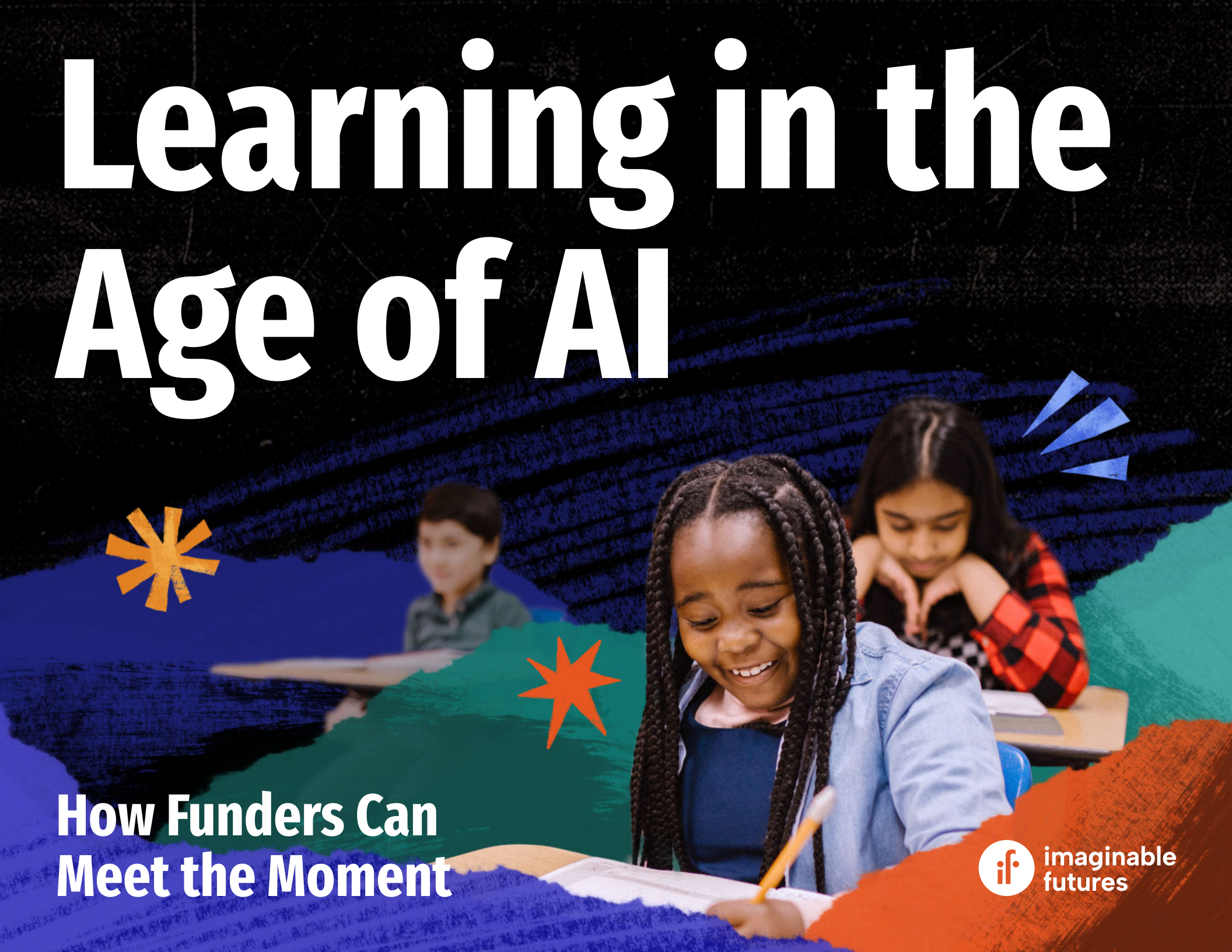
Learning in the Age of AI



How Funders Can Meet the Moment

imaginable futures

A FUTURE WORTH DESIGNING FOR

Every generation faces the same daunting task: preparing young people for a world it cannot yet see. This moment is no different, except that artificial intelligence is redrawing that world faster than any force in living memory.

With that in mind, we set out to understand what a world increasingly influenced by AI means for learners today. This is not a technology adoption question—it is a question of human development. What do young people today need to become thriving citizens of the world they are inheriting? And how might education evolve to support this trajectory?

We came into this research with the intention to expand the conversation—speaking with more than 50 educators, researchers, technologists, parents, community leaders, funders, and young people across 16 countries. We deliberately sought voices often missing from today's discussions about AI as well as those right at the center of it—seeking to bridge these perspectives, distill what's different about this moment, and help our field make intentional choices as we move forward.

What we heard defied the hype cycle that dominates headlines—no savior narratives, no inevitable sense of doom. Instead, there was a sense of possibility, agency, and optimism. **More than anything, the people we spoke to shared different versions of the same refrain: the impact this technology has on learning is ours to shape**. We heard caution and concern, but we also heard hope. This moment of disruption in society could make room for long-needed reforms in the way we support learning—and maybe even how we define its purpose.

While no one can predict exactly what tomorrow's world will demand of today's learners (and we should be wary of anyone who claims otherwise), **what we want for our kids is universal: purpose, sound judgment, genuine relationships, curiosity and the ability to keep learning across a lifetime**. These are not new aspirations, but we have struggled to deliver on them for most learners for decades—building education systems that largely reward individual knowledge retention and compliance over connection and agency.

> AI doesn't change what we want for young people. It raises the cost of failing to deliver, and if used wisely, offers powerful new tools that can help us get closer to delivering quality education for all learners—not just an elite few.

We imagine a future where every learner, regardless of background, develops agency over their own story, finds genuine belonging in learning communities, and grows into someone with the skills and confidence to shape the world they're entering. This is a future worth designing for.

— Imaginable Futures

In This Report

A NOTE TO FELLOW FUNDERS

There are many unanswered questions in this moment—and just as many vocal perspectives. With technology evolving quickly, it can be tempting to adopt a wait-and-see posture. But while caution is merited, leaning out right now—or trying to thread the needle on the perfect strategy—will not help us deliver better outcomes for learners. As you explore this report and internalize the reflections it contains, we encourage you to:

1 Hold curiosity and caution in equal measure.

No one has all the answers right now. Stay committed to learning, to questioning your own assumptions, and to engaging in good-faith disagreement.

2 Act, however imperfectly.

Find the parts of this vision that move you or naturally overlap with the work you're already doing and make a few grants or investments. This could be to trusted collaborators, to new actors, or to pooled funds for joint experimentation. Just don't stay on the sidelines—be part of fueling what comes next.

3 Stay in cross-generational conversation.

Change is happening fast, but young people are mobilizing faster. As adults working towards a better future of learning, we must listen to and learn from young leaders who are leading the way, even—and especially—when that feels uncomfortable.

