

Jigsaw's 10th anniversary
Decade in Review



Message from the team

This year Jigsaw celebrates turning 10. The milestone gives us a useful opportunity to reflect on the past and plan for the future.

One decade in, we feel that we have accomplished a lot and are also just getting started. We have gradually become a trusted provider of applied research, evaluation and strategy across the sector. We love what we do and we have a growing number of stories of how our work has had a positive impact on education.

Jigsaw exists to build better evidence for education to help address the global learning crisis. We believe that using rigorous and contextualised evidence to inform decision-making is the best way to bring about lasting change in education.

The need for our work is as clear and urgent as ever. It should make us all deeply concerned that, in 2023, most 10 year olds in the world's poorest countries cannot read, write or do basic maths. Ensuring that all children - particularly the most marginalised - have a holistic education is the most effective way to enhance individual well-being, develop thriving communities, and build resilient and adaptable systems for the future. Alongside many others, we play a small but significant part in working to address this, and we are in it for the long haul.

This review provides a snapshot of what we have worked on in the last decade, the different phases of our journey and some of the milestones, plus an opportunity to say thank you to a lot of wonderful people and organisations.

We start the new decade clear in our mission and mandate, grateful for our partners, and with a fantastic and fun team who together make up Jigsaw. We hope you enjoy reading!

Page 2

A snapshot of the decade

Page 3

The Jigsaw journey so far

- Phase 1: 2013-2015
- Phase 2: 2016-2018
- Phase 3: 2019-2022
- Phase 4: 2023 onwards

Page 8

Thanks to our team and partners

- Team
- Partners

Page 9

Endorsements

Page 11

Connect with us

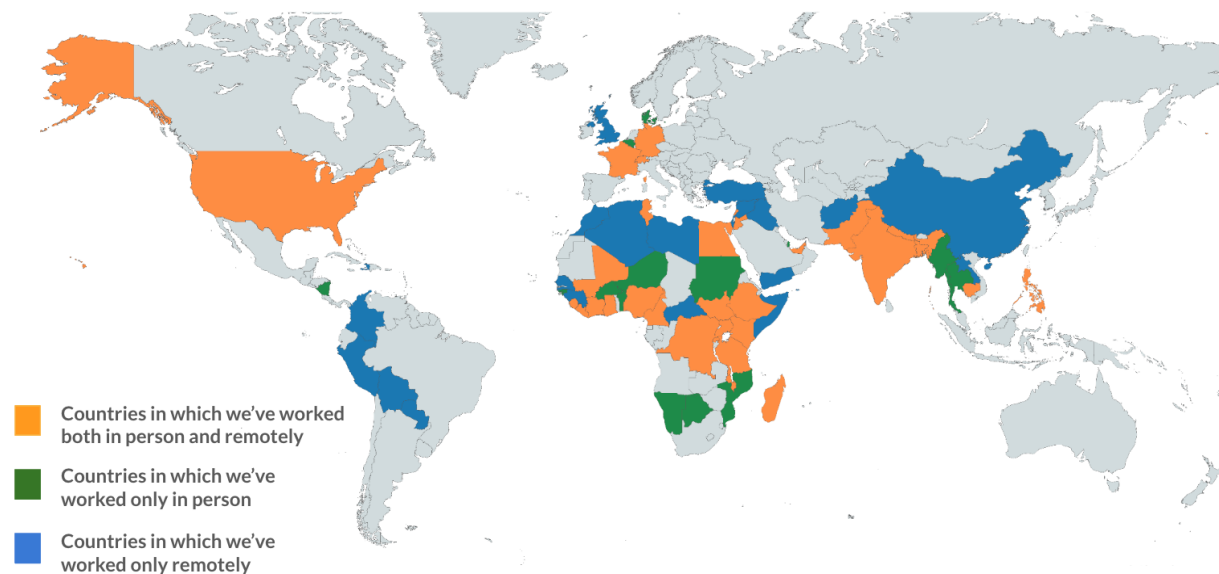
A snapshot of the decade

Over the last 10 years, Jigsaw has delivered about 155 projects for 69 organisations.

Our work has varied from conducting independent evaluations, to designing large-scale research studies, to providing evidence-based strategy to aid decision-making.

