



STRATEGY 2021-2026

# FUTURE FORWARD

Empowering young people  
to make positive change

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# 01 FORE WORD





**“ Organisations like The Diana Award have never been more important in nurturing the talent of young people and working with them to change the world for the better.”**

The lives of thousands of young people have been impacted by the global pandemic with education interrupted, work opportunities disrupted and social connections strained. Yet many of the young people who I have been fortunate to meet over the last year have shown an enormous passion and commitment to helping their communities recover and rebuild - and beyond that, are working hard to tackle the social inequality and injustice that they see in the world around them.

Organisations like The Diana Award have never been more important in nurturing the talent of young people and working with them to change the world for the better, by celebrating their successes; creating opportunities for growth; and ensuring that young people have a seat at the table.

The world has changed significantly in the twenty years since The Diana Award was established in my mother's memory, however challenges remain, and urgent change is needed so that young people inherit a world of which we can be proud.

Future Forward sets out The Diana Award's blueprint for how change can be achieved, with young people at its heart. I am excited to see what The Diana Award and the young people it empowers can achieve together.

**HRH The Duke of Cambridge**



03

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



## The world may have changed since our founding, but our dedication is as strong as ever.

That's because we know young people are often closest to society's problems. Youth are at risk of poor mental health and low social mobility. And unless we take action now, young people will continue to lack opportunities to influence decisions and the inspiration to engage in social action.

We can't let the world turn the same way. What we need now more than ever is change. And who better to lead that change than young people? Disenfranchised youth, with diverse perspectives. There's no better time than now to empower young people to take charge of our future. And to create long-lasting change.

That world only exists in partnership with young people. And by putting them at the heart

of everything we do. So we're developing a partnership that:

- unlocks their potential and develops an inclusive appreciation of success,
- creates opportunities for growth regardless of background, and
- inspires action by platforming change in all its forms.

20 years ago, we started working to develop potential, foster resilience and inspire positive change in the future of young people. Over the next 20 years and far into the future, we're committed to that mission and hopeful for the world youth will create.

**Because our future is safest in the hands of those who will live it.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Tessy'.

**Tessy Ojo CBE**  
CEO, The Diana Award

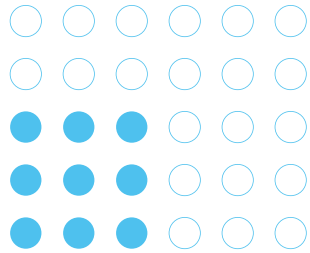
# 02 A CHANGING WORLD

**At The Diana Award, we know that young people have the talent, passion and insight to shape the future and lead the recovery. That's why together we've developed 'Future Forward' – a new five-year strategy to empower young people to make positive change.**

In recent years we've faced huge global challenges including the climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic that have impacted on the lives of millions and exacerbated social inequalities. The impact of the pandemic on the mental health of the nation and existing social inequalities has been felt most acutely by young people.

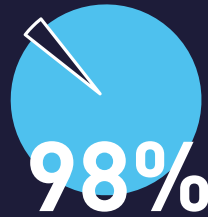
Young people's desire to tackle longstanding discrimination and injustice is demonstrated clearly in their strong involvement in movements including Black Lives Matter, the Youth Climate Strike and MeToo. Young people are driving positive change. And yet their voice is still missing from the conversations about post-pandemic recovery.

At The Diana Award, we know that young people have the talent, passion and insight to shape the future and lead the recovery. That's why together we've developed 'Future Forward' – a new five-year strategy to empower young people to make positive change.



## 4.3 million children living in poverty in the UK in March 2020

[Child Poverty Action Group, March 2020]



of gen Z say  
they care  
about the  
problems the  
world faces

[Beatfrees,  
March 2021]



Compared to before the first  
lockdown, many young people  
are more politically engaged,  
with almost **four in ten** (39%)  
more interested in politics now  
than before the pandemic

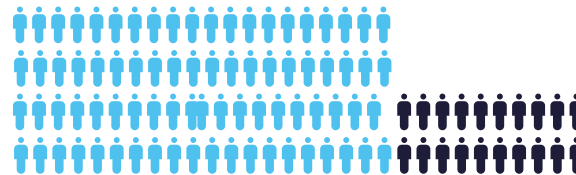
[Duke of Edinburgh's Award, June 2021]

Despite the  
challenges of the  
pandemic, **70%** of  
our young people  
are more engaged  
than ever with  
social and  
community action

[Diana Award survey,  
April 2020]

**85%**  
of our young  
people feel  
mental  
health and  
wellbeing is  
a top priority

[Diana Award survey,  
April 2020]



**80% of young people report that  
the pandemic increased their wish  
to make a change in the world**

[The Possibilists study, 2021]



04

# OUR MISSION



**We exist to empower  
young people to make  
positive change**

**We do this by:**



**Unlocking  
potential**



**Creating  
opportunities**



**Inspiring  
action**



# 05 UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

With support, guidance and opportunities every young person can reach their full potential, ensuring no young person is left out or left behind.

