



# NEW CHALLENGE

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A Transformative Approach  
to 21st-Century Higher Education That  
Develops Entrepreneurial Leaders



# CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

This document shares the story of New Challenge, its unique approach to learning, the transformative impact it has on both students and communities, and the role it plays in larger educational innovation efforts at The New School and beyond.

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## WHY NEW CHALLENGE?

*“Being a part of New Challenge has been my most valuable experience at The New School. It has taught me how to make a real impact on the world and made me realize what I want to do for the next 10 years. The support of New Challenge has given me the confidence to pursue this project on a bigger scale and the mentorship I needed to see it through. I have received leadership training that I will use for the rest of my life.”*

— Kate Wallace, New School student

**New Challenge** is a response to a changing world. The future of work, enterprise, and careers is being transformed by technology, globalization, and other factors. Young people are increasingly seeking to build careers with purpose and to make a positive social impact through their work. The economy is changing at an ever-faster pace, with millennials expected to change jobs every two or three years. By 2020, *Forbes* analysts predict freelancers and entrepreneurs will comprise more than 50% of our economy. In this context, there is an urgent need for students and emerging professionals to develop the entrepreneurial mindsets and skills that will enable them to navigate their careers over the course of a lifetime.

At the same time, there is a global demand for new solutions that enhance environmental sustainability and meet human needs like better health, sanitation, education, and financial security. In order to address these challenges, we believe students must further hone their skills in the areas of innovation, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, empathy, resilience, communication, and collaboration. Students must be able to work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds to tackle complex problems that span diverse cultures, sectors, and disciplines. To achieve this, it is imperative we create learning environments and resources that support students in shaping a future that is prosperous, just, and sustainable.

There is a critical need to disrupt more traditional learning paradigms in higher education in order to meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and ensure they continue learning throughout their lives. Co-curricular learning initiatives like New Challenge provide useful contexts for educational innovation because they exist outside the formal structure of degree programs. These more flexible, interstitial spaces provide an opportunity to test new learning methods, which can be broadly applied across the University in different ways over time.

*“New Challenge builds from The New School’s deep legacy of progressive education and commitment to social engagement. It supports the generation of a more just and inclusive world in very authentic and grounded ways. I am constantly amazed by the imagination and determination our students demonstrate as they bring these ideas into reality.”*

— Mary Watson, Executive Dean,  
Schools of Public Engagement

Since its inception in 1919, **The New School** has been at the forefront of progressive higher education. It has a rich history of supporting students and scholars in thinking about positive social change and challenging the status quo. The New School is the world’s only design-led university, with academic centers in New York City, Paris, Shanghai, and Mumbai, offering over 10,000 students more than 135 undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The institution has a higher percentage of international students than any other U.S. university and is known for supporting emerging change makers in developing the mindsets, skills, and networks essential for success and leadership in the creative economy.

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# WHAT IS NEW CHALLENGE?

New Challenge is a university-wide social innovation education platform launched in 2012. The goals of this transformative initiative are to nurture the entrepreneurial mindsets and skills needed to pursue a variety of career paths in the 21st century and to support students in accessing resources to create sustainable social impact. Our theory of change is rooted in the belief that if we support students in developing an ability to empathize with others, collaborate across differences, solve problems creatively, adapt to changing circumstances, and persist in the face of obstacles, then they will be able to thrive in this rapidly changing global economy. Many students will continue to develop and scale up their New Challenge projects throughout their careers, while others will help fuel the next wave of innovation as entrepreneurial leaders and managers within existing companies or organizations. A high percentage of these individuals will follow in the footsteps of pioneering New School alumni who have imagined new futures and re-envisioned entire industries, practices, policies, and technologies to positively impact society.

*“The entire process has enabled us to become entrepreneurial, while also allowing us to gain traction in the field.”*

— Emilia Giordano, New School student

In this context, creating pathways for real-world learning has never been more important. New Challenge provides an environment that encourages students to embrace challenges as they take their ideas to the next level. Students develop the confidence to take risks and share their ideas with others as they implement their projects. For many, the opportunity to apply what they are learning in the classroom to real-world challenges is transformative. As students engage with injustices that move them on a personal level, they further develop core competencies needed to succeed in the 21st century. These mindsets and skills characterize a design-driven approach to interdisciplinary problem solving. They include the ability to identify unmet needs, map diverse stakeholders, prototype various solutions, validate initial assumptions, and adjust course as needed.

A year-round learning experience open to both undergraduate and graduate students across the University, New Challenge has created a robust application process in which the entire New School community identifies teams with a high potential for significant social impact. The University has engaged more than 500 alumni, faculty, and administrators as judges and mentors for New Challenge. Winning teams receive mentorship, participate in skill-building workshops, and are eligible for up to \$10,000 in seed funding from The New School. During this year of support, student teams develop tangible products, services, consultancies, cultural projects, projects, game designs, and new technologies that address pressing social issues in communities around the world. This initial support enables New Challenge winners to leverage additional resources, connect with the broader

## ORIGINS OF NEW CHALLENGE

New Challenge was built from the ground up by a group of students and faculty from design, management, performing arts, and social science. This initial team of students began their collaboration by developing a creative project that engaged the university community in the experience of improvisation as a metaphor for risk taking, deemed to be an essential element in change making.

