
At Montessori Global Education, we are proud to recognise and celebrate programmes that are elevating the future of learning through STAR Endorsement.

STAR Endorsement provides public recognition of quality educational services which are innovative and relevant; enabling learning communities to make informed choices when looking for high-quality education resources, products or programmes. This recognition highlights organisations whose work places learners and their experiences at the centre, ensuring education that is responsive, meaningful, and grounded in evidence.

One such organisation is MyMachine, a STAR Endorsed programme that cultivates creative confidence by bringing together learners across three educational levels to co-create solutions from idea to prototype.

Through its unique methodology - where primary school children invent a Dream Machine, university students design the concept, and technical/vocational secondary students build the working prototype - MyMachine offers a powerful model for collaborative, purpose-driven learning. By empowering children and students to voice, test, and refine their ideas, MyMachine nurtures a mindset where innovation is not only possible but expected.

The following article explores how MyMachine builds creative confidence by placing students' ideas at the core of the learning journey - demonstrating how curiosity, co-creation, and purposeful collaboration can ignite engagement, strengthen agency, and foster environments where imagination becomes a catalyst for real impact.



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BUILDING CREATIVE CONFIDENCE: HOW CHILDREN SHAPE THE LEARNING JOURNEY

MyMachine unites Primary, Technical Secondary and University Students to collaborate as peers.



Children have big ideas. Once an adult, only 1 out of 10 people voices their ideas. When asked why, they report that “*as a child, my ideas were usually ignored, laughed at, or punished*”.

Unfortunately, most education systems never let students voice their ideas and bring them to life. Yet when we leave school to join the workforce, we are expected to come up with ideas and bring them to life collaboratively. But once an adult, we have become experts in boycotting our own ideas and those of others: ‘Won’t work’, ‘No budget’, ‘Won’t make the deadline’, etc. This is where solution-driven engagement goes to die. We become silent, afraid of being labelled.



At MyMachine, we believe we should not boycott our ideas, nor those of others. Instead, the MyMachine methodology finds ways to test and value them. That’s how students learn how they can contribute to a truly fulfilling life and help people, organisations, communities, and the world at large thrive.

MyMachine is a unique intergenerational collaboration of students who bring to life



'Dream Machine'-ideas invented by children. It all starts in primary schools, where we ask children to invent their 'Dream Machine'. In Step 2, university students help them design a Concept for it, and in Step 3, technical or vocational secondary school students help build an actual Working Prototype.

Tens of thousands of Dream Machine ideas have been invented so far, like the My-Mom-And-Dad-Should-Always-Say-Yes-To-Me-machine, the Turning-Bunk-Bed, better known as the "never-have-to-discuss-anymore-who-gets-to-sleep-on-top-machine", the Home-Work-Making-machine, the Jump-To-The-Moon-machine, the Food-For-Everyone-machine, and many more.

Some Dream Machines are about having fun; others serve a personal purpose or deal with a global issue.

Any grade in primary and at the technical / vocational secondary level can join.



At the university level, MyMachine works with students from a wide range of faculties, including product design, occupational therapy, teacher training, arts, engineering, electronics, architecture, communication, digital design, and game design.

The overall students' involvement in MyMachine is a lengthy process, spanning 5 to 7 months. On average, producing one Dream Machine involves about 50 people collaborating, including students, teachers, and professors. So far, MyMachine has delivered over 1.58 million student-hours of impact.