Our Process

Research Inputs

Our research explored how the presence of AI in our society is reshaping learning across the arc from childhood to adulthood, and what those shifts might mean for the people and systems that support learners. We asked questions such as:

- How might the ubiquity of AI across institutions and industries reshape the skills and capabilities young people need to thrive as adults?
- What potential risks and harms are most concerning?
- How can we protect the relational experiences that anchor young people's social and emotional development?
- What shifts are needed to close existing equity gaps?
- How are learners and educators—especially in under-resourced communities—using AI in ways that dominant narratives might miss or misrepresent?

52

Research Participants

30+

Reports, articles, and podcast episodes synthesized to distill existing perspectives

2

Co-Creation Sessions with Young People

16

Countries Represented in the Research

Who We Spoke To

We held in-depth qualitative interviews with a wide range of experts—exploring their hopes, fears, their hunches about what is changing (and what isn't), and their reflections on the shifts in incentives and values needed to transform education systems.

Profiles:

- Global Education Experts
- Teachers & Administrators
- Parents
- Youth Wellbeing Experts
- Technologists & Innovation Experts
- Indigenous & Minority Community Leaders
- Researchers
- Philanthropic Leaders
- Young People from Seven Countries

Throughout our conversations, one truth stood out: this conversation is deeply personal. Like all of us, these experts carry multiple different roles and identities at the same time. Alongside their day jobs, they are parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, and working people navigating technological and societal change in real-time. Each of these identities informs—and often complicates—our perspectives on what good education looks like and how technology should or shouldn't play a role.

Across dozens of conversations there were no simple answers. The consensus that emerged was a quieter one: concerns about AI's impact on education are real, but so is the opportunity to harness this technology—and the disruption it brings—for the benefit of learners everywhere.

> *"Human relationships were vulnerable 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago—for 100 years they have been moving in the wrong direction. If AI helps us pay attention to that and do something about it—that's a good thing."*
>
> — NONPROFIT LEADER, UNITED STATES

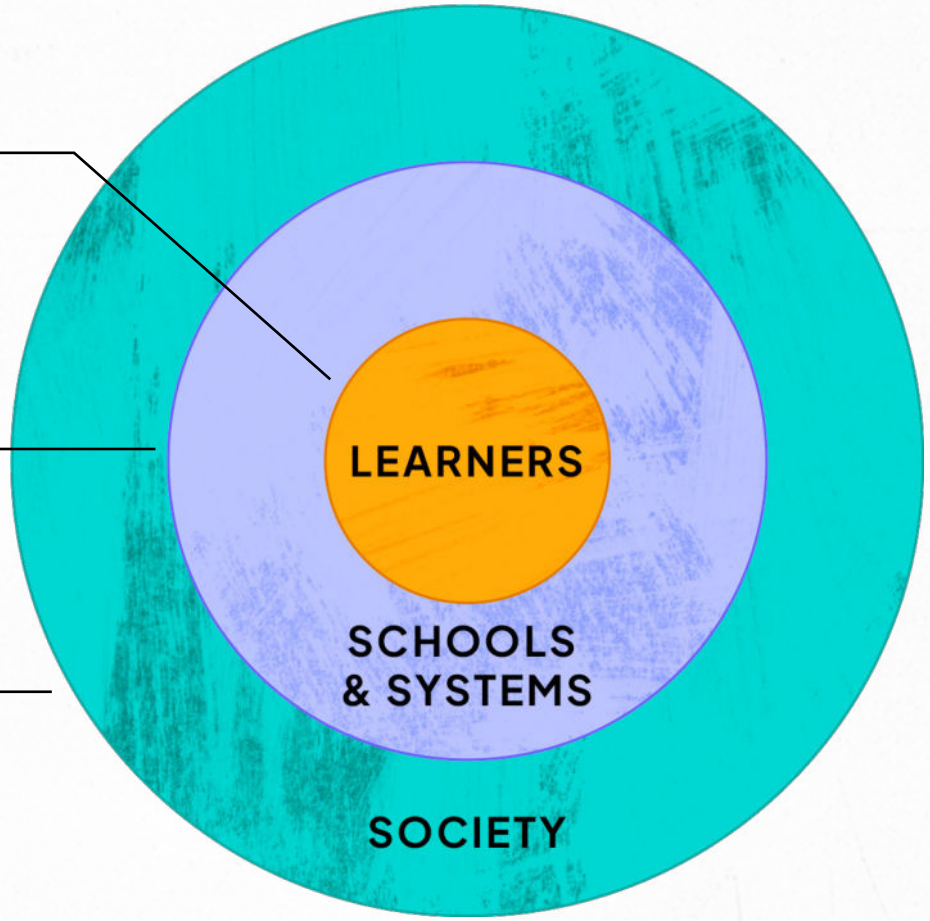
What We Heard

To present our insights, we looked across three levels: Learners, Schools & Systems, and Society.

How are learners experiencing the challenges and opportunities inherently presented by an increasingly AI-mediated world?

How are schools and education systems responding, and what might be possible?

What is shifting (and what needs to be true) at a societal level to ensure learners thrive long-term?

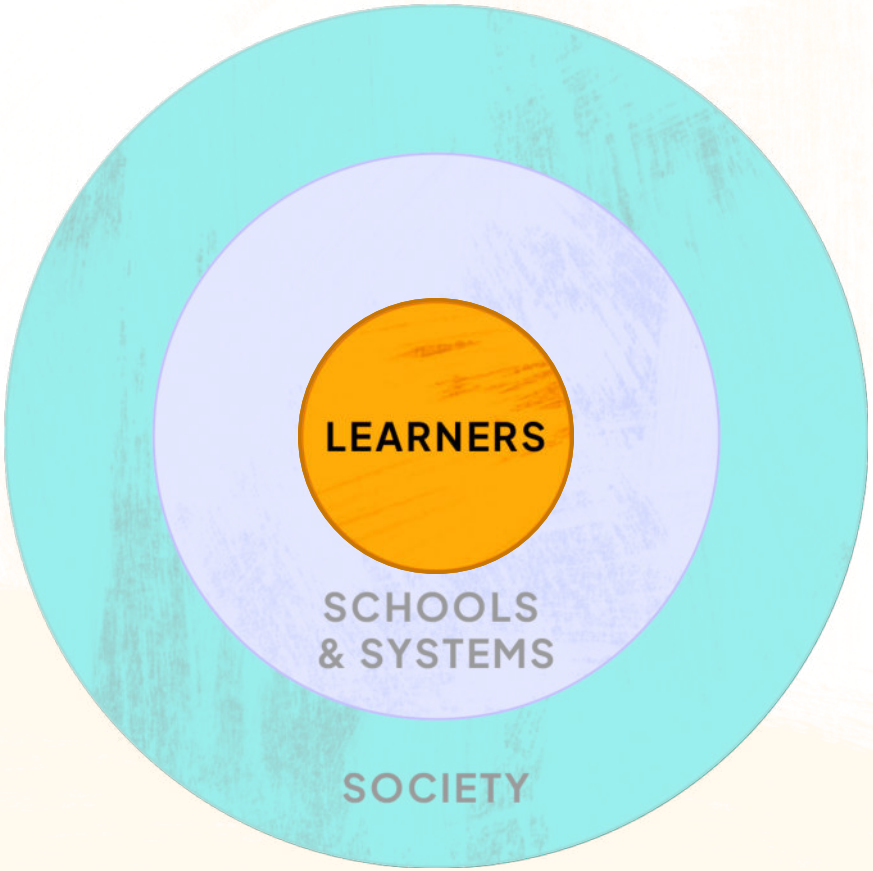


Learners

Young people are growing up in a world of increased uncertainty. Navigating this will require greater agency, resilience, and relational IQ.

