

Management for Professionals

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Kathleen Schröter  
Philipp Plugmann *Editors*

# The Global Impact of Social Innovation

Disrupting Old Models and Patterns



Springer

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# Management for Professionals

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Alexander Ruthemeier • Seda Röder •  
Kathleen Schröter • Philipp Plugmann  
Editors

# The Global Impact of Social Innovation

Disrupting Old Models and Patterns

 Springer

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## Foreword

Social innovation is the process of developing and deploying effective solutions to challenging and often systemic social and environmental issues in support of social progress. Social innovation is not the prerogative or privilege of any organizational form or legal structure. Solutions often require the active collaboration of constituents across government, business, and the nonprofit world.

—Sarah A. Soule, Neil Malhotra, Bernadette Clavier / Stanford Graduate School of Business

The last few years have made it clear for us, once again, that we are living in a constantly changing world where new challenges continue to crop up. Time has also shown us that the gap between rich and poor is always growing.

Charity, sympathy, and empathy, as well as creativity and innovation, are more necessary than ever. To truly be able to solve the global challenges in such areas as energy, water, education, health, poverty, and human rights, we need to cooperate – globally.

Unfortunately, creativity, innovation, charity, sympathy, and empathy on their own cannot solve global injustices, although they make a good ground on which to sow the seeds for ideas of possible solutions – in my opinion *There aren't any problems, just hidden solutions*.

Cooperation between the different organizations, i.e., non-profits, government, and the corporate sector, is the key to success regarding social innovation.

As changes and development in different areas of our society evolve, we can also see strong and very positive development in the world of innovative social entrepreneurship. Here, we do not just want to emphasize innovative and creative thinking and acting, but also the strong professionalism and perspective of viewing a non-profit organization as a corporate entity. Professional and successful companies need competent staff that must be remunerated accordingly. Here, too, we see a positive trend whereby a new group of leaders comes to the forefront – social entrepreneurs, like global visionaries, empathy innovators, and professionals looking into deep collaborations.

## Non-Profit Sector

Still, for most of us, organizations that fulfill a charitable goal are either an association registered as a non-profit, like “eingetragener Verein” in Germany or “Förening” in Sweden, where like-minded people come together for that purpose. This form of legal entity is dependent on its members and is often used as a vehicle within charitable areas like sports, art, and music. They can be seen as clubs for charitable like-minded persons, wanting to bring to fruition a good cause.

Another form of legal entity is the charitable foundation. Foundations are independent assets that do not have an owner. The will of the founder is realized with the help of income generated from the foundation’s management of its assets and, if necessary, donations through fundraising.

Additional forms are, for example, corporate entities that have been given the charitable status, like “gemeinnützige GmbH” in Germany.

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## Government

It is gratifying to see new innovative social projects already underway around the world. Both developing countries and industrialized countries have recognized the importance of this endeavor. The roles of governments are diverse, and they are not limited to tax relief and financial support. Many governments take on tasks such as:

- Being a collaborating partner, who gives credibility to the project and reduces potential technical, commercial, and financial risks associated with the innovation.
- Setting up standards/using standards to encourage and to regulate innovation.
- Buying innovation as a lead customer.

Overall, it can also be said that the governments are challenged, as we have all seen through the global COVID-19 pandemic, to support social innovation.

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## Corporate Sector

Entrepreneurial thinking is indispensable for success. Non-profit organizations are irreplaceable as reliable partners to this end. Governments stand by as strong partners through the tasks mentioned above, but entrepreneurial thinking is essential for the expected success.

Up until now, investors have been primarily concerned with *evaluation*, i.e., how do I rate success, which lies in either *avoiding* or *solving problems*? For an investor, this entrepreneurial question is key.

From the corners of this triangle, we move between solving the problems within the limits of what is possible and allowed with the help of investors who are willing to take the risk - to be able to solve the problems.

The interesting and admirable reports in this book are proof that once a problem has been identified and clearly defined, and once the goals are realistically formulated and the right partners are ready with conviction and courage, we can move worlds.

The question is: is the change a *disruption* or a *normal development* in a constantly changing world?

The book that you hold in your hands is not only important in terms of content but also serves as a very good motivator. Perhaps, this book can help with some questions that may cause doubtfulness or hesitation.

Global efforts, supported by innovative thinking, can achieve more than we might believe.

