

# REBOOTING EDUCATION

  
Reboot  
the Future

A conversation on how COVID-19  
is changing ideas about education

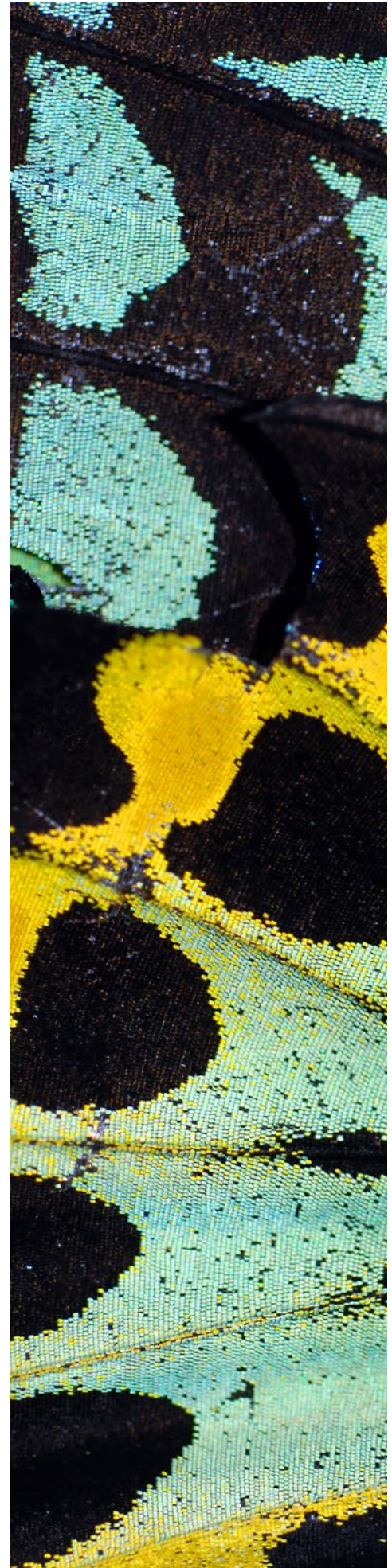
# INTRODUCTION

As part of the ‘perfect storm’ of Covid, every system and sector was seen to be stress-tested to exceptional limits. Like the Health Sector, the Education sector has come under a lot of scrutiny: as a potential incubator of the virus, as a de facto childcare system underpinning the daytime economy, and as the key repository of social value and exemplar of what we value most as a society.

Students, families and teachers have all demonstrated exceptional capacities for change and resilience in this period. Yet there remains a pervasive anxiety hanging that we do not yet know how this experience will change us, or what changes might be forced upon us, yet to come.

In this spirit, Reboot the Future has used this Covid moment to ask: what is needed to take us forward? What action will drive the common good? We envisage the findings of this conversation to underpin a series actions, activities and resources through our teacher platform, **Global Dimension**.

While lockdown has provided an opportunity for reflection for some, families and teachers have never been busier, as they quickly adopt new learning models and prepare for new socially distant classrooms. **We are grateful to everyone for their participation in this busy time.**



# WHAT WE DID

Our Conversation on Rebooting Education created a space for people to share their thoughts on how COVID-19 has changed our ideas about education, and to explore what this means for the future.

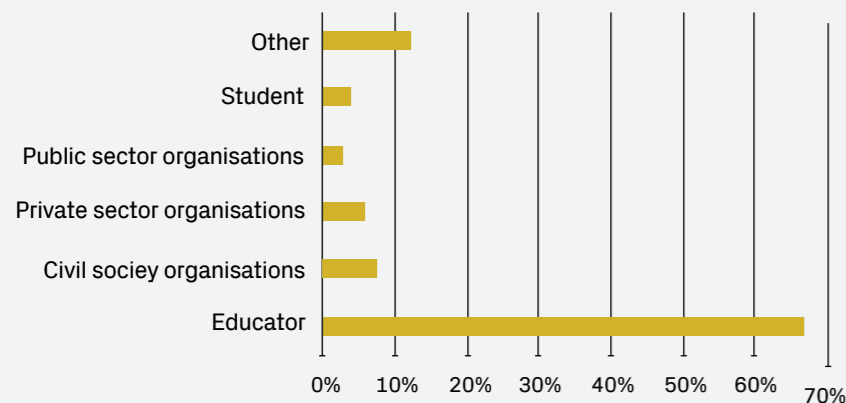
We engaged over 1,500 people from education, business, government, civil society and young people, across 10 countries. Over 300 people took part in our surveys, 67% of which were educators.\*

We had conversations with influential figures in the field of education to reflect on the crisis and opportunity of the current moment.

We convened an online virtual discussion in partnership with Franklin University and the Future Food Institute as part of #GoodAfterCovid19, featuring 35 leading thinkers in the educational world today, viewed by over 1,200 people.

We also ran an online campaign, reaching 6,000 people, and welcomed people's film bites on 'How should schools reboot the future?'.

