

Impact Report

2020-22

Empowering children to reimagine the future.



About the Institute of Imagination

The Institute of Imagination (iOi) is a well-established and pioneering education charity. We work with parents, teachers, youth and community leaders and academics. We design and deliver creative learning experiences across the arts, sciences and digital technologies for marginalised and disadvantaged children aged 5-11 years old. These experiences empower children today to believe they can build a just, fair and sustainable world tomorrow.



Contents



- 3 **CEO introduction**
- 4 **The need**
- 5 **Purpose, vision, mission**
- 6 **Our values**
- 7 **Our impact**
- 8 **Our beneficiaries**
- 9 **A child's story**
- 10 **Gail's story**
- 11 **David's story**
- 12 **iOi in action**
- 13 **Our strategy**
- 14 **iOi today**
- 15 **Theory of Change**
- 16 **Measuring our impact**
- 17 **Thank you**



"Without imagination, I can't achieve my dreams."

Follow my story on page 9



Imagination is a human faculty. It is an essential skill for life.



Martin Allen Morales
CEO of the Institute of
Imagination

It is the conduit for creativity, curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving and play. It leads to resilience, innovation and finding solutions, from immediate personal challenges to major world-changing innovations.

Imagination can be difficult to define; however, there is a growing consensus that all children and young people need to be equipped with creativity and critical thinking skills for a rapidly developing digital age. Automation by Artificial Intelligence and machines has the potential to radically change our economy, meaning such skills will become highly valued (Vincent Lancrin et al. 2019).

Children today face an increasingly uncertain future with growing volatile economic, social, environmental, and political challenges that require imagination to reimagine society, business and institutions. These challenges are compounded for marginalised and disadvantaged children yet the education system is failing them. In addition to foundational literacies, the World Economic Forum strongly recommends children also need core competencies and characteristics such as creative and critical thinking skills to prepare for the future, participate in a fair and equitable society, and for their health and wellbeing.

There are severe education inequalities through a narrow curriculum aiming for high exam results and prioritising high achievers which again exacerbates the situation for children from less advantaged backgrounds. It is well documented that children growing up in poverty and disadvantaged areas are less likely to do well at school. The recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2023 report confirms this stark reality as it states that “there is a gap in young people’s educational attainment by parental income across all stages of education”.

This narrow approach to education has diminished imagination and creativity not only from traditionally creative subjects like art and music but also from literacy, numeracy, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines. It is an unforgiving education system where the needs of children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and those not in mainstream education (particularly following the impact from COVID-19) have been forgotten.

Growing up in certain geographic areas can negatively influence a child’s chances of receiving a successful education, and children from low socio-economic backgrounds have less access to the tools that support them to progress academically in school.

These crucial deficits affect a child’s immediate resilience, mental health, social skills, future work potential and integration into society. In short, our children are not best prepared for life today or life in the future.

Through our vital work with primary school-aged children, we are delivering practical, scalable and transformative solutions. We have engaged with over 140,000 children since our charity was formed, and with many more parents, teachers, community leaders and other educators in England and in selected countries around the world helping transform children’s lives with fundamental skills which can help them navigate a rapidly changing world.

Like their children, parents and also the community leaders we work for also suffer from the poverty of opportunity and so our work provides them with essential resources and learning which leaves a legacy that is transformative. Within the school system there is currently a teacher recruitment and retention crisis in England. With our fast growing network of schools, we are uniquely positioned to scale the critical provision of STEAM training and support for teachers, as well as offering incentives for them to stay in the profession. Headteachers thus commend us for keeping their team members in the profession and more motivated, creative and better equipped.

Supporting children to develop creativity and aspiration must be a priority for everyone. It is especially vital for those with the poorest opportunities. Unlocking the innovator and entrepreneur within each child, and their imagination, should be a child’s right.

We understand the power of creativity, so now more than ever, we must scale our reach and be a force for change within the education system. With access to creative learning, our children will be prepared for an uncertain future and be equipped with the confidence and ambition to thrive.

We are living through extraordinary times but as we now look forward, I hope this report gives you a snapshot into the phenomenal results we have achieved and how we have evolved and developed to enable us to be so well placed for the road ahead.

