



**Skills Builder**  
PARTNERSHIP

# IMPACT REPORT 2022



# One day, everyone will build the essential skills to succeed.



Progressing towards this goal, **2,367,463 opportunities** to build essential skills were delivered this year by **851 partners**.



## Tom Ravenscroft

Founder & CEO  
Skills Builder Partnership

I'm pleased to share our **Impact Report 2022**. It's been a year of big progress, and the culmination of our three year strategy that commenced in 2019.

### Collective Impact

In 2019, after running for a decade as Enabling Enterprise and growing to reach around sixty thousand students a year, it was clear that no single organisation could ever equip everyone with the essential skills to succeed.

We also saw that there were plenty of people and organisations who cared about building essential skills. We knew that they did so in a huge range of different ways and different settings – whether the arts, sport, drama or more.

Likewise, essential skills were critical for employers who had long called for more focused efforts to ensure everyone built them.

That alignment between employment and education has been a critical part of our approach. It was captured most clearly when we launched the Skills Builder Universal Framework in 2020. Developed with partners including the CIPD, CBI, Gatsby Foundation, BITC and the Careers & Enterprise Company, the Framework broke down essential skills into steps which anyone could teach and assess on the path to mastery.

This provided the shared language and approach that underpinned a more aligned, impactful approach.

### Joining up the journey

In the last year, the Partnership has been made up of 841 partners. All of us commit to using that Framework and approach to align our efforts to build essential skills for everyone.

It has been fantastic to see growing engagement across all of our partnership groups: educators, employers, and impact organisations. Together, our efforts mean that wherever in life an individual is they have access to tools and programmes that boost their essential skills.

Our work has grown rapidly outside the UK this year and in partnership with British Council we have worked with government ministries in Kenya and Uganda, as well as running work in ten countries.

### Looking forwards

As the scale of our work grows, we are making sure we understand the bigger picture too. Our Essential Skills Tracker 2022 showed starkly the huge advantages that higher essential skill levels provide across a lifetime: in access to employment, earnings, and wellbeing.

But it also highlighted that too many people are caught in a skills trap where missing early opportunities to build essential skills puts them on a trajectory that reduces their future career and life opportunities.

We know this can change, and I hope you see this Impact Report as a demonstration of just how much can be achieved.

Tom Ravenscroft

# Why we exist

The need for essential skills comes from two places: the “skills gap” seen in our economy and the “skills trap” experienced by millions of individuals.

Employers consistently report a lack of essential skills as one of their biggest brakes on growth. Research from the CBI in 2018 indicated that employers ranked essential skills like leadership and teamwork as being more important than qualifications for success in a role.

Educators see the need for higher levels of essential skills to boost learning - 97% of teachers and 88% of young people say that essential skills are at least as important as academic achievement for future success (Sutton Trust, 2017).

At the same time, individuals from less advantaged backgrounds tend to have fewer opportunities to build essential skills, have lower skill levels as a result, go into lower-skilled, lower-paid jobs that in turn provide fewer opportunities to build essential skills and ultimately report lower levels of life satisfaction. The UK annual wage premium for essential skills is up to £5,900 for the average worker (Skills Builder Partnership, 2022).

Skills Builder exists to bridge the skills gap and transform the how the world builds skills, so that one day everyone builds the essential skills to succeed.



# The Skills Builder Approach

## Eight Essential Skills

Essential skills are those highly transferable skills you need for practically any job. They allow you to more rapidly learn technical skills and are shown to improve life chances and productivity.



## The Universal Framework



The Universal Framework is the world’s leading taxonomy for essential skills and impact measurement. It was developed over five years with input from leading organisations across education and employment, including the CBI, CIPD, Gatsby Foundation, the Careers & Enterprise Company and Business in the Community.

By adopting a shared language and approach, organisations make their skills building efforts more than the sum of their parts. The Framework provides this common language and shared objectives for building essential skills. Its steps provide a shared route map that is used by all partners to align their efforts to build the essential skills of the individuals they work with. It can also be used as an assessment tool, helping to identify existing skills, and next steps for development.

The Universal Framework has also been widely adopted outside the formal Partnership – for example, as a recommended model for developing new apprenticeship standards and as a tool for T-Level students in England.

## Evidence-based best practice

Based on research, collaboration and tens of thousands of hours of building essential skills across sectors, we have developed an approach for employers, educators and impact organisations to build the essential skills of their employees and learners.

The approach sets out what best practice looks like in each context, enabling organisations to embed the Universal Framework for Essential Skills. Formally adopted by over 841 employers, educators and impact organisations in 2021-22 alone, it has been tried and tested, with demonstrable impact.



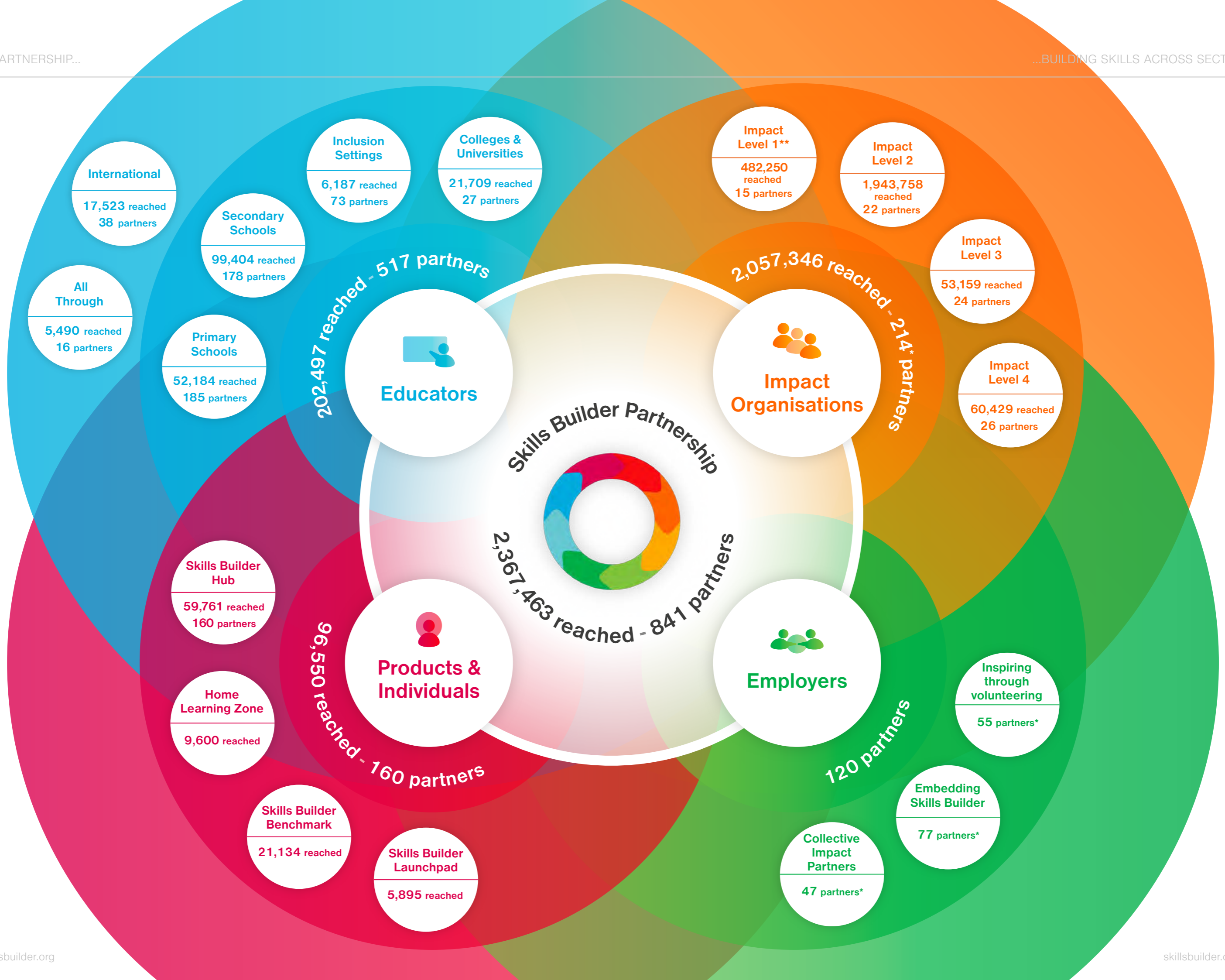
Skills Builder’s work demonstrably contributes towards two of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals:



Skills Builder directly ensures the provision of “access to life-long learning opportunities that help individuals acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society.”



