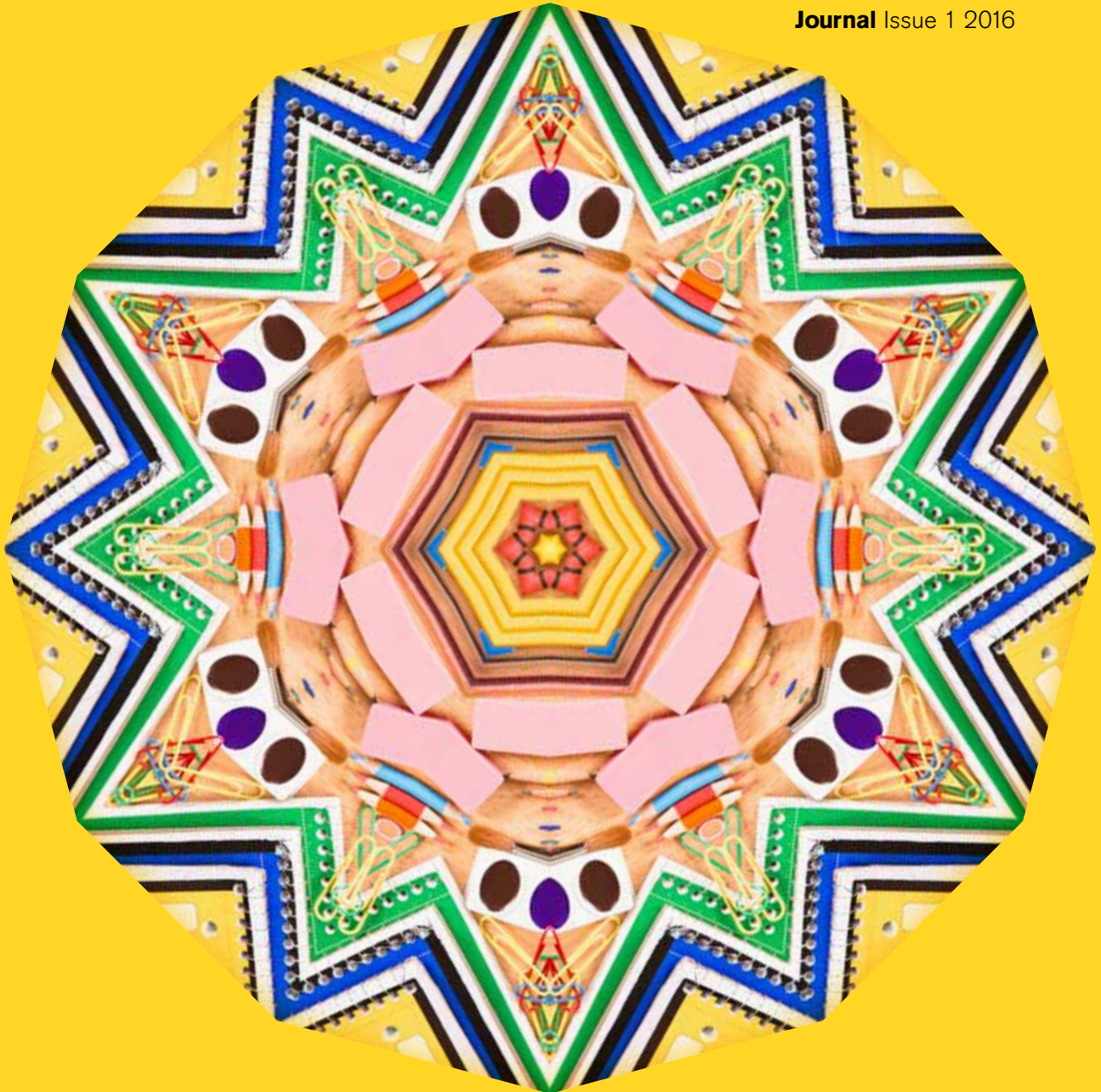


RSA

21st century enlightenment

Journal Issue 1 2016



Classroom creativity

Joe Hallgarten lays out the road ahead for innovation in education

Andy Hargreaves on the need for professional capital in teaching

Vincent Kompany talks shared value in the Premier League and the power of football

RSA

House

Did you know?

RSA House can host dinners, parties, meetings and more. Catered by Harbour & Jones, recently awarded Event Caterer of the Year!

To book your event contact us on

020 7930 5115

or email house@rsa.org.uk

www.thersa.org/house



“IF EDUCATION SYSTEMS WERE SUCCEEDING AGAINST THE CRITERIA THEY SET THEMSELVES, THE NEED FOR CHANGE WOULD BE MINIMAL”

JOE HALLGARTEN, PAGE 10

REGULARS

- 06 UPDATE
The latest RSA news
- 09 PREVIEW
Events programme highlights
- 49 NEW FELLOWS
Introducing six new RSA Fellows
- 50 LAST WORD
Selina Nwulu’s haunting ode to London’s creative landscape

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

- 18 *The apprenticeship scheme that aims to make taking the more vocational path a viable alternative to traditional schooling*
- 44 *A new organisation that helps migrants fully integrate into their host country through providing language classes*

FEATURES

- 10 POLICY
A colliding course
RSA Director of Education Joe Hallgarten sets the scene for the Society’s latest thinking on innovation in the global education landscape

- 16 CONVERSATION
Shared goals
Matthew Taylor sits down for a conversation with Manchester City football captain Vincent Kompany, to discuss the business of the beautiful game
- 22 COMMUNITY
The nature of nature
School director Arnie Bieber argues that a more highly involved and engaged role for parents in education is a faster route to better learning outcomes for children
- 24 PSYCHOLOGY
The creative construct
Getting rid of the myths surrounding creativity could be the way to get those juices flowing, says psychologist James Kaufman
- 28 CASE STUDIES
Innovation in action
We follow three examples of creative approaches to learning and teaching in the UK and abroad
- 32 ECONOMY
Engendering equality
While the education gap is narrowing, women still need a society-wide revolution if we are to reach true parity, argues Director of RSA Global Natalie Nicholles

- 34 TEACHING
Blooming teachers
Empowering teachers to access and harness their professional capital is the foundation for successful innovation in schools, claims education scholar Andy Hargreaves
- 40 INTERNATIONAL
Raising alliances
Educator Modupe Adefeso-Oletaju outlines the Nigerian perspective on education with a look at how the country is putting public-private partnerships to good use
- 42 EDUCATION
Lifelong learning
Adult education beyond traditional tertiary schooling needs a reboot, argues Tony Breslin, RSA Associate, if it is to truly make an impact on those who need it most
- 46 YOUTH
A lesson in listening
Educationalists Russell Quaglia and Kristine Fox advocate for the importance of giving students a voice and ensuring they are truly heard in order to encourage their creativity

Patron of the Society

HM The Queen

President

HRH The Princess Royal

Board of Trustees

Chair

Vikki Heywood CBE

Deputy chair

Dr Suzy Walton

Treasurers

Sarah Ebanja

Stephen Gleadle

Dr Irene Campbell

Tony Cohen

Jackie Elliman

Peter Fell

Clive Grinyer

Keith Horsfall

Keith Read CBE

Fellowship Council

Dr Irene Campbell

Wiard Sterk

At-large Councillors

Steve Coles

Kath Davies

Kerrie Howard

Christopher Luffingham

Alex Newberry

Erinma Ochu

Nicholas Parker

Dan Stanley

Laura Pictor

Eric Woodcock

Pooran Wyncarczyk

Executive

Chief executive

Matthew Taylor

Director of external affairs

Nina Bolognesi

**Director of research
and innovation**

Rowan Conway

Chief operating officer

Carol Jackson

Director of Fellowship

Oliver Reichardt

*RSA (The Royal Society for
the encouragement of Arts,
Manufactures & Commerce),
8 John Adam Street,
London WC2N 6EZ*

Tel +44 (0)20 7930 5115

www.thersa.org

Registered as a charity

in England and Wales

no. 212424 and in Scotland

no. SC037784

RSA Journal, Volume CLXII

No. 5565, Issue 1 2016

ISSN: 0958-0433

Region/Nation

East Midlands

East of England

Ireland

London

North East

North West

Scotland

South Central

South East

South West

Wales Cymru

West

West Midlands

Yorkshire

Chair

Jeanne Booth

Malcolm Noble

Vacancy

Philippa Holland

Pauline Moger

Rod Hyde

Ann Packard

Maurizio Fantato

Ann Henricson

Ed Whitelaw

Wiard Sterk

Ted Fowler

Keith Horsfall

Pam Warhurst

RSA Journal

Editor

Jane Duru

Creative director

Ben Barrett

Designer

Dean Buckley

Publisher

Emma Fisher

Production director

John Faulkner

Production artworker

Jack Morgan

Managing director, Wardour

Claire Oldfield

CEO, Wardour

Martin MacConnol

Commissioning editor

Rachel O'Brien

Distribution

Ann Gutowski

*The RSA Journal is published
for the RSA by Wardour,
5th Floor, Drury House,
34-43 Russell Street,
London WC2B 5HA
Tel +44 (0)20 7010 0999
www.wardour.co.uk*

“FOR LEADERS, THE WORK OF SYSTEM CHANGE MEANS GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND”



MATTHEW TAYLOR

Poet Andrew Marvell had it right when he wrote: “How vainly men themselves amaze.” Most of us are content to compare ourselves favourably with what might be called the industry average. But what if our whole sector is failing? What if the failure is less about organisational performance and more about collective action?

As captain of his club and country, no one could blame Vincent Kompany if he focused all his energies on maintaining his comparative advantage for as long as his legs hold out. Yet, as he explains in his interview with me for this *Journal*, Kompany is challenging not just his club and country, but the whole system of professional football.

Kompany's call is not simply for football clubs to give something back to the community in the form of charitable activities, but that they pursue a strategy of 'shared value'. This means developing business models that do good over the long term. At the heart of this is how football treats its fans.

Without supporters, individual clubs and the whole game are in trouble. But because we fans are often driven by blind loyalty, clubs lack a commercial imperative to treat us well. Clubs can be owned by dodgy businessmen, buy players who lack commitment, play dreary football and continuously increase the ticket prices, yet still we will come back for more punishment.

For Kompany, the negligence of clubs towards fans is not only unethical; it will prove counterproductive. Instead, he urges clubs to invest in a deeper, more authentic and reciprocal relationship with fans; whether that is manifest in choosing sponsors more in sympathy with the club's ethos or keeping ticket prices affordable

to lower-paid families. If they take these steps, he argues, fans are more likely to stay loyal even when results don't go well. Kompany points at a club in crisis like Aston Villa and argues that fans are hurt not just by the results, but by the justifiable sense that they have been 'squeezed' for years.

In not just wanting Manchester City and Belgium to do the right thing but to challenge the whole model of football value creation, Kompany offers an example of what social enterprise experts (and recent RSA speakers) Sally Osburg and Roger Martin describe as 'shifting the equilibrium'.

Equilibrium shifting is the goal of other contributors to this *Journal*, with an emphasis on the education system. We feature Arnie Bieber wanting to empower parents as partners in schooling, Russ Quaglia insisting on a stronger voice for pupils, Andy Hargreaves aiming to redefine teaching as a 21st-century profession and Joe Hallgarten, James Kaufman and Modupe Adefeso-Olateju all seeking, in different ways, to bring creativity to the heart of education.

As a CEO myself, it is easy to fall into the comforting assumption that as long as my organisation is reasonably successful I am helping to reform the systems of which we are a part. The truth for leaders is that the work of system change means going above and beyond, and sometimes sacrificing what seems to be in the short-term interests of our own organisations. For us at the RSA, this is about experimenting with our core model of change and, in so doing, encouraging others to question whether existing models of outcome and impact work.

For Vincent Kompany, like the rest of us, winning on the day is sometimes all that matters, but inspired by people like him leaders should never 'themselves amaze' unless they are genuinely seeking to shift the equilibrium. ■



DESIGN

RETHINKING CONSUMPTION

The RSA has published the final report of its Great Recovery project; it documents the process, and acts as a guide for those wishing to understand and advocate the need for systemic change to our 'take, make, waste' systems of consumption.

Over the past four years, the RSA has taken a design-focused approach to building a more circular economy. *Lessons from the Great Recovery 2012–2016* shares the reflections and insights of the project, from finding collaborators and growing a network, to learning through doing and pushing for policy change.

Supported by Innovate UK, the RSA sought to scrutinise the impact of design in the shift towards a circular economy by taking apart manufacturing systems and products and exploring the processes behind them. The Great Recovery has enlightened, challenged, explored, connected and inspired those who have encountered it. Most of all perhaps, it has taken the concept of the circular economy out of the realm of the 'expert' and into everyday experience, teaching us to recalibrate our relationships with our 'stuff' and daring us to question our current economic models.

The report shows that if you build a movement fuelled by creativity and reinforced by a dynamic network, things can really shift.

To read the report, visit www.greatrecovery.org.uk



DESIGN

STUDENT DESIGN AWARDS

Submissions to the RSA Student Design Awards programme have increased 12% since last year. In March, the 2015-16 competition closed for entries and attracted an impressive range of submissions from around the world. While the majority of entries came from the UK, a significant number were from China, Singapore, the US and Russia. Students responded to 12 briefs on a range of real-world challenges from how to reduce domestic food waste or improve the way medicines are distributed in the developing world, to how we can better design our cities to be more inclusive. All briefs are sponsored and this year's sponsors include Airbnb, Fazer, GlaxoSmithKline, Phillips, RBS, Unilever and Waitrose. Judging will take place until May and the winners will be celebrated at a large public event hosted at the RSA on Monday 20 June.

Find out more about the programme at sda.thersa.org

**“SUBMISSIONS TO
THE STUDENT DESIGN
AWARDS ARE UP 12%
SINCE LAST YEAR”**



INTERNATIONAL

NEW US RSA CHAIR

Lolita Jackson FRSA has been appointed by the RSA Trustee Board as Chair of our affiliate RSA US. Lolita is currently Chief of Staff to the Senior Advisor to the Mayor for Recovery, Resiliency and Infrastructure in the New York Mayor’s Office. A self-confessed anglophile, Lolita was former chair of the British-American Project, is an accomplished professional jazz singer and has graced stages around the world.

“I am thrilled to become leader of the RSA US Board of Trustees,” says Lolita. “I look forward to working with the newly formed Board to facilitate bringing the RSA to US Fellows through events and programming, while also connecting the US more directly to other affiliates and London as well. This is an exciting time for RSA US and I hope to meet many US Fellows over the course of the next year as we ramp up our activities.”

EDUCATION

ACADEMIES GROWTH

The number of RSA Academies has expanded from five to seven in 2016. The latest additions – Abbeywood First School and Church Hill Middle School – will join Arrow Vale RSA Academy and Ipsley CE RSA Academy as RSA schools in the Redditch area.

“This is an exciting time for the children and for staff of all the RSA academies,” says Di Smith, Executive Headteacher for Abbeywood First School and Church Hill Middle School. “Students in Redditch will benefit from collaboration, sharing outstanding practice and seamless transition from ages three to 19.”