There are no problems, only hidden solutions. — Towa von Bismark, Executive Director  
UBS

Executive Director, UBS  
Zurich, Germany

Towa von Bismark



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## Introduction

Social innovation and social impact are not simply buzzwords, but they are a global opportunity that can provide new resources and pave the way for a better life out of poverty and scarcity for millions of people. Everyday NGOs, philanthropic organizations, and individuals around the globe tackle and solve problems that governments or corporations fail to address. In this book, you will find many of those success stories and best practices.

The book is divided into three main sections: The Role of Community, Platforms, and Creativity and Leadership in the process of creating social impact. The aim of this book is to give the reader concepts and experiences that illuminate the heterogeneous field of social innovation from different perspectives while also addressing some of the challenges in the future.

As we, the editorial team, were preparing the content of this book, we came to realize that an important gap remains between on-site efforts and impact measurement. In many cases, quantifying social innovation and impact is extremely difficult, which makes the field feel like homeopathy: the medicine seems to help but no one is quite sure why, how, and for how long. This is mainly due to the fact that organizations below a certain size cannot afford to commission research studies that measure the short- and long-term impact of their efforts. However, this fact should not prevent the reader from being invested in social impact ventures, NGOs, or other philanthropic, non-profit undertakings. The strategies and best-practice examples in this book will suffice to convince how much positive change even the smallest projects can bring into the lives of communities and individuals.

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# How Creativity Projects Can Lead to a Social Enterprise, Enabling Cross-Generation and Cross-Milieu Communication: The Way to “ootiboo”, a Case Study

Kathleen Schröter and Angus Cameron

## 1 Introduction

The more the world is leaving the industrial age behind, the more the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world (the VUCA world) is shaping lives and job opportunities. In the twenty-first century, the existing standard school system no longer adequately prepares future generations to cope with the problems of the world.

Nearly half of the jobs in OECD countries are likely to be automated over the next 10–15 years. It is estimated that 65% of today’s schoolchildren will work in professions that do not currently exist. Although school education around the globe lasts longer and results in more qualifications than any preceding generation, many young people struggle to find good jobs that reflect their skills and interest (OECD, 2020).

With all advances of the digital society in the twenty-first century, we need to ask how we can complement—not substitute—artificial intelligence and encourage cultures that foster lifelong learning, curiosity and well-being.

Creativity is what makes us human, and it’s something that computers and technology can’t replicate with the same ability (Amabile, 2020). Creativity is ranked as one of the top five job-related future skills, alongside problem-solving, critical thinking, leadership and resilience (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Moreover, being creative in childhood has a positive spillover effect on emotional and cognitive development and mental health: arts interventions in childhood mid-age groups have been shown to strengthen children’s social skills, emotional skills and creativity (Hoffmann et al., 2021). In addition, reading for pleasure positively affects school performance as well as mental well-being (Farshore, 2020).

---

K. Schröter (✉) · A. Cameron  
ootiboo GmbH, Berlin, Germany

The relationship between creativity and well-being remains understudied in children: most studies on this age group focus on the relationship between creativity and academic achievement (Kaufman et al., 2016).

**ootiboo will be the first enterprise to capture nuanced relationships between creativity and other variables linked to successful outcomes across child development, working with an unprecedentedly large sample of children. Additionally, our research seeks to inform the continued development of ootiboo via ongoing assessment of creativity and well-being.**

**Focusing on primary school children aged 5–11, ootiboo creates projects that expose children to a wide range of creative expression. These projects are supported by professional creatives, authors and the scientific research community such as neuroscientists and behavioural scientists.**

**In the process of working with the ootiboo crew, involved adults experience the benefits of such collaborations first-hand—ootiboo is aiming to awaken the childlike explorer mindset in everyone, no matter the age.**

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## **2 Community-Engaging, Large-Scale Creative Projects: Proof of Concept, Proof of Value**

To understand what ootiboo does, we should go back to the beginning and tell the story of how it all began. Contently’s editor-in-chief Joe Lazauskas and his co-author Shane Snow translated the neuroscience around storytelling and explained why stories matter: “(…) when we hear a good story as human beings our brain lights up. It illuminates the city of our minds (…). It makes us care. It builds relationships. And that’s why storytelling has been such a fundamental part of being human since early times” (Lazauskas and Snow, 2018).

Storytelling is a significant part of ootiboo, so here is the story of how we came to be.

