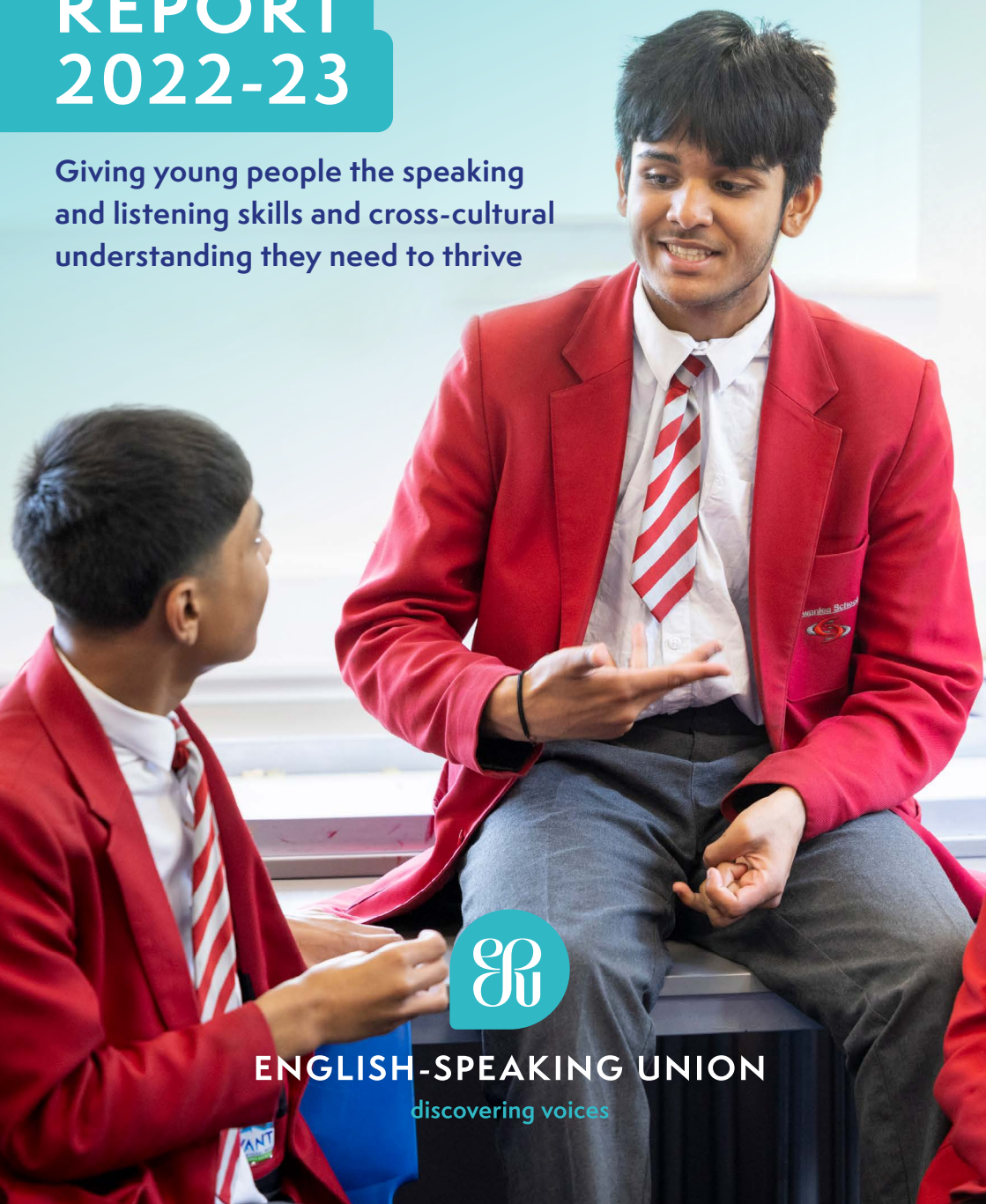


# ESU IMPACT REPORT 2022-23

Giving young people the speaking  
and listening skills and cross-cultural  
understanding they need to thrive



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

discovering voices

# INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to share our 2022-23 academic year impact report. We are proud of our continued Covid-19 recovery and the increasing positive impact we are having on the speaking and listening skills of children and young people across England and Wales, and around the world.

The ESU is unique. We are the only oracy charity working across all types of schools in England and Wales, and our membership structure domestically and internationally means we have an unparalleled opportunity to connect with young voices across the globe. We continue to work with a range of partner organisations, as well as with our International ESUs, to extend the reach of oracy education, and we remain committed to increasing access to and the quality of oracy provision both within and outside formal education settings.

