



**Skills Builder**  
PARTNERSHIP

# Impact Report



2023

**15** Celebrating  
15 years of building  
Essential Skills



The logo features the number '15' in a large, white, sans-serif font. The '5' is stylized with a colorful, multi-segmented circular graphic inside it, transitioning through colors like blue, red, yellow, and green. To the right of the '15' is the text 'years of building Essential Skills' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Below this is a horizontal line of seven small, colored dots (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink). Underneath the dots is the text 'Skills Builder' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, and 'PARTNERSHIP' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it.

years of building  
Essential Skills

**Skills Builder**  
PARTNERSHIP

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

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Over the last year, **900 partners** have delivered  
**2,635,000 individual opportunities** to boost  
essential skills across **20 countries.**



# Tom Ravenscroft

Founder & CEO  
Skills Builder Partnership

**It is September 2008. I'm a year into my nascent teaching career in East London, and by some measures things are going well: the rhythms of an industrious and focused classroom are there, coursework is on track, and progress is being made. But there is also a nagging doubt – is this the complete education that the 15- and 16-year-olds in front of me really deserve? Is something missing?**

It is hard to believe that I'm writing this fifteen years later. That lens of the young people in my Year 11 business studies class is still the most important one I bring to every decision. I knew that those young people were being short-changed by an education where essential skills like teamwork, leadership, creativity and communication were afterthoughts. Too often we presumed they were innate or acquired so randomly that structured teaching was impossible.

Over the last fifteen years, we have made enormous progress. The case for building essential skills has moved from intuitive to robust: our research has shown that higher levels of essential skills boost earnings, job and life satisfaction, and halve the likelihood of being out of work or training. We have shown that individuals can boost their essential skills through the clear route map and rigorous teaching and practice offered by the Skills Builder Universal Framework. This year, we see 2.7 times more progress by our participants against their peers.

The Partnership now is unrecognisable from its humble origins. In the last year 900 partners across 20 countries delivered more than 2.635 million individual programmes to boost essential skills using the Skills Builder approach.

In education, we now work with children from the age of 4 to apprentices, college and university graduates. Beyond the classroom or lecture theatre, we are seeing essential skills transformed on the rugby pitch, through the arts, on expeditions, in youth settings, and much more. And we have a growing number of trailblazing businesses joining up the journey from education into employment and throughout individuals' careers.

I'm overwhelmingly grateful to our team and our partners for embracing this collective approach. By working together as a Partnership, systemic change is in reach – indeed, it is already underway. Whether in statutory careers guidance in England, curriculum and assessment in Kenya, or teacher training in the Czech Republic, we are seeing the building of essential skills using the Skills Builder approach has become mainstream.

We are on an exciting trajectory – but the need is more urgent than ever. As technological change, automation, and societal and environmental challenges become ever more pressing it is these essential skills that will enable us all to face the future with confidence.

More than ever, we must ensure that one day, everyone builds the essential skills to succeed.

**Tom Ravenscroft**

# The critical impact of Essential Skills

**£4,600**

Increased annual earnings from higher essential skills

**25-50%**

reduced likelihood of unemployment

Seen in those with higher levels of essential skills

**91%**

of young people see the essential skills as key to being successfully recruited

**£22.2bn**

Potential value for the UK economy.

Over the last fifteen years, we have demonstrated just how critical essential skills really are to individuals' success. While the importance of skills including teamwork, communication, creativity and self-management have long seemed intuitively important, we have been systematically working to build the evidence base to show exactly how crucial they are – and why.

## **We have found robust evidence that higher levels of essential skills set individuals up for the rest of their lives:**

- In the UK, higher levels of essential skills *boost earnings* – moving from the lower quartile to the upper quartile essential skill score is associated with a wage premium of about £3,600-£4,600 per year
- UK workers *value those essential skills* – 92% believe essential skills are important to their careers, and over half would consider changing job to get more opportunities to build them
- Essential skills *predict job satisfaction* as strongly as income, and individuals with higher essential skills also report *higher life satisfaction*
- Individuals with higher essential skill levels are *25-50% less likely to be out of employment or education*

## **By reviewing the evidence base with partner researchers, we've also seen that:**

- Overwhelmingly, *young people see the value of essential skills* across key aspects of their lives for transition, including academic performance (78%), university entrance (66%), successful recruitment (91%), progression in employment (91%), and overcoming wider life challenges (89%).
- There are strong links between higher essential skill scores and self-efficacy and perseverance of effort.

## **However, it is also clear that opportunities to build those essential skills are not distributed fairly:**

- In education, learners with lower family incomes, parents or carers who are less engaged with their education, or who attend a non-selective school make less progress in building their essential skills
- On entering the labour market, individuals displaying lower levels of those skills earn less, and have fewer opportunities to build those skills further
- This means that individuals' essential skills often peak by age 40 – unless they receive consistent opportunities across their careers to be taught and apply those skills

If we were to fix this problem at the level of the UK, the value to the economy would be around £22.2bn per year – akin to resolving the gaps in numeracy and literacy.

# The Skills Builder approach

Evolving since 2008, the Skills Builder approach is now the *de facto* language and method for building essential skills for millions of individuals across the world.

One of the frequent criticisms about essential skills used to be that it was hard to know what they really were. Different taxonomies and terminologies proliferated, but they rarely went beyond another list of terms and sometimes their definitions. As such, it wasn't much of a surprise that teachers regularly reported that while they understood the importance of these skills, they didn't know where to begin in building them.

The first step was to define essential skills: *those highly transferable skills which almost everyone needs to do almost any job, and which support the application of technical skills and knowledge.*

We identified eight skills:



Following iterations and testing since 2016 with thousands of learners, the Universal Framework was launched in 2020. Its design was informed by a thorough year-long evidence review by partners including the Gatsby Foundation, CIPD, BITC, and Careers & Enterprise Company, as well as testing with twenty employers.

The Universal Framework is therefore one of the most rigorously developed and tested tools out there. By breaking each of the eight skills into 16 steps going from absolute beginner to mastery, it helps to provide a clear model for assessing and measuring skills and then teaching them in an efficient and effective way.

Beyond its use by our partners and programmes, it has been built into government guidance for careers guidance in England, T-level and Apprenticeship Standards and adopted in many Local Skills Improvement Plans across the country. Further afield, it is being built into curriculum and assessment standards in Uganda and Kenya, and teacher training in the Czech Republic.

