Let Teachers SHINE

An evaluation report for **The Shine Trust** by **The Young Foundation**

First Year Grantees

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Section One: Introduction

Let Teachers SHINE (LTS) is a competition run by the SHINE Trust open to teachers working in England who have an idea that could boost the attainment of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Successful applicants receive grant funding worth up to £15,000 in the first year, with subsequent grants of up to £100,000, depending on the scale of the project. Grantees take part in an accelerator programme that combines training, one-to-one mentoring, networking and specialist advice to maximise the impact and reach of projects.

The Young Foundation worked with the SHINE Trust to deliver a package of support that supported cohort members to grow and scale their ideas. The table on the following page shows the components of the programme delivered in 2020.

Element of Support	Description	Provider
Grant Funding	Grants of up to £15,000 in the first year of funding and subsequent grants of up to £100,000 in years two and three.	SHINE

Training

Theory of Change workshop	Full-day workshop on the theory of change model for developing impactful projects. Aims to support Grantees to plan to achieve impact and support monitoring of their outcomes.	MANCHESTER 1824 The University of Manchester
Project Planning & Delivery Models workshop (Level One)	Workshop based on the Social Business Model Canvas (SBMC) to develop a simple business plan and support for applying for further funding.	THE YOUNG FOUNDATION
Business Planning & Routes to Scale workshop (Level Two)	Workshop based on the Social Business Model Canvas (SBMC) to develop a simple business plan and explore routes to scale	THE YOUNG FOUNDATION
Education Landscape- customer needs & market mapping workshop (Level Two)	Workshop on market analysis and understanding of customer needs. With guests from education sector acting as 'critical friends' to provide feedback on the projects.	THE YOUNG FOUNDATION
Networks & Income Generation workshop (Level Two)	Workshop on options for income generation (school sales and fundraising) and networks to explore	THE YOUNG FOUNDATION
One-to-one support from SHINE project manager	Ongoing support and guidance from the SHINE team for Grantees throughout the course of their projects.	SHINE
Mentoring	Grantees paired with a social entrepreneur from the education field to mentor them as they develop their project.	THE YOUNG FOUNDATION

This report presents the findings of an evaluation conducted by The Young Foundation of the Let Teachers SHINE (LTS) programme, to identify how it supports participants in their journeys as innovators within the education sector. In December 2020, we interviewed 10 LTS Grantees to explore their experiences of the programme and identify how it supported them to grow their ideas and overcome barriers. We spoke to those currently on the programme, in their first or second year, as well as legacy grantees who are no longer funded by SHINE. A list of interview participants and their projects is included below.

First Year Grantees

Stronger Me
Fiona McCrudden

Stronger Me was set up by primary teachers in Bradford to help raise the aspirations of young girls from minority backgrounds. The project provides experiences to build resilience, increase self-esteem and develop stronger interpersonal relationships.

First Year Grantees

SIMMPLE
Lucy Flannagan

Science teacher Lucy Flannagan developed SIMMPLE Science to help teachers deliver more engaging and memorable science lessons at secondary school. It combines teaching guides, resources and Continuing Professional Development training to support teachers to do this in 10 schools in the North East.

Be The Examiner
Elisabeth Protopapa

Biology teacher, Elisabeth, set up Be The Examiner in 2019, an intervention designed to get secondary students marking each other's work to better understand how exam questions are graded.

Science Futures – Discovering Antibodies
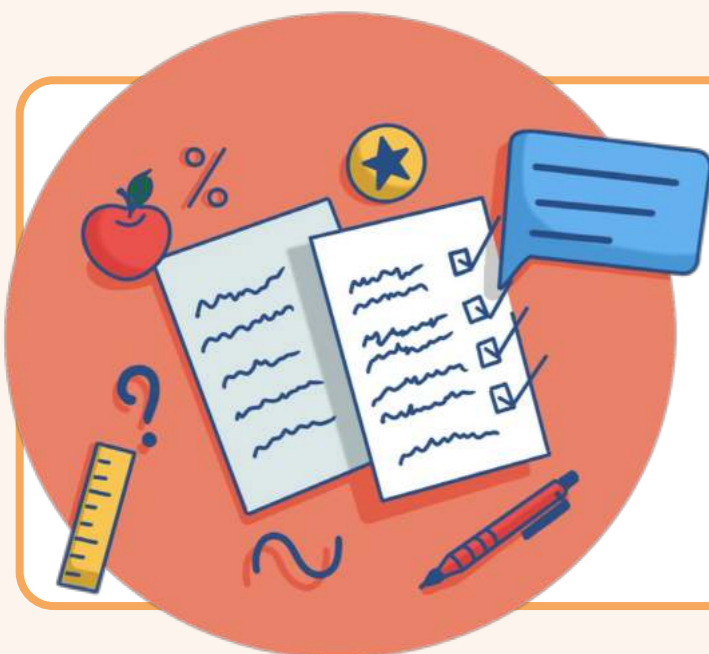Nick Harris