Participants in our survey



**Reboot the Future** @futurereboot · Jun 16  
 A taste of whats to come on Thursday, when we will be joined by 30 leading voices in innovating education, to discuss how schools can reboot education: [buff.ly/3hsBbK9](https://buff.ly/3hsBbK9)  
 Thank you Dina Buchbinder @Education4S we can't wait to hear more!  
 Tickets - [bit.ly/EducationFishb...](https://bit.ly/EducationFishb...)



2 replies 5 likes

**Reboot the Future** @futurereboot · Jun 9  
 Very excited to announce our inspirational conversation starters! 🙌  
 @FrancoisTaddei (Director @criparis), @joysyj (Director of Education, @Nesta), @luksha (Founder @gloaledfutures) and @PolmanKim (Founder @futurereboot). Join us: [bit.ly/EducationFishb...](https://bit.ly/EducationFishb...)  
 #RebootingEducation  
[Show this thread](#)



9 replies 16 likes

**Reboot the Future** @futurereboot · May 27  
 As schools across the world start preparing to reopen, we are launching #RebootingEducation – a conversation exploring what we have learned about education during #COVID, & what this means for the future. Please share your views/experiences, open to all: [buff.ly/3eogi0h](https://buff.ly/3eogi0h)



11 replies 19 likes

300 people took part in our survey, 67% were educators

35 leading thinkers took part in our virtual discussion on 'How should schools reboot the future?' viewed by 1,200 people

Our online campaign #RebootingEducation reached 6,000 people

We spoke to a selection of leading thinkers in the education space.

# WHAT PEOPLE SAID

**Andy Middleton,  
TYF**

'It is by enabling young people to grapple with the serious challenges we are facing in the world and gaining experience of addressing them, that they leave school with unshakeable confidence in their ability to change it.'

**Joysy John,  
NESTA**

'Empathy has been taken for granted and is overlooked. In fact, empathy is effective in resolving all conflicts. I would love to see more empathy in education.'

**Amitabh Shah,  
YUVA Unstoppable**

'In the last month and a half we have fed about a million kids across India because this is the first thing they asked for. Before values or cutting-edge maths techniques, we need the bare basic necessities.'

**Karen Pashby,  
The Manchester Metropolitan  
University**

'If we aren't producing critically reflexive spaces any kind of pedagogy is going to end up reproducing the systems we are trying to change so what we need to ask is, what do we need to un-learn?'

**Filippo Cipolini,  
Boston University**  
'Learning should be seen as the end rather than the means.'

**Rachel Musson,  
Thoughtbox Education**

'If you feel well you learn better- its simple knowledge really but we have forgotten this in the complexity of all our systems.'

**Richard Dunne,  
The Harmony Project**

'We need to move away from subject specific learning to project based learning, and away from competition towards collaboration.'

**Manju Patel-Nair,  
ChangeMakers UnLtd**

'There are many statements coming out from schools, but unless schools are really looking inside, we are finding that teachers facing racism are still not having their voices heard.'

**Wendy Ellyat, Flourish  
Project and UK Spirituality  
in Education**

'We are learners from birth, we can't really stop ourselves learning, so the question is how are we inhibiting that?'

**Julia Guillemot,  
UN SDSN Youth**

'I don't think we need to oppose global to local...we have seen that if we want to reach schools globally we also need to work at the local level to make learning relevant for the teachers and for the students.'

**Anthony Bennett,  
Reboot the Future**

'It's not morally acceptable to talk about education, and a movement for children, without it being an equitable one.'

**Neil Hawkes,  
Values-based Education**

'We need to shift our economic system to one that is based on the well-being of humanity. Once the system begins shifting then schools will follow suit. But we can be at the forefront of that by being the change-makers.'

**Matteo Vignoli,  
Almacube**

'Changing the world around you is a political act, but (desire to change the world) is also the first motivation of knowledge.'

**Alia Al Zougbi, HEC Global  
Learning Centre**

'Black Lives Matter, Climate catastrophe, COVID-19, gender action, disability rights, these are all interconnected and the underbelly of all of these is our values.'

**Florencia Librizzi,  
SDG Academy**

'We learn by copying what we consider role models, so we need to ensure that as a society we hold each other accountable and we do not tolerate things that are against what we are saying we want to teach.'

**Clive Belgeonne,  
DECSY**

'There's a lot of agreement amongst teachers about what the problem is and what's needed, but they are not trusted to engage with this agenda.'

**Pavel Luksha  
Global Education Futu**

'What if instead of focusing on education for individual improvement we thought of education's role as helping humanity become a better version of itself?'

**Morgan Hope,  
Global Action Plan**

'We are in the middle of a period where our understanding of the future is rebooting what education is, to hopefully produce a kind of future where children are more compassionate and they learn to make a contribution, rather than to be competitive.'