As an open source tool, we are thrilled to see its widespread uptake, and the critical role it plays in defining *what* we mean by essential skills and *how* to assess and build them.

# Our journey

Over the last fifteen years, Skills Builder Partnership has grown from a single classroom to reaching millions of individuals in the last year alone. Here's our journey.

**2008**

The original Enabling Enterprise programme starts in twelve schools in London and Manchester with about 270 learners aged 14-16 taking part

**2009**

Enabling Enterprise becomes a Community Interest Company

**2010**

Enabling Enterprise pilots new programmes, including working with primary schools

**2013**

Enabling Enterprise celebrates five years with 20,900 students across 147 schools on its programmes

**2019**

Our first programmes run with Further Education colleges.  
The first impact organisation partners start to work with Skills Builder to develop a new range of high-impact programmes to boost essential skills beyond education

**2018**

Enabling Enterprise becomes Skills Builder Partnership, adopting a strategy of collective impact and collaborating with partners to align approaches to building essential skills

**2017**

*The Missing Piece: The Essential Skills that Education Forgot* is launched, sharing the learnings of the previous decade and introducing the Skills Builder Framework

**2014**

Offices in Birmingham and Manchester mean that Enabling Enterprise is available to schools across England for the first time

**2020**

Skills Builder Universal Framework launches after two years of development, testing and refinement in collaboration with Gatsby Foundation, CEC, BITC, CIPD and others.

**2021**

Skills Builder starts its formal international programmes with the Global Accelerator with schools in 9 countries  
Skills Builder Employer Programme launches, supporting businesses to use the Skills Builder approach in their outreach, recruitment, and staff development

**2022**

Skills Builder is included in statutory guidance in England, and works with governments in Uganda and Kenya to extend use of the Skills Builder approach into national curriculum and assessments

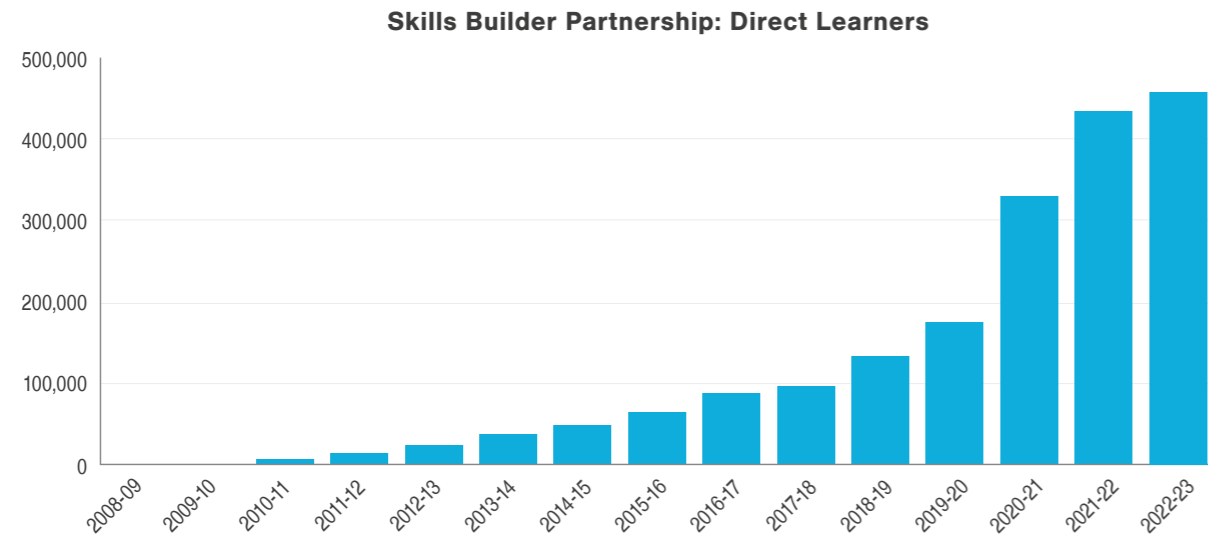
**2023**

Skills Builder Partnership celebrates 15 years with 2.635million participants, with 900 partners in 20 countries

# A fifteen year journey in four charts

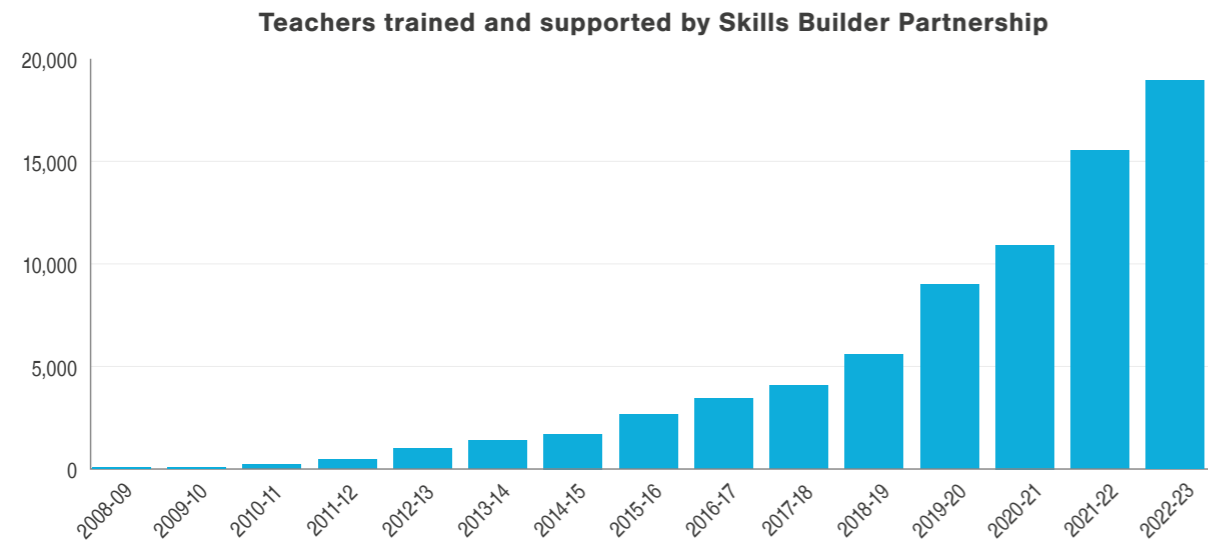
## Reaching learners at scale

From humble beginnings with a few classes totalling 270 learners in 2008, by 2023 the number of learners directly participating in Skills Builder-delivered programmes was more than 240,000 as well as 220,000 attending Award-holding schools and colleges. Cumulatively, more than 1.4million learner programmes have been delivered by Skills Builder since 2008.