Nick aims to inspire a love for science amongst primary pupils by engaging them in a real-life science experiment looking at antimicrobial resistance being led by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. His project aims to encourage pupils to stick with science as they transition to secondary school.

Second Year Grantees

Boromi

Evie Keogh

Boromi is a network of in-school play libraries that provides interactive learning resources for parents & carers to use at home with their primary-school children. The project is driven out of the desire to improve disadvantaged children's learning at home.

The Story Project

Olivia Richards

The Story Project aims to integrate the development of literacy skills and emotional wellbeing for primary pupils. Driven by a concern at a growing mental health crisis in the UK, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the project develops a model of using reading as a means of teaching lessons in wellbeing and mental resilience.

Lightning Maths

Roy Clutterbuck

Head of Maths in a primary school, Roy created interactive card games to support pupils' learning in fun, informal ways. He set up Lightning Maths to scale up his work, providing games and teacher training to schools across England. As a social enterprise, Lightning Maths also provides games for sale for families to use at home.

Legacy Grantees

Play Righters
Rosie Osborne

Rosie developed Play Righters, a drama intervention that supports secondary students to write and direct their own plays with professional actors. The project intends to build confidence and attainment of disadvantaged students through the process.

Times Tables Rockstars
Bruno Reddy

Times Tables Rockstars was set up by Maths teacher Bruno in 2014. An online learning intervention to help primary pupils master multiplication and division, the project has been used by approximately 75% of primary schools in the UK to date.

Speech Bubbles
Adam Annand

Whilst not involved with Let Teachers SHINE, Adam set up Speech Bubbles in 2012 with support from a SHINE Innovation programme. Speech Bubbles is a national primary school drama intervention supporting children's communication skills, confidence, and wellbeing.

Section Two:
How does the Let Teachers SHINE Programme Support Innovation?

The LTS programme supports teachers to explore and develop their innovative ideas in several ways. The programme provides support that resources innovative practice; creates space for innovation within schools; and supports innovators to grow. This section will explore how the programme achieves this to support the journeys of innovators and provides recommendations for how innovation within the education sector can be supported more generally.

Resourcing Innovation

Challenge:	SHINE's Solution:
A lack of time and budget in schools stands in the way of creating a product from an idea, sharing it and being able to develop it based on feedback	Grant making helps to create the time and space for teacher-led innovation.

"Without doubt capacity is going to be top of that list. Most teachers that you ask just don't have the headspace and the free time, and the ability to do it. I think that's obviously an enormous challenge"
-(Evie Keogh, Boromi)

A lack of resources to invest in ideas and practice is one of the primary barriers to innovating within schools. The above comment from Evie sums up the challenges of innovating where resources are tight; the lack of time and financial resources available to teachers inhibits innovation within schools.

LTS addresses these barriers head-on by providing grant funding to support the work of innovators. Funding is used differently by each innovator depending on the nature of their project. Many innovators use significant chunks of their grant to increase the time available to spend developing their idea, often buying-out time from their weekly teaching schedules by contributing towards school budgets for cover staff. This time is invested in developing the project: creating materials, planning, building connections with other teachers and schools to run the project. The dedicated time that is carved out of innovators' schedules enables projects to move forward and transition from an idea or a hobby into something with the ability to scale and grow.

"I was kind of doing my project anyway before I applied to Let Teachers SHINE, but when I was doing full time teaching there was just no way that I could dedicate the time to it. I was spending the time on the weekends and holidays doing the prep work, but the SHINE funding really allowed me to progress. So, when I gave the games to the other teachers, rather than just being like, 'oh, here's some games' and then walk away, it allowed me to have time to go to the school and talk to the teachers individually and make that connection. And that personal connection is super important in terms of getting buy-in from teachers to use the programme and provide feedback and gather evidence."
-(Roy - Lightning Maths)

The above quote is from Roy, who runs Lightning Maths, a social enterprise that designs and produces interactive card games to support children to learn maths.