**Nick Graham,  
The Weaving Lab**

'What are the experiences, what are the kind of 'ah-ha' moments that you've had that have helped you get from a ranking mindset to a linking mindset?'

**François Taddéi, CEO CRI,  
#LearningPlanet**

'Lots of people talk about learning organisations, learning communities, learning ecosystems, what we are aiming at is a learning planet.'

**Ross Hall,  
The Weaving Lab**

'If we want to thrive, we need to think about learning to live to thrive.'

**Ann Finlayson,  
SEEd**

'A lot of what we would love to see in education is actually happening under the radar, so for me the fundamental question is how do we get our education system away from politicians?'

**John North, Globally Responsible  
Leadership Initiative**

'We need to acknowledge that the natural system of the environment is not a mere stakeholder in our education, or for that matter our business or our governments, it is the ultimate foundation of the rules.'

**Sophie Charrois,  
Oikos international**  
'From which perspective do we want to teach our future generations?'

# WHAT WE FOUND OUT

We found that, like us, many of you believe that we need a new vision of education, one that nurtures our ability to connect with each other and the rich ecosystems that support us and of which we are part.

What emerged from our Conversation is a set of themes that will guide Reboot the Future, and we hope other organisations, as we think about the future of schools in the wake of the pandemic and how we can best support them.

## CONNECTION

### We found out...

Education needs to **nurture stronger connections** to ourselves, each other and the planet. This was expressed in different ways including the Golden Rule, 'Triple Care'<sup>\*</sup>, and notions of reciprocity and empathy.

### You said...

30% of survey respondents considered the **climate and ecological crisis** to be the biggest global issue that today's young people will face in the next twenty years, followed 'inequality' (chosen by 17%) and 'global health' (chosen by 11%). **Only 2% 'strongly agreed' that schools currently teach students to value the environment.**

*'The focus needs to shift from what has traditionally 'prepared young people for their future' to thinking about what the future will realistically look like for their students, and addressing it. They (schools) need to make significant, meaningful, system-wide changes that address the scale of the crisis, not small tokenistic changes to tick the 'we're sustainable' box.'*

**Survey respondent**

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

### We found out...

**A global perspective and compassionate values** are viewed as the foundations out of which social and environmental engagement grows, and should be at the heart of our schools.

### You said...

For young people to build a more sustainable future, **the thing our respondents most commonly thought was needed was 'more education on global issues'** (chosen by 17%). This was followed by 'nurture compassionate values' (chosen by 14%) and 'compulsory climate emergency education' was third (chosen by 12%).

*Young people need to be educated in tandem with their growth as people within both local and global communities.'*

**Survey respondent**

*'I am already incredibly passionate about Global Learning, but Covid has provided a very real experience and natural stimulus for pupils.'*

**Teacher**

## LEARNER'S VOICE

### We found out...

We need to **listen to learners' voices much more than we are now**, to create equitable learning environments, and to co-design the evolution of learning with learners in order to have meaningful changes in the future.

### You said...

**'Empowering young people to take action to change current issues'** was one of the 5 most common things respondents suggested must be done to create a more compassionate and sustainable future.

*'The students already voice their frustration at the slow pace of change in society and in institutions, of their (lack of) acknowledgement of issues affecting them and their future opportunities.'*

**Teacher**

## VALUES

### We found out...

There is a **huge disconnect** between the values people think will best equip young people for the future and the values promoted by the current education system.

### You said...

**The largest number of respondents (36%) felt the value the current education system most encourages is 'to follow the rules and be like everyone else'.** However, the value the largest number of respondents (29%) considered **the most important for young people to address future global issues was 'building supportive communities'**.<sup>\*</sup>

*'We need less intense focus on cognitive development & more emphasis on the rounded, personal growth of individuals.. so that whatever the innate abilities people have, they can flourish, maximise their potential & use their talents & interests for the good of all & as responsible stewards of our precious planet.'*

**Survey respondent**

# FOUR THEMES EXPLORED

## CONNECTION

### A shift towards connections and systemic thinking

The need for education to place greater emphasis on nurturing stronger connections to ourselves, each other and the planet was a recurring theme throughout our Conversation. This was expressed in different ways including the Golden Rule and the concept of 'Triple Care' (Care for oneself, Care for others and Care for the environment), notions of reciprocity, and empathy.

