

2020/21

Annual Impact Report

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Be informed.



Be heard.



Be curious.

CONTENTS

1

Why our impact is needed

2

What we do to make an impact

3

What our impact has achieved

4

Future impact

— “ —

In order to support and empower the next generation, we need to involve them in all matters that will impact their future.

— ” —

WHY OUR IMPACT IS NEEDED

— “ —

Children have a right to be heard and to have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

— ” —

ARTICLE 12 OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

Children & Young People

Children and young people need to:

see what is happening in the world around them from a range of different perspectives



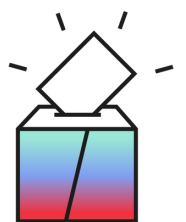
Be informed.



Be curious.

explore issues through activities that promote questioning, enquiry & discussion

use their voices to articulate their views and be proactive in initiating positive change.

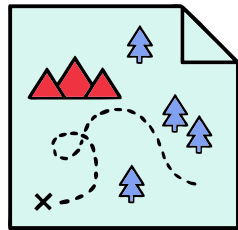


Be heard.

WHY OUR IMPACT IS NEEDED

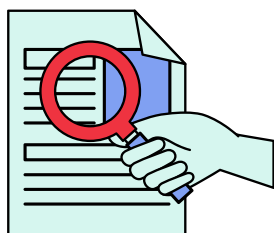
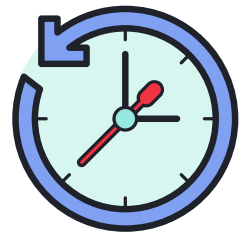
Teachers & Senior Leaders

Teachers and Senior Leaders want:



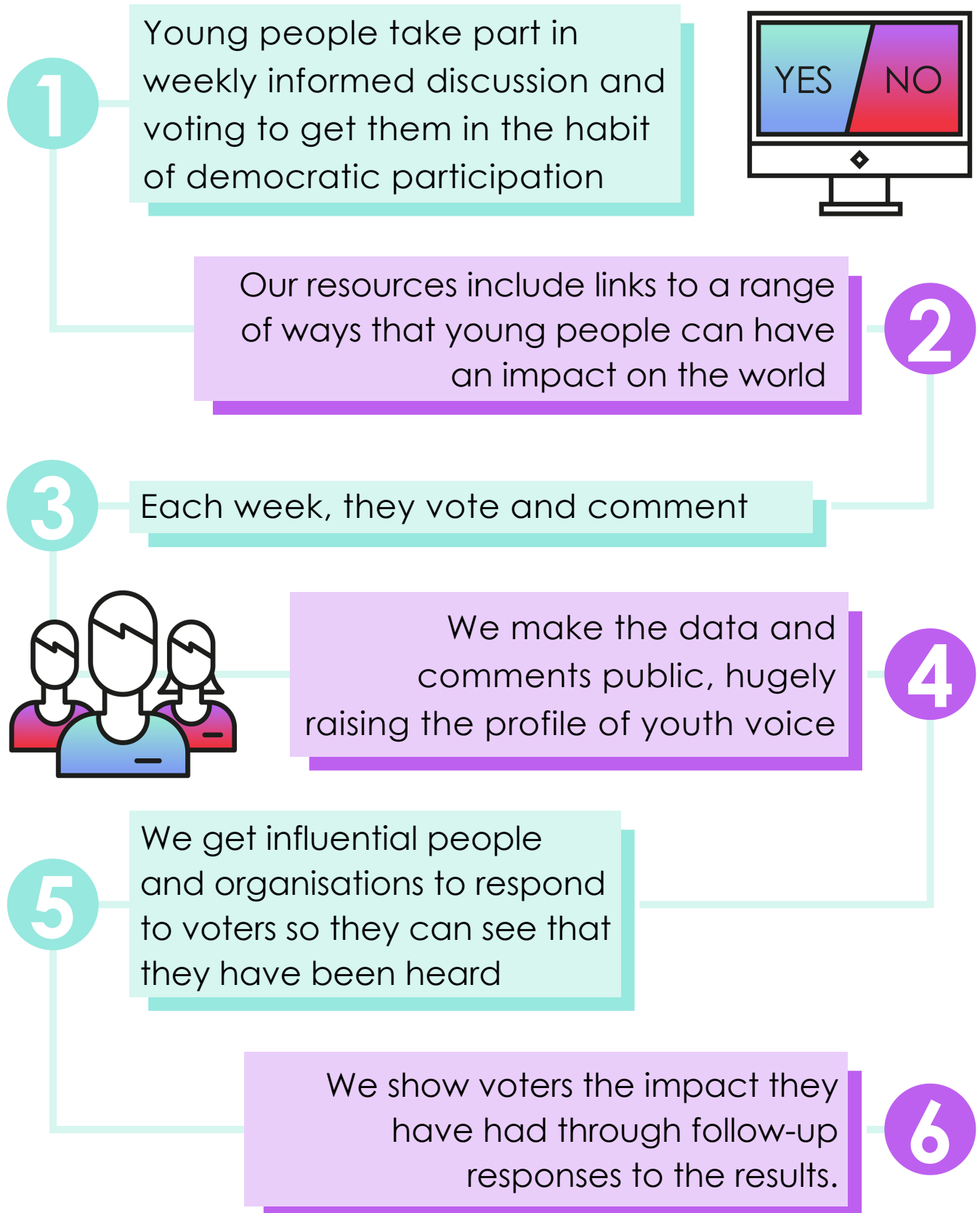
children to explore educational, social and political issues and to be empowered with the skills and values they need for a healthy life

