

## Young Enterprise's Project Inspiring Futures Developing Employability prospects and Enterprising Mindsets for young people in England and Wales' most underserved communities

While the impact from the Covid-19 pandemic is thankfully lessening, an entire generation of young people have been affected by the closure of schools and disrupted learning. Since schools fully reopened in March 2021, there have been tremendous efforts to catch up on lost learning and to recover from the impacts of closure. Education settings rightly focused on the academic curriculum, with opportunities for enrichment and practical learning more limited for young people than in previous years.

Now, more than ever, Young Enterprise has a critical role to play in equipping young people with the knowledge and confidence they need to succeed in the changing world of work. Our solution is to deliver our Project **Inspiring Futures (IF)** across the country, targeting schools in areas of Government-identified deprivation.<sup>1</sup> Working with schools in the most deprived deciles of 1-4, we are providing young people with learning pathways to enable them to develop confidence and key skills including teamwork, problem solving and resilience.

We seek support from the Global Giving community towards providing employability and enterprise opportunities for young people from the UK's most disadvantaged communities.

### About us

Young Enterprise works directly with young people, teachers, and businesses to help build a successful and sustainable future for all young people. Through our enterprise, employability and financial education programmes and resources, we help young people to fulfil their true potential. Founded on applied learning, supported by volunteers from a broad range of industry sectors, our programmes help young people to develop practical skills that can't be learnt from a textbook and prepare them for the world of work. Our learning activities for 5-24 year olds range from financial education workshops and one-day employability masterclasses to our flagship Company Programme, described as our most immersive enterprise experience.

**We've improved the knowledge & skills of over 7.2 million young people in the UK since 1962**

**88p of every £1 raised is spent on reaching young people**

**We are supported by a dedicated volunteer network of over 5,000 people**

### The need for the programme

A recent study by the Careers and Enterprise Company found that teachers now think workplace skills such as teamwork, problem-solving and presenting have a higher value than academic qualifications in preparing school and college leavers for the world of work. According to this study, teachers also said they are concerned that disadvantaged students have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic and are showing decreasing levels of engagement.

We know that increased opportunity and support is critical to young people's development in areas of deprivation or poor social mobility. Project IF data collected from pilot year participants at the start of the programme indicates a lower-than-average baseline for respondents, compared to their peers in more affluent areas. Project IF participants rate themselves lower than their peers for key measures, such as confidence, resilience and financial capability. The graph below highlights the difference in impact from our programmes for young people from

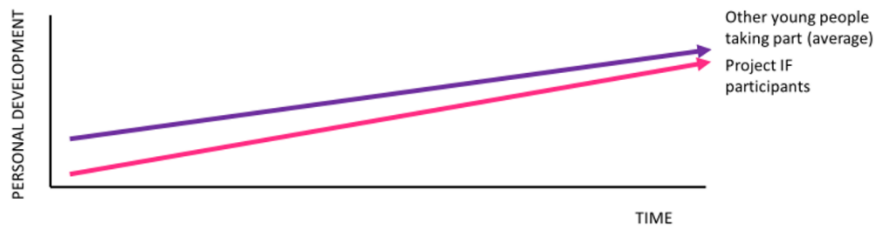
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<sup>1</sup> Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) IMD1-4 UK Government-identified areas of deprivation  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation>

disadvantaged communities. At the end of this document, our Theory of Change explains Project Inspiring Futures' aims, activities, expected outcomes and long term impact.

### The impact of Project IF compared to peers taking part

Compared to other participants, Project IF is having a greater impact on young people and, as such, is narrowing the gap with those taking part at IMD 5-10 schools



### Project Inspiring Futures (IF)

Aiming to tackle this opportunity gap, Inspiring Futures reaches young people at schools in the most disadvantaged areas across England and Wales.

Launched in 2020 with seed funding from Young Enterprise's Life President William Salomon, Project IF has reached 112 schools across its two pilot years (7.6% of all IMD 1-4 schools). We're expanding the project to meet demand and our bold ambition for the current academic year is to reach 190 schools (10.8% of all IMD 1-4 schools), but this vision is reliant on securing further support from a range of different sources to unlock young people's potential. The programme consists of two steps, which are:

#### **Step One, Company Programme for up to one academic year:**

A group of young people (typically 12 students but potentially up to 30) take part in our flagship Company Programme. Students work in teams to create and run a real trading company of their choice over the course of a year, supported by a volunteer business mentor. Students come up with a product or service by carrying out market research, then they go on to take responsibility for the management, production, sales, marketing, and financial roles for their company. YE supports them through their journey, providing the encouragement and recognition of their efforts which creates sustained impact for those involved.

#### **Step Two, Employability Masterclass (face-to-face workshop):**

During their Company Programme experience, the young people are invited to attend a YE- or Business Advisor-led employability session, as an opportunity for young people to identify their own personal skills and qualities and learn how to showcase these to future employers. The sessions focus on key job-hunting topics, such as interview preparation and writing a CV. The young people also become aware of their 'digital footprint' and how their online profiles could impact their future prospects.

