



Our Three-Year Plan 2024-2027

The path to a million



Introduction

Ten years ago First Give was founded to inspire a spark of social conscience in young people.

Over our first decade we have refined and expanded delivery of our flagship programme, which we run in partnership with hundreds of secondary schools across England and Wales. Consequently, almost a quarter of a million young people have been given the opportunity to take action to support charities and causes that matter to them, and in doing so, gained the benefits that such work brings: a feeling of agency, skills development, empathy and improved wellbeing.

This spark of generosity and social conscience was important when we started in 2014. But in 2024 it is perhaps even more so. The UK charity sector is in crisis¹, stretched in its mission to meet the needs of a society hit by an ongoing cost of living crisis². Only three fifths of pupils feel a sense of belonging at school³. And on a wider scale, the language of division and social disintegration remains ever present, leading to three in four Britons believing the country is divided⁴.

Empowering and equipping young people to meaningfully contribute to their communities is a first step to addressing these challenges and more. Our vision is of a more generous society, and in preparing this strategy, we have thought long and hard about our mission, and our ambitions for our work. This strategic plan therefore provides a roadmap for the next three years, but it also looks further into the future. It defines our ambitions as we enter our second decade, and provides a lodestar to guide us as we aim to engage a million young people in our programming by 2034.

We are incredibly proud of the scale and impact of our work thus far, but we are ambitious to inspire and motivate greater and greater numbers of young people. To do this, we will need to lay solid foundations for growth. That means improving the sustainability of the organisation; improving how we evidence our impact; and listening to and involving young people even more.

I therefore invite you to read through this strategy; to be inspired by the work of our team, our partner schools and the young people who participate in our programmes; and, I hope, to join us as we embark on our second decade.

Isaac Jones, Director

- 1 The Cost of Giving Crisis, NCVO (2023)
- 2 Cost of living insights, Office for National Statistics (2024)
- 3 School belonging – A Literature Review, National Children's Bureau and Goldsmiths, University of London (2024)
- 4 Political aggression polling, IPSOS (2024)

The Story So Far

1,315

First Give programmes
completed

234,506

students who have completed
a First Give programme

£1,469,000

in grants donated
to charities

In our latest survey responses, teachers and participants told us about the impact of participation:

Increased awareness of social issues and charities

98%*

of students who presented at their Final reported improving awareness of social issues affecting their community.

98%*

of students who presented at their Final reported improving awareness of how charities help people in their local community.

Increased confidence to make a difference

95%*

of students who presented at their Final told us their ability to help others in their community had improved.

Skill development

99%*

of students who presented at their Final told us they improved in at least one of our key skill areas: Presentation skills; Teamworking skills; Leadership skills; Research skills; Project Planning skills.

Motivation to help others

90%*

of students who presented at their Final told us they were likely or very likely to do more social action in the future.



* Based on responses from 1,968 students who presented at their First Give Final in 2023-24.



First Give helped me to see a different side to my students... I think because it was about doing something and helping their community it got them more engaged and they put more effort in than I thought they would.”

Teacher

Core Statements

Our vision

The society we want to see

Our vision is of a more generous society where all people are able and willing to give their time, money and skills to causes that they care about.

Our mission

Our role in creating this society

Our mission is to create opportunities where young people are inspired and empowered to give their time, money or skills to charities and causes that matter to them.

Our values

We are known for being:

- ✦ Altruistic
- ✦ Empowering
- ✦ Professional
- ✦ Inspiring
- ✦ Collaborative

Theory of Change





What I loved most about the First Give Programme was the sense of empowerment it gave me.”