a time-saving, cost-effective and consistent way to deliver PSHE, Citizenship, Oracy, Tutor Time and Assemblies



to meet and evidence curriculum requirements such as SMSC, Prevent, British Values and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

WHAT WE DO TO MAKE AN IMPACT



WHAT WE DO TO MAKE AN IMPACT

This year, children and young people from 800+ schools have voted 792,695 times on 40 questions.



We can have as many as 25,000 children and young people voting each week.

From Brexit to the benefits of nature, from consent to the future of cash, we cover a huge range of topics. Here are just some of the questions voted on during 2020/21:

"Should professional sport be free from Coronavirus rules?"

"Is involvement with a criminal gang always a choice?"

"Should we share our medical data?"

"Does uniform limit self-expression?"

"Is the refugee crisis really over?"

"Will learning ever be the same again?"

"Would you pay more for fairly traded products?"

WHAT WE DO TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Each week, we send the results of the vote with comments from voters to influential people and organisations. Here is some of the feedback we have received in the last 12 months:



Feedback: "Is streaming good for the music industry?"



Kim Bayley, Chief Executive of The Entertainment Retailers Association

"Streaming is now the dominant way to consume music, particularly for under 25s. ERA believes that the impact of streaming on the music industry has been overwhelmingly positive, returning a declining music business to growth and creating an entirely new sustainable music ecosystem. From the low point of 2014 the value of the UK recorded music market has grown every year thanks to streaming."

Find out more about how artists and songwriters are paid from Kim in the Notes section!

"We thank everyone for their valued observations ... British artists, including a new wave of rap, hip hop and dance talent, are doing especially well by harnessing the global reach of streaming – over 500 are now being streamed an incredible 50 million times or more globally a year. This is giving them successful careers and rising earnings!"



Gennaro Castaldo, Director of Communications at BPI (representing UK independent & major record labels)

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Feedback: "Is uniform a barrier to self-expression?"



"At Mosaic Trust we believe in equality, diversity and inclusion. Uniforms can be helpful at levelling a playing field for all students as with uniforms you don't get a clear depiction of those who can afford big brands versus those who have to wear lower end attire. Allowing young persons to see beyond what one is wearing is important to help them see a person before they see the brand. Some uniform policies go too far however not allowing trans and gender non-binary individuals a freedom of choice which can result in anxiety and increased dysphoria. Other policies try to address hairstyles of young persons of colour are oppressive in their very nature. Well designed, flexible uniforms with welfare of young persons at heart will make a positive difference in any school."

