



Innovation, Education and Impact

How are Silicon Valley Innovations Making a Dent in Education?

August 24

Pace Gallery, Palo Alto

On Thursday 24 August, [Threshold Group](#) and [ONE WORLD](#) came together for an afternoon of engaging and inspiring discussions, focused on the future of public education as well as EdTech in Silicon Valley. The event, held at the [PACE Gallery](#) in Palo Alto, kicked off with [Nancy Poon Lue](#) providing an overview of the challenges currently facing the education sector and the innovations required to spur positive change, through a fireside chat with Scott Saslow, founder and CEO of ONE WORLD Training & Investments. Nancy currently leads a collaborative effort for [NewSchools Venture Fund](#) with the Gates Foundation and Digital Promise, exploring models for a national education R&D hub aiming to accelerate innovation by leveraging best practices of moonshot approaches used in diverse industries.



A panel discussion followed, with [Anisa Dougherty](#), Impact Analyst at [Threshold Group](#), [Jennifer Carolan](#), General Partner at [Reach Capital](#) and [Sidharth Kakkar](#), Founder and CEO of [Front Row Education](#), bringing a diverse set of perspectives from across the ecosystem to the event.



The speakers reinforced several key messages - namely that while progress has been made in the education system, bringing about further change requires a concerted effort to drive adoption of incoming innovations. Equipping teachers with the tools to bring about change, like in the case of Front Row, which offers software helping teachers to reach every student at their individual level of understanding, is highly valuable. Thinking about education in the context of affordable housing, community development and health care, rather than in isolation is also key to improving outcomes. "Good education exists; it's just that it doesn't exist for certain segments of the population" explained Anisa Dougherty. "Harnessing the distribution power of technology can create marketplaces" added Jennifer Carolan.

Ultimately, change requires increased alignment between the individual, local and national level, which begins with each parent, teacher, donor and investor getting involved. Ending the event, Stephanie Cohn-Rupp, Impact Investing Managing Director at Threshold Group, gave a clear call to action: "Engage with your local community and local leaders and make change happen."

During the networking receptions guests had the opportunity to mingle with social entrepreneurs in the education and technology field: [Andrew Hill](#), founder, [LiftEd](#) / [Perla Ni](#), founder, [GreatNonProfits](#) / [Ravi Gundlapalli](#), founder, [MentorCloud](#) / [Caryn Voskuil](#), Education Studio, [Ideo.org](#).



Feel inspired by this post and want to know more? Then join us at our event on September 21 - [Impact Investing in Silicon Valley](#).

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We hope to see you soon!