We can’t do this alone, so I hope our work and ambition inspire you to join us.

Martin

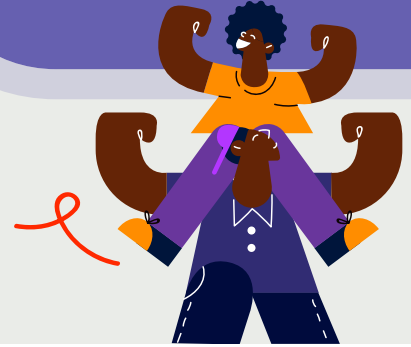
The need

From the first mark on a cave wall, to Dr Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' vision, to the creation of the COVID-19 vaccine, our greatest developments have begun with leaps of imagination.

In an era of rapid global change, being able to imagine a world that does not yet exist is vital. But opportunities to imagine, explore and experiment, without predetermined outcomes are increasingly rare.

At the Institute of Imagination (iOi), we want every child to have the skills and opportunity to imagine and achieve their fullest potential.

According to the World Economic Forum, an estimated 65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist.



Be prepared for a rapidly developing digital world

'Automation by Artificial Intelligence and machines has the potential to change our economy radically, meaning creative and innovative thinking skills will become highly valued.'

Vincent Lancri et al. 2019
Educational Research and Innovation, OECD

The iOi places creative thinking at the heart of its work, providing opportunities for children to think and act creatively across the arts, sciences and digital technologies.

Poverty of Opportunity

'There is a gap in young people's educational attainment by parental income level, and this continues throughout the different stages of a child's education.'

Joseph Rowntree Foundation
UK Poverty Report 2023

The iOi is committed to providing opportunities to those children and families considered to be the most disadvantaged.

Participation in a fair and equitable society

'Children are facing growing volatile economic, social, environmental, and political challenges. Imagination allows us to reimagine our society and circumstances.'

Education Inequalities Review
The Institute for Fiscal Studies 2023

The iOi focuses its work on communities where there is a deficit of creative opportunity.

Forgotten SEND Needs

'The attainment gap between pupils with SEND and their peers is twice as big as the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers.'

Education Endowment Foundation 2023

The iOi creates opportunities for all children, curating their activities so that they are accessible to all audiences, fostering a culture of inclusiveness.

Empowering children to reimagine the future



Our purpose is to create the space, tools and opportunities for creativity to thrive.

Our vision is for every child to have the equal opportunity and skills to imagine and achieve their fullest potential.



Our mission is to design and deliver learning experiences across the arts, sciences and digital technologies. These empower children today to believe they can build a just, fair and sustainable world tomorrow.



Our values

Every child is at the centre of our universe

We listen to children by co-designing and collaborating with them, their parents, teachers and community leaders on everything from our research to our programmes' development.



Imagination = innovation = change

We drive innovation through a blend of play, curiosity and creativity - taking risks and nurturing new ideas with a beginner's mind.

Inclusivity is in our DNA

Because we know impact is amplified by many diverse voices, we embed inclusivity in everything from employee onboarding to our core offering.



Our impact

Since we launched in 2011, over 140,000 children have participated in our work. As a result, we have also reached many more hundreds of thousands of parents, teachers and carers through our wider work.

Over the past 2 years

Programmes

64,200

Children & Young People

5,773

Children with SEND

63

Schools

656

Teachers & Education Professionals

328

Classes

14

London Boroughs

Products

3,500

Imagination Boxes distributed to children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as children in hospitals.

We estimate that the boxes distributed have reached many more through their families and friends.

Platforms

138,000

Unique impressions on iOi at Home (our On-Demand platform)

In 2022, we surveyed 52 teachers and 125 pupils who participated in our Schools Programme:

100%

of teachers said that our programme allowed them to use creativity in the curriculum

95%

of children said that our programme helped them be creative and think of new ideas

85%

of children said that our programme helped them feel like they can change things for the better

98%

of teachers thought that our programme helped children to inspire their self-potential



Our beneficiaries

5 to 11 year olds: Within the learning system, these children have fewer opportunities than other age groups. We focus our unique expertise here as this is a pivotal time in a child's learning journey and also in the way they set their aspirations. The importance of this is highlighted by the OECD as it asserts that "by the age of seven, children are already facing limits on their future aspirations".