Lukasz Konieczka, Executive Director of Mosaic LGBTQ+ Young Person's Trust



The VoteTopic results were shared with...



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Feedback: "Are the days of cash numbered?"



FT

Roger Blitz, World News Editor, The Financial Times

"The pandemic has driven the use of digital transactions because of their convenience and because of the public's reluctance to handle cash. ... Some countries in the developing world may not be able to keep up with the shift to digital because they lack the technological infrastructure of developed countries. But the shift from cash is no longer about whether it will happen but how quickly." (Full quote in Notes)

"In a world where more and more transactions are contactless, it'll be fascinating to see whether cash remains relevant, or really does become 'old money'! It's such an important question for young people who will drive the economies of the future, and ultimately make that decision."

The Economist

Tom Bigglestone, School Relationships Manager, The Economist Educational Foundation

The VoteTopic results were shared with...



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Feedback: "Do we take the benefits of nature for granted?"



Mark Rowland, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation

"Nature is our great untapped resource for our mental health and wellbeing, and sometimes we take for granted the nature we have around us. I am delighted to see the VotesforSchools [result] for Mental Health Awareness Week 2021 and that children and young people of all ages are recognising the importance of nature for their mental health. It is important we equip the next generation to connect and appreciate nature. By opening themselves up to a meaningful relationship with nature, children and young people can reduce feelings of stress, anxiety and social isolation and are more likely to be advocates in protecting the natural world."

"At a glance, the results show us that the older you are, the more you are likely to believe that we take nature for granted. This shows us one of two things, either younger people are able to appreciate the benefits of nature more and lose this as they get older, or they just don't realise the benefits that nature can have. Outdoor education is so vital when you're growing up as it shows you that you can still connect with nature in so many ways, and especially that it needs protecting. Keep finding reasons to get outside and make sure that everyone knows just how great nature is for us!"



Natalie Harling, Director of Business Development, The Outward Bound Trust

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WHAT WE DO TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Advisory Role

In addition to our topics, we sit on the following boards and networks to contribute to their work, amplify youth voice, and further inform our approach:

- ✓ Centre for Democracy
- ✓ Our Shared World
- ✓ Oracy Network (and APPG)
- ✓ Counter Terrorism Youth Advisory Group
- ✓ Political Literacy Network (and APPG)
- ✓ Youth Advisory Network
- ✓ /together Policy Committee



WHAT WE DO TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Focus Groups 2020-21

We work with selected partners to take discussion further and gather more detailed feedback from young people on key issues. This year we had three focus groups:

Careers in cyber security with IBM and the National Cyber Security Centre

Diversity in examinations with The Black Curriculum

Future of Education with Protection Approaches for UNESCO

We had more than 1,200 individual responses from 100+ schools that have been used to inform and shape campaigns and strategy.

“

The Black Curriculum would like to extend their thanks to the Youth Advisory Board for getting involved in such impactful work! Your contributions to the conversation around diversity and Black history in exams were incredibly insightful and is something we at The Black Curriculum strive to address. Black history should not be limited to October's Black History Month, but should be represented in the curriculum all year round, as well as in exams. Thank you all for offering your time and insight on this important issue!

”

THE BLACK CURRICULUM, June

WHAT WE DO TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Projects



VotesforSchools goes global

We have had our first successful international pilot project with the British Council's Connecting Classrooms programme.

VotesforSchools has been used with a cohort of schools in London and Nepal, with a focus on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“

I was inspired to make my own films from the VfS sessions. I have learnt that I can change the world and that I can make a difference to children's futures. I want to become a presenter and make my mark in the world.

”

“

What I like about VfS is the quizzes from all around the world. The topics have made me think creatively.

”

“

VfS has taught me about the world. It has helped me to find out about the world around me. I know so much more about the world and lots of facts that I did not know.