The two schools have marked the occasion by working with two Royal Designers for Industry (RDI), architect Peter Clegg and landscape architect Andrew Grant. The two RDIs are supporting students to create a sculpture that reflects this point in the schools’ history, with the children keen to get creative contributions from everyone in the school community. This project is the latest in a long series of design-education collaborations between RSA schools and RDIs.

IMAGES: GETTY, ISTOCK



EMPLOYMENT

EMBRACING SELF-EMPLOYMENT

The majority of people who are self-employed are happier answering to themselves, according to the RSA’s work on the freelance economy. The project concludes that many face hazards such as volatile patterns of income and an absence of statutory sick pay and employer pension contributions, which must be addressed if they are to enjoy a decent standard of living.

In 2013, the RSA began a programme of work looking at the self-employed: who they are, the kind of challenges they face, and how they could be better supported. It argued the need for more flexible financial solutions – such as easier access to interest-only mortgage payments – and equal treatment for the self-employed in the welfare system. The recently published Deane Review into self-employment considered many of these ideas and has embraced some.

The work on self-employment has been greatly enriched by RSA Fellows, who have shared their thoughts on draft reports and input into the development of our Self-Employment Charter. Fellows also attended a roundtable event with the lead government official working on the Deane Review. Fellows’ perspective has enhanced the quality of our ideas and made our work more compelling because it is grounded in both research and experience.

■ *Individuals and organisations willing to work with us to pilot grassroots initiatives such as cash-pooling schemes and collective sick pay should get in touch by emailing engagement@rsa.org.uk*



FELLOWSHIP

A NETWORK FOR LIFE

Nearly 80% of Life Fellows who responded to a recent survey would like to see the establishment of a network dedicated to them. The survey, conducted by the RSA and Life Fellow Dr Malcolm Aickin in October last year, sought to find out more about people's motivations and ideas for change. It found that many Life Fellows feel proud of their Fellowship and desire more recognition, while some explicitly did not want to be treated differently to other Fellows. Many said they want to be more active in their support of the Society's activities.

Becoming a Life Fellow of the RSA is simple. Fellows pay a one-off fee (dependent on age and length of Fellowship), and this means they will never have to make another payment. As well as saving money on Fellowship, it's a clear demonstration of commitment to our organisation.

Dr Malcolm Aickin, chair of the Environmental and Sustainable Development Awards Forum, has been involved with the RSA since 1981 and

a Life Fellow for a number of years. Working with RSA staff and chief executive Matthew Taylor, Malcolm contacted the 2,900 Life Fellows for whom we hold an email address to find out how to better harness the long-term commitment they have made to the Society. Malcolm, who hopes to act as convener to a new Life Fellows' network, said: "I'm delighted, surprised and overwhelmed by the response to my email to Life Fellows."

Life Fellows were asked about their motivations for switching to Life Fellowship; many respondents said they wanted to make a long-term commitment to supporting the RSA and, for many, taking up a Life Fellowship was the most cost-effective option. Activities that appealed to the largest number of respondents were the events programme (for example, 64% of survey respondents were interested in lectures). Two common barriers to engagement identified were a lack of time, and wanting to be more involved in the RSA's work but not knowing how to participate.

The RSA will use the survey results to do more research and analysis, with the aim of making it easier for Life Fellows to express their support both actively and passively, and to ensure that this is acknowledged and celebrated. In response to the fact that 78% of respondents were in favour of establishing a Life Fellowship network, the RSA will be working with Malcolm in further analysing the data and holding focus groups to help understand what specific shape this should take.

In the meantime, the RSA will continue to send Life Fellows regular communications and updates on its work, and is designing a new Life Fellowship card.

■ *If you are a Life Fellow who missed out on the opportunity to respond to our survey, please contact us at malcolm@rsa.org.uk to feed in to this work. Likewise, if you are a Life Fellow and have recently moved or changed contact details, please update us by emailing fellowship@rsa.org.uk. Finally, if you would like to become a Life Fellow, please contact our Fellowship team on 020 7451 6939.*

PREVIEW



THE LIFE PROJECT

How does childhood and inequality influence the course of our lives? In 1946, scientists started tracking thousands of British children born during one cold week in March and have established similar studies roughly every 12 years since. *Nature* journal editor Helen Pearson tells the story of these studies for the first time.

Where: RSA

When: Thursday 28 April at 1pm



ECONOMY FOR THE COMMON GOOD

What does an alternative economic model look like? Austrian economist Christian Felber explains how Economy for the Common Good creates systemic change. The initiative is based on awarding legal benefit points to socially responsible companies to encourage the pursuit of the common good. It started in 2010 and is supported by 2,000 businesses from 40 countries.

Where: RSA

When: Thursday 12 May at 1pm



THE TRUTH ABOUT CRIME

Policy adviser Tom Gash dispels some of the most persistent myths around crime – from the widespread misconception that poverty causes crime, to the belief that tough sentencing reduces crime. In fact, he argues crime is both less rational and much easier to reduce than many people believe, and there are small changes that could achieve a dramatic reduction in wrongdoing.

Where: RSA

When: Thursday 19 May at 1pm



2016 STUDENT DESIGN AWARDS CEREMONY

Richard Clarke, master-craftsman, Global Vice President for Advanced Innovation at Nike, and SDA alumnus, delivers the annual address at the 2016 Student Design Awards ceremony.

Where: RSA

When: Monday 20 June at 6pm

Events programmer Sara O'Donnell has selected the highlights above from a large number of public events in the RSA's programme. For full event listings and free audio and video downloads, please visit www.thersa.org/events

SCOPE FOR CHANGE

If we can set creativity and leadership on the same path, there's hope for an innovation-driven education system yet

by Joe Hallgarten
 @joehallg

Ten years ago, when surveying refugee camps in countries where serious conflict was coming to an end, researchers asked some of the children there to name the one thing they were most looking forward to when war was finally over. The overwhelmingly popular answer, regardless of age or country, was a simple one: going to school. More recently, Pascal Plisson's documentary *On the Way to School* recounts four treacherous journeys from home to classroom: a two-hour walk across the Kenyan savannah; four hours trekking over the Atlas mountains; 90 minutes by horse through the Patagonian plains; and three boys' 4km journey from a West Bengal coastal village to town (the two younger pushing the eldest in his punctured wheelchair).

Read these surveys and watch these journeys and you sense the deep, visceral need children have to be at school. This is, of course, not only about learning. Schools are also places to socialise and be socialised; to hang out, eat, make friends, break up and make up with them again. For most children, at least until adolescence, schools represent security, reliability, attachment and happiness in the face of any uncertainties that surround their home lives, their identities and their futures.

In these global contexts, the RSA's education mission – to close creativity gaps in learning – may seem a premature luxury. In situations where basic resources, improvement infrastructures, and teachers and teacher training are lacking, why should any system focus on empowering leaders, educators and learners to have great ideas and put them into action?

Our rationale is three-fold. First, as our report on international schools outlined, all debates and practices

JOE HALLGARTEN
 IS DIRECTOR OF
 EDUCATION AT THE RSA

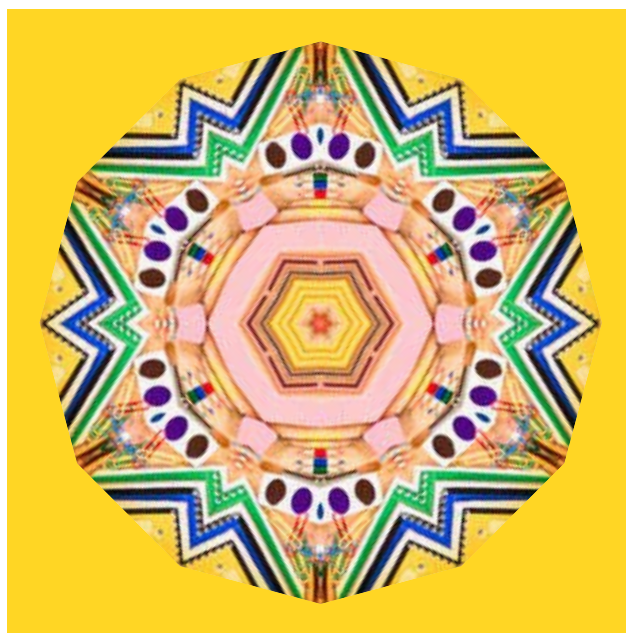
are becoming increasingly global in nature. In this context, if the ghosts of William Shipley and others returned to the 21st century, they would be surprised that our remit had remained so parochial for so long. Second, an approach to change that is built on teacher empowerment, values the broader outcomes of creativity, agency and well-being, and works deeply with civil society partners to support learning, could enable developing education systems to improve far more rapidly, possibly leapfrogging more mature models in the process. Third, the RSA's emerging model of change and impact will strengthen if we develop a truly global creative community with a cause.

Our report *Creative Public Leadership* is a first, small step to a more global outlook. Written with the Innovation Unit for the 2016 World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE), we explored how school systems around the world could create the conditions for successful innovation that could in turn transform outcomes. This question arose from our shared belief that school systems that do not develop the innovative cultures, motivations and capacities of their leaders, educators and institutions are unlikely to see their efforts result in long-term, sustainable returns.

We have deliberately remained in a neutral space in the traditional versus progressive education debate. Some of the language adopted by those seeking radical changes to the 'desirable outcomes' of learning can be off-putting to those they need to convince. As one school principal told us: "Every time I hear the phrase '21st-century skills' I close my ears and reach for my periodic table, my handwriting ledger and even my Bible". The rhetoric of 'education revolution' can close down the most important discussions, confining debates to the converted rather







than the sceptical, and reassuring the confident rather than inspiring the constrained.

Our starting point built on some key assumptions, all contestable. First, that the ‘mandate the good, unleash greatness’ mantra of school reform needs challenging. The journey from poor to good cannot simply be mandated; and the journey from good to great cannot be ‘unleashed’ without creating the conditions in which the (implied) freedom can be exercised purposefully and with impact. Second, that it is wrong merely to await the tsunami of technological revolution in its many, and unpredictable, forms; we need to be proactive in seeking to reshape the architecture of public investment in learning and encouraging the creation of ecosystems that are more open, inclusive and diverse. Third, that in this context, institutions such as ‘the school’ can and should sustain a crucial role. Announcements of its death are premature and unwelcome. Finally, we need to find ways to emancipate the agency of learners, not just as consumers of technologies, but as makers, problem finders and solvers; entitled, invested players in their own right.

Our first question was whether an education innovation journey was necessary at all. Imagine you have just been appointed as the new minister for education (choose your country or region). Whatever is already in your in-tray, or whatever your own passions and prejudices, building a school system with the capacity for systemic innovation is unlikely to figure high on your list of priorities. So while you are not anti-innovation (who is?), you are likely to be aware of its potential risks, and ambivalent about the role of government in doing anything other than standing aside, partly to avoid implication in failure.

If, by sticking within their current tramlines, education systems were succeeding against the rigid criteria they tend to set themselves, then the need for change would be minimal. The reality is more depressing. McKinsey’s review of 30 years of education-reform efforts around the world concluded that there had been “lots of energy, little light”. A trebling of spending in most OECD countries between 1970 and 2000 led to, at best, a stagnation in outcomes. In the global north, school improvement continues to struggle with multiple pressures: learner dissatisfaction, disengagement or stress, growing costs (often in contexts of reduced public investment), frustrated educators and continued accusations of mismatch to societies’ needs.

The predicament of less established education systems is even more concerning. A recent study from the US-based Brookings Institution shows that without a fundamental rethinking of current approaches, it will take another 100 years for children in developing countries to reach the levels achieved in developed countries. And, as the Open Society Institute argues, “overall progress has actually resulted in a measure of greater inequity”. In the 1960s, Basil Bernstein famously wrote that education could not compensate for society. While this is of course much-contested, it is clear that education’s ‘compensatory’ challenge grows as global wealth inequalities grow within and between countries.

While the mantras of reform have become ubiquitous across education systems the world over, the dominant models of change are not working. For more than two decades, governments have pursued classic neoliberal reforms – the ‘market constellation’ of competition, choice and high-stakes accountability – to improve results. Known as a new public

“THE RHETORIC OF ‘EDUCATION REVOLUTION’ CAN CLOSE DOWN THE MOST IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS”

management (NPM) approach, pioneered in the UK, this is described as ‘steering, not rowing’, although the reality feels very different on the frontline. Even those aspects of the NPM orthodoxy that have improved outcomes are having diminishing returns. Existing systems are enormously wasteful of human capital and continue to invest in failing programmes.

The logic of the current reform model has one central flaw: it is, at heart, doubtful of the value of teacher professionalism, seeing it as a mask for producer capture by vested professional interests. It has created a form of ‘managerial professionalism’, driven by heavy scrutiny linked to rankable performance measures. Despite the language of decentralisation and autonomy, the measurement systems entailed in these reforms put teachers at the bottom of an accountability chain that

reaches only up, towards various offices of principals, school boards, local or national ministers and inspectors. While systems do recognise the importance of teacher quality, overall they are far more sceptical about trusting teachers to improve their own quality.

These dominant orthodoxies are being exported. The ability of developing countries to successfully adopt the features of more westernised schooling paradigms is used as a criterion to receive aid. Yet, as Lance Pritchett explains in his book *The Rebirth of Education*, “Copying the educational fads from rich countries is not going to work: pedagogical and educational problems of developed countries are entirely different than those of advanced countries.” Moreover, the structures by which policy is made and handed down to schools in most jurisdictions disregard the fact that they are dealing with complex systems and tend towards simplistic solutions. The cognitive frames of policymakers seem to be misaligned with the complexity of actually transforming learning.

There are more fundamental reasons for this failure than any lack of innovation. This includes a shortage of resources and basic materials, huge class sizes and, above all, poorly trained and motivated teachers. However, if we are to improve global education performance and reduce inequality, let alone develop a wider set of outcomes, then serious, disciplined and radical innovation is required at all levels.

Of course, education systems across the globe are full of innovations. In Lebanon, new temporary schools have been built to serve refugee camps that aim to connect with the other assets in the community. In the US, Big Picture Learning connects students with real-world, personalised learning by creating and maintaining innovative, learning environments that ensure students spend at least two days a week working on personal projects or completing internships beyond the school gates. Beyond Tech, the Al Bairaqa programme at Qatar University, trains and mentors secondary students in hands-on scientific activities to improve motivation in science and maths. In Nigeria and some Indian states, citizen-based assessment programmes are providing more reliable performance data and enabling high-quality community and parental engagement. Databases such as Edutopia and the WISE hub provide a myriad of education innovation exemplars.

In spite of this volume of activity, we identified five weaknesses in the way that innovation appears to be emerging. First innovations seem to be equity-light. >>

CREATIVE PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

Creative Public Leadership positions the state as an authorising and facilitative platform for systemic innovation. In the education context, it asks policymakers and other system leaders to create platforms for collective agency among schools and teachers, incentivising them to use this to innovate in collaboration with others in a school community; including learners and parents, and the wider world of local communities.