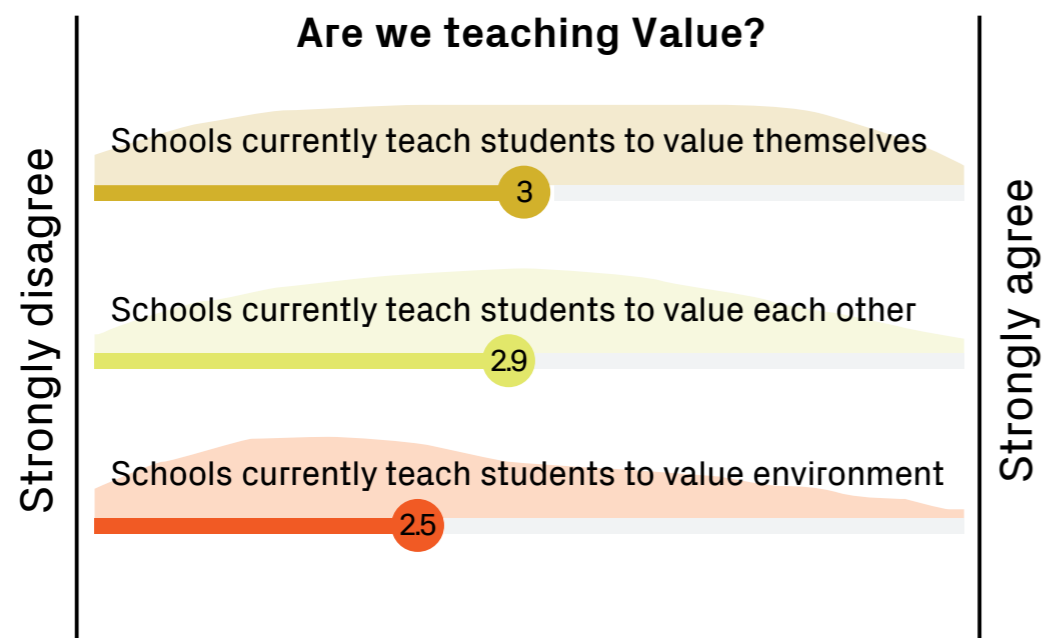
When asked about the status of our current education systems and whether they encourage young people to value themselves, each other, and the planet, opinions were largely negative. Overall, 57% of respondents disagreed that schools currently teach students to **value the environment**, with just 2% strongly agreeing.

Only 7% of respondents strongly agreed that schools currently teach students to **value themselves**, 4% strongly agreed that schools currently teach students to **value each other**.

We found that COVID-19 is viewed as a 'triggering situation' which could facilitate entry into a new 'learning ecosystem' based on more cooperative principles such as open-source learning, collective intelligence, and equity.

During the pandemic, people have learned a lot about what they think is important for education which they would like to see maintained in the future, with the importance of teaching about health and wellbeing of people and the planet commonly cited, followed by the importance of learning about current issues, as well as community and personal relationships. As one teacher said: 'Hopefully pupils will have taken a step back during lockdown and realised how a world without cars, less pollution, less litter, more nature is better for everyone.'

Do schools currently teach students to values themselves, each other and the environment?



**DINA BUCHBINDER**, *Founder and Executive President of Education 4 Sharing (E4S)*, argued that by **putting play, 'an ancient and universal language that touches our deepest fibres as human'**, at the centre of the table, we can teach students about empathy, to care for others, and to understand abstract concepts, from values to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



**RACHEL MUSSON**, *Founder of ThoughtBox Education*, said that **the very notion of what a teacher is needs to shift** away from imparting information onto young people and towards being 'gardeners' or 'facilitators', where children and teachers participate in the learning experience together, fostering greater connection, empathy, and space for the individual to flourish.



**OLIVIER BRÉCHARD**, *Director, #LearningPlanet Festival, CRI*, explained the benefits of **moving beyond 'teacher communities' and to connecting teachers to the wider ecosystem** so they can collaborate with different players such as designers, scientists, artists, engineers and change makers.

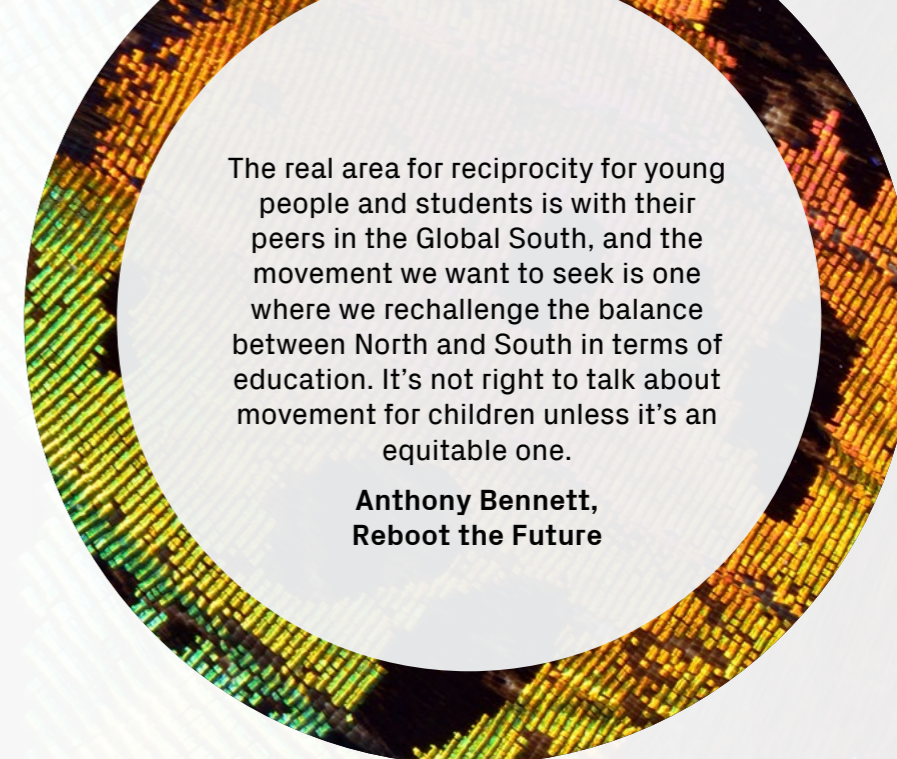
## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