Learners today are living in a world where knowledge is increasingly abundant, truth is contested, and uncertainty is the norm.

To build choice-filled lives amidst this backdrop, they need a sound internal compass, relationships they can lean on, and the confidence to own their story—no matter where it starts or where it leads.



Note: For the purposes of this report, young people refers to learners spanning from early schooling through early adulthood, recognizing that development, agency, and technology access vary significantly across this range.

Schools have struggled to deliver the skills learners need most—and AI has raised the stakes.

Critical thinking. Creativity. Relational intelligence. Adaptability. Judgment. These are the same "21st century skills" education reformers have been naming for two decades, and yet education systems have struggled to deliver.

Experts tend to agree: there is not a new competency set arriving with AI, but a renewed urgency in building the muscles we know kids need, and the ability to flex, strengthen, and wield them in different contexts over time.

The fact is, most schools in most places are still focused only on concept mastery, test scores, and core subjects. These foundations remain essential, but are not sufficient on their own. Young people need a much broader set of capabilities to thrive. AI brings an urgent and rare opportunity to redesign learning around the skills required for work and life in the 21st century.

> *"The education system we've built for the last hundred years needs to make a fairly radical shift away from domain knowledge. In times of radical disruption and change, it's more useful to have the kinds of skills that allow you to cross domains of knowledge rather than go deep in a single domain."*
>
> — INNOVATION LEADER, UNITED KINGDOM

> *"Schools train students to answer questions, but forget to ask questions—we didn't learn how to solve problems ourselves."*
>
> — STUDENT, QATAR

> *"The state delivers a standardized curriculum, detached from local context. Most schools are designed to prepare students for standardized tests and university admission. The state does not encourage critical thinking."*
>
> — INDIGENOUS LEADER, BRAZIL

Durable learning requires productive struggle and collaboration, both of which AI can erode and enhance.

Decades of learning science tells us that interpersonal interaction and individual struggle are critical ingredients for cementing concepts and building confidence. When young people use AI to offload their thinking—to write the essay, solve the problem, or make the decision—the work gets done, but learning doesn't stick, and the feeling of authorship is stripped away.

But the flipside is also true. When AI helps a young person build something they never could have built alone—an articulation that reflects their best thinking, a tool for their community, a project that solves a real problem—it can be a powerful tool for building agency and self-belief.

Yet, today a dichotomy exists in how AI shows up in schools: students get penalized for using AI to complete busywork and spend their creative energy removing the evidence. At the same time, we are missing a unique opportunity to use that same technology within schools to deepen learning, fuel students' curiosity and connection to the real world, and support self-directed learning.

> *"The feeling of accomplishment, of 'I did this and I'm proud of my work'—that's where I see frictionlessness becoming really damaging. When AI takes over most of the work, a young person is not invested in the outcome in the same way."*
>
> — FORMER EDUCATOR, UNITED STATES

> *"When you see research in education you will find that the most effective strategies to help students learn are based in interactions."*
>
> — EDUCATOR & PSYCHOLOGIST, CHILE

Unlocking Agency Through Building with AI

In Brazil, students aged 14–24 from under resourced communities in Realiza.vc's workforce readiness program, use Lovable's no-code tools to build working prototypes of their own ideas in just a few hours. This hands-on process sharpens their critical thinking and gives them something powerful: the experience of turning an idea into something real.

AI can supercharge discovery, allowing learners to interact with and learn from worlds beyond their own.

What often changes trajectories is not information, but exposure: to new people, a career you didn't know existed, a version of yourself you didn't know was possible or a place beyond your reach. Helping young people imagine futures outside their immediate circumstances has always been one of education's most important responsibilities, but too often access to that kind of exposure has depended on a combination of privilege and luck: the right school, the right neighborhood, or the right teacher.

AI can make this kind of exposure more abundantly available—guiding students through experiences of other cultures, introducing them to alternative viewpoints, and offering insight into different career possibilities.

> *"My mother, a maid, taught me how wealthy people live and encouraged me to imagine a different future for myself. Technology can create that window to the world."*
>
> — EDUCATOR, BRAZIL

> *"We can make available what wealthy students have always had: mentorship, networks, internships, and permission to explore. The curriculum of professional life isn't a skill gap—it's a class gap."*
>
> — WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EXPERT, UNITED STATES

Exploring Professional Pathways

Students complete a personal reflection and Futre.Me helps learners link their strengths and interests to over 17K different employment pathways—enabling them to explore what different careers are really like and connect what they are learning today with the futures they want to build.

AI can alleviate the shame that keeps young people from asking for help—but the social norms are still unclear.

Shame and fear have always been significant barriers in education and development. The student who won't ask the teacher to repeat themselves in front of the class. The teenager who needs mental health support but fears the stigma of seeking it. The young person embarrassed to admit a difficult friendship moment, even to a trusted adult.

In moments like these, responsibly designed AI tools (with the right human oversight) can alleviate the shame and embarrassment that often comes with asking for help—offering learners a private place to work through a concept without an audience, to rehearse a difficult conversation before having it in real life, or to access evidence-based resources for emotional support.

However, to unlock the emotional benefits of AI, we need to address the shame attached to relying on it and break the 'code of secrecy' between generations. Addressing the stigma kids feel is key to keeping lines of communication open, so private moments with AI become a bridge back to human connection rather than a retreat from it.

> *"I like [using the tablets for practicing reading] because when I make a mistake, I get to try again."*
>
> — STUDENT, MALAWI

> *"Young people are not talking to adults about the relational impact of AI at all. They can feel adult judgment and shame."*
>
> — YOUTH ORGANIZATION LEADER, UNITED STATES

> *"AI helps me mask emotions in uncomfortable conversations."*
>
> — STUDENT, KENYA

Closing Global Gaps in Mental Health Support

Over 75% of people who need mental health support never receive it because of cost, stigma, or a lack of available professionals. AI is increasingly becoming a private, judgment-free first step for people who might otherwise seek no support at all. Platforms like Kooth, Wysa, and Kids Help Phone combine AI with trained clinicians, using technology to expand access while ensuring pathways to human care.