1. Build the case for change
2. Desist from waves of centrally driven, short-term ‘reforms’
3. Develop outward as well as upward accountability, to learners and localities
4. Create and protect genuine space for local curriculum designs
5. Prioritise innovations that transform approaches to assessing students
6. Place intentional, rigorous focus on the development of teachers’ innovation capabilities, throughout their careers
7. Redirect some proportion of a jurisdiction’s education spending to an explicit incubator programme, tasked with radically innovating on behalf of the system as a whole
8. Build systems of collaborative peer learning to support the adaptive scaling of innovation
9. Put system entrepreneurship at the heart of system leadership

“PROFOUND LEARNING AND GREAT TEACHING ARE PREDICATED ON THE POWER OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS”

Generally, any interventions that do not explicitly aim for equity normally do the opposite; they increase achievement gaps. Too many education innovators see issues of equity as an afterthought, to be considered during the replication process, rather than central to their efforts.

Second, they are teacher-light. Despite countless examples of teacher-led innovation, it is not surprising that in the era of high-stakes prescription and measurement the overall role of teachers in innovation processes appears limited and devalued. According to the OECD’s TALIS survey, three-quarters of teachers feel that they would receive no recognition for being more innovative. It is still rare to find the systematic involvement of teachers in education innovation. One important exception is British Columbia’s ‘network of inquiry’, which is predicated on professional learning approaches that are ‘sustained and curiosity-driven’. Another is the ‘non-positional teacher leadership’ programme, which ran across 15 countries, and is currently being trialled in Palestine and Egypt. Ontario and Singapore have

also developed system-wide approaches to enabling teacher-led innovation.

Third, too many innovations are evidence-light, failing to develop a disciplined understanding of their impact. Evaluations are too success- and advocacy-focused. Hypotheses about change have not been ‘good enough to be wrong’, so innovations have been doomed to appear successful. The more your pedagogies and practices break with existing conventions, the greater the need for a good understanding of the evidence base behind those conventions. While this is true across all innovations, those attempting to move beyond traditionally measured learning outcomes appear particularly prone to poor-quality relationships with evidence. They have a built-in disadvantage, in that systems have generally failed to reach a consensus about how to define and assess outcomes such as creativity, resilience and empathy.

Fourth, the system is replication-light. The assumption that innovation-scaling is linear and procedural, rather than iterative and relational, is particularly unhelpful in education, where human relationships are a cornerstone of practice and play a fundamental role in determining outcomes. The concept of ‘high-fidelity implementation’ might be both undesirable and unrealistic in our classrooms. Unless practitioners are put at the centre of the innovation process, and invested in as innovators in their own right, the cultural shifts required in scaling new approaches that rely on relationships and ethos just as much as processes and functions will fail to materialise.

Finally, innovation is generally transformation-light. There are pockets of educational innovation that are beginning to rattle dominant discourses about conventional models, but the stubborn roots of the 200-year-old schooling paradigm remain. The structures that dictate the systems, processes and intended outcomes of the formal schooling system remain remarkably resilient. In the domain of organised tax-funded education, systems of schooling are for the most part in improvement mode: they take for granted the implicit parameters and metrics that maintain the current model of schooling. The incremental and piecemeal is overpowering the game-changing and revolutionary.

The most radical education innovators are doing so in guerrilla fashion, at the margins. The immense resources of states are still largely locked down into a model predicated on the values and assumptions of a previous age. Their work runs parallel with the systems run by states. Emerging

THE SYSTEM ENTREPRENEUR

A new type of system leader is emerging across the globe, displacing the more recognisable bureaucratic public managers and placing system innovation at the heart of their agendas.

Frances Westley has described these emergent leaders as system entrepreneurs: “responsible for finding the opportunities to leverage innovative ideas for much greater system impact”.

Building on Westley’s typology, we define the key roles of system entrepreneurs in education as follows:

- Facilitators: creating consensus among various stakeholders through designing opportunities for dialogue that help reframe the status quo
- Brokers: creating “bundles of financial, social, and technical solutions that offer a real alternative to the status quo”
- Advocates: advocating ideas to those with political or financial influence, or who can change public opinion
- Stewards: holding innovations and ideas to account on behalf of the public and the broader system vision
- Forecasters: balancing and responding to short- and longer-term demands for change



economies have experienced the rapid emergence of a low-cost private school market. Omega in Ghana, APEC in the Philippines and Bridge International Academies across Africa are just a few examples in what is a sea of growing school chains seeking to fill the void left by what they perceive as ineffective public school systems. Levels of innovative practice within these are often exaggerated (and innovation in public schools under-appreciated), but as a growing part of the education fabric, new school providers have the potential for positive disruption.

The way in which public education leaders and institutions interact with these trends of change is fundamental to the ongoing challenge of equity within education systems. Leaving transformation to market forces carries significant risks. The task for jurisdictions should be to enable ecosystems of innovation involving a diverse range of players (including schools and practitioners) conditioned by the values of equity and democracy. While plenty of agencies within government have the title ‘innovation’ somewhere in their remit, they rarely venture beyond incremental improvement. With a few exceptions, for instance the NYC iZone, and the Creative Partnerships programme in England, there is a lack of curation of these efforts; this diminishes their collective potential and contributes to widening gaps in opportunity and achievement.

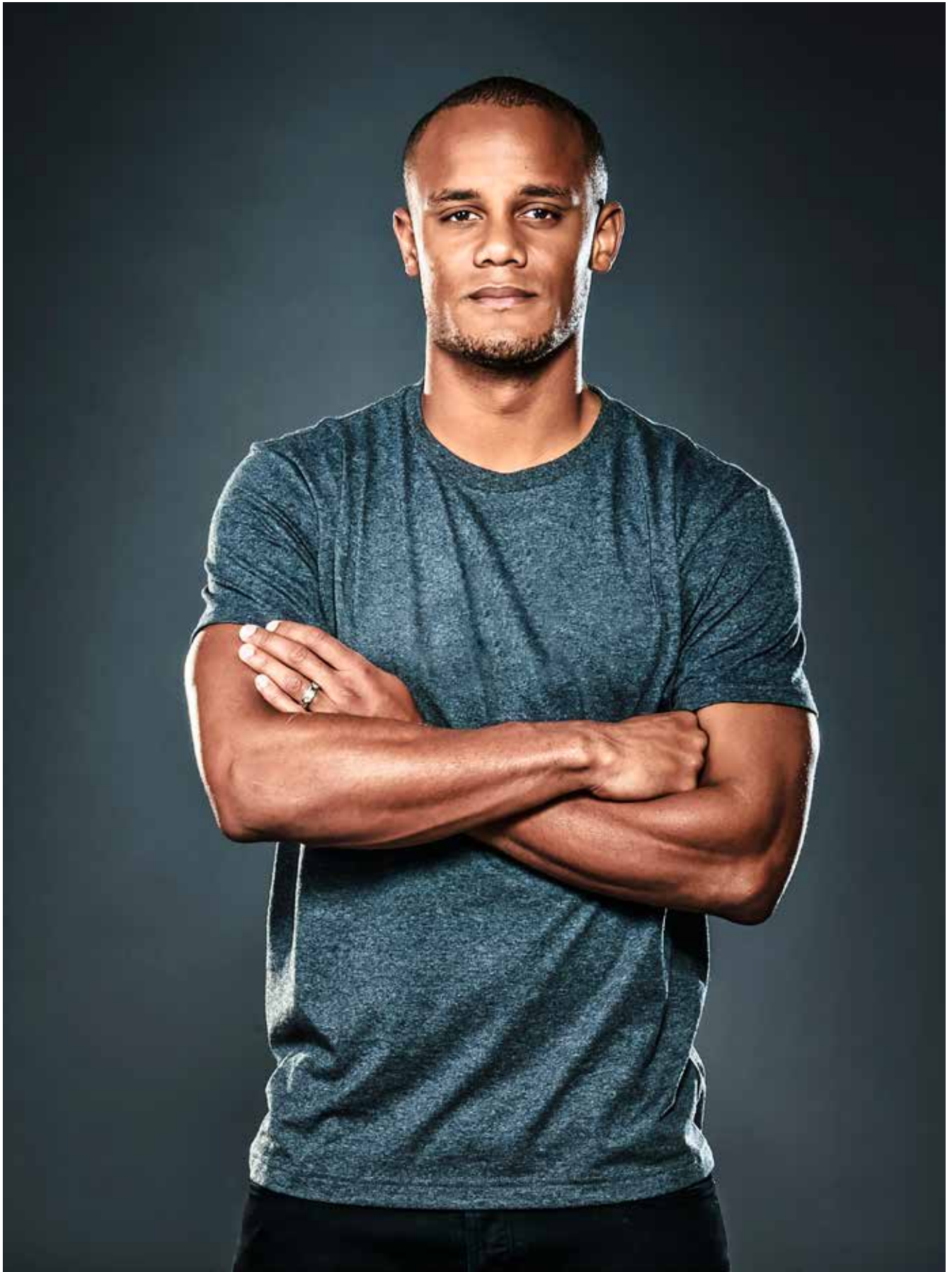
School systems should create intentional platforms for innovation that are long-term focused, equity-centred and teacher-powered. In doing this, leaders need to reinforce that profound learning and great teaching are ultimately predicated on the power of human relationships. We therefore need to aspire towards a humanising innovation, defined by Chappell

as “an active process of change guided by compassion and reference to shared value”.

While the role of government remains crucial, we need to draw on resources from both within and beyond traditional public institutions to create the enabling conditions and cultures for innovation. The RSA’s creative public leadership approach is based on a conviction about the potential for education as humanity’s best hope; one that can both assemble and communicate a compelling case for change. We need leaders who understand that this is not a quest to converge on a single solution, who have the political savvy to create the legitimacy for radical change, and draw on international networks as a source of imaginative ideas rather than prefabricated policies. System leaders need to support schools to think more often, more deeply and more radically about their mission but schools need to take ultimate responsibility for their own ethos.

To test our thinking, we set out nine first steps to reorient the role public system leaders might play and offered five ‘journeys in progress’ drawn from work in South Korea, Australia, British Columbia, New Zealand and Nigeria. The RSA’s next steps are three-fold. First, we are talking to a small number of education system leaders around the world who might want to adapt our ‘half-formed’ ideas for their context. Second, we are investigating how specific global issues can inform and be informed by the approaches of the international school movement. Finally, we will turn our community of education changemakers into a global community, willing and able to develop, interrogate and share practices, and campaign for change. ■

■ *Read the report at www.thersa.org/schoolsysteminnovation*



PHOTOGRAPHY: PEPISICO

SHARED GOALS

Vincent Kompany and Matthew Taylor discuss the Premier League, shared value and why football is more than just a beautiful game

🐦 @VincentKompany, 🐦 @RSAMatthew

MATTHEW TAYLOR: A lot of footballers don't seem to think beyond football or about what's going to happen afterwards until the end of their careers. Why are you different?

VINCENT KOMPANY: More footballers are becoming active in other sectors. If you follow American sports, you see a lot of athletes quite openly active in other things. When you play football, every single week it's like you're the centre of the world; the problem is when you start believing it. I've always had a very active mind, where I needed to be occupied and doing other stuff. I like a challenge. If I go for something, I like to be good at it.

TAYLOR: Where does your sense of social responsibility come from; is that to do with your background, your parents or football?

KOMPANY: That's mainly my parents. Education is a very important part of who I've become and who we've become as a family. My mother was a union leader and she used to always defend the weakest and most deprived. My father was part of the revolution against Mobutu. He had to flee the country and leave Zaire [the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)] to come to Belgium.

VINCENT KOMPANY IS CAPTAIN OF MANCHESTER CITY FOOTBALL CLUB AND THE BELGIAN NATIONAL TEAM. HE IS A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR AND INTERNATIONAL SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES AMBASSADOR

As I became aware of the money I was earning, that sense of responsibility grew. Doing charity work was never something on the side; it was as much a priority as my football career. With more experience and knowledge, I've studied and tried to improve myself as a person. I realise better now how I can have an impact on the full picture.

TAYLOR: You have social projects in the DRC and Brussels; there are various ways in which you've tried to make a difference. What has your journey been?

KOMPANY: At heart I'm an entrepreneur and someone that's always looking for some social responsibility. I didn't think the two had to be separated. When I went to the Congo around 10 years ago, I realised how many opportunities there were for business as well as to help people in need. I read a book that had a completely different perspective on poverty in Africa. It uses a simple example about umbrellas: where there is a choice, do you import umbrellas from China and give them to people? Or do you invest in the country to make sure that they produce the umbrella, therefore the people work and earn an income themselves? I started to follow that set of beliefs. As much as the model is needed in Africa, it's also a model that we can apply here in Europe.

TAYLOR: Twenty years ago, there was little talk of social responsibility in football. Now, if you talk to >>

any Premier League club, they'll have a story about it. Why has that happened?

KOMPANY: Football started off as a social project and evolved; it became a global sport. More and more, it is damaging for a brand to just be focused on profits without having a plan that can make other people benefit. We are very early into this process of realising the role that we have to play. One of the biggest examples for me is the pricing of certain tickets in England. Just look at the numbers in English football in comparison with all the other countries in Europe, or even the world. If you take the Premier League as a unit and look at the difference between the other leagues, there is enough of a margin to come to some sort of agreement between all the clubs in the Premier League to reduce that margin and to make the fans benefit from it.

It goes back to the concept of shared value. It's not about losing money and making concessions for social or

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION A SWARM WELCOME

"I was a bright kid who did badly at school," says Robert Ashton, founder of Swarm apprenticeships. "Only years later did I realise I failed at school because I was bright, not thick." This was the inspiration for Swarm, which connects "bright young people with attitude to business owners with aspiration", and is partly funded by an RSA Catalyst grant. It focuses on those who have fallen between the traditional routes of university or a vocational career.

"We equip our apprentices to demonstrate the return on investment they represent to their employer," says Robert. "It works wonders for their self-confidence." Swarm launched in Essex and Suffolk in March 2013, with London to follow this year. It manages and trains apprentices, matches them to employers and provides a mentor. "We hope that, increasingly, these will be RSA Fellows – people who know what success looks like," says Robert, who worked in corporate sales before becoming a social entrepreneur and author.

He now aims to create more Swarms in more areas. "We don't compete with what's there: collaboration, not competition, is the way we will grow," he explains. The ultimate hope? That Swarm will come to support a few thousand hopeful young people each and every year.

■ To learn more, visit www.swarmapprentice.org.uk

"IT'S EASY TO GET MARGINS UP, LIFTING THE PRICE EVERY YEAR. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A GENIUS TO DO IT"

community reasons; you do it because there is a bigger plan behind it. The fact that you can allow some of those traditional hard-core fans, the ones that come in with the flags, that sing their hearts out, that aren't worried about the sandwiches at half-time – I know a little bit of revenue would be lost on match day – gives you a better atmosphere. Now if you have the Premier League – the best, most-watched league in the world – that's going to be viewed by billions of people, you need those front-row fans to be hard-core football fans and you can't have empty seats 10 minutes before the end of a game. That happens in every football stadium in England now. Football still has to take a big step forward in understanding that it's not at every stage that money has to be taken out of the pockets of the fans. If the atmosphere is better, someone with more revenue will pay more to come and watch the game, because it's a spectacle on the pitch and in the stands.

