

# ThinkForward Annual Review 2013



**Building partnerships**  
for successful school to work transitions



**“In the UK today there are over one million young people not learning and not earning. We know that failing to grab hold of the job ladder early on in life can reduce opportunities further on. This comes at a tremendous cost to society and to the young people themselves.**

**We can make a lasting impact by supporting young people to succeed during the critical period of their lives between 14 and 19 years of age. The challenging transition from school to work can be daunting and it is vital we make sure they don't face it alone.**

**As an exciting investment in the Impetus-PEF portfolio, ThinkForward benefits from a unique combination of support that will enable it to work with even more young people during this crucial time of their lives. I am proud of the work ThinkForward delivers every day, helping young people most at risk of dropping out to explore future career goals and then providing them with sustained support that encourages them to unlock their potential in life.”**

Daniela Barone Soares, Chief Executive Officer, Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation

## Foreword

**Education must reflect the changing needs of the labour market if young people are to make a successful transition from school to work. Focus should be placed on both achieving better qualifications and having the skills and work experience that today's employers require.**

When I reflect on ThinkForward's second year, I am proud of its success. However, too many young people around the UK are not making the transition from school to work successfully. Changes to careers education have made it harder for schools to support all young people. At the same time, skills needs have shifted, causing difficulties for young people entering the workforce and meaning some employers are reluctant to hire young workers.

We know the solutions. The most vulnerable young people need sustained support, from choosing the right GCSEs, all the way into their first job or further learning. All young people must involve themselves in the world of work, so that they have opportunities to meet and hear from employers and experience different work environments. Better integration between schools and the local labour market will ensure that young people have up-to-date information about job opportunities and the skills, qualifications and experience required to succeed in the labour market.

During 2014 we will be continuing to do just that within East London, and also starting to think about how we roll out the programme more widely. None of our work would be possible without the help of our delivery partners and funders, and I would like to thank them for their continued support.

Bill Cornog, Chair, ThinkForward

## About ThinkForward

With 15% of young people failing to make a successful move from education into employment, ThinkForward is a breakthrough programme that intervenes early to significantly improve the chances of those most at risk of dropping out.

These young people are given a 'super coach' from age 14 to 19, who provides personalised, sustained support to overcome challenges in and out of school and to build employability skills and confidence. Additional access to a business mentor helps establish links to the world of work. The programme also connects young people with the most relevant local services and networks.

ThinkForward was created in 2010 by Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation, following its research into how to dramatically reduce the likelihood of young people becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

**“For the past 30 years, Tomorrow's People has been committed to tackling the blight of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. We have always had ambitions to work with young people before they reach a point of crisis in their school career and our partnership with ThinkForward enables us to do just that. Only two years into the programme and it is leading the way in early intervention. We are seeing that our hands-on approach is bringing about real social change for some of the most disadvantaged young people in the community.”**

Baroness Stedman-Scott, Chief Executive, Tomorrow's People

## The year in numbers

**14** coaches in 14 schools

**300** employees volunteering

**1,110** young people supported

**85%** of young people showing an improvement in behaviour, attendance or attainment

**95%** of 16-year-olds progressing into education, employment or training

## Partnerships

ThinkForward is made possible through a network of partners. Together we support successful school to work transitions for those most at risk of leaving school or being unable to reach their full potential.



### A partnership with young people

An experienced and trusted coach helps young people explore future career goals and inspires them to succeed.

When Adam was 14, he became involved in a local gang: starting fights, mugging younger children and occasionally assisting in dealing drugs. That's when our coach Darrin got involved.

*"Darrin explained what could happen to me. He had a friend, just like me, doing every crime I'd been doing. He had no life at all – couldn't get a job. I didn't want to be like him by the time I was 25,"* says Adam.

*"It's about building up their confidence,"* says Darrin. *"Building up their self-esteem, encouraging them to have a bit of self-worth and giving them an opportunity to shine and letting them see they've got a talent somewhere."*

With the support of ThinkForward, Adam was able to leave the gang and improve his behaviour and school work. He's now confident that his security lies in the prospect of a stable job – and is looking forward to earning a wage so that he can help his mum.



### A partnership with schools

Sustained support from age 14 to 19 provides continuity through what can be a turbulent time in life.

We place our coaches in schools and identify the young people most in need of support.