*“Innovative solutions to complex problems are most likely to emerge when disciplinary boundaries are transcended and fresh perspectives are given the space to flourish. New Challenge is a hotbed of collaboration and invention in a university unlike any other. We bring policy, design, science, humanities, and performance together. In that laboratory, anything is possible.”*

— Joel Towers, Executive Dean,  
Parsons School of Design

entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region, and develop partnerships with a range of collaborators, including individuals, organizations, and companies in New York City and throughout the world.

To date, more than 700 students have participated in New Challenge and more than 70 students have received funding. Teams are tackling a range of issues, including transitional employment for the formerly incarcerated, sustainable transportation, housing justice, physical and learning disabilities, recycling, climate change, education (STEM, arts-based learning), food systems, civic tech, and more. They are working both in the United States and across the globe, including New York City, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Colombia, Cuba, India, Liberia, Uganda, and Ethiopia.

The New School's approach to social innovation distinguishes it from more narrow approaches to entrepreneurship typically found at business schools, which tend to focus exclusively on the creation of social ventures. Rather than idolizing the solo entrepreneur, we encourage students to form teams and design *with*, not *for*, communities. In addition to conceiving of innovative products and services, New School students collaborate with community members to build the capacity of others to meet their own needs. With this in mind, the following core principles guide New Challenge:

▶ **DESIGN DRIVEN**

As a design-led university, we believe creativity is central to the student learning experience and view design as an important means of finding solutions to complex challenges

▶ **CROSS-SECTOR APPROACH**

Our aim is to develop leaders for social change across all sectors (nonprofit, public and business)

▶ **CO-CREATED CHANGE**

We privilege co-created solutions with communities and diverse stakeholders

▶ **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

We emphasize the creation of solutions with the potential for systemic impact that creates a more just world

▶ **INTERDISCIPLINARY AND COLLABORATIVE**

We recognize that all disciplines can contribute creative ideas to complex challenges and seek to foster collaboration across disciplines

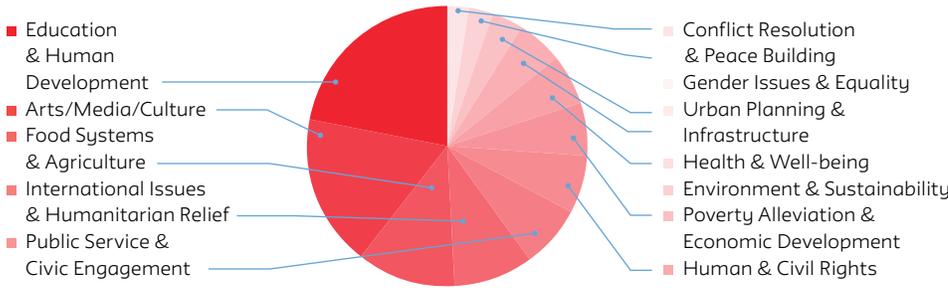
Our progress is reflected at the student level in terms of the high level of participation across the University and the extent to which students develop entrepreneurial mindsets and skills. At the community level, students continue to work on their projects in collaboration with external partners, pivoting as they identify the best ways to create sustainable social impact. At the university level, New Challenge has demonstrated ways of overcoming structural impediments that hinder transformative learning, such as semester-long courses and disciplinary silos, and provided insights into how this may be done more broadly across the University.

**SAMPLE LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHOM  
NEW SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE COLLABORATED**

**WORLD BANK ▪ GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA ▪ CURE INTERNATIONAL ▪ AMERICAN RED CROSS ▪ FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY ▪ NYC OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ▪ DATAWIND ▪ TOMMY HILFIGER ▪ POINTS OF LIGHT ▪ GOODWILL INDUSTRIES INTERNATIONAL ▪ INC. ▪ SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP AFGHANISTAN ▪ IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AFFIRMATIVE NETWORK ▪ ARAB-AMERICAN FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER ▪ NYC DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ▪ NYC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE ▪ NYC DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ▪ THE POINT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ▪ SULLIVAN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM ▪ DELAWARE VALLEY JOB CORPS ▪ FEDERATION FOR THE HOMELESS ▪ CENTER FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

# NEW CHALLENGE AT A GLANCE

## TOP ISSUE AREAS ADDRESSED BY APPLICANTS



## GLOBAL IMPACT: A SAMPLE OF NEW CHALLENGE PROJECTS

Click each icon to learn more



## PARTIAL LIST OF DEGREE PROGRAMS REPRESENTED BY APPLICANTS

ACTING ▪ CREATIVE WRITING ▪ DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY ▪ DESIGN AND URBAN ECOLOGIES ▪ DIRECTING ▪ ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT ▪ FASHION DESIGN ▪ INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ▪ MEDIA STUDIES ▪ NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT ▪ ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT ▪ PIANO PERFORMANCE ▪ PLAYWRITING ▪ PSYCHOLOGY ▪ PUBLIC AND URBAN POLICY ▪ SOCIOLOGY ▪ STRATEGIC DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT ▪ THEORIES OF URBAN PRACTICE ▪ TRANSDISCIPLINARY DESIGN ▪ VOCAL PERFORMANCE