Alumnus

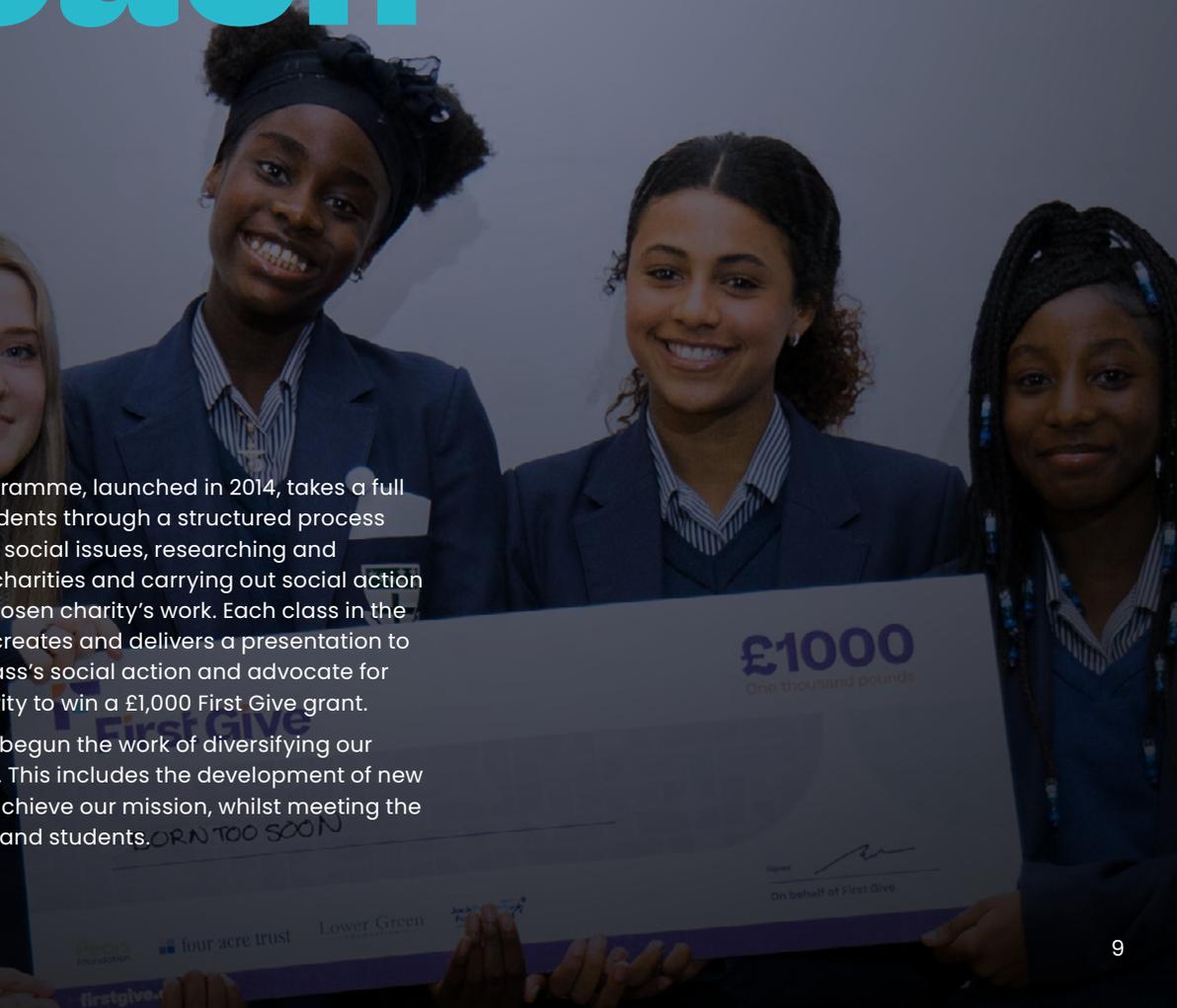
Our Approach

Since 2014 we have run our programmes with full year groups in secondary schools. Delivering in partnership with schools in this way is important for a number of key reasons:

- 1 We work with schools because this is where most young people are;**
- 2 We work with full year groups to ensure all young people have the opportunity to participate;**
- 3 We work in partnership with teachers because they are experts with pre-existing relationships with young people.**

Our flagship programme, launched in 2014, takes a full year group of students through a structured process of learning about social issues, researching and connecting with charities and carrying out social action in support of a chosen charity's work. Each class in the year group then creates and delivers a presentation to report on their class's social action and advocate for their chosen charity to win a £1,000 First Give grant.

We have already begun the work of diversifying our programme offer. This includes the development of new programmes to achieve our mission, whilst meeting the needs of schools and students.





First Give was an amazing opportunity for me...it really improved my awareness of social issues and how to combat them. I wish I could do it all again!"