The guardrails young people need most are the ones they carry within themselves.

After witnessing the harms of social media on young people's development, many are rightfully asking, "how do we protect young people from AI until they're old enough?" But a better question may be, "how do we prepare young people to make good choices in a world where AI is always available?"

The lessons of comprehensive sex education (vs. abstinence-only alternatives) can be instructive here. External guardrails matter, but decades of research tells us that they don't change behavior on their own. What works is helping young people build internal guardrails—the judgment to navigate real life situations with confidence.

That internal compass matters because there's a threshold moment most young people pass through when they shift from using AI for practical tasks (like homework help) to using it for relational or emotional support. The kids who navigate that moment well are the ones who've done some reflecting beforehand—who have the self-awareness to recognize what they want from these tools, and the discernment to notice when their use is bringing them closer to it or further away.

> *"If our goal is to support young people, we will fail if all we do is focus on taking things away."*
>
> — DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST, CANADA

> *"AI doesn't have the context in which you are born, or the context in which a particular situation happens. I worry that my friends are not able to discern the advice that they get."*
>
> — RECENT GRADUATE, KENYA

Building Conscious Consumers in the Classroom

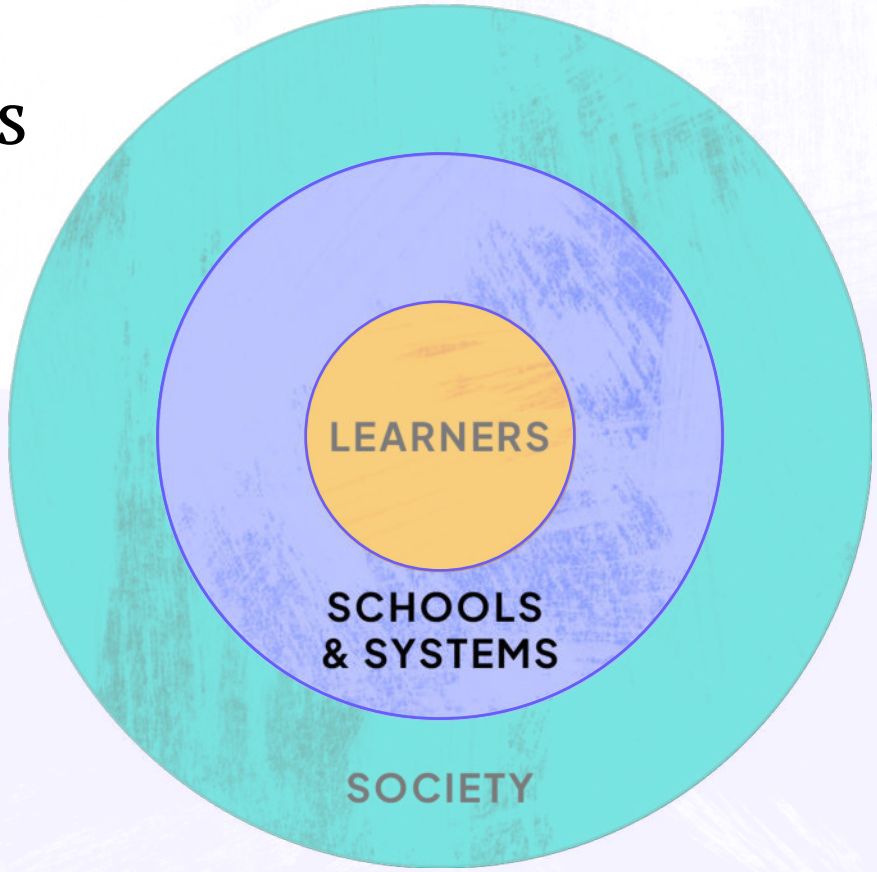
One educator we spoke with has students flex their critical thinking and build discernment by having them complete an assignment themselves, then prompting AI to do the same task. Together, they compare the two outputs, identify where the AI falls short, and discuss what makes parts of each response stronger. The exercise teaches a powerful lesson: you cannot effectively delegate or evaluate a task you do not understand yourself.

Education Systems

Schools were built to distribute knowledge. The future demands they develop people.

For more than a century, schools have been designed around a relatively predictable paradigm: distribute knowledge, build expertise, and enter the world of work prepared for a (mostly linear) career.

This moment gives us permission to question those assumptions. AI has made information ubiquitous and careers less linear. What if instead of imparting expertise, schools became homes for self reflection, relational development, and real-world experiences? And what if careers better supported cycles of ongoing exploration and intentional learning across a lifetime?



We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in teachers, but experts worry we're likely to miss it...again.

Teachers are one of the greatest and most critical leverage points in education—supporting student learning and social development. Yet they spend the majority of their time on everything except teaching: admin, lesson planning, grading, communication, and often filling gaps left by an insufficient safety net.

Two of the most practical and transformative uses of AI are to unburden teachers from administrative load and provide them with personalized coaching. Together, these investments would ensure teachers—especially those in under-resourced settings—are able to allocate their time more effectively, grow in their craft, and spend more time supporting students hands-on. Both the educators and experts we spoke with worry the field will underinvest here, failing once again to prioritize the people at the heart of our education systems.

> *"It's a lot of work to grade 30 essays. We trained AI to grade the essays, and students went from writing 2–3 per year to one per month."*
>
> — SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR, BRAZIL

> *"Teachers rarely get real feedback—maybe an inspection every few years, and a peer coach if they're lucky."*
>
> — RESEARCHER, UNITED STATES

> *"Time and again, I see us investing in anything but the people."*
>
> — FORMER EDUCATOR, UNITED STATES

Teachers as Builders

The Creator Collective, a partnership between Teach for All and Anthropic, is a WhatsApp-based community where educators use free AI tools to build resources for their classrooms.

Teachers in the collective have generated over 1,500 innovations—from an AI-powered coach to an automated grading tool.

If we want schools to teach what matters, we have to change what gets measured.

What gets measured drives incentives for teachers, students, and systems alike. Changing assessment is how we close the gap between what schools do and what we say we want them to deliver.

But there's a problem standing in the way: today's "skills of the future" frameworks aren't consistently defined, which gets in the way of schools actually making the changes that would better deliver these outcomes.

Gathering the requisite longitudinal evidence to support the development and assessment of these skills is critical, foundational work if we want to shift what schools teach—and what parents and prospective employers value.

The good news is that multimodal AI (tools that can intake voice, video, and text) are making it easier to assess demonstration of these skills within the natural flow of learning as students collaborate, reason aloud, and work through problems together.