TO DATE, MORE THAN

# 700 STUDENTS

HAVE PARTICIPATED IN NEW CHALLENGE, WITH A TOTAL OF MORE THAN

# 70 STUDENTS

RECEIVING FUNDING

MORE THAN

# 500 ALUMNI, FACULTY, & ADMINISTRATORS

HAVE SERVED AS JUDGES AND MENTORS

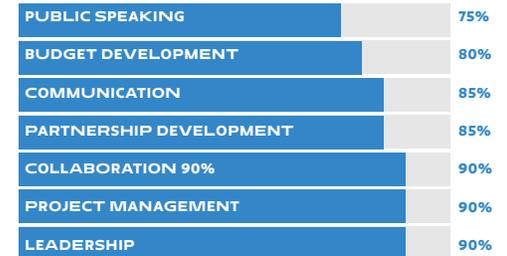
WINNING TEAMS RECEIVE UP TO

# \$10,000

TO IMPLEMENT THEIR NEW CHALLENGE PROJECTS.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING SKILLS AND MINDSETS THROUGH NEW CHALLENGE

### STUDENT SKILLS



### STUDENT MINDSETS



# A COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

New Challenge is part of a history of educational innovation at The New School that directly supports the University's [strategic mission and vision](#). The New School has evolved continuously through the years in response to changes in the marketplace of ideas, career opportunities, and human curiosity. Throughout this history, it has remained at the cutting edge of higher education, launching many new degrees that are the first of their kind. In just the past decade, the University has introduced new degrees in design and technology, urban design, transdisciplinary design, design and management, environmental policy and sustainability management, urban ecology, and data visualization. These programs teach design thinking as an approach to solving complex problems, such as improving our cities, addressing health and environmental concerns, and building new business models for the kinds of groundbreaking companies that will reinvent our economic and cultural landscapes. New Challenge enriches the learning experience across these and other degree programs by creating a pathway for students to translate their ideas into reality.

New Challenge is one example of how The New School continually develops innovative approaches to learning and ensures higher education remains relevant in today's rapidly shifting economy. The following diagram illustrates ways in which this initiative overcomes constraints commonly found in traditional universities.



By breaking through artificial barriers commonly found within institutions of higher education, such as siloed academic disciplines, semester-long courses, and theoretical forms of knowledge, New Challenge creates a more holistic student journey. As depicted in the diagram on the following page, the support students receive from New Challenge enables them to take the ideas they explore in the classroom, and through other opportunities at The New School, and implement them in the real world.

## A LEADER IN INNOVATION

The New School was one of the first universities selected an [Ashoka U Changemaker Campus](#), signifying leadership in social innovation and social entrepreneurship education.

*“New Challenge is an example of how The New School is setting the bar in modeling a culture and platform where everyone can contribute ideas for change, regardless of discipline, age, or identity.”*