In periods of social disruption and uncertainty - such as when a pandemic hits - xenophobia often emerges. While COVID-19 has made our lives more insular, including a drastic reduction in freedom of movement, it has also illustrated how globally interconnected we are – there is no longer such a thing as isolated issues and actions.

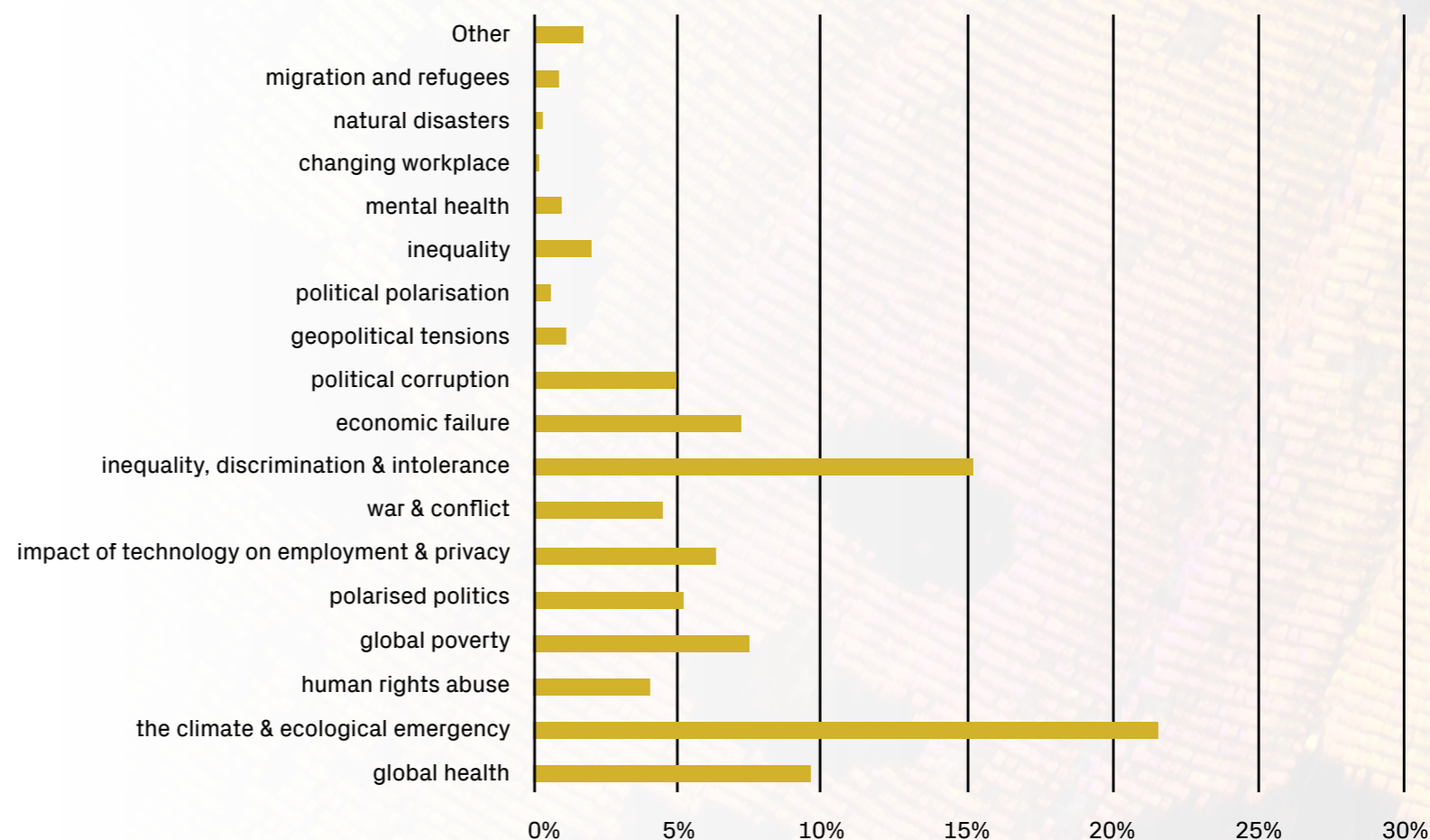
One of the major themes that arose through our Conversation was the need to increase education on current issues and global citizenship, and to challenge the balance between the Global North and South.