> *"It's so much easier [with AI] to assess talking—students explaining themselves—things that used to be super expensive and complicated to assess."*
>
> — CURRICULUM DESIGNER, PERU

> *"Almost everyone agrees, in the abstract, on the 21st-century skills that matter. But in practice, parents and systems still default to traditional credentialing because they don't yet trust the alternative."*
>
> — INVESTOR & EDUCATOR, UNITED STATES

Assessing Skills in Context

Atlas Arena uses multiplayer games to assess skills such as collaboration, communication, and problem-solving in real time. Researchers are exploring whether authentic behaviors demonstrated during gameplay provide a more meaningful measure of young people's mastery of the capabilities that they will need beyond school.

It's time to tear down the artificial wall between school and work.

Schools have traditionally treated learning and doing as separate activities: first acquire knowledge, then apply it later in life. In a shifting economy, that sequence may no longer hold.

AI is rapidly reshaping work. Some projections suggest half of U.S. entry-level white-collar jobs could disappear within five years while others believe the changes will be much more concentrated. Either way, young people need to leave school with the practical experience, networks, and strong sense of self that will allow them to build a meaning-filled career amidst a shifting landscape.

When work stops providing a ready-made career ladder, the capacity to reinvent yourself becomes the most durable skill of all. AI makes it possible to coordinate that kind of real-world, project-based learning at scale, so young people can explore their passions and solve real world problems in age-appropriate, individualized ways.

> *"Young people should do projects, competitions, and leadership programs to be prepared for their life after school. In school, you're mostly like a follower. But in real life, we're the ones who will lead. We need to build a better world, right?"*
>
> — YOUTH, MALAYSIA

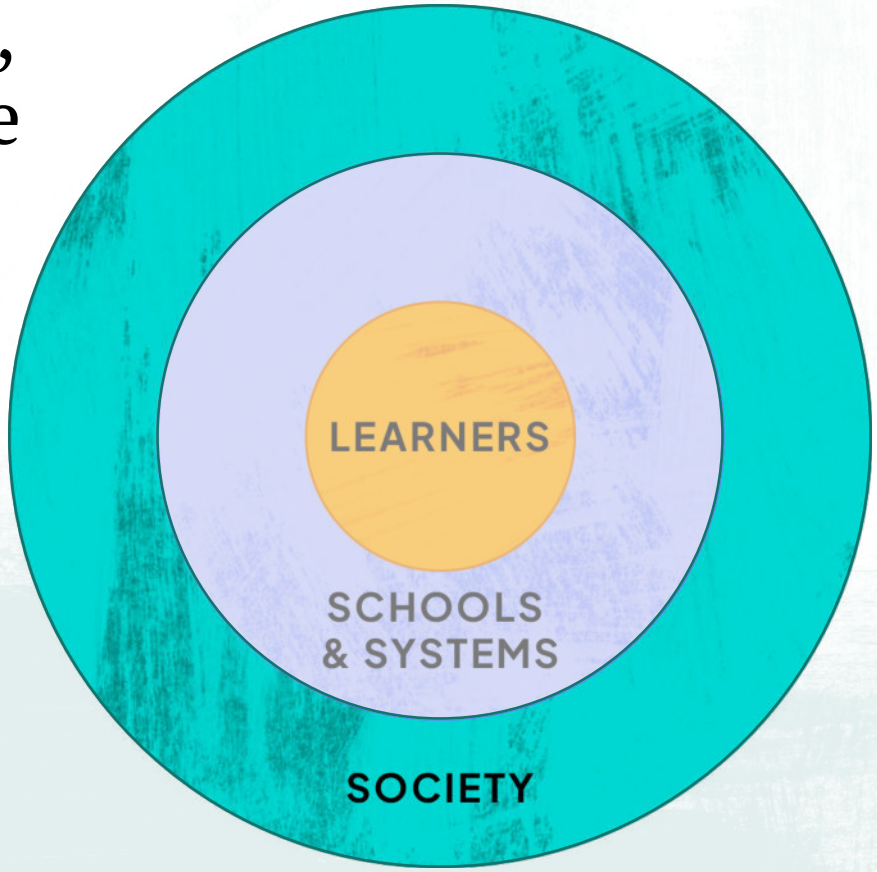
> *"We've sort of caged young people up in classrooms saying that you need to know this stuff before you can do anything."*
>
> — FUNDER, UNITED STATES

A Learning Experience that Bridges School and Work

At Big Picture schools in Australia, students spend up to two days each week in interest-based, curriculum-linked internships with mentors from the community. This model puts real-world projects, professional network-building, and authentic responsibility at the core of the learning experience. In addition to building key life skills, 74% of BPL alumni report securing their job through a contact made through these internships.

Society

Intentional design, governance, and community input will make the difference in whether AI helps us close, or widely expands, existing equity gaps.



Without confronting the structural barriers that shape access to opportunity today, AI risks amplifying existing educational inequities—its most transformative capabilities accessible to a privileged few. Familiar barriers like connectivity gaps in many communities and gender gaps in technology access could be amplified if we're not careful.

On the flipside, there is an opportunity for communities to use this technology to have more authorship over their own learning and remediate past erasure—it's up to us to create the conditions.

AI-enabled tools can be a first connection to critical systems of support for learners and their families—especially those who've long been left out.

In many conversations, we heard a version of the same debate: AI is imperfect and risky, so we should limit young people's access to it. And there *are* reasons to be cautious.

But that argument measures AI-supported tools against a status quo that doesn't exist for most young people—a trained school counselor, a responsive teacher with the resources to be fully present for every student, or a functioning mental health system. In many cases, the real comparison isn't AI versus human—it's something versus nothing.

This is not a call for recklessness, but an invitation to move with urgency: to create new digital on ramps that connect young people to resources they've previously lacked access to and to democratize the infrastructure to build with AI, so communities can shape and deploy their own locally relevant solutions.

> *"When the government closed our schools in Afghanistan, the only thing that could really help me succeed and improve was technology. When I left school I didn't know how to use a phone, but when I learned how to use a phone and a laptop, everything changed."*
>
> — STUDENT, AFGHANISTAN

> *"People don't have 2,000 shillings to go to a therapist. I've seen a number of young people go to AI to help them with mental issues."*
>
> — RECENT GRADUATE, KENYA

AI-Powered Wayfinding

NextLadder Ventures is investing $1B in "NavTech"—AI-enabled tools that help people navigate critical moments like job loss, housing instability, or health crises. Rather than replacing overburdened counselors or caseworkers, NextLadder is funding tools that connect these systems in intelligent ways, reducing the burden for families and those that serve them.

When it comes to where and how to integrate AI, communities must be able to make their own trade-offs.

