

**THE  
B!G  
iDEA**

# Innovation

# starts

# here



**Impact Report**  
2021 – 2022

“There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress.”

Edward de Bono

Supported by

Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme  
2017–2022



# Contents

|          |  |                                 |    |
|----------|--|---------------------------------|----|
|          | <b>Welcome</b>                           | Letter from Kim                 | 2  |
| <b>1</b> | <b>The B!G Idea</b>                      | Impact in numbers               | 6  |
|          |  | Who we are                      | 8  |
|          |  | Why we exist                    | 9  |
|          |  | Mission and vision              | 10 |
|          |  | Review of the year              | 12 |
| <b>2</b> | <b>A Creative Educational Programme</b>  | Our work with young people      | 16 |
|          |  | Our programme                   | 20 |
|          |  | Educational policy              | 22 |
|          |  | Teacher success                 | 24 |
|          |  | Student success                 | 28 |
|          |  | Student showcase                | 32 |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Connecting Industry and Education</b> | Our mentors                     | 38 |
|          |  | Mentor and partner testimonials | 42 |
|          |  | Wider industry policy           | 46 |
|          |  | Our partners                    | 48 |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Innovation Starts Here</b>            | Looking ahead                   | 58 |
|          |  | Support our work                | 60 |

# Letter from Kim



Over the past two years, we have experienced some of the most disruptive events in modern times, consequently shaking up priorities, societal norms and entire industries. Through it all, I saw nothing but resilience, bravery, and leadership from our team, our partners, our mentors, our teachers, our community and, most importantly, our B!G Idea students.

On a national scale, not investing in creativity will constrain Ireland's innovative spark and creativity has largely been misunderstood and under utilised in our country. Creative thinking and problem solving are exactly what we need as we move into a solution-focused era. Creativity is the prerequisite for innovation, you cannot innovate without getting creative!

The nature of work and the needs of society require new skills, which are different from those of today. We know that these future skills are creative skills; skills that can be taught, skills we need now. Unsurprisingly, creativity has been identified as the top skill required by 2025 (as identified by reports from World Economic Forum, LinkedIn & Forbes), yet there has been no true focus on teaching these skills.

This widening skills gap is becoming more and more apparent and we need a paradigm shift in skills and mindset to be ready for the future - skills including problem-solving, critical thinking, resilience, ideation and, of course, creativity. On a national scale, not investing in creativity will constrain Ireland's innovative spark and creativity has largely been misunderstood and under utilised in our country. Creative thinking and problem solving are exactly what we need as we move into a solution-focused era. Creativity is the prerequisite for innovation, you cannot innovate without getting creative!

Cue The B!G Idea! Our multi-award-winning, FREE, innovative creative educational programme for 15 to 19 year olds empowers students through inquiry-based learning. Students develop critical thinking skills through socially conscious, co-created projects that connect

“The only unique contribution that we will ever make in this world will be born of our creativity” Brené Brown

them with industry, their peers, their community and their world. These critical skills will help them through their education, life and work. They are applicable to every future profession, even those not invented yet.

Since we launched, we have worked with 2500 students and 100% have learned new critical skills for life. 501 incredible industry professionals have believed in us and have helped students through their learning journey. We have worked with students and teachers from TY, LCA and Youthreach and shown that creative thinking and problem solving can be taught and transcends boundaries. We have grown and matured as an organisation, welcoming new team and Board members along the way. Most importantly, we have celebrated each and every student and their journey in our end of year Showcases and exhibitions.

Looking to the future we must empower young people, from all backgrounds, to believe that they can effect change in our world. The coming year will see us expand our networks and increase our funding goals to reach 4000 more young people, embracing a shared island approach through a pilot in Northern Ireland. Our EU project is a collaboration that will see us test the waters in new regions throughout Europe. We need to do everything in our power to create an environment for young people to realise their potential and become changemakers, innovators, leaders, pioneers and trailblazers that can positively impact not only their own communities but also wider society. That's our vision and it drives everything we do as an organisation. The overwhelmingly positive impact we are seeing from students and teachers is why I am so

proud of the work we have achieved through The B!G Idea. In this, our first impact report, I am excited to share the what, why and how of The B!G Idea, as well as our vision and plans for the future. It is a celebration of the achievements, collective effort and impact that The B!G Idea community has made in democratising creative thinking and equipping the next generation with the creative mindset to tackle the BIGGEST problems society faces. Once again, thank you from the bottom of my heart to everyone that has supported and continues to support The B!G Idea – demonstrating the power of collaboration. Innovation starts here!

**Kim Mackenzie-Doyle**  
Founder & CEO



# The B!G Idea



“Through the B!G Idea I would say what we have all collectively learnt is that no matter how young you are, you can make a difference and that our voices should be heard. The B!G Idea has empowered us to make a difference and taught us to be more creative when approaching a problem.”

**Emma**  
TY StudentT, Coláiste Pobail Setanta

1



# Our impact in numbers

25000+

creatively empowered young people!

501

diverse industry mentors

99%

of students reported learning new skills

98

teachers have facilitated our programme

49

participating schools

40+

partners have supported our work

22

counties

7m

reached through social media and PR

10,000

student waiting list

355

student pitch submissions

12

student awards

9

critical skills

8

B!G issues tackled by our students

8

academic partners

5

awards won

3

student groups - TY, LCA and Youthreach

2

amazing Showcases

1

EU project

1

accreditation from NCCA

1

teaching support app developed

# Who we are

The B!G Idea is a free multi-award-winning creative educational programme that empowers the next generation to tackle big, local to global challenges using creative thinking.

## Who we are

The **B!G Idea** allows for students with different learning abilities to acquire new skills, gain advice from industry leaders, connect learning from other subjects and gain confidence in tackling the biggest challenges in the world.

Our students are supported by **hundreds of B!G Mentors** throughout the programme, helping them to learn the most in-demand skills in the world! Uniquely, The B!G Idea programme **bridges the gap between industry and education.**

The B!G Idea develops game-changing, creative thinking skills in students, bringing problem solving, resilience, empathy, critical thinking, research, communication and collaboration to 15 to 19 year olds at a time when it can make the BIGGEST difference.

## Why do we exist?

Right now our young people are facing the biggest issues the world has ever seen. These students are our **change-makers**, our future and we have a responsibility to equip this generation with **cognitive and emotional tools** that will empower them to solve the challenges that they are facing on a local, national and global scale.