We identified the 'climate and ecological emergency' as the biggest global issue that today's young people will face in the next twenty years, chosen by 30% of participants, followed by 'inequality, discrimination and intolerance', chosen by 17%, and 'global health', chosen by 11%.

In terms of what needs to happen in schools to build a more sustainable world in the future, the most popular response was 'education on global issues and citizenship', followed by 'to nurture compassionate values', and 'compulsory climate emergency education'. A global perspective and values were therefore recognised as the foundation out of which social and environmental engagement grows, and came ahead of compulsory academic learning. The fact that COVID-19 has shown what can be done with technology could increase the global availability of educational tools and access to indigenous knowledge in the future.



### What are the biggest global issues that young people will face in the next 20 years?



## HEARING THE LEARNER'S VOICE

**It is too soon to know what the impact of the lockdown will be on young people. It is likely that many of the problems we are facing today such as climate change, recession, obesity and health crises, will become more protracted in the future and young people will suffer disproportionality.**

It is within this context that Francois Taddei , CEO of CRI, argued that **we need to listen to learners' voices much more than we are now**, and that by building momentum and engaging them at scale around critical global frameworks and processes that will safeguard their futures, politicians will start listening, as demonstrated through other grassroots uprisings including Black Lives Matter and Fridays for Future.

Within the classroom, many innovative approaches to enabling youth empowerment were shared, which supported the idea of 'teaching children how to think not what to think'. Ann Finlayson, CEO of SEEd, warned against top-down educational approaches that view young people as 'empty vessels that need to be filled up with stuff to be ready for the world', instead emphasising the need to align the education system with the care and values they already hold.

Alia Alzougbi, Head of HEC Global Learning Centre, explained the need to create **equitable learning environments**, where students are given more power over what they learn and how they engage with the issues they learn about, so they can bring their own unique perspective to the table. She said 'We need to recognise our own oppressive structures before trying to fight for the oppressed'.

Andy Middleton, Chief Exploration Officer at TYF Group, explained how important it is to make **real-world learning** on the things that matter to young people's communities part of their learning rather than separate. 'It is by enabling young people to grapple with the serious challenges we are facing in the world and to gain experience of addressing them, that they leave school with unshakable confidence in their ability to change it'.





## VALUES

### Reframing Learning: from ego-driven to spirit-driven

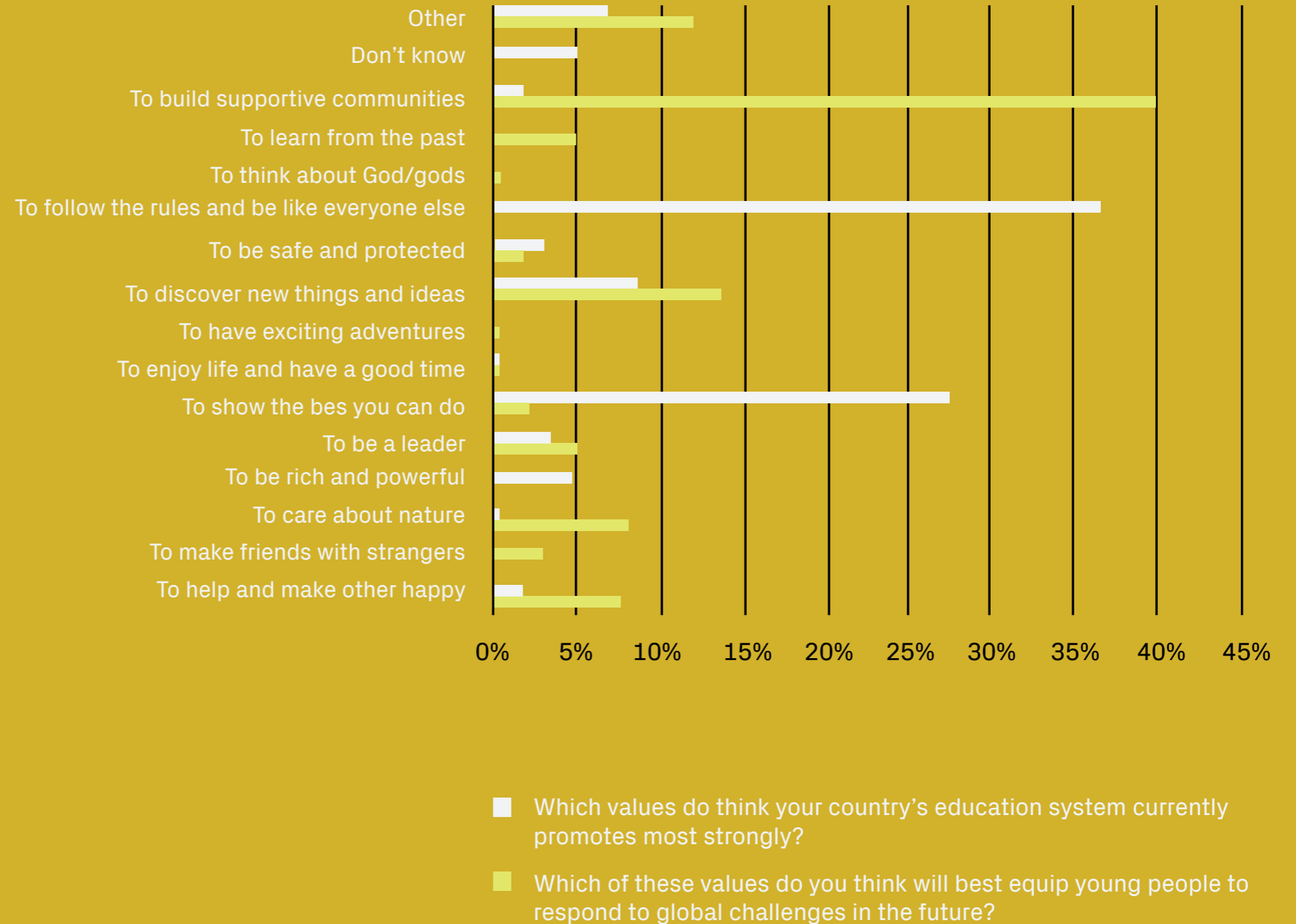
Values were a recurrent theme throughout our Conversation and recognised as the anchor from which we can act in a meaningful and consistent way. As Neil Hawkes, Founder of Values-Based Education, said: 'The challenge for us is to go back to who we really are so we give out positive values of love, respect, equity, tolerance and justice which is the natural repository of the human spirit... Then we can cooperate and we're not ego-driven, we're spirit-driven. This is where it all begins and this is how we can change systems throughout the world.'

