

**THE  
B!G  
iDEA**

**Impact Report**  
2023 – 2024



# **Impact**

# **Through**

# **Innovation**

“If I didn’t do The B!G Idea I’d still be on my own and not really talking to people. But now that I am I have a lot more friends and I’m enjoying it here.”

**Latoya,**  
Learner, *Kilkenny Youthreach*

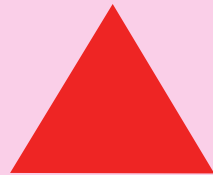


# Table Of Contents

About Us	2
Letter from Joe	3
Our Approach	4
Strategy to 2027	6
Our Impact in Numbers	8
Transition Year Story	10
Youthreach & CTC Story	12
Northern Ireland Story	14
Leaving Cert Applied Story	16
Our Showcase 2024	18
Our Winners	20
Investing in our Future	22
Industry Workshops	26
Our B!G Partners	28
United Nations: SDG's	30
CEO Look to the Future	31

# About Us

Our mission is to empower young people to solve challenges in their lives and their communities through innovative education and industry collaboration.



## Creativity

We think differently and stay curious to innovate, constantly striving for improvement with agility and fun. Willing to take risks and experiment, we 'flearn' and find a way.



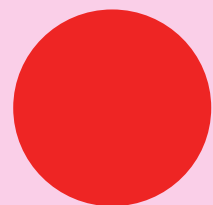
## Communication

Communication is key. We build strong connections through empathetic listening and clear, respectful interactions, fostering transparency and mutual understanding.



## Collaboration

We collaborate to achieve more, by embracing challenges and fostering an inclusive environment, where everyone has a voice and helps each other grow.



## Commitment

We demonstrate commitment by taking accountability, holding responsibility and always doing what we say we are going to do.

**At The B!G Idea, we believe that creative thinking is a transformative power that can reshape the world. Founded in 2020, our mission is to democratise creative thinking, empowering young people from all walks of life to tackle personal, local and global challenges.**

Through a unique blend of innovative education and industry collaboration, we equip students with the skills to think critically and solve problems creatively. Our multi-award-winning programmes connect students with industry professionals, offering mentorship and

real-world project experiences that inspire confidence and foster a new generation of change-makers. Together, we're not just preparing students for the future; we're helping them create it.

# Letter From Joe



As we celebrate our achievements, this Impact Report is a testament to our commitment to empower young people through creative thinking.

**Joe Hogan**  
Chairman of The B!G Idea,  
EY & EU Entrepreneur of the Year  
2011, Co-Founder of Openet, CTO of  
Amdocs.

### The B!G Idea - Year 2024/2025

**Dear Friends and Supporters,**

**As Chairman of The B!G Idea, I am thrilled to present our 2023/2024 Impact Report. This year has been marked by transformative experiences for our students, significant growth, and continued accessibility to our programmes, reaching 10,000 students across Ireland. We have maintained our commitment to providing these programmes free of charge, enhancing accessibility for families and schools, and equipping young people with highly sought-after skills.**

This year, we introduced a September entry point to better accommodate the needs of teachers and students, which proved to be a resounding success and expanded access to our award-winning programmes empower the next generation to think B!G, act boldly, and create a brighter future. Thank you for being a part of this journey. We look forward to another year of innovation, growth, and positive impact with you.

I am immensely grateful to our mentors who have generously shared their time and expertise, significantly boosting our students' confidence and development.

Highlights of the year included the Student Accelerator at Autodesk's headquarters in Dublin and our largest Showcase event at Mastercard HQ. Both events exemplified the creativity and teamwork of our students, nurtured by their mentors' guidance.

Our partnerships with industry leaders and educational institutions have been crucial. As we continue to grow, we look forward to welcoming new partners to further enhance our impact. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated team, mentors, partners, volunteers, and Board for your unwavering commitment. Thank you for being part of this journey; your efforts are always truly appreciated.

**“We empower the next generation to think B!G, act boldly, and create a brighter future through innovation, mentorship, and accessible education for all.”**

**Joe Hogan,**  
Chairman, The B!G Idea

We anticipate another year of innovation and positive impact.

Best regards,  
Joe Hogan Chairman  
The B!G Idea



# Our Approach

In an ever-changing world, we align with international and national policies advocating for creative thinking, digital literacy, and inclusive education. Our programmes foster a culture of innovation and collaboration, equipping young people with tools to navigate a dynamic global economy and meet contemporary standards of educational excellence and societal contribution.

“They’ve also learned that their own ideas can apply to the real world and that they’re good. They will be the people having these ideas and will be contributing to issues such as global warming in the future.”

