



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEAS FOUNDATION WITH SUPPORT FROM THE COMINO FOUNDATION

In 2003 Sir Mike Tomlinson, who was Chairman of the Learning Trust for Education in Hackney became aware that Robin Wight was forming the IDEAS Foundation in Hackney with Heather MacRea and David Holloway, who became Chief Executive. The key purpose of the IDEAS Foundation is to spot and develop creativity in young people, pilot creative education projects and champion relationships with the creative industries. This would be done through work experience, internship and apprenticeship opportunities with projects covering a range of disciplines including advertising, digital media, architecture, product design, fashion, film and music.

Mike Tomlinson was supportive of this work because a key driver was to provide opportunities for young people from disadvantaged London boroughs, such as Hackney. These young people could experience work in a creative industry, demonstrate their creative capability in that work setting and to have the chance of establishing a relationship with a mentor who could continue to offer guidance and advice. The initiative was seen as a way of extending the horizons of young people whose range of career ambitions might be severely limited to work settings and occupations with which they are familiar. The Comino Foundation was convinced that there was potential value in this innovative education initiative and provided funding to support work with 2 schools in Hackney.

The annual grantee conferences organised by the Comino Foundation have proved particularly useful to the IDEAS Foundation and have enabled David Holloway to identify that there were opportunities for developing the IDEAS Foundation programmes with schools associated with the Comino Centres. The Comino Foundation continued to provide funding to enable the work with schools in Hackney to expand but additional funding was provided to progressively establish a relationship with schools associated with the Liverpool and Wigan Comino Centres. The creative industries are particularly vibrant in Manchester and Liverpool and a high point in 2009 was when the young people participating in the Wigan/Ideas Foundation project met with Andy Burnham, then a Minister and Member of Parliament for Leigh.

The IDEAS Foundation is now well established both in London and the North West with relationships with many creative companies and other organisations all of which support projects in 6 Ideas Foundation Schools, in other schools around the country and an on-line project called 'I am Creative' where students can work on a professional brief supported by a creative mentor. This work is now supported by funding from numerous charities with work in an ever increasing number of colleges

and higher education establishments. By 2011 over 2,000 young people have benefited from this initiative with over 800 completing the full scholarship programme.

The Comino Foundation is now partner in the 3 Ideas Foundation schools initiative in Greater Manchester, where the Ideas Foundation works together in schools with the Sheffield Comino Centre and contributes to the core competence based practice and development embodied in the GRASP methodology.

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The Comino Foundation
November 2011