Higher levels of essential skills are linked to higher productivity and higher skilled jobs. The Skills Builder approach supports “full and productive employment and decent work for all.”



\* Some partners are represented in more than one category  
 \*\* Not included in total reached figure



# Global reach and how it all adds up

The infographic features a world map with callout boxes for ten different regions. Each box includes a country flag, a title, a description of the project, and a category icon. The categories are 'Impact Organisations' (orange bar) and 'Educators' (blue bar).

Country	Project Description	Category
British Council	This year, the British Council launched their online training course 'Teaching and Assessing Core Skills'. This has trained over 5,000 teachers worldwide in how to build essential skills using the Skills Builder approach.	Impact Organisations
Ghana	In Ghana, we have worked with 4 schools as part of the Global Accelerator programme. We have also provided technical support for Ghana's Education Ministry in using Skills Builder to support curriculum reforms.	Educators
Czech Republic	In the Czech Republic, we are working with NGO Schola Empirica, to train teachers from 11 schools across the country to use the Skills Builder approach. Going forward, the training course they have developed has been approved by the Czech Government.	Impact Organisations
Bahrain	In Bahrain we worked as part of a project with the OECD, Teach For All and the Bahraini Education Ministry to train 200 teachers to build their learners' creativity skills using the Skills Builder approach.	Educators
India	In India, we are working with impact organisations Pencilbricks and The Apprentice Project, to embed essential skills into their programmes and provision. We also worked with 6 schools as part of the Global Accelerator.	Impact Organisations
Latin America	In Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala, we have been working with social enterprise Teach a Man to Fish to support teachers to assess essential skills, using the Universal Framework, through the 'School Enterprise Challenge'.	Educators
Uganda	In Uganda, we are working with government agencies, in partnership with British Council, to integrate the Skills Builder approach into the national education curriculum and assessment processes.	Educators
Egypt	In Egypt, we have worked with 6 schools as part of the Global Accelerator, supporting Skills Leaders and teachers to embed the Skills Builder approach into the national curriculum.	Educators
Kenya	In Kenya, we are working with the National Examinations Council in partnership with British Council. Skills Builder is being used as the approach to assessing the development of essential skills in the curriculum.	Educators
Malaysia	In Malaysia, we are working with The Surin Academy, one of the first inclusive schools in Kuala Lumpur, to embed principles of best practise with the Global Accelerator. In 2022, the school achieved the Skills Builder award.	Educators



# Educators

OUR REACH IN 2021 - 22

517

Schools and colleges in the Partnership

15,669

Teachers trained

202,497

Students

408

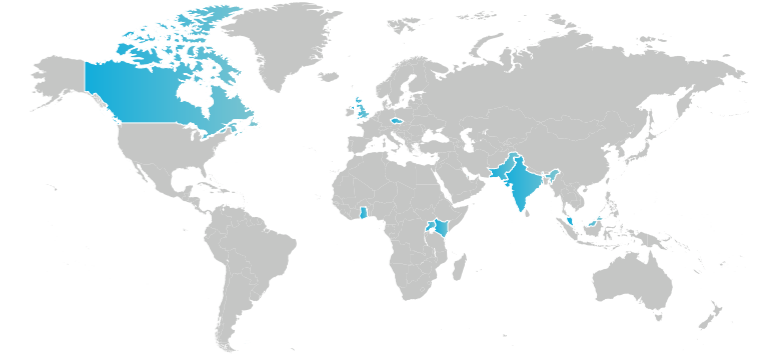
Skills Builder Awards

87%

UK secondary schools & colleges reached by the Partnership

## The Skills Builder Approach







The Skills Builder Partnership was originally set up by teachers to ensure that every student had the opportunity to build the essential skills to succeed. We work with educators in a full range of settings: primary and secondary schools, special schools, alternative provision settings, colleges and universities – the full range of institutions. Our flagship Accelerator programme is an intensive year-long programme to build the capacity of schools and colleges to take a best-practice approach to develop essential skills as a central part of the education they provide. We also support schools and colleges through Digital Membership, giving them access to the tools and curriculum they need to support their learners.



Over a decade's work, we have honed six key principles, which are best practice for building essential skills in education settings. As we work with our school and college partners, our focus is always on how to create sustainable change in the educational experience that students are getting. We do this by supporting a Skills Leader in the institution, providing training for all the teaching staff, and working as strategic partners with senior leaders to adapt policies and curriculum goals accordingly.

Higher levels of essential skills are linked to higher productivity and higher skilled jobs. England's latest statutory careers guidance for secondary schools and colleges states that: "In schools, each subject should support students to identify the essential skills they develop and to identify the pathways to future careers... The Skills Builder Universal Framework shows how to build essential skills into the school or college curriculum."

Our six principles are to:

-  **1. Keep it simple:** A consistent focus on the essential skills helps ensure everyone's shared understanding and makes building them as tangible as possible.
-  **2. Start early, keep going:** Starting as young as 3 years old and committing to keeping it up allows time for mastery, and ensures the skills help unlock other learning.
-  **3. Measure it:** Quantifying skills ensures a balanced understanding of strengths and weaknesses, highlights progress and demonstrates next steps.
-  **4. Focus tightly:** Building skills should build upon students' previous learning, and focus on achieving mastery by giving the skills the time and focus they need.
-  **5. Keep practising:** To accelerate progress in the essential skills, they should be applied and reinforced elsewhere in the curriculum and outside it.
-  **6. Bring it to life:** Keep it relevant by taking children and young people out of the classroom and by bringing real-life problems and challenges into it.



Schools and colleges who demonstrated best practice in embedding these principles achieved a **Skills Builder Award** this year. In this inaugural year, we are pleased that **408 schools and colleges** achieved an Award.

# Impact

## Measuring Impact at Scale

The Skills Builder Framework is the leading impact measurement framework for essential skills. Educators use it for formative assessment as well as to see progress.

The Skills Builder Hub is an online resource tool built around assessment against the Framework. It asks teachers to assess the proportion of their class who are able to demonstrate the different skill steps. These proportions are then used to create an aggregate skill score of between 0 and 15 for the skill. Teachers revisit this assessment subsequently in the year to track any changes.

This year, we analysed the data from a cohort of 2,301 groups representing approximately 59,761 individual students. We excluded the results of groups who were demonstrating progress more than one standard deviation greater than the average to avoid outliers.



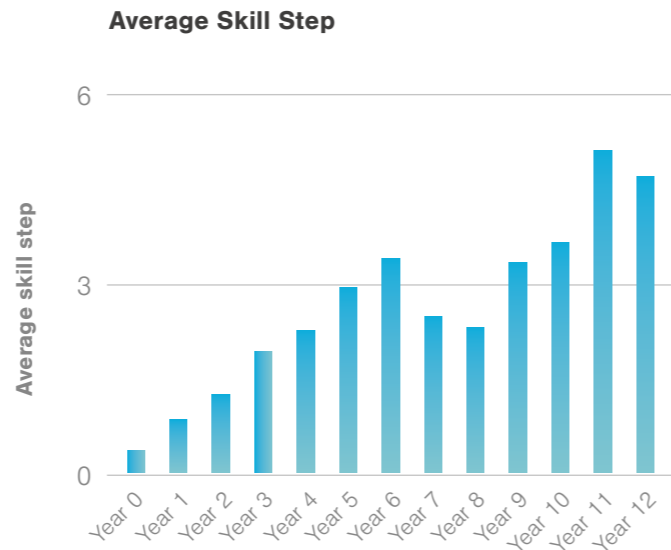
## The starting point: a challenge

At the start of the programme, teachers complete an assessment of their classes.

These assessments give us a view of how essential skills are generally built over a child or young person's time in school before a Skills Builder programme.

What we see is that through primary school, students are making 0.46 steps of progress per year. While this consistent progress is encouraging, unfortunately the rate of progress is inadequate for children to reach the target of Step 6 by Year 6.