Kerry Anne Walsh,  
Teacher, Borris College



## National Educational Framework Alignment

### Transition Year Programme

- Cross-Curricular Links
- Programme Statement Alignment
- Key Competencies

### Junior Cycle

- Key Skills
- Indicators of Wellbeing
- Individual Subject Learning Outcomes

### Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

- Social Education and Vocational Preparation Modules
- LCA Principles Alignment
- Senior Cycle Key Skills

### Youthreach & Community Training Centres (CTCs)

- LCA
- National Framework of Qualifications Level 3 & 4
- Youthreach Soft Skills Framework

### Northern Ireland Education

- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
- Learning for Life and Work and Careers

## 2024 Wider Policy Alignment

### OECD/ PISA 2022 Creative Thinking Assessment

Stresses global education’s need for the integration of creative thinking in curricula, teacher training and assessments.

### EU Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP) 2021 - 2027

Outlines a strategy to enhance digital literacy, skills, and infrastructure across EU member states to support inclusive and innovative education. Resetting education for high quality, inclusive and accessible European digital education.

### Sharing Works: A Policy for Shared Education (2015)

Promotes collaboration between schools in Northern Ireland to enhance educational outcomes and foster community cohesion.

### Investing in a Better Future (2023)

Outlines reforms to Northern Ireland’s education system to enhance equity, quality, and sustainability.

### Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland Skills for a 10x Economy (2021)

Highlights plans to enhance workforce skills to drive innovation, economic growth, and competitiveness.

### Economic Mission Statement for Northern Ireland (2024)

Highlights current priorities for economic development within Northern Ireland which include ‘good jobs’, ‘promoting regional balance’, ‘raising productivity’ and ‘reducing carbon emissions’.

### ESD to 2030

This cross departmental report underscores the vital role of integrating sustainability education, transversal skills, and youth engagement in shaping a sustainable future.

### Creative Youth Plan, 2023 - 2027

This initiative intends to enable the creative potential of young people through expanded initiatives delivered between 2023 and 2027.

### National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2023-2028

Prepared by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth. Emphasizes supporting the creative potential of all children, particularly those who are seldom heard, by enhancing their access, opportunities, and participation in meaningful ways.

### Action Plan for Education (2021)

Fosters creativity, innovation, and interdisciplinary learning as essential skills for a diverse and inclusive STEM workforce, driving economic growth, technological advancement, and broader societal progress.

### Department of Education Statement of Strategy, 2023-2025

Addresses the need to prepare students as active citizens and future leaders by equipping them with essential skills for a low-carbon, digitalized world, fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability.

### Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027

Aims to integrate digital technologies into education to enhance teaching and learning, preparing students for a digital future. Pillar 1: Supporting digital technology in assessment.

### Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2023)

Provides a comprehensive approach to promoting the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff in education. The policy emphasises principles that are young-person centered, equitable, inclusive, evidence-informed, outcome-focused, and collaborative.

### Ireland’s Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024- 2033

Enhances literacy, numeracy, and digital skills for all learners to thrive in a changing world. Pillar 4: Enhancing curriculum, teaching, and assessment. Pillar 5: Supporting diverse learners’ potential.

### STEM Education Policy Statement, 2017-2026

Pillar 3: Support “Creative Youth” school programmes combining STEM and the Arts including creative practitioners, creative technology, design thinking and other practices.

### DEIS Plan (2017)

This plan targets educational disadvantages to improve outcomes for underserved students in DEIS schools through support and innovation.

### Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025

‘Ireland’s Future’ benefits residents, businesses, and workers, recognizing skills as key to growth, opportunity, and global citizenship.

### The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Framework for the education sector’s contribution to sustainability at all levels.



# Strategy to 2027

Take a little look under the hood and see how we're setting ourselves up for success.

## Thriving Organisation

### Financial Sustainability

We're dedicated to strengthening our core funding streams and building financial resilience. Our strategy includes developing robust financial plans that prioritise high-impact areas such as staff retention and programme delivery, ensuring we have a sustainable financial base for the future.

### Technology and Innovation

We will continuously enhance our EdTech platform. This platform is designed to scale with our ambitions, supporting multiple programmes and improving overall programme management to meet our stakeholders' evolving needs.

### Organisational Culture

By 2027, we aim to cultivate a high-performance culture built on trust, engagement, and professional growth. We're committed to providing our team with targeted training and development, adapting roles to align with our growth, and offering clear career pathways to retain and motivate our staff.

## Elevating Impact

### Programme Accessibility

We're constantly working to elevate the effectiveness of our programmes through ongoing evaluation and redevelopment. Our outreach strategies are designed to increase enrollment and ensure accessibility. We're particularly proud of our inclusive programmes like Youthreach and LCA, which are making a real difference in the lives of disadvantaged youth.

### Enhanced Learning Outcomes through Technology

Our use of technology aims to significantly improve learning outcomes. We're setting specific performance targets to ensure our platform efficiently meets the needs of our students and educators, enhancing the overall impact of our programmes across the Island of Ireland.



## Collaboration & Community

### Expanding Partnerships

We're actively building and strengthening partnerships across industry, academia, education, and government sectors. Our focus is on co-creation and alignment with our mission, bringing together diverse groups to amplify our impact.