However, our surveys revealed a significant disconnect between the values people think will best equip young people for the future and the values promoted by the current education system.

Respondents overwhelmingly felt that the current education system encourages young people 'to follow the rules and be like everyone else' followed by 'show the best you can do'. This is in stark contrast to the values respondents thought would equip young people to respond to major global challenges of the future in which 'building supportive communities' was by far the most popular answer. Less than 2% of respondents thought our current education systems encourage people to 'help and make others happy', likewise 'to build supportive communities'.

When asked which values teachers have most widely drawn upon during COVID-19, 'to be safe and protected' (27%) followed by 'to discover new things and ideas' (16%) and 'build supportive communities' (15%) were the most popular choices, possibly highlighting a disparity between teachers' values and those promoted by the wider education system.

This chart shows the difference between the values our respondents think will best equip young people to respond to global challenges in the future, against the values they think are currently promoted by their education systems.



## WHAT NEXT?

COVID-19 has created a moment to reflect on our role in bringing about change, a window to do things differently, a **fertile ground for renewal**. For Reboot the Future, this is just the start of an ongoing conversation with teachers and allies, to explore how schools can reboot the future.

Right now, there is both a great need and a great opportunity for a **soft power groundswell** that builds empowerment, agency, and hope from the bottom up.

Teachers have had significant change to grapple with during the pandemic. So as we look ahead to the new academic year, we will support **simple, courageous actions in the classroom, and at the grassroots of education, that build connections, global perspective, learner's voices, and compassionate values**, the things this conversation has shown to be so important.

At Reboot the Future, our work is inspired by the **imaginal cell story** - the cells inside the caterpillar that, by connecting and creating larger cooperative networks, eventually transform the caterpillar into the butterfly. **Education needs imaginings**. These imaginings exist both within and beyond the classroom - we need all actors involved, generating pressure and positive examples that push our education system in line with the values we all want and need in our futures; of equity, sustainability and compassion.

## Take action on #RebootingEducation

There are 3 ways you can get involved in our conversation on rebooting education:

### Start a conversation:

Ask your school, Academy Trust, or Local Education Authority:

- How are we teaching a commitment to actively promote equity of all people?
- How are we preparing learners with the skills, knowledge, and values needed to effectively address the climate crisis?
- How are we helping learners develop a love of learning, so they will remain open-minded critical thinkers throughout their lives?

### Share ideas with others:

Share your ideas on 'How can schools reboot the future?' with a 2 minute film bite, post it on social media using the hashtag **#RebootingEducation**, and follow the hashtag to hear from others. Take a look [here](#) to get inspiration from others.

### Become an advocate:

Sign up to **Global Dimension**, our online Global Learning community that provides teaching resources on global issues, Global Citizenship, and compassionate values. Our new, updated Global Dimension platform, with regular webinars on global issues, is coming soon.

