



## NEWSLETTER 52 - SPRING 2022

### Supporting schools as we move towards the new reality

As we start to move towards the new reality with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions and as horrifying events in Ukraine unfold, it is clear that during the coronavirus crisis there have been harsh impacts on the wellbeing, physical and mental health and finances of many people but in communities everywhere there has also been an amazing and sustained outpouring of compassion, support for those in need, sense of togetherness, thoughtfulness, generosity, kindness, empathy and determination to win through.

In our schools, despite ongoing personal setbacks, dwindling budgets, staffing issues and pressure to catch up on gaps in learning, teachers, children and caregivers alike have done their best to adapt, look out for one another and move forward.

Social media has played an enormous part in everyone's life and will continue to be a significant influence on children as they grow up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Learning to keep safe online is an important part of the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum.



We are particularly pleased with how our programme [THE BIG THINK](#), designed to systematically support children's personal, social and academic progress from the age of 5 to 11 to give them the best possible start in life, is proving to be so beneficial on many levels.

## Helping teachers and children make up for lost ground

After two years of uncertainty, worry and enforced home-schooling brought about by the pandemic, many people's mental health has deteriorated. Conditions have propelled forward, a shift in education so as to better balance what had become an intense and in some cases harmful focus on academic outcomes with a more dialogic, holistic approach and an emphasis on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) – a very strong feature of THE BIG THINK.

As we conducted online training for schools using THE BIG THINK, teachers were telling us that in the absence of training since the outbreak of COVID-19, they were delighted to discover how the structure of the programme and its fully-resourced lesson packs not only relieved their already demanding workloads but also contributed to their Continuing Professional Development (CPD), especially by building their competence and confidence in facilitating sessions that empower children with skills, strategies and information to enable them to better manage the social and emotional dimensions of their lives and improve their wellbeing.

Using social media, we advertised free workshops at fortnightly intervals so that teachers and others involved in educating, mentoring or parenting the emerging generation could deepen their understanding of human values and how they can be used to nurture social and emotional skills that are now recognised as vital for pupils' wellbeing and capacity to learn.

THE BIG THINK uses 5 core human values that resonate well with children: TRUTH, LOVE, RESPONSIBILITY, COMMUNITY and PEACE.



The programme comprises 60 values-themed assembly and lesson kits for ages 5 to 7 and to ensure progression and age-appropriate learning, a further 60 for ages 7 to 11. Each set of 12 gradually reinforces the five aspects of SEL:

**SELF REGULATION** is practised using the **PEACE** modules

**SELF AWARENESS** is deepened during **TRUTH** sessions

**RELATIONSHIP SKILLS** are enriched using the **LOVE** packs

**RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING** is achieved via the **RESPONSIBILITY** lessons

**SOCIAL AWARENESS** is amplified by the **COMMUNITY** learning units.

## Real-life, relevant, quality education

One child recently commented that THE BIG THINK lessons are the best ever! What children like so much about this programme is that they are allowed to think independently and that they can make their own choices.

Every lesson is an engaging experience in a safe and supportive environment. The set gives the children space to ask questions, explore and share their ideas, tackle new challenges, try out new things, face their anxieties and practise life skills while developing an excellent mindset for their future. Here are three of the character muscles they gradually build.

**CONFIDENCE** – The children are constantly being given opportunities to grow and push themselves so they gain self-confidence and trust others. They learn to manage and express their emotions well. All the insights opened up to teachers enable them to help their pupils lay foundations for a fulfilling life.



**RESILIENCE** – Encouraging the children to venture outside their comfort zones and using activities like roleplay to help them overcome their fears, they learn to be resilient, determined and persist through setbacks, develop creative approaches to problems and master tools for achievement.

**LIFE SKILLS** – The Big Think's dialogic, supportive approach empowers children to think, make independent, well considered choices, listen attentively and be caring. The good communication and teamwork skills they develop, along with values literacy, will benefit them well beyond their school days.



After experiencing The Big Think during the Autumn and Spring terms, in the Summer term the children are ready to work on a project of their choosing in conjunction with their local community so as to enhance relationships and enable them to contribute to one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

10 **Reduced inequalities**

11 **Sustainable cities & communities**

12 **Responsible consumption & production**

13 **Climate action**

14 **Life below water**

15 **Life on land**

16 **Peace, justice & strong institutions**

17 **Partnership for the goals**



1 **No poverty**

2 **Zero hunger**

3 **Good health & wellbeing**

4 **Quality education**

5 **Gender equality**

6 **Clean water & sanitation**

7 **Affordable & clean energy**

8 **Decent work & economic growth**

9 **Industry, innovation & infrastructure**

THE BIG THINK is a process that systematically delivers high QUALITY EDUCATION

## A combined approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education

In September 2020 schools were expected to start teaching a new curriculum for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) so as to better prepare young people for life, enable them to enjoy healthy relationships, make informed choices and look after their wellbeing. However, because of lockdowns and school closures, the introduction only began in the 2021 Summer term for many schools, with planning spilling over into the Autumn term.