### Advocacy and Policy Influence

As part of our commitment to youth empowerment, we're positioning ourselves as thought leaders through strategic thought leadership pieces and advocacy events. By 2027, we aim to secure national recognition for our mentoring programme and integrate it into national policy frameworks.

### Community Engagement

We're developing a national collaboration network to support ongoing innovation and advocacy. This network is a powerful tool for promoting policies and programmes that empower young people, helping us make long-term broader impact.

# Our Impact in Numbers

We have made a strong impact since 2021.

11475

creatively  
empowered  
young people

3402

DEIS learners supported

1023

Mentors

444

Educators

407

Youthreach, LCA and  
CTC students supported

191

Diverse Educational  
Settings

38

Online Events Delivered

23

Counties participating in the programme

14

B!G Global Issues Tackled

17

UN SDGs Supported

10

In-Person Events Delivered

7

National Awards

6

Trial Programmes Completed

4

Bespoke Educational Programmes

2

NCCA Accreditations

1

OECD Appraisal

1

EU Project



Student Stories

# Transition Year and DEIS

Product Design

Climate Change



“I think your research around accessing green energy sources has given you a great foundation to create an impactful solution.”

**Each&Other**



**Grace Hyland-Martin,**  
Mentor 2023, Each&Other

Team Sunny Sonics, Transition Year students from St Leo's College, demonstrate how industry collaboration can turn ambitious ideas into impactful solutions.

**Team:** Sunny Sonics, St Leo's College, Carlow

**Teacher:** Siobhan Halpin

**Solution:** Solar Powered Phone

**Mentor Connections:**

Jane Lyons, Amdocs;  
Laura Blighe, Mr Price;  
Danielle Deveney, Each&Other;  
Stephen Ashe, Linesight;  
Ronan Murphy, Vision Green;  
Grace Hyland-Martin, Each&Other.

## Tackling Climate Change with Ingenuity

Team Sunny Sonics began their BIG Idea journey by investigating the challenge of climate change. Their initial research revealed the significant energy consumption and waste associated with mobile phones. This insight led them to conceptualise an environmentally friendly phone designed for social media influencers. By leveraging social media, they aimed to amplify their environmental message.

## Mentor Insights and Industry Collaboration

With expert support from mentors at Amdocs, Mr Price, Each&Other, Linesight and Vision Green Consultancy, the team refined their idea. These industry professionals provided invaluable insights, helping the students integrate solar technology and consider the circular economy to ensure a sustainable product lifecycle.

“The mentor input was excellent for bringing our attention to different things. Their fresh perspectives highlighted things the team hadn't considered.

**Siobhan Halpin,**  
Teacher, St. Leo's College

## Developing a Sustainable Solution

The mentor guidance was pivotal in shaping the final solution. Grace Hyland-Martin, Each&Other noted, “**I think your research around accessing green energy sources has given you a great foundation to create an impactful solution.**” This comprehensive support enabled Team Sunny Sonics to develop a more viable and environmentally conscious solar-powered mobile phone.

## Achieving Recognition and Impact

Team Sunny Sonic's journey highlights the profound impact of industry collaboration in education. With practical insights and expert advice, the students were empowered to develop a solution with tangible real-world benefits. Their experience underscores the value of mentorship in guiding young innovators to create meaningful and sustainable designs.



“The BIG Idea programme helped us grow confidence in our opinions and ideas!”

**Sunny Sonics,**  
Transition Year Team



# Youthreach and CTC

App Design

Cost of Living



“Your dedication has transformed your B!G Idea journey into a very impressive final solution.”

<epam>



Oleksandra Posharenko,  
Mentor 2023, EPAM

Team Motherboard, Kilkenny Youthreach, illustrate how industry collaborations can ignite key skills development and empower learners to create impactful solutions harnessing the positive power of AI.

**Team:** Motherboard, Kilkenny Youthreach

**Teacher:** Michelle Murphy and Deirdre Cotterell

**Solution:** Financial Management App

**Mentor Connections:** Carol McEvoy, Autodesk; Oleksandra Poshtarenko, EPAM; Caoimhe Mulhall, Linesight; Richie Hartnett, MTU.

## Addressing Financial Challenges with Innovation

Unsettled by the rising cost of living in Ireland, Team Motherboard focused on how AI and technology could alleviate financial burdens, especially for young people beginning their journey towards independent living. This led to the development of Cash Coach, a financial management app designed to reduce expenses and promote well-being

## Mentorship and Industry Support

Mentors from Autodesk, EPAM, Linesight and Mr Price played a vital role in guiding the team. They helped Team Motherboard focus on specific financial challenges faced by young people and investigate existing technological solutions. This mentorship inspired the team to utilise advanced AI to analyse spending patterns and provide personalised saving recommendations.



“Working in a team, everybody gets a say, everybody gets a chance, it’s just a better way to get stuff done!”

Motherboard,  
Youthreach Team

## Collaborative Effort and Skill Development

Working as a team allowed each member to contribute and have a voice in the project fostering a collaborative environment that enhanced problem solving and critical thinking skills. “Working in a team, everybody gets a say, everybody gets a chance, it’s just a better way to get stuff done!”

