

# DEBATE MATE NEWSLETTER

---

## CORE PROGRAMME

Our programme kicked off in November with a virtual launch event, attended by nearly 3000 students from across the country, and a panel of experienced speakers, including some Debate Mate champions who inspired our massive audience to take part in Debate Mate clubs!

We are currently working with 120 schools on our Core, Debate Mate Plus and Accelerate programmes with over 1500 students each week, running both in-person and online sessions delivered by nearly 300 aspirational university student mentors. The first round of our Urban Debate League will take place online in January and February 2021, with students joining from school or from home. This is the first time we've ever hosted such a large competition virtually, and we are really excited to deliver it in this format. Our experience running online clubs, workshops and tournaments in the first lockdown helped us refine our online delivery model and to expertly navigate any virtual conferencing platform, so we were well-equipped to offer a range of in-person and virtual options to schools based on their circumstances. Our mentors have been extremely adaptable, attending additional training sessions to learn how to deliver our curriculum effectively online, donning their Debate Mate masks in schools, and following protocols to keep everyone safe. Importantly, teachers have been so committed to making the programme work to enable their students to develop the key skills we teach. We so appreciate their dedication to their pupils' development and attainment through such a challenging time.



Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to mention that I am moving on from Debate Mate after five fantastic years at the organisation. It has been such an incredible experience getting to know so many inspiring young people and their teachers and working with such a motivated and high energy team who embody our mission and values so very well. While it is sad to leave, I look forward to following the work of Debate Mate as it continues to flourish and grow. Thank you so much for your ongoing support of our organisation, and please stay in touch.

*Marie-France - Head of Operations and Programmes*

## **GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAMME**

While social distancing restrictions have prompted the Graduate School to shift to an entirely virtual delivery model for the 2020-21 programme, we have taken this opportunity to expand enrolment on the programme to all regions for the first time. So far, the Graduate School has been attended by 55 unique students coming from every one of Debate Mate's regions, with more set to join for the catch-up week in January. Our virtual delivery model has also allowed us to increase our number of career and university access talks by inviting inspirational mentors throughout the UK, as well as guests from Christ Church College Oxford, to deliver engaging presentations.

While only on Week 6 of the programme, there has been a lot to celebrate at the Graduate School. Our annual internal competition in October was so successful that it is scheduled for a comeback by popular demand next term. We also sent teams to the prestigious LSE Schools and Imperial Schools competitions, the latter of which saw a Debate Mate team reach the Bronze Final. In November, six Grad School students were selected out of only 20 to proceed to the second day of the England Debate Team trials, while two of our students reached the third stage of the selection process, out of only 10 debaters in the country. We are incredibly proud of the progress that our students, new and returning, have made so far and look forward to working with them again when the programme restarts in January!

## **DEBATE MATE PLUS PROGRAMME**

Despite COVID-19, the Debate Mate Plus programme has been able to deliver sessions to 11 London-based sixth forms, culminating in an exciting competition before the break for the Winter holidays.

Students began the programme with an exciting virtual Launch event in collaboration with the Bank of America. Students were able to watch a world-class show debate and interview the Bank of America representatives about their careers!



A few weeks later, the schools were joined (online) by student ambassadors from Christ Church College, Oxford University. They were able to hear about the experiences of current Oxford students, and ask for key tips when applying themselves. In preparation for the competition, each school was then virtually joined by a current diplomat at the FCDO - whose job it was to help them prepare for an exciting and challenging International Relations themed motion.

In the final week of the first term, we held an online competition event, where students first heard from special GCHQ guests and then had the chance to debate the other schools on the programme. It's been an exciting programme of events for the students, and is set to continue in the new year!

## EDUCATION UK

In addition to the 17-week Core Programme we deliver in eligible schools across the country, Debate Mate's Education UK arm works with schools, universities, charities and youth groups to deliver bespoke, debate-led training programmes for students of all ages. From one-off pitching masterclasses to inter-school debating tournaments, these programmes use the Debate Mate methodology to develop core confidence and key 21st-century skills in young people of all debating backgrounds and abilities.

Committed to the accessibility and sustainability of debate-led teaching, Debate Mate's Education UK arm also delivers a range of CPD programmes for teachers and school leaders. These programmes empower participants to transform teaching and learning across all Key Stages and subject areas and to develop a whole-school culture of debate.

Highlights of this year's programmes include:

- A series of full-day debating master classes for participants on the University of Essex's Aspire Programme, which encourages students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds across the eastern region to work towards applying to, and succeeding at, top universities.
- A weekly debating club established in partnership with the Eritrean Youth Club, which supports young people to build their connection with the local community, grow in confidence and develop new skills.
- A range of virtual Classroom to Boardroom programmes, which have provided an innovative new way for Debate Mate students to connect with inspiring professionals from across the world to share their perspectives on topical issues, showcase their skills, and discuss the applicability of debating skills in the world of work



## **DEBATE MATE LIMITED**

2020 has been a remarkable year for everyone, Debate Mate Limited included. It has presented a unique mix of challenge and opportunity and has seen a period of rapid transformation for the company.