”

WHAT WE DO TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Commissions

Commissions 2020-21

We created custom careers-based resources for use in Buckinghamshire, Luton, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire Secondary schools, as work experience was not possible due to the pandemic.

The NHS (HEE) had bespoke resources on careers in Podiatry, Therapeutic Radiography and Pharmacy for their schools website.

350 WOW Show schools received these resources to inspire young people's futures.

— “ —

It is more important than ever that young people understand their local labour market to enable them to make informed decisions about their next steps and their futures. It was a pleasure to work with VotesforSchools, who have a collaborative approach that ensures that the needs of their clients are met, along with using their expertise in how to communicate effectively with the student audience. The lesson resources which VotesforSchools created for us bring the labour market to life in a truly innovative way that will ensure that the aspirations of young people are raised and that they can feel positive about their future in the county.

— ” —

NIKKI WAKEFIELD, Oxfordshire LEP

WHAT OUR IMPACT HAS ACHIEVED

In June 2021, our Youth Advisory Board discussed:



Do you learn enough in school to prepare you for life in the wider world?

What is the purpose of education today?



Youth Advisory Board

1

We invited all our schools to nominate students to join our Youth Advisory Board

2

22 children from 11 Primary and Secondary schools attended three online meetings this year in October, February and June

3

We facilitated discussion on what are the most pressing issues for young people, which VoteTopics they would like to see, and how they think youth voice can be amplified.

WHAT OUR IMPACT HAS ACHIEVED

Student Voice Awards

Student Voice Awards 2021

Our annual awards promote Student Voice by recognising and celebrating high quality and inspiring practice. For these awards, we provide success criteria and receive examples from schools of the impact of youth voice from individuals and the school as a whole.

— “ —

The VotesforSchools lesson debates on the BLM movement, Pride, Petrol & Diesel Cars, Feeling Safe, Gender Bias and more recently Consent have led to positive change when shaping college policies involving consultation with key stakeholders. Students have spoken up at year group committees passionately in support of their beliefs, backed up with pertinent evidence. As a consequence, changes have been implemented with SLT & Governors' agreement on issues such as car engines idling on campus & student safety talks.

Our next step is to invite the local MP into school to meet with the Student Council. This will then consolidate their understanding of what using their voice means beyond school but also how they can get involved in the local area, not just national elections.

— ” —

SVA APPLICATION, MAY 2021

WHAT OUR IMPACT HAS ACHIEVED

In 2020/21:



our data was included in the Protection Approaches Future of Education report for UNESCO (2021)

we were centrally involved with the /together campaign, a national movement to promote community cohesion



we collaborated on The Big Ask with the Children's Commissioner, the biggest ever survey of young people.







Protection Approaches

FUTURE IMPACT

For Voters

We will develop our impact for voters by:

-  giving children and young people more genuine and meaningful opportunities to have a voice and influence decisions which affect them
-  engaging more young people in weekly voting
-  increasing our Youth Advisory Board capacity by catering for separate Primary and Secondary meetings
-  amplifying youth voice through the media and partnerships.

FUTURE IMPACT

For Schools

We will develop our impact for schools by:



providing more resources and support on sensitive and challenging topics



increasing participation in our Student Voice Awards



seeking opportunities for school-based research and case studies.

“

An absolutely fantastic resource with excellently planned lessons which engage all ages in our school from 11 to 18. Our teachers love using it and the topics are always relevant. I would recommend this to any school. It's a fantastic way of getting students discussing topical issues that they wouldn't usually know about. The staff are always on hand to answer any questions and help with any issues. Thank you, I can't wait for another year's worth of resources.

”

ANNUAL SURVEY, JULY 2021

FUTURE IMPACT

Upcoming Project



1

We are working with the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) in the run-up to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26).

2

There will be a package of free resources for Primary, Secondary and 16+, on the question: “Will climate change affect children's rights?”

3

We aim to get 100,000 voices heard, not just here in the UK, but from across the world.



Find out more about our impact on our website:

www.votesforschools.com

Or contact Lizzy Lewis, Head of Impact:

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