## Achieving Recognition and Impact

Industry support influenced the development of their final solution. Oleksandra Posharenko, Project Manager, EPAM, commended the team’s transformative progress “Well done Team Motherboard for your innovative approach to helping young people manage their personal finances! Your dedication has

“Problem-solving, critical thinking, seeing things through, these are all life skills learners are perfecting with The B!G Idea. Which will stand to them for life and future studies.”

Michelle Murphy,  
Tutor, Kilkenny Youthreach

transformed your B!G Idea journey into a very impressive final solution.” The team’s tenacity and perseverance in conceptualising their Cash Coach app, exemplifies how support from industry can encourage learners to practise practical skills preparing them for life beyond the classroom.





# Northern Ireland

App Design

AI For Humanity



“AI has brought in various exciting possibilities and is going to revolutionise every aspect of our lives, including education.”

 **MedicsHub**

**Murali Shyamsundar,**  
Mentor 2023, MedicsHub



Team Croí Uladh, from St Joseph’s Grammar School, Tyrone, exemplifies how our Northern Ireland programme and mentor model enriches educational experiences and prepares students to tackle real world challenges with confidence.

**Team:** Croi Uladh, St Joseph’s Grammar School, Tyrone

**Teacher:** Siobhán Uí Choinn

**Solution:** Detect AI App for Teachers

**Mentor Connections:**

Laura Campbell, Big Motive;  
Murali Shyamsundar, MedicsHub;  
Tanya Moore, SEI;  
Emer Carr, Ki Business & Tech.

## Harnessing AI for Educational Integrity

Recognising the rapid growth of AI and its potential impact on education, Team Croí Uladh leveraged their organisational and critical thinking skills to create Detect AI. This app enables teachers to scan learners’ assessments to detect the use of large language models like ChatGPT, ensuring academic integrity in secondary schools.

## Mentorship and Industry Support

Mentor feedback was instrumental in shaping the project. Experts from MedicsHub, Big Motive, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland and Ki Business & Tech guided the team to delve deeper into user needs and practical applications, enhancing their confidence and motivating them to refine their project further.

## Embracing Challenges with Innovation

Murali Shyamsundar, Educational Advisor & Co-Director, MedicsHub, praised the team for their innovative approach to a real life challenge stating **“AI has brought in various exciting possibilities and is going to revolutionise every aspect of our lives, including education.”** This recognition highlighted how mentor support helped the team to realise the full potential of their idea. Reflecting on their own experience Croí Uladh appreciated how **“the programme teaches us that we need to be vocal about our opinions and that our words and ideas can have a positive impact on others.”**

## Developing Practical and Impactful Solutions

With mentor advice, Team Croí Uladh streamlined their project to focus on creating a solution that could be easily implemented by teachers, significantly enhancing educational practices in schools. This collaboration demonstrates how innovative thinking and industry support empowers students to tackle contemporary challenges effectively.

“The B!G Idea programme pushes students to step outside their comfort zones, requiring them to critically assess and improve their ideas - a skill often overlooked after completing a task.”

**Siobhan Quinn,**  
Teacher, St Leo’s College

**“The programme teaches us that we need to be vocal about our opinions and that our words and ideas can have a positive impact on others.”**

**Croí Uladh,**  
Northern Ireland Team





## Student Stories

# Leaving Cert Applied

Service Design

Mental Health



“What an amazing idea, I wish I’d had this when I was making the big leap from primary to secondary school.”



Glyn Griffiths,  
Mentor 2023, PA Consulting



Team Musketeers from Ringsend College illustrate how innovative thinking coupled with industry support empowers students to create meaningful solutions to real-world challenges.

**Team:** Musketeers, Ringsend College, Dublin

**Teacher:** Fiona Byrne

**Solution:** Mental Health

**Mentor Connections:**  
Glyn Griffiths, PA Consulting;  
Mary Clare Byrne, Microsoft;  
Kevin Dowling, PA Consulting.

### Addressing Mental Health through Empathy and Innovation

Team Musketeers started their creative journey by examining the challenge of mental health from a young person’s perspective. They identified a significant milestone that often triggers anxiety: the transition from primary to secondary school. To address this, they developed a proactive solution - Transition Support Day- an inclusive event designed to ease common fears, boost confidence and promote well-being among incoming first-year students.

### Mentor Insights and Industry Collaboration

Mentors from PA Consulting, Microsoft and Stripe provided invaluable support shaping the team’s project. They encouraged Team Musketeers to seek partnerships with businesses and offered advice on structuring the event activities. This guidance helped the team refine their ideas and significantly contributed to the event’s success.

“I’ve seen characters come through, I’ve seen confidence come through. The B!G Idea has given us that foundation for an atmosphere of creativity!”