Roy had developed the games in his spare time before applying to the LTS programme. He was using the games with his own pupils as well as giving them to colleagues at other schools. These efforts show an impressive level of commitment to his pupils' learning, but Roy admits that he did not have the time to properly explain the games to colleagues or get feedback on how well they supported children's learning. He also wasn't sure whether the games were actually being used as he didn't have the time to build stronger connections with other teachers. The funding changed this by allowing Roy to spend one day a week on Lightning Maths, which enabled him to reach out to more schools and gather feedback and insight that shone a light on how the game was used and how effective it was in reaching its aims.

As well as buying time, innovators used their LTS funding to purchase materials to produce elements of their projects. The below quote from Lucy, highlights the importance of these resources to tangibly explore innovation in schools:

"We want to upskill the teachers, give them the knowledge and ideas to do the practical, engaging lessons, and then provide them the kit that goes with it. When we've been on training courses in the past- you go on a course, someone tells you something really good, and you go back to school and you think 'we haven't got any stuff. We haven't got any resources, we haven't got any money. It was a brilliant idea in theory, but actually it doesn't work'."
-(Lucy, SIMMPLE Science)

Lucy identified the lack of funding for materials that support innovation in teaching as a barrier to more engaged learning in schools. She is frustrated that many schools lack the resources and budget to support innovative teaching practice. SIMMPLE Science is a project that intends to support teachers to deliver more engaging and meaningful science lessons to secondary school students by providing interactive lesson plans to 10 schools in the Northeast of England. The project aims to replace 'Powerpoint lessons' where science is taught on the whiteboard and worksheets with lessons based on practical experiments and demonstrations.

LTS recognises the budget restrictions faced by schools and seeks to support projects where the emphasis in innovation is on pedagogical practice, rather than in new technologies and expensive resources. As such, Grantees are only allowed to use up to 50% of their budget on material resources. However, most of the innovators interviewed used part of their funding to buy or create more engaging teaching and learning resources that helped turn ideas into reality. Resources also help innovators promote their projects within schools, and new pieces of kit or technology can act as a hook to draw in other teachers. For example, Elisabeth purchased a set of visualisers (or document cameras) for her school. These allow teachers and students to display live marking

of exam papers on the white board in revision sessions. Bringing these new resources to school, supported Elisabeth's ability to have an impact:

> *"We bought something that we always wanted to buy: the visualisers. We took a risk as we weren't sure if people were going to use them. But actually, now everyone is talking about [those] visualisers. We wanted to do this ages ago but money-wise it could not be justified because we didn't have any kind of research to back it up. So, it's been really nice to actually have the product because it's made me work a lot with the teachers."*
>
> *-(Elisabeth, Be the Examiner)*

The new technology, relatively inexpensive but not previously justifiable within school budgets, opened doors within school and allowed Elisabeth to develop her project in collaboration with her colleagues. The resources enabled her to pilot her idea, which has now embedded itself across the school.

Innovation relies on being able to develop your idea into something that can be put out for use, developing it based on feedback and experimentation. In innovation terms this the process for creating a minimal viable product (MVP); a form of your idea that can be used and provide initial insights into how it has been received by your end user. The same applies to innovation in school settings too, however resourcing time and materials enables innovators to develop their ideas and begin learning how to progress this further from its initial implementation.

Recommendation - Resource Innovation in Schools

Funders within the education sector should explore how they can provide grant or seed funding to give teachers the time and space to develop ideas and a minimum viable product in schools.

Now that innovators have carved out the time to innovate and have the resources to put their ideas into practice, how does the LTS programme support ideas to develop?

Creating Space for Innovation in Schools

Challenge:

Competing priorities within schools often result in a lack of headspace for teachers to develop new ideas and practice, a crowded marketplace for new ideas, and struggles to get buy-in from senior leadership teams.

SHINE's Solution:

A programme of support that allows teachers to carve out time to reflect on and develop ideas, coupled with an emphasis on gathering evidence to prove the worth of innovation and secure backing and status for innovation within schools. and space for teacher-led innovation.

