



# FESTIVAL FOR CHANGE

## Final Report

The **'Festival for Change'** was initiated by **Promoting Economic Pluralism (PEP)** – its aim to support motivated 18-25 year olds shape a better, sustainable future after Covid-19. Using an exciting interactive platform, a pioneering programme of digital events ran from July to October 2020. The focus was to help young changemakers think systemically about ideas - from conception to wider impacts, see how to navigate purposeful careers in a new future and connect globally. This report highlights outcomes and learning, with details of activity.

### 1. Overall outcomes

#### World changing ideas...

Feedback told us the festival worked well to provide practical support to help participants develop fresh thinking.

Our goal was for 50 teams to submit ideas – we had 53! The quality was impressive. From reducing poverty and waste to connecting rural communities, children's wellbeing and raising female hygiene awareness, diverse ideas reflected real global issues. The [12 first round winners](#) and [final four](#) are all truly inspiring.

#### ...supported by great mentors...

Mentors were invaluable throughout the festival. In particular, those who volunteered their professional expertise for 1-2-1 guidance – a few of whom are still supporting finalists with further development of initiatives.

#### ...creating connections – and showing passion!

With limited travel in a worldwide pandemic, the festival pioneered novel digital interaction to connect globally – without carbon emissions. We also saw how bringing together people from different countries and different perspectives drove innovation.

For example, seven students based in Hong Kong, India, the Netherlands, Philippines and UK who met at the festival and formed 'Women Against Waste'. Silver award winners for their idea to reduce packaging, this team showed exceptional passion and commitment. Meeting all hours to cover time zones and one even took part from her car boot – from a carpark for Wi-Fi!



#### Festival goers said...

*"It was amazing, I never had such a journey - where an idea progresses from a basic stage with the help of mentors and experts."*

**Mohammad Rayed, Bangladesh**

*"Wonderful to see so many young people engaged with the process - and with each other."* **Parmjit Nahil, UK**

*"Articulating a problem for social, environmental and economic impacts was wonderful, has to be done."* **Ankit Pandey, India**

*"I live by the sea and seeing rubbish on the beach truly breaks my heart. Was very important to change this."*

**Sina Albanese, Netherlands**

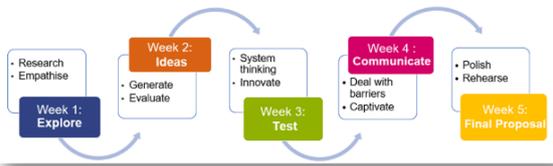
*"Really ambitious, uplifting concept and a good way to connect with different people who are keen to make a tangible difference."* **Alison Thompson, UK**

#### WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- It was a very positive experience, with young participants gaining clear benefits.
- We attracted talented people as mentors to volunteer their expertise and insight.
- High registration (over 2000) did not convert to high attendance (about 200 in total).

## 2. Programme

We presented a total of 95 events working with some of PEP's 40+ like-minded partners, and supported by our sponsor [Partners for a New Economy](#). The focus was first to develop proposals, then we had insights to help traverse a changing careers landscape. See details with links below:

Phase one: The Challenge	Phase two: Career Focus
 <p><b>Change proposal criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs to be an original idea.</li> <li>• Responds to the pandemic.</li> <li>• Addresses economic, environmental, political or social issues.</li> <li>• Is communicated with impact.</li> </ul> <p><b>Expert briefings and workshops</b> to develop, present ideas (plus <a href="#">resources</a>)</p> <p><b>'Provocations'</b> – renowned thinkers and doers presenting brilliant, diverse views.</p>	<p><b>Briefing sessions</b></p> <p>A global HR expert shared views and understanding.</p> <p><b>'Partner connect'</b></p> <p>To meet some of PEP's partners, learn from what they do and how they started.</p>   <p><b>Nominated speakers</b></p> <p>Chosen by participants, more fresh thinking and ways to promote economic pluralism</p> 

### WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- The activity mix was viewed very positively – most popular events in order of preference were:
  - a) **Challenge briefings and workshops**, particularly with Dave Jarman, a Senior Lecturer in Entrepreneurship – for his wisdom and practical ways to think about ideas with clear focus.
  - b) **Provocations/nominated speakers** – for highlighting new insights, challenging existing norms and being generally inspiring, showing systems change is possible.
  - c) **Partner sessions** – for chance to connect and find out about interesting organisations.
- Timing....a few felt three hour sessions were too long; others thought the YouTube recordings did help catch up. Some said festival was too long overall - better to keep to summer months.

### Festival goers said...

"Amazing speakers showed economics is nothing to be scared of - and we all need to engage in these macro and micro discussions." **Jayne Ashely, UK**

"Challenge briefings were great, especially from Dave Jarman. Also Partner connect sessions were good - to see how NGOs started." **Mohammad Rayed, Bangladesh**

"The provocation speakers are very provoking!" **Mike Wistow, UK**  
 "Speakers brilliant in exposing issues and ideas." **Sergio Rengifo, Spain**

"Fascinating speakers – very insightful." **Magda Figueroa Diaz, Brazil**  
 "Been blown away by the quality of Dave Jarman's talks!" **Andy King, UK**

"Most helpful to develop a proposal was to how to do a ppt. make a pitch and clarify ideas to communicate to others." **Ankit Pandey, India**

### 3. Mentors role and assessment process

Mentors were fundamental to the festival experience, giving their time and expertise for free. On hand to support young participants generally, those with personal mentees were invaluable in developing proposals.



Many reviewed ideas and provided detailed comments on the submission platform. Some also evaluated proposals to pick first round winners. Others were instrumental in improving presentations for final panels, spending extra time to work with project teams.