**Innovative interventions and radical collaboration are needed now more than ever and what drives innovation? Creative Thinking.**

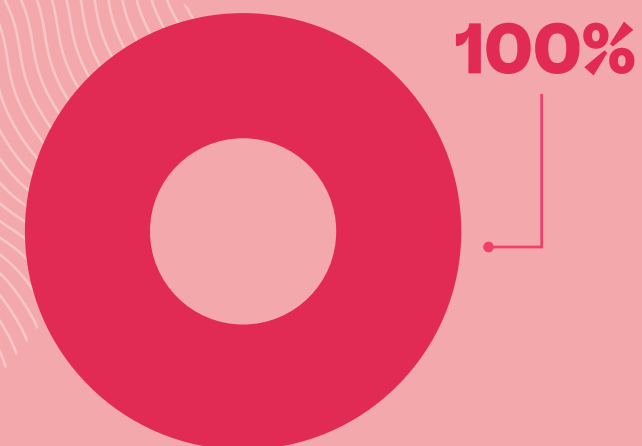
“I think that The B!G Idea has huge benefits for students going into the senior cycle. They have built this resilience and these creativity skills that can help them find solutions”

Mark Danaher,  
TY Teacher, Desmond College

# 45,000

children and young people are **living in disadvantaged circumstances across Ireland.**

Decreased optimism

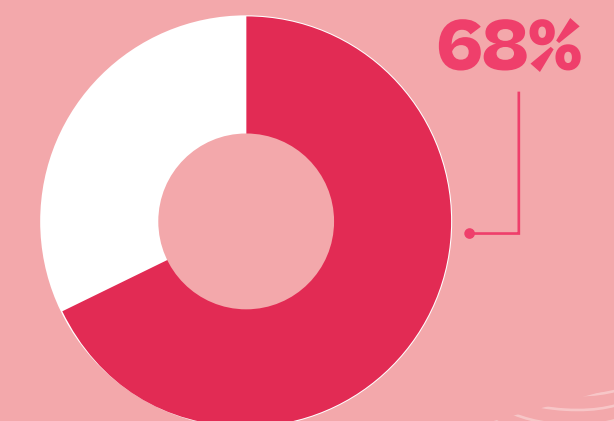


**100%** have experienced a decrease in levels of life satisfaction and optimism from 1st year to 6th year.



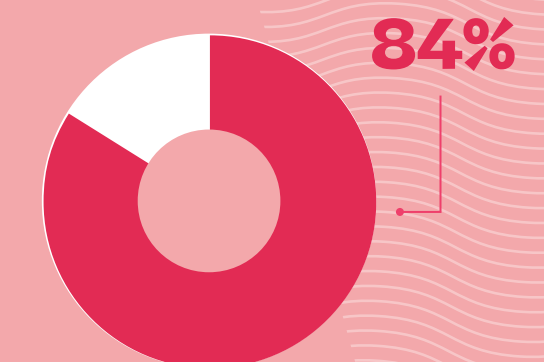
**One in four young people in Ireland have literacy / educational needs.**

Anxiety about the future



**68%** of students surveyed feel that they have experienced **depression or anxiety** and that they are **stressed about their future.**

Skills shortage



**84%** of students from deprived areas **don't believe they have the skills to succeed in a professional career.\***

\*See supporting documents





### Our Mission

We want to democratise creative thinking; empowering the next generation with critical creative skills to tackle local and global issues.

### Our Vision

Our vision is for a world where industry and education are truly connected, where young people have the creative skills, ability, resilience and confidence to take on B!G challenges.





# Review of the year



## Programme Expansion

**This year The B!G Idea established itself as a nationally recognised, award-winning creative educational programme.**

Since its inception, The B!G Idea has grown and expanded to ensure equitable access for all students. In 2022, our programme welcomed students from the Youthreach sector and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) through two successful pilot projects.

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is a two year Leaving Certificate available to students who wish to follow an alternative senior cycle programme with a strong practical and vocational emphasis.

The Youthreach programme provides two years integrated education, training and work experience for early school leavers. Both LCA and Youthreach work to support students that face a greater degree of educational disadvantage when compared to young people in the general population. We were delighted that one of the projects (The Lounge) submitted by Youthreach students was selected by industry mentors out of over 2000 students to win the Mental Health category.

**“[My favourite part of The B!G Idea was] working together with my friends to make new discoveries and try to solve problems to better our community and even the world!”**

**Alexandra,**  
TY Student, St Leo's College

## Our B!G Achievements

### European Expansion

- In 2022, The B!G Idea secured an EU KA2 education project partnership with four other partners across Europe.

### Teacher App

- The first B!G Idea Community of Practice App for Teachers launched in January 2022. We have seen high engagement from new teachers with 100% of 2021 teachers engaging.

### Growing even B!GGER

- Joe Hogan, EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2011 and current judge was elected to Chair of The B!G Idea Board of Directors in March 2022. Joe is Founder of Openet and CTO of Amdocs and advisor to Enterprise Ireland. We continue to actively grow our Board to support our ambitions.
- To support expansion plans and sustain our growth in 2022, we built up our team with two new full time employees, with further plans (funding dependent) to onboard two more in 2023.

### Mentor Community

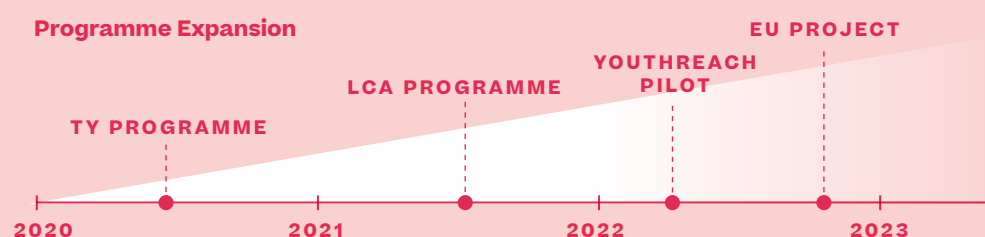
Through individual membership, teams and B!G partners, we have **built a paying mentor community of 400 B!G mentors**. This amazing community is vital to the success of the programme, supporting our students financially through the programme, as well as with their time and expertise.

### The B!G Showcase & Exhibition

- Our programme culminates in our online B!G Showcase, globally viewed and enjoyed by thousands, and our online exhibition, celebrating each and every student project, our teachers, mentors and partners. Our 2022 Showcase was even bigger and better than before with key supporters joining us in the studio and amazing guest speakers.

**This was the perfect celebration to round off an incredible year of growth for The B!G Idea.**

## Our B!G Achievements



The B!G Idea Community of Practice App for teachers launched in January 2022



Joe Hogan, Former EY entrepreneur of the year, Founder and CTO of Openet and new Chair of the Board at The B!G Idea