We will continue to expand our impact, as well as to grow our research capacity to give schools and policy makers the confidence they need to invest in oracy. We are so grateful to all our members, donors, volunteers and partners who make our work possible. Together, we are showing young people that the better we can communicate and understand one another, the easier it is to resolve differences and work towards common goals.



## IN BRIEF

**1,011,100**

young people were involved in our competitions worldwide

**6,618**

children in England & Wales whose speaking skills we improved

**1,400**

students took part in a Discover Your Voice workshop

**118**

young people attended our Debate Academy summer school



## Oracy Culture Award

Our **Oracy Culture Award** is the only national award celebrating those schools placing oracy at the heart of their curriculum. This year's winner, from a strong field of entries, was state-funded secondary The Hertfordshire & Essex High School (above), which offers its students a whole range of oracy activities from weekly upper-school debates and student-led assemblies to ethical debates on science and healthcare and spoken reviews for World Book Day.

## Volunteering

We are hugely grateful to our **volunteers** who gave over 1,000 hours of their time in judging our competitions and giving feedback. This is alongside many more hours given by our branches and local organisers in setting up the heats. We also welcomed two volunteers to Dartmouth House: Martha McKinney-Perry, a Laidlaw Scholar from Trinity College Dublin, who joined us for six weeks to lead some redevelopment work for Debate Academy; and Matt Oldham from KPMG who volunteered as an oracy coach at Debate Academy.





## OUR ENGLAND & WALES COMPETITIONS & PROGRAMMES

### Performing Shakespeare (Years 7-9)

This year's **Performing Shakespeare Competition** was the largest ever, involving approximately 2,500 students from 106 schools. New for 2023, the final was held in the Sam Wanamaker Theatre at Shakespeare's Globe – a highly atmospheric reconstruction of an early 17th-century playhouse. The finalists certainly rose to the occasion, not least our winners, home-schooled sisters Ishvari and Kishori Mutty (above) who wowed with their spirited interpretation of Hermia and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

#### IN NUMBERS

**2,500**

students  
approximately,  
from 106 schools  
took part

**62%**

from state schools

**40**

inter-school heats



‘Public speaking gives us the freedom to discuss whatever we want, in as much depth as we want – the research part is something that I really enjoy.’

Ramya, Bromley High School  
(Best Team, 2023)

## ESU-Churchill Public Speaking Competition (Years 9-11)

While the prestigious **ESU-Churchill Public Speaking Competition** consistently develops all manner of skills from speaking and listening to confidence and critical thinking, one of its most heartening aspects is the inter-school interaction and friendships it encourages. The unique non-adversarial format, which pairs the speaker from one school with the chair and questioner of another, emphasises cooperation and allows students to mingle outside their established social groups – something much in evidence at this year’s final at Churchill College, Cambridge.

### IN NUMBERS

**1,400**

students  
approximately,  
from 238 schools

**59%**

from state schools

**135**

inter-school heats

## Schools' Mace (Years 7-13)

The ESU's **Schools' Mace** is the oldest and largest debating competition for schools in England, and this year grew even larger as we welcomed Welsh schools for the first time – something we hope to increase rapidly in the coming years. As always, the motions were wide-ranging, running the gamut from trial by jury and electoral reform to whether advertisements should be airbrushed. 'Can it be legitimate for environmental groups to use the destruction of property to further their aims?' was the controversial topic for the grand final, won by the team from St Paul's Girls' School (below), in proposition.

### IN NUMBERS

**1,200**

students  
approximately,  
from 344 schools

**55%**

state schools

**119**

inter-school heats



‘Coming from an all-girls school, it’s really empowering to be able to debate on the same level as boys and to discuss relevant issues that affect us now.’

Anya, St Paul's Girls' School,  
winning team member, 2023





### Debate Academy (Ages 14-18)

‘The most interesting week of my summer.’ This is how one student summed up her time at **Debate Academy**, our immersive summer school, held this year at Stamford School in Lincolnshire. Offering top-quality, multi-level coaching from leading debaters, it also provides a host of diverse, engaging electives and activities to allow students to explore new interests and ideas. That said, one of the most popular options was a good, old-fashioned balloon debate – ‘which surely proves that our participants have caught the debating bug,’ says Cait Lees, the ESU’s Head of Education Operations.