#### Assessment process

1. The 53 proposals submitted were grouped under four themes - economy, education, environment and health.
2. 12 standout ideas chosen with a competency grid by expert panels.
3. Four winners picked to present again to a final professional panel for review and guidance – these then voted on by the public to decide the 'People's Choice'. Title won by ['Bottle Economy'](#) project.

#### Festival goers said...

*"Mentors helped me refine my idea and presentation - understand underlying factors for robust solutions"*  
**Ankit Pandey, India**

*"I loved that I could help in progressing projects. It was quite a lot of work, but worth the hassle."*  
**Parmjit Nahil, UK**

*"Mentoring was rewarding - felt I was really able to make a difference to help the young people realise their passion."*  
**Karen Marshall, UK**

*"I think the personalised mentoring was most useful - really helped develop our thinking and shape our proposal."*  
**Mohammad Rayed, Bangladesh**

*"Evaluating diverse proposals against our economic pluralist criteria, and working with finalists to develop and draw out the transformative potential in their proposals, was deeply satisfying."*  
**Nicolette Boater, UK**

#### WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Feedback about mentors from young participants was universally extremely positive.
- Assessment approach worked well and the competency grid provided was a useful guide tool.
- Most mentors enjoyed their experience, but there are some things we need to improve:
  - a) Run advance 'train the trainer' sessions and clarify better what the role involves.
  - b) Organise formal mentor introductions – not just rely on brief details in Remo profile.
  - c) Add mentor-led discussion groups to share concerns, as well as to discuss project ideas.

### 4. Platform

The festival was presented on Remo, an impressive and fresh digital platform founded in 2018.

New to PEP, this virtual platform offers exceptional interactive functionality – with 'tables' in different 'spaces' for participants to 'move around' and 'meet' each other. What makes it really stand out is how it gives people control of who they mix with, which table discussions they join.

We also had the 'Your Priorities' tool to manage proposal submission, commenting and voting. Previously used by PEP for ['Not the Nobel Prize'](#) it worked very effectively again for this festival.

## [4. Platform continued]



We chose Remo as it offered more opportunity than other platforms to maximise engagement. Enabling people to connect and collaborate across continents, with no cost to them or to the planet, was a huge consideration underpinning our whole festival.

We adapted the layout with a bespoke design to give it the feel of a real festival.

### WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Majority loved Remo! Liked its look; excited by the functionality and found navigation easy.
- A small number were not bowled over, and some were put off by technical hiccups. Remo has addressed many of these, and good to reiterate - new tools always require a little perseverance!
- Video was best for instructions on using the platform and should be at hand from the start, not later as we had – details/tips in Welcome Guide and emails were provided, but not absorbed.

### Festival goers said...

*"I am so impressed by the platform; it has a lovely design and is very effective to facilitate group discussion."* **Edward Sidebottom, UK**

*"Fantastic festival and technologically amazing. Very easy to navigate and very interactive."* **Olivia Uzoabo, Nigeria**

*"I love the idea of interactivity instead of just being a viewer. Platform and conference have great potential."* **David Green, California**

*"I loved the workshop space with its table setups, so innovative."* **Mohammad Rayed, Bangladesh**  
*"Like the platform, very exciting."* **Alison Thompson, UK**

*"It was so easy to move around and you could still see everyone else - so much better for meeting different people."* **Karen Marshall, UK**

## 5. Communications

We had a clear communications plan designed to inform and inspire our different audiences, with key messages and channels aligned to their needs. For instance, the partners comms pack which included social media posts and content for potential blogs/newsletters – all tailored for partners to use directly.

Data shows festival videos on our YouTube channel were also well used – with over 1500 views of recordings (about 500 hours watched).

Reflecting the pioneering spirit of the festival, to test new ideas and continually improve, we regularly reviewed our comms plan and all activity. Feedback sessions to gather views were very effective, with practical outcomes of what participants told us. For example, introducing personal mentors and signage for workshop tables to clarify which to join.



## [6. Communications continued]



### Festival goers said...

*"With such a varied programme, it's essential to keep in touch."*  
**Parmjit Nahil, UK**

*"It was over such a long time scale that I needed direct reminders."* **Jayne Ashley, UK**

*"The emails were great, and the newsletters were good, very comprehensive - helped catch up."* **Ankit Pandey, India**

### WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Majority thought comms was timely, effective and engaging; only a few felt it was too much.
- Emails seen as the most useful channel, followed by event reminders and then the newsletter.
- Improvement ideas: share comms schedule in advance; more social media (particularly on Facebook); create cumulative link to see latest YouTube recordings; add WhatsApp as a channel.

## 6. Festival team and costs

Our core festival team consisted of professionals, interns and young student volunteers. Everyone worked hard to deliver activity. From planning and research to comms, to supporting events in person.

As well as a strong team, a major programme like this clearly needs finance to make it happen.

Covering technical support, salaries and operation, the total festival cost was only about £25,000, given the huge voluntary input.

### Festival team said...

*"I enjoyed being part of such a pioneering experience! Process was planned, but energetic with new ideas, reacting to feedback and continually learning."* **Andy King, Social Media Manager**

*"I've learned so much about comms and also it was great to host speakers - wonderful to meet so many amazing people!"*  
**Holly Bootman, Comms Exec (on internship from LSE)**

## 7. Next steps...

We want to run another festival and are working with student-led Exe Consultancy to gather market research and define our future strategy to improve engagement and interaction. Our aim is to co-create a new programme for 2021 with partners who want to be involved. This will:

- Continue PEP focus to help young people lead change
- Harness digital ways to connect local action with wider global collaboration
- Facilitate international dialogue to address climate emergency...in the year of COP26