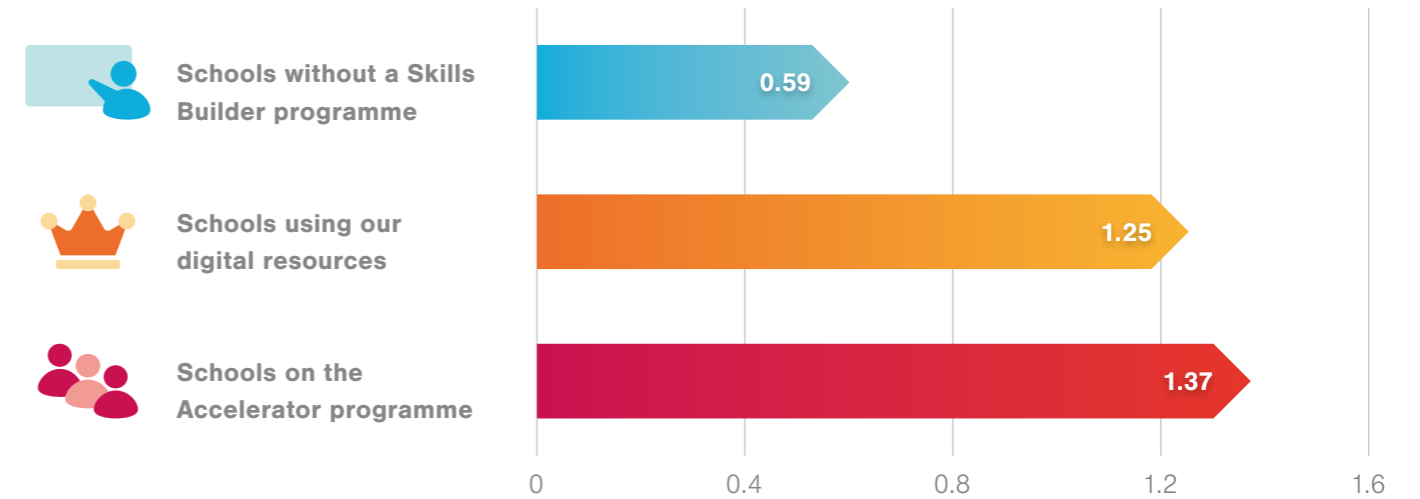
More concerning is at secondary school, where progress stalls and, on average, young people are making negligible progress for several years.



## Accelerating progress with Skills Builder

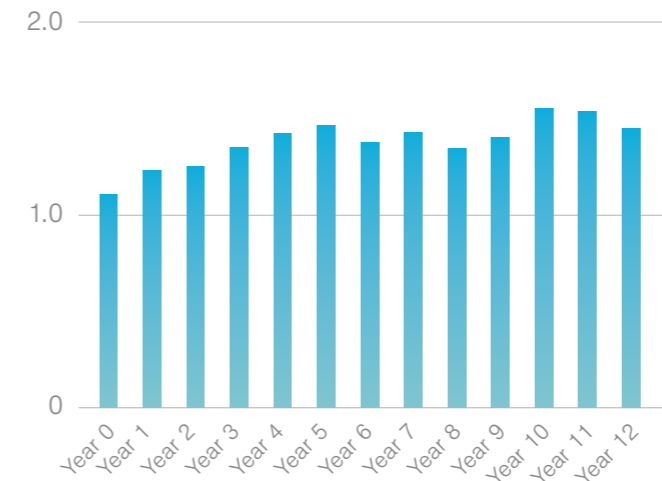
Individuals in groups using learning resources made meaningful progress in 2021-22, and further progress for programmes that are using the Accelerator programme, particularly for those in their second year.

### Average steps of progress in the year

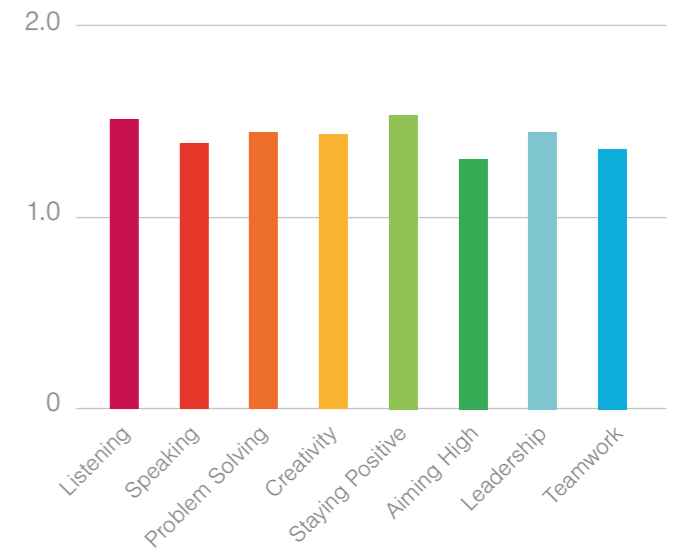


## Progress in all skills and at all ages

Progress by year group for Accelerator schools



Progress by skill for Accelerator schools







**SPECIAL**  
**Pioneer House High School**

*This content was written by Pioneer House High School*



**Skills Builder**  
*Gold Award*

Pioneer House is a specialist support school for students aged 11-19 with significant learning difficulties. A huge focus of our curriculum is to prepare students for independent living and employment so that they can become active citizens in adulthood.



**Keep it simple:** The eight essential skills are displayed in all areas of the school. The essential skills are specifically referenced within lessons and work experience programmes so that students and staff are constantly referencing and reflecting on them. More than this, the essential skills are built into all students' Education, Health and Care Plans and are discussed at length with parents during reviews.



**Start early, keep going:** Essential skills are taught sequentially in Skills Builder lessons as well as in all curriculum lessons. This has now developed with cross curricular links through the key stages. This is evident with students accessing Skills Builder projects in Key Stage 3, experiential work experience placements in Key Stage 4 and then vocational work experience placements in Key Stage 5.



**Measure it:** Pioneer House use the expanded version of the Universal Framework (and input into its development), which breaks the essential skills down into even smaller, incremental steps. This is more appropriate for our pupils. Progress is tracked internally and within students' individual Education, Health and Care Plan reviews. Reflection time is built into employment lessons and work experience programmes.



**Focus tightly:** Every lesson has a Skills Builder focus which is shared alongside the learning objective. Skills are referenced in plenaries, lesson summaries and rewards. Essential skills are referenced in all students' individual outcomes. Students have regular tutor meetings to discuss their outcomes and how they are progressing towards them, they set targets based on this.



**Keep practising:** As a school, we tap into the projects, challenge days and virtual trips offered by Skills Builder. Essential skills are embedded across the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities such as experiential work experience, vocational work experience, enrichment and 'Fantastic Fridays'.



**Bring it to life:** Pioneer House's innovative work experience programme is intrinsically linked to essential skills development. To help students reflect, they use a map which links all placements with target essential skills, special cards so they can record when skills are being used and workbooks.



**SECONDARY**  
**Ormiston Bushfield Academy**

*This content was written by Ormiston Bushfield Academy*



**Skills Builder**  
*Silver Award*

At Ormiston Bushfield Academy we recognise that education is about much more than academic progress. The world into which our young people will emerge will present them with many challenges - and so, we are dedicated to helping them develop into well-rounded individuals in all aspects of their lives.



**Keep it simple:** Skills Builder has been fully embedded into our new STEM curriculum so years 7 and 8 recognise the essential skills. The language of skills is used consistently and highlighted through the use of icons in lesson materials. Year 9 and 10 students have also used the framework and resources in tutor time in conjunction with careers sessions. Social media is used to highlight skills on a weekly basis and we share ideas with parents, carers and students providing on how to develop away from the classroom.



**Start early, keep going:** Our focus from September 2022 is strategic planning and policy development to ensure the language of essential skills is used across all areas of the academy. The STEM curriculum will be used as a model of progression in essential skills, with the Universal Framework providing clear statements to work towards.



**Measure it:** Assessment has worked well for those teachers using the resources to reflect on the skills of their groups. Formative assessment is used regularly and feedback provided to students when engaging in activities such as debate, presentations and group work. Some teachers also use self assessment with their students and discuss strengths and areas for development with them. Achievement points were recorded on SIMS by teaching staff and used when selecting focus skills for the year.