Fiona Byrne,  
Deputy Principal, Ringsend College

### Building Confidence and Practical Solutions

Mentor feedback boosted the team’s confidence and propelled them forward. Glyn Griffiths, Sustainability, Innovation Consultant, PA Consulting, remarked “What an amazing idea, I wish I’d had this when I was making the big leap from primary to secondary school.” Such encouragement was vital in helping the team to realise the importance and potential impact of their project.

### Creating an Inclusive and Impactful Event

With insights from industry mentors, Team Musketeers transformed their annual Transition Support Day into an engaging and practical event that catered to diverse student needs without high costs. Their experience highlights how industry connections can foster creativity, confidence and problem solving skills, empowering students to deliver impactful solutions.



“The mentor feedback made us feel more confident about our ideas and pushed us to do more!”

Team Musketeers,  
Leaving Cert Applied Team





# Our Showcase 2024: Thinking B!G For Ireland

Our mission is to empower young people to solve challenges in their lives and their communities through innovative education and industry collaboration.



The B!G  
Ideas of 2024!



**The B!G Idea Showcase at Mastercard's Dublin offices was a celebration of creative thinking and a display of the synergy between industry and education. The event drew over 200 attendees, including 114 students from diverse educational settings across Ireland, complemented by schools, mentors and the general public enjoying the experience online.**

The occasion commenced with a networking breakfast and a panel titled 'Future Skills and Thinking B!G for Ireland,' featuring insights from industry stalwarts like Grace Hayes of Mastercard, Trevor O'Reilly from PA Consulting, and Sinead Tuite of MSD Ireland, with moderation by Paul Sweetman CEO of the American Chamber.

Keynote speaker Jack Kavanagh, a renowned advocate for resilience and mental wellbeing, captivated the audience with his perspective on creativity's pivotal role in forging a brighter future. The highlight of the day was the interaction between the 114 students from our various programmes and their mentors. These students, who had engaged in digital mentoring sessions, relished the opportunity to meet their online mentors in person. They participated in hands-on activities that challenged them to employ their newly honed skills in a collaborative setting, focusing particularly on diversity and inclusion.

The day's success was palpable, marked by a contagious enthusiasm that, as noted by Mastercard's Grace Hayes, 'lit up the office.'

## High Potential: The 2024 Student Accelerator

For the third consecutive year, The B!G Idea's Student Accelerator event at Autodesk's Dublin offices showcased industry-education collaboration, with 61 students and 25 mentors participating—doubling previous years.

The day featured a prototyping workshop by Mick Torrans from Mastercard, where students created digital wire frames, followed by a 'Pitch it like a Pro' session led by Michelle Fogarty from LifeScientific, enhancing their presentation skills.

Students presented their innovative projects to a panel including Dawn Carty from MSD Ireland and Amanda Fennell from Autodesk, receiving valuable feedback to refine their ideas.

Special thanks to Autodesk for hosting this transformative event and to all mentors for their dedication, which fostered the next generation of changemakers.



# Our Winners



“Coming up with creative solutions for The B!G Idea was fun, it really got our minds thinking.”

Gem Solutions

**Overall B!G Winner supported by Mastercard. Winning Team: Gem Solutions, St Brendan’s Community, Birr**

This remarkable app designed specifically for third-level students living away from home won the overall award for its innovative solution to easing financial and nutritional challenges. This application offers affordable, nutritious meal plans and subsidised food packages delivered directly to college campuses. By making healthy eating accessible and reducing budgetary stress, this initiative supports the well-being of students and contributes to a healthier future for our youth.

**Climate Change Category Winner supported by MSD. Winning Team: Sunny Sonics, St Leo’s College, Carlow**

Recognising the reliance on smartphones, Sunny Sonic’s project offers a practical, eco-friendly alternative that meets the urgent environmental needs of our planet. This solar-powered mobile phone features a modular design that allows for easy repairs and upgrades, effectively extending the device’s lifespan. Constructed from recycled and sustainable materials, this innovation represents a major leap towards more environmentally responsible technology.



“The B!G Idea programme helped us grow confidence in our own opinions and solutions!”

Sunny Sonics



“The skills we acquired will help us in the future. Working with others is essential in nearly every job.”

Motherboard

**AI For Humanity Category Winner supported by Nostra. Winning Team: Motherboard, Kilkenny Youthreach**

Kilkenny Youthreach celebrated success with an app empowering young people to manage finances. Using AI to analyze spending, it suggests savings by finding the most economical local sources for frequently purchased items. Users upload shopping lists, and the app locates the cheapest nearby options. This tool enables financial savings and instills long-term budgeting skills, making a lasting impact.

**Mental Health Category Winner supported by Mercury Engineering. Winning Team: Mind Matters, St Leo’s College, Carlow**

Team Mind Matters won the Mental Health category for their unique app that enhances mental health by integrating daily self-care tasks with a virtual pet’s well-being. Users log activities like exercise to keep their pet healthy, adding motivation to maintain a regular self-care routine. This approach transforms routine tasks into an emotionally engaging experience, encouraging consistent self-care. It also fosters empathy and responsibility through interaction with the virtual pet.