### **2.1 “Lasting Memories” - an Opportunity to Light-Heartedly Learn About Local History for the Community and Younger Generations**

The idea for “Lasting Memories” came in July 2018 when two local artists from East Cliff Creatives (ECC), Angus Cameron and Ben Braudy, worked together on a series of beach installations in Kent, UK. On 1 design 16 volunteers came to help, inspiring them to envision a much larger collaborative beach art project involving poppies constructed from thousands of pebbles. The poppy is the enduring symbol of remembrance of the First World War, strongly linked with Armistice Day (November 11th, 1918). The team originally planned for Armistice 2018, prepared a budget and reached out to the local community. However, after some research, they decided instead to mark the true end of WW1, when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28th, 1919.

Given the historical significance of the project, the team had the support of Darrienne Price who headed up the First World War heritage projects for local culture development organisation Screen South.

### **2.1.1 Evolution of an Idea**

An idea is shaped over time. It evolves, adapts and responds to various factors including time, budget and other decisions made along the way.

The number and size of the poppies went through several iterations, eventually becoming seven poppies to represent the 7 months from Armistice to Peace.

Initially the pebbles were to be painted in flat colours, red for the petals, black for the centre and edging and green for the stalks. However, an additional darker red colour meant each of the petal stones could have its own unique design.

**This turned the pebble painting into a much more engaging and personalised experience.**

### **2.1.2 Historical Research**

Behind each of the seven poppies was a story from the 7 months between the Armistice in 1918 and eventual peace with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919. These revealed the impact of the aftermath of war on the local community of Folkestone, more than 100 years ago.

A group of volunteers worked closely with Screen South to research the seven stories for the project, and the team held an outreach event at Folkestone Museum to further engage with the community and strengthen the historical research.

### **2.1.3 Funding**

By the end of 2018 the team had reworked their proposal, carried out a survey to gauge local interest and prepared and submitted an (ultimately successful) application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for nearly £12 k. Screen South partnered up with the ECC to help get the funding.

On January 25th, 2019, the team found out the application was successful.

### **2.1.4 The Practicalities of Collecting Tonnes of Pebbles and Painting Them**

The team identified an ideal location, a location for the poppies on Folkestone's pebble beach near the harbour, and obtained permission to remove the pebbles to paint them on the proviso they would be returned.

In all, there were 14 group collections by ECC members and youth groups. On one outing alone, 9000 pebbles were collected.

A big purchase for the project was for the containers (trugs) to collect and store pebbles. By the end of the project, the team had amassed 200!

Trugs laden with pebbles were transported from the beach in cars to a couple of storage areas, and by doing that, the limits of the private vehicles were tested.

### **The Right Type of Paint and the Painting Workshops**

Due to a beach location, the project needed an eco-friendly solution to colour the pebbles. After testing a variety of different natural dyes with limited success, Ben

came across Lakeland Paints, a company who specialise in non-toxic, eco-friendly temporary paint.

Being a specialist paint, it came with the special price of around £75 per 5 L tin (to give an idea, a basic decorating paint comes in at approximately £28 per 5 L tin)—and the team ended up buying 16 of them. This was a key element that had been budgeted for.

The first workshop was held at Folkestone Library. Working in a relatively confined space, managing paint and pebbles with lots of children was a big learning curve. The workshop gained plenty of interest and was busy. One lesson quickly learned was to keep different colours on separate tables to avoid mixing—and to minimise the amount of paint a 5-year-old can get their hands on!

However, by the end of the first round of workshops near the end of May, only 4500 pebbles were painted—not nearly enough.

### **2.1.5 Where to Find More Volunteers? Gallery 66: The Opportunity to Be Inclusive and to Involve any Passers-by**

Earlier in the year, ECC had held a pop-up shop at Gallery 66 on Folkestone's cobbled old high street. Its owner offered Gallery 66 as a community art space so that the pebbles could be painted there. At no cost! A hugely generous offer. . . and a massive relief!

With space to store and paint pebbles and a chance to be really visible to the community, the team filled the window space with decorated pebbles to attract attention. It worked. Over the coming weeks, a steady stream of locals and visitors from around the UK and beyond popped in to paint pebbles. It was also a chance for members of ECC to get involved, get to know each other better and engage with the community.

Local business showed their support with surrounding shops promoting the project and also painting pebbles. A local cafe even provided free pizza for painters, during some of the evening sessions.