Many are rightfully cautious about rolling out new technology to learners. But educators and community leaders note those most likely to urge caution are often the ones with the resources to give their children access to AI outside of school. For families who can't fill that gap, caution without context widens the very disparities we're trying to close.

Meanwhile, some minority communities see AI as a tool to reimagine inequitable systems that have never included them. In our research, several Indigenous leaders pushed back against well-meaning outsiders urging restraint. Likewise, educators who have worked in low-income schools expressed enthusiasm for using AI to deliver personalized and project-based learning to students in schools that previously never had capacity to manage it at scale.

> *[In health care,] withholding AI from lower-income populations and their providers does not prevent harm—it creates a digital caste system, where affluent patients benefit from AI-augmented understanding, preparation, and advocacy, while others are denied the same tools in the name of 'protection'. That is not equity. That is paternalism."*
>
> — HEALTH EQUITY LEADER, UNITED STATES

> *If you give me a tool, I can decide how to use and deploy it. When you protect us from something, it's like you don't believe in our agency. Indigenous thinkers have for generations had to insert our values and our worldview into existing systems. We navigate this all the time."*
>
> — INDIGENOUS LEADER, UNITED STATES

> *There are families right now who are saying AI shouldn't be in schools, who have the wealth and the means to train their kids on technology outside of school. The families who don't have the wealth or the means to do that are the ones whose kids have zero access to AI right now."*
>
> — FORMER EDUCATOR, UNITED STATES

There can be no equitable future of learning without investments in data sovereignty.

The vast majority of the data that feeds AI systems is created or controlled by a handful of companies in a handful of countries. For learners in communities all over the world, the consequences of this imbalance are profound: tools that exclude local languages, impose values that don't match local priorities, or give answers that are useless or damaging within a local context.

Communities face an uncomfortable bargain—contribute your data and knowledge to systems you don't control, or stay effectively invisible to the systems increasingly embedded in all types of institutions.

Data sovereignty offers a different path, where communities govern their own data—deciding what's collected, how it's used, and who benefits—and share in the value it creates. Taking steps in this direction is how we break out of old, extractive patterns where a community's resources flow out and finished products are sold back at a premium.

> *"If our worldview became part of artificial intelligence, it could benefit the wider world. Yet I worry about the possibility of appropriation—our knowledge being used without our consent or used against us."*
>
> — INDIGENOUS LEADER, BRAZIL

> *"Different cultures have different norms and beliefs about right and wrong. Nobody wants to live by someone else's guardrails."*
>
> — GOVERNMENT ADVISOR, UNITED KINGDOM

> *"Anthropic spent $122 billion. Africa can't match that. Let's take what's been built globally and apply it locally. You can fine-tune foundation models to our own local languages. But it's not an either/or."*
>
> — EDUCATION ENTREPRENEUR, GHANA

> *"The AI tools in the market are not contextualized to the curriculum, the place we live, the realities of the teacher, or of the child."*
>
> — EDUCATOR, KENYA

Reimagining Education

Where do we go from here?

We asked each person we spoke with to share a vision for the future of learning 10 years from today, and the investments they see as critical to getting there.

What emerged across these conversations was not a single destination, but a constellation of priorities that can serve as guideposts for investment and implementation.

Some of these priorities are familiar—but all of them take on new urgency in the age of AI. Today, many of them are treated as trade-offs or ideological opposites, but the future that learners deserve is one where we integrate them and harness the unique capabilities of humans and technology to finally deliver quality education for all.

This moment requires bold vision and intentional implementation.

WHAT LEARNERS NEED

- Hyper-Personalized Learning
- Better Preparation for a Changing Economy
- Richer Relational Experiences
- Preparation to Navigate an Uncertain Future

WHAT WE MUST INVEST IN TO GET THERE

- Democratizing Experimentation
- Championing AI Sovereignty
- Seeding Wholly New Models
- Making the Big Models Better

What Learners Need

WHAT LEARNERS NEED

Rich Relational Experiences

Foundational experiences that prepare young people to live and work in community with others.

WHY IT MATTERS

The science is unambiguous: humans learn through relational experiences. If harnessed well, AI can help us restore human-to-human connection that has long atrophied in schools.

By moving administrative and diagnostic tasks that consume teachers' time into the background, prompting collaboration among groups of learners, and measuring the application of interpersonal skills like collaboration and cooperation, schools can help young people build the interpersonal skills they need to be thriving adults—and the active citizens our world desperately needs.

GLIMMERS OF THIS FUTURE TODAY

Interest-Based Cohorts

In Brazil, NAVE public schools organize students into interest-based pods that move around the school pursuing their own interests, working together on real-world problems.

Group-Based Assessment

In Canada, the University of British Columbia has pioneered a group-based assessment design, where students sit the exam alone, then immediately retake the same exam in small groups—turning peer negotiation from a testing violation into part of what's being assessed.

> *"The student that is at a different place academically—whether ahead or behind—is getting a lot from working with students in other places."*
>
> — EDUCATOR, UNITED STATES

> *"We instinctively devalue relational skills because they feel innate—but they can be cultivated intentionally."*
>
> — EDUCATOR, UNITED STATES

WHAT LEARNERS NEED

Hyper-Personalized Learning

Delivering what we know works, tailored to the pace and interests of each learner.

WHY IT MATTERS

As AI continues to advance and becomes accessible through new interfaces, the promise of personalized learning will be possible to deliver—without the drawbacks of screen time. This would allow students to explore core subjects through the lens of their own interests, provide those with learning differences with truly customized support at scale, and unlock a learning experience that cultivates each learner's sense of agency and curiosity.

GLIMMERS OF THIS FUTURE TODAY

Personalized Learning Experiences

At a school in Philadelphia (United States), a teacher uses two AI-powered tools—RevX x InquirEd—to build personalized, project-based learning experiences for students around the topics students care about. For example, a student interested in food insecurity in her community can learn fractions and other grade-appropriate math through that lens.

> *"I envision students using technology not to be glued to the screen but to get out into the world. By the time you're a teenager, you're already solving problems for your community."*
>
> — FORMER EDUCATOR, UNITED STATES

WHAT LEARNERS NEED

Preparation for a Changing Economy

Ensuring young people leave school with the skills they need for the world they are inheriting, and that structured learning doesn't stop after graduation.

WHY IT MATTERS

The world of work is being redrawn and career paths are becoming less defined. Education can rise to meet this, ensuring young people graduate with the ingredients they need. This includes some evergreen foundations that we have yet to deliver universally—like literacy and critical thinking—as well as more emergent skills like the ethics of technology and systems navigation.

And as economies and technology continue to evolve, learners must have more intentional scaffolding to support their winding career paths.