**Focus tightly:** Dedicated time is planned into tutor time sessions and is available to teach essential skills throughout the year. Planning and curriculum maps show that some teachers dedicate time to the teaching of skills, pitching teaching at an appropriate level, in subject lessons too.



**Keep practising:** The language of essential skills is used across the whole school including extra curricular opportunities. The essential skills will be present in student planners and the expanded steps will be displayed in classrooms. Lesson observations and learning walks will provide feedback to teaching staff and build in the expectation that essential skills should be reinforced in lessons whenever possible.



**Bring it to life:** We used the online work experience modules with years 9 and 10 and a virtual trip with a group of year 10 students. We also ran a challenge day for year 12 and they took part in work experience. A number of subject areas also use project work. All of these experiences enabled students to apply the skills in an experience linked to the world outside of the school.



## INTERNATIONAL - PRIMARY Kanjeru Primary School

*This content was written by Kanjeru Primary School*



**Skills Builder**  
*Silver Award*

Kanjeru Primary School is a two-stream public day school in Muguga Ward, Kabete Subcounty of Kiambu County, Kenya. It brings learners from a neighboring slum, with a population of 850. We have been developing skills at our school with the British Council and Skills Builder. Our main focus has been improving the impact on learners' essential skills which have had a great impact in their general learning.



**Keep it simple:** In our school, all teachers have made use of the Framework to assess the skills. We have made the Skills Builder language part of our day to day activities, as it brings a positive impact on our school's general performance. We have visual aids available in all classrooms so learners are reminded of the skills.



**Start early, keep going:** We involved all our grades in the teaching of essential skills this year. We also introduced our parents, local Church, student alumni, Rotary Club and linked environmental organisations to the Skills Builder approach; which provided reference opportunities in every lesson for our children. We have introduced children to the essential skills in the lower grades through reading, in order for them to understand what the skills are. Skills Builder lessons take place every week.



**Measure it:** Our teachers have been creating assessment questions to check in with learners on their development. Teachers record students' progress via logs and videos to track progress. We have meetings each week for teachers and student leaders to get a chance to ask questions in regard to the program and discuss challenges and focus areas. These frequent meetings have been really effective.



**Focus tightly:** Skills Builder lessons take place once a week in every class. Our teachers focus on one skill at a time. Teachers decide which skills to focus on, so they are relevant for their students. We have used the Skills Handbooks to plan these sessions. We are working as a team to plan the best lessons and achieve the best results for our learners, which has really helped us develop these essential skills.



**Keep practising:** The skills are referenced by all teachers throughout the school day. Teachers are also giving children the opportunity to practice these essential skills through a variety of school activities, such as sports and gardening clubs, which enable them to build skills like Teamwork, Staying Positive, Problem Solving and Creativity, as they interact with each other and teachers.



**Bring it to life:** Through technology we are able to bring to life how essential skills are used in the wider world. We are also trying to bring real-life outcomes into projects where possible. Our aim is to continue with the project to perfection. We are also doing our best as staff in order to make sure our learners are at the top with essential skills.



## INTERNATIONAL Government Girls High School

*This content was written by Government Girls High School*



**Skills Builder**  
*Gold Award*

Government Girls Model High School Kallur Kot is based in Bhakkar District of Punjab Province, Pakistan. Our school's vision is to provide quality of education for the holistic development of the students and our mission is to make students responsible citizens of Pakistan who lead a successful life and play an active role globally.



**Keep it simple:** Our school made an action plan to ensure teachers and students used the common language of essential skills. We focused on getting the essential skills embedded in our policy, curriculum, timetable and lesson planning. The language of essential skills is used extensively across the school: assembly, meetings, parent teacher meetings, games, curricular and co-curricular activities. We displayed charts and posters in all classrooms and the library.



**Start early, keep going:** There are 500 students in the school, aged 11-15 years. All students took part in the program. In younger classes, teachers taught upwards from skill steps 0, while teachers developed skills from step 5 up in older classes. Every Friday, teachers choose the most appropriate resources from the Hub and offline materials and all teachers and students have engaged well with these.



**Measure it:** All teachers used formative assessment regularly during their teaching to assess progress of the students in the specific, focus skills. All teachers logged these assessments and reflections throughout the year, using online and offline assessment and Skills Passports, to reflect and plan. At the end of each month, students who had excelled in an essential skill were rewarded with badges, tokens and certificates and shared with parents.



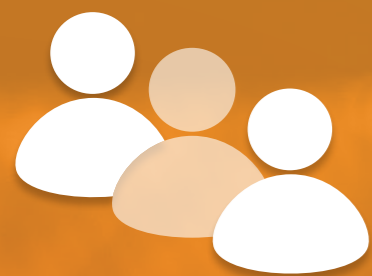
**Focus tightly:** We ran weekly one hour sessions with all classes that solely focused on the teaching and assessing of essential skills using the Skills Builder online/offline tools. The assessments showed us where students were in their development of a specific skill. Teachers could then start teaching from the suitable point of the framework until the students achieved the target step, which led to continued progress.



**Keep practising:** Teachers targeted specific skill steps to be applied in lessons through their lesson planning. As well as curricular activities, our school has a comprehensive program for practising essential skills in co-curricular activities including celebration of cultural days, art projects and challenge days. The whole school community has been involved in these events, helping to share the essential skills far and wide.



**Bring it to life:** Examples of how students apply their skills to the wider school and community include participation in Study tours, visits to the nursery for planting and regional competitions. Essential skills are flagged and monitored with all students across the school during these opportunities. Having a variety of experiences gives brilliant opportunities for students to apply the essential skills and bring them to life.



# Impact Organisations

OUR REACH IN 2021 - 22

214

Impact organisations

2,057,346

Opportunities delivered

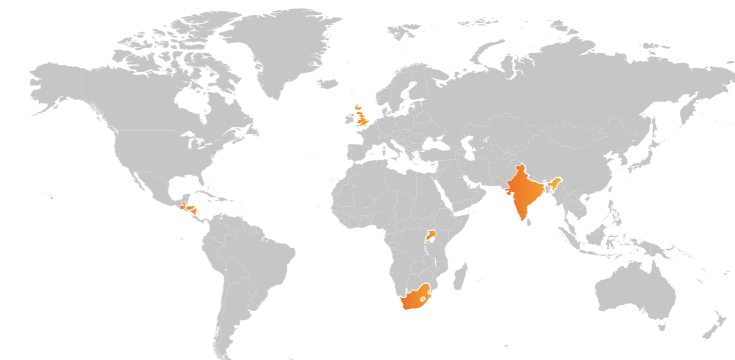
116

Impactful partner programmes

## The Skills Builder Approach

### Clusters of excellence




The power of the Skills Builder Partnership comes from the committed alignment of all of our partners, but close collaboration with other impact organisations plays a critical role. Our partners are a diverse group covering areas with clusters including employability, sports, the arts, volunteering, university access, parental engagement, inclusion, and retraining.



Each brings expertise and a great track record from their focus area. By aligning together, it means that the individuals we support can better learn and practice their essential skills in a diverse range of settings. This multiplies our individual efforts, and also means that we can learn from each other.

### How we work with impact organisations

Social impact organisations work with us to build their capacity to fully adopt and embed the Skills Builder approach in their work in three main areas:

 Programme Design	 Impact Measurement	 Staff Training
<p>We support partners to embed best practice in building essential skills using the Skills Builder approach. Programmes can then achieve an approved Impact Level.</p>	<p>Partners benefit from using skills measurement tools and best practice we have seen. Partners can measure the impact of their programmes using benchmarking tools. They can draw on best practice as to how to implement the tools and how to turn the data into meaningful actions.</p>	<p>Finally, we train the teams and volunteers of partners to most effectively use the Skills Builder approach, as well as the learning tools and resources we have built.</p>

**90%**  
of organisations  
felt Skills Builder supports achieving their mission

**100%**  
of organisations  
saw their membership as valuable

# Our partners

Over 2021-22 we had the privilege of working with 209 Impact Organisation partners to deliver opportunities to build essential skills as well as 3 employers on their impact programmes. These partners embed the Skills Builder approach, aligning their programmes with the Skills Builder Framework. Doing so makes it easier for the individuals who we all support to better connect the different opportunities that they have to build essential skills. Partners join one of twelve clusters, giving them greater opportunities to connect and collaborate.