**From the 1000 or so people who came into Gallery 66 to paint, there were many nationalities, diverse backgrounds, able-bodied and disabled, and even three dogs helped with the painting.**

Gallery 66 was just one part of the painting puzzle. Schools and youth groups played a key role in generating the number of painted pebbles needed. In one school alone, 400 children took part in a giant painting session in their school hall. In total over 1200 school children across eight schools took part.

**It became a really inclusive community project. You did not have to be an artist to paint a pebble, but everyone's effort, young or old, contributed to a larger artwork.**

### **2.1.6 All Painted, Now Lay It Down**

With growing community support and participation, the project crept ahead of projections, and amazingly the last pebble was painted 2 days early!

Nearly 49,000 red, black and green pebbles—including almost 40,000 petal pebbles with unique designs—were the result. The designs were as diverse as the volunteers that painted them.

## **A Special Poppy for Belgium Refugees – Reflecting the Close Ties Between Belgium and Folkestone During the War**

One of the research themes focused on the Belgian refugees who passed through Folkestone and the relief effort to rebuild Belgian towns after the war. Darrienne from Screen South had connections with Wallonia Belgium Tourism and contacted them to develop a European angle to the project. The seed for the eighth poppy was planted: a half-sized version of the poppy design, one half in Folkestone, the other in Belgium. The idea was greeted positively, and the team was invited to lay the poppy at the Mons Memorial Museum.

With kind support from Folkestone Vehicle Rentals for use of one of their vans, Le Shuttle for the channel crossing and Wallonia Belgium Tourism for their hospitality, the team were all set and arrived in Mons on Thursday afternoon and finished by mid-Friday. The team got straight to work, a chance to put all the testing into practice using a bespoke wooden grid to accurately lay the pebbles to recreate the poppy paper design. By midday Friday the Poppy was complete, with pride of place in the large entrance hall of the museum.

**Instead of designs, the smaller Belgian poppy contained mini pebbles with a single letter on each stone. In Folkestone there was a matching poppy with letters. In the museum, these letters represented the first names of some of the Belgian refugees, whilst in Folkestone these were the letters of their surnames.**

## **The Pebble Poppy Weekend: Celebrating Treaty of Versailles, 28th June of 1819**

Saturday morning at 6:30 am saw a team of 20 volunteers assemble—including Angus' 86-year-old father. They roped off the area, unloaded trugs of pebbles, built the first wooden grid and laid the outline to the central mini 2.5 m diameter Belgium Poppy that mirrored the one in Belgium. Once the outline was complete, volunteers followed behind filling the shapes with painted pebbles.

The system worked well. They soon moved on to the larger 5 m diameter poppies and one by one marked them out on the beach.

Darrienne from Screen South talked with passers-by about the project and the heritage represented by the poppies. The local history research behind each poppy was also displayed next to each design. Over the day there was a steady stream of curious onlookers and plenty of positive feedback.

Visual documentation of the construction was a key element of the project with drone photography and a documentary film crew capturing the event.

By the end of the day, four poppies were complete and work had been started on the fifth.

A little tired and achy, the team were back on the beach early Sunday morning with some fresh volunteers. The full design soon took shape and by midday construction was complete. This was particularly satisfying as everyone could sit back and enjoy the celebrations hosted by the local council to commemorate the end of the First World War, which included parachutists landing nearby on the beach, a Spitfire fly-by and finally the Red Arrows display.





*“Lasting Memories” before the finish line: giant poppies next to the boardwalk at the beach*

**The team around “Lasting Memories” had achieved what they set out to do. It would not have been possible without the dedication from members of the East Cliff Creatives and support from volunteers, local community groups, schools, businesses and individuals.**

“For me personally, the project gave me the opportunity to connect with the community, evolve existing relationships and form new ones. It proved that we can bring the community together to create art projects that are truly inclusive, and the hope is to build upon this in the future. Oh, and I lost 5 kilos by the end of the project carrying all those pebbles; it even had health benefits!” Angus Cameron

## **2.2 What Lasting Memories Lead to: Paper Beach**

ECC made its name for its imaginative, collaborative and purposeful artwork projects on the Kent coast. This led to a new opportunity, even in the middle of a pandemic.

