

Global Challenges Foundation

A climate for change: how the Educators' Challenge is addressing real-world issues

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The finalists have been chosen in the Global Challenges Foundation's competition to raise awareness of global governance among young people and the general public. Winners will be announced on 15 May – but everyone can have their say in the [People's Choice award](#)

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An [ocean liner](#) that takes young people from islands most affected by climate change to educate others about environmental degradation; the [African Leadership University](#), which has launched a degree in global challenges; and

the Social Presencing Theatre where participants become aware of three bodies: their own, the social body, and the Earth. What do these very different projects have in common?

They are all finalists in the Global Challenges Foundation's Educators' Challenge.

The Global Challenges Foundation (GCF) was set up by Swedish philanthropist Laszlo Szombatfalvy in 2012 to mitigate the catastrophic global risks that face humanity today. These risks include climate change, pandemics and weapons of mass destruction. One of the ways GCF has done this is through creating the New Shape Prize, where participants put forward projects to improve global governance and tackle worldwide threats.

But while some people are only too aware of these problems, getting the world at large – particularly young people – to become interested and involved with solutions to these issues is another matter.

GCF has addressed this through the Educators' Challenge, which was specifically designed to tackle the lack of awareness and engagement on global governance. This competition asked for innovative approaches that would involve students and broader audiences in discussions on the importance and principles of global governance, its history and its potential future.

According to Victoria Wariaro, project leader of the Educators' Challenge: "Today, as a global collective, we are faced with interlinked and highly complex challenges that transcend national borders. Everyone should have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the high levels of risk that we face, and the key elements of how global governance can mitigate those risks. This needs to be communicated effectively to increase engagement."

In November 2017, the GCF put out an open call for all types of creative educators – from teachers and lecturers to PR professionals and games developers – to come up with ideas to spread the discussion on global governance. By June 2018, when the entry period ended, more than 70 entries from all over the world had been received.

"For the first time, we can see there is a huge community of people really engaged with these issues," says Wariaro.





▲ The Global Challenges Foundation presented its global governance solutions at the Paris Peace Forum.
Photograph: Marion Dubier-Clark/Paris Peace Forum

Now, a diverse final jury of seven members will select 10 winners who will receive prizes of \$5,000 at the Educators' Challenge awards in May. Prizes will be awarded for the most effective and creative proposals, and there will also be a People's Choice award. From 1 April, visitors to the [Educators' Challenge website](#) will be able to look at the videos produced by finalists and [vote](#) for the project they like the best. Simply doing this will help spread understanding and promote discussion about global governance.

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Another of the finalists in the Educators' Challenge is a multiplayer online game called [New Shores – a Game for Democracy](#), whose lead developer is Aleksandra Solińska-Nowak from the [Centre for Systems Solutions \(CRS\)](#) based in Poland. "[The game's] goal is to help young people realise how difficult it is to reconcile conflicting needs and develop a well-functioning community," she says.

In [New Shores](#), players imagine they have moved to an island in the middle of the ocean and need to develop a thriving society. This is easy at the start: they have plentiful resources, which they are able to keep or invest in public institutions, education and so on. In the course of playing, the resources start to shrink. This means the players have to collaborate. They also have to find effective solutions to poverty and homelessness, and save the world from disaster.

"It is an internet game, but the social element is really important," says Solińska-Nowak. As a result, there is a real-world narrator (such as a teacher) running the game and facilitating discussion afterwards. Unlike most online games, it is not clear how you win or lose. "The most common comment from young people is

that this is like the real world," she adds. "You have to identify your own goals: do you invest for private profit or act for the common good?"



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So why did CRS enter this game into the Educators' Challenge? "We were looking at a way to promote [the game] among educators," she says. The game had already been developed and was available for use. "But being free is not enough. We have to make people notice it," she stresses.

Jakob Rhyner is professor of global change and systemic risks at the Innovation Campus, Bonn, and a member of the Educators' Challenge jury. "Engaging more people in the challenges we face today is the alpha and the omega in trying to implement sustainable development goals," he says. The projects are all very different from each other, and overall diversity was something the jury looked for in

drawing up the shortlist.

"I hope these different projects can get together and cross-fertilise," stresses Rhyner. "This is the most useful thing they can do. There is more wisdom out there than we can imagine. We must collect it and support it."

The Educators' Challenge awards, co-organised by LSE Institute of Global Affairs, will take place on Wednesday 15 May in London, UK. The educational day will explore how to increase engagement and awareness around global catastrophic risks. Apart from the awards ceremony, the event will feature panel discussions and keynote addresses by influencers and experts invited to share their knowledge and insights. For more information, visit the [Educators' Challenge](#)

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