Student

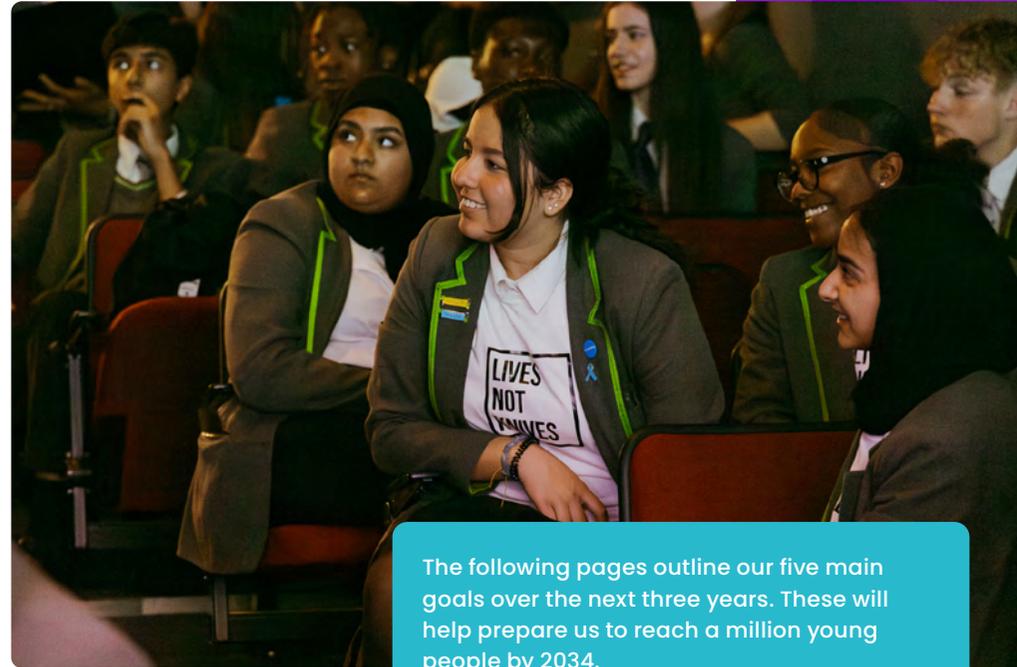
A group of diverse people are seated around a table in a meeting room, engaged in discussion. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue gradient. The text is positioned on the left side of the image.

Our Plan and Priorities for 2024–2027

Our Ambition

Our ambition is to activate the generosity of **a million young people** by the end of our second decade. This three-year plan lays the foundations required to reach this target.

This ambition will require investment and focus in order to broaden the reach of our activity. But growth for growth's sake is not enough. For this reason, we will work over the next three years to centre young people's voices in our decision making, and to further develop our evaluation methodology so as to ensure we maintain the depth of our impact as we scale.



The following pages outline our five main goals over the next three years. These will help prepare us to reach a million young people by 2034.





1.

Develop First Give's organisational sustainability and foundations for growth

We will continue the work of ensuring that the charity is prepared for growth in our second decade. This includes:

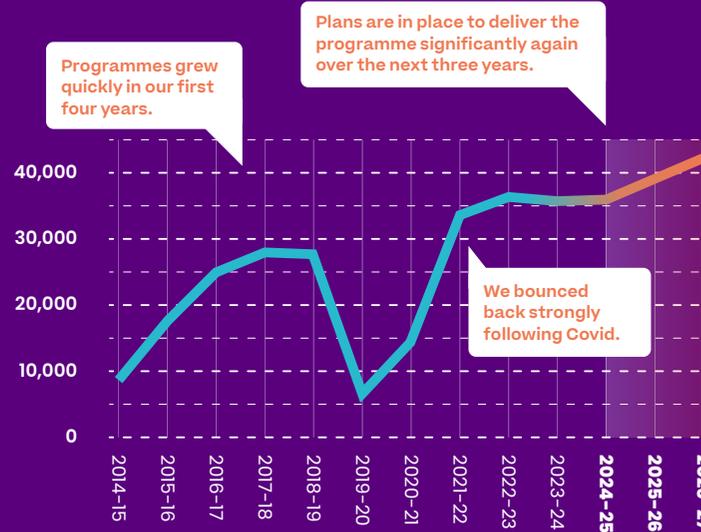
- ◆ Developing our capacity to deliver at scale (People, Governance and M&E)
- ◆ Maintaining our strong funding model, whilst diversifying income sources to reduce reliance on any one stream, and growing our income sustainably to support growth of our programming
- ◆ Investment in sales and marketing and communications, continuing to speak with confidence about our impact.

2.

Grow the Core: deliver the First Give programme to at least 116,000 young people between 2024 and 2027.

Our proven and established programme is what we are known for and will remain central to our growth. In the next three years we plan to engage with young people more effectively to ensure their voice is central to iterative improvements we make, and to wider decisions at the charity.