“What we get out of community as human beings is something that we’ve all been missing in the last year incredibly”. Sarah Bates, Publishing Strategy Director of Farshore (formerly Egmont Books)

Living in Folkestone, Sarah had seen ECC’s work with the pebbles on the beach, and it occurred to her that a collaboration might be possible. Farshore is home to some of the world’s best-loved characters and brands, including Minecraft, Winnie-the-

Pooh, Tintin, Mr. Men and Little Miss and Thomas and Friends. The company was working on their rebrand but wanted a way to share their mission of making every child a proud reader—and also to address the challenges that we all faced throughout the pandemic. Sarah got in touch with the East Cliff Creatives; they put a proposal together, and the result was Paper Beach.

Paper Beach championed reading and the joy of books, no matter your age. It also marked a new chapter for Egmont Books as they celebrated the first anniversary of becoming part of HarperCollins Publishers—one of the world’s largest book publishing companies.

The project unveiled a brand-new company name for Egmont Books: Farshore. This remained under wraps until the very final stage. The project aimed to prove that even whilst physically distanced from one another, people could still come together to create something wonderful; and whilst everyone was prevented from going out, travelling and meeting up with one another, they could still go on the most fantastic adventures within the pages of a book.

This was a community-style art project, with a connection to books, the shoreline and imagination.

### **2.2.1 The Task**

The project asked a simple question: “Where does reading take you?”. Taking part was simple; all anyone needed was an A4 sheet of paper and a black pen. They could draw, write or even type their entry, so long as they answered the question.

A new painting by a local artist provided the backdrop to the words and drawings of all the entries received over the course of the project.

### **2.2.2 Asking for Entries Digitally**

The main challenge was bringing the impact that Lasting Memories had made into the digital realm:

1. ECC reached out through their social media channels and asked for participation worldwide.
2. ECC also reached out to the schools and youth groups who had been involved in the Lasting Memories project.
3. Farshore accompanied the project with six pre-recorded home-schooling sessions led by leading authors and illustrators to help kids create their own characters and worlds. These sessions are still available on Farshore’s YouTube channel.
4. The project had three different competitions for schools based in the UK, kindly donated by Farshore. Prizes included book bundles worth up to £500 for the winner’s school and a special author’s masterclass.

The number of entries increased as soon as the project introduced a competitive element, rewarding schools for entering the most pages each week. This approach created an additional sense of purpose and inclusivity for the kids, teachers and parents. It also proved that people sometimes just want to join in and be part of something, regardless of their perceived talent or ability. Entries flooded in, and

before the deadline, 2400 pages were delivered—showing all kinds of drawings, writing and other creative expressions, using just black ink on a white A4 page.

The collaboration between East Cliff Creatives and Farshore brought together the thoughts of thousands of participants to celebrate the magic of reading through the creation of a giant artwork. The youngest entrant was 2 and the oldest turned 100 just before the artwork was revealed. Entries came in from five different continents and 28 countries.

With a live-streaming event, people from all over the world could watch the team lay down the sheets of paper one by one, slowly forming the life-size image of a beach. Entire schools who participated in the competition watched the live streaming together, and a short documentary captured the journey.

This project was the first collaboration with a business enterprise; Farshore funded 100% of the project, worked closely with the ECC team and provided additional resources with their authors, design team and marketing.



*Finished mosaic of 2400 A4 pages laid on the floor of a movie studio stage*

## 2.3 Learnings

Those two projects, Lasting Memories and Paper Beach, cannot be compared in terms of content and goals, but they can be compared when it comes to the outcome:

1. **A sense of belonging** was created, as individuals contributed something bigger. Volunteers formed groups and started or solidified friendships. By contributing one piece to a bigger artwork, to the bigger picture, everyone felt invested in the end result.

2. **Teamwork** played an essential role in reaching the finishing line, either by painting and building the poppies or by competing to find out which school could submit the most entries.
3. Asking individuals to spend time on a specific topic in a **playful way brought joy** and created an experience which became a treasured memory and a story to share.
4. **Intergenerational communication** and quality time spent together as families and amongst strangers had a simple but very effective outcome. Elderly volunteers told children and other younger volunteers stories about the First World War, and during Paper Beach, kids talked about their favourite books with their parents, siblings and friends.
5. Inviting a wide audience with no specific targeting to join in—the passers-by in the shop painting poppies or those reached via social media to contribute to Paper Beach—created an **inclusive experience, irrespective of age, gender, nationality or any other perceived division**.
6. **Attention span increased** for participants, regardless of their age in both experiences.