To find out more about #RebootingEducation please visit our [website](#) or [get in touch](#)  
[www.rebootthefuture.org/rebootingeducation](http://www.rebootthefuture.org/rebootingeducation)  
#RebootingEducation @futurereboot

**THE GOLDEN RULE: TREAT OTHERS AND THE PLANET AS YOU WOULD WISH TO BE TREATED.**

We get lost in trying to address these issues at a global or national scale... We need to be focusing on one neighbourhood at the time, and to shift our conversation from local to global scaling'.

**Ross Hall,  
The Weaving Lab**

As we think of rebooting and remaking learning, we have to remember those things that are timeless and classic so as we wrestle with what's new, like AI, we also think about deep and caring relationships, and how in this new learning landscape, young people are supported by these relationships.

**Greg Behr,  
The Grable Foundation**

Yes let's push the policy-makers and let's take to the streets and champion for change, but let's also be bold from the inside and do things differently in the classroom. One tiny little change in your classroom and that's a ripple that has started. When schools come back in September, it's a brand new start. It is an exciting time to try new things..

**Rachel Musson,  
ThoughtBox Education**

## Here is a selection of the top 30 questions that came up during our Conversation:

1

How can we empower teachers and school leaders to effect change?

2

How can we integrate different cultures into our learning?

3

How can I be a global individual but also operate at a local level support this movement?

4

We all seem to agree on WHAT needs to be done and WHY, and even how we do it - but HOW DO WE SCALE UP OUR EFFORT?

5

How can we actually do this? How can we lead the revolution in education?  
What resources How can we move to a more empathy-based education while we still have an exam system that puts a strangle-hold on teachers and students alike?

6

How can we gain political respect for educational professionals, in the same way as medical scientists have gained political respect during the COVID-19 pandemic?

7

What do learners want? How can their voices be engaged in this discussion?

8

What three principles do you feel I can take into my educational setting tomorrow?

9

How can we convince students (and teachers) that sustainability is not an "extra credit", or a "nice to have" anymore, but it is a compelling issue of our present

10

It appears that we know what the problem is but, with government holding sway over the form and function of education how do we affect real change?

11

How to make learning not a tool for economic advancement but a way to enrich one's being?

12

How can we build critical reflexivity into teaching so we delink from rather than reinforce the exploitation and paternalism inherent in the traditions we have inherited

13

What steps could we take to create reciprocity and redress the north/south imbalance and inequality that Antony Bennett identified?

14

How do we get learners who are disengaged to believe their voices are powerful?

15

What if human skills were the focus: interdependent compassion curiosity collaboration?

16

How do we ensure that our Global Education highlights inequalities and promotes Social Justice rather than a charity mindset?

17

How can we move away from the idea that education is something we 'do to' children and make it instead something we 'do with' them?

18

What can we learn from other systems beyond education in terms of positive leadership for change?

19

How do we get our politicians (who in the UK have control of education) to value a more holistic, emotionally intelligent education, when they don't see this building the economy in the same way ranking style education does?

20

Whilst the focus from governments is on exam results, how can we get parents/ students (and other teachers) to value Global Education – learning as a process/ to develop empathy/ understanding?

21

How long does it take for education to 'reboot' and do we only recognise that it has rebooted when we look back at it from the future?

22

How are we going to support our pupils to recover from what has happened with COVID and use it to voice a shared experience / reflect on how it has brought the world together / can be a vehicle to enable positive change / encourage empathy etc

23

Who would like to work together to support teachers in schools to meaningfully (with moral courage) to work towards racial justice, within schools and outside the school gates?

24

How do we best explain this to those that favour competition? (given sport plays a big part in our culture).

25

How to create a curriculum focused on self-awareness, an exploration values, empathy, inclusion ...

26

How do we make sure that education and training is given prominence as part of the climate and ecological emergency, not just an implicit expectation.

27

How can we seize this moment of potential change to build alliances to ensure we learn and live for a Kinder, Fairer, Greener future

28

How long is it going to take to break the conveyor belt (school-Uni-employment)? This seems to dictate how we assess and therefore limits the potential to wholly move towards project-based learning

29

How can we change education systems both locally and globally in effective ways in which we learn from each other and inspire each other?

30

As we reboot education how do we make sure necessities are taken care of for millions of kids all over the world?

## ABOUT REBOOT THE FUTURE

Established by Kim Polman in 2018, Reboot the Future is a small foundation with a huge ambition, we want a more compassionate and sustainable future. Our inaugural book, *Imaginal Cells: Visions of Transformation*, was co-authored by three Nobel Prize winners and a selection of global leaders from Al Gore to Muhammad Yunus and William McDonough.

The principle underpinning the foundation's work is the Golden Rule (*Treat others and the planet as you would wish to be treated*) and we are dedicated to spreading this message through our education, leadership and social action programmes. We run Global Dimension, the UK's leading resource hub for Global Learning supporting a network of 15,000 teachers.

For more information, please get in touch.

[www.rebootthefuture.org](http://www.rebootthefuture.org)

[@futurereboot](#)