Schools must consult with parents about their RSHE policy and the content of their scheme of work. Sex education is compulsory for secondary schools with the groundwork being established during the primary phase - and this is where we share our expertise.

During the lockdowns and school closures, with sales and training opportunities for The Big Think being so limited, thanks to a grant from the Social Enterprise Support Fund (SESF) and the National Lottery, we were able to concentrate instead on adding 32 assembly and lesson kits to align with the new RSHE curriculum for primary schools. In 2021, we conducted virtual training sessions for individual schools and clusters of schools using The Big Think. It became clear that initially many teachers were anxious about holding their RSHE consultation with parents but using our approach, bringing representatives from across a school's community together, soon proved very successful and the sessions were extremely constructive.

Recognising how engaging and unifying our dialogues are for groups of teachers, children, parents and carers as we introduce them to The Big Think, in the 2021 Autumn term, Lorraine King, the Health Improvement Advisor for PSHE and Children's Life Skills in primary schools in Islington, was keen to collaborate with us. We are excited about teaming up to support schools with their statutory duty to consult caregivers about their RSHE provision.



Together we are working with headteachers and those leading Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education from 10 Islington primary schools to create a road map for an effective RSHE consultation process, including a Q & A element to garner the views of teachers, children and caregivers. The feedback so far has been very positive as we help teachers facilitate a face-to-face or virtual Community Values Dialogue for RSHE tailored to the needs of their individual school, with each one involving up to 30 participants so as to have a good mix of staff, children, faith and other local community leaders. Parents have expressed their appreciation for how the dialogue unites everyone around common values and gives them a voice; children too like their opinions being heard and teachers seem mighty relieved at what is achieved and the invigorated collaboration with parents and carers.



## Supporting the HVF

As we take stock of the impact of the coronavirus crisis on what we had hoped to achieve with the launch of THE BIG THINK in July 2019, it is clear our income from subscriptions for sales and training has been severely affected by school closures and disruptions. Now, with the easing of restrictions and evidence of the widespread need for systematic, high quality teaching of social and emotional skills, we look forward to getting our business plan back on track and continuing to move the dial forward to bring about the recognised and necessary changes we have been advocating in how children are taught.

We are so grateful to all who have generously made donations since our last newsletter, including the trustees of The Tony Metherell Charitable Trust for their regular donation, the trustees of the Joan Ainslie Charitable Trust, the Enid Slater Charitable Trust and The Allen Charitable Trust and the loyal donor from a family trust. Your funding translates directly into positive, durable changes, higher attainment levels and better life chances for thousands of children along with improvements in their wellbeing and that of their teachers, parents and carers.

We much appreciate the annual subscriptions from our Members and Friends. Your kindness means we can go on enhancing the quality of children's school careers. For all the generous donors who wish to remain anonymous, please accept our heartfelt thanks. We are most grateful to the following for your support: Jill Bell, Brenda and Norman Clark, Dawne Davis, Jean Francis, Mary and Don Greenwood, Linda Jones, Iain Lee, Rosemary Lipscomb, Tim Lipscomb, Gloria Prema, Adrian Price, Mike Roberts, Nigel Shamash, Geoffrey and Ann Steinberg, Trevor and Patsy Sturmer, Polly Stone and Maureen Watson – *and all who shop online using [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) and have nominated the Human Values Foundation as the recipient of donations from Amazon.*

AND FINALLY ...

It is always a pleasure to hear from you and have your comments, suggestions and ideas about how we might win sponsorship for our various ongoing projects or that you would like to have some e-materials about The Big Think programme to share with your family members, friends, colleagues, potential subscribing Friends of our charity and others. Do contact:

Rosemary Dewan, Human Values Foundation,  
The Coach House, Salisbury Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0AJ

Alternatively ring 01403 259711 or e-mail: [yes2values@hvf.org.uk](mailto:yes2values@hvf.org.uk).

The charity's website is: [www.humanvaluesfoundation.com](http://www.humanvaluesfoundation.com).

The Big Think's website is: [www.the-big-think.org](http://www.the-big-think.org).

***The HVF team wishes our readers a safe, healthy and happy summer.***

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