Throughout the 2 years in which those projects were developed and executed, Angus Cameron together with all those connected to the projects shared their experiences with family, friends and their wider networks.

I was amongst them. Angus and I have been friends through previous work in the high-tech entertainment industry. When Paper Beach finished, I was already part of the Sonophilian Foundation. This foundation draws attention to the scientific proof of the positive effects of creative expression.

Introducing Angus to Sonophilia, and most importantly to the SfNC (the Society for the Neuroscience of Creativity—the main scientific partner in the foundation), was a gamechanger. The idea was born to develop creative projects with a systematic approach. With two other colleagues from my then-current job at the Berlin-based company J2C, Dr. Ina Filla and Hendrik Wantia, the four of us founded ootiboo GmbH in Berlin with the goal to prove a hypothesis:

CREATIVITY can be used as a vehicle to strengthen MENTAL HEALTH and develop FUTURE SKILLS in our children!

---

### 3 Implications for a Systematic Change

What if we could combine the success of Lasting Memories and Paper Beach with scientific research and follow the creative process in a longitudinal study?

To do this we formed a new company—ootiboo—to reach out to European Union research labs and involve EU funding opportunities, we founded a GmbH in Germany, the home of three of the co-founders.

## 3.1 Why Mental Health and Future Skills?

### 3.1.1 Robust Mental Health in Children Is the Foundation to Grow, Learn and Thrive!

From birth throughout childhood and adolescence our brains critically form and shape neuronal connections. These are essential for acquiring the cognitive and emotional skills that shape lifelong health and healthy relationships, allowing us to make a meaningful contribution to our community and the world.

Being exposed to constant high-stress environments and early negative experiences, such as exposure to violence, discrimination or poverty in homes, schools or digital spaces, increases the risk of mental health conditions (UNICEF, 2021). Thirteen per cent of 10–19-year-olds live with a diagnosed mental disorder; anxiety and depression make up about 40%, alongside intellectual disabilities, ADD/ADHD and others (WHO 2020). An estimated 45,800 adolescents commit suicide each year. That's more than 1 child every 11 min, making suicide the fifth leading cause of death in 10–19-year-old boys and girls (WHO 2020). On top of that, psychosocial distress is more prominent than ever due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All of this impairs the brain's ability to make those critical connections.

The economic burden for societies arising from mental health conditions in children aged 0–19 total US\$387.2 billion each year worldwide (Department of Health Policy of the London School of Economics and Political Science, in UNICEF, 2021).

Despite the extreme costs in human lives, on families, communities and the economy, only 2% of government health budgets are spent on mental health globally (UNICEF, 2021).

ootiboo takes up the challenge: mental health in childhood must be addressed by giving children the tools and skills they need to be able to form the neuronal connections essential to their cognitive and emotional development.

### 3.1.2 Future Skills Are Highly Connected to Creativity, the Skill Least Achievable by Artificial Intelligence

As stated in the introduction, the careers of the future look set to change dramatically from those of today. Nearly half of the jobs in OECD countries look set to become automated over the next 10–15 years, and an estimated 65% of today's schoolchildren will work in professions that do not currently exist.

**Consequently, they will need an entirely different set of skills to enjoy successful careers.**

**Within the trends of globalisation and growing autonomy, future skills in self-management such as active learning, resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility are needed to maintain mental health.**

## 3.2 Methodology: The Research Approach

Epigenetic research shows that the conditions we create and the experiences we provide for young children affect not just the developing brain but also lifelong health and educational achievements.

ootiboo's scientific research, in collaboration with some of the most renowned science labs in the world, focuses on:

- The effect of free, safe, creative expression on cognitive and emotional development and mental health
- How creativity is organised and develops in the brain
- How creativity/creative skills can be fostered

The creatives and scientists dive into the real world of the children:

- In the classroom—ootiboo is inspired by scientific insights that reading, crafting, making music and other creative activities have huge positive impacts on a child's well-being, relationships, development and future life chances. Creative projects are designed accordingly and measure the real time effects of these activities on the children directly in the classroom—by means of questionnaires and physiological measures of stress and relaxation.
- In the laboratory—inspired by the real-world experiences of the children during the projects, ootiboo dives deeper and studies the neurological processes of the effects by means of brain imaging methods in the laboratory.
- On ootiboo.com—ootiboo's digital platform enables to conduct standardised and (for the children and families) highly secured research by means of digital creativity games, giving unique insights into how to quantify and best foster creativity in children, independently of language or culture barriers.