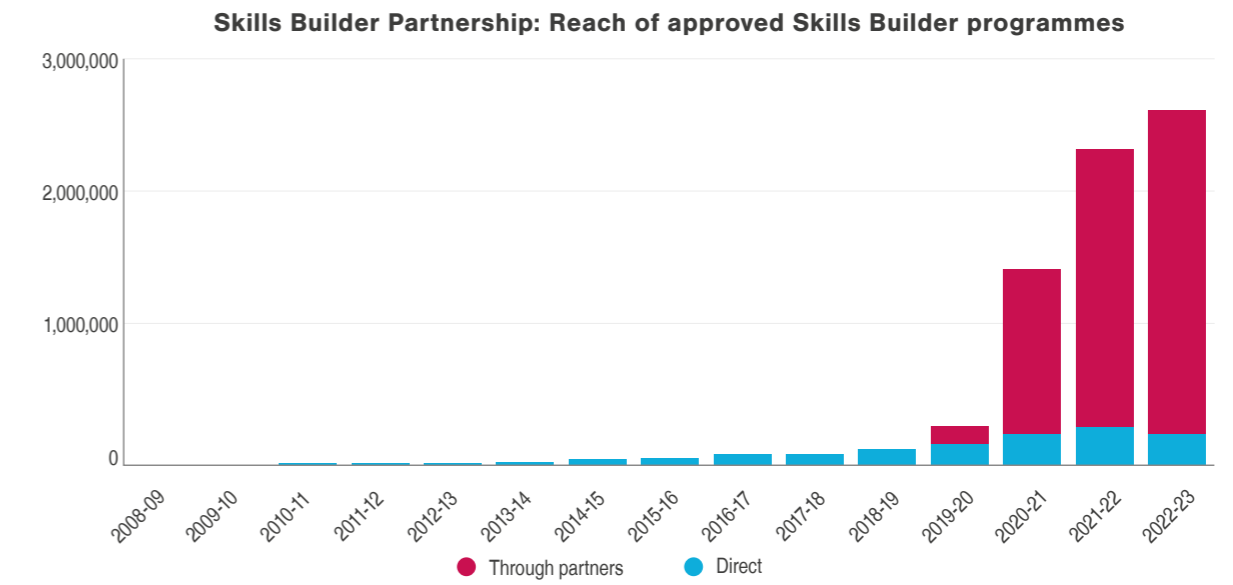
## Through thousands of educators

This was made possible by the hard work and engagement of thousands of teachers and Skills Leaders who delivered the Skills Builder approach with their learners – from 9 trained and supported in the first year, to more than 18,000 in the last year. Together, that’s more than 65,000 programmes of teacher training since 2008.



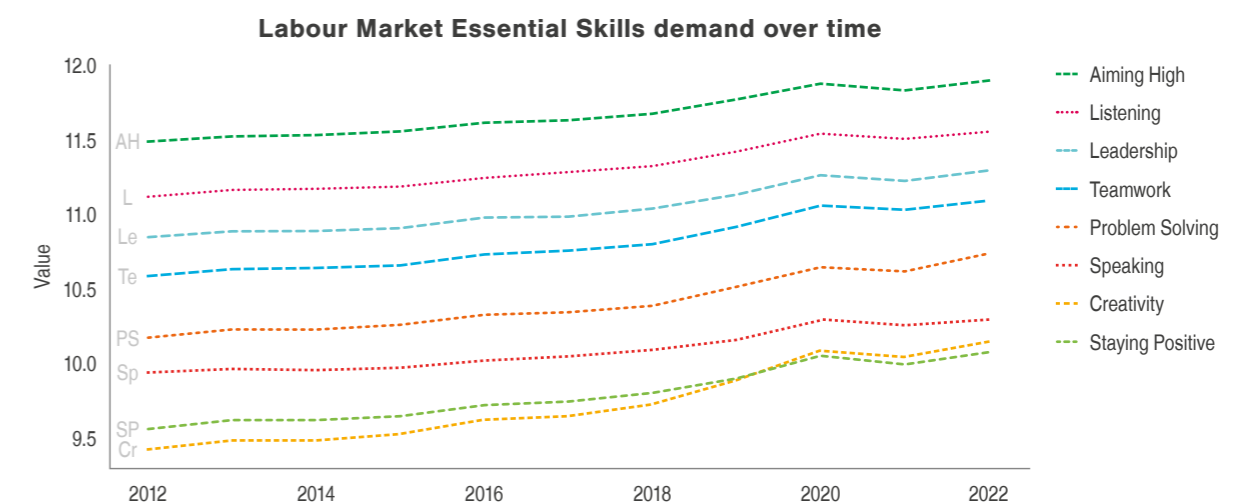
## Collective impact

But it is the focus on collective impact that has been transformational – with approved Skills Builder programmes from partners delivering 2,635,000 individual programmes in the last year alone – transforming the availability of opportunities to build essential skills.



## The opportunities ahead

We need to continue to grow our reach and impact because as we look forward, we can see that the labour market is going to need ever-higher levels of essential skills. But we can meet this challenge.



Source: Skills Builder Careers Explorer



# Educators

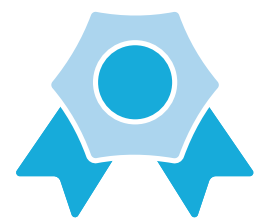
OUR REACH IN 2022 - 23



Partnership Reach



On active programmes



In Award-holding institutions

577

Schools and colleges in the Partnership in 2022-23

87%

UK secondary schools & colleges reached by the Partnership so far

18,991

Teachers trained and supported in 2022-23

240,991

Students reached on active programmes in 2022-23

720

Skills Builder Awards

222,435

Students in Award holding schools and colleges



# Our approach

When Skills Builder launched 15 years ago, the question was how to make the development of essential skills a normal part of a good education for every child and young person. That meant that every learner should have those opportunities. Over the years, we have expanded the accessibility of the approach: whether at primary or secondary school, in college or university, or in alternative provision or special school settings.