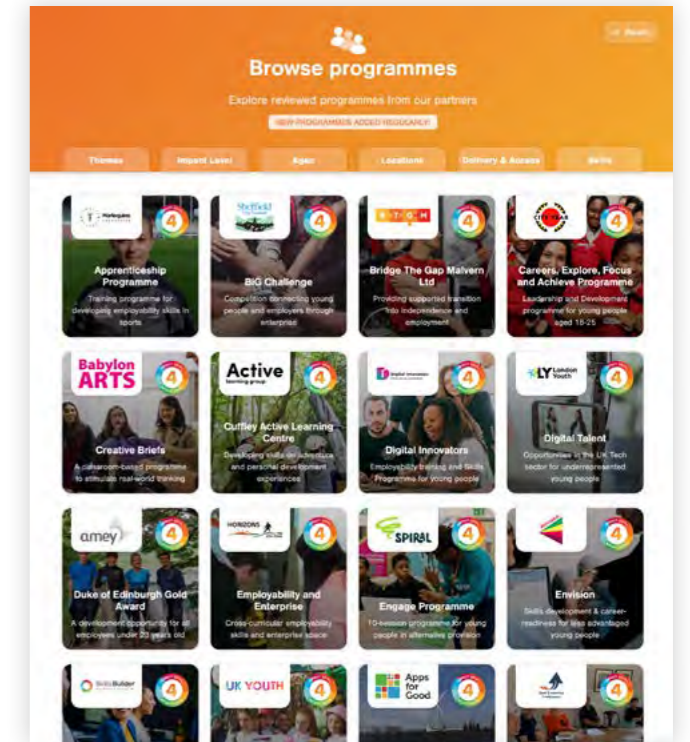


# The Impact Directory

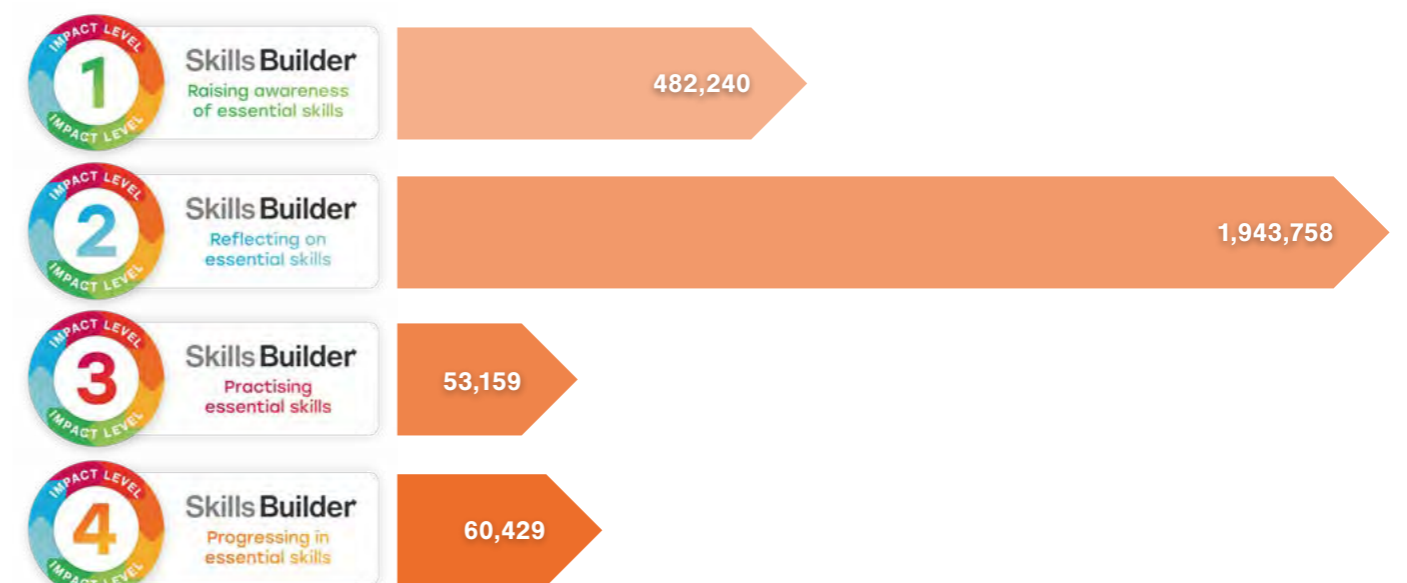
Partners are delivering life changing opportunities to build essential skills. Many of their programmes and initiatives are of the highest quality, adopting best practice in skills building. Stakeholders across sectors want to be able to quickly discover impactful programmes that relate to their context. The Impact Directory is a tool that allows them to do this, showcasing partners that have achieved an Impact Level.


There are four Impact Levels:

- 1. Raising awareness of essential skills:** Programmes that are successful at this level make individuals more aware of the eight essential skills and their importance for success.
- 2. Reflecting on essential skills:** Programmes that are successful at this level give individuals the opportunity to become more self-aware of their skill levels and next steps by reflecting on their essential skills
- 3. Practising essential skills:** Programmes that are successful at this level give individuals the opportunity to apply and practise their essential skills and the steps.
- 4. Progressing in essential skills:** Programmes that are successful here combine the chance for individuals to reflect on their essential skills before and after applying them, with programme content that is specifically targeted on making steps of progress.




### Opportunities delivered





**City Year**  
Careers, Explore, Focus and Achieve Programme



City Year UK (CYUK) is a youth and education charity which empowers diverse 18 to 25-year-olds to tackle educational inequality through a year of full-time volunteering in schools.

Throughout their City Year, our young people take part in our Leadership and Development programme which provides them with training, career opportunities and new networks. Our programme combines real world experiences and is underpinned by comprehensive training, coaching, and networking in a professional environment.

At CYUK we believe that a participant's year should serve as a launchpad for their career. There is a clear skills match between what employers want and the capabilities young people can develop through full-time volunteering and social action and this is why the essential skills, as defined by Skills Builder, are important for us to use as our framework for their development. Through workshops, guest speakers and dedicated mentors, our volunteers progress in skills development and gain an insight into a range of career paths.

Through our guided reflection curriculum and alumni programme, participants regularly reflect on their essential skills - setting goals for the skills they want to develop and tracking and quantifying whether progress has been made. In order to do this, we use Skills Builder Benchmark for all our volunteer mentors. We use the admin licences to analyse data in order to inform our continued support for our mentors' development. In the wise words of one of our alumni: "Use your City Year to think"!




**Smart School Councils Programme**




Smart School Councils provide schools with an empowering digital platform which involves every child in democracy. Used by over 400 schools across the world, the platform supports a pupil-led, inclusive school council that's easy to run and transforms pupil voice in schools to make democracy more active and fun.

The core programme's aim is to help every child lead change through direct action in their schools. Last year, 40,000 students per week engaged in debate as a part of the class debate tool, raising democracy participation from 7% to 100% in just one term. Through regular, student-led and democratic class meetings across the whole school, young people of all ages are involved in all stages of the process, from running the school council in the Communication Team, holding Class Meetings and joining Action Teams to create a club, campaign or activity to create change.

Participation in the Smart School Councils core programme primarily supports two essential skills: Speaking and Listening. Students are given the opportunity to become more self-aware of their skill levels and next steps by reflecting on these skills and how they apply them in each stage of the process. Selected reflection questions draw links between the democratic process and communication skills, with students assessing themselves against key step descriptors. This creates awareness of explicit skill development and a greater understanding of how these skills support specific tasks, linking these essential skills to positive outcomes and supporting transferability to other contexts.



**British Council**  
Teaching and Assessing Core Skills




The British Council supports peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We work directly with individuals to help them gain the skills, confidence and connections to transform their lives and shape a better world in partnership with the UK. We support them to build networks and explore creative ideas, to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications.


Our free online course, Teaching and Assessing Core Skills, supports teachers and school leaders to develop their ability to teach skills and learn how to measure their students' skills development. It is available to teachers and school leaders around the world.

Employers are demanding higher-order cognitive skills from their workforces, so it's crucial that young people have access to education that supports the development of essential skills to help them succeed. The online course guides teachers and school leaders on how to capture student achievement and plan progression in skills. It supports them to work through examples of how it can be carried out in the classroom with opportunities to practise these new techniques in the teachers and school leaders' own contexts.