— Marina Kim, Co-Founder, Ashoka U

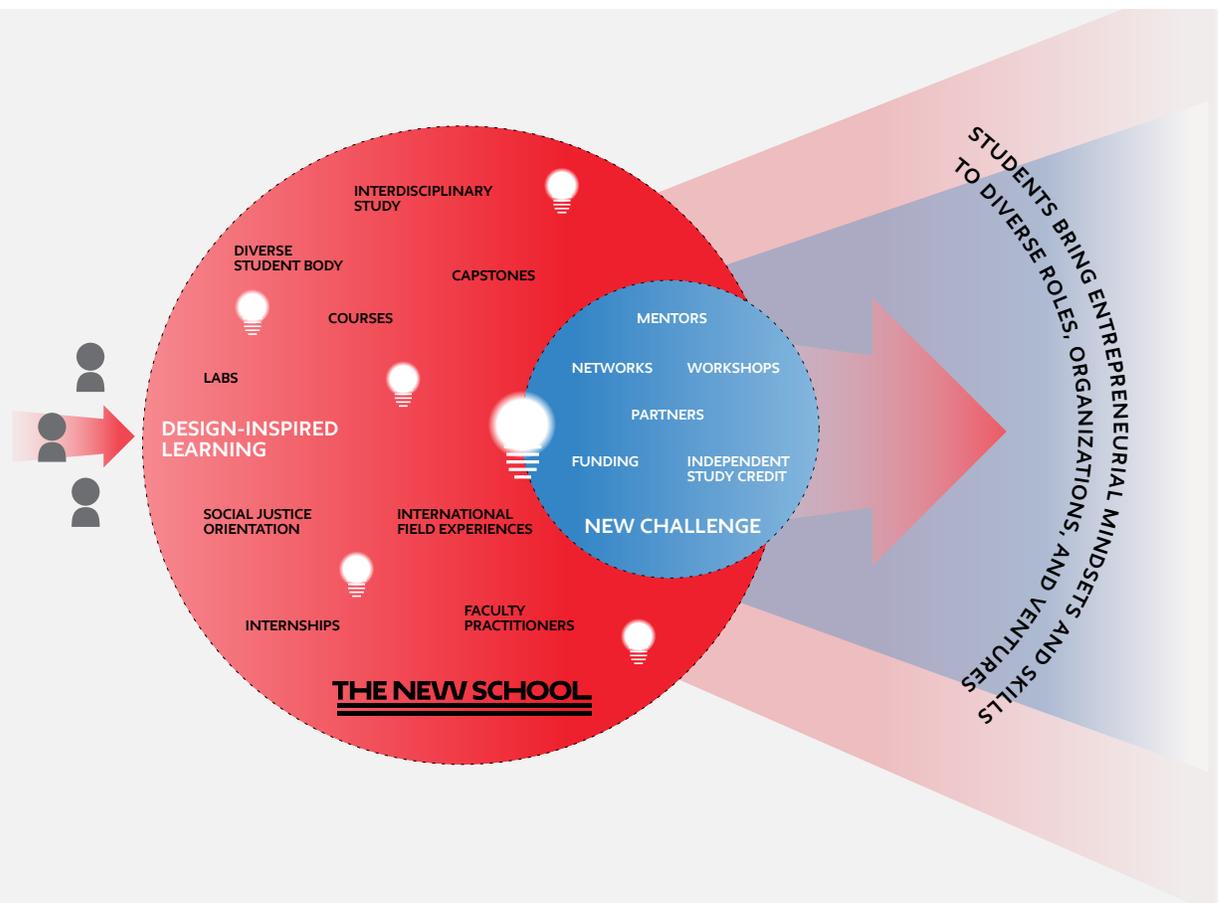
## A DESIGN-LED UNIVERSITY

Over the past 20 years, design has come to occupy a prominent place in public consciousness, cultural systems, and the global economy. Studio-based tools like data visualization, collaborative play, and prototyping are now employed to improve services and tackle the social, environmental, and economic problems that accompany urbanization. Acquiring these skills, which are critical for emerging professions, prepares New School students for careers in both established and new fields. To help them adapt to design's new expanded role, the university is strengthening curricula and launching forward-looking programs in which students apply design strategies in cross-divisional collaborations.

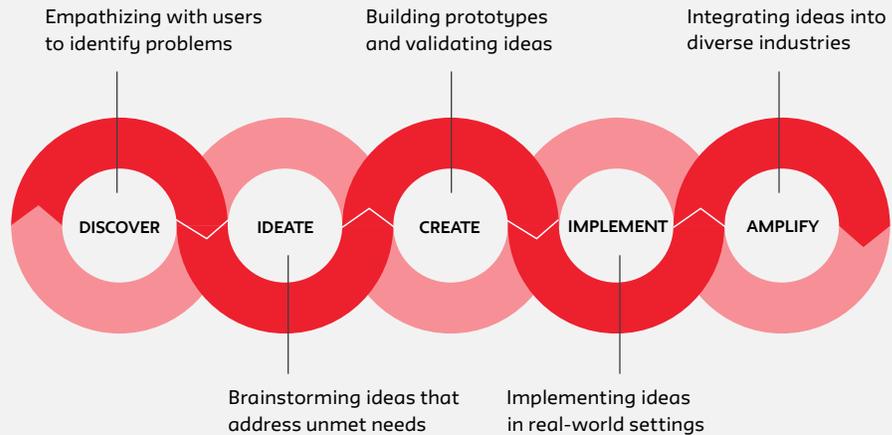
— From “Creating a Design-Led University,” p. 11, *Regarding Design (re:D)*, Spring 2013 ([Regarding Design](#) is the magazine for alumni and the broader Parsons community).

# STUDENT LEARNING JOURNEY

With the support they receive from New Challenge, students take the ideas they explore in the classroom and implement them in the real world, building on a range of resources, including courses, internships, mentorship, labs, funding, and workshops.



**DESIGN-INSPIRED LEARNING**  
Design-inspired learning is infused through the Student Learning Journey.





**NEW  
CHALLENGE  
PROJECTS:  
CREATING  
TRANSFORMATIVE  
CHANGE**

# PROJECT SNAPSHOTS

Below are illustrative examples of projects supported by New Challenge, representing a broad range of approaches, disciplines, and issues addressed by students. Projects are evaluated based on the following criteria: Problem Definition, Proposed Innovation, Potential for Social Impact, Feasibility, Team Leadership, and Collaboration. Click on titles to learn more about each project.



## [Accessible Art](#)

Lexy Ho-Tai, Fashion Design;  
Martha Gold, Community Partner

Accessible Art is a free adaptive art program that fosters a nurturing and creative environment in which all children are able to express themselves by constructing customizable art tools for severely physically disabled youth. The program encompasses regular weekly classes at PS 811X in the Bronx (the largest public special education high school in the country), as well as workshops in other boroughs throughout New York City.



## [Amigo Legal](#)

Lien Tran, Design & Technology

Amigo Legal makes complex legal information readily accessible through games that empower immigrant youth to build skills and acclimate to life in the United States. This platform was inspired by the needs of unaccompanied immigrant minors who may be eligible for legal relief, but lack understanding of what it takes to be released from government juvenile facilities or make well-informed decisions.