“The B!G Idea is a great way for young people to use their innovative skills and it’s great fun as well!”

Mind Matters

**Cost of Living Category Winner supported by RIAI. Winning Team: The Change Agents, Castletroy College, Limerick**

Recognising the financial hurdles some families encounter in supporting their children’s extracurricular endeavours The Change Agents organised ‘Fun Fest’. This event received sponsorship from Basketball Ireland and other partners, to promote sports and music among 5th class students from local primary schools. The resounding success of ‘Fun Fest’ has ignited a vision to expand its reach as a multi-school event, promoting sports and music awareness across Ireland, annually!



“It was a really good experience that is very hands on, so you get to learn better!”

The Change Agents

**Diversity and Inclusion Category Winner supported by Autodesk. Winning Team: Miraculous, Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon**

The Open Sesame app designed by Team Miraculous introduces a star rating system that empowers users to evaluate the accessibility of buildings and services for individuals with diverse abilities. By fostering a better understanding of accessibility, the app drives efforts towards a more inclusive and accessible world, encouraging users to contribute actively to societal change.



“We enjoyed working together to combine all of the stages of the creative process to deliver our solution.”

Miraculous



# Investing In Our Future

We align with industry needs to drive innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable growth. By fostering collaboration and future-focused skills, we empower businesses to create positive societal impact while strengthening Ireland’s economic resilience.

### Aligning with Industry needs for National Economic Resilience

**Our strategic alignment with industry requirements is crafted to elevate enterprise innovation and competitiveness, reflecting Ireland’s national strategy for economic resilience and transformation.** By prioritising collaboration, creativity, and innovation, we play a crucial role in enhancing decision-making around people and the planet, supporting business success that positively impacts society. This approach is harmonised with national policies aimed at expanding and intensifying enterprise innovation capabilities, particularly among indigenous SMEs, as delineated in Ireland’s strategic economic objectives.

Our initiatives promote cross-sector collaboration as a standard of excellence, optimising skill development to continuously advance future innovation capabilities nationally. These efforts are vital for embracing digital transformations and effectively addressing climate action imperatives, ensuring that all sectors are equipped to tackle the challenges of today’s dynamic economic and social environments.

Niamh Cooney, our Head of Development and Sustainability, emphasises our collaborative ethos: ‘At The B!G Idea, we understand that real success in business extends beyond financial gains. Our commitment is to foster an environment where innovation and competitiveness thrive alongside sustainable practices that benefit both people and our planet. By integrating these principles, we prepare industries to not only face future challenges but to drive positive societal change, ensuring a prosperous economy that respects our shared environment.’

“The B!G Idea has the power of bringing people from different backgrounds, with different experiences and putting them together positively to help young people to find their own strengths.”

Amanda Fennell,  
Director of EMEA Marketing, Autodesk

### OECD Skills Strategy Ireland 2023

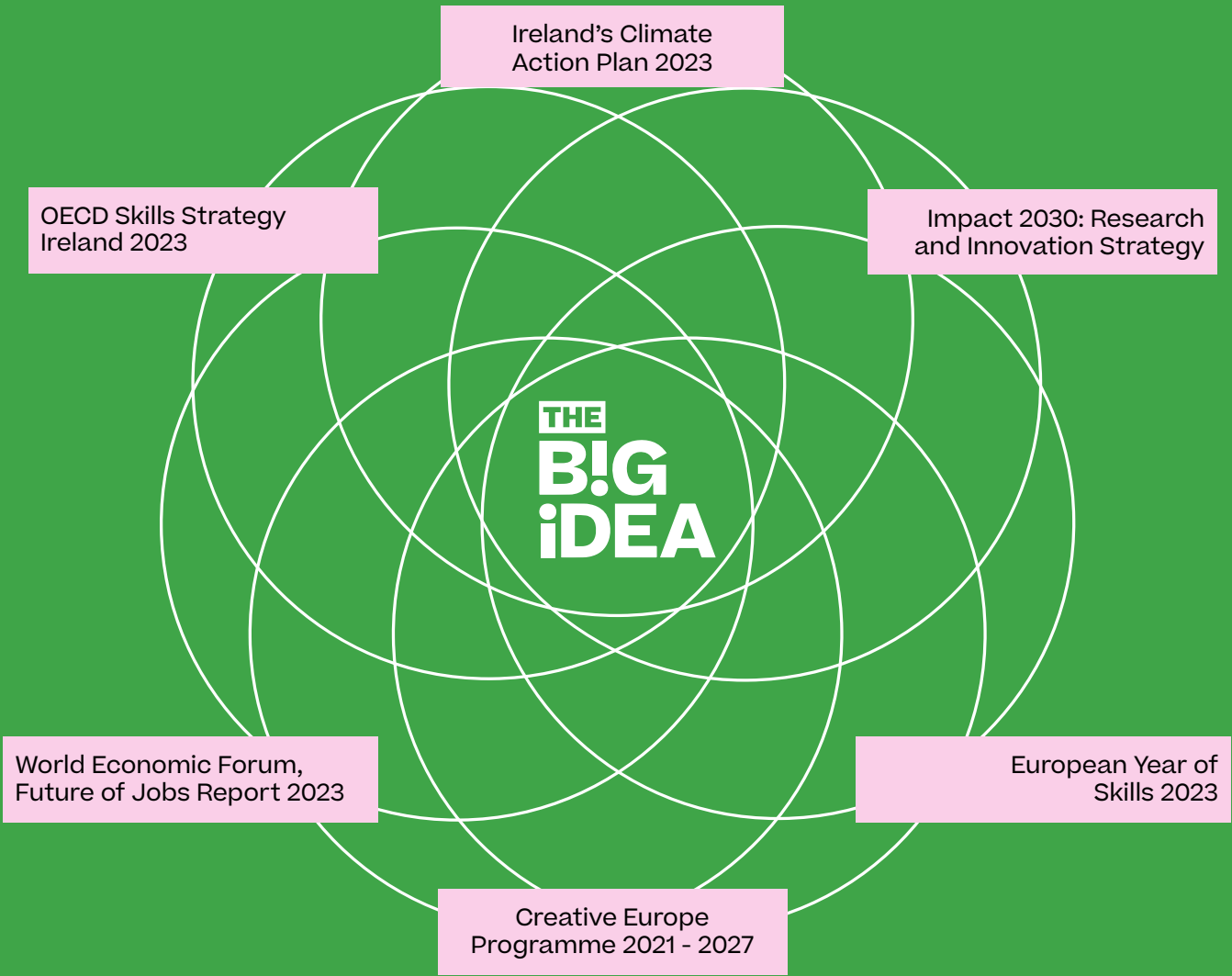
Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. Improving the development of transversal skills for innovation, such as creativity, critical thinking, and communication, across the education system, including lifelong learning.