# A Creative Educational Programme



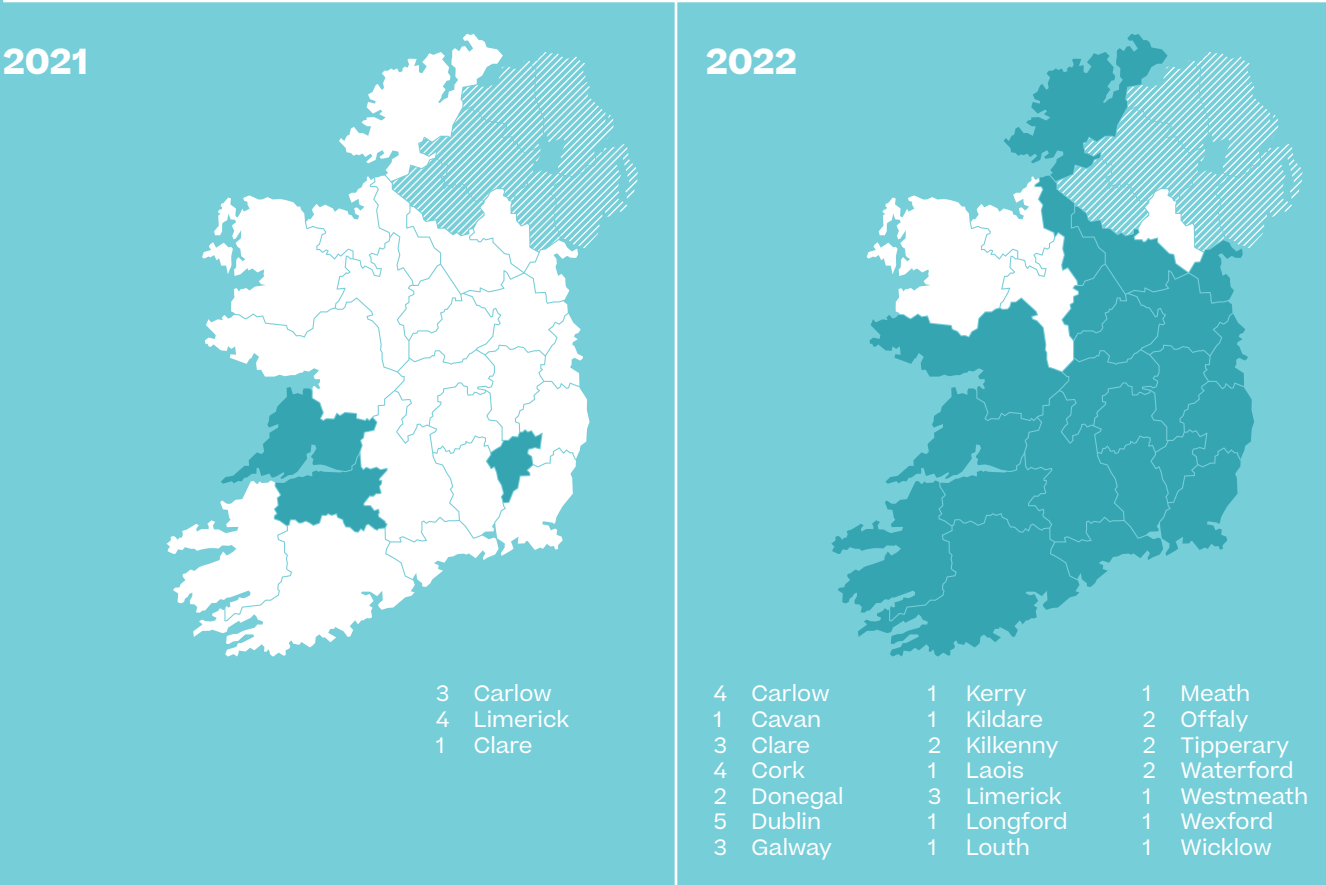
“ [I learned] that I am able to come up with meaningful ideas to improve the community we live in ”

Michael,  
TY Student, St Flannan's College

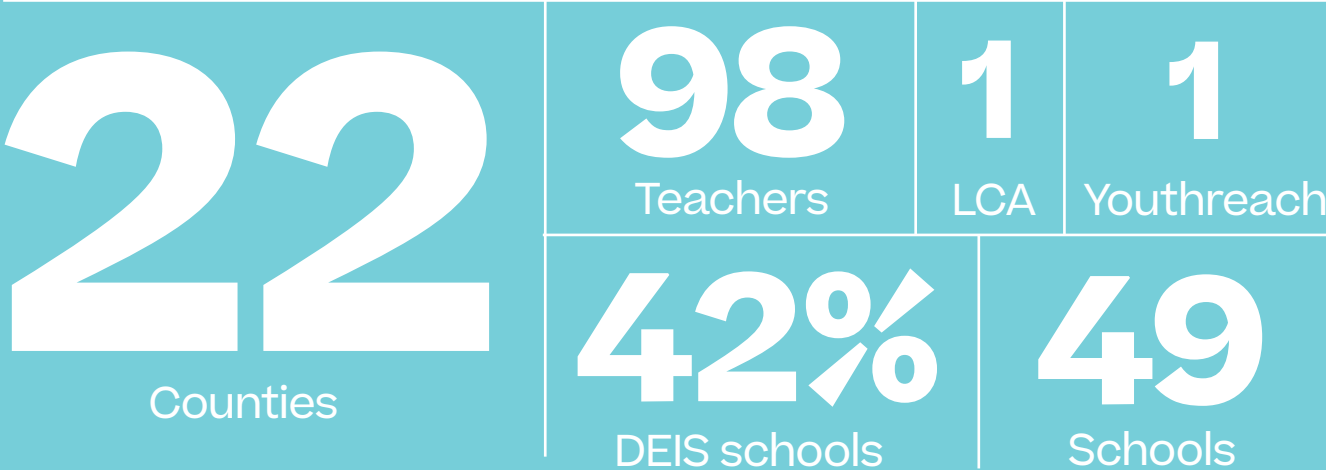
# 2



# Our work with young people



KEY STATISTICS



Students who participate in The B!G Idea are keenly aware and concerned about the local and world-impacting challenges that await them. The B!G Idea equips students, including those who experience educational disadvantage, with the creative mindset they need to tackle the B!GGEST problems society faces. It empowers them to change their world.

We have worked with students from 22 counties all across Ireland, in both **urban and rural areas**. We have supported 98 teachers, from varying subject disciplines, to deliver the programme in 49 schools, 17 of which were DEIS schools (schools in areas of **socio-economic disadvantage** whose students are at risk of **educational disadvantage**). The B!G Idea works to give young people from **all areas and backgrounds** access to the kind of game-changing, creative learning that bridges the gap between industry and education.

Our programme is student focused. Co-creation forms a key part of the learning process, which has proven to increase engagement from students. Our B!G Idea students are keenly aware and concerned about the world-impacting challenges that await their generation. They are consulted to identify the top social stressors in their own lives, which in 2022 included **Climate Change, The Housing Crisis, Mental Health, Equality and Healthcare**. The B!G Idea introduces participating students, including those who experience educational disadvantage, to a creative mindset. This shift to a collaborative and solution driven approach helps them to tackle the biggest problems both they and society face.

Since our launch in 2021, over **2500** students have experienced The B!G Idea.

- **100%** stated they learned new skills
- **92%** feel empowered to tackle challenges in their lives and within their community because of The B!G Idea
- **96%** shared that The B!G Idea had a positive impact on their life

We aim to equip **4000 young people** with these in-demand skills for life in 2023. We are excited to be introducing a pilot to students in Northern Ireland which will bring vital creative skills to even more young people through a shared island approach.

“I became really creative, I never knew I could actually be that creative and I’m really hard working I thought. I actually put my head down doing this B!G Idea and I really liked doing it.”

Jake,  
TY Student, Portlaoise College



**“Creative Ireland has supported The B!G Idea because we passionately believe that creativity is going to be a critical skill for the future. The work of The B!G Idea is so important because creativity is a critical competency for the future, not just the jobs of the future but to everybody’s wellbeing so there is nothing more important than that curiosity, inventiveness, ability to fail and try again. These are all critical life skills and if you can do it while having loads of fun in the classroom why wouldn’t you?”**

**Tania Banotti,**  
CEO, Creative Ireland

Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme  
2017–2022





# Our programme

## Programme development OCT – DEC

The B!G Idea team work with our students, teachers, mentors and partners to develop the programme content and to co-create project briefs.

- Students
- Teachers
- Mentors
- Partners

1  
Research

At the research stage, students discover more about the co-created B!G Idea briefs and they learn how to work collaboratively in teams.

Students are encouraged to carry out different forms of research to develop an understanding of the issues identified and how they impact real people and their communities.