As part of the online course, educators learn about the Skills Builder approach and how the Skills Builder Framework supports them to target and understand students' progress over time. They build an action plan to support the reflection and practising of essential skills in their school, with the opportunity to share, review, and refine this project with other participants on the course and with support from experienced course educators.



**Teach a Man to Fish**  
School Enterprise Challenge



Teach A Man To Fish works with schools in Africa, Latin America and Asia to set up school businesses. These businesses are both educational and profitable – teaching students business and entrepreneurial skills, and generating much-needed income for schools.

School Enterprise Challenge is a free life skills educational programme we provide for schools. The programme encourages students to develop essential and business skills, guiding them to create their own enterprise idea, design a business plan, put that plan into action and launch their very own school business. Through teaching essential skills and encouraging self-reflection, Teach A Man To Fish creates empowered young entrepreneurs. Participants of the programme are proven to develop essential skills faster than their peers. Throughout the programme, learners have the opportunity to learn and apply essential skills in teams, with a focus on Speaking, Leadership, Teamwork and Problem Solving.

The programme is available to any school, anywhere in the world. We provide a range of online resources to support setting up the enterprise and students are encouraged to think about sustainability so that businesses can grow year on year and generate real profits for the school and wider community. Teach A Man To Fish also provides the programme directly to schools, training teachers and supplying hard copy materials, as well as supporting teams with school visits and additional online resources, including training on the Universal Framework and essential skills.



# Employers

OUR REACH IN 2021 - 22

120

employers

55

Working towards  
excellence standards

77

Offering high quality  
volunteering

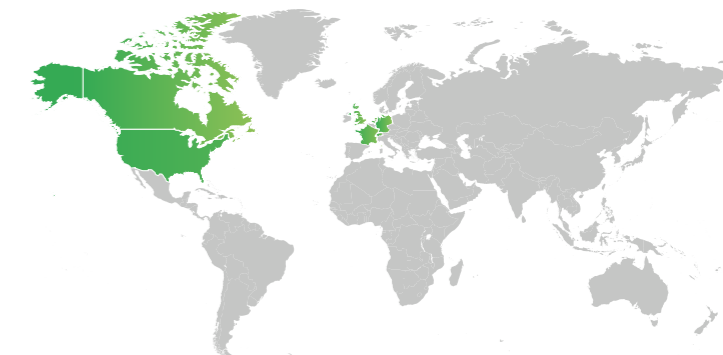
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Supporting  
collective impact

## The Skills Builder Approach




There are big opportunities for both employers and individuals from investing in essential skills in the workplace.

According to a recent piece of research by McKinsey, "the need to address skill gaps is more urgent than ever." A majority (58%) of businesses said that closing skill gaps in their companies' workforces has become a higher priority since the pandemic began.



At the same time, 92% of UK workers believe that essential skills should form part of professional development.

For employers looking to close skills gaps while attracting and retaining talent, there are two solutions: adapt recruitment to better attract and identify individuals with the requisite skills, and build the essential skills of their own workforce.

 <b>Recruitment</b>	 <b>Staff development</b>	 <b>Outreach</b>
<p><b>Hire the right person for the right role</b></p> <p>Ensure transparency throughout your hiring process and remove barriers to entry by using the clear and consistent language of the Skills Builder Framework across your recruitment cycle.</p>	<p><b>Build a skilled and inclusive workforce</b></p> <p>Identify essential skills strengths and gaps in your workforce and provide individuals at all levels of the business with opportunities to build these skills at each stage of their journey.</p>	<p><b>Ensure essential skills for all</b></p> <p>Provide meaningful opportunities for young people and adults to develop the skills to succeed through outreach activities equipping the workforce of tomorrow with the essential skills.</p>

The Skills Builder approach helps employers close the skills gap by making recruitment more inclusive and able to better identify essential skills. In staff development, it drives engagement and gives employees the skills to succeed in their current - and future - roles.

For many employers, it doesn't stop there. They want to support their communities to build essential skills through outreach. This third pillar of the Skills Builder approach for employers accelerates the impact of outreach and CSR programmes.

# Achieving excellence



Employers work with Skills Builder to achieve excellence in building essential skills. They use our tools - Benchmark and Launchpad – to measure and build their employees' and programme beneficiaries' skills, they draw on our expertise to map their existing approach to the Universal Framework and advise on recruitment or training design

Our highly qualified team draws on tens of thousands of hours of optimizing the building of essential skills to guide employers in how to achieve excellence. The Excellence Standards for each area of Recruitment, Staff Development and Outreach are broken down into manageable indicators.

When employers hit these indicators, they achieve excellence marks which they can use to gain recognition for their high standards as an employer.

 <p><b>Recruitment</b></p>	<p>1. The essential skills required and developed through job roles are shared</p>	<p>2. All applicants are given a fair chance to demonstrate their essential skills</p>	<p>3. Assessors use the Skills Builder Framework to objectively assess applicant's essential skills</p>
 <p><b>Staff Development</b></p>	<p>4. Employees are aware of the essential skills and the benefits of developing them</p>	<p>5. Employees are supported to develop their essential skills</p>	<p>6. The employer promotes and recognises the development of essential skills</p>
 <p><b>Outreach</b></p>	<p>7. Activities raise awareness of the essential skills and their value for participants</p>	<p>8. Activities offer participants opportunities to build essential skills</p>	<p>9. Activities measure and demonstrate progress in building participant's essential skills</p>

In 2021-22, a range of employers worked with us to achieve excellence standards, from SMEs and not-for-profits through to large corporates.



# Impact

Embedding the Skills Builder approach into recruitment, staff development and outreach has shown demonstrable impact on key metrics within as little as six months.

## RECRUITMENT

- Embedding the Universal Framework and Skills Builder approach into recruitment practices drove a 23% improvement in employers being able to recruit candidates with the skills they need in their business. This was due in part to a 29% improvement in employers' confidence at identifying skills in the recruitment process.

*"The Framework has allowed HR professionals to coach and support managers to identify the essential skills required for success. It has also given us a specific language to communicate these skills."*

– HR PROFESSIONAL, AKW GROUP

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Research shows that employees with higher levels of essential skills are by some measures more productive. There is an annual wage premium of between £3,900 and £5,900 for the average worker associated with an increase in skill score from the lower quartile to the upper quartile.
- 89% of employees who benefited from learning & development that had embedded the Universal Framework believe that the experience improved their performance in role with 75% feeling more engaged in their work.
- Three quarters of these employees reported an improvement in their essential skill levels, with 63% of this improvement attributed to the Universal Framework building awareness and confidence.
- The employee experience of a structured approach to essential skills was reflected by their managers and talent teams. After only six months, 67% reported an improvement in their team's performance thanks to building essential skills with the Skills Builder approach.

## OUTREACH

- Embedding the framework into outreach drove a 17% increase in CSR professionals reporting that their programmes effectively build essential skills, with 100% reporting that it improved their programmes' impact.
- Employers using Benchmark to measure pre- and post- programme skill levels while structuring their programmes around the Universal Framework have seen participants make rapid progress. 98% of participants achieved progress, with an average 2.2 steps of progress over their 20-week programme.

**29%**  
Improvement in  
employers' confidence in  
identifying essential skills

**89%**  
Felt more engaged  
in their work

**100%**  
Reported an  
improvement to their  
programmes' impact

**MORGAN  
SINDALL  
GROUP**

## Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure



Recruitment

Morgan Sindall Infrastructure delivers some of the UK's most complex and critical national infrastructure across six core sectors of energy, water, nuclear, highways, rail and aviation for public and private customers. Working on projects and long-term frameworks, Morgan Sindall believes in connecting people, places, and communities through innovative and responsible infrastructure.

Recognising the value of reaching wider and diverse audiences, Morgan Sindall Infrastructure worked collaboratively with Skills Builder to determine the minimum essential skill requirements for each role – 41 in total – and embedded these into the role profiles shared with prospective candidates. Through working together in this way, the team at Morgan Sindall Infrastructure were trained to map the Framework to different types of roles which they can repeat for any future role. The embedding undertaken for the graduate and apprentice roles yielded fantastic results with a significant rise in the number of high-quality applications received, totalling an increase of over 170%.