Headspace

Teachers have a whole host of responsibilities, commitments, and demands on their time. Innovation requires time to plan, reflect and experiment. This

> *"There's just so many different priorities on you as a teacher and I think maintaining the focus on the project takes a lot of effort, to just stay in that space."*
>
> *- (Olivia, Story Project)*

can be difficult in the education sector. Creating the headspace to innovate within this context is one of the key benefits of the LTS programme. As a structured programme of support, it has several ways of enabling innovators to develop their project and refine their ideas. The most useful of these identified by Grantees was the 'Theory of Change' (TOC) training and the reporting requirements of the grant.

The Theory of Change model helps to map out the impact innovators are seeking to achieve and outline a plan for the steps they need to take. Several people identified this workshop provided a practical framework that allowed them to develop a roadmap for their innovation. It helped innovators to clarify

and make sense of their ideas. Within the context of competing demands on teachers' attention, this framework helped to carve out valuable headspace for innovators to maintain a focus on what their projects were seeking to achieve.

> *"The theory of change workshop really helps you see quite a long time in advance and plan for the steps that you're going to have to take, so that they're not just creeping up on you as you get on with everything else. It means that you've really thought through the steps to the project."*
>
> *- (Lucy, SIMMPLE Science)*

> *"We had a lecturer from the University of Manchester who did a whole day on the theory of change. Thinking about what this is going to be, how we're going to measure it, and how we're going to plan for it. It was a fantastic day. Out of all the training we've had, that was, for me, the most learning."*
> *- (Roy, Lightning Maths)*

Grantees identified the in-depth nature of the workshop as being particularly beneficial for allowing them to reflect on the approach and apply it to their own work. They contrasted this to other workshops provided by The Young Foundation which covered more ground but in less depth. This potentially indicates that future programme design should seek to ensure that training sessions have enough time dedicated for innovators to fully explore ideas and tools, recognising the lack of time and headspace that exists outside of workshop settings.

The reporting requirements of the grant also helped to focus innovators' thinking on how their project could be improved and ensure regular progress was made in developing it within schools, as Fiona explains:

———

Fiona's project worked with a group of primary school girls to help build their self-esteem and resilience through workshops, trips, and mentoring. It aimed to address issues for young girls in minority communities within Bradford to help raise their aspirations. Projects like these are challenging to run. They require a lot of time, resourcing, and emotional investment from teachers. In this context it can be difficult to take a step back and reflect on the project's successes and areas for improvement. The reporting requirements of the programme helped Fiona find the time to do this, leading to developments in the project. LTS provides innovators with the time and headspace to fully reflect on their practice and make improvements which enhance their social impact.

> *"I think the reporting has been the most useful part of the programme because it really made me focus on what was good about the project and what needed to be improved. It made me think of things that I hadn't realised were something we could improve on. When you run these projects day to day you can see what's good, but you don't tend to have the time or the brain space to dedicate to improving them. But when I had to write the end of term report, I realised that there were bits that could be improved on to increase the impact of the project. And that was really useful. So the reporting deadlines were the most valuable part of the programme for me."*
> *-(Fiona, Stronger Me, Bradford)*

Evidencing Impact

The LTS programme further supports innovators to operate successfully within schools by placing an emphasis on gathering evidence of their impact. Evidence-gathering is a key component of the programme, tied in with the Theory of Change model and the reporting requirements. Adam runs Speech Bubbles, a drama intervention at Key Stage One to support children to develop communication skills. Adam, a legacy grantee, originally received funding and support from SHINE in 2012 and has grown the project from working with 150 children a week in south London to working with 1200 children a week across the country. Adam credits the support from SHINE as a large factor in his success.

> *"What makes a difference is the things that SHINE has enabled me to do. So, the early conversations with SHINE were about putting together a very good evidence base. And they really pushed me down that line. We'd started doing that with SHINE backing, and we've continued to build the evidence since. And as we get into a more evidence-rich environment in schools, having an intervention that's got a strong evidence base behind it makes the difference, and SHINE were very supportive in doing that."*
> *- (Adam, Speech Bubbles, London)*

Adam shows us how SHINE instilled the importance of evidence-gathering for his practice and links this to the specific requirements of the education sector which places greater importance on evidence-based practice. In recognising the importance of evidence to support and legitimise innovation, the programme helps to build the capacity of innovators to succeed within the specific conditions of educational settings to ensure maximum impact for students and pupils remains at the centre of their projects.