2  
Ideation

Informed by their research, student teams create a range of ideas. Through guidance and support, students develop a pitch to communicate the story of their idea so far and how it responds to the issue. Industry mentors review each pitch and provide feedback, guidance and encouragement to students.

MENTOR INPUT

STUDENT PITCHES: MENTORING INPUT

3  
Development

At this stage, students analyse the **feedback** from industry mentors and further develop their proposed solutions. They learn critical creative skills in prototyping, testing and refining their B!G Idea.

4  
Presentation

In the closing weeks, students learn how to prepare and communicate their B!G Idea solution. They present a 2-3 min video outlining their learning journey, their experience and their insights, 1 x A3 of their B!G Idea proposal and 1 x A3 of their learning process.

MENTOR INPUT

STUDENT B!G IDEA: JUDGING

5  
Showcase

MAY

Our B!G Showcase is an online celebration of The B!G Idea students, teachers, mentors and partners. Students are awarded prizes and medals for each category and a trophy for the overall B!G Idea winning project.

An on-line interactive exhibition shares every student's B!G Idea to the world.

### Creative skill development

Each week students focus on developing a range of creative skills. Lessons engage students in fun and accessible creative activities while also expanding students' understanding of creative thinking. Lessons also include weekly interviews from creative professionals sharing how they apply creative thinking to solve problems.

# Education and policy

The B!G Idea is a skills based creative education programme that has been dynamically aligned and integrated with a number of educational frameworks and policies, including the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

### National Educational Framework Alignment

#### Transition Year Programme:

- Local and Global Citizenship and the Social Moral and Personal Transition Year Areas of Study
- TY Key Skills: Critical and Creative Thinking, Working with Others, Being Personally Effective, Communicating, Information Processing

#### Junior Cycle: Cross-curricular links

- JC Key Skills: Being Literate, Being Numerate, Managing Myself, Staying Well, Communicating, Being Creative, Working with Others, Managing Information and Thinking
- JC Indicators of Wellbeing: Respected, Active, Responsible, Resilient, Aware, Connected
- JC Individual Subject Learning Outcomes

#### Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA):

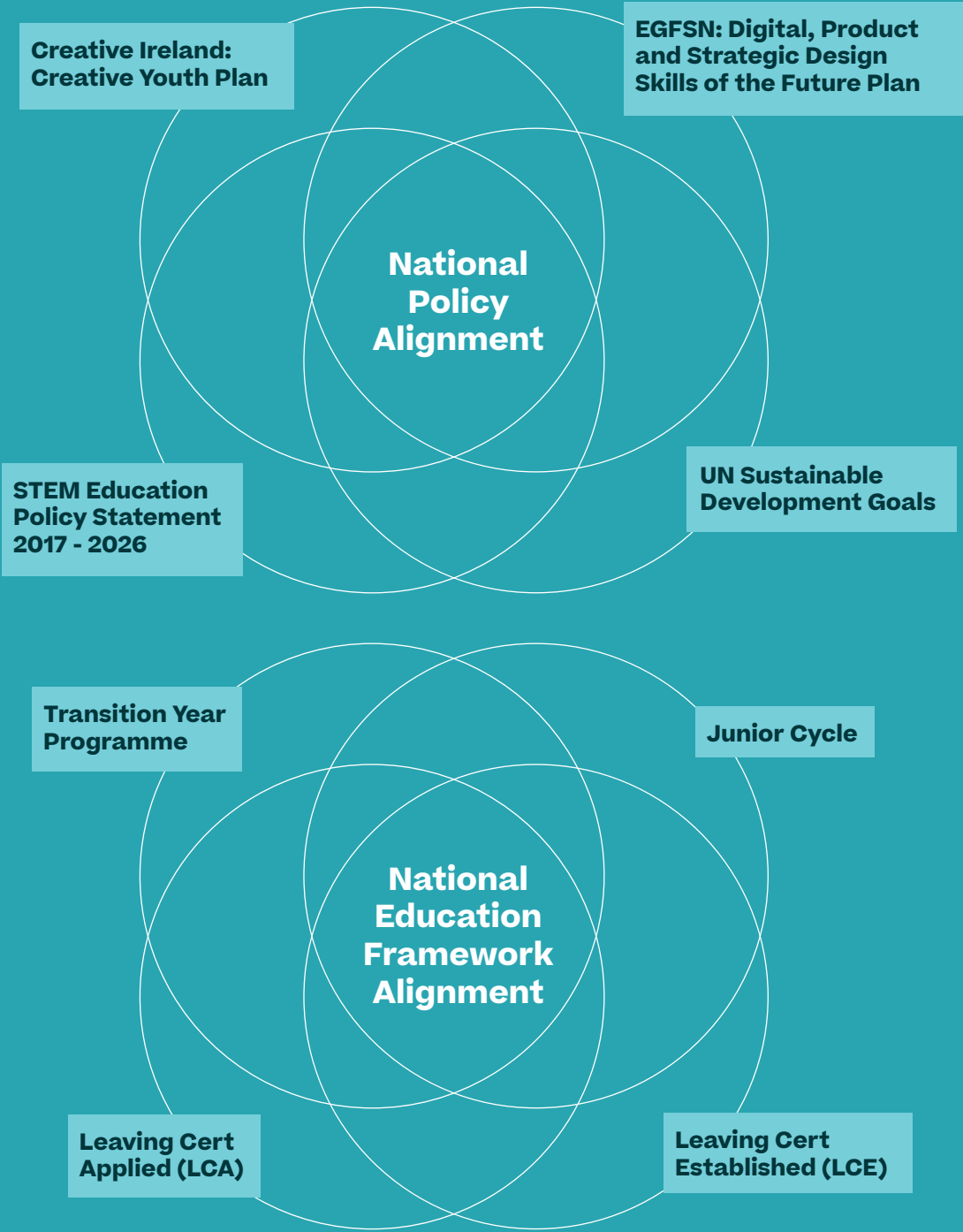
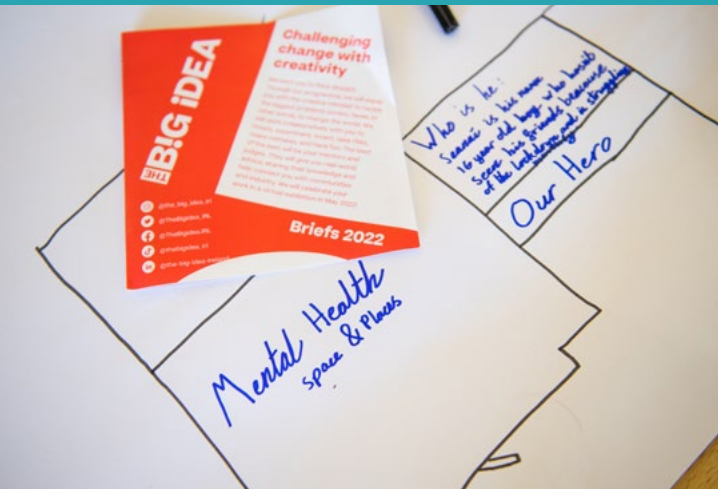
- Social Education and Vocational Preparation Modules
- Aligns with the Underlying Principles of the LCA
- Senior Cycle Key Skills: Critical and Creative Thinking, Working with Others, Being Personally Effective, Communicating, Information Processing