TAYLOR: The notion of shared values says that the idea of enlightened self-interest is a really good principle for organising things as a whole. Is that a reflection of what you've seen – that 'pure' charity doesn't have the dynamism or the sustainability of a model based on that notion of enlightened self-interest?

KOMPANY: Too often we're forced to make a choice: charity or business. Of course supporting charities is very important and there need to be dedicated areas for charities. But I think we need to close the gap between the two worlds – entrepreneurial and charitable – because there is a huge middle ground there, where there are still a lot of projects worth bringing to completion, that are going to have huge long-term benefits for society.

With the Belgian national team, we took a completely different view of how we were going to work towards our fans, towards our marketing, towards improving the national team. We decided to make the fans formal beneficiaries of that relationship; no longer just the people that come to the



stadium and pay for a ticket. It was a two-way relationship, where we had to do something for them in order for them to do something for us. Together we could grow; revenues and interest in the national team would increase and the fans' experience would improve and we'd maybe see some projects having an impact in their communities again. Now, the discussion on whether it was a complete success or not will be an important one, because to have complete success in shared values you need a long-term approach.

It's difficult to explain shared value to your board because it's difficult to measure. The enemy of shared value – and this is what happened with the national team – is short-term profits. Someone hands you a huge bag of cash and they set demands. From the moment they set demands, they're turning your brand towards doing something for them in an old-school way. Whereas if you are in a strong position because you've created that shared value – you've genuinely interested the fans, you've genuinely interested your public because you've done something good – from that moment onwards, you need to be able to say, 'You want to give us X amount; we'll take less. But over a longer period of time, this is what you have to do as well, to be part of this world, of this connection'.

TAYLOR: Your national team, Belgium, has lots of challenges. To what extent did you see your role within the team?

KOMPANY: When people think about Belgium, especially politics, they get depressed; they don't know where it's going anymore. I look at it and I see opportunities, because this mess creates a huge gap where there are still a lot of things that have not been done, that you can do. It's more difficult to do, but beautiful to do. And the national team is exactly that. It had been horrible for 20 years and the only time that it had been a pleasant affair was when it did well on the pitch. But to support the team when it does well, that counts for nothing in my book.

People looking for a unifying symbol get battered all the time, because they love their country but nothing they read is positive. Then, when something pops up and stands strong and says, 'We represent the country and we're proud of it', you get this huge amount of people coming out of nowhere and they're more passionate than ever, which is what you want. You prefer to have 100 team fanatics than 1,000 people that don't really care.

TAYLOR: One of the criticisms of shared value is that it says to companies, 'Doing the right thing is going to be in the interest of the business.' What happens when you should just do the right thing, even if it's not in the business's interests?

KOMPANY: But what is the right thing? Is it what the regulations dictate? Or is it the step beyond? Shared value forces you to be innovative, go further and question



everything that is out there. It's not because a regulation has been set that therefore it is right no matter what. I've found that if you try and push it further, have a certain ethic, if you put yourself to the service of your environment and society, the return and the loyalty that you get back from the people going with you on this shared journey are much greater and more valuable in the sense that it is a long-term journey that you go on together.

TAYLOR: It seems to me that football fans are the most impatient people in the world and are absolutely driven by the next result. When managers or owners try to say, 'Look, this is a strategy for three to five years,' fans say, 'Well no, I just want to win next Saturday.'

KOMPANY: It's a common view but it's wrong. Look at German clubs. In the second tier of the Bundesliga, 40,000 to 50,000 people turn up for every game for clubs that have had poor results for a long time. It's that sense of ownership. Ownership doesn't come in shares, forget about shares for the fans; it's about making them feel ownership of the project and when you talk about innovation, let them be a part of that. Let them influence the club and the direction it goes in. It's not as much about results for those people that feel they are part of a community. You look around Manchester; it's

communities that support one club or the other, red or blue. That goes far beyond the results at the weekend.

TAYLOR: So you're saying when it comes to football, ownership isn't the critical issue. Many people worry that clubs, which have these deep roots in communities, can be owned by people who don't have anything like that relationship.

KOMPANY: I'm not from Manchester, but I can tell you anything about the history of the club. It's more about understanding what it is about. You can see it in the ownership of Manchester City; they've invested a huge amount of money into the local communities. The role and the impact of Man City in Manchester is undeniable. You wish owners from every single club were as thoughtful and would invest as well in their communities. But this step is for the Premier League as a whole to decide how to give an important role to the fans, structurally, for the future to make them part of this wonderful journey. If you do it right, you'll make money back and continue to grow.

TAYLOR: Part of the value of being associated with the club is to be associated with that place and to have a sense of identity with those fans?

KOMPANY: The Man City fans have always been great for me. I've always had the feeling that I wanted to go above and beyond for them. I do it because I'm passionate about it; there's a sense of being grateful. This goes back to the culture. To build a culture takes time and I think with football and the Premier League being in a different era now, a lot of clubs have to re-find their culture.

If you try and tell a business leader – and all the owners of clubs in this Premier League are business leaders – that you want him to give things for free, he's going to say, 'I've got a CSR budget. Here, this is what I'm prepared to give.' You need to be able to make people understand that going above and beyond in making people part of this journey is going to bring in more revenue, which, ultimately, is good for everyone, in a sense that it brings in more jobs and brings more for this Premier League that everybody loves so much. To grow, the Premier League needs to use its dominant position to make some groundbreaking changes to its model.

TAYLOR: Aston Villa's owners have only been to the club three times in the past three or four years. The pain that is felt in that place is not just to do with results, it's about a sense of an institution that has lost its way. So some practice is hard to justify?

KOMPANY: At the moment the fans are angry. Not because it's a beautiful club that's not doing too well, but because they're getting squeezed by that club. You say, 'You know what? I'm going to put my pride aside. I love football, this is my passion, I'm going out and I'm supporting the club away and anywhere they play.' You're doing that and then, for whatever reason, the results don't go your way. Where I say that the current model creates a situation like that at Aston Villa, is in the fact that you cannot squeeze those people on every end and then not expect negative reactions. It's only going to increase as much as we keep squeezing.

As a Premier League we could decide to create shared values that makes us all better. Those fans would accept a lot more and wouldn't have the same reactions, and that would benefit the league in the long term. What's happening now for Villa is not good for anyone, not even for the Premier League. We need to be sure that we're not always seen as the people that are just squeezing, because that's easy. When you've got a very good project, good players, great facilities, you're in a country of football, it's easy to get your margins up by lifting the price every single year. You don't need to be a genius to do it. Anyone can be a managing director with

“ANYONE WHO SAYS IT'S JUST FOOTBALL IS FAILING TO SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE”

this kind of principle. It is more difficult to think: 'how can I increase my fan base?' Maybe sell a lot more products to people who want to buy them and that have the disposable revenue, or maybe increase the price for people that can pay the tickets in the prime seats. But make sure that the stadiums are bouncing every single week and that the fans are always interested; that they are always kept close to the team and the club.

TAYLOR: Many people perceive football as being just about money and footloose owners; they worry about the ethics on the field. You're saying forget all of that; if only football would recognise this concept of shared value, it has a transformative ability?

KOMPANY: Anyone who says it's just football is failing to see the bigger picture. Football, as a movement, is huge in affecting people's way of thinking, people's behaviour, in putting something in people that gives them a reason for being. I think football should be and will be, hopefully, led by people that hold these values very highly. In Belgium, if you're doing sports at a higher level, you get marginalised a lot by the intellectuals of the country: 'it's just football', or 'he's just a runner', or 'he's just running behind a ball'. I always had a bit of frustration towards that attitude because I felt that I was doing a lot more than just playing football. As an individual, I'm playing football but I'm part of something a lot bigger; a movement that's positive, that's taught me things. I was in a neighbourhood where people have been linked to horrible activities, and yet I got out of it because I managed to see a different world through football. I managed to meet different people. These are the values that need to always be put at the forefront and then everything else comes around it. Football is not just football. It is much more important than that. ■

■ *This interview was conducted before the Islamic State attacks on Brussels on 22 March 2016, where, at the time of going to print, more than 30 people were killed and 200 injured.*

THE NATURE OF NURTURE

Getting parents actively involved in education is vital if we are to help children reach their full potential

by Arnie Bieber
 @arniebier

Schools, like most institutions, whether in the private or public sector, face the challenge of remaining relevant in the face of rapid change and an unpredictable future. While companies unable to change with the times face going out of business, schools seem immune to such harsh realities. Perhaps this is due to the intangible nature of education's 'product', student learning, or perhaps it is simply because schools are viewed as 'too big to fail'.

Whatever the reason, many schools find themselves providing a system characterised by siloed subjects and classrooms, teachers working in isolation and students learning and moving en masse from one class to the next. Such a framework is no longer up to the task of preparing today's graduates to creatively navigate across the shifting currents of global change.

One study about divergent thinking – a key component of creativity – revealed that while 98% of three- to five-year-olds "showed they could think in divergent ways", the same study revealed that only 10% of 13- to 15-year-olds and only 2% of 25-year-olds were divergent thinkers. Sir Ken Robinson's comment hits the mark on these results: "The trouble is that nothing rewards people for thinking off-piste. Education is driven by the idea of one answer and this idea of divergent thinking becomes stifled." Of course, there are many factors at play here, but it is hard to imagine that school isn't one of them.

So how can schools create new programmes and structures to meet the needs of today's learner? In my view, lasting change can only be accomplished if all school stakeholders, not just educational leaders, are enlisted as allies and partners in this endeavour. Teachers, students and parents need to feel that they have a real voice in shaping the school's future.

At the International School of Prague (ISP), we are working to include all stakeholders in the change process.

ARNIE BIEBER IS
 DIRECTOR OF THE
 INTERNATIONAL
 SCHOOL OF
 PRAGUE AND
 VICE-CHAIR OF THE
 ICIS BOARD OF
 TRUSTEES

One successful initiative has been a quarterly workshop series for parents called the Edge in Education. The purpose of these gatherings is to engage and challenge parents in thinking about the major trends and research in education today. Through the series we can communicate what we educators are thinking about and why. Over the years, the Edge series has presented the latest findings in learning, brain and motivational research, trends in curriculum development and the importance of skills such as creative and innovative thinking and a growth mindset.

One Edge workshop, entitled 'The Relevance Gap', focused on the concept of 'life-worthy learning', a term coined by David Perkins, author, researcher and a founding member of Harvard Project Zero. In his book *Future-wise*, Perkins argues that a meaningful curriculum is one that provides opportunities for "learning that is likely to matter in the lives learners are likely to live". This particular workshop gave parents an opportunity to grapple with what Perkins calls the 'relevance gap': the disparity between what we traditionally teach in school and what really will matter in the future lives of students.

Even though many, perhaps most, educators will tell you that schools must change in fundamental ways, they find themselves in a quandary: managing a well-functioning school while leading new initiatives. It can feel like building a plane in the air!

In the 1994 classic management book *Flight of the Buffalo*, authors James Belasco and Ralph Stayer say: "Change is hard because people overestimate the value of what they have and underestimate the value of what they may gain by giving that up." School change is hard, but it is possible if we alter our tack leading from the top down, to an inclusive model that encourages everyone to take initiative in moving forward. I am not advocating an abdication of leadership; I am advocating courageous and strategic leadership, which recognises that the change needed to remain relevant and viable requires pooling our collective resources and wisdom.



A key step towards meaningful school transformation is a concerted effort to educate, not only teachers, but also parents and students, about why creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and life-worthy learning must be an integral part of a child's education. Beyond enlightening all stakeholders about why change is necessary, schools must find ways for interested individuals to try things out without, in the process, draining human and financial resources. Research and development and prototyping new ideas are low-impact, cost-effective methods, embedded into the culture of most 21st-century companies. In schools, there is understandable angst about 'experimenting' on students. Nonetheless, research-informed innovation and initiative-taking in schools must become an accepted common practice. This requires allowing for much greater autonomy than is usually found in schools.

In this vein, ISP has embarked on a design-thinking approach to strategic planning, where strategies are tested by small groups through rapid prototyping. For example, one group of teachers decided to prototype an alternative learning environment; another group is piloting a mountain-biking programme; and others are prototyping modern language learning through sustainable agriculture and urban food production. Such prototypes are not managed but are supported by the school administration, enabling us to work

out the kinks on a small scale before extending ideas into fully fledged programmes. Our hope is to create a prototyping school culture so that change initiatives take root from the bottom up.

Whether it is through parent engagement programmes like the Edge in Education, design thinking, prototyping or other strategies, transformative change in schools will occur if leaders are given the latitude by governments or governors to nurture grassroots initiative-taking. On a policy level, education authorities should relinquish a one-size-fits-all model and encourage school communities to innovate. Furthermore, those holding the purse strings should incentivise change through 'innovation grants' awarded to those proposing ideas with potential. This sends a powerful message that school change is a priority.

By inviting all community members to be change agents, leading by example and building a shared educational vision, even parents who may have felt detached from schools in the past will realise that they too are vital participants in the school-change movement. As Mahatma Gandhi was reported to have said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." ■

■ For more information, visit www.school21c.org



THE CREATIVE CONSTRUCT

An esoteric quality surrounds it, but creativity can be found everywhere if we let go of the ideas that surround it

by James C. Kaufman
✈ @jameskaufman

Studying creativity is a bit of an odd journey. Many people feel a certain ownership towards the concept, from scientists who study it to teachers who nurture it, to those who practise it daily. Yet if many people feel they are creative – or at least that they have been creative at some point in time – they also tend to doubt that it is something that can be defined, let alone measured.

Curiously, though, the same obstacles seem to face the construct of happiness. Many of us are happy people. We've all been happy at some point. But most of us could also suggest several possible definitions of happiness. We might see how someone trying to measure happiness is working towards positive ends. What may make me most envious, however, is that few would claim to be experts on happiness simply because they have felt happy.

Unfortunately, creativity researchers often see scientifically driven work get lost amidst a sea of fun-but-useless activities, earnest-if-pointless advice and blatant money grabs from those who 20 years earlier may have claimed to be emotional intelligence experts. The silver lining, though, is that people are genuinely interested in creativity. With that in mind, I would like to highlight a few key findings from the scientific world of creativity: some common sense and others counterintuitive.

First is that we have agreed on a basic definition for more than 60 years. One easy way to tell an essay is written by someone who does not know the field is that it begins with: "No one can agree on how to define creativity." You might disagree with the standard definition, or think it is too vague, but most of us agree that creativity is an activity that produces something that is both new and task appropriate. If it is just new, then it is just chaos or noise (substituting rocks for chocolates won't make your cookies more creative). If it is just task appropriate, then you are doing what people have done before. Some >>

DR JAMES C. KAUFMAN IS A PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AT THE NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT. HE IS AUTHOR OF *CREATIVITY 101*



people add the component of high quality; others suggest that creativity should include an element of surprise.

Another myth to debunk is that of the ‘mad genius’: creative people aren’t crazy. There is enough research on genius and mental illness to imply that there may be some type of relationship (although much of the work is highly flawed or over-interpreted). But if we are talking about the kind of everyday creativity that most of us enjoy, there is no connection to being mentally ill. Indeed, creative people are more likely to be in better moods, be happier, be in better physical health and be resilient in the face of trauma, as I explore in several essays in my book *Creativity and Mental Illness*.