Backing & Status

Schools are crowded marketplaces when it comes to new ideas and innovations in educational practice, with regular changes in curricula, priorities, and practice. This can make cutting through and establishing a foothold for a new idea difficult. Teachers may be fatigued with new ideas or worried that new ways of working will increase their workloads.

Within this context, LTS participants recognise the value that being backed by SHINE has for promoting their project. Aside from the ability to invest in time and resources for promotion, LTS innovators found that the award gave them a higher status within schools that enabled them to win teachers over more quickly than when they had tried to spread their ideas before. Elisabeth explains how the award benefitted her in this way:

> *"Having that extra money also gave me that status. When I'm talking to other people about how we have won some funding, it makes a massive difference. Especially in the educational sector."*
> *- (Elisabeth, Be the Examiner, Leeds)*

This status is useful for innovators as it opens doors that may have previously been shut and affords ideas opportunities to prove themselves to colleagues. This is particularly important when it comes to convincing senior leadership teams of the value of the specific projects being carried out and of supporting innovation amongst teachers more widely. For example, Fiona explains how the backing from SHINE helped keep her project as a priority for senior leaders:

> *"Having that support from SHINE meant that it was always at the forefront of school life and kept it as a big priority. It really helped to keep it at the forefront of everything we were doing in Key Stage 2."*
> *- (Fiona, Stronger Me, Bradford)*

Recommendation- Create Space for Innovation in Schools

Educational leaders can help to create space for innovation in schools by:

- Adopting innovation practices to embed a culture of exploration that allow teachers to carve out enough headspace to reflect on and develop ideas;

- Be open to new approaches to monitoring impact and how this might be applied across the wider school setting

- Increase external opportunities for teachers as part of their personal development

Supporting Innovators to Grow

Challenge:

Competing priorities within schools often result in a lack of headspace for teachers to develop new ideas and practice, a crowded marketplace for new ideas, and struggles to get buy-in from senior leadership teams.

SHINE's Solution:

A programme of support that allows teachers to carve out time to reflect on and develop ideas, coupled with an emphasis on gathering evidence to prove the worth of innovation and secure backing and status for innovation within schools. and space for teacher-led innovation.

Innovation involves taking risks, developing opportunities, and charting unknown territory. Innovation is a significant undertaking, full of challenges for individuals who invest large amounts of their time and energy into their projects. These challenges require a certain type of support that extends beyond things like funding and planning. Grantees need support to grow as innovators and develop the connections, skills, and confidence to operate effectively. The LTS programme provides this support in several ways.

Addressing Innovator Isolation

LTS Grantees are often just starting out as innovators and are usually the only person innovating in their school. As such, they tend to lack the networks to make their work a success. The programme aims to address this 'innovator isolation' by providing opportunities for Grantees to make connections with fellow innovators, potential funders, and customers. Olivia explains how meeting other Grantees helped to shape the initial ideas on her project:

"We had a meeting with other people who got the Let Teachers SHINE award and it was really useful being able to talk with them, because they gave me some really good advice right at the beginning. So, at the start of the project I was trying to find a story or book to go with every single wellbeing scale that I had identified as being important for the children..."

Olivia is an English teacher who has set up The Story Project, an intervention for primary and secondary schools that aims to incorporate emotional wellbeing and literacy education to support the emotional development of children. Olivia benefitted from talking with her peers on the programme about her project and bouncing ideas around. This suggests that Olivia wasn't necessarily able to find this type of support at her school where she was the only person trying to innovate. This illustrates the challenge innovators face when isolated and the value of being part of a cohort of people with similar aims.

Networking amongst Grantees occurs primarily through the series of workshops provided on the LTS programme. So, as well as allowing innovators to pick up new knowledge and ideas, the sense of cohort support and networking opportunities generated through group-based workshops is an invaluable aspect of the LTS programme for all participants.