Over a decade, we honed the principles that underpinned best practice in building essential skills:



**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.

## 94%

of Skills Leaders

observe progress in  
the first term

Our Accelerator Programme works with cohorts of schools and colleges to build those best-practice principles deeply into education – enabling all the learners to benefit from world class essential skills teaching and progression. We train a Skills Leader to lead the approach in their institution, ensure all of the teachers are trained and confident, and work with senior leaders to make the policy changes required.

Beyond the schools and colleges in the Partnership, 87% of UK secondary schools and colleges are now reached by partners' approved programmes. Statutory careers guidance in England states that: 'In schools, each subject should support students to identify the essential skills they develop and to identify pathways to future careers... The Skills Builder Universal Framework shows how to build essential skills into the school or college curriculum.'

## 95%

of Skills Leaders

report increased confidence  
to deliver change in school  
after training

While this approach enables us to scale the impact, we have never lost sight of the individual learner: A step of progress might mean a learner is able to recall and follow simple instructions, to organise their ideas using a mind map, or to confidently speak in front of their peers for the first time. The Universal Framework helps every individual to own, master, and articulate their essential skills.

## The essential skills challenge in education

One of the long-term challenges in grappling with essential skills has been in being able to measure them. The Universal Framework has been a game-changer in this regard, using the skill steps to generate skills scores for individuals and then track them over time.

By doing this, we have also been able to shine a clear spotlight on the challenge. For 2022-23, we are drawing on 1,788 teacher-assessed cohorts reflecting 61,300 learners over the year.

Before learners had taken part in a Skills Builder programme, we can see the pattern of essential skills by age in the UK looks like this:

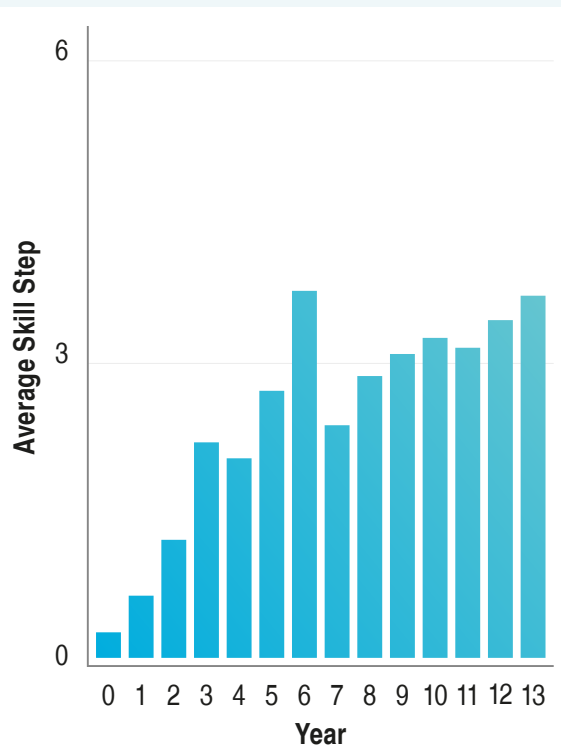
### The starting point

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 0.57 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.

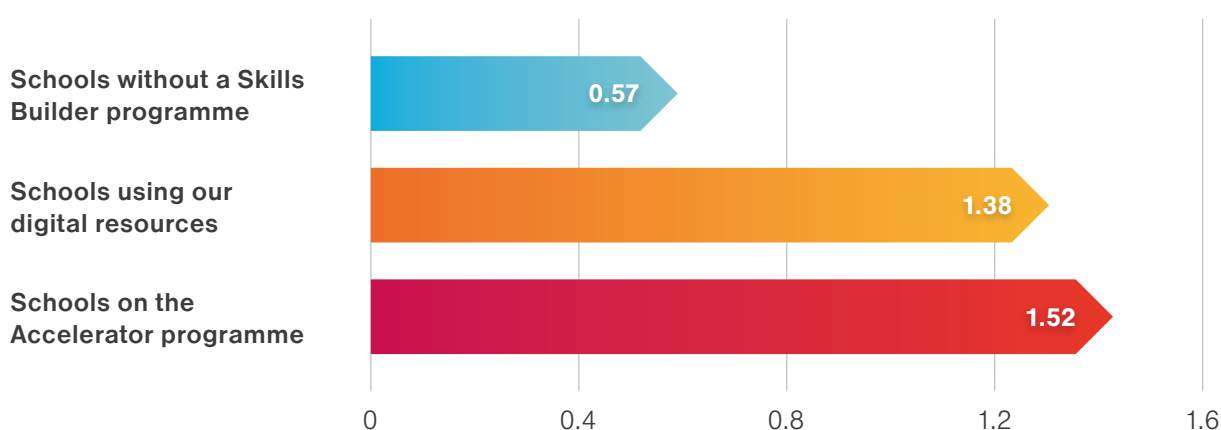
More concerning is at secondary school, where progress stalls and, on average, young people are making negligible progress for several years.



## Transforming learner progress

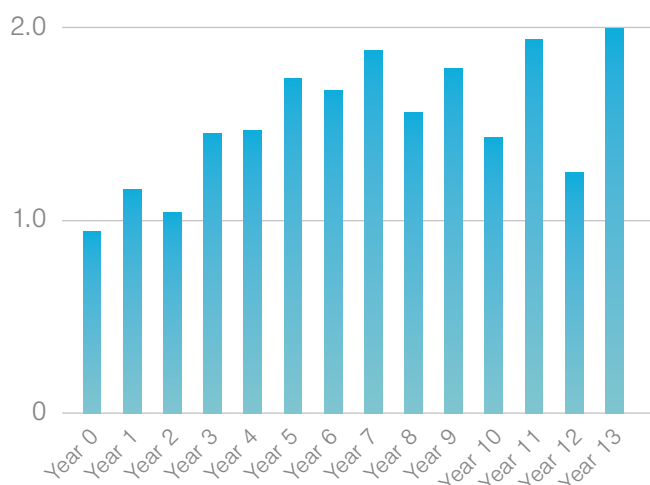
Because of our research mapping the essential skill requirements of different professions (Careers Explorer, 2023), we know that there is a meaningful gap between the entry-level essential skills requirements of most occupations and those demonstrated by young people leaving education.