Third is that creativity isn’t one thing. This point actually has many different meanings. Creativity tends to be domain-specific as opposed to domain-general. If you are creative at cooking, then you are no more or less likely than someone else to be creative in an unrelated area (such as music or physics or woodworking). But it is also true that there are different levels of creativity. The 4-C model proposes mini-c (the creativity inherent in learning), little-c (everyday creativity), Pro-c (expert-level professional creativity), and Big-C (legendary creative genius). Further, there are different ways of being creative. For example, divergent thinking is being able to generate many different possible ideas, whereas convergent thinking is being able to home in on the best idea. They are both creative.

Further, think about all the ways that someone might be creative professionally. There are many different approaches that people may take (even without realising it). Some might make small improvements on existing ideas, like developing a new painkiller with fewer side effects. Others might synthesise existing ideas together, such as a television creator who takes elements of past successful shows to create a new hit series. Still others make huge leaps that lead to a different approach altogether, such as Netflix seeing that the future of video would be streaming online instead of physical materials. Both the person sitting in an art museum and sketching their own version of a famous painting and the person who makes us completely reconsider what art may be are creative. They may represent different levels of ability, but they are both creative.

Another key finding is that rewards usually don’t work. It is hard to get people to do things they don’t want to do, so it is natural to offer some type of reward, from money to extra credit to recognition. People tend to be the most creative, however, when they are doing something because they want to do it. Some argue that rewards can actually kill creativity, whereas others point to specific circumstances in which they may be beneficial but, regardless, they should always be a last resort. If someone wants to write a poem or design a scientific experiment or build a robot, before you bring up payment or grades, it is best to let their enjoyment lead the way. Save the gold stars for the

folks who make it clear they won't do something for its own sake (and, when you pull them out, make it clear you want creative work). It is impossible to make someone feel passion, but introducing others to many different experiences can help them find that area that makes them excited. In *Teaching for Creativity in the Common Core Classroom*, Ronald Beghetto, John Baer and I explore what motivates others. Giving people choice in assignments or workload is one way to help motivation; so is emphasising the learning process as opposed to the tangible outcome. As much as possible, avoid evaluating and observing people (given this is the real world, it is impossible to avoid it altogether).

Most quick-and-easy fixes are too good to be true. The research findings most likely to make the headlines are those that imply that doing one small thing will make you more creative. Simple habits or physical surroundings are not going to be the difference between finishing that novel versus letting it die on your laptop. We all have this dream of effortless creativity; of the muse speaking through us and making us immortal. But it is a myth. Creativity takes hard work, revision, failure, extensive knowledge and persistence. It is a lot easier to read that Einstein had a messy desk or Picasso ate a banana before painting and think, 'I can do that, too!' But the banana (which I am making up) didn't make Picasso creative. A mix of unfathomable work and innate talent made him creative.

We tend to not particularly like creative people. Businesses and schools always say they want creative people, and many actually do. But there have been many studies that show that teachers, workers and the average person may have an unconscious bias against creativity, or at least a love-hate relationship. Instead of being horrified as each new study comes out, I am more surprised it is not a more extreme trend. We are trained to value conformity. There are often very, very good reasons to conform to societal expectations; how do you feel about people who shout 'fire' in movie theatres or punch random people or urinate in public places? We have rules and laws for a reason, and yet the most revolutionary creative work tends to break rules. It is easy to look back in hindsight at great advances and laugh at people who were slow to embrace penicillin or

a round earth or the internet. But we depend on a long series of mental shortcuts for basic survival. We can reasonably assume, for example, that higher prices usually mean better quality, or that walking in the daytime is safer than walking at night. If we had to actually consider in detail the thousands of decisions we make every day, we would never get anything done. Certainly, we are sometimes wrong in our shortcuts, but they are correct often enough to make them useful. It is harder to make snap decisions about creative ideas. If you have never heard an idea before, you have to stop and think about whether it makes sense. Similarly, creative kids may take up more of a teacher's time than other kids. Creative workers may require more supervision. It takes effort to answer questions, consider alternative perspectives, judge a suggestion's merit,

or respond to sometimes tangential thoughts. Yes, it is worth it in the long run, but anti-creativity bias doesn't materialise out of thin air.

Developing a critical eye for creativity is important. What many of these points are leading towards is that

creativity should be held to the same basic critical standards as anything else. Is it important? Sure. But if you are a running a school, it is good to take a step back and think about where it actually aligns with your goals and values. There are a limited number of hours in the day and dollars in the budget. In the days of common core, anything that isn't 'on the test' has a cost. Deciding to spend time on increasing student creativity means taking time away from other activities, many of them also important and compelling, such as building students' resilience or having a strong chess club or excelling in teaching foreign languages. Is one better than the other? It depends on the values of the school and community at large. Is improving organisational creativity an important goal? If so, why? A consultant who has the workforce practise their painting is making the (likely wrong) assumption that creativity in one area will transfer into a different one. In your own life, think about the best times and places to be creative. Think of ways to use your particular set of strengths in the most efficient and enjoyable way. If you're going to make the investment of your time, effort and money to be creative, then why not get the most out of it? ■

“CREATIVITY TAKES HARD WORK, REVISION, FAILURE, EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE AND PERSISTENCE”



ILLUSTRATIONS - JACQUIE BOYD

INNOVATION IN ACTION

How creativity in the classroom is helping teachers and learners in the UK and internationally

THE MULTI-FAITH MUSEUM

Last November, as part of Takeover Day at the RSA Academy in Tipton, students from the school's leadership council entered and won a Dragons' Den-style competition to produce an idea that would bring about positive social change within the school community. Their winning idea? A multi-faith museum in school.

The group won the top prize of £500 and, through further fundraising, the student leadership council are now making it happen. The multi-faith museum has three aims: to educate against discrimination; to educate about the right and freedom of individuals to hold other faiths and beliefs; and to develop mutual respect and tolerance to those with different faiths and beliefs.

Tipton, a town in the West Midlands, is in the top 20% of most deprived districts in the country. As such, residents tend not to travel very far out of the area nor do different communities appear to integrate as well as those in wealthier areas. In Tipton, the English Defence League and Britain First are very active, and racism and prejudice are a real issue.

Neve Ovenden, a head student with responsibility for representing student voice at Tipton, is adamant about the need for a museum: "I believe firmly that education is the remedy to discrimination. Where there is ignorance, there is the risk of misunderstanding or manipulation. The multi-faith museum, through education, is aiming to tackle that in our community, in which the issue is certainly a prevalent

one, and, fantastically, it could be replicated in schools across the country."

She adds: "In my role I hope to create and maintain an effective network of student voice representatives and groups. I want to encourage students, through the setting up of action groups raising awareness and campaigning around the academy, to express their passions and opinions unabashedly and proudly, and to develop valuable skills in public speaking and teamwork in the process. This year, student voice will extend beyond the boundaries of the school gates, out into the wider community and the world that it's sometimes easy to forget we are a part of. That, at least, is the plan."

The multi-faith museum will contain artefacts and information on a range of faiths and cultures, and alongside physical objects there will be an education programme devised by RSA8, the Year 8 leadership group drawn from across all the RSA academies. It is focused on creatively informing and engaging people in the school and other local primary schools, parents and the wider community. Through talks and performances about faith, culture and experiences, attitudes can be challenged – and hopefully, changed. A digital magazine will also raise awareness by encouraging people to get involved and building anticipation for what is to come. >>

Georgina Chatfield, Programme Manager, RSA Academies



CATALYSING CREATIVE LEARNING

Over the past nine months, five RSA academies have been participating in the Catalytic Teaching and Learning project in partnership with the Helen Storey Foundation. Two art installations drawing upon the work of Professor Helen Storey RDI – ‘Field of Jeans’ and ‘Limb Bud Dress’ – have been touring the schools. A chemical that helps to reduce harmful air emissions has been washed into the jeans and the dress, and explores possible ways to purify air. The ensuing discussion was then used to kick-start a more creative learning experience.

On 22 September 2015, ‘Field of Jeans’ landed at Holyhead School. The sight of the ghostly white jeans standing on ‘legs’ aroused interest among the curious teenagers who stood pondering over them. ‘Limb Bud Dress’, placed in the new reception building, also sparked interest among parents, governors and the visiting community.

A group of students, who became the RSA Catalytic Jeans team, decided to plan and deliver an assembly to inject some creative juice into their peers. Kobir in Year 13 led the demonstration of the decomposition of hydrogen peroxide, using a catalyst to help him explore the role of these chemicals, while Year 11 girls Sabaha, Fariha and Zeenat explored the possible links between the jeans and climate change, as well as considering other global solutions. The successful and independently implemented assembly left students with plenty of questions to reflect on when synthesising their own interpretations of the jeans. The power of peer-led interaction was visible and emphasised the importance of peer-led learning and its impact on other students.

Following this, the students were empowered further to plan an event. They chose to put on a cross-curricular day for a mixed cohort of students ranging from Year 7 to Year

11 to solve the big question: ‘Why is Mr Corbett wearing a pair of jeans?’ With activities led by teachers of geography, design and technology, and science, and facilitated by our RSA Catalytic Jeans team, they successfully explored the topic. This enabled deeper critical thinking among the students, whose presentations showed depth of thinking and synthesis of ideas.

Evaluations by pupils suggested they thoroughly enjoyed the experience, particularly the thematic approach to the day, which they felt helped them to learn a lot in a fun way. Their feedback also hinted at how powerful art and fashion are in communicating issues in science, with students feeling sufficiently challenged and asking if more lessons could be done this way. Principal Martin Bayliss and other senior leaders also commented on the tangible buzz and excitement among students, who were managing their own learning in a very student-centred way.

When time came to wave goodbye to the jeans, one member of staff, Alka Mistry, had the brilliant idea to leave behind a legacy of our work. The legacy book meant other schools could record their contributions to the project and pass them on to the next school in the RSA family.

On reflection, I have come to believe in the power of art and fashion in helping science to communicate key issues. Using artwork around the school would enable a more global approach to instigating STEM debates and discussions around wider issues in the news. I have come to see the power of thematic approaches of which the ‘big question’ was a key example. The use of real-life scenarios in the lesson is one way we can enable students to participate in learning in a more meaningful way.

Ravinder Rheel, science teacher, Holyhead School, Birmingham



CAUSING A STIR

A shocking 84% of Ugandan teachers say they want to quit and 25% of Indian teachers are absent each day. The charity STIR works to support education leadership and enable teachers to overcome this crisis of learning throughout the developing world, where teacher motivation is at an all-time low.

Our approach centres around reigniting teachers' motivation and sense of purpose. We start our engagement with teachers not by telling them what they are doing wrong, but by giving them a chance to share their existing efforts to improve learning – 'micro-innovations' – with each other and recognising them for doing so. They are then invited to join a 'Teacher Changemaker Network', a local group of peers with whom they share challenges and together create, implement and reflect on innovations to overcome these challenges. Over time, teachers in the network work together to integrate and adapt evidence-based practices into their teaching and, increasingly, lead the development of a movement of 'Teacher Changemakers'.

We have worked intensively with 10,000 teachers across 15 states in India and 48 districts in Uganda. Through regular collaboration, opportunities to develop their own innovations and a recognition and development structure, teachers can lead improvement in children's learning.

Manju, a teacher in Lucknow, India, was initially hesitant about sharing information but after joining a changemaker network, this changed. "After associating with STIR, I realised that we can solve a lot of our problems at our own level," he says. "We just haven't noticed it before." Through a rigorous, World Bank/DFID-funded evaluation we are learning more about how to build the intrinsic motivation of teachers. Local peer recognition and sending letters to teachers' families, recognising their efforts in school, seem most promising so far.

By working both with teachers and a parallel network of policymakers, we hope to reach a tipping point, where a culture of teacher innovation and collaboration becomes the norm. Swati, a teacher changemaker in Delhi, sees the benefit of being part of such a network: "To step forward and lead a group of experienced teachers is not an easy task. However, I am motivated by the excitement of the teachers and the prospect of improving the reading levels of the students."

If we are to have any hope of accelerating progress in children's learning, teachers must be at the heart of any solution. Together with thousands of colleagues, teachers like Swati and Manju are helping to rebuild their profession and improve children's learning. *James Townsend, Chief Programme Officer, STIR*

ENGENDERING EQUALITY

Reaching gender parity can no longer be solely about female education; it requires a wholesale rethink of our attitudes to women and girls

by Natalie Nicholles
 @theRSAorg

Gender parity in education has undoubtedly improved over the past two decades. According to the World Economic Forum's 2015 Global Gender Gap Index, we are now 5% away from parity for educational attainment (as measured by the number of women and girls enrolled in education compared with men and boys in 109 countries). However, despite this improvement, girls continue to suffer severe disadvantage and exclusion in education systems throughout their lives. The significant risks girls face in exercising their right to education have been starkly highlighted by events such as the Taliban's attack on Malala Yousafzai in 2009, and the abduction of the 276 Chibok girls by Boko Haram in 2014. While it would be easy to view these as extreme exceptions, they should not be underestimated as indicators of a broader cultural mindset towards girls' learning.

Globally, an estimated 63 million girls are missing out on their education due to bottlenecks and barriers including social and economic demands such as household obligations, child marriage and gender-based violence. These make barriers to education virtually insurmountable when faced with everyday challenges like a lack of school fees, cultural norms favouring boys' education, inadequate sanitation facilities and negative classroom environments.

NATALIE NICHOLLES
 IS DIRECTOR OF
 RSA GLOBAL

Even among the developed nations, progress in education is not translating into women's equal participation in society, whether it be the workforce, politics or earning potential. Although healthier and more educated, women are no more likely to be earning an income than they were 20 years ago.

So why have interventions to improve girls' access to, and attainment in, education not translated into a broader change in society's culture, norms and attitudes? A recent macro review by the UK's Department for International Development of girls' education interventions found that research studies mostly focus on initiatives linked to resource, infrastructure and changing institutions rather than engagement with norms, and the links between girls' schooling and gender equality more broadly in society. It concluded that our collective understanding of interventions to shift gender norms is woefully under-researched, because this aim was not designed from the outset.

This dichotomy is evidence of a widening gulf between initiatives in education that attempt to raise girls' achievements and expectations, and a society that continues to devalue this achievement and undermine these expectations. As early as 1871, the RSA recognised how such a gap would hinder social progress when it established the Women's Education Movement to promote the better education of girls in all classes. This group proposed and agreed objectives including "promoting the education



of women, of whatever class” and – crucially – creating “a sounder public opinion on the subject of women’s education, and thus [removing] the great hindrance to its improvement”. The movement lasted until 1884 and led to the establishment of the Girls’ Day School Trust in 1872, which still exists today. Given how 19th-century England was dictated by gender, this was bold statement for the RSA to make.