Marginalised and disadvantaged children across England: Although we have worked internationally in the past, we have increased our focus on working in greater depth and breadth with marginalised and disadvantaged children across England. As the attainment gap is widening for them, we prioritise children who receive free school meals or whose family receive any kind of means-tested benefit.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities): We work in mainstream schools, special school settings and with children not in education, including vulnerable children who are in care or in virtual schools.

Girls and STEM: Girls and women are disproportionately underrepresented in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and maths) education and jobs. We believe that our creative products, programmes and platforms empower all children and help address the rebalance needed and even though we don't have targeted interventions for girls we are looking at how we can increase our attention to this issue.

Teachers and community leaders working in areas of high indices of deprivation: The schools and community or youth centres we work with see our work as critical as they have suffered from increased budget cuts which affect their work and find it hard to recruit, train and retain their staff.

36%

of our beneficiaries are eligible to receive free school meals (National Avg is 21%)

45%

children with English as a second language

10%

children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)



My story

A child's perspective



"Hello, I'm a student at St Luke's CE Primary School in Newham.

I have a passion for knowledge and when I grow up, I now want to be an engineer."

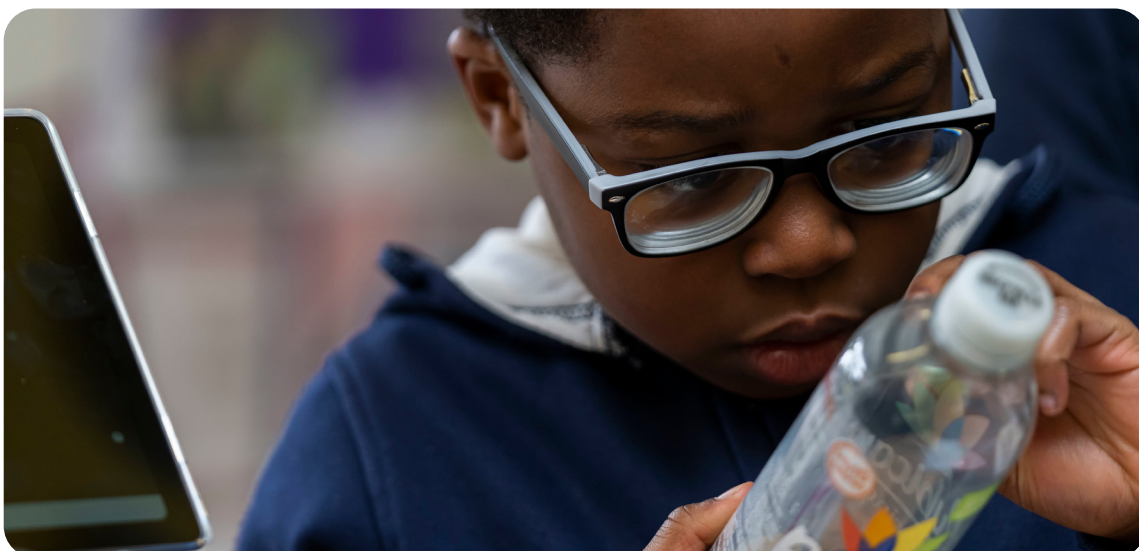
"Without imagination, I can't achieve my dreams. I know that when I'm older, I can use these skills to benefit the public and myself."

"Through the Institute of Imagination (iOi) workshops at St Luke's, we have developed our imagination and creativity by using technology. We have used micro:bit kits, computer aided design software, virtual reality and even stop motion animation like in the LEGO, and Wallace and Gromit movies.

I think we are engineers when we use CAD. We are film makers when we use stop motion animation. And we are coders when we use micro:bit. It's like work experience in the classroom!

The iOi have provided us with creative ways to fire up our imagination through using new and exciting technology.

Imagination, technology and creativity are exactly what is needed to succeed in our future. Without imagination, I can't achieve my dreams. I know that when I'm older, I can use these skills to benefit the public and myself."