We use tools based on the Universal Framework to enable us to measure learners' essential skills before and after a programme, and to track progress. By comparing with the implicit rate of progress made by learners who have not been on a Skills Builder programme before, we can compare the progress from schools and colleges on the Skills Builder Accelerator:

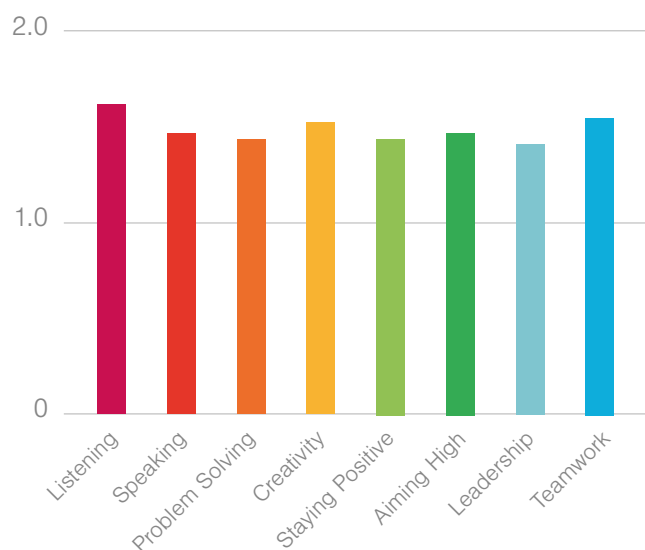


This accelerated rate of progress also helps to close the gaps shown on the previous page, with this progress evident in all year groups and across all eight essentials skills:

**Progress by year group for Accelerator schools**



**Progress by skill for Accelerator schools**



## A decade of building essential skills at William Tyndale Primary School



A long-term vision to equip their students with essential skills has marked a decade of partnership with William Tyndale Primary School in the London Borough of Islington.

While teaching Year 6, now Headteacher Sophie Gavalda, noticed difficulties in the children’s ability to collaborate and present. Set against the backdrop of Islington’s high level of young people outside of employment or training, the school made addressing this a priority.

Inspired by the idea of projects linking school learning with a careers curriculum, the school launched its first Skills Builder project, ‘A Day in Politics’. Children excitedly created their own political parties, proposing their priorities. “The impact on the children was immediate, with high levels of engagement and a clear link with developing communication and confidence that as a school we thought, actually, this should become part of our curriculum”, reflected Sophie Gavalda.

Over the years, the school has deeply integrated essential skills into all subject areas and school policies, creating a holistic approach to skill development. Weekly Skills Builder sessions are in place, and designating a “Skill of the Month” has shaped skill integration across the academic year, as does alignment with other school initiatives, such as the United Nations’ Rights Respecting Curriculum.

William Tyndale has also created inspiring opportunities for children of all ages to apply their essential skills to challenges with local businesses – from designing an ice-cream with the local ice-cream shop, to working with a fragrance company to create a new perfume.

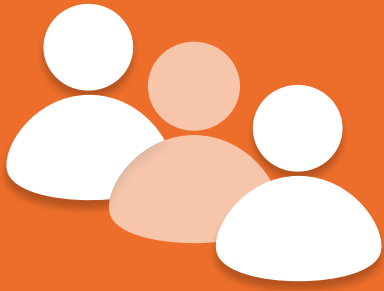
Sophie Gavalda reflected that all the children can confidently use the language of essential skills and identify the skills needed when they face a problem. They develop creative solutions to issues, apply different strategies, and the programme has boosted their resilience. Children now have a much deeper understanding of careers and how they can use essential skills later in life.

The school is now also supporting the whole staff team to build their own essential skills to higher levels, with managers providing coaching and support using the Framework.

William Tyndale holds a Gold Award for Excellence in building Essential Skills, and is now striving for Flagship status. Its commitment to expanding Skills Builder among local schools and businesses is ensuring that many more children and young people in Islington develop the essential skills to succeed.

“ The impact on the children was immediate, with high levels of engagement and a clear link with developing communication and confidence... ”

• SOPHIE GAVALDA •  
HEADTEACHER, WILLIAM TYNDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL



# Impact Organisations

OUR REACH IN 2022 - 23



222

Impact organisation partners in 2022-23



2,393,000

Opportunities delivered on Level 2+ programmes in 2022-23



199

Approved programmes in 2022-23

# Our approach

One of the big changes that Skills Builder has made over the last fifteen years is the move from a model of directly delivering programmes into schools, to seeing our mission as only being achievable through collective impact. That means we need lots of organisations working together, aligning their efforts to boost essential skills. Each of partners brings unique expertise and reach, but collectively we can ensure that every individual is getting the rounded set of opportunities to learn and practice their essential skills.

Our impact organisation partners are a diverse group covering focus areas including employability, sports, the arts, volunteering, parental engagement, inclusion and retraining. This means that a child or young person being taught essential skills in school or college might be able to apply those skills on the sports pitch, on an expedition or through debate. This is transformative for reinforcing those skills and making them transferable across the rest of their lives.

## Impact Levels

Partners deliver life-changing opportunities to build essential skills to millions of individuals every year. We recognise this impact with one of four Impact Levels:

**Level 1: Raising awareness of essential skills:** These programmes make participants more aware of the eight essential skills and their role in supporting success



**Level 2: Reflecting on essential skills:** These programmes give individuals the opportunity to learn more about essential skills and reflect on where they currently are



**Level 3: Practising essential skills:** These programmes give individuals the opportunity to apply and practice their essential skills and develop the steps



**Level 4: Progressing in essential skills:** These programmes combine formative assessment with direct instruction and practice in essential skills, leading to progress