In addition to this, each candidate invited to interview is given a preparation guide which supports them to better understand the essential skills required for the role and how to effectively demonstrate them in the interview process. This is also reflected in the interview scripts used by hiring managers during the day which ensures that skill-focused questions are aligned with specific steps of the Framework. Interviewers are also trained in the essential skills to build their confidence in identifying and evaluating these skills during an assessment. By embedding this language throughout, Morgan Sindall Infrastructure is working to ensure that their recruitment process is valuable to both successful and unsuccessful candidates.

**ALLEN & OVERY**

## Allen & Overy LLP



Staff Development

Allen & Overy is a top law firm and a longstanding employer partner, working with Skills Builder since 2015. This year, Allen & Overy have introduced a Solicitor Apprenticeship. Selected individuals have the opportunity to gain the qualifications, skills and experience to excel in a leading law firm over a six-year period. Skills Builder have been working closely with the team to create a training roadmap within the apprenticeship programme to ensure apprentices acquire and develop their essential skills. Allen & Overy believe that for apprentices to thrive, they will need to develop these skills in a meaningful way.

To support these goals, Allen & Overy has worked with Skills Builder to integrate the Essential Skills Academy into the training programme for their solicitor apprentices. The Essential Skills Academy is an interactive ten-session course that supports individuals to understand, practice, develop and articulate their essential skills effectively. Alongside the live workshops, participants assess their areas of strength and development against the Skills Builder Framework. They also take part in self-directed learning by completing short courses on skill steps they would like to develop using Skills Builder Launchpad.



Linklaters

Linklaters LLP



Outreach

Linklaters is a global law firm with over 5,000 staff across 20 countries. As an organisation, Linklaters is passionate about engaging in social impact that supports people to feel empowered and able to transform their lives. Skills Builder has worked closely with the Social Impact team at Linklaters to integrate essential skills and the Universal Framework across their volunteering programmes. Linklaters wants to ensure that there is clarity and consistency in the way essential skills are taught, practised and developed across their outreach. Alongside this, the Social Impact team were keen to record progress in essential skills and the long-term impact of their programmes for participants and volunteers.

Skills Builder worked with Linklaters to review their work experience programme, the Business Foundation Course, and rigorously embed essential skills at a step level throughout. The programme, delivered both virtually and in-person multiple times a year, allows young people to develop their Speaking, Listening and Teamwork skills through a range of activities whilst learning more about Linklaters. Through this they were able to accredit their programme with an Impact Level 3 which shows that participants are more aware, actively reflecting and practising their essential skills.

This drive for consistency was extended to Linklaters' charity partners who are involved in much of their outreach work. Skills Builder ran training sessions with these partners to build their understanding and confidence in using the essential skills and Framework in their work. Skills Builder also worked with Linklaters to enhance impact reporting, with charity partners responding on a termly basis about skills in a way aligned to the framework.

To augment the employee volunteer experience and give volunteers an opportunity to consider how the skills they will be supporting programme participants to build are crucial in their own roles, Skills Builder is developing a set of volunteer training modules. Linklaters staff will be able to complete these ahead of an experience, which will quickly familiarise them with the Framework.



LLOYDS BANK



Lloyds Banking Group



Collective Impact

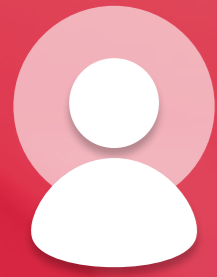
Lloyds Banking Group is committed to its mission of Helping Britain Prosper. In this, Lloyds are working to create a more sustainable and inclusive future for people and businesses across the UK – shaping finance as a force for good. Lloyds joined the Partnership in 2020 and have integrated the Skills Builder Framework and approach across their outreach, staff development and beyond.

The first area of focus is centred around supporting young people to be work-ready through effective outreach. Lloyds recognise the crucial role that essential skills play in supporting the transition from education to employment and entrepreneurship so wanted to showcase them in their work with young people. Skills Builder collaborated with Lloyds to create a selection of Skills Summits which are 1-hour interactive workshops focused on a few of the essential skills. Over the last year, Lloyds have successfully worked with over 2,300 students from across the UK using these resources. Alongside this, Lloyds have invested in the training of a team of volunteers, called Master Builders, who lead the Skills Summits and spread the use of the Framework further across business outreach. This training has allowed the Master Builders to become more confident in the language of essential skills so they can better understand their skill sets as well as utilising it within their own day-to-day practices.

Lloyds Banking Group is also committed to being by the side of business, with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Lloyds were keen for small businesses to gain exposure to the Framework and understand how it could be used to address some of the issues facing them including mass vacancies, difficulty engaging new talent and offering all staff meaningful development opportunities. Skills Builder and Lloyds are creating a comprehensive toolkit for SMEs to provide them with expert guidance on using the Framework in their context, to tackle some of these challenges. Lloyds are using their influence in this space to share it widely and gather feedback so more businesses can benefit from the approach.

Lloyds advocate for systemic change across the world of work and education with essential skills being a central part of the conversation. Skills Builder has worked with Lloyds on joint events, like City Giving Day, and embarked on engaging governments across the UK in conversations about the importance of a common language. Lloyds recognise that there is still a lot of work to do around this and together with Skills Builder are looking forward to delivering even more positive change.





# Products

OUR REACH IN 2021 - 22

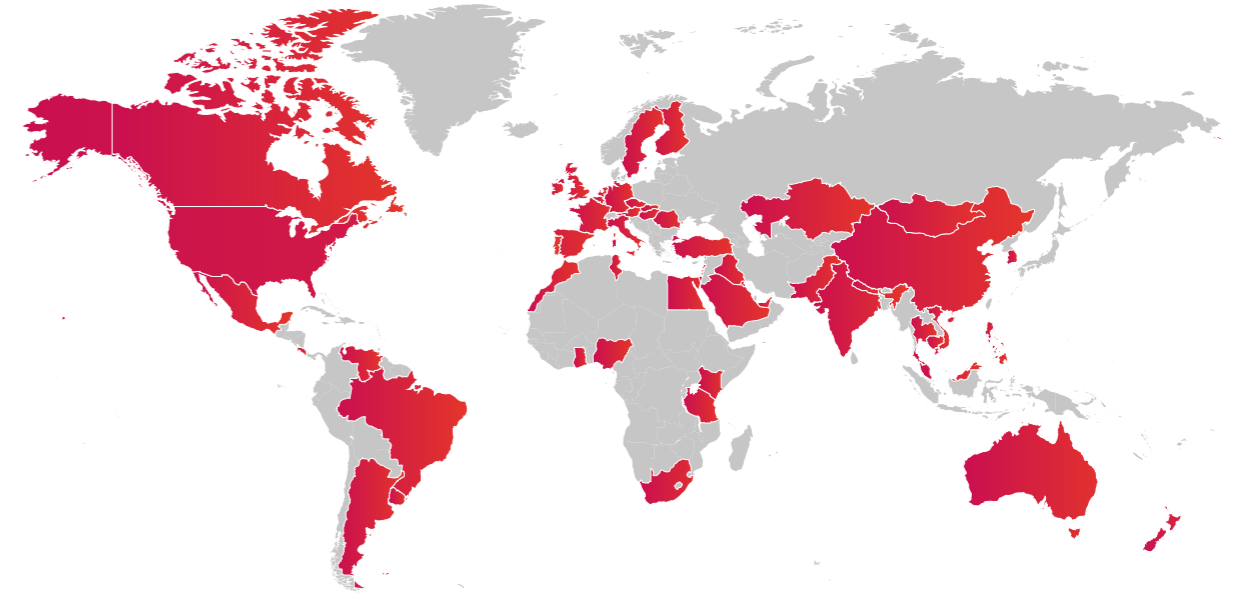
# 96,390

active learners

# 110

countries reached

## The Skills Builder Approach



Our mission is to ensure that one day, everyone builds the essential skills to succeed. While our work with educators, employers and impact organisations is critical for making that impact, we also want to ensure that any individual who wants to build their essential skills has access to top quality resources and materials to be able to do so.

To do this, we have four tech products that enable skills building at scale: Benchmark, Launchpad, Skills Builder Hub & Homezone. They each serve different groups looking to build skills.