...So I was looking for hundreds of books, and very early on in the process, through talking with other projects, they suggested that that was not sustainable or possible to do, and then came up with a better model of finding less texts that covered more than one wellbeing objective. So that gave me a better structure for the project."
- (Olivia, The Story Project, London)

"We share information with each other about meetings that could be beneficial. There's a lot of meetings that happen, but if you don't know the right person to access this information, you don't go...So that professional relationship is quite useful to access information."
- (Fiona, Stronger Me, Bradford)

Rosie, a drama teacher in London, also told us that SHINE helped her develop contacts with the Greater London Authority who have since funded her project. This type of networking is particularly important for teachers whose professional networks are primarily centred around their school. Involvement with the LTS programme helps to open up more opportunities for Grantees and possible partnerships to help them scale and grow their project.

Innovator isolation also has effects on Grantees' sense of self-belief and confidence. As Roy explains, it is important for innovators to meet others who are doing similar things to help gain a sense of perspective and see examples of people succeeding.

> *"In school, where almost everyone else is getting on with their schoolwork, it feels a bit odd to be this one who wants to change things. So, it's really nice on a personal and social level to meet other people who are doing similar things and to see that they're successful in their work."*
>
> *- (Roy, Lightning Maths, London)*

Also important in contributing towards a sense of self-belief in Grantees is the sense of validation that comes from your idea being backed by an external organisation, as Evie explains:

> *"A really big thing for me was just having an external organisation to back you and to back your idea, because as a teacher you work in quite a microclimate environment and it was such a boost to me to have an organisation come along and say, 'we actually think this is a really good idea and we're going to support you to pilot it'. Having that kind of boost to take your idea out of your classroom where it's relatively safe and put it into an external environment was a huge step forward."*
>
> *- (Evie, Boromi, London)*

That psychological boost of having your idea backed by a funder is important for allowing innovators to confidently take steps forward and overcome the self-doubt that comes with trying something new. The LTS programme provides that boost that can propel innovators to make their first steps in putting their idea into the wider world. Once they are out there, SHINE also provide a notable level of personal, emotional support to their Grantees.

> *"They've been there when I've needed them. They're not just a funder, but a partner. They really invested in me and really supported me as a person. I think that stood them above and beyond for me."*
> -*(Evie, Boromi, London)*

> *"They were able to give me encouragement, because by the time I left the classroom I was flying solo. And I think it was just good to have a check-in once in a while, even if it was just a phone call. So, I think it was probably more of an emotional, psychological crutch, that was quite ad hoc, but worked for me."*
> *- (Bruno, Times Tables*
> *Rock Stars, London)*

As the above quotations show, people have overwhelmingly positive things to say about the quality of one to one support they received as part of the programme. The level of support provided by SHINE and The Young Foundation to Grantees stands out as a high point of the programme. Innovators feel supported in a way that goes beyond their expectations of a funder. People feel that they could be open and honest about challenges and difficulties and that they could rely on SHINE and The Young Foundation staff for emotional support as they navigated the ups and downs of their journeys. It is clear that an investment in building strong relationships with innovators helps create a supportive environment in which to work.

Addressing Innovator Isolation

The personal support provided by SHINE and The Young Foundation creates an environment in which innovators feel able to experiment and take risks. This environment is created by the flexibility of the programme. For Elisabeth, "in most cases you would expect an organisation that feeds you money to expect an outcome and having that unconditional support was fantastic". Whilst LTS aims to achieve maximum impact for the most disadvantaged students, it also aims to build the capacity of teachers to achieve this impact themselves. As such, Grantees' success is not judged against the delivery of a fixed set of outcomes but in their growth as innovators. LTS removes the pressure associated with large grants to allow innovators to experiment and find their own way. As Lucy says, "there's no stress for us...they say 'whatever works for you, is what works'. So, they are really good in that way".

"Very early on we started talking about the further funding that SHINE could offer. They really encouraged me to apply for more funding, which has now meant that I've got a further two years' funding, which has been a big game changer because before that point I was constantly looking for grants and wondering how the project's going to grow. Now I've actually got the space to build."

- (Olivia, The Story Project)

The programme also affords teachers the time to build their projects and enterprises gradually. SHINE offers support to innovators at different stages of development and there are opportunities within the programme for people to apply for further funding to progress their work. Olivia told us that:

In providing opportunities for progression and further funding, LTS provides the scaffolding that allows innovators to grow their projects. Scalability and growth are at the heart of the programme and the workshops provided by The Young Foundation support Grantees with access to alternative sources of funding once their time on the programme ends, such as through different grants or by developing self-financing strategies.