### Leaving Certificate Established (LCE) Youthreach:

- Suitable for both 5th and 6th year students
- Youthreach Soft Skills Framework
- Senior Cycle Key Skills: Critical and Creative Thinking, Working with Others, Being Personally Effective, Communicating, Information Processing

### National Policy Alignment

- Creative Ireland; Creative Youth Plan 2017 - 2022
- The STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026
- GFSN Together for Design: Digital, Product and Strategic Design Skills of the Future (published 2019)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)





# Teacher success

## Deepened Understanding

# 100%

of teachers reported a deepened understanding of creative thinking and its application in industry

## Recommends the Programme

# 92%

of teachers surveyed would recommend the programme to other schools

## Supports Senior Cycle Transition

# 84%

of teachers agreed that the experience will support their students as they move into senior cycle and beyond

## Enjoyment

# 100%

of teachers enjoyed delivering The B!G Idea programme

### Survey Results

All results taken from our post programme teacher survey. 62 teachers responded out of a total of 75 who took part in The B!G Idea programme in 2022



### Research survey

Teachers, students and schools come in all shapes and sizes and each teacher delivering The B!G Idea programme has their own **individual background and school experience.**

Teachers from all subject disciplines including **Science, Business Studies and Physical Education** facilitated The B!G Idea programme. **For many teachers this was their first experience of creative thinking. They all recognised the potential to apply aspects of the programme to enhance teaching and learning in their individual subject disciplines.**

For us, success for teachers was focused on them engaging in our process, unlocking their creative potential and supporting their students to find theirs. To better understand teachers' experience throughout our programme, qualitative and quantitative impact data was captured at key milestones. **100% of teachers reported a deepened understanding of creative thinking and the application of creative thinking in solving problems!**

### The B!G Idea App Launch

As well as providing all teaching resources and lessons, the first B!G Idea Community of Practice App for Teachers was launched in January 2022 to further support teachers in their facilitation of our programme. The high level of teaching and learning support, as well as the benefits of our peer learning based community app provided to teachers through the programme play a key part in the programme's success.

“I loved the resources, guidance and opportunities to deliver similar lessons to other classes. It has been a positive experience where I have learned and developed in my own teaching.”

**Sinead Ní Fhathaigh,**  
TY Teacher, Meánscoil San Níoclás



“I learned that I’m not as shy as I used to be. I don’t really like to talk much or throw out my ideas or be involved with groups but I actually did pretty good on this project with my classmates.

I’ve definitely learned to speak up more and not be afraid of people judging your opinion because they could have the very same.”

Tori,  
Youthreach Student, *Kilkenny Youthreach*





# Student success

The B!G Idea is democratising access to creative education ensuring that it is accessible and free to all students, including students experiencing educational disadvantage and young people with additional educational needs.

We design content for all learning styles and abilities creating a truly inclusive learning experience. Through our classes we embrace failure and exploration, encouraging students to develop resilience and curiosity.

The B!G Idea programme generates **curiosity** among students, **developing confidence** and allowing all students to voice their ideas. **Universal Design Principles and Guidelines** are integrated throughout The B!G Idea programme making it **accessible to all students**.

Given the diverse background of the students engaging with the programme, success **looks different to everyone. For some students success is having a winning project, for others it's making a new friend, working in a team, communicating their opinion to their peers or discovering new tools to help them solve problems they might not even have been aware of beforehand.** It's learning new techniques like how to research and new tools like meditation. Every little piece of The B!G Idea

process is important to someone. Our key metric of success is students engaging in the creative process - **it is truly about the journey, not the destination!**

Throughout our programme impact data is collected ensuring that we have an oversight of how the programme supports young people learning the skills that matter. We achieve a baseline by measuring indicators at the start, middle and end of the programme. These indicators track student progress, skill development and learning outcomes. Data proves our theory. We are filling a gap in the education system, complementing the current curriculum with 100% of our students learning new skills.

“Our favourite part was working in a team and collaborating with each other as we all have different ideas but work well together.”

Annabel,  
TY Student, St. Brendan's Community College

100%

Answered Yes when asked:  
Did you feel you learned new skills through The B!G Idea?

100%

Answered Yes when asked:  
Do you have a deeper understanding of creativity now than before The B!G Idea?

98.5%

Answered Yes when asked:  
Do you feel more confident in using creative thinking in the future to address challenges you might encounter?

97%

Answered Yes when asked:  
Did you enjoy The B!G Idea programme?

94%

Answered Yes when asked:  
Do you feel more confident in using Creative Thinking in the future to address challenges you might encounter?

### Skills learned by our students:

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <br>Creative thinking | <br>Problem solving | <br>Working in a team |
| <br>Research          |  | <br>Communication     |



**“The fully cross-curricular nature of the programme allows for all learning abilities to gain new skills, interact with industry leaders, connect learning from other subjects and gain confidence in tackling the biggest challenges in the world.”**

**Fiona Byrne,**  
Head of Education, The B!G Idea



# Student showcase

1000s

of online attendees at the Showcases

12

national student awards

2

interactive student exhibitions

2

amazing BIG Showcases



## Showcase

Our Showcase is the BIGGEST event in The BIG Idea calendar! Our **students, teachers, mentors and partners come together to celebrate** the success of all of our incredible students. In 2022 we welcomed incredible guest speakers: **Ailbhe Keane, Founder and CEO of Izzy's Wheels; Leo Clancy, CEO of Enterprise Ireland and Maria Walsh, MEP** who talked to the students about the importance of the skills they had learned and the impact they can have on the world. The worthy **winners of each category** were announced along with the **overall BIG Idea winner. All student teams who had embraced the creative process to tackle the BIG challenges were celebrated.**

## Exhibition

**The BIG Idea virtual exhibition celebrates the work of every single student.** We share their incredible BIG Ideas as well as their process and learning journey. While all of the projects and ideas that won a prize were fantastic, we are also interested in the process that the students follow for the programme. **Success in every form is celebrated each year!**

The exhibition is open to the wider public so they can explore all of the projects and communicate the potential for creative thinking to the wider community. The exhibition has experienced **international visitors from countries as far as Australia, Canada, South America, Africa and more.**

The exhibition is also a valuable **teaching and learning resource** for the incoming BIG Idea cohort. It demonstrates the range and diversity of students' final ideas and communicates that all engagement is celebrated and showcased.

Visit the Showcase at [thebigidea.ie/exhibition](https://thebigidea.ie/exhibition)





“Young people have great ideas and should be given a voice more often.”

Shane,  
TY Student, *Lusk Community College*

# Connecting Industry and Education



# 3

“The nature of work and the skills required for the next decade and beyond are different from those of today. Programmes like The B!G Idea significantly improve the outcomes for companies who will need innovation, creativity and critical thinking in the forefront as they press on into the future, with all of the challenges that lie ahead.”