[WATCH THIS VIDEO TO LEARN MORE ▶](#)



## [Blank Plate](#)

Mai Kobori, Eulani Labay & Amy Findeiss,  
Transdisciplinary Design

Blank Plate addresses issues of food justice in the South Bronx by inspiring Hunts Point teens to engage in creative culinary experiences, transforming their relationship to food, and fostering new connections through eating. The project incorporates several other food and education initiatives with the goal of cultivating a food-centric community in an area that currently lacks access to fresh, affordable food.



## [BeyondABC](#)

Kate Wallace & Danny Dang,  
Design & Technology;  
Ker Thao, Transdisciplinary Design

BeyondABC is a mobile game that teaches at-risk youth in rural India safety lessons, so they know their rights and can protect themselves from exploitative situations, such as human trafficking. By focusing on prevention and education, this technology platform equips children with necessary survival skills.



## [blink blink](#)

Nicole Messier & Alex Tosti, Design & Technology

blink blink inspires girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) through the production and dissemination of creative circuit kits that engage middle- and high-school students in designing their own arts, crafts, and Do-It-Yourself (DIY) fashion projects. The kits provide a playful avenue that empowers girls to explore making with STEM concepts via soft circuits, including LEDs, batteries, and conductive thread.



## [Constellation Project](#)

Tamara Streefland, Design & Urban Ecologies;  
Jesseka Mae Emerick, Design & Urban Ecologies

Constellation Project tackles challenges posed by combined sewage overflows and pollution in urban areas, such as North Corona, Queens. This project transforms networks of vacant lots into community gathering spaces that enhance green infrastructure, water retention, and environmental remediation. More recently, the founders have expanded their scope to include cities along Lake Erie and created a water consultancy.

*“It’s wonderful to see that for many students, these ideas are coming from a very personal place.”*

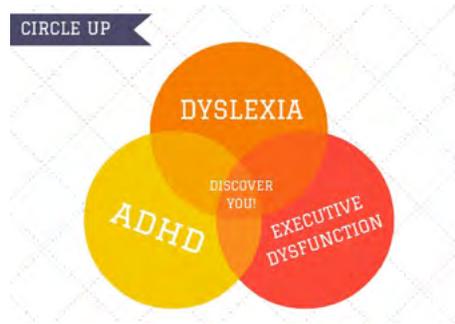
— Cynthia Lawson, Associate Provost, Parsons School of Design



### Harlem Peace Partners

Talib Hudson, Urban Policy & Management;  
Stanley Fritz, Community Partner;  
Brandy-Courtney Williams, Community Partner

Harlem Peace Partners mobilizes young professionals of color to support community-based organizations focused on reducing violence in Harlem. This project aims to increase the capacity of such organizations in an effort to help them better fulfill their missions.



### My IEP Meeting

Emilia Giordano, Media Studies;  
Megan Hayden, Community Partner

My IEP Meeting is an online education tool that enables high school students with learning disabilities to advocate for their own education needs during Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings with parents and teachers. This web-based platform and companion mobile app helps students find their voice by teaching them to identify and build on their strengths while exercising their rights.



### Project Fogg

James Frankis & Sean Baker,  
Transdisciplinary Design

Project Fogg is a post-disaster visualization and communication kit intended to help communities respond quickly and effectively in the hours immediately following a disaster by allowing those on the ground to capture and access real time footage. Comprised of a large tethered helium balloon, camera, and long-distance Wi-Fi network, the device flies high above an impacted area, broadcasting a live video feed to everyone below.



### Stratum, Rural Design Studio

Laura Nitz, International Affairs; Matt Lowry, Community Partner; Isaac Diebboll, Community Partner; Tom Bosket, Community Partner

Stratum is a property development service that connects cultural and spatial resources to stimulate redevelopment through collaborative design projects on a local scale. The founders have activated numerous organizations in Callicoon, NY, resulting in projects that include 3D printing workshops at a makerspace, a decentralized community-supported agriculture platform, a recirculating aquaponic system, and an education curriculum.



### STEAM Punks

Kristen Kersh & Mehdi Salehi,  
Design & Technology

STEAM Punks was created in response to the personal experience of Mehdi Salehi, a political refugee from Afghanistan, along with the realization that there is currently little opportunity for children in Afghanistan to receive an education beyond basic reading, writing, and mathematics. This set of kits and workshops is designed to help young people in Kabul explore technology and design through making by sparking imagination and creativity.

[WATCH THIS VIDEO TO LEARN MORE ▶](#)



### Sweet Generation

Amy Chasan, Nonprofit Management

Sweet Generation is a storefront bakery near St. Mark’s Place that simultaneously provides at-risk young people with job training and donates a percentage of its proceeds to support arts education for youth. After having completed a highly successful Indiegogo campaign and being awarded “Best Cupcake” in New York City by the *Village Voice*, the company has launched a growing wholesale division, acquired a new off-site production facility, and developed an online sales platform.