### 3.3 Methodology: The Practical Work

The practical work with children directly informs new research, filling pressing knowledge gaps on how we can best strengthen mental health and foster future skills through creativity to enable children to thrive. Together with teachers, ootiboo creates safe spaces in primary schools encouraging 5–11-year-old children to discover and explore their innate creativity, deal with the most pressing challenges of the twenty-first century (e.g. climate change) and experience how it feels to achieve a common purpose in collaboration with other kids—in an inclusive, equitable, cross-cultural, digital approach.

With the help of creative professionals from diverse artistic domains, such as writers, painters, sculptors, graphic designers, artistic techies and many more, ootiboo plans and conducts concise projects tackling distinct topics and inspiring diverse artistic forms of expressions, to build a culture of inspiration, trust and agency. Ootiboo is already in partnership with schools in the UK and in conversations with schools in Germany, and **because there is no cost to schools, ootiboo is able to help in some of the most socially deprived areas. The projects inspire inclusivity, collaboration and free exploration, without fear of failure or the pressure to perform and with the allowance to make a mess!**

ootiboo has already introduced so far the following:

**After-School Clubs (ASC)** ASCs are held at primary schools, run by in-house teaching staff and consist of six projects that take place over an entire school year. In groups of up to 20, children draw their interpretation of an ootiboo from their imagination, create 3D models of themselves, explore their own powers and talents with the help of an avatar and use mind maps and storytelling to explore “what creativity actually is”. Each project runs for 4–6 weeks per term and is supported by downloadable digital resources including lessons plans and short films.

**Big Projects** Open to anyone who wants to join in, big projects run for several weeks and conclude with an eye-catching event to celebrate the achievements of all the participants. Lasting Memories and Paper Beach would be considered big projects, and after their success stories, May 2022 will see the launch of Propa Happy, the first official ootiboo big project and the second project in collaboration with Farshore.



Ant and Dec with the Cover of Propa Happy



Award-winning UK TV hosts Ant McPartlin and Declan Donnelly are set to release their debut children's book in May 2022 to raise vital funds for the NSPCC (the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) ahead of its annual fundraiser, Childhood Day, on June 10th, 2022.

Published by Farshore, *Propa Happy* is a fun-filled guide to feeling good for children packed with games, jokes, anecdotes, challenges and quizzes to make kids smile. Created in consultation with child psychology experts and with guidance from the NSPCC, *Propa Happy* includes mental health advice and activities so that children can nurture their emotional well-being every day.

ootiboo will be working closely with Farshore and schools across the nation to create a fun, big project to celebrate the launch of the book and to help raise awareness of the NSPCC's annual fundraiser Childhood Day on June 10th, 2022. Ant and Dec are donating all their author proceeds to the NSPCC's Childhood Day campaign, which encourages kids and grown-ups across the UK to come together to fundraise so that the NSPCC and Childline can continue their work to support children. As Ant himself says, "Every child deserves a happy childhood—and the NSPCC rely on fundraising to ensure they can continue to be here for children and families" (PR announcement *Propa Happy*).

**One Day Pop-Up Engaging School Days** Within big projects we have school pop-up events to engage an entire primary school for 1 day, encouraging children from all classes to creatively explore a special topic via three 30-min creative activities.

In summer 2022 the first pop-up event launches with our World Builder project. This is designed to promote the awareness of STEAM in younger children and helps them realise that each skill is connected; rather than working separately or even in opposition to other skills, creativity works hand-in-hand with science and technology. Held in collaboration with Egmont Publishing and their STEAM (science, technology, arts and mathematics)-focused *LEGO Explorer* magazine, the children create their own planet and alien creature or plant.

**Digital Platform** Beyond the work with schools, ootiboo also has a dedicated, secure digital platform, ootiboo.com. Here users find much more content and activities to continue inspiring children, educators and families around the globe to explore creativity. The platform also enables standardised research to be conducted, reaching out to millions of school children, circumventing language or culture barriers. The digital platform is open to anyone who wants to join in; it's accompanied by scientific research and contributes to a 10-year longitudinal study conducted by our researchers.