Gail's story

A community leader's perspective



"Hi, I'm Reverend Gail Thompson.

Founder of Millennium Community Solutions. We work with children from local housing estates across Lambeth and Southwark."

"The impact has been tremendous, I'm actually lost for words."

"We work with children and young people from local communities and housing estates across Lambeth and Southwark. A substantial part of the Millennium Community Solutions (MCS) strategy is to identify and partner with organisations with similar values to our own.

It is vitally important that we can identify and communicate the need and the impact that we want to achieve as a community hub, especially to meet the needs of beneficiaries in Lambeth & Southwark. By working with the iOi, we achieved an even greater impact.

The iOi's Digital Heroes Community Programme initiative launched in 2022 to bring coding and creativity to children and young people, and to communities that are traditionally underrepresented in technology & socio-economically. Thanks to the iOi, we now work with more than 200 children a week to provide access to coding and creativity. I have never seen young people engaged so much; the impact has been tremendous, I'm actually lost for words."



David's story

A teacher's perspective



"Hi, I'm David Huntingford.

I am the Headteacher at William Ford Junior School in Dagenham. Our motto is 'Purposeful learning, engaging activities'."

"Working with the iOi has given a purpose to our learning through critical thinking and creativity. Teachers now have the confidence for creative approaches to the curriculum and demonstrate how creative thinking can help cross-curricular learning."

"With the iOi Schools Programme everything was provided for us; the resources, teacher training and all the information we needed for the workshops. Pupils got a real hands-on experience of being creative and linking different subjects together, working collaboratively to bring about a desired outcome. They loved it. Working with the iOi has given a purpose to our learning through critical thinking and creativity.

Teachers now have the confidence for creative approaches to the curriculum and demonstrate how creative thinking can help cross-curricular learning. We have really seen pupil engagement increase following our participation in the iOi Schools Programme, and teacher confidence in giving more autonomy to the pupils. It was enjoyable to deliver and to receive. Our staff surveys show that school morale has increased."



Our strategy



In 2023 we launched our 3 Year Strategy with the target of reaching half a million children from marginalised and disadvantaged communities. Although for many years we have worked both nationally and internationally, our focus is to concentrate our efforts across England for the next 3 years with some unique exceptions including pockets of committed international work.

Our transformative and scalable work is underpinned by innovative learning content delivered through three meta themes: People, Planet and Purpose. These filter down through two core strands of work:

Impacting Children

We develop and grow our programmes, content for platforms, and products directly with and for children.

Impacting the Learning System

We drive systemic change by repositioning imagination and creativity at the heart of the learning and education agenda.

Programmes

- Schools
- Communities

Products

- Imagination activation tools

Platforms

- On-Demand content
- Digital platforms



Research

- Partnership with academic institutions
- Publishing research

Community

- Thought leadership
- Building networks
- Major events

Consulting

- Commissioned partnerships
- Knowledge, skills & expertise

Long-term goals

Goal 1:
To lead the movement of imagination.

Goal 2:
To pioneer the global classroom by creative learning experience 24 hours a day, every day, wherever our beneficiaries are.

Goal 3:
To create systemic change by re-positioning creativity and imagination at the heart of learning and education.

Through our Programmes such as the iOi Schools Programme, Products like our Imagination Box and our Platforms, including our On-Demand content, we have inspired and empowered children from the most challenging circumstances to think creatively, work collaboratively, understand failure positively, problem solve and build their aspirations for the future. Thanks to our donors, we are able to offer all our work completely free of charge for the most vulnerable children and those from the most disadvantaged communities. Below are brief examples of some of our work.

Programmes

iOi Schools Programme

Our creative learning programme builds core life skills such as creative and critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration and wellbeing while integrating with the curriculum and exploring real world issues such as sustainability. In 2022, we delivered our Schools Programme to almost 10,000 children in the most deprived London boroughs.

Digital Heroes Community Programme

We work with marginalised children and families through community hubs to build creative thinking, confidence, aspiration and wellbeing, as well as core digital skills exploring virtual reality, coding and robotics.