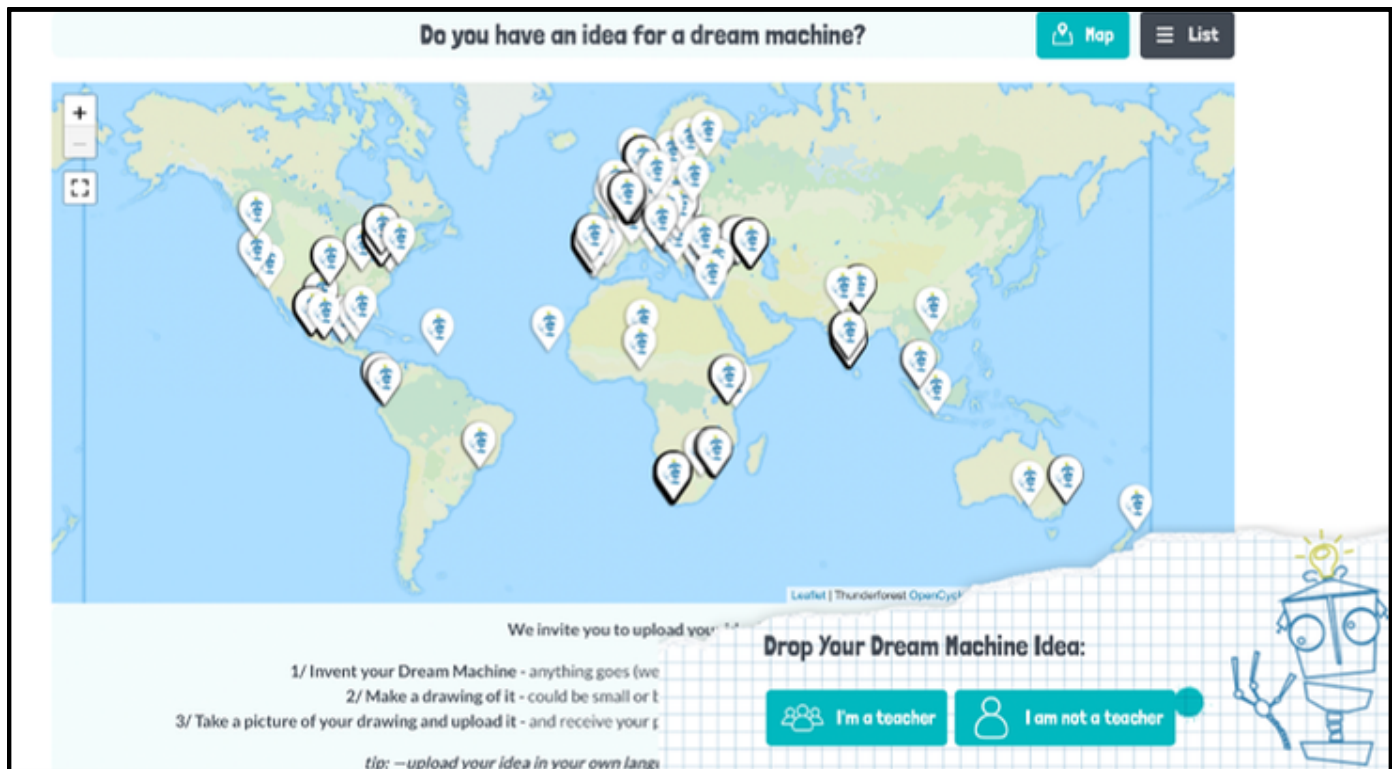
For many involved students, the learning process becomes much easier. The joy of creating their Dream Machine is a giant propeller of their learning hunger. Because, it's often problematic for students to understand why it's essential to know all that mathematics, physics, or collaboration dynamics. Giving their learning a purpose—in this case, building their Dream Machine—makes a world of difference. Their commitment to learning is firm, driven by wonder, as they seek the solutions needed to conceptualise and produce a Working Prototype of their invention.



A crucial element of MyMachine is the open-ended approach. We are not imposing a theme upon the students. We listen to the children and commit to helping them with what they consider necessary.

By doing so, we create an opportunity for them all to learn that having ideas is essential. That you shouldn't be afraid to express your ideas—even if they sound a bit weird or challenging in the beginning. They learn what it takes to bring an idea to life. No matter the scope of your vision, it all starts with finding the confidence to express it and bring it to life.

Plus, in the grand scheme of things, if we genuinely desire breakthrough solutions, we must nurture those who dare to think differently to address poverty, cancer treatment, space exploration, mobility, energy, and a healthy food supply—in short, all the challenges we face to create a prosperous, inclusive future for all. Those groundbreaking—often initially perceived as "crazy"—ideas come from those who have the guts to express and test them. They have what it takes: creative confidence. They go beyond the fear of the unknown, the fear of taking the first step, the fear of losing control, and the fear of being judged.



Want to join as a teacher?

Teachers who want to join can contact a MyMachine Chapter running in their country, or join MyMachine's annual open call to primary school teachers around the world: [MyMachine DreamsDrop](#).

Once a year, MyMachine picks ideas from that online world map and brings them to life in collaboration with universities worldwide.

<https://mymachine-global.org/join-with-your-school/>

Is your organisation interested in setting up a MyMachine Chapter in your country?

<https://mymachine-global.org/launch-a-mymachine-chapter/>

Find out more about the MyMachine Global Foundation at www.mymachine-global.org.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this innovative approach and for your interest in programmes that are reimagining what learning can look like. We hope this article has offered valuable insights into how creative confidence, collaboration, and learner-centred design can shape more meaningful and future-ready educational experiences.

If you'd like to discover more Montessori-inspired resources, thought leadership, and STAR Endorsed programmes driving positive impact around the world, we invite you to explore the Montessori Global Education Network.

Together, we can continue fostering environments where learners - and their ideas - thrive.



If you are interested in exploring the essential principles that underpin this timeless child-centred approach, join our Interactive Introduction to Montessori Programme.

Learn more about STAR Endorsement and how it recognises innovation in child-centred learning here.



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