> *"Today's learners will need to be making constant choices as AI improves about when and whether to hand things off."*
>
> — INVESTOR & FORMER EDUCATOR, UNITED STATES

GLIMMERS OF THIS FUTURE TODAY

Attention as a 21st Century Skill

The School for Radical Attention is piloting forms of learning that help people exercise agency in their attentional capacity—learning how to more effectively navigate our current digital world.

Career Navigation Beyond Graduation

As AI-powered chatbots started to take over low-level customer service support, IKEA leveraged the product knowledge of its frontline customer service staff—retraining them as design consultants that can help customers make choices.

WHAT LEARNERS NEED

Capacity to Navigate Uncertainty

Equipping young people for a lifetime of self-discovery and reinvention.

WHY IT MATTERS

No one knows what the future holds, and no curriculum can future-proof a learner against a world whose contours are still being shaped. One thing is certain: the future belongs to those who adapt.

Education must play a more active role in helping young people build the interior architecture to thrive amidst uncertainty—comfort with ambiguity, trust in one's own judgment, intrinsic motivation, and the capacity to stay connected to one another.

GLIMMERS OF THIS FUTURE TODAY

A New Kind of Gap Year

Anchored around a fellowship for the transition out of high school, The Flight School is a 1–year program that helps young people cultivate agency, purpose, relational intelligence and moral imagination. After the fellowship, students stay in the community—building on and returning to the connections they've built.

> *"There are different routes to being happy, fulfilled and successful in life. I don't think my education really taught me that. I wish that I learned that much earlier."*
>
> — TECHNOLOGIST, UNITED STATES

The Investments Required

Seeding Wholly New School Models

Demonstrate what a completely reimagined school experience can look like in practice.

WHY IT MATTERS

The opportunity before us in this moment is not just to tinker with individual parts of the system, but to harness the capabilities of AI, the wisdom of educators, and the science of learning to create school models that reimagine every part of the school experience—the incentives, structures, school culture, and assessment together.

In order to showcase what transformation can look like, these new models need the resources, time, and freedom to try things that a system-wide mandate never allows.

> *"Find some lab schools, some frontier schools, a municipality with a forward-looking mayor—and trial things that are systemic in that hyper-local place."*
>
> —GLOBAL EDUCATION RESEARCHER, UNITED STATES

GLIMMERS OF THIS FUTURE TODAY

School, Reconstructed

In Idaho, One Stone School has replaced traditional courses with community design challenges, multi-week immersions, and passion projects. Coaches, not lecturers, guide learning; portfolios replace grades; and students co-create the school itself—turning it into a living laboratory for new models of education.

AI-powered pop-up schools

In Kenya at Duara Schools, female teachers trained as school entrepreneurs run their own community-based microschool with a shared AI-powered backend for curriculum, finance, and operations.

Democratizing Experimentation

Ensure teachers have the tools to build with AI for themselves—and help us all learn along the way.

WHY IT MATTERS

Educators know what their community needs. The authentic care that teachers have for young people is one of the best lines of defense we have against our concerns about the ramifications of AI.

This means ensuring educators have access to quality AI tools, hands-on support from technologists, and trust from their institutions to build what they need to support learning within their classrooms. It also means supporting cross-pollination, so that we learn quickly and translate what works across contexts with urgency.

> *"You cannot simply tell people how to use technology. People need to put their hands on it. When people use a technology, they generate their own questions. They discover unexpected applications. They imagine possibilities that the designers never considered."*
>
> —EDUCATOR & RESEARCHER, BRAZIL

GLIMMERS OF THIS FUTURE TODAY

Remixing the Tech Teachers Are Already Using

Rumi is a WhatsApp-based AI tool that turns a teacher's voice note into a ready lesson plan and feedback. There's no app to download, no data plan to budget for, just the messaging app already on every phone, built atop the infrastructure that most teachers already use daily.

Making the Big Models Better

Work with frontier labs to encode more plurality into the most widely-used models.

WHY IT MATTERS

Large, open systems reach more people faster than anything else. So, we must ensure these models—upon which so many other solutions are built—are genuinely inclusive, able to speak every learner's language, and reflective of a wider range of values and knowledge traditions.

We also need to ensure educators and young people have a seat at the table in the rooms where design decisions are made—influencing the way tools are built, regulated, and rolled out.

> *"We cannot approach Big Tech from a place of fear. Instead, we should explore how to partner with them. I want to build out our 'Center for Ancestral Research and Innovation'."*
>
> —INDIGENOUS LEADER, BRAZIL

GLIMMERS OF THIS FUTURE TODAY

Connecting Minority Languages into Global Systems

Addis AI trains AI models on thousands of hours of YouTube videos, bringing minority language support to products and LLMs on the mass market.

Ensuring Rigor in Instructional Outputs

Anthropic and Learning Commons partnered on Claude for Teachers, which pulls from machine-readable datasets—instructional materials, learning science research, state academic standards, etc.—so lesson plans are grounded in real curriculum expertise, not just generic training data. Because the underlying tools are open-source, any developer building education AI, on any model, can build on the same foundation.

THE INVESTMENTS REQUIRED

Championing AI Sovereignty

Ensuring no one has to rely exclusively on tools built and controlled a half a world away.

WHY IT MATTERS

In addition to reliable access to mainstream LLMs, communities need AI systems and data infrastructure they fully own—systems that don't rely on external mediators, can't be co-opted by government or corporate power, and are nimble enough to address locally-specific needs.

Especially for communities whose data has historically been used against them, ownership is a matter of safety—and of agency.

GLIMMERS OF THIS FUTURE TODAY

Building the Infrastructure for Sovereign AI

Amini builds AI infrastructure for the Global South—building local compute capacity and data infrastructure that allows communities in Africa and beyond to own their data and build AI-powered solutions to local challenges atop it.

> *"Without sovereignty, you are included in someone else's version of the future—that is indeed an efficient way to be recolonized in the age of AI."*
>
> —SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR, KENYA

> *"It's like we have cocoa in Ivory Coast. We send it to Switzerland for processing and they sell it back to us at a premium. We don't want that to happen with data."*
>
> —TECHNOLOGIST, KENYA

What Now?

A REMINDER

Our Collective Opportunity

If there is one thing we hope you take from this report, it is that the future of learning in an age of AI is not predetermined. The choices we make now—what we fund, whose ideas we trust, which questions we pursue, and where we are willing to experiment—will help shape what comes next.

No single funder, organization, or strategy will have the answer. This moment invites us to learn and act together: to test emerging ideas, identify where action is most urgently needed, and explore what philanthropy—alongside educators, young people, communities, policymakers—can do today.

The opportunity before us is bigger than responding to a new technology. It is to use this period of disruption to make progress toward the future we want to see for young people: agency, belonging, connection, curiosity, and the ability to keep learning throughout their lives.