As many of you know, Debate Mate prides itself on being high-energy, high-interactivity and high impact. We built our relationships and reputation not only by being 'in the room' but by bringing the room to life! So when lockdown struck, there was a chance that we would very quickly lose what made us special. But, being Debate Mate, this was never going to happen!

Since March 2020, we have delivered over 1,000 hours of training workshops, 200 hours of executive coaching and 30 Showcase Debates to partners from Hong Kong to Hawaii, Kampala to Kuala Lumpur.

Some of our highlights include:

- Delivering a comprehensive five-part programme for 125 aspiring female leaders at Standard Chartered Bank, Europe and the Americas. As part of the programme, we welcomed the CEOs of Europe and the Americas, as well as the Manager of Liverpool Ladies FC, Vicky Jepson, as guest speakers.
- Completing our 18-month journey with 75 global leaders as part of the bp Aspire programme, which saw us connect the Aspirers with Debate Mate students from across the world.
- Working with 14 female political candidates from across seven African nations as part of a wider project with Westminster Foundation for Democracy and the African Liberal Network. Excitingly, a number of the participants have been duly elected to national and local office!
- Designing and delivering a combined workshop for employees of Goldman Sachs and their children.
- Supporting Magnitude Capital, a Manhattan-based asset management company, with empathy, listening and facilitation skills.

In addition to focusing on professional skills development, we also used the opportunity of virtual communication to connect even more of our corporate partners with even more of our students. This Boardroom to Classroom (to Zoom room) model worked really well with:

- BCG, which saw employees from across the UK, Europe and the US connect with students from 10 UK schools.
- Bank of America, which saw 200 BofA interns share their experience and expertise with dozens of students.
- UBS, which is an ongoing programme connecting professionals from a number of roles with students aspiring to a career in finance.
- Designing and hosting a Showcase Debate for bp that brought together two hugely important topics, centred on the motion: 'This House believes that the key driver of achieving NetZero will first be achieving a truly diverse workforce.'



Responding to increased demand, 2020 has also seen us finesse a product offering that emphasises turning debate into dialogue, supporting companies with tricky issues affecting them at a strategic level. Some examples are:

- Leading 250 participants from Novartis in discussions about their commercial model, and target areas for investment.
- Supporting our great friends at Cambridge Assessment and Cambridge University Press to define their new equity, diversity and inclusion strategy.
- Working with 350 Prudential colleagues from across the world to facilitate conversations about internal processes - including organisational hierarchy, and the balance between traditional and digital approaches to their products and services.

Finally, we are also using the virtual world to reach out to individual professionals that want to enhance their own skills. Later this January we are running a Debate Mate Confident Communication & Virtual Impact MasterClass if you are keen to enhance your own skills or have a more personal taste of what Debate Mate has to offer please sign up [here](#).

### **VIRTUAL DEBATES**

Since April 2020, we have been hosting our signature live Show Debates online. Streaming from Zoom webinar and YouTube has enabled us to reach thousands of people, covering topics from Leadership to Education, Football to Harry Potter and many more. The unique format allows us to have expert VIP guests speak alongside our fantastic Debate Mate students. We have been joined by guests including the BBC's Nick Robinson, Professor Rose Luckin, Brett Witzdorf, founder of Teach First, Andrew Adonis, former Education Minister, broadcaster Jacqui Oatley MBE, Helena Kennedy QC and Bloomberg's Naomi Kerbel. We have had our students from Year 5 - Year 12 join our debate panels this year, representing the Debate Mate ecosystem from the Classroom to the Boardroom.

Here are some of the debates that we have run this year:

- This House Believes that there is no point in planning for an uncertain future
- This House Would void the 19/20 football season
- This House Believes that the days of the traditional classroom are over
- This House Believes that the Wizarding world should reveal themselves to muggles
- This House Believes that the most effective leaders are those that are feared, not loved
- This House Believes that all students should receive free school meals
- This House Believes that the Next Generation is better equipped to meet challenges facing people and planet than our current leaders

Thank you so much to all of our fabulous guests and partners!

### **DEBATE MATE ONLINE**

When the UK went into the first lockdown, Debate Mate Online trialled its first Virtual Debate Club with parents signing their children up to a 5-week course, as ever, led by our amazing mentors. With demand increasing, we spent the summer planning our 12-week programme, which launched in September and we're proud to say now has over 30 clubs running every

week! True to our core mission and values, we are giving substantial discounts to parents whose children are in receipt of Free School Meals, those on Universal Credit and key workers. With children and mentors from around the world participating, we hope to build our global Debate Mate community in 2021!

### **DEBATE MATE COMMUNITY**

Like with so many other parts of Debate Mate building our mentor community has had a virtual transformation this year. In place of drinks after judging training, we decided to run a social session with the obligatory Zoom quiz but also a 'speed dating' type format giving mentors the chance to chat and meet with each other no matter where they were in the world. It was such a delight to catch up with our mentors less formally as it really allowed us to get to know the bright, charismatic and outgoing people who run our programme week in week out.

We also ran several staff socials via Zoom providing some much-needed light relief after long days. It's been amazing to see the team not only come together and support one and other but also genuinely thriving and growing closer as a team!