The current crisis in girls’ education and beyond suggests we need to be brave, yet again, about what is hindering progress today, and how to address it. If we want to get girls learning in our classrooms and women succeeding in our workplaces, then we need to have an honest conversation about how we treat females in our societies. It is a conversation we often shy away from because it risks revealing cultural and structural inequalities in schools, homes, communities, universities and corporations around the world. Girls’ access to education alone cannot address structural barriers, which require transformative approaches that tackle discrimination and power relations between males and females in schools and society at large.

We need an increasingly holistic approach to education that recognises the importance of power in the interdependent relations among families, schools, communities and national governments. We need interventions in girls’ education to focus on the empowerment of girls in tandem with improving their learning. We need to move beyond indicators focused on gender parity and focus more on measuring larger progress in girls’ education on dimensions of equity and learning outcomes.

This is by no means simple or straightforward, but it is crucial for social progress. Enabling women and girls to reach their potential by leading fulfilling lives that really match their aspirations means making a conscious effort to tackle gender inequality through how we educate girls in the 21st century. The RSA’s mission is driven by this aim of empowering more people to apply their creativity to bring about positive social change. This is no more poignant than in girls’ education. As Michelle Obama recently said: “We cannot address our girls’ crisis until we address the cultural norms and practices that devalue women’s intelligence, silencing their voices and limiting their ambitions.” ■

BLOOMING TEACHERS

Empowering teachers to embrace their creativity in the classroom is the route to creating educational systems fit for the modern era

by Andy Hargreaves
 @hargreavesbc

On 22 February 2011, at 12.51pm, a monumental earthquake shook the city of Christchurch in New Zealand to its foundations. One hundred and eighty-five people lost their lives. Others lost family members, friends, limbs and homes. Around 10,000 dwellings became uninhabitable. The city's historic stone cathedral cracked apart and its tower collapsed in pieces. Three-quarters of the central business district was destroyed or damaged beyond repair.

After the dust had settled, the rebuilding had to begin. Some of this would inevitably be long term, and the giant cranes that now sweep across the city are symbols of the ongoing reconstruction. Other answers had to be more immediate.

Where would the city's residents and future visitors shop, dine and do their banking when retail space had been all but eliminated? The response was a quickly constructed precinct called Re:START, where scores of old shipping containers have been refurbished, brightly repainted and stacked on top of one another to make a chic shopping district.

Where would the cathedral's displaced congregation worship? The solution, devised by prize-winning Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, is the magnificent Transitional Cardboard Cathedral, erected on the edge of the most damaged part of the city.

It has not all been easy, of course. Bureaucracy, bickering and a few obstructive property owners sometimes made progress difficult. But the reconstruction of Christchurch is a compelling case of how and why creativity matters. Creativity isn't just egocentric self-indulgence or oddball eccentricity. >> It is also the way we devise ingenious solutions to

ANDY HARGREAVES IS THE THOMAS MORE BRENNAN CHAIR IN EDUCATION AT THE LYNCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AT BOSTON COLLEGE

IMAGES: © ART-WORK BY SU BLACKWELL PHOTOGRAPHY BY JARON JAMES







overwhelming social problems. Creativity counts when other social values also come into play like heritage, inclusion and sustainability. Creativity is a collective responsibility, not just an individual disposition.

Crises and social problems require many people to be creative, not just one or two. At this point in history, we need creativity, care and compassion on a scale that we have never witnessed before. How do we stem the spate of violence and shootings in the US? What is the best response to the global epidemic of physical and mental health problems among young people? Which technology companies will be the first to take the lead on dealing with the digital obsessions of children who are starting to average 10 hours of screen time a day? How can we respond in an agile and ethical way to oil shortages then oil gluts, to unemployment and economic stagnation, to the global refugee crisis, and to the surge of droughts, storms and floods as well as the climate-change processes behind them?

THE CASE AGAINST CREATIVITY

Few people seem opposed to the idea or importance of creativity in principle. And as the 37 million views (and counting) of Sir Ken Robinson's TED talk *Do Schools Kill Creativity?* testify, masses of people are at the very least intrigued by it. In education, though, the greatest criticisms of the creativity movement have been matters of scale. We might be able to generate more creativity with an inspirational teacher or two, in a few schools here or there, or even in school networks of self-selected enthusiasts. But what about building entire systems of creativity where every teacher is

capable and every student can benefit? How can we develop more creativity for all of them?

In the face of these challenges, many reformers in education have felt that it is better just to do something simpler and more familiar instead. If we couldn't turn thousands of weak or mediocre teachers into brilliantly innovative ones, perhaps we could at least get them up to proficiency by training them to teach a three-part lesson properly or follow a curriculum script. So systems such as those in England and the US focused for many years on easily measurable priorities in basic skills linked to targets and testing to drive up the numbers that would increase student achievement and also reassure voters when the next election came around.

But the strategies didn't work. On reliable, independent measures (not those produced by governments themselves), in the main, these strategies didn't raise achievement results or narrow achievement gaps. While the compelling need for creativity, care and compassion across the world has been growing, the greatest global educational trend of the past two decades ran completely contrary to it, driven by the promise of short-term results.

For example, over the past two decades, US educational reform pursued a relentless drive to test every child (and almost every teacher) every year on a prescribed curriculum of basic literacy and mathematics. Education professionals campaigned against it by pointing to the harmful effects on student achievement, engagement and creativity, and on the ability to attract and retain high-quality teachers in public education. Researchers provided the evidence that backed teachers up. But the tipping point came when students and

their families created an opt-out movement that made the tests inoperable and rendered their results useless. State governors suspended the tests, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stepped aside, and the new Every Student Succeeds Act has significantly eased testing pressures and accountability requirements. Thanks to creative student protests, US education is on the cusp of a new educational beginning. And in this respect, it is not alone.

A new narrative of educational change is emerging. This narrative embraces a vision of a large-scale system for learning that is more creative, inclusive and sustainable. It also envisions a different kind of teaching profession that is collaborative rather than individualistic, and that has its own needs for creativity too.

CREATIVE VISIONS AND SYSTEMS

How do we deliberately build whole systems of creativity? The answer is that it is already happening. In Ontario, Canada, where I currently serve as one of four advisers to its Premier, Kathleen Wynne, the province's new vision, Achieving Excellence, stresses that educational excellence (and equity) must include the arts, sciences and a range of creative and entrepreneurial skills in digital citizenship and other domains. It aims to reach and engage with the many different ways that young people learn best, including those from the most disadvantaged populations such as Canada's indigenous communities. Another key driver for improvement in the vision is achieving greater well-being – in mental, emotional and physical health – for all students and their teachers.

Ontario is not alone. In 2015, I worked on a team of four with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to review Scotland's national Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) that had been 10 years in the making. CfE centres on four capacities of what it means to be a Scottish learner and citizen. First is that successful learners are enthusiastic, motivated, determined and open to new learning. Second, confident individuals are ambitious, have self-respect, hold strong values and beliefs, and develop emotional, mental and physical well-being. Third, responsible citizens demonstrate respect for others and participate in political, economic, social and cultural life. And finally, effective contributors are enterprising, resilient and self-reliant.

These are not just paper pronouncements. We saw them in schools we visited where children spoke confidently about their learning and about why they were learning particular things. We saw inspiring interdisciplinary projects on topics like the making of Harris Tweed in island crofting (or cottage) industries. There was drama and expressive dance for young

children, elements that had almost completely disappeared in the old narratives of standardised testing and curriculum prescription. We were also impressed by the positive regard that students showed for the out-of-school learning experiences that were the right of every child in the system.

The School of the Future framework in Norway proposes another four learning competencies: subject-specific competencies; competencies of metacognition (being able to reflect on what and how one is learning and why); competencies of communication, interaction and participation focused on cooperation and problem-solving; and competencies of being able to explore and create in ways that incorporate critical thinking and problem-solving in cooperation with others.

The world is waking up. This new vision or narrative of change is spreading fast. The countries and systems embracing and advancing it are not ahead of the curve. They are the curve. It is countries that continue to rely on the old narrative of individual competition, narrowly defined content and top-down systems of inspection and control that are falling behind.

Creative learning in creative systems is not just about technological innovation and economic skills. The new narrative of creativity does not adopt irresponsible stances of disruptive innovation that dismiss or destroy the past and

“CREATIVITY IS A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY, NOT JUST AN INDIVIDUAL DISPOSITION”

proclaim that schools are broken. It does not make exaggerated comparisons between bad versions of old things (boring classes in 'factory' schools) with exemplary cases of digital new things (showcase schools

under charismatic leaders). The new narratives don't propose introducing 'disruptive' technology at breakneck speed to try and bypass teachers and teaching and go straight to the learner. Indeed, in their September 2015 report *Students, Computers and Learning: Making The Connection*, the OECD found that “countries which have invested heavily in information and communication technologies for education have seen no noticeable improvement in their results”.

The new narratives of educational change combine creativity with care, compassion and community. They address the development of the person, the society and the community, as well as the skills that are needed for the economy. The governments of high-performing Singapore and Finland grasp that teachers are nation builders. Within England, there is now a network of over 150 schools supporting the education of the 'whole child'. The development of the whole person in a process of lifelong learning has long been valued as *cura personalis* in the Catholic Jesuit tradition, and as *Bildung* (the cultural formation and maturation of the person) among German and Scandinavian systems.

In the terms of the classic 1996 UNESCO report *Learning: The Treasure Within*, children must learn not >>

only how to know and do things, but also how to be, and how to live together. And this is why, on any scale, a vision of creative and caring learning is unimaginable without creative and caring teachers and teaching.

CREATIVE CULTURES OF TEACHING

This leads us to the second systemic question: how can lots of teachers, not just a few, realise the vision of being creative in an effective way?

One common response is simply to say teachers need to be given more freedom and autonomy to make the judgements they think are best. Certainly, giving teachers little or no autonomy and prescribing the details of what they should teach does nothing to bring out the creative best in teachers. Indeed, it drives some of our most inspiring teachers out of the classroom altogether.

But will more autonomy automatically yield better results? One answer is that teachers will have more autonomy if schools are given more autonomy, like the academies, free schools and charter schools in England, Sweden and the US, for example. But school autonomy is deceptive. It might give school owners and school leaders more autonomy over budgets and staffing decisions, but individual owners can be just as tyrannical as centralised bureaucracies. The urge for owners to run their schools with teachers who are young, compliant, inexpensive and temporary is hard to resist. School autonomy can sometimes lead to greater teacher autonomy, but in a results-centred and profit-driven environment, the opposite often turns out to be the case.

So perhaps we should just give autonomy to the teachers, pure and simple. Take off the testing shackles and let their spirits soar! But individual autonomy in a profession can lead to awful practice as easily as excellent work. Just ask the university students who have seen vast variations in the quality of their lecturers.

Since the 1970s, research has shown that when teachers spend almost all their time teaching and thinking about teaching alone, they become more conservative, not more creative. They get no feedback or ideas from anyone else. There is no moral support for those moments when children will not do as they are told or when lessons fall flat. The only way colleagues know what teachers are doing is by the noise that children make that penetrates through the classroom walls. So in cultures of individualism, teachers learn to keep the noise down, avoiding any risks that might irk their peers.

Ironically, in a culture of individual autonomy, teachers actually become more alike. They take fewer risks and their results are relatively weak because they don't have access to other teachers' strategies that could help their students. Here

and there, a few individuals may stand out from the rest and they are the ones that students always remember. But like the nine-year-old boy in the movie *Home Alone*, although it makes good entertainment to see an extremely resourceful young man repeatedly repel intruders from his house, you wouldn't want to build a whole crime-fighting strategy on this idea. Try the educational equivalent of this kind of individual ingenuity and eventually you'll just burn out because it is too hard to create everything by yourself.

So what else is there other than autonomy and no autonomy? In our book *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*, Michael Fullan and I propose a third way forward: collective autonomy. Teachers who operate in cultures of collective autonomy have more independence from bureaucratic or market-driven interference, but less independence from each other. In the culture of collective autonomy, most teachers still make the vast majority of their decisions alone in their own classes. But the basis of these decisions, the knowledge that informs them, including knowledge about their students, is developed and shared with other colleagues.

And it works. Collective autonomy has more impact than individual autonomy. Or, to put it another way, the social capital of the group and how it works together adds value to the accumulated human capital of individuals. In a classic paper 'The Missing Link in School Reform' in the November 2011 issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, business professor Carrie Leana reported on

“THE SOCIAL CAPITAL OF THE GROUP ADDS VALUE TO THE ACCUMULATED HUMAN CAPITAL OF INDIVIDUALS”

the impact of more than 1,000 elementary school teachers in New York City on their children's mathematics attainment. She took measures of teachers' individual human capital – their qualifications and skills – and also their social capital in terms of how much they collaborated with their colleagues in relation to teaching and learning issues, as well as how much they trusted one another. Two of her key findings were that teachers with high social capital scores increased their mathematics scores by 5.7% more than teachers with lower social capital scores; and teachers with low individual ability raised their performance to the standard of average teachers elsewhere if there was strong social capital in their schools.

So how can we use deliberate strategies on a large scale to get the sort of high social capital (or collective autonomy) that leads to improvement and innovation?

In the Pacific Northwest of the US, my Boston College colleagues and I are working with a regional educational development centre, Education Northwest, to build collaboration among teachers who work in isolated rural schools. As in other countries, many rural communities in the US experience high rates of poverty. The teachers in these communities are often the only ones who teach



their subject or their grade. They live far away from other teachers who could help them. So here, the schools and their systems have co-designed a network that has been focusing on increasing students' engagement with their learning and their communities. They are designing more inspiring learning materials and experiences with other schools, through face-to-face and online interaction. In an interview in the aptly named *Daily Yonder*, one of the network's teachers, Christina Spriggs, who teaches in Glenns Ferry, Idaho, describes her experience in the network as "inspiring and rejuvenating" and she has seen the positive impact on students' achievement and engagement in her school.

Just north of Idaho, Alberta, Canada, is one of the highest-performing education systems in the world according to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results of student achievement. The government worked in partnership with the Alberta Teachers' Association for 14 years to stimulate and support teacher-designed innovations in 95% of the province's schools. It did this by allocating 2% of the budget to provide time and coordination for teachers to collaborate with each other within and across their schools; by requiring participants to inquire into the impact of their innovations; and by setting the expectation that schools had to share their results with others. According to the OECD's international comparisons of teaching and learning conditions, Alberta teachers are not only more likely to report participating in collaborative professional learning than teachers in other countries; they also report that this increases teachers' confidence in their own abilities.

In England, the London Borough of Hackney moved from being the worst-performing local authority in 2002

to performing well above average on all key indicators 10 years later. In *Uplifting Leadership*, Alan Boyle, Alma Harris and I describe the reasons for unusually high performance in business, sport and education. Hackney, we found, used strategies that included expecting and resourcing schools to support other schools that were struggling. This applied even though the schools competed with each other for students. Collaborating with competitors in this way led to all the schools improving. As a result, more and more Hackney parents started sending their children to schools in the borough rather than outside it. This made the schools and the community even stronger.