Leo Clancy,  
CEO, Enterprise Ireland



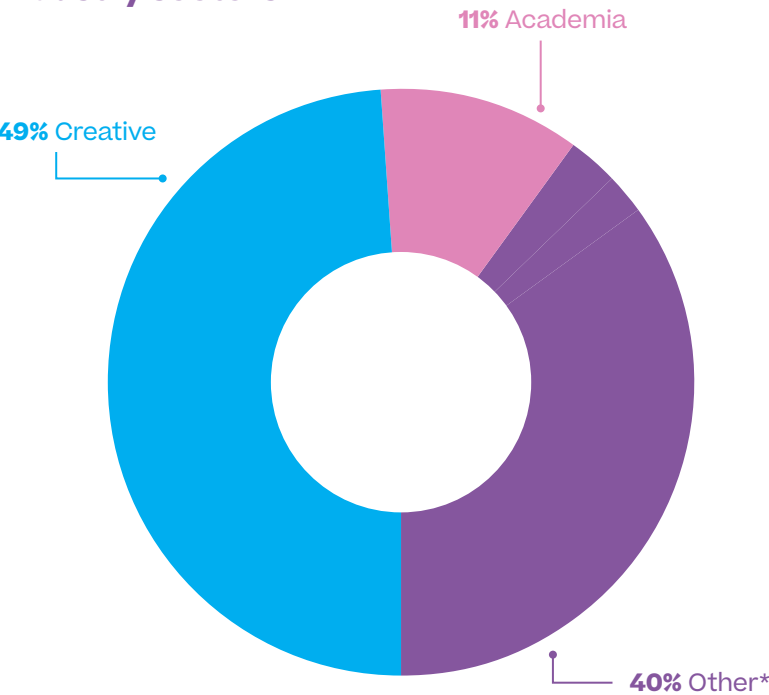
# Our mentors

Our mentors play an intrinsic role in The B!G Idea programme, providing a vital link between industry and education.

“The B!G Idea really bridges the gap between education and industry and students really grasped that. They felt that they were really being heard and that when they got the feedback from one of their mentors they felt that the mentors had really listened to their ideas.”

Mary Gorey,  
TY Teacher, St. Joesph's College, Thurles

Mentors by industry sectors



We are proud to be backed by industry and academia, with over 226 companies and third level institutions across Ireland represented by mentors on our programme.

In 2022, we had 400 paying mentors supporting 2000 students across Ireland. We have created a progressive community who support students both financially and with their time and expertise across key touchpoints in the programme. Through their experience, they can build meaningful connections with like-minded professionals and be part of a dynamic network of cross sector professionals in our B!G community. B!G mentoring offers a unique, flexible and individualised approach to mentoring and can be done from anywhere in the world.

There is a lot of knowledge locked in industry and we have created a platform where brilliant, experienced professionals are actively sharing knowledge to help young people to learn the most in-demand skills in the world. Industry professionals from every sector interact directly with students through a supportive, safe, and inclusive digital environment. Mentors are matched with student projects and offer constructive feedback and advice at key milestones.

Mentors play a key role in The B!G Idea, supporting the development of lesson content and helping us to shape the programme ensuring that it stays relevant and tied to real world learning outcomes that students will need now and in the future.

Our focus on diversity and gender balance is key to the mentor panel. We want to introduce our students to a wide variety of professionals throughout the programme, from graduate up to CEO level. It is so important that our students get to see the relevance and impact of the skills they are learning come to life, as well as the relevance and impact of these skills across multiple industry sectors and society.

|       |                           |
|-------|---------------------------|
| 501   | Mentors                   |
| 226   | Companies involved        |
| 1     | B!G mentor community      |
| 2800+ | Hours of expertise shared |

|     |          |
|-----|----------|
| 49% | Creative |
| 11% | Academia |
| 40% | Other*   |

\* Technology, Healthcare, Finance, Retail, Consultancy, Construction, Engineering, Energy









# Mentor stories



## Why become a mentor?

- 1

Low time commitment
- 2

Flexible and online
- 3

Join as an individual or a company team
- 4

Belong to our mentor community
- B!G Impact

I think The B!G Idea is so important for our younger generation because it gives the students the skill set to come up with solutions for the big problems. They're the ones that are bringing the new ideas. They are able to see past the problems and actually suggest solutions that we over complicate.

**Elena Rimeikaite**  
Kooba, 2022 Mentor and partner

I would have benefitted enormously from a programme like this. The B!G Idea has made mentoring easy and enjoyable too. Mentors definitely get as much back as we give.

**Neil O'Connell**  
Microsoft, 2022 Mentor

I would say to anyone considering being a mentor on the 2023 programme is to do it absolutely without any hesitation. It's been a fantastic journey for a mentor and just to be here and to see what it's meant to so many people has been really sort of life affirming, positive and fun, it's been great.

**Glyn Griffiths**  
Design Partners, 2022 Mentor and partner

It was a pleasure to play my (tiny) part in this really important initiative for young people... Every student approached it differently, they even read it differently and that is actually how it should be. We're presented with problems every day and they're customer problems, they're product problems, they're pricing problems and financial problems but they all can be approached very differently. That's what I'm going to bring back to my team now, to make sure they're thinking about different ways to approach the problems we see everyday.

**Cormac Donnelly**  
Irish Life Health 2022 Mentor

A really valuable learning experience for both students and mentors, I wish there'd been something like this when I was in school!

**Aoife Flynn**  
McCann Dublin 2022 Mentor

“The B!G Idea reflects the Netwatch vision of a culture of care, innovation and passion for people. It allows the young people in our communities to understand their creative potential and see the difference they can make in their worlds.”

**Laura Murphy,**  
Netwatch, 2021 & 2022 Mentor and Award partner





“The impact of mentor involvement in The B!G Idea highlights for students the diversity in industry and career pathways. The mentors really opened their eyes to the various jobs that are out there that wouldn’t be necessarily talked about and how different skill sets can open their world to huge opportunities.”

Emer Magee,  
TY Teacher, St. Patrick’s Comprehensive School





# Wider industry policy

The B!G Idea programme is equipping the next generation of changemakers and leaders in Ireland with the skills they need to thrive as they move beyond senior cycle into the world of work.

It is a transformational time and skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, resilience, ideation and, of course, creativity are exceptionally important. They are the most sought-after skills that have been recognised globally as a way to help young people fully unleash their potential.

The World Economic Forum states they are the most worthy skills employers will look for in employees in 2025. These skills are applicable to every future profession and can be used in both industry and society.

“As one of Ireland’s leading healthcare companies, we are passionate about ‘Inventing for Life’ in all that we do. We are very proud to support The B!G Idea and the next generation of creative inventors and innovators who will shape Ireland’s future.”

MSD,  
2021 & 2022 Award partner



## EGFSN Design Skills Implementation Group

The design community should explore the development of a Transition Year Design Programme to promote the uptake of design as a career.

## European Skills Agenda 2020

Beyond technical skills, the labour market increasingly needs transversal skills like working together, critical thinking and creative problem solving.

## Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025

Transversal skills are the building blocks for the development of the ‘hard’, ‘vocational’ or ‘technical’ skills required to succeed in the labour market.