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# A CLOSER LOOK: TRANSFORMING THE FASHION INDUSTRY THROUGH INCLUSIVE DESIGN



*“I was offered an opportunity that made me ask myself... do I want to help a small amount of people or a lot of people, and I went with the latter.”*

— Lucy Jones, New School student

Disability and Beauty seeks to implement a more inclusive approach to fashion by challenging the notion that design for those with disabilities must constitute a separate market. The idea for this project was inspired by Jake, the 14-year-old cousin of Lucy Jones. Jake suffers from hemiplegia and has trouble dressing himself. Lucy first started working on this project when a professor gave her an assignment to design something that would “change the world through fashion.” She continued with the project, ultimately making it the focus of her Senior Thesis at Parsons.

As Lucy gains additional experience, insights, and connections, she has recognized the importance of being open-minded, trusting herself when assessing opportunities for collaboration, and recognizing her self-worth. She is committed to making it easier for individuals who are differently abled to find simple, beautiful, and functional clothing. For Lucy to tackle all disabilities would not have been feasible, so she decided to focus on the seated body, individuals who use wheelchairs. She is now implementing her original goals on a much larger scale by working with Mindy Scheier, fashion designer and founder of the nonprofit Runway of Dreams. This groundbreaking organization is adapting mainstream clothing for people with different abilities, similar to maternity or petite lines, through

**DISABILITY AND BEAUTY**  
2015 New Challenge Winner

**Lucy Jones**  
Fashion Design

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
[VISIT THIS WEBSITE ►](#)

[WATCH THIS VIDEO ►](#)

**RECENT PUBLICITY**

[Tommy Hilfiger.com](#)

[The Mighty](#)

[Seventeen magazine](#)

[NPR Weekend Edition](#)

[Vice](#)

[Vogue](#)

[Huffington Post](#)

[The Odyssey Online](#)

[Fashionista](#)

*“Runway of Dreams is at the forefront of a revolution that’s starting to happen, that will change the way we look at disability in this country in a really positive way.”*

— Dr. Danielle , Psychologist, Model, and Disability-Rights Advocate

partnerships with major fashion labels. Runway of Dreams recently announced a partnership with Tommy Hilfiger to launch an adaptive version of select styles from its children's line.

Lucy's work on this project, combined with her undergraduate thesis, has resulted in numerous honors and acclaim. In addition to having been selected as "Designer of the Year" at Parsons and being named to the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 Arts and Style Class of 2016, she secured a fellowship through the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) to work as a "Social Innovator" at Eileen Fisher, Inc., a top women's clothing brand known for its commitment to human rights, environmental sustainability, and social impact. Since completing her BFA in Fashion, Lucy has received significant press in many prominent publications and venues, including *Seventeen* magazine and Saks Fifth Avenue, among others.