### Ireland’s Climate Action Plan 2023

Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The Climate Action Plan 2023 stresses the need for education and awareness, especially among youth, to drive innovation and transition Ireland towards a low-carbon future.

### Impact 2030: Research and Innovation Strategy

Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. Places an emphasis on talent, inclusion, innovation, international governance, and capacity, and aims to maximise the contribution of R&I to multiple policy objectives.



### World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2023

Recommends that education systems focus on developing a broad range of skills, including digital literacy, problem-solving, and creativity, and provide opportunities for experiential learning and real-world problem-solving active learning, resilience.

### Creative Europe Programme 2021-2027

Recognises culture and freedom of creation are vital for the European Union and its citizens, as a means for strengthening democracies and values.

### European Year of Skills 2023

Seeks to bridge skills gaps and enhance the EU’s skills strategy. It aims to reskill individuals for quality employment, through national efforts, EU initiatives, and funding. It fosters creativity by aligning skills development with emerging demands and collaboration.







# Industry Workshops to Inspire Action

Our bespoke workshops connect industry, government, and young minds to drive innovation, tackle key challenges, and foster future-focused collaboration.

## Bridging Industry & Innovation

We have actively facilitated the alignment of industry and government objectives through a series of bespoke collaborative workshops aimed at sparking innovation, tackling key challenges, and harnessing collective strengths. To maintain accessibility to our programmes and expand our impact into industry and government, we have developed bespoke workshops to advance strategic cross-generational and cross-sectoral thinking. These sessions provided a vibrant forum for dialogue and the exchange of ideas, allowing stakeholders from various sectors to immerse themselves in advanced educational techniques and innovative problem-solving approaches. By uniting young people, industry leaders, government representatives, and academic experts, we have sparked forward-thinking solutions that adeptly meet the shifting demands of our economy and society. These interactions not only ensure that our educational endeavors are in sync with industry and governmental priorities but also help in creating growth mindsets equipped to navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving world.

“The workshop was an incredible experience, bringing together people of all ages to collaborate on solutions for climate action and sustainability. It exceeded expectations, with participants fully engaged and inspired to use creative approaches to tackle these critical issues. We were thrilled to see such a high level of interest, accommodating an oversubscribed group that was eager to make a difference. The focus on empowering student voices and encouraging creative problem-solving around sustainability challenges was truly impactful. Participants left feeling motivated and equipped to drive meaningful change in their communities.”

**Aideen Foley,**  
Principal Officer, DFHERIS





# Our B!G Partners

Our partners help students build confidence, creativity, and problem-solving skills through mentorship and real-world challenges, driving positive change.

## MSD

Since 2021, MSD Ireland has partnered with us to drive innovation and align with their sustainability goals, empowering students to solve real-world climate challenges through SDG-focused mentorship and creative problem-solving.

“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.”



## Together...

4

Years of Partnership

3

Student Accelerators

3

time Challenge Champion

3

Events Supported

## Unum

Since 2021, Unum has provided highly engaged mentor teams, hands-on support for DEIS and Youthreach students, and valuable contributions through our Mentor B!G 5 interviews, enhancing development for both students and mentors.