Jo Dibb, Headteacher of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School in Islington, says: *"ThinkForward is improving young people's esteem so they can achieve. We have seen some incredible results so far. One young woman used to feel the teachers were getting at her and didn't understand her. Her coach got her involved in curating a photography exhibition and putting on a concert. She has invited staff along to these events and now their relationship is transformed. Her sense of pride is palpable."*



### A partnership with businesses

Success in the critical transition from school to work relies on a connected approach to local employers and training opportunities.

Through ThinkForward, 40 businesses in London are providing activities that help young people develop their employability skills, including workshops, mentoring and work experience.

R R Donnelley hosted a group of young people during the summer holidays, which gave them a taste of several jobs within the business and boosted their CVs.

April from Raine's Foundation School in Bethnal Green says: *"A work placement gives you a chance to try things you wouldn't normally experience. I have learnt so many things, which I can use now in school and in the future to get a job."*

Her supervisor Claire says: *"April was a joy to have in the office. It was great to see a transformation from an extremely quiet, shy young person on the first day to her talking to any member of staff by the end of the week."*



### A partnership with other youth organisations

During 2013 we partnered with the Education Endowment Foundation to further evaluate the impact of ThinkForward. We believe a rigorous, evidence-based approach leads to better outcomes that enhance young people's employability.

Sheffield Hallam University, working with Essex University, is leading a randomised control trial that will compare the progress of young people on the programme with that of young people at similar schools. The aim is to gain further evidence of the impact of the approach and explore how it could be delivered on a larger scale.

Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, says: *"This project will increase our knowledge of how to help the children in our schools who need it most."*



### A partnership with government

The work of ThinkForward in 10 of its 14 schools is funded by an innovative Social Impact Bond.

During the year, Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society, and Lord Nash, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, visited ThinkForward schools to see the programme in action.

Nick noted: *"Britain is leading the world in the development of the social investment market. Social Impact Bonds like ThinkForward's are an important new tool to encourage fresh responses to help tackle some of this country's most deep-rooted social problems."*

**ThinkForward is currently delivered in 14 schools:**

Bethnal Green Academy  
Bridge Academy  
with support from UBS

Central Foundation Boys' School  
City of London Academy Islington\*  
with support from EEF

Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School

George Green's School  
with support from Barclays

Highbury Fields School\*

Highbury Grove School\*

Islington Arts and Media School\*  
with support from EEF

Morpeth School  
with support from EY

Oaklands School  
with support from Nomura

Raine's Foundation School

Swanlea School  
with support from Barclays

Tower Hamlets Pupil Referral Unit\*  
with support from ICG

\* New schools added in 2013



Coach Darrin with a student



Jo Dibb, Headteacher of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School in Islington



A student on work experience



Students engaged in a workshop with one of our partners, the Media Trust



Baroness Fookes, Lord Nash and Baroness Stedman-Scott visit a ThinkForward school

## What we do

### ThinkForward has a measurable impact on the young people we reach.

#### Enrolling young people

We identify the young people that need our help based on factors known to put them at risk of becoming NEET in the future:

- 61% of our participants' first language is not English.
- 47% started with lower than expected Key Stage 3 results.
- 36% have special educational needs.

#### Understanding young people

During 2013 our highly skilled coaches worked with 1,110 young people to understand their skills and ambitions and identify their barriers.

#### Supporting young people

The coaches:

- carry out regular individual and group coaching.
- pull together an action plan of the best relevant local activities.
- connect with professionals in the world of work.

**We have undertaken over 2,000 activities with young people during 2013, in partnership with 50 other providers.**

### As a result:

#### Young people develop the mindsets and skills necessary for work while still in education.

Assessments using a validated personal development tool show improvements in their positive thinking, appetite for learning and planning and organising skills.

#### Young people improve their behaviour and attendance at school.

By the time they leave school, over 85% of young people have made improvements endorsed by their teachers during 2013.

#### Young people achieve good qualifications.

60% of our participants obtained at least 5 GCSEs of grade A\*-C in their summer 2013 exams.

Thanks to education progression support, job search training and work experience, at age 16 95% of our participants continue into further education, employment or training.