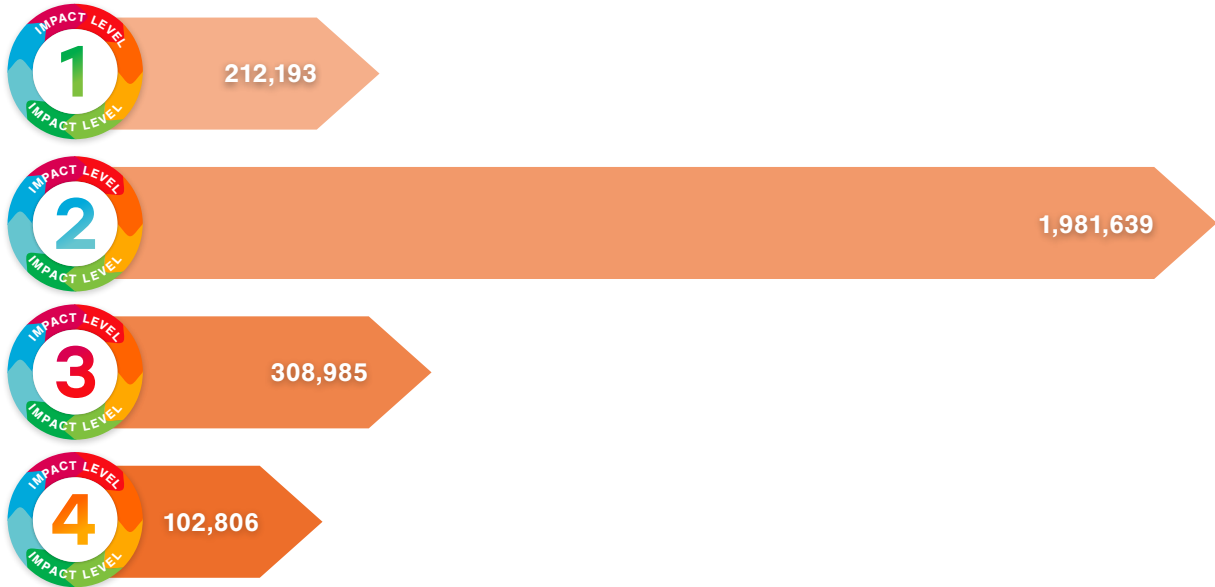


Through the *Impact Programme* and *Impact Academy*, we work with partners to help them to make the most of the Skills Builder approach in their programme design, impact measurement, and staff training. Successful programmes are approved at one of the Impact Levels above, and then promoted to our wider education and employer network through the Impact Directory.

## Our impact

This year, it's been great to see continued growth in the number of individuals benefitting from high quality approved essential skills programmes, and also the growing depth of those programmes as more achieve the highest Impact Levels:

### Opportunities delivered



Beyond creating more high quality opportunities to boost essential skills, we are pleased that partners are seeing the value of being part of the Partnership:



## Our partners

During 2022-23, we were pleased to work with 222 impact organisation partners to deliver opportunities to build essential skills.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with all of our partners:





## The power of a universal language at Envision



Envision's partnership with Skills Builder has turbocharged essential skills development for young people aged 14-19 through designing and implementing projects that create tangible, lasting improvements within their school or college communities – from raising awareness of mental health, to creating a uniform swap shop.

In 2020, Envision sought to streamline their approach. As the organisation had grown, so had their programme iterations. "The magic was there, but it wasn't quite pushing everyone in the same direction," explained Jo Clark, Director of Programmes and Impact at Envision. Envision's expanding work with schools and desire to better understand its outcomes had also increased the need for a more standardised curriculum.

Envision found alignment with Skills Builder's Universal Framework. "There was something truly wonderful, accessible, enduring, evidenced, and transferable about the language of Skills Builder," said Elisabeth Paulson, CEO of Envision. They worked together to craft their Envision Essential Skills Framework – fully integrating the Universal Framework and refining their curriculum to build these skills explicitly. Essential skills became their ultimate outcome and heart of their mission.

On the Envision programme, young people assess their essential skills pre- and post-programme. When they come to present their projects, the emphasis is not just on "who has the most successful social action project" but "who has developed their essential skills, how they've used them to make change, and how they'll use them in the future," explained Elisabeth Paulson.

Another part of the programme sees teams of young people paired with a team of mentors from a local business who support their skills development and projects. Young people and mentors use that recognised common skills language – and mentors value building their own essential skills in the process. "What we were able to do by working with Skills Builder was to go to our partners and use that universal language as well, strengthening the programme," reflected Jo Clark.

Envision progressed to make this same language part of their staff development, which has supported high-quality programme delivery. Relationships between programme coordinators and young people have also benefited from that shared understanding and language.

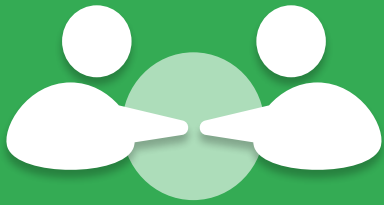
Envision is proud to be part of a broader movement emphasising the importance of essential skills. "We want our outcomes and our programme's rigour to be as strong as possible so essential skills sceptics have less opportunity to pick holes and supporters more opportunity to say this is one of the reasons why essential skills need more attention," Elisabeth Paulson commented.

Envision's achievements include a top Impact Level 4 programme rating and a Gold Excellence Mark for their staff development work, showcasing how the Universal Framework connects values and impact throughout an organisation - and, most importantly, for the individuals it serves.

“ There was something truly wonderful, accessible, enduring, evidenced, and transferable about the language of Skills Builder ”