We have undertaken work in 68 countries, both in person and remotely. The map below indicates the distribution of our work, showing all the countries in which we have engaged in evidence-building.

Our work to build evidence in these countries has involved a wide range of mixed methods. We have conducted more than 23,000 surveys and learning assessments, and more than 7,500 interviews and focus groups. None of this would have been possible without the thousands of participants willing to share their experiences, perspectives and educational insights with us.



The Jigsaw journey so far

Like with most memorable journeys, Jigsaw's so far has had a few twists and turns, plenty of surprises, and lots of precious travelling companions.

We didn't set out with a 10 year plan - and if we had we don't think it would have helped us - but as we look back we can see a few approximate phases we have gone through together. Here is a little summary of each one, including a few milestones and spotlighted projects. If you have been part of the Jigsaw journey then you may well read things you remember and were part of making happen!

Phase 1: 2013 - 2015

Jigsaw officially launched in April 2013 with our first two employees. In the first couple of years we delivered more than 30 projects in over 15 countries, learned a lot, and laid the foundations of the organisation. Great organisations we partnered with early on our journey included Tearfund, UNICEF, VSO, and Save the Children. We quickly built up a reputation for being reliable and flexible - and able to help solve problems through rigorous and applied research, strategy and evaluation. At the same time the Jigsaw team grew gradually, and we worked together to get our internal systems established and explored the various ways we could have maximum impact.

2013

- ▶ Jigsaw hires its first two employees.
- ▶ Jigsaw conducts its first research visit - to Bangladesh with the Global Campaign for Education.

▶ **Project spotlight:** Within a few weeks of launching, Jigsaw began its first multi-country evaluation, working with VSO to assess their global effectiveness and monitoring systems. This successful work leads to several on-going engagements with VSO and proves our credentials for conducting complex and sensitive evaluations.

- ▶ Jigsaw becomes a certified social enterprise.

2014

▶ **Project spotlight:** At the start of 2014, Jigsaw was commissioned to conduct our first multi-year education study, focused on IICD's work to improve education in Zambia and Ghana. The methodological tools we designed during this study became foundational for many subsequent engagements.

2015

Project spotlight: Our work providing technical MERL advice for Tearfund staff was the first of several targeted mentoring engagements - these gave us the opportunity to explore in-depth the kind of opportunities and challenges NGOs face in embedding evidence in their work. We went on to collaborate with Tearfund on a wide range of work, and also provided similar support for Open Knowledge Foundation, Raleigh International, and others.

Phase 2: 2016 - 2018

By 2016 Jigsaw had grown to a team of 10, and we had found our feet as a more established organisation. Our identity was developing and we began to engage in larger and longer contracts. Jigsaw was increasingly called on for strategic evidence-building engagements that could influence decision-making and policy-making more directly. We had the privilege of running several multi-point education evaluations which involved large-scale learning assessments - for PEAS, Aga Khan Foundation, and Opportunity International. This enabled us to establish work with RDM, our brilliant research partner based in Uganda. It was also during this phase that we began our strategic collaborations with REUK and UNHCR, which have continued to flourish and strengthen. We were able to lift our eyes up and consider together where we could have maximum impact - with education increasingly central to most of Jigsaw's work.

2016

- ▶ Jigsaw establishes a research partnership with RDM in Uganda.

Project spotlight: In collaboration with the Aga Khan Foundation Jigsaw conducted our first large scale learning assessment - a Difference in Difference study in Uganda. This was also the first time we worked with RDM, our Uganda-based research partner, and the start of many projects together.

- ▶ Jigsaw grows to a team of 10 employees.

2017

Project spotlight: A private philanthropic foundation approached Jigsaw directly and commissioned us to undertake a global study of refugee experiences of higher education. This involved two years of research across eight refugee-hosting countries, and resulted in a suite of outputs which were used widely across the sector.

▶ **Project spotlight:** Jigsaw agreed to work as the external evaluator (baseline, midline, endline) for PEAS as part of the FCDO Girls' Education Challenge. The success of this work led on to several more engagements for Jigsaw across the GEC portfolio, evaluating the work of Opportunity International, Avanti, and Plan International.