## Impact 2030 - Ireland’s Research & Innovation Strategy

*Pillar Three: Innovation Driving Enterprise Success and Pillar Four: Talent at the Heart of the Research and Innovation Ecosystem*

## UN 2030 Agenda (2016 Sustainable Development Goals)

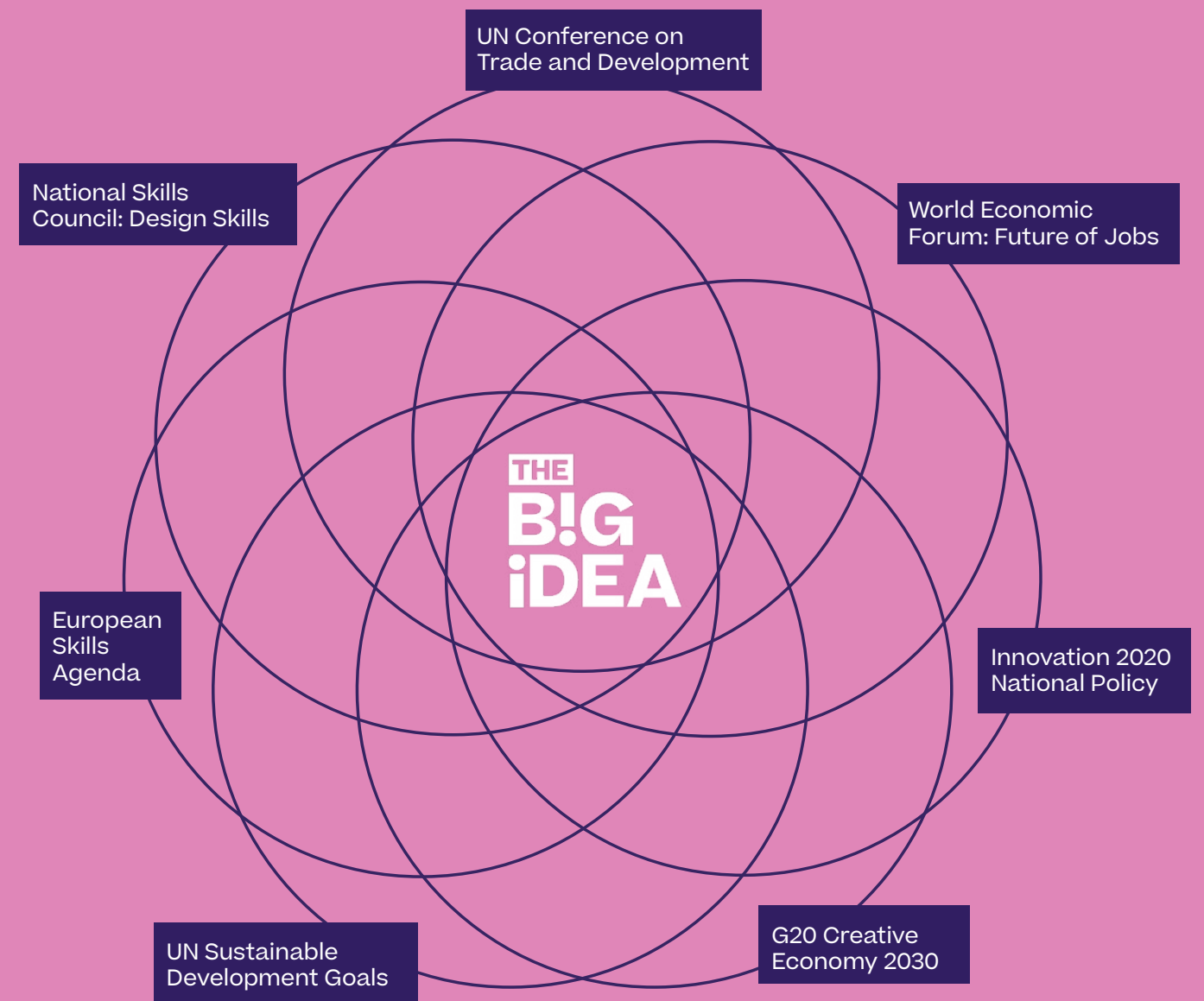
The 2030 Agenda inspires us to think creatively by leveraging innovative approaches and critically rethinking the way we approach the development challenges of today.

## World Economic Forum

The top skills rising in prominence in the lead-up to 2025 include critical thinking and analysis as well as problem-solving, and skills in self-management such as active learning, resilience.

## The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

(The Creative Economy) can foster income generation, job creation and export earnings while promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development.



# Our partners

“Aerogen are delighted to get involved with The B!G Idea as a partner of the Mental Health award. We are passionate about supporting our local community and this programme offers a great opportunity for our global team to share their skills and expertise to help students develop solutions to real problems.”

Ciara Power,  
Aerogen, 2022 Mentor and Award partner

Aerogen®  
Pioneering Aerosol Drug Delivery

Progressive companies all over Ireland recognise the skills of the future are creative skills. They also recognise that our programme is delivering the skills that will enable the employees and entrepreneurs of the future to make innovative change to industry and society. These skills will significantly improve outcomes for companies and communities who will need innovation and critical thinking to progress and solve the challenges that lie ahead.

We are proud to have such a wide range of support from our industry and academic partners who share the same beliefs. We achieved this impact together and it simply would not have been possible without their support. We were delighted to continue a significant number of partnerships from our inception while welcoming even more companies, institutions and organisations across Ireland supporting our work.

We have been part-funded by the Creative Ireland Programme with a strategic partnership with Institute of Designers Ireland (IDI) since our first trial. The foresight from Creative Ireland, the all-of-government culture and wellbeing programme that inspires and transforms people, places and communities through creativity

empowered The B!G Idea and helped build the foundations that we now continue to work on.

Grant funding continues to be important for our growth and development. We were delighted to have had success with Carlow Local Enterprise Office, Rethink Ireland, CEUD (Centre of Excellence of Universal Design) and ESB Energy for Generations fund.

Eight third level institutions across Ireland backed our vision to democratise creativity and innovation, supporting us with academic mentors which added an additional layer of expertise and validation to the student experience.

Our ambition is to build long-lasting relationships and create an even bigger impact for our

students through a regional, national and multinational partner network.

Every company and industry across the world need B!G ideas that add value, not just to them but to our society as a whole. We all need to play our part in solving the challenges that we are facing. The B!G Idea successfully brings together some of the leading companies in Ireland with the next generation of global citizens and employees, around the skills and issues that matter the most.

|     |                              |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 40+ | Diverse company partners     |
| 8   | Industry sectors represented |
| 4   | New funding streams          |





# B!G supporters

Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme  
2017–2022



The B!G Idea is part-funded by the Creative Ireland Programme with additional support from our corporate partners:

## AWARD PARTNERS

**Aerogen®**  
Pioneering Aerosol Drug Delivery

**CJ Fallon**  
ESTABLISHED 1895

**MSD**  
INVENTING FOR LIFE

**netwatch**  
Ireland and UK

**RIAI**

## FOUNDATION PARTNERS

**BIGMOTIVE**

**bradley:**  
THE BRAND AGENCY

**buddalife**

**CCS**  
Carlow Toolmaking Services

**dolmen**

**DCI**  
Design & Crafts  
Council Ireland

**DELMEC**

**designpartners**

**HOW MIGHT WE?**

**DYNAMO**

**Each&Other**

**kooba**

**Linesight**

**HUSKIES**

**RichardsDee**

**SUIR**  
ENGINEERING

**TapCreative.**

**Red Dog**

**unum**  
TECHNOLOGY CENTRE CARLOW

**ttm**  
Healthcare

**UX Design  
Institute**

## BELIEVERS

**NCAD DUBLIN**

**Institute of  
Art, Design +  
Technology**  
Dún Laoghaire

**GRIFFITH COLLEGE**

**TUS**

**Ulster  
University**

**UCC**  
University College Cork, Ireland  
Colaiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

**INSTITUTE of  
TECHNOLOGY  
CARLOW**  
Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Cheatharlach

**TU DUBLIN**  
TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY DUBLIN

## GRANT PARTNERS

**Centre for  
Excellence in  
Universal Design**  
**NDA**

**ESB**  
**Energy for  
generations**

**Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil**  
Local Enterprise Office

**INSTITUTE  
DESIGNERS  
IRELAND**

**RETHINK  
IRELAND**





“Empowering the next generation to engage more actively with issues affecting the built environment is a key objective of the RIAI and starts with curiosity, excitement, and knowledge. The B!G Idea is a programme which aims to tackle challenges through creativity, and the RIAI is delighted to partner with the programme.”