**We will:**

- Develop confidence, resilience and improve wellbeing for young people across all our programmes
- Challenge systemic inequalities which prevent young people unlocking their full potential
- Improve workplace readiness and instil active citizenship through a range of mentoring initiatives

**“ In a world where our youth is challenged every day in many different ways around the world, The Diana Award is a fantastic platform that identifies talent, passion, opportunity, determination, attitude, aptitude and helps many young brilliant people take their projects further. Thank you Diana Award for empowering our youth.”**

**- Alex Cruz**

Former Chair and  
CEO of British Airways



# 06

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

**Young people deserve a seat at the table to shape decisions about our shared future. Their voice enriches decision-making and inspires us all to do more and do better.**

### We will:

- Develop a global network of changemakers and support them to develop their capacity for change
- Enable a youth-led, peer-to-peer anti-bullying movement which empowers young people to be upstanders against bullying behaviour in schools and online
- Support organisations across the UK to invest time and resources in mentoring opportunities that create a more inclusive and fair society
- Increase social mobility for young people, especially those who need us the most through a range of mentoring initiatives

“Gilead Sciences have been partnering with The Diana Award team for a few years now. We have a shared agenda in believing that our best hope for a brighter future are the incredible young people that The Diana Award has empowered over the years. I have never worked with an organisation that so passionately puts all their energy into enabling young people to unlock their potential. The proof that this approach works? You only have to see the previous recipients of The Diana Award and how they have evolved into true changemakers and leaders. I couldn't be more proud to be involved with The Diana Award team and play a small part in creating opportunities for these inspiring young leaders.”

– Alex Kalomparis

Vice President, International  
Public Affairs, Gilead Sciences

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“I'm passionate about change because I believe young people should have a seat at the table especially when our future is at stake”

– Lanre Adeleye

Aged 18, UK



# 07 INSPIRING ACTION

With the right support and advocacy, young people have the passion, energy and insight to lead the change they want to see, for themselves, their communities and the world around them.

### We will:

- Amplify and recognise young people as change makers, giving them a platform to further their work and inspire the communities around them
- Advocate for changes to legislation and policy that strengthen the response to bullying behaviour
- Advocate for changes in policy that reduce the birth to work inequality experience for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

"I am advocating to unlock financial and non-financial resources to build a more inclusive and fairer system of participation for young people"

– **Luis Alvarado Bruzual**  
Aged 24, Venezuela

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"I'm raising awareness of mental health, campaigning for more action to be taken and changes to improve our services so that one day no-one will feel as alone as I did when I was struggling with my own mental health."

– **Lottie Leach**  
Aged 19, UK

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"I'm empowering young people from across the world as changemakers in advancing the UN sustainable development goals."

– **Shomy Chowdhury**  
Aged 26, Bangladesh

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"I am a young volunteer in my community. I meet people with the same views and interests and with this I grow and learn from them. I use it to grow my knowledge, to influence youth in my community and the world."

– **Allysha Nolasco**  
Age 11, Canada



08

# BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS

**Future Forward is an ambitious plan, which requires innovation, talented people and robust practices. That is why over the next five years we will:**

- Build a long-term, financially sustainable organisation that remains unique, relevant and compelling in a competitive landscape
- Embed robust governance procedures and practices, with an outcome-focused, youth-led approach in everything we do
- Be innovative and adapt, using digital technology to create the change we want to see across society. This will cut across all aspects of our work from our infrastructure to fundraising and supporting our online communities
- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy that strengthens the organisation's reputation and brand as one of the UK's leading and trusted youth movements
- Be an employer of choice. Our staff, volunteers and young people will feel valued, rewarded, included and inspired about being part of our family

**And through our programmes and initiatives we will:**

- Increase our effectiveness and impact by embedding evidence-driven, youth-led approaches across our programmes
- Enhance our expertise and profile as a platform and catalyst for youth-led social action
- Increase our voice and influence on policies and practices that affect the young people we work with and their ability to effect social change.

**We know that we can't achieve any of this alone.**

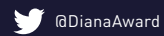
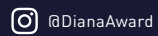
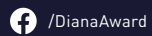
By working with young people and partners we can create the change we want to see in the world.

To work with us please visit  
[www.diana-award.org.uk/get-involved](http://www.diana-award.org.uk/get-involved)

# FUTURE FORWARD



Diana Award Strategy 2021-2026



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