#### IN NUMBERS

**118**

students

**36%**

on full or partial  
bursary

**96%**

rated Debate  
Academy very  
good or superb

**90%**

learned many  
things they didn’t  
know before about  
speech and debate

**86%**

felt it helped them  
build personal  
relationships



## Discover Your Voice

As schools continue to return to normal after the pandemic, we were thrilled to be able to run our **full- and half-day workshops** again, especially as the vital skills we teach are those that Covid-19 made hardest to practise. One of our largest bookings came in July, when Swanlea School in Tower Hamlets, East London, booked workshops for 14 Key Stage 3 classes, each with around 30 students. 'Our students are clever and bright,' says Jo Martin, Leader of Oracy at the school, 'but for them to have better life opportunities, I think social confidence and oracy are really important.' Particular thanks to the London branch which sponsored some of our workshops in the capital.

### IN NUMBERS

**1,400**

students  
approximately

**89**

sessions delivered  
to 16 schools and  
organisations





# INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

## International Public Speaking Competition (Ages 16-20)

For the first time since 2019 we were finally able to welcome our competitors and their International ESU supporters back to London for the grand final of the **International Public Speaking Competition**. Thirty-one participants from 29 countries and regions attended, enjoying a week of cultural exchange and public speaking coaching and heats. Egsheglen Javkhlan from Mongolia was judged the overall winner. 'I feel that if the whole world could learn about as many cultures as we have this week, we could get rid of so much of the tension between nations,' she said. 'I travelled to London, but I feel like I've travelled to 30 different countries!'

### IN NUMBERS

**1,006,000**

participants worldwide  
approximately

**31**

national finalists in  
London for a week

**6**

grand finalists





## International Public Speaking Competition Grants

For the first time this year we created a fund specifically to support and extend inclusion among International ESUs. A total of £5,000 was given to successful bids, helping approximately 3,000 more young people access IPSC feeder competitions than would have otherwise. Highlights included ESU Mongolia, where a relatively small amount enabled the installation of hub spots with free WiFi in the countryside, allowing many more students to take part; and ESU Ghana where students who enrolled for the programme went through both virtual and in-person training sessions with seasoned speakers and former IPSC participants from the country.



## Secondary School Exchange (Post-Year 13)

Ten UK students went out to the US to spend time studying there, and we welcomed seven US scholars to do the same here. Feedback is always extremely positive for this once-in-a-lifetime experience. As returning SSE scholar Solomon Thomas says, 'More than anything, the year has changed my mindset. It's taught me to say yes to things – there are so many opportunities out there if you look for them.' Our grateful thanks to the ESU branches which assisted with student bursaries to help cover costs.

### IN NUMBERS

# 100%

of respondents strongly agreed that the SSE has improved their confidence to build relationships with new people

# 90%

from state schools







## Debate tours

Global understanding and international friendship are at the heart of the English-Speaking Union and one of the many ways in which we encourage this is by promoting opportunities for experienced debaters to take part in **tours** offered by our International ESUs and partner organisations. This year, we provided ESU mentors for two tours – to Japan and Denmark. In each, our oracy coaches mentored hundreds of students from various schools, and then judged a series of debates in prestigious competitions, allowing students to practice the skills they had learned.

## Professional scholarships

We continue to offer a wide range of **professional scholarships** for students of music, science and art among other things, allowing them to broaden their perspectives on the world and their topic of study. This academic year, two students received bursaries to study on the Anne Chilton Art History Scholarship, two received scholarships to attend the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove, and one post-doctoral scientist was awarded the Lindemann Fellowship grant to carry out research at a host institution in the US.

# SUPPORT OUR WORK

## BECOME A MEMBER

The best way in which you can help us to continue and expand our life-changing work is by **becoming a member**. In doing so, you'll become part of a community that values the power of friendship and language, and that supports young people with the speaking and listening skills they need to thrive. Membership starts from just £20/year. For more information, please email [membership@esu.org](mailto:membership@esu.org) or call **020 7529 1585**.



## VOLUNTEER

Many of our members support our competitions by acting as **volunteer** judges. This is an incredibly rewarding experience, allowing you to see first-hand the impact of the work we do. Please contact [volunteering@esu.org](mailto:volunteering@esu.org) if you would like to get involved.

## DONATE

The English-Speaking Union is an educational charity that relies on the generosity of individuals, charitable foundations and companies to help ensure our programmes continue to be accessible to those who need them most. If you would like to **donate**, please call **020 7529 1571** or contact [fundraising@esu.org](mailto:fundraising@esu.org)



## HOLD AN EVENT

Through holding a function at **Dartmouth House**, you'll be contributing towards the ESU's income streams, supporting our transformative educational programmes for young people. For more information, please contact [dartmouthhouse@graysons.com](mailto:dartmouthhouse@graysons.com)

## SPONSOR

Sponsoring one of our competitions or programmes not only helps us extend our reach, it can provide significant opportunities to raise your company's profile and reach new audiences on both a national and international level. For more information, please contact [fundraising@esu.org](mailto:fundraising@esu.org)



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