## Finances and governance

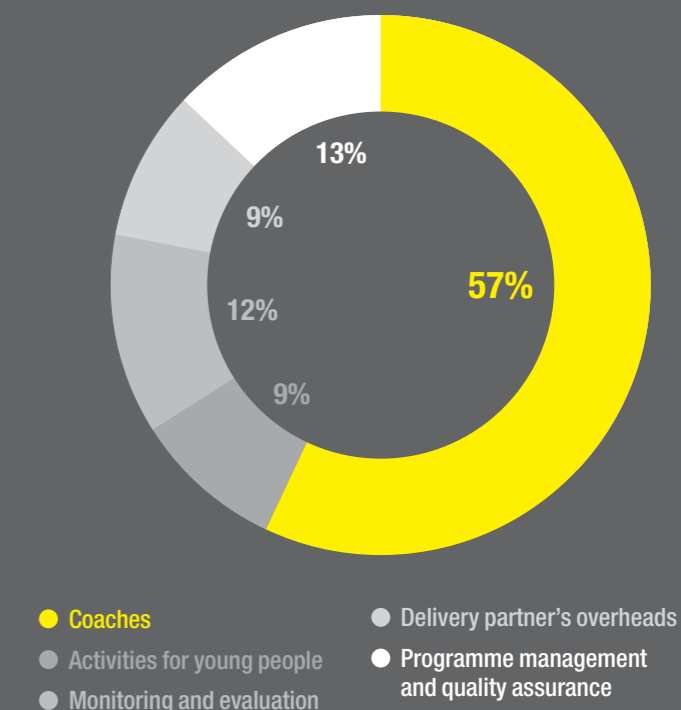
### The cost of the programme

For every young person who goes on to become NEET, an average of £56,000 is lost to the public purse by the time they reach retirement age. And this doesn't even cover the opportunity cost to those people, their families and their communities.

With the cost of the ThinkForward programme being less than £1,250 per young person per year, the sum is more than repaid by the opportunity to help young people become successful working young adults.

Coaches	£778,039
Activities for young people	£127,146
Monitoring and evaluation	£162,914
Delivery partner's overheads	£126,661
Programme management and quality assurance	£178,069
<b>Total expenditure in 2013</b>	<b>£1,372,829</b>

### 2013 one-year spend



### The funding for the programme

ThinkForward couldn't have been created without the support of a wide range of partners. We would like to thank all those who have made the development and implementation of the programme possible:

<b>Founder</b>	Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation
<b>Strategic partners</b>	Barclays, EY, Garfield Weston Foundation, ICG
<b>Other donors</b>	Education Endowment Foundation, The Nomura Charitable Trust, UBS, Vitol Foundation, 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
<b>Delivery partner</b>	Tomorrow's People
<b>Pro bono partners</b>	Apax Partners, Ashurst, Bain and Company, Bain Capital, The Blackstone Group, Centerbridge, The Carlyle Group, Clifford Chance, Kirkland & Ellis, KKR, PwC, R R Donnelley, TPG Capital, Travers Smith

### The governance of the programme

The ThinkForward programme is overseen by a board that combines a wealth of experience in business, education and social change:

<b>Bill Cornog (Chair)</b>	KKR
<b>Michael Abraham</b>	UBS
<b>Philippa Charles</b>	Garfield Weston Foundation
<b>Sharon Deutsch-Nadir</b>	Private Family Trust
<b>Charlie Green</b>	Impetus-PEF Trustee
<b>Mathew Grinnell</b>	Barclays
<b>Adam Isleif</b>	Nomura
<b>Jo Margrie</b>	London Boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets
<b>Barbara Storch</b>	Impetus-PEF Portfolio Director
<b>Emily Sun</b>	Independent Consultant
<b>Charles Thomson</b>	aSource Global
<b>David Vaughan</b>	EY
<b>Tom Walker</b>	Impetus-PEF Trustee
<b>Oliver Wright</b>	Bain and Company
<b>Jo Zendel</b>	ICG

## Get involved

One of the things that makes ThinkForward unique is the way it links young people with volunteers, activity providers and work opportunities. These partners have become part of a proven initiative helping young people make a successful transition from school to work.

For corporate partners, donating to ThinkForward provides your firm and its employees with a meaningful and effective way of giving back. Employees are also able to get involved in a range of volunteer activities, including work shadowing, business mentoring and workshops that build employment skills.

For other partners, working with ThinkForward is a valuable way of connecting with the young people who most need their support, and helping them to thrive within their school or local community.

To find out how you can become a partner, please contact us at [info@think-forward.org.uk](mailto:info@think-forward.org.uk) or call **020 3474 1001**.

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Building a better  
working world



Garfield Weston  
FOUNDATION

Our founding partners in Shoreditch are: Barclays, Ernst & Young and The Garfield Weston Foundation.



ThinkForward is brought to you by Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation and delivered in east London by Tomorrow's People.