Products

iOi Imagination Box

Our Imagination Box has been designed to spark creativity and imaginations, supporting intellectual and emotional development. It was developed for all children but specifically for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Platforms

On-Demand Content

Through our website we provide access to our programmes for children, families and educators to reach and inspire them, wherever and whenever they want.

Our content is designed to spark imagination, problem solving, and tinkering with innovative concepts and creations.



Theory of Change

Our model sets out our work in impacting children through our programmes, platforms and products as well as impacting the learning system through our research, campaigns, networks and events.

Importantly, it states clearly our focus on two key outcomes for children:

- 1. Building creativity:** By creating the space, tools, and opportunities for creativity to thrive through the designing and delivering of creative learning experiences across the arts, sciences and digital technologies.
- 2. Sparking aspiration:** Our work opens up opportunities for children to build skills, ambition and inspire possibilities in regards to their future.



Measuring our impact

Our Impact Measurement Framework works through a collection of reliable, valid and pragmatic impact data using assessment measures and questionnaires across four key measurement indicators.

We measure the progress made by participants, baselining before and capturing the same data after, to measure the change that has taken place.



	Aims	Outcome	Tools	Source
1	Creativity and creative thinking	Children develop the skills for the future of work	Divergent Association Task	Harvard / Olsen et al (2021)
2	Aspiration	Children develop the skills for the rapidly changing future of work and do not narrow their aspirations	T1 + T2 Questionnaire	DeWitt et al (2011)
3	Value of imagination and creativity as key skills	Those involved in supporting children's learning value imagination and creative thinking alongside other core skills	T1 + T2 Questionnaire	Rubenstein, Coach, & Siegel (2013)
4	Value of the conditions for imagination and creativity to thrive	Those involved in supporting children's learning are confident in preparing and facilitating the conditions for creative thinking	T1 + T2 Questionnaire	Rubenstein, Coach, & Siegel (2013)

Over the years we have used various methods to measure our impact according to the context of the need for our work and our proposed solutions. Today, led by our new Theory of Change, our Impact Measurement Framework has been re-assessed, studied and further refined by our team with the support and guidance of impact and data consultancy, Trust Impact.

In our aim for broader impact, we also consider the UNSDGs as goals which we work toward. In particular we focus on UNSDG 4 'Quality Education', challenging the crisis of extreme poverty and climate change, UNSDG 8 'Decent Work and Economic Growth', supporting children to grow their skills in innovation and creativity, and UNSDG 10 'Reduced Inequalities', focusing our work with the most disadvantaged communities.

People

Our Team

Martin Allen Morales • Chief Executive Officer
Tom Doust • Executive Director
Carrie Anne Philbin MBE • Director of Learning
Kimberley Mitchell • Director of Development
Damian Griffiths • Director of Finance & Enterprise
Catherine Lambert • Head of Marketing & Communications
Jess Joyson • Programmes Lead
James Brown • Programmes & Production Manager
Nileema Yesmin • Programmes & Content Manager
Emma Callow • Creative & Content Lead
Jennifer Luk • Projects Development Lead
Amandeep Hoonjan • Partnerships & Philanthropy Manager
Sally Bateson • Fundraising Consultant
Chloe Booth • Trusts & Foundations Consultant
Maia Abayomi • Marketing & Digital Officer
Max August • Fundraising Officer
Tanisha Reid • Bookkeeper
Fran Meana • Lead Facilitator
Akvile Terminaite • Facilitator & Creative Content Designer
Paul Clifford • Facilitator
Emma Brand • Facilitator
Nadeem Din-Gabsi • Facilitator
Fernand Frimpong Jnr • Facilitator
Helen Ainsworth • Facilitator
Jonathan Godsi • Facilitator

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Dame Mary Marsh
Michael Morpurgo
Abdi Omar (Ambassador)
Mark Wallinger
Professor Alison Gopnik • Founding Patron
The late Sir Ken Robinson • Founding Patron

Thank you

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“Imagination is the source of all human achievement.”

Sir Ken Robinson (1950 – 2020)

Patron of the Institute of Imagination
Teacher, writer, researcher, education specialist.

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