These are not the only examples that exist. They are just a few of the ones we have supported and studied directly. What they show is that creative learning and teaching can occur in large-scale systems. They show that international narratives and visions of educational reform are now starting to embrace principles of creativity, care and community rather than opposing them or subordinating them to standardised treatments of easily measurable basic skills. Creativity, we are seeing, is a collective responsibility, not an individual characteristic. Creative learners need many creative teachers who work together effectively for the good of all their students. A system that empowers teachers in this way usually results from deliberate design, not just luck or circumstance. Creative learning and teaching call for creative system designs too.

It needn't take an earthquake to trigger a collective creative response. More often, what is required is the quiet commitment and courage of many ordinary people to oppose or opt out of the wrong things, and to invest in well-designed alternatives that will produce a better quality of life for everyone. ■

RAISING ALLIANCES

In Nigeria, exploring the benefits of public-private partnerships is helping improve educational outcomes

by Modupe Adefeso-Olateju
 @tepcentre

As globalisation disrupts traditional approaches to knowledge acquisition and skills development, policymakers are increasingly faced with the monumental challenge of raising a populace that is not only productive locally, but competitive globally, able to deploy the complex thinking that employers seek. As nations aim to increase their competitive advantage, the role of the school as a space for learning continues to be probed. Increasingly, there is a shift in focus from raising enrolment rates to ensuring that children actually learn. Goal 4 of the United Nations Development Programme's 2015 Sustainable Development Goals highlights the importance of obtaining quality education as a solid foundation for sustainable development. With this sharpened focus on results, more focus is being given to approaches that facilitate learning in the classroom. The role of creativity and innovation in improving teaching and learning is one important aspect of this.

In the 2004 Nigerian National Policy on Education, creativity is highlighted as a goal for teacher education, with emphasis on ensuring that teachers acquire intellectual knowledge while being adaptable to changing situations. This welcome policy statement has yet to be translated into a strategic plan that encourages and nurtures creativity in public schools. While it is slowly changing in some parts of the country, public schools in Nigeria typically feature rote learning. As noted by Eyiuche Olibie and Lilian-Rita Akudolu in their 2009 paper on creativity, it has remained a 'blind spot' for policy development. With the rapidly changing economic landscape and employers increasingly valuing higher-order skills stimulated by creativity, it is apparent that Nigerian learners are at a long-term disadvantage as evidenced by continuing low levels of learning achievement.

Creativity in education is not limited to the role of the teacher but

ideally encompasses multiple channels within and beyond the school environment. This is of particular importance in Nigeria, which in recent years has witnessed the renaissance of creative industries including performing and visual arts, and film. Identifying and scaling innovations in education is being highlighted as an important way to improve learning experiences and, ultimately, outcomes. The past few years have seen a surge in the development of innovative teaching and learning methods, curriculum-delivery platforms and academic support tools. These innovations are relatively small scale, however, and sit mostly within the non-state sector; they are yet to effect system-level change in the education sector. Nevertheless, several are demonstrating proof of concept and implementation and offer examples of good practice and present opportunities for progress. A key challenge remains the relative lack of agency on the part of such non-state entities to engage policymakers with a view to introducing innovations that stimulate creativity at the scale of entire districts, states and the nation.

The Education Partnership Centre (TEP Centre) was established to facilitate public-private partnerships and collaboration and plays an important role in facilitating effective public-private discourse and developing programmes designed to tackle the lack of innovation and creativity in the sector. Creativity is viewed as an approach to developing reflective and responsible lifelong learners; individuals and societies prepared to embrace a changing world, and who attain their maximum potential in academia, work and life in general. Creativity and innovation transcend the school, influencing how policies are determined and planned, how the curriculum is designed and implemented, and how assessment, monitoring and evaluation are carried out.

At the programmatic level, TEP Centre curates the regional hub for Centre for Education Innovations (CEI) Nigeria. This initiative employs a three-pronged approach – identify, analyse, connect – to address the lack of data on non-state education innovations that are helping to provide or

MODUPE ADEFESO-OLATEJU IS CEO OF THE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP CENTRE, A CONSULTANCY FIRM THAT SUPPORTS AN ARRAY OF EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS



strengthen meaningful learning opportunities, especially for the poor. CEI, a global initiative of Results for Development, increases access to quality education for the poor by identifying, analysing and connecting non-state education innovations with each other, with policymakers and potential funders. One such example is Corona iTeach, a teacher-training programme designed to attract high-achieving university graduates to careers in teaching. These young people are trained in 21st-century pedagogy and positioned to restore dignity to the teaching profession. They have stimulated creativity and innovation in the private schools where they work and the implementing organisation is in discussions with the Lagos state government to extend this initiative to government schools.

A second programmatic intervention, which, from the outset was designed to foster collaboration between the public and private sectors, is the establishment of a citizen-led, household assessment of learning in Nigeria, LEARNigeria. This assesses the foundational literacy and numeracy skills of five- to 15-year-olds and leverages the data for two main purposes: first, to stimulate the agency of parents and communities enabling change to occur at grassroots level and, second, to strengthen accountability in the public sector as the resources invested in education are weighed against the results demonstrated by the learners. The design and pilot of this initiative were deliberately co-creative, involving several education stakeholders including policymakers, government

agencies, corporations, academics and educationalists.

The experience of establishing and implementing these initiatives has revealed some lessons with regard to the role of partnerships in stimulating creativity in the education sector. First, if Nigeria is truly to leapfrog into the 21st century, there is a need to stimulate creativity and innovative thinking at all levels of the education value chain. The approach to education sector planning requires a major rethink. Second, this rethink can be achieved by harnessing the competencies of the non-state sector – where there is already much effort being put into stimulating creativity and innovation – as a catalyst. Third, public-private partnerships that leverage the agency and competencies of both sectors do not typically occur spontaneously; they are usually facilitated. Organisations and initiatives that demonstrate the capacity to establish meaningful high-level partnerships across sectors have an important role to play.

As oil-dependent Nigeria grapples with the challenge of fluctuations in global crude oil prices, it becomes ever clearer that the future lies not in its ability to harvest natural resources but in its determination to develop human capacity. For the country to thrive in an age of rapid globalisation, it is imperative that focus is placed on developing citizens who are knowledgeable, skilled, analytical and adaptable. Well-structured partnerships have the potential to harness the capabilities of a broad stakeholder base to stimulate creativity and innovation in Nigeria's youth. ■

LIFELONG LEARNING

By rethinking post-school education we can make real a new maxim – learning is for life, not just for children

by Tony Breslin FRSA
 @UKpolicywatch

In the run-up to the 1997 election, Tony Blair had spoken of ‘education, education, education’ as the three priorities for any Labour administration he would lead. In so doing, he all but secured the vote among teachers and academics, and boosted Labour’s appeal to floating voters, especially those with school-age children. The truth is that most of us heard Blair say something a tad narrower: ‘schools, schools, schools’.

The Learning Age Green Paper published in 1998 appeared to change all that. It spoke of learning as lifelong, of a re-energised further education sector, and of embedding learning in the culture of society and communities. Fixing or improving schooling is a staple of challenging parties at general elections, whether it is needed or not. The Green Paper went much further than this and was one of a number of progressive outputs from the early years of that first Labour term. It seemed things really could only get better.

At a recent RSA debate, former education secretary David Blunkett identified *The Learning Age* as one of the pieces of work he was most proud of. But he, together with Vince Cable, David Willetts, David Hughes, CEO of the Learning and Work Institute (L&W; a merger of NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion), and the RSA’s Matthew Taylor, agreed that many of the fine ambitions set out in the report and elsewhere remain unfulfilled. So what can be done?

At the RSA we are revisiting those ambitions and will be offering new ones appropriate to the 21st century in a new paper to be published this spring. This work will reflect on these earlier aspirations – and the policy directions since followed by various administrations – and set out six components that might be considered vital for any sustainable and practical vision for the future of lifelong (and life-wide) learning: purpose, access, scale, sociability, entitlement and definition. We will be framing our proposals in the form of an advisory memo to a newly elected city mayor, because, in contrast to the analysis offered in the recent

TONY BRESLIN IS AN ASSOCIATE IN THE RSA CREATIVE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM. HE IS DIRECTOR OF THE CONSULTANCY BRESLIN PUBLIC POLICY, AND FOUNDER OF PARTICIPATION CAMPAIGN USE YOUR VOTE

Education White Paper, we think a local perspective remains imperative in framing provision and clarifying purpose.

This question of educational purpose is much more complex in a world where employment is scarcer and labour markets are global and fluid rather than local and apparently fixed. In an era where the ‘work hard at school, get a job’ equation is no longer guaranteed to deliver (or at least to deliver a job for life), educational provision has to deliver across a triple scorecard that spans employment, leisure and citizenship.

The capacity to engage in learning throughout and across the life course has a new currency precisely because of the near-end of the lifelong career. Moreover, the likely reality of periods of non-work for most of us (or our children and grandchildren), and the growing democratic and participation deficits that Bernard Crick’s reports on citizenship education sought to address, means that educational provision must address our needs not just as workers, employees and entrepreneurs, but our aspirations as citizens and community members. It should enable us to engage confidently and creatively in all sorts of social and civic settings.

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Access is arguably the biggest challenge that any renewed focus on lifelong learning faces. As David Willetts pointed out at the RSA debate, “the potential of new technologies for distance and blended learning is especially remarkable for professional and vocational education”. However, as annual surveys carried out by L&W consistently reveal, the reality is that there is an inverse relationship between the take-up of learning opportunities in adulthood and those who might benefit most from them.

Over the past 20 years, efforts to widen participation in higher education have significantly altered the demographic of young people progressing to higher education in spite of the emergence of fees and loans and the complaints of those who claim “too many kids are going to university now”, even if the change has been least among some of the standard-bearers of the Russell Group. We need to address the participation of disadvantaged adults in educational provision with similar vigour and intent, locally and virtually. In part, this involves actively



“THE ‘SUPER COLLEGE’ MAY HAVE FANTASTIC FACILITIES, BUT IS UNLIKELY TO BE ATTRACTIVE TO RELUCTANT LEARNERS”

seeking to create local cultures where participation in learning is the norm not the exception, and the desired route to personal autonomy and development. We need to get the message out there that education is power and that the fruits of learning will be more people being able to apply their creativity to bringing about positive social change.

Perhaps one approach to explore is to target resources not at types of learning but at types of learner. If the task is to re-engage reluctant, nervous, previously ‘failed’ learners back into education, does, in the first instance, the focus of the learning undertaken matter as much as the engagement in the process of learning itself? In any case, we need to open up multiple access points and locations, many of which will not look like conventional ‘schools’: think community halls, primary schools after the start-of-day school run or before pick-up, workplaces, youth groups, prisons, libraries; think online and off.

SCALING UP

One ongoing tension in any education system is to reconcile mass provision and personalised learning. At one level, our

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION ACADEMY ACHIEVEMENT

SDI Academy is an English-language school specialising in helping migrant workers fully integrate into Singaporean life.

Launched in 2013, the academy offers English courses that are customised to fit an individual’s specific needs, putting emphasis on giving instructions in the student’s native language and encouraging interactions with Singapore locals.

Founder and CEO Sazzad Hossain estimates that 2,000 students will have graduated from the school by the end of 2016. He is currently working on expanding the RSA-supported programme into Malaysia, Indonesia and, potentially, the Middle East. An engineering student at Nanyang Technological University, Sazzad faced a similar language barrier in his early life. “I can personally relate to problems migrants can face,” he says. “I had to learn English by interacting with friends but if there had been a dedicated academy, I could have overcome problems much faster.” The RSA helped SDI Academy refine its curriculum and continues to offer ongoing support and advice from the UK. As Sazzad says, “the need is universal.”

■ For more information, visit www.sdi.academy

growing knowledge of the experience of so-called ‘school-refusers’, increased levels of internal and external exclusion, and the increasing popularity of home-schooling reflect this tension. At another, some developments in the way we provide and assess learning over the past two decades have not helped. For example, the shift away from modularity in public examinations on the basis that it dumbs down standards makes conventional exam courses less accessible to adult learners, who (often for reasons of simple convenience) need programmes that are bite-sized. The focus on measuring the success of institutions on the basis of course completion helps to push learners towards larger chunks of learning, thereby reducing accessibility to adult learners, especially those with low incomes and significant employment and/or family responsibilities.

The implication is that, in terms of returning learners, institutions need to be incentivised to provide drop-in learning opportunities rather than be punished when these adults drop out, having gained the learning they need. The requirement is to develop ‘low-stakes-but-high-value’ accreditation. The notion of digital badges, as offered through the Cities of Learning framework, might offer one way forward. On the issue of ‘returners’, David Hughes at L&W is right to point to the support that good employers give those returning from maternity and paternity leave, and ask why educational institutions are often less adept at doing this for returning learners.

Finally, we need to look at the settings and locations in which learning is offered, especially to those who harbour a negative experience of earlier learning. The 21st-century regional ‘super college’ may offer fantastic facilities, but it remains school-like in image to those who do not cross its threshold. Such institutions are unlikely to prove attractive to our most reluctant learners. Family- and work-friendly learning opportunities, delivered in the kind of locations that individuals pass through in the course of their daily activities, might provide those who are tentative with a gentler step back into education. In short, we need provision that is human scale in size and tone, and the use of existing facilities may mediate some of the cost of this more dispersed, localised provision.

THE LEARNING MULTIPLIER

In a world of YouTube and Google, we may ask why we need to trek to colleges and classrooms for adult learning? Certainly, the internet has much to offer. But, fundamentally, the best learning retains a social dimension. That can be through email or a LinkedIn group but also through face-to-face relationships. The best learning is always collaborative and iterative; it is a



conversation if not a vigorous debate; the need is to blend electronic and face-to-face learning, using the benefits of each.

There is another dimension to the sociability of learning at any age, from pre-school onwards. Great learning is shared, informally, formally and continuously. The marvel of learning is not just that it is ‘the gift that just keeps giving’; it is the gift that can be given away and yet never lost. I do not lose my learning by giving it to you; indeed, the likelihood is that I enrich it through our newly enabled discussions on the issue. Too often, we fail to maximise the benefits that might flow from sharing learning, benefits that an educational economist might call the ‘learning multiplier’.

Nowhere is this failure clearer than in the field of work-based training and programmes of continuing professional development. How often do individuals attend courses without any obligation to share their learning and, more importantly, any opportunity to do so? If we are to encourage employers to offer employees the opportunity to undertake accredited learning at and through work, and if we are to share the benefits of that personal learning more widely, we need to popularise strategies for sharing learning and professional development experiences with peers, subordinates and bosses, and across businesses and organisations as a whole.

THE RIGHT TO FREE EDUCATION

In an era that has seen the introduction and escalation of loans and fees in higher education, less successful attempts to initiate a similar culture in further education, and the onset of ever-tightening public purse strings, the issue of entitlement cannot be ducked. Two observations are pertinent. First, the attempt to introduce the loans model in further education settings seems to have acted as a much bigger disincentive to learners than it has in higher education. As further education learners are typically older, although there are likely to be economic benefits, the investment does not come with something as clear cut as a graduate lifetime-earnings guarantee and the learning is not accompanied by the life experience and network connections that can flow from three or four years in a university setting. Second, without some notion of an entitlement, whether this is to be targeted or for all, current patterns of take-up are likely to

endure. Again, those already persuaded of the value of learning will continue to be the likeliest to take up opportunities.

