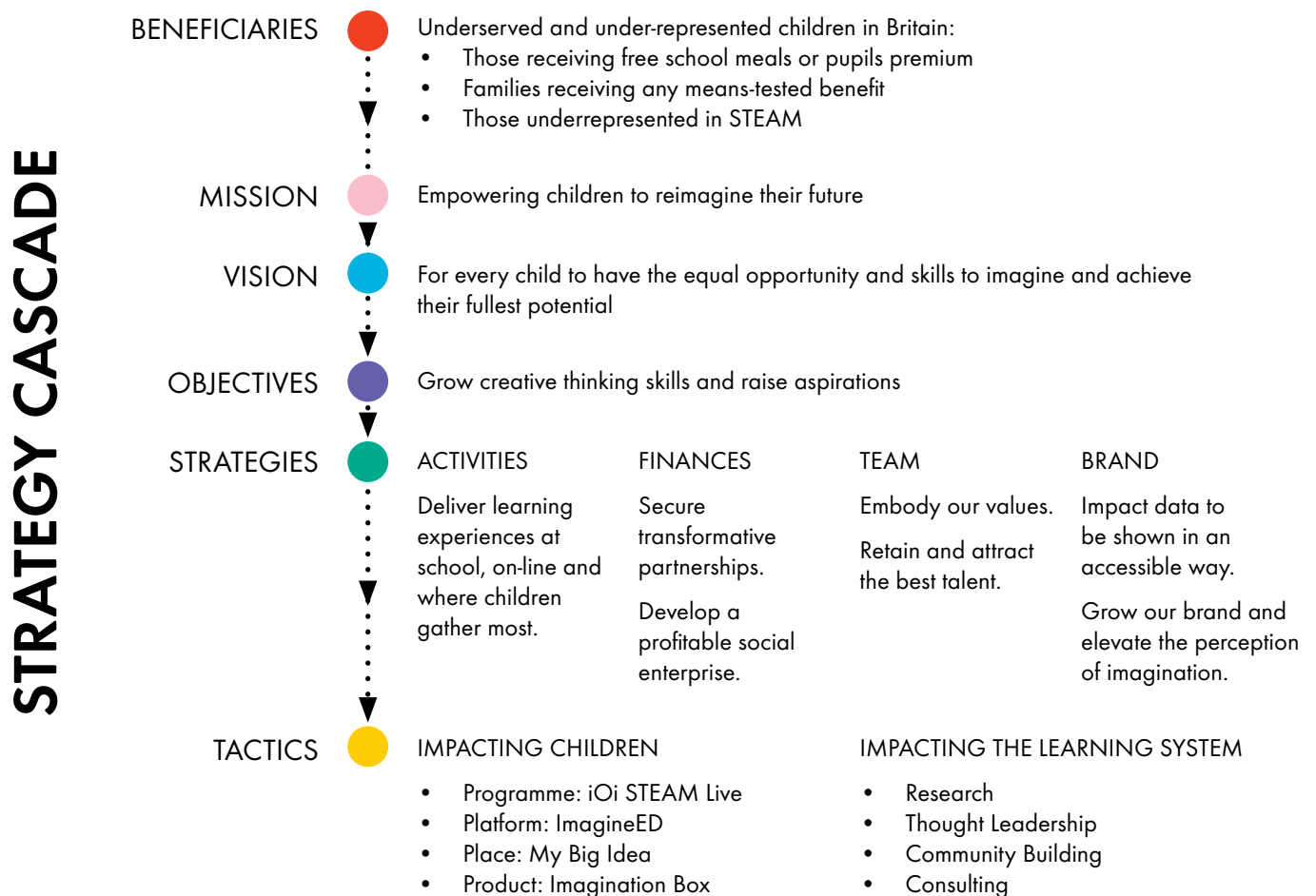
From our Chief Executive

The highlight of my year was reading a longitudinal study update on Mason and hearing his grandma Sherry's words about our work (p5): "It opened Mason's mind to all these possibilities". Through our early intervention, by growing his creative thinking skills and raising his aspirations, our activities empowered him to succeed and win a scholarship to a top secondary school, passing his entrance exams with ease.

So I am pleased to say that in 2023 we had many stories just like Mason's. In the year, for 32,000 children, we delivered new scalable programmes and activities, evidenced our work clearly and created a positive, lasting impact in every community with which we worked.

As you can read in our Strategy Cascade below, we have a clear plan for our way forward. Our key activities are now growing in reach and depth of transformation, but we live in an outdated learning system, so our challenge is to focus on systemic change. To achieve this, in 2023, in partnership with Bath Spa University, we published our first research paper on the importance of creativity and imagination.

With our partners at the LEGO Group, Save The Children, EasyPeasy and the Young V&A, we also began to develop a deep impact programme in Tower Hamlets. Alongside our activities in other communities, we are now acutely focused on delivering this unique programme and look forward to scaling this in years to come.



I care deeply about our mission as it relates to my own lived experience, so it is a great privilege to lead the Institute of Imagination as I know how vital our work is. Thanks to our amazing team, volunteers, partners and supporters, we are working tirelessly to provide opportunities for children to develop their potential and help shape their future.

However, raising the money needed to fund our work has been very challenging, so we are keen to find partners, both large and small, who, like us, are committed to breaking the cycle of poverty together. Do get in touch by email at hello@ioi.london or please donate here: ioi.london/donate/

Martin Allen Morales, Chief Executive, Institute of Imagination

Thank you

Our work would not be possible without the wonderful people and organisations listed below. Without you we wouldn't be where we are today.

People:

Alexandra Rodriguez & Family, Alicia Delfin and Family, Amy Pearson, Arabella Chute, Bob & Roberta Smith, Carla Aerts, Chloe Booth, David Dible, David Pallash, Doug Laughlen, Fran Meana, Helen Tarbuck, Jay Olson, Jim Stretton, Katy Potts, Kimberley Mitchell, Kirsten De Groot, Louis Howell, Maia Abayomi, Margaret Webb, Dame Mary Marsh, Mason and Sherry, Mishal Tariq, Nicole Brown, Professor Penny Hay, Richard Nicholson, Richard McFaul, Rob Hardy, Rob Hopkins, Sarah Coia, Sarah Seleznyov, Shafina Vohra, Sophie Britt, Dr. Tricia Jenkins, Tugce Ozgen and Vlad Glaveanu.

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With special thanks to our former Trustees and Patrons*:

Our Founding Patron the late Sir Ken Robinson, whose personal insights and body of work continue to be alive today in our work and our lives. To Ric Lewis (our former Chair), Kate Grussing CBE, Dr Lynne Guyton, Mary Reilly, Lady Ashley Shaw Scott Adjaye, Laura Watson, Nick Viner, Jane Quinn, Paul Simon, Emma Gilpin-Jacobs, Professor Alison Gopnik* (Founding Patron), Michael Morpurgo* and Professor Mick Waters*.

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