Recommendation- Support Innovators to Grow:

Funders and educational leaders can support innovators to grow by:

- Enable a culture that encourages information sharing and collaboration within and outside individual schools

- Facilitate connections amongst teachers and other educational professionals as part of their learning and development

- Providing flexible, personal, and emotional support to aid those developing new ideas and practice.

Section Three:
Building on Success

The LTS programme is successful in providing teachers with the right level of support they need to develop innovative practices within school settings. This success begs the question of how could the LTS programme create more impact?

Our evaluation has identified several opportunities for enhancing the support provided on the programme, and for other stakeholders in the education sector to support innovation in schools more generally.

Evie's point about tapping into the experiences and expertise of previous LTS grantees was echoed by others who recognised the value that connecting with alumni could bring to the LTS programme. Linked to experiences of 'innovator isolation' discussed previously, these connections have the potential to expand the professional networks of Grantees, increasing access to information, ideas, and personal support. The diversity of experience held by alumni could support the journeys of individual innovators, as well as contribute to more collaboration between innovators within the education sector. As Bruno explains: "SHINE could help connect the dots among the grantees even more, now that there are so many grantees over the last six, seven or eight years. Why not connect all the Maths interventions or all the interventions working in a particular place? There's a big enough cohort for us to find the common themes and support each other."

"It would be great to have an alumni network where you can tap into people that might be three or five years further on in the process who might be really willing and eager to help someone."
-(Evie, Boromi)

An expanding and better-connected network of LTS alumni could act as ambassadors for innovation within schools, providing advice and guidance to teachers across the country who have new ideas. There could be a role for a network like this to play in providing a 'social infrastructure' of innovators to provide light-tight support and a sense of community to other innovators in the sector. Supported by SHINE, there could also be a role for this network to play in helping to make the case for measures that enable greater innovation in the sector and create school cultures that allow innovators to flourish. A large part of this might be carving out more time in teaching schedules for people to develop their practice and experiment with new ideas, and justifying the spending needed to allow this happen.

An Approach to Innovation in Education

Another area for exploration identified by LTS innovators is developing more school-specific approaches to innovation that recognise the challenges of the sector. It was recognised that innovating in schools is different to innovating in other sectors and developing tools and approaches to support innovation in this context is key to increasing the impact innovators can have.

As mentioned previously, schools are competitive marketplaces when it comes to new ideas and teachers face a range of competing priorities and demands at work. For education leaders, products or services are often bought in from external organisations to address specific attainment issues, however, what the LTS programme demonstrates is that these interventions can be created from within and at a lower cost. Grantees struggle to promote their projects within schools and there's a need for further support in developing marketing strategies that go beyond traditional commercial approaches. As Roy says:

"I think it's really important that we, as SHINE innovators, don't put ourselves in the same category as any other company who've got this programme they want to sell. We're offering something else and we should be able to communicate that to schools. It would be good to have ways to communicate that to schools more easily and make the most of this point that we're from the inside."
-(Roy - Lightning Maths)

Recognising the unique challenges innovators face in schools, SHINE could support Grantees to develop more effective strategies to promote their interventions - internally and externally. As Rosie explains, this could incorporate different models of growth and distribution, including spreading good practice and interventions through sharing mechanisms:

"It would be good to have some kind of way of sharing with other schools, like a SHINE sharing tool, because if you're not selling your product, then you could share it out of goodwill and I think that'd be a great way for people to get ideas. Schools could just pick and choose what they wanted to work with and contact the person because I'm quite happy to share my resources"
-(Rosie, Play Righters)

As well as diversifying the marketing strategies of innovators, SHINE can also play a role in creating more innovation-friendly environments in schools. Building on the successes and insider status of its innovators, SHINE could further promote innovation in the sector, and help lay the foundations for individual innovators to increase their reach and impact.

Key to this is getting buy-in from senior leadership. As covered previously, teachers need time, resources, and headspace to develop new ideas & practice. LTS provides this support to its innovators but there is a wider case to be made for the value of supporting more innovation in the sector. There may be opportunities for education organisations, such as the NUT, NAHT and OFSTED to support changes needed to make this possible. The impact of LTS innovators shows that the money needed to make this possible can yield significant benefits and SHINE is well-placed to work with other bodies to make the case for greater investment in educational innovation.