At the RSA debate, there was broad support for revisiting the notion of something akin to Individual Learning Accounts as a means of underpinning such an entitlement. L&W has carried out significant development work on what it calls Personal Career Accounts, and through its longstanding work on a Citizens’ Curriculum and call for a Career Advancement Service for those in poorly paid and low skilled jobs, it has begun to flesh out how an entitlement might be sustained and what a core curriculum for adult learners might look like.

THE MEANING OF LIFELONG LEARNING

We have to take the term lifelong learning literally: no longer simply the post-school corrective to earlier academic failure, but a journey in which the statutory years play a key part.

To this end, the RSA’s work is likely to propose a ‘o plus’ analysis, which leads us to a repurposing of compulsory schooling itself, as a part of the lifelong learning continuum, not its preface. In such a model, the role of statutory education is not simply to accredit, qualify and classify young people, important as a decent set of grades is likely to remain. It is to build in every learner the appetite, capacity and confidence to go on learning – autonomously and creatively – so as to support their employment and career progression, their leisure and their participation in public life.

Locality and the civic realm is key to all of this. If our debate is anything to go by, there is widespread and cross-party agreement on the longstanding failure of national policies in this field. At the least, a local solution is worth a try. The growing focus on local identities, encouraged by the emergence of mayors and increasing moves towards devolution and regionalisation, may point to the development of a learning culture as an intensely local and context-sensitive activity.

After years of decline and marginalisation, a process apparently brought to its conclusion with the recent White Paper, education – or at least lifelong learning – may once again become a fundamentally local project, a staple of effective citizenship and a key marker of strong, confident, effective local government and community identity. ■

A LESSON IN LISTENING

*Empowering students to find – and use – their voice is
the first step on the road to creativity in education*

By Russell Quaglia and Kristine Fox
 @DrRussQ

Today's schools are educating students for a yet-to-be-imagined future; for yet-to-be-developed jobs. Despite this, the existing K-12 education system in the US is grounded on compliance and standards. Now, more than ever, it must be driven by creativity and innovation. We must create an environment that engages the minds of students while honouring their voices.

Students report that the longer they are in school, the more their creativity diminishes. According to the My Voice National Student Report 2014 published by the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, 80% of sixth graders (10- to 11-year-olds) agreed with the statement "At school I am encouraged to be creative". Only 60% of 12th graders (17- to 18-year-olds) agreed. In elementary school, students are encouraged to wonder, explore and have fun. They do not fear failure. Elementary students eagerly share their ideas on everything, all the time! However, as students progress through middle school and enter high school, the encouragement for divergent thinking and creative assessments dwindles, or even disappears entirely. It seems that if students can check off the rubric boxes, then they are deemed successful, regardless of originality or the potential impact of their ideas. Schools are trying to standardise creativity and stifle students' voices, which is quite ironic since creativity is the antithesis of standards. Granted, standards do not inherently require all teachers to teach the same way. However, an unintended consequence of standards is too many teachers lecture and move through required information in order to cover everything that might be in an exam. Teachers are told what to

teach, when to teach, and often how to teach. There are scarce opportunities for in-depth, relevant and creative learning and assessment. More often than not, students demonstrate their understanding of content by taking the same multiple-choice exam as thousands of students across a region in order to prove the standard has been learned. If teachers had the flexibility to encourage creativity, one group of students might understand world history through the lens of literature and writing. The teaching strategy might include teaching students to write and present original scripts representing a historical era. Another class might understand world history through the lens of geography. These students could demonstrate their understanding of historical events by developing maps representative of migration and immigration patterns.

Education should take a cue from the business sector by supporting and rewarding new ideas and innovation. It is common practice in some successful businesses to have a weekly 'genius hour' where employees are encouraged to be creative and explore emerging ideas. This type of encouragement in schools would allow students to realise that learning and discovery are not finite and are not restricted by exam questions. After all, the ultimate purpose of learning is not to succeed at exams, but to succeed in life.

Students have too few opportunities on assessments to express original responses or emerging ideas. Even a seemingly creative assignment such as building a DNA model can limit creativity. Students can search online for a perfect DNA model, replicate it and then receive the highest mark for the assignment. Likewise, students can read abbreviated notes about a book, design a diorama and then, having never actually read the book or applied their learning in a creative manner, pass the assessment related to the reading. While both of these assignments may help students understand a

RUSSELL QUAGLIA
IS THE FOUNDER
OF THE QUAGLIA
INSTITUTE
FOR STUDENT
ASPIRATIONS

KRISTINE FOX IS
SENIOR FIELD
SPECIALIST AT THE
QUAGLIA INSTITUTE
FOR STUDENT
ASPIRATIONS



concept, neither gives students an opportunity to develop original ideas or to express their voice. Is it that students are not ready or willing to think creatively? Are they not prepared to express their ideas and values? Or, is it that the educational establishment is not ready to allow students to be creative and have a voice?

Students are not going to find creative solutions to perplexing problems when they have little interest and no voice. Passion releases creativity. Confidence amplifies voice. To prepare them for their future, students' thoughts, ideas, interests and questions must drive learning *now*. To support creative thinking, students must have opportunities to immerse themselves in problems and challenges that spark their interests, engage their minds, and direct their intellectual energy toward the benefit of others.

We need to understand that student voice and creativity are inextricably connected. A curious student asks 'why?' while

a creative student with voice asks 'why not?' Students must be encouraged and provided opportunities to continuously ask both. Why is there so much concern around global warming? Why does it matter if I learn about genetics? Why do I have to understand world history? Why do free-trade agreements matter? These types of questions bolster a student's innate desire to challenge current thinking. With the proper conditions in place, the questions turn into innovative thinking and action. Why not solve global warming by providing free solar panels? Why not fund stem cell research over pharmaceutical research? Why not study the history of peace instead of the history of war? Why not demand fair trade instead of free trade? This type of inquiry encourages students to develop ideas beyond the scope of textbooks, standardised exams, or even the potential biases of the teacher. By simply using the Socratic teaching method – which stimulates critical thinking >>



– students are challenged to ask as well as answer questions, communicate their ideas and consider the opinions of others.

Not all learners experience the necessary conditions for creativity to flourish. According to the 2014 My Voice National Student Report, only 63% of high school students agreed with the statement “I feel comfortable asking questions in class”. The ability to wonder and challenge the status quo starts with questioning. Together, teachers and students must build classroom cultures where learning begins with questions, and never ends. In addition, both relevance and meaning are important for learners of all ages. To spark curiosity, students first need to feel an issue or problem is pertinent to them. In response to the statement “My classes help me understand what is happening in my everyday life” only 35% of 12th graders agreed. In this grade, students in the US are typically ready to graduate from high school and enter university, technical school or begin their careers. Perhaps there is no grade more important than this one for students to believe that their learning matters to their lives.

Students should graduate feeling confident that what they have dedicated their school days to is applicable to their future. Although creativity emerges uniquely in each student, students embody creativity when they: use their voice for positive change; know how to express themselves; do not fear failure or success; are driven internally to succeed; connect diverse content areas; respect other people’s opinions; challenge the status quo; demonstrate understanding through application; welcome the challenge of complex problems; and see themselves as part of a global community. We must ensure students are partners in the learning environment in order to ensure they reach their fullest creative potential.

Our research shows that when students have a voice, they

are seven times more likely to be motivated to learn. However, supporting and developing the voice of students cannot be legislated or mandated through policy. Rather this needs to be fostered as a priority in the classroom, every day, in every grade. Teachers must intentionally create time and opportunity for student voice to drive creativity, nurturing a genuine partnership with students where their voice is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Teachers also need to develop assessments that reward unique ideas and originality, encourage students to challenge the way things are typically done and guide them to collaborate with other students around the globe. Students’ passions

and interests should drive learning and inquiry, with teachers connecting and applying learning to students’ everyday lives, and presenting complex, real-world problems to consider and solve. Above

“STUDENTS ARE CREATIVE AND THEY WANT A VOICE. THE ONLY THING IN THE WAY IS CURRENT PRACTICES”

all, teaching should enable students to build their skills for creativity; this means measuring progress by how well students apply their knowledge to solve problems and challenges, and ensuring that creativity and innovation take precedence over pacing guides and schedules.

Students are inherently creative, and they do want to have a voice. The only thing standing in the way of fostering this voice and creativity is current practices. We need to start recognising that students are full of potential and to accept the fact that they have something to teach us. When we establish an environment in which the unknown is embraced and the voice of students is celebrated, we will finally have an environment where the creativity of students will flourish, and a world of creativity and possibilities will emerge. ■

■ For more information about the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, visit www.quagliainstitute.org

NEW FELLOWS

SHARAN JASWAL



Sharan Jaswal is education director at London-based charity MyBnk. Created in 2007, it delivers financial education

workshops to young people aged between 11 and 25, helping them learn about money.

After doing an economics degree and working in a number of different industries, the discovery of a love of working with young people after she became involved with a project to support vulnerable children led her to MyBnk. "MyBnk is sort of the bridging of two passions, of start-up, business, enterprise and of working with young people," she says.

Some MyBnk-inspired projects have now begun in Turkey, Uganda, Brunei and Italy. As part of her role, Sharan is keen to grow MyBnk through new collaborations, which is where the RSA comes in. "It's a nice way of tapping into regional expertise and likeminded people in organisations," she says, citing networking events as a way to start potential partnerships. She also hopes Fellowship will help her stay abreast of current thinking. "The RSA is doing really interesting work around activity in education for learners, teachers and institutions," she says. "We at MyBnk thought it would be really good to get involved to keep me up to date with what's going on."

🐦 @sharanj

REBECCA WINTHROP



New York-based Rebecca Winthrop has spent more than 20 years working on education issues for the most marginalised.

Since 2009, as the Director for the Center for Universal Education at US thinktank The Brookings Institution, and Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development, she has focused on how we can best equip young people with the skills needed to flourish in a changing world. "Creativity, along with other competencies such as collaboration, problem solving, literacy – digital and non-digital – and numeracy are some of the core skills today's young people need," she reflects. Despite earning her PhD at Columbia, Rebecca is more motivated by action than theory. "I have always been most interested in and drawn to opportunities to translate research into practice," she explains.

It was after a chat with a member of RSA staff at the WISE conference that Rebecca became interested in Fellowship. "The RSA network is an exciting way to tap into a range of different expertise and a great network through which we can share the work we are doing at Brookings," she says. She hopes to find like-minded Fellows who would like to share ideas on new educational models.

🐦 @RebeccaWinthrop

IN BRIEF

Here are a few more Fellows who are working to drive social progress:

Andrés Peri is the director of Research and Evaluation Department at the National Administration of Public Education of Uruguay and is Uruguay's delegate to the PISA Governing Board. He remains dedicated to improving educational outcomes for children.

Alex Bell has worked in schools across London for the past 25 years, including as associate headteacher of Brindishe Lee Primary School as it transitioned from 'requires improvement' to 'outstanding'. He hopes to meet likeminded educationalists through the RSA Fellowship and to complete a book on global education and creativity.

Professor Dominic Wyse is a professor in early childhood and primary education at UCL. His research focuses on curriculum and pedagogy, with English, language, literacy and creativity being key areas. As a Fellow he hopes to explore the education and arts sides of the RSA's work.

Dilanthi Weerasinghe co-founded Bridges for Children CIC, a community-led, not-for-profit educational psychology service based in London, after working as an interim principal educational psychologist in the public sector. She is committed to social justice, education and equality.

YOUR FELLOWSHIP: ENGAGE WITH THE RSA IN FOUR MAIN WAYS

1 Connect online: Search for Fellows online at our brand new website. Visit www.thersa.org/new-website for details of how to login. You can also follow us on Twitter @theRSAorg, join the Fellows' LinkedIn group and follow our blog at www.thersa.org/blogs

2 Meet other Fellows: Fellowship events and network meetings take place across the UK and are an excellent way to meet other Fellows. Visit our website to find an event in your area.

3 Share your skills: Login to the website to update your Fellowship profile and let other Fellows know about your skills, interests, expertise and availability.

4 Grow your idea: RSA Catalyst offers grants and crowdfunding support for Fellow-led new and early-stage projects that aim to tackle a social challenge. Visit the Project Support page on our website.

Explore these and further ways to get involved at www.thersa.org



A STRANGE TYPE OF BEAUTY

By Selina Nwulu,
Young Poet Laureate for London 2015/16

Let's play a game.
Let's peel back the skin of this city
and rearrange its insides till
we have created a strange kind of beauty
we don't recognise. Let's move this city's landmarks
like chess pieces; take the London Eye and
roll it to the edges of the city,
drag the Tate into zone five,
have the Royal Opera House playing
in outskirt basement halls,
grab some chicken and chips via the London Coliseum.

Classrooms become their own theatres
so that young people can unfurl their
aches into creative roars. For the shy ones
the pen becomes a microphone
to their power and those words travel further
than the lulls of their stomachs. Instead
those notebook soliloquies become a future
bouquet of verses blossoming into the mouths of thespians.

Art galleries are not echo chambers
of prestige. Instead their doors have become
a fleshy open smile, their tongues speaking in
a language of visual miscellany. Graffiti masterpieces
are hanging with Cézanne and Monet. There are
Dali moustaches on corridors twitching and beckoning
young people to find new works of art to get lost in.
Workshops are being run by Barka,
wide floors and windows for children to paint on

Young people are composing digital sonatas
in their rooms and we've taken their roofs off.
We've unplugged their headphones so that
those tsks tsks in their ears have now become a siren of noise
the sky has broken into an orchestra of patois symphonies
there's grime-fused electro sprinkled with classical undertones,
rap lyrics chasing bhangra, bouncing off of buildings,
the sky a new constellation of sounds
pulsating like shooting stars across this city.

Let's play this game,
let's play it everywhere.
Till we do not know where the
highs and lows of this city
begin and end,
till the backbone of London is a
helix of hybrid noises, words, neon colours and shapes
for young people to skip and dance across.
So that wherever they go
their footprints will leave traces
of the city they played in.
So that wherever they go
they are left reeking
with this strange kind of beauty

and they will not live less
they will not live less
they will not live less. ■

■ A Strange Kind of Beauty was commissioned by cultural education charity A New Direction, as a response to the challenges young Londoners face in contributing to the creative life of the city. Watch an animation of the poem at www.anewdirection.org.uk/a-strange-kind-of-beauty

Do you know someone who would make a great Fellow?

Your nominations are a great way to add the expertise and enthusiasm of friends and colleagues to the Fellowship community. You can nominate them online at www.theRSA.org/nominate. We will send a personalised invitation on your behalf and notify you if your nominee becomes a Fellow.

Fellows have access to the brightest new ideas, innovative projects, a diverse network of like-minded people and a platform for social change



Are you getting the most from your Fellowship?

Using our new website you can find other Fellows based on their skills, interests or location. Just update your Fellowship profile to tell others what you're interested in and how they can connect with you.

Visit www.thersa.org/new-website to update your profile and start getting the most from your RSA Fellowship

Fellows have access to the brightest new ideas, innovative projects, a diverse network of like-minded people and a platform for social change