## DISABILITY AND BEAUTY 2015 New Challenge Winner

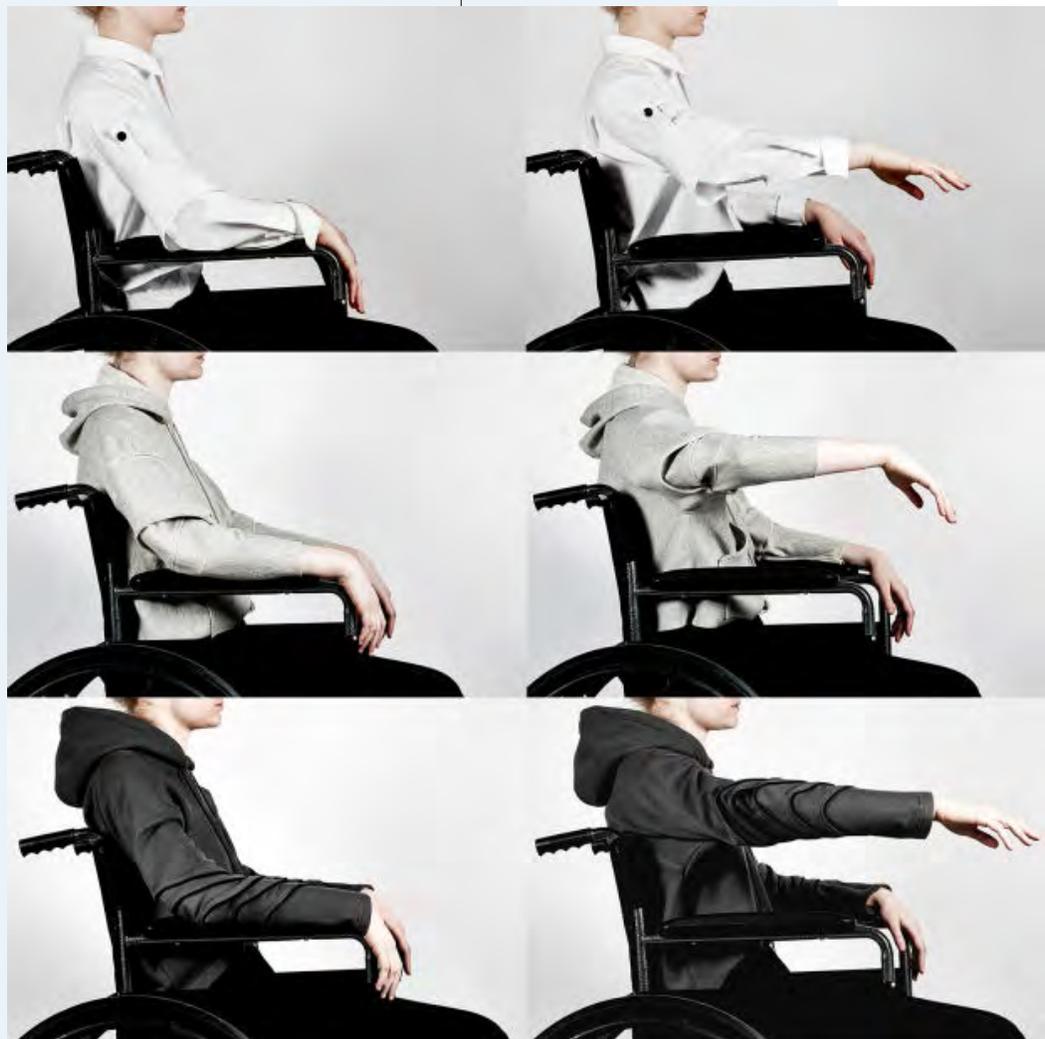
**Lucy Jones**  
Fashion Design

*"I think [adaptive clothes] can make a difference because it's time for the world to see that we are all equal. I just want to feel as normal and non-different as I can."*

— Liam, child with spinal muscular atrophy

*"Adaptive clothing will absolutely be that next department that we're going to see in our stores, in our society, as something that becomes very much a mainstream notion."*

— Mindy Scheier, Fashion Designer



Lucy Jones and Runway of Dreams are partnering with major brands, such as Tommy Hilfiger, to make the fashion industry more inclusive to all

# A CLOSER LOOK: CREATING A PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED YOUTH



Drive Change is using the food truck industry to broaden access to opportunity, reduce recidivism, and increase job readiness for young adults coming out of adult jail in New York City. The initial model of this social venture involved building and operating a state-of-the-art food truck that provides transitional employment to formerly incarcerated youth. Through its eight-month re-entry program, Drive Change works with approximately thirty young people annually, helping them develop transferable skills through participation in a paid fellowship.

Snowday, Drive Change's award-winning food truck, serves as a mobile classroom for trainees, who spend 35+ hours per week learning the business (marketing, social media, and money management), prepping the entire menu from scratch, and participating in six hours of professional development courses each week. To ensure the youth make successful transitions into full-time employment, Drive Change has developed strategic partnerships with social and public agencies that provide youth with counseling services and other forms of support. In addition to addressing this critical need, Snowday also serves as a mobile advocacy piece by providing an opportunity to connect with different people across the city, talk about injustice inside the criminal justice system, and dispel preconceived notions about what it means to be previously incarcerated.

The seed for Drive Change was planted when Jordyn Lexton was teaching English at the NYC Department of Education public high school inside the jail complex on Rikers Island. While there, Jordyn witnessed the harsh impact of the system on the youth and saw several young people filled with potential cycle back into the system. Students struggled to find meaningful

## DRIVE CHANGE

2013 New Challenge Winner

**Ann Bickerton**

Nonprofit Management

**Jordyn Lexton**

Community Partner

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
INCLUDING RECENT PUBLICITY:

[VISIT THIS WEBSITE ►](#)

[WATCH THIS VIDEO ►](#)

*"It was through the support we received from New Challenge that we figured out the voice for our message; saw how people responded when we shared our vision; and developed more deeply the concept for what is now a nearly \$1M budget organization."*

— Jordyn Lexton,  
Co-Founder, Drive Change

employment post-release, yet Jordyn noticed a glimmer of self-esteem and hope in the youth who were enrolled in a culinary arts class. Motivated by their sense of purpose and pride, and inspired by a belief in the power of good food to bring people together, Jordyn teamed up with Ann Bickerton to start Drive Change.

Since launching Snowday, Drive Change has reached several milestones, including signing a lease on a commercial location in Brooklyn, achieving status as an independent 501c3, and catering a meeting for UK Cabinet members with chef Jamie Oliver's 15. In addition to leveraging the New Challenge prize money to raise an additional \$150,000, Drive Change has received funding from the Fierce Advocacy Foundation, NY Community Trust, Pinkerton Foundation, Brooklyn Community Foundation, and Propel Capital. In the future, they hope to build a food truck commissary where other like-minded businesses will park, receive industry benefits, and hire young people out of the program. This commissary will allow Drive Change to create a fleet of food trucks for social justice and expand the program to over 100 people per year. After proving the commissary infrastructure model, Drive Change plans to scale to other cities.

Drive Change has received national attention in numerous outlets, including NBC, Melissa Harris-Perry, Edible, The Chew, and Yahoo Foods, for the innovative model they have developed. In addition to having been named an Echoing Green Fellow and included in the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 Social Entrepreneurs Class of 2016, Jordyn was also selected as one of NYC Zagat's 30 Under 30 influencers in the food sector. In 2014, Snowday made history by winning both the Vendy Award for the best food truck in NYC and the People's Choice Award. Valerie Jarrett, senior advisor to President Obama, has also recognized Drive Change as an innovative new company in the field of re-entry.