Research from Education and Employers<sup>2</sup> finds that that young people who recall two or more meaningful encounters with employers while in education are five times less likely to be NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and typically earn more than peers who recall no such activities. But these life-changing opportunities are not available to all. Recognising that these encounters directly affect young people's employment prospects, we believe that students in underserved communities greatly benefit from a two-step approach over an academic year.

Our two-step approach to the project provides the opportunity for young people to:

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.educationandemployers.org/research/employer-engagement-in-the-school-to-work-transitions-of-young-britons/>

- Raise aspirations through encounters with role models (you cannot be what you cannot see)
- Develop key skills such as leadership, confidence, communication, teamwork
- Develop an enterprising mindset, enabling them to apply the skills they have learnt in the longer term
- Reflect on and articulate skills they've gained by developing a CV and taking part in a practice interview

Excitingly, we have made our full suite of three digital e-learning courses (high-quality two-hour online courses) available to the schools participating for all their young people, as well as all other IMD 1-4 schools this academic year. This has been generously supported by a Philanthropist and means that Employable Me (employability skills), Route to Success (future lifestyles – budgeting, taxes and careers), and My Money Matters (financial education), will all be accessible by young people in underserved communities across the country.

## Feedback and Impact of Project IF

### Calm Nature from Coppice Performing Arts School, Wolverhampton

Calm Nature from Wolverhampton in the Black Country, West Midlands, developed ethical and eco-friendly plant selling kits. They sold all their plants at a trade fair in Stourbridge and also held trade events at their partner partnership evenings for Year 7, 8 and 9. They were winners in the Black Country regional competition and also delivered a presentation at The University of Wolverhampton.



About their experience, the young people said *'If we could summaries our journey in just a few words, we'd probably go with fun, exciting, but most importantly, a lesson! We've learnt so much about not only business, but ourselves, and one another, which we feel is incredibly important'*. They also made £500 profit, which is a fantastic achievement!

## Trade Fairs



Our Trade Fairs provide a platform for young people who are taking part in our flagship [Company Programme](#) to trade with the public. We run them with venue partners across the country.

In March 2022, we hosted a Trade Fair at Spitalfields Market in London, with circa 40 student teams present – many of these were participating in Project IF. We were delighted that BBC News joined us on the day to report on the event, as the photo depicts here. One of the Project IF schools, Saint Ignatius in Enfield, were fortunate to be included within the following BBC London news clip.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/business-60710925>

## Competitions

Showcase events, regional finals, and national finals highlight competing teams, with the opportunity to present their achievements and celebrate successes. The young people also compete to be recognised in a number of different categories, such as 'Best Presentation' and 'Most Innovative Product'. These events are key, helping participants to develop communication skills across a range of written and verbal presentation tasks. Ultimately, all the teams are recognised for their skills development and the confidence to participate.



Project IF team **Resin Time**, case study below, won our Lancashire Area Final. Elsewhere, **Eleven Company** from Saint Hilds in Hartlepool (Northeast) walked away elated with an award for best Customer service (Judge's comments below, picture above).

*"The team had really thought about what the customer and had asked their target audience about their views. Everything they had thought about was very much centred around what the customer actually wants and needs."*

### Team Resin Time from Sir John Thursby School, Burnley: a case study

Resin Time from Sir John Thursby School, developed an arts and crafts company making bookmarks, jewellery, key rings, and coasters using non-toxic, eco-friendly resin and flower petals. Not only did they win our Lancashire Regional Company of the Year Award (they went on to win the 'Best Customer Service' award at the Northwest final event with teams from across the region), but we also arranged a visit for them to 10 Downing Street. They met Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Myles Stacey, OBE, where they explained their journey and the importance of the skills development opportunities they experienced.

*"Thank you so much for picking our school to take part, the girls and myself are still buzzing from the experience. They got so much out of it. It was a great day."* their teacher said.

### Budget

The total budget for all 190 schools to take part in Project IF is £680,200 While we have secured some funding towards this total, we are seeking a contribution from Global Giving supporters to enable young people at 10 state schools to take part in the 23/24 academic year. We generally ask each school to make a small contribution as we find this secures commitment and involvement, whilst motivating educators to engage their students fully. However, we know many schools are working with more stretched budgets than ever and we want to ensure all barriers to participation are removed. To highlight what a grant could fund for young people this year, I have listed some examples below:

- A grant of £1,000 (\$1282) would enable two year groups to access Employability Masterclass digitally
- A grant of £5,000 (\$6413) could fund two Company Programmes for up to 70 students
- A grant of £10,000 (\$12,827) would provide 3 Company Programmes for up to 105 students and Employability Masterclasses for up to 105 students

### Summary

We are seeking funding of \$45,900 to enable us to offer **Project Inspiring Futures** support for young people at 10 schools this year. Your contribution will make a significant difference to our project; your support of Young Enterprise represents a direct investment in the futures of young people. With your contribution we can engage schools in the most underserved communities and make a meaningful difference for the young people for whom this support is needed more urgently than ever. We hope you can join us on this journey to enable more young people to achieve their true potential.

If you have any questions about this report or any other aspect of our work at Young Enterprise, please contact Viv Couche, Philanthropy Manager on [viv.couche@y-e.org.uk](mailto:viv.couche@y-e.org.uk) or +44(0) 7926 071968



## Inspiring Futures Theory of Change