We began this report with an invitation to not sit on the sidelines. We end with a call to move forward with curiosity and caution, but also with the conviction that we can learn by doing. The future is still being shaped. Let's shape it together.

Hold curiosity and caution in equal measure.

Act, however imperfectly.

Stay in cross-generational conversation.

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How we used AI in this research

We used AI tools to aid in the research process, not replace our thinking. Throughout this project, we leveraged AI to support transcription and quote verification, while our team led the research, synthesis, writing, and design. We also used AI to help sense-check our synthesis and spot gaps or inconsistencies that we may have missed. All outputs generated by AI were reviewed and validated by our team.

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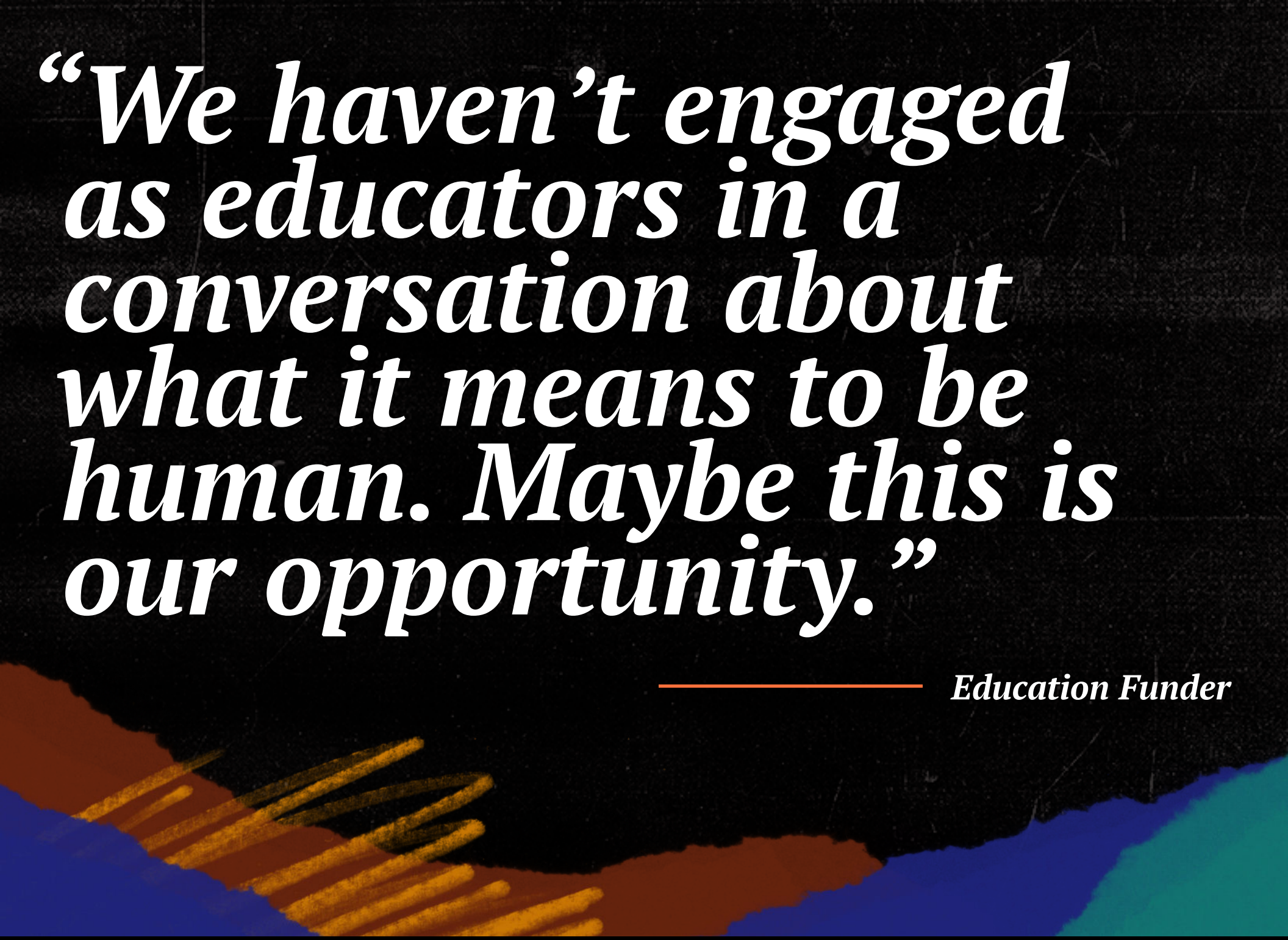
Note: Opinions expressed are those of the individual contributors, not their affiliated organizations.


“We haven’t engaged as educators in a conversation about what it means to be human. Maybe this is our opportunity.”
Education Funder

Appendix

KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

One of the challenges in exploring the benefits and downsides of emerging technology is that the expertise on the technology itself is highly concentrated among a few voices in a few places. In an effort to enable a more inclusive conversation, we want to offer a few key terms and (imperfect) definitions that may help you engage with this report.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)	A broad field of computer science focused on developing systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, including perception, reasoning, learning, language understanding, prediction, and decision-making.
Generative AI	A class of AI models capable of generating novel content—including text, images, audio, video, software code, and structured data—by learning statistical patterns from large training datasets.
Training Data	The datasets used to train AI models. These may include text, images, audio, video, software code, and other structured or unstructured data that shape a model's capabilities and limitations.
Large Language Model (LLM)	An AI system trained on vast amounts of text that learns statistical patterns in language, enabling it to generate human-like text, answer questions, and perform a wide range of language-based tasks.
Prompt	The instruction or input provided to an AI model that guides its response. Prompts may include text, images, files, or combinations of multiple input types.
Data Ownership	Who has control over the collection, storage, and use of certain information.
Frontier Lab	An AI research organization (like Anthropic, OpenAI, or Google DeepMind) working at the cutting edge of AI capability development.
Compute	The computational resources required to train and run AI models, typically including specialized hardware, processing power, memory, and energy.
Physical Infrastructure	The built environment and basic structures necessary for society to function, such as roads, electrical grids, and public transit. Social Infrastructure: The communities, organizations, and public spaces that allow people to connect.
Digital Infrastructure	The networks, broadband cables, and emerging civic platforms that drive economic activity and provide access to information.
Bias	Systematic differences in AI outputs that disadvantage or misrepresent particular individuals or groups due to patterns in training data, model design, or deployment context.
Hallucination	When an AI system generates outputs that are factually incorrect, fabricated, or unsupported by evidence, while appearing plausible or confident.
Human-in-the-Loop	A system design approach in which humans remain actively involved in supervising, validating, or making decisions about AI-generated outputs, particularly in high-impact contexts.
AI Literacy	The knowledge, skills, and critical understanding needed to effectively evaluate, use, and interact with AI systems, including awareness of their capabilities, limitations, and implications.