*"I'm contributing by helping [the trainees] realize when you put your mind to something, you can push through, persevere, and succeed."*

— Roy Waterman,  
Chef at Drive Change who spent 13 years in prison

*"I think the most important thing I've learned is that you have to put your ideas out there in the world — the moment you start talking about it and connecting with other people is the moment it starts to materialize."*

—Jordyn Lexton, Co-Founder, Drive Change

## DRIVE CHANGE 2013 New Challenge Winner

**Ann Bickerton**  
Nonprofit Management  
**Jordyn Lexton**  
Community Partner



Drive Change serves delicious, inspired food with a side of social justice to broaden opportunities for young people coming out of adult jail and prison.

A photograph of a student sitting at a desk in a classroom, viewed from behind. The student is looking at an Apple iMac computer. The screen displays a 3D CAD model of a mechanical part, possibly a bracket or a base, with various colored components. To the right of the student, a black sign with white text reads "COMPUTER-DESIGN" and "CAD" below it. The desk is cluttered with a white mug, a keyboard, and some papers. In the background, other students are blurred, and a green chalkboard is visible. A red vertical bar is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text "DESIGNING THE FUTURE" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**DESIGNING  
THE FUTURE**

## A WORK IN PROGRESS

*“It’s inspiring to see a university invest so deeply in students who want to make positive change in the world. This program sets the stage for New School students to not just strive to become change makers in the future, but to do it now.”*

— Nancy Lublin, New School Trustee; Founder and CEO, Crisis Text Line

Like the human-centered design approach used by many of our students in their own projects, New Challenge continues to evolve based on the changing needs of students, employers, and other stakeholders. To support ongoing improvement, we periodically convene a cross-divisional group of faculty, students, and administrators to think strategically about how to move forward. We use the feedback gained from these discussions as we continue to pilot and test new features, program elements, and institutional partnerships each year. This iterative process allows us to refine our selection process, workshop support, peer learning, mentoring, assessment, student reflection, and capital development.

Since its founding, New Challenge has evolved from a prize to an ecosystem of support involving all areas of the University, connecting students to a broader entrepreneurial network within and beyond The New School. First, in order to ensure support for New Challenge winners once they graduate, we have created a strong alliance with the Parsons Entrepreneurs Lab (E-Lab). The E-Lab enables students to continue working on their projects and social ventures after graduation by creating partnerships with co-working spaces and incubators in New York City. After receiving year-long support through New Challenge, students can now apply to E-Lab for further support as they continue to grow. Second, we are designing a new Future of Work and Learning Lab focused on driving educational innovation beyond The New School. By engaging companies, other universities, foundations, educational entrepreneurs, and policymakers, we hope to collectively imagine how we can continue to innovate as we prepare students for the future of work in a rapidly changing context. Our goal in developing this initiative is to spark new collaborations across sectors that enable people from diverse backgrounds to learn and succeed in the new economy.



Students, alumni, faculty, and staff continually re-imagine how New Challenge can best meet the needs of diverse stakeholders.

As we look to the future, our aim is to scale up New Challenge and enhance its impact in communities and for students. We are guided by the following key questions as we continue to iterate and further refine this educational model:

- ▶ **WHAT IF** New Challenge were able to scale up by allowing students to earn academic credit as they implemented their projects?
- ▶ **WHAT IF** New Challenge invited industry partners to identify social and environmental challenges and gave students a chance to develop ideas that attract potential industry investment?
- ▶ **WHAT IF** alumni who engaged in deep mentorship with students were viewed as co-educators and received discounts on courses offered at The New School?
- ▶ **WHAT IF** students at The New School were able to receive a credential (perhaps through a badging system) that recognized them as having acquired entrepreneurial mindsets and skills?
- ▶ **WHAT IF** foundations funded well-defined challenges of importance to the nonprofits they support and students were able to collaborate with these groups to develop solutions that directly benefit communities?
- ▶ **WHAT IF** The New School created an online platform that enabled students to find collaborators and mentors for their projects?
- ▶ **WHAT IF** universities in the New York City region worked together to develop a platform for raising capital, so that students could ensure their projects would lead to sustainable career pathways?
- ▶ **WHAT IF** there was an alternative track to a traditional capstone or thesis that resulted in the creation of a social enterprise?

Indeed, these are some of the opportunities we are already developing and plan to bring to fruition to realize even greater impact at the student, community, and institutional levels.

We have learned much from New Challenge as we continue contributing to a learner-centered revolution. In particular, we have learned the fundamental importance of experiential learning — learning that is rooted in real-world challenges and puts students at the center; that is highly networked and participatory; and that is supported by faculty and mentors. We recognize that achieving an effective balance between classroom-based learning and applied learning is essential for the entire university. The task ahead of us, and for all of higher education, is to design appropriate institutional structures, so that we can continue delivering relevant educational paradigms for today’s learners.

*“In order to understand the complex challenges of our times, and to respond in ways that can address that complexity, we need to find new ways to teach, learn and practice. New Challenge is one of the exciting experiments we have launched to meet this need.”*

— Tim Marshall, Provost,  
The New School



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**“ONE THING I LOVE  
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AS A CATCH WORD,  
BUT INNOVATION AS  
AN ABILITY TO SEE  
POSSIBILITY.”**

— Ann Bickerton,  
New School student