• ELISABETH PAULSON •

CEO, ENVISION



# Employers

OUR REACH IN 2022 - 23



101

employer partners

53

working towards  
Excellence Standards

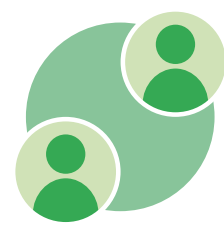


42

offering high quality  
volunteering

88,806

individuals building  
essential skills through  
employer partners



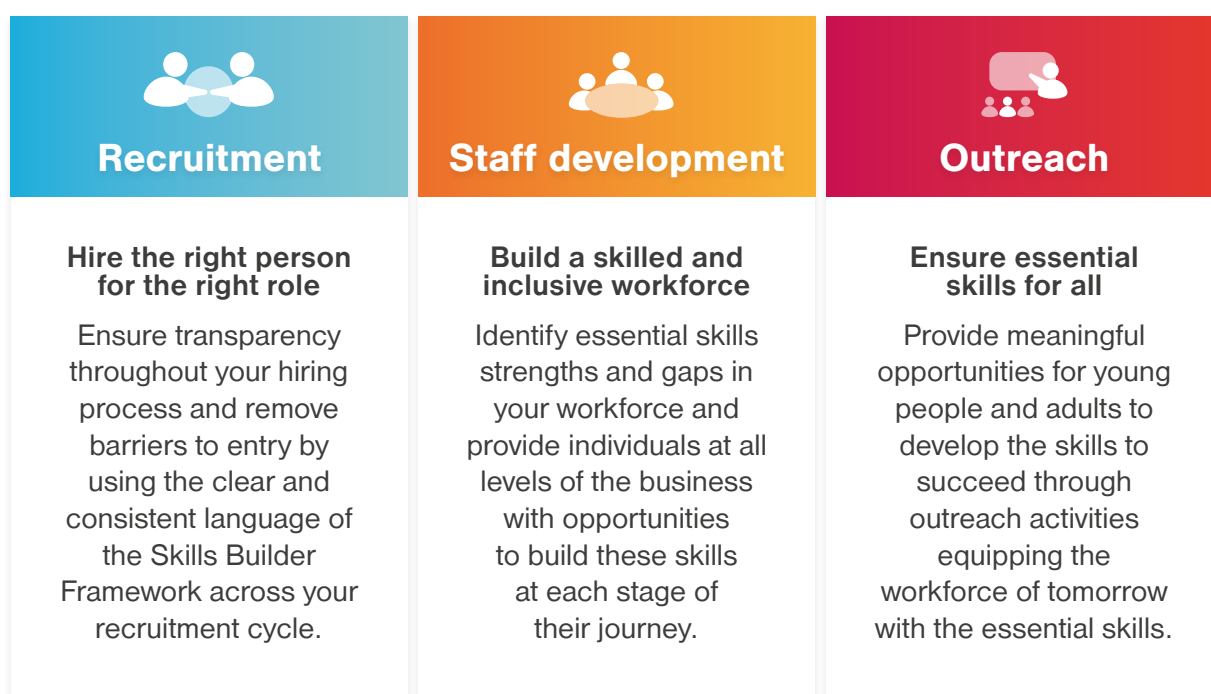
34

supporting  
collective impact

# Our approach

The critical third group in the Partnership are employers. Fifteen years ago, headlines bemoaned that 'schools are churning out the unemployable'. Since then, we have seen really meaningful progress with hundreds of employers having stepped up to support children and young people to hone and practice their essential skills in employment settings. In the last three years, the launch of the Universal Framework helped to bridge one of the most challenging changes that young people often face – from education into employment.

Far beyond just outreach to education though, our work with employer partners focuses on how to use the Skills Builder approach to seize the opportunities that essential skills offer, working across:



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

For many employers, it doesn't stop there. They support schools and communities to build essential skills through outreach, building a virtuous circle of skills development.

## Our impact

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**23%**

**improvement**

in employers being able to recruit candidates

### Trailblazer employer research

We have learnt how impactful the Skills Builder approach can be for businesses and other employers across their recruitment, staff development, and outreach (Trailblazers Report, 2022):

#### 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.

**75%**

**of employees**

felt more engaged in their work

#### Staff Development

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.

#### 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.

#### Employer Programme

We also see strong feedback from participants on our Employer Programme:

**96%**

average satisfaction scores from partners

**87%**

average score for recommendation of Employer Programme to a peer

**91%**

average satisfaction score with training

## Our partners

During 2022-23, we were pleased to work with 101 employer partners to deliver opportunities to build essential skills. This included 53 partners who were working towards achieving Excellence Standards. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with all of our partners:

<b>Adecco</b>	<b>Higgins</b>	<b>Oppidan Education</b>
<b>AKW</b>	<b>Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON)</b>	<b>PA Consulting</b>
<b>Allen &amp; Overy</b>	<b>Higher Horizons+</b>	<b>Places for People</b>
<b>Amey</b>	<b>HS2</b>	<b>PwC</b>
<b>Baker McKenzie</b>	<b>Institute of Chartered Accountants in England &amp; Wales (ICAEW)</b>	<b>Rural Payments Agency</b>
<b>Balfour Beatty Vinci</b>	<b>KFC</b>	<b>Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts (SFCT)</b>
<b>Bank of England</b>	<b>KPMG</b>	<b>SSE (Scottish and Southern Energy)</b>
<b>Birmingham Airport</b>	<b>KX Recruit</b>	<b>Tata Consultancy Services</b>
<b>Breedon Cement Ltd</b>	<b>Kyndryl</b>	<b>Thames Water</b>
<b>Capgemini</b>	<b>Linklaters</b>	<b>The Brilliant Club</b>
<b>CIPD</b>	<b>Lloyds Banking Group</b>	<b>The Crown Estate</b>
<b>City &amp; Guilds</b>	<b>LNER</b>	<b>Tideway</b>
<b>City Year UK</b>	<b>Morgan Sindall construction and infrastructure</b>	<b>UBS</b>
<b>Clarion Housing Group</b>	<b>Network Rail</b>	<b>University of East Anglia</b>
<b>East Sussex Careers Hub</b>	<b>Oliver Bonas</b>	<b>Weil</b>
<b>Envision</b>	<b>On-Purpose</b>	<b>Wembley Park</b>
<b>FloodFlash</b>	<b>Opencast</b>	<b>West London Alliance</b>
<b>Harlequins Foundation</b>		
<b>Heathrow</b>		
<b>HEPP SY</b>		

We are pleased to have worked with these organisations to support outreach and volunteering too:

<b>Allen &amp; Overy</b>	<b>Innovo Engineering &amp; Consultancy</b>	<b>Places for People</b>
<b>Baker Mckenzie</b>	<b>ISG</b>	<b>Ride Tandem</b>
<b>Brewin Dolphin</b>	<b>KPMG</b>	<b>Rural Payments Agency</b>
<b>Buro Happold</b>	<b>LGT Wealth Management</b>	<b>Stagecoach Group</b>
<b>Defra/Rural Payments Agency</b>	<b>Lloyds Banking Group</b>	<b>Tata Consultancy Services</b>
<b>Eversheds Sutherland</b>	<b>London Stock Exchange Group</b>	<b>Tideway</b>
<b>GE</b>	<b>Lovell</b>	<b>Unity Trust Bank</b>
<b>Gibson Dunn &amp; Crutcher LLP</b>	<b>Mercia</b>	<b>Watson Farley &amp; Williams LLP</b>
<b>HEPP SY</b>	<b>Mercia Asset Management</b>	<b>Weil, Gotshal &amp; Manges (London) LLP</b>
<b>Higgins</b>	<b>MFS Investment Management</b>	<b>Willmott Dixon</b>
<b>Hilton</b>	<b>Oliver Bonas</b>	<b>Zurich</b>
<b>HS2</b>		
<b>HSBC</b>		

## The versatility of the Universal Framework at Amey



Amey, an infrastructure services and engineering company, with more than 10,000 employees across the UK, partnered with Skills Builder to boost employee development and increase the impact of their outreach.