“We are committed to engaging with programmes that create a societal impact where we live and work. The B!G Idea is important to us as it helps young people to learn that creativity and innovation is for everyone and can be applied in so many ways.”

## unum

4

Years of Partnership

6

Aligned SDGs

25+

Mentors Involved

## Autodesk

Since 2022, Autodesk has partnered with us, providing engaged mentor teams and supporting our in-person Student Accelerator, helping students advance their innovative ideas, increase confidence and motivate them to bring their idea’s to life.

“Autodesk is changing how the world is designed and made. We are empowering innovators everywhere to solve challenges big and small, and we are proud to be supporting The B!G Idea – a programme doing the same.”

## AUTODESK

2

Years of Partnership

2

Years of Accelerators

20+

Mentors Involved

## EPAM

For two years, EPAM has fostered innovation through mentorship. This was highlighted by a mentor winning the 2023-2024 Mentor of the Year award, empowering others to grow and succeed.

“Equipping the next generation of students with problem-solving skills to tackle complex global issues like climate change and hidden poverty is exactly what Ireland and the technology industry needs right now.”

## <epam>

2

Years of Partnership

5

Aligned SDGs

10+

Mentors Involved



# United Nations: SDGs

In keeping with our global outlook we help young people understand the wider potential of their project solutions by aligning them to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## SDG Champions

**Our programmes firmly align with SDG 4 (Quality Education) by empowering students and learners in 2023/2024 to address critical societal issues such as Hidden Poverty (SDG 1), Mental Health (SDG 3), Diversity and Inclusion (SDG 10), Displaced People (SDG 16), and Climate Change (SDG 13).**

Our mission aims to break educational barriers, emphasise youth skills for employment and entrepreneurship (Target 4.4), and foster knowledge and skills for sustainable development, including education in sustainable lifestyles, human rights, and global citizenship (Target 4.7). We embody SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through collaborative efforts to find solutions to these challenges, and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by actively engaging students with industry mentors. This holistic approach supports both individual growth and broader societal progress.



# CEO Look to the Future



**Kim Mackenzie-Doyle**  
*Instigator & CEO of The B!G Idea*

As we step into another transformative year, I am excited to present our 2023/2024 Impact Report. This document not only reflects our past achievements but also sets the stage for the innovative strides we aim to make in empowering the next generation.

## Embracing Tomorrow's Challenges

**Today's youth face an increasingly complex landscape, marked by environmental challenges, mental health concerns, and rapid technological advancements. At The B!G Idea, we are poised to tackle these challenges by equipping young minds with creative and critical thinking skills necessary for the future.**

In an era where creativity intersects with technology, our unique educational approach, supported by industry professionals and academic experts, prepares students to lead with innovation. We continue to adapt our programmes to meet emerging global needs, ensuring our students are ready to thrive in a dynamic world.

This past year, we broadened our reach, impacting over 4,975 students, including

significant expansions in DEIS participation and extending our presence in Northern Ireland. Our initiative has been recognised globally once again, reaffirming our commitment to being at the forefront of educational innovation.

From humble beginnings to a now multi-award-winning initiative, The B!G Idea has grown to partner with over 100 schools across 23 counties. Our network of dedicated mentors plays a crucial role in this journey, demonstrating the power of a collective effort in shaping the educational landscape.

We invite you to join us on this exciting journey forward. Whether as a mentor bringing your expertise to learners across the country or as a partner organisation driving change with us, your involvement will contribute

to a sustainable and bright future for our island.

Together, let's continue to inspire, innovate, and influence the world for the better.

With anticipation for what we will achieve together,

Kim Mackenzie-Doyle  
Instigator and CEO, The B!G Idea

**“Equipping young minds with creative and critical thinking skills, we empower students to lead with innovation and thrive in a rapidly evolving world.”**

**Kim Mackenzie-Doyle,**  
*Instigator and CEO, The B!G Idea*

# Thank you!

## **Our Students and Learners**

Our BIGGEST thank you goes to our students and learners, for trusting the creative thinking process and proving to everyone that our young people are our greatest asset.

## **Our Teachers and Tutors**

Thank you for facilitating the programmes in your schools or Youthreach/CTCs and allowing students and learners to develop a new way of thinking.

## **Our Mentors**

For supporting our students and volunteering your time, sharing your industry knowledge so generously. For giving vital input into the lives of young people across the island of Ireland.

## **Our Partners**

For providing core funding to keep our programmes free and accessible, believing in us, and bringing your teams onboard to support our work, helping us to improve outcomes for our young people.

## **Our Believers**

To the universities and colleges who share our vision and purpose and support us with mentors, advice and solidarity in the world of educational innovation.

## **Grant Awarding Bodies**

For recognising our impact and potential, aiding The BIG Idea to reach even more young people this year.

“It teaches us that we need to be vocal about our opinions and that our words and ideas can change the world!”

**Roise,**  
Student, St Joseph's Grammar School