RIAI  
2022 Award partner

RIAI



# Innovation Starts Here



“Creative skills are the most in-demand skills that have been recognised by the EU as a way to help young people fully unleash their potential and be ready for the challenges ahead. We need BIG ideas that add value to our society and solve the challenges we are all facing. Creative thinking and problem solving are exactly what we need as we move into a solution focused era.”

Maria Walsh, MEP

4



**“Creativity asks us to be inquisitive, to question the status quo and to explore new and better ways to do things. In learning how to question and to work creatively through a problem, students are developing essential and adaptable life skills.”**

**Niamh Cooney,**  
Head of Development and Sustainability, *The B!G Idea*



# Looking forward



As we head into our third year we will take our impact and learnings and continue to think B!G. As with everything we do we will continue to listen to young people to understand how we can best support them. We are driven by our vision for a world where industry and education are truly connected, where young people have the creative skills, ability, resilience and confidence to take on B!G challenges in life. We are excited by the possibilities ahead and we will focus on key areas for our next year to help bring vital creative skills to as many young people as possible.

Our core focus is to expand the 2023 B!G Idea programme to accommodate 4000 students nationally. Over the next three years we will continue to develop and refine our programme, expanding our impact through junior cycle into senior cycle, supporting opportunities to apply transversal creative thinking skills across subject disciplines. We remain committed to increasing our LCA, Youthreach and DEIS outreach to support disadvantaged youth.

To support this much needed growth, our philanthropic offering, Think B!G Funding, will focus on enabling students from the most deprived areas and disadvantaged backgrounds to access our creative learning experience and gain confidence in themselves and their own learning.

This expansion will also require the support of 800 mentors from across industry sectors, representing national, and even international, spread for mentors and students. This will also involve a revision of mentor involvement in the process, as well as our partnership model and corporate mentoring offering. We plan to further integrate mentors and partners in programme development through mentor CPD and The B!G Idea Steering Group.

An agreed EU partnership including schools in Croatia and Greece will also give us the ability to develop relationships with European schools, allowing us the ability to research the positioning in foreign schools with an alternative language, different education systems and professional associations.

We have established strategic partners in Northern Ireland, including education and corporate partners and an academic partnership with The University of Ulster. These important relationships will support the design, development and implementation of a pilot B!G Idea programme in the NI education system in 2023, cementing a shared island approach to creative learning.

Collectively we are building momentum to make a real and long-term difference in young people’s lives; supporting a better society for us all. With the foundations of creative thinking we can effect much needed change. Because one B!G Idea can change their world.

|      |                               |
|------|-------------------------------|
| 4000 | Students                      |
| 800  | Mentors                       |
| 2    | New funding streams           |
| 2    | EU partnership                |
| 1    | Northern Ireland school pilot |

“We are proud to partner with The B!G Idea, who is leading the way in creative education, increasing the potential of Irish students and Ireland as whole.”

CJ Fallon,  
2022 Award partner





# Support our work!



We are on a mission to democratise creative skills. In 2023 we aim to equip 4000 students with the skills and tools to prepare for life in a complex and challenging world. We cannot do it alone. If you are a student, school, teacher, parent, professional or company and would like to find out more or support our work, simply visit our website at [thebigidea.ie](https://thebigidea.ie) and click ‘GET INVOLVED’.

To talk to us about Think B!G Funding and how you can financially support disadvantaged young people on our 2023 programme, please email [hello@thebigidea.ie](mailto:hello@thebigidea.ie)



## Teacher

### Teaching Creative Skills

Our multi-award winning free creative programme has been designed to empower your students with the 21st century skills they need. Developed by educational and industry experts, your students will have the opportunity to gain transferable skills to support them in tackling the BIGGEST problems they might face.

#### Benefits

- 1. Empower your students** with the skills they will need for their future and to activate social change in their local communities through applied creative thinking.
- 2. A fully supported programme** that has been designed by award-winning experts where materials, class content and resources are provided for free to students, parents and schools.
- 3. Learn new skills** from the programme that can enhance teaching and learning in your individual subject discipline.

“To anybody considering supporting The B!G Idea I would say you absolutely have to do it. It’s really vital that The B!G Idea as a not-for-profit organisation gets the support from industry and from stakeholders and partners to ensure the longevity of the programme. I can’t express enough how important The B!G Idea is to moving into the next generation of young people who are going to be workforce ready.”

Charlotte Barker,  
CEO - IDI, 2021 & 2022 Mentor and Partner



## Individual

### Become a B!G Mentor

We’re on a B!G mission to create a better world through creative innovation. Sign up to become a mentor today and join our growing community of over 400 mentors in 2023. Year one and two of The B!G Idea were a huge success and we need even more B!G mentors to support 4000 students on our programme next year! Will you join us and support the next generation of creative problem solvers?

#### Benefits

- 1. Support our students.** B!G mentors directly fund two students, equipping them with creative skills for life while offering advice and support.
- 1. Join like-minded people.** Collaborate, connect and grow with other mentors in an inclusive, diverse and forward-thinking community of professionals from all industries.
- 1. Be a part of The B!G Idea.** Help us to shape the development of The B!G Idea programme for young people and be a part of our exciting future.

## Company

### Become a B!G Partner

As a B!G partner your company will be one of the most progressive organisations in the country, bridging the gap between industry and education. In 2023, we want to empower 4000 students with creative skills for life. We’re on a mission to create a better world through creative thinking and we cannot do it alone. We need your support.

#### Benefits

- 1. Impact.** Make a real impact in our students’ lives, empowering them to think differently and be the change they want to see.
- 1. Awareness.** Deliver your social impact, sustainability and marketing goals and be part of our B!G story!
- 1. Engage Employees.** We offer an individualised mentoring journey that is flexible, fun and can be tailored to suit everyone.



# Thank you!

## Board Members

### Joe Hogan

Founder & CTO  
Openet Global

### Fergal Doyle

COO Arboretum  
Holdings

### Mary Clare Byrne

Global Consumer  
Retail Program  
Management Lead  
(MBO), Microsoft

### Kim Mackenzie-Doyle

Founder and CEO  
The B!G Idea

### Fiona Byrne

Head of Education,  
The B!G Idea

## Former Board Members

### Lesley Tully

CEO Penny and  
Former Head of  
Design at Bank  
Of Ireland

### Kelly Mackenzie

CEO White Bear  
Studios

## Advisor

### Ronan Healy

How Might We

## Website

### Philip Farmer

Unthink

Thank you to all of the incredible B!G Idea team. We would also like to thank our Think B!G funders, the individuals and companies who have made significant financial contributions to our work, enabling us to grow and support even more young people.





# Because one B!G idea can change their world...

See how you can take part, sign-up or become a mentor at **thebigidea.ie**

“You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.”

Maya Angelou

## Supporting documents

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