2018

- ▶ Jigsaw establishes a research partnership with the UNHCR education team.

▶ **Project spotlight:** Jigsaw was commissioned by Dubai Cares to conduct a large-scale research study on refugee education in Pakistan and Rwanda, in partnership with REUK and UNHCR. This study employed an innovative methodological approach with refugees trained as researchers and shaping each aspect of the study, and led to a suite of outputs including collaborative academic articles.

- ▶ Jigsaw celebrates having worked in more than 30 countries, successfully delivering over 60 evidence-building engagements.

Phase 3: 2019-2022

By 2019 we focused exclusively on building evidence for education in low and middle-income countries. Through this period we started to make a more explicit contribution to the global dialogue on education - specifically on refugee education and education technology - through a range of academic articles and conference presentations. The season of Covid-19 was particularly intense for Jigsaw, with a lot of global demand for expertise in how technology could be used to help sustain learning during school closures. A particular highlight of this phase was Jigsaw's work as a founding partner of EdTech Hub, providing us with the opportunity to engage in a wide-range of strategic work alongside talented partners. We also took the decision to build on various refugee education studies by establishing teams of refugee researchers in Pakistan and Rwanda, expanding our perspectives and increasing our expertise.

2019

▶ **Project spotlight:** Jigsaw ran a range of smaller evidence-building projects for organisations including GPE and GIZ, all focused on different aspects of refugee education and involving running a wide-range of workshops focused on how to apply research findings for maximum impact.

Project spotlight: Jigsaw became a founding partner of EdTech Hub, a global movement to build an evidence-driven future for education technology, with initial support from FCDO, BMGF, and World Bank. This led to deep engagement on a wide range of technical issues including educational messaging, technology-enabled teacher professional development, and technology in girls' education.

2020

- ▶ Jigsaw joins the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium to work with other leading-edge organisations on refugee higher education.
- ▶ Jigsaw agrees to join with REUK in their work to pioneer development of The Lighthouse as a refugee education hub in north west London.

2021

Project spotlight: The Digital School appointed Jigsaw as a long-term partner for monitoring, evaluation, research and learning, with the mandate to give strategic and independent input to the UAE-based initiative that exists to provide high-quality digital education for marginalised learners.

2022

- ▶ Jigsaw is joined by six refugee researchers, strengthening the team and establishing our work in Pakistan and Rwanda.
- ▶ Jigsaw contributes to a range of global education gatherings, sharing research insights at numerous conferences and, as part of EdTech Hub, speaking at the UNGA Transforming Education Summit.
- ▶ Jigsaw grows to a team of 20 employees.

Phase 4 - 2023 onwards

We started 2023 with an intense few months of project delivery, and also finally got round to dropping 'consult' from our name to officially become Jigsaw Education. Our team of 20 people across the UK, Pakistan and Rwanda is stronger than ever and we have a lot of fun working together to address big challenges in education. This year we are spending time thinking and talking together about the work that we do, learning from each other and planning for the future. As part of this we have added one new technical area to our work, focused on 'education, climate and environment'. We are also about to move into our long-awaited new home as part of The Lighthouse - a refugee education hub in north-west London led by our partner REUK. We will continue to be a hybrid organisation, building home in this physical space while also investing in all the things that make remote-working good for those team

members in other places. We will explore how best to build Jigsaw teams in more of the countries where our work takes place, and will keep on partnering with like-minded, evidence-driven education organisations. In the years ahead we want to ensure our work to build evidence for education is consistently excellent: grounded in context, technically precise, and with strong pathways to uptake.

Looking ahead

- ▶ At the end of 2023, Jigsaw will move to our long-term home called The Lighthouse: a refugee education hub in north west London.

Project spotlight: A future milestone which Jigsaw is working towards is the development of GERE (Global Evidence for Refugee Education) - a new applied research initiative with young refugee researchers at the centre, which exists to build better evidence and improve decision-making for refugee education.

Learn more at gere-research.org

Thanks to our team and partners

Team

As we celebrate the first 10 years of Jigsaw we want to take the opportunity to say a big thank you to the brilliant Jigsaw team, past and present. Over the last decade, there are 33 people who have been part of the Jigsaw core team, plus another 20 contractors, and more than 100 enumerators. Each one has made an important contribution and we are very grateful.