A network-based, regional approach will be key to growing the network effectively and we will therefore open up new regions (starting with the West Midlands) as well as expanding in existing regional hubs.



3.

Innovate at the Core: develop and pilot a new secondary programme

In 2023-4 we undertook extensive conversations with school partners, young people and funders to identify potential ways to diversify our work. Pressure on curriculum time available for non-academic learning is a key challenge for schools, meaning that many are unable to “fit” the existing First Give programme into their timetable. With this in mind, we have begun the process of piloting a brand new programme, First Give One Day.



4.

Innovate in an ‘adjacent’ delivery space: develop and expand our primary programme

Over the next three years we will continue to test the viability of ‘First Give Primary’, with a focus on all-through schools, and schools that ‘feed’ our existing partner secondary schools. In this way, we increase the likelihood of children participating in multiple First Give interventions, deepening the impact of our work.



“Primary-age pupils are capable of taking on an active role as young citizens in our communities... Our research reinforces the existing evidence that pupils derive direct benefits from participating in youth social action, including developing leadership, teamworking, problem solving, and communications skills as well as a sense of social responsibility, civic self-efficacy, with signs of developing a habit of service.”

— Citizens of Now, RSA 2021



“ This would be a great way for students to become part of the community...we do a lot in school talking about social issues...the practical actions aspect is lacking.”

Teacher

5.

Accelerate and further innovate: boost successful innovations and explore new ways to reach young people at scale.

Assuming a realistic and relatively ambitious increase of around 15 programmes per year over a ten year period to 2034, we anticipate we would have cumulatively reached around 790,000 young people through our core and adjacent programming.

We will see the real life impact and potential of the core and adjacent innovations during the first two years of this plan, coupled with a strong focus on business development. In year three we will be preparing to invest behind the success to reach our ambition of one million by 2034. If we need completely new ways to reach young people, most likely outside the school environment, we will initiate a strategic innovation programme's exploratory phase towards the end of year two, with a view to test in year three.



“ This experience has made me more open to understanding and addressing broader societal issues. For me, it has ignited a desire to contribute to larger changes, and I’m eager to continue seeking ways to make a positive impact beyond this challenge. ”

Student

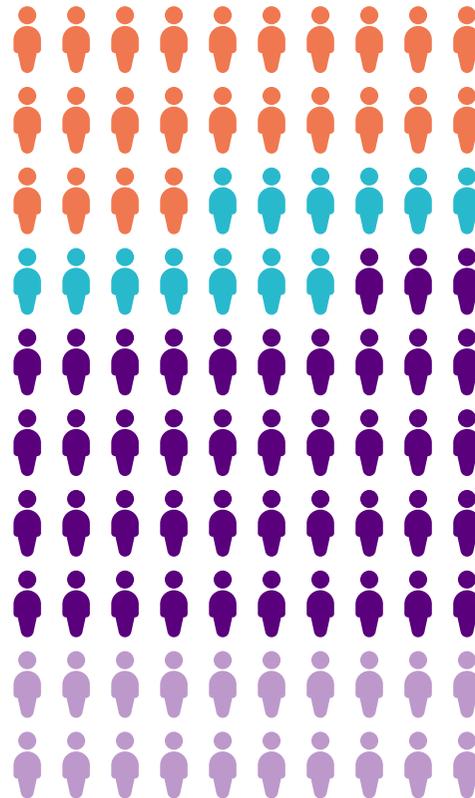


To the Future 2027-2034

This document provides detail on our strategic goals for 2024-27, and the required activity to achieve them. These goals have been designed to support the growth required to meet our longer term ambition - to activate the generosity of a million young people by 2034.

Over this three year period, we will continue to deliver our work, establish proof of concept for new programming and ultimately prepare the charity to inspire, equip and motivate a million young people by the end of our second decade.

In taking the approach of diversifying our programme offers, young people may well participate in multiple programmes. This can only serve to deepen the impact for these young people, and we are therefore comfortable to recognise an assumed percentage of these numbers may include repetition.



234,506

Young people reached to date

133,440

Young people reached in 2024-27

428,700

Forecast of young people reached 2027-34

203,354

Strategic innovation

1,000,000

Total

 = 10,000 young people. Figures rounded to nearest 100 for this graphic.



Activating the
generosity of a million
young people by 2034.

Share your journey with us



firstgive.co.uk

Registered Charity Number 1156416