Amey's participation in the Government's post-pandemic Kickstarter work experience scheme for unemployed young people was a catalyst for getting involved. Amey needed to demonstrate that the programme was more than just something people did, but that it had measurable benefits and outcomes.

On discovering Skills Builder, Amey found the perfect fit for assessing developmental progress on the Kickstarter programme, and implemented the Universal Framework to support and assess participants.

Inspired by the programme's success – and the Framework's versatility – Amey sought to leverage it for further initiatives, including the Duke of Edinburgh programme for young employees. "It seemed like the perfect fit because they are skills that can relate to absolutely anything, any job you do," said Sarah Hale, Social Value Manager at Amey. Impact was tangible, as Amey observed young employees were coming away with a more developed skill set, consisting of the skills they needed.

Outreach and work experience programmes were the next step for Amey, which enabled them to personalise programmes by first assessing participants' essential skills and then using these insights to capitalise on strengths and focus on development areas.

"It wasn't just a case of, here are the eight essential skills; it was let's make it beneficial to you and make sure we're actually improving your skills," Sarah Hale explained.

The next group to be targeted was early careers, resulting in the Essential Skills Academy that reaches hundreds of apprentices and graduates, and has been awarded a Gold Excellence Mark. Participants build essential skills related to their role on a six-month essential skills module. Line manager appraisals and reviews formalise and reinforce the importance of these skills, fostering a complete approach across the business. The programme has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from staff who are seeing individuals across the business make meaningful progress.

The Skills Builder approach is now core at Amey. In Sarah Hale's words, "I love having people come to me, asking me questions about the Framework, hearing about it and using it. If I see people using it off their own back, it brings me a lot of joy and it makes you pretty proud."

Achieving their latest Excellence Mark has inspired Amey to strive for Platinum, setting their sights on integrating the Framework into their recruitment processes.

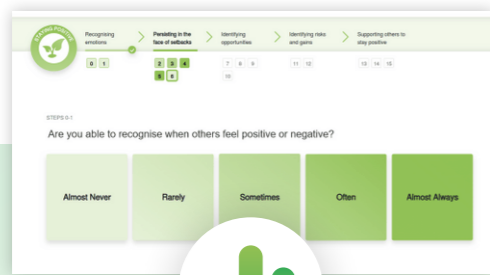
“ It wasn't just a case of, here are the eight essential skills; it was let's make it beneficial to you and make sure we're actually improving your skills ”

• SARAH HALE •  
SOCIAL VALUE MANAGER, AMEY

# Our products

Over the last fifteen years, we have seen that everyone can benefit from building their essential skills – and everyone has the capacity to do so.

While we primarily work through our partners, we also have a product offer that enables everyone to build essential skills in four different ways:



## Skills Builder Benchmark

Benchmark is the innovative tool for individuals to assess their levels of essential skills.

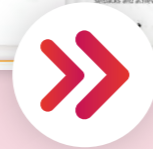
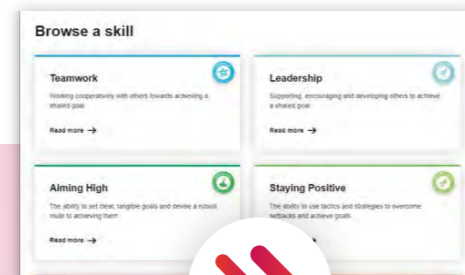
It is used widely by employers to understand their teams' skill levels and target professional development, as well as by educators and impact organisations.

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, 151,623 self-reflections have been completed by 24,852 individuals.

[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 11,610 users in 2022-23 and is continuing to grow organically.

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



## Skills Builder Hub

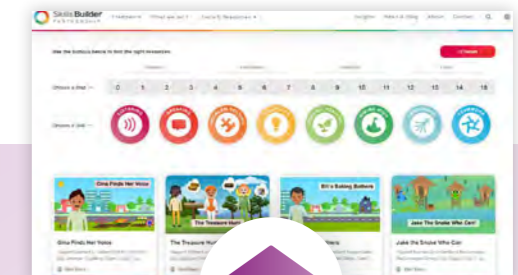
The Skills Builder Hub opens up the opportunity for schools and colleges to build their essential skills wherever in the world they are. The Hub includes:

- 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 2022-23, Skills Builder Hub had more than 8,000 active users from 94 different countries. These users supported 61,300 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 2022-23, the Home Learning Zone had 6,961 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

Over the last fifteen years, we have seen the power of working together to transform essential skills: it is far beyond the scope of any single organisation to effect such change.

We are grateful to our supporting organisations for making this work possible:

- Funding Accelerator and Global Accelerator programmes for our state school and college partners, to make the programme accessible to everyone
- Investing to scale up our Impact Programme and Impact Academy, reaching many impact organisations who would otherwise be unable to access this support
- Collaborating on research that builds the case for essential skills, and how to build them effectively

Over the years, many of the innovations which are now core to our programmes and approach have been made possible by the generous support of partners – including products like Hub, Benchmark, Launchpad, and Homezone.

We are also grateful to the support of partners who make our international pro bono work possible.

Thank you to all of you.



ALLEN & OVERY



Baker McKenzie



CIPD

Coast to Capital



教育燃新  
EDNOVATORS

four acre trust



Heathrow

happSY

Higgins PARTNERSHIPS

HS2

KPMG



Linklaters

LLOYDS BANK



London Stock Exchange Group



OLIVER BONAS

Places for People



SAVANNAH WISDOM



the guinness partnership



UBS

Wates





# Looking forward: the road to 10 million opportunities

As a Partnership, I think we can feel immensely proud of what has been achieved, and excited about our momentum as we move beyond our first fifteen years.

Skills Builder Partnership has always been driven by a belief that our mission was not merely a marketing slogan, but a guiding beacon and a tangible goal: one day, everyone will build the essential skills to succeed.

As a way marker to achieving that mission, we set ourselves the ambitious goal of delivering 10 million opportunities to boost essential skills by 2025. Those individuals would be reached through high quality, structured programmes which were approved as delivering against the Skills Builder Universal Framework. To put that in context, the first decade of our work delivered 490,000 opportunities cumulatively – so we need to deliver twenty times the impact in less than half the time.

To achieve this, our strategy through to 2025 focuses on five priorities:



## **Grow the Partnership**

We will continue to grow the number of aligned partners in each of our partner groups: education, impact organisations, and employers



## **Provide high quality platforms and content**

We want to continuously upgrade our core products of Hub, Benchmark and Launchpad so they drive essential