Particular thanks go to all those that have been part of the Jigsaw core team: Aimee Mukankusi, Aime Parfait Emerusenge, Alice Robinson, Andy Pearson, Annette Zhao, Asma Rabi, Becky Daltry, Bethany Sikes, Catherine Gladwell, Chisenga Muyoya, David Hollow, Feryal Awan, Gentile Gasanabandi, Jan Sequeira, Joel Mitchell, Jonny D’Rozario, Julia Pacitto, Kalifa Damani, Kara Melville-Bain, Katie Shuford, Katrina Barnes, Kellie McLean, Liddy Greenaway, Lydia Tanner, Matt Thomas, Meaghan Brugha, Nathaniel Hollands, Noor Ullah, Preeti Dhillon, Rozina Zazai, Saalim Koomar, Sarah Voss, and Tim Unwin.

The Jigsaw team in 2023 is the strongest it has ever been, and we will be growing again soon with two new colleagues arriving in the next couple of months. It is a great pleasure working alongside such talented, kind and committed people.



Partners

Jigsaw’s work only makes sense in the context of strategic partnerships. We are grateful to all of you, and love the diversity, dedication and technical expertise we have learned from through our collaboration.

We love working with organisations that want both to build better evidence for education, and use that evidence to improve their impact. We have learned that our collaborations are most fulfilling when we agree on the most important technical priorities, have ideological alignment on methods that will be most useful in the context, and have a shared appetite to adapt on the basis of the findings. We have been fortunate enough to connect with many organisations where this is the case - we are glad to have been part of your journey, and thanks for sharing in ours.

We are particularly grateful for some of the organisations we have worked with to tackle big challenges in education. These include: Aga Khan Foundation, Avanti Communications, BMGF, Brink, Cambridge Education, Dubai Cares, Education Development Trust, eLearning Africa, European Commission, FCDO, GIZ, GPE, GSMA, IDRC, ITU, IICD, King’s College London, ODE, ODI, Opportunity International, PEAS, Plan (International, Ireland, and Canada), Porticus, PwC, Raleigh International, RDM, R4D, REUK, Save the Children (UK and International), Swiss Development Cooperation, Tearfund, The Digital School, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, University of Cambridge, Vodafone Foundation, VSO, and War Child.

Endorsements

We are grateful when the organisations who trust us to help them also take time to let us know how our work has enabled them to build and use evidence more effectively in education. Here are a few snapshots of feedback we have received:

“

Working with the Jigsaw team is always a wonderful experience! They handle every interaction with the utmost care, thoughtfulness, and transparency. We are delighted to be working with a partner so passionate about and dedicated to strengthening refugee youth led research for refugee education.

Dubai
Cares

“

We have been impressed by the knowledge possessed by the whole team, how quickly they understood the project, and the quality of the evaluation produced - it allowed us a frank and honest look at what has and has not worked and allowed us to refine future engagements.

Avanti
Communications

“

Jigsaw married their own experience and a broader understanding of the sector with hard work and a desire to support us through a period of change. They produced an excellent final report containing valuable insights into how we can improve as an organisation.

VSO

“

The research provided helpful insight and analysis and the final report was delivered to a high standard. The Jigsaw team is rigorous, professional and personable!

GSMA

“

I have greatly enjoyed working with Jigsaw and very much appreciate the hard work they have put in - the team has been accommodating throughout and I have felt that the evaluation has been in very safe hands.

Opportunity International

“

I have very much enjoyed working with Jigsaw - they brought new and incisive thinking to the tasks and critically delivered great products on time and within budget.

Save the Children

“

Jigsaw pushed our own thinking to the next level in terms of what we wanted and why, which prompted a smarter approach all round - we now consider them as thought partners.

IDRC

Connect with us

We want to collaborate with organisations doing exceptional work in education. Get in touch to discuss your ideas. If you'd like to join our brilliant team then please let us know and tell us why. You can find us on:

[Twitter](#) • [LinkedIn](#) • [Website](#)

For any enquiries please email:
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