**89%**  
of impact organisations  
rate the Hub as at  
least 4 out of 5

Benchmark & Launchpad enable individuals to assess their skill levels and build their own skills in a focused and effective way. Many of our employer partners give their employees the opportunity to build their skills with these platforms and benefit from progress data to support their staff development and ESG goals. Colleges and secondary schools also find these platforms to be impactful for their older learners.

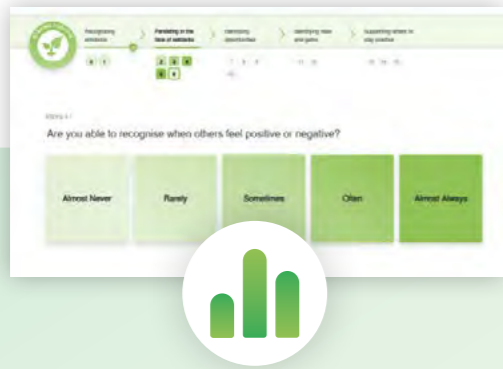
**92%**  
of Skills Leaders  
saw an impact on learners  
from the Hub

Skills Builder Hub is used by teachers in the classroom at primary and secondary level. Through formative assessment, teachers discover targeted teaching resources to fit a range of contexts. The Home Learning Zone enables parents and carers of primary-age children to use outside of their classroom learning.

We're pleased to see active usage of these tools not just in the UK but in 62 further countries, making essential skills development accessible to all.

# For independent learning

# For educators, parents & carers



## Skills Builder Benchmark

Benchmark is the world's leading tool for individuals to assess their levels of essential skills.

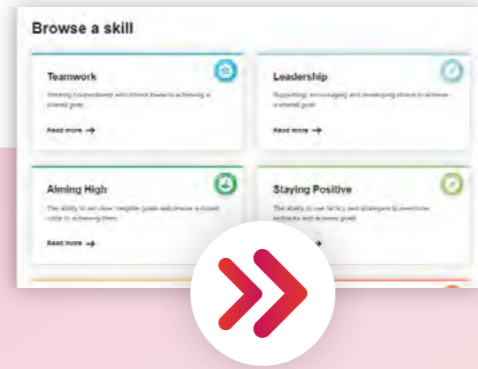
It is used widely by employers to understand their teams' skill levels and target professional development, as well as by educators and impact organisations.

Skills Builder Benchmark includes:

- Structured self-reflection questions covering the entire Skills Builder Framework
- Feedback reports on areas of strength and suggested focuses for development

This year alone, 128,104 self-reflections have been completed by 21,134 individuals, a 78% year on year increase.

[skillsbuilder.org/benchmark](https://skillsbuilder.org/benchmark)



## Skills Builder Launchpad

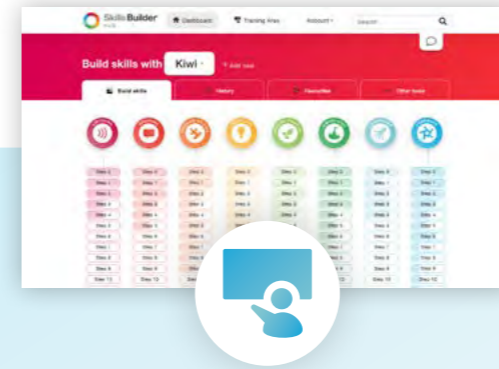
Skills Builder Launchpad has been piloted this year for the first time. It acts as a powerful complement to Benchmark by supporting individuals to build their own essential skills.

The Launchpad tool includes:

- Short learning modules featuring video, audio and written explanations for how to build each skill step in turn
- Activities and ideas for how those skills steps can be applied and practiced in the real world
- Space to record reflections and evidence of achieving a particular skill step

Launchpad had 5,895 users in 2021-22 and is continuing to grow organically.

[skillsbuilder.org/launchpad](https://skillsbuilder.org/launchpad)



## Skills Builder Hub

The Skills Builder Hub opens up the opportunity for schools and colleges to build their essential skills wherever in the world they are. The Hub includes:

- Tools for teachers to assess the essential skills of their class
- More than 300 short lessons to directly teach skill steps
- 20 extended projects and 15 challenge days that give the opportunity to apply and practice skills
- Training materials to boost teachers' confidence

The Skills Builder Hub is widely used by schools and colleges on the Accelerator programme.

Excluding those users, in 2021-22, the Skills Builder Hub had more than 10,118 active users from 101 different countries. These users supported 59,761 learners to build their essential skills.

[skillsbuilder.org/hub](https://skillsbuilder.org/hub)



## Home Learning Zone

The Home Learning Zone provides activities that children can complete with their parents and carers.

The Home Learning Zone includes:

- Stories that introduce the skills for children
- Regular challenges that the whole family can get involved with
- Ideas for projects and activities that parents and children can take part in
- Guidance for parents about how they can talk about essential skills with their children, and support their classroom learning

In 2021-22, the Home Learning Zone had nearly 9,600 users. For our calculations of reach, we make the conservative estimate that each individual user was supporting one child to build their essential skills.

[skillsbuilder.org/homezone](https://skillsbuilder.org/homezone)

# Collective Impact

## Our Supporters

As a not-for-profit organisation with an ambitious mission, none of the achievements of the last year would have been possible without the generous support of our Collective Impact Partners.

These partners are critical for supporting our programmes: they fund the first year of the Accelerator programme for eligible schools and colleges. They also help to support our work scaling with Impact Organisations, enabling them to embed and make the most of the Skills Builder approach in their work.

Much of our innovation is also underpinned by the support of these partners. For example, in the last year they have supported the development of Skills Builder Benchmark and Launchpad as two potentially transformational products. They have also supported us to expand into new geographical areas.

Finally, our Collective Impact Partners are often powerful advocates for the wider systemic change that we need. They encourage businesses, educators, and impact organisations to work together and to better align our efforts.

**We're grateful for all of their support.**



## As we come to the end of our current three-year strategy we are excited by the engagement and momentum across the Partnership.

There has been rapid growth in our work with employers. The Skills Builder approach has proved its worth across recruitment, staff development, and outreach. Our Trailblazers Report at the end of the year demonstrated improvements in work satisfaction, performance, and increased progress in essential skills for businesses who were in our Employer Programme.

We can see rapid growth in approved programmes that can boost essential skills in so many settings – and which delivered 2,367,463 such opportunities in the last year alone. The collaboration and learning between partners have been hugely encouraging.

And in education, our work is increasingly the mainstream approach to building essential skills. Backed by the Careers & Enterprise Company, called for in statutory guidance in England, and recommended to support T-Levels.

### Where next

Although we are encouraged by the progress that has been made, we know that there is a lot more to do.

Our 2025 Strategy looks to build off what has been achieved so far as well as recognising the innovation, new partnerships, and broader policy change that will be needed if we are to achieve our mission.

### Working across sectors






One of the great strengths of Skills Builder Partnership has been its ability to bring together three broad groups: employers, educators, and impact organisation.

The continued engagement and alignment of those three groups is a critical part of our 2025 Strategy so we can provide that wrap around offer for any individual to build their essential skills across their lives.

## Our big priorities

We have set ourselves a challenging goal; to deliver 10 million high quality opportunities to boost essential skills by 2025.

While ambitious, we also have a clear plan to get there:

- 
**Grow the Partnership**  
 We will continue to grow the number of aligned partners in each of our partner groups.
- 
**Provide high quality platforms and content**  
 Our core products like the Hub, Benchmark and Launchpad are already widely used across the Partnership. We also want to do more to licence our content and tools more widely.
- 
**Align infrastructure organisations**  
 We will accelerate our work to engage and build relationships with infrastructure organisations – those organisations that set the rules and norms for others.
- 
**Influence national policy**  
 We will engage with national government where we have learning to share and where we see opportunities to create more high quality opportunities to boost essential skills.
- 
**Build global networks**  
 Finally, we have learnt a huge amount from our international partners. We want to continue to make the Partnership more global, sharing our resources and materials in different languages, and being part of the international conversation.

So, as we complete our 2019-22 strategy and celebrate its achievements, we are already looking to 2025. It will take all of us closer again to achieving our collective mission: to ensure that one day, everyone builds the essential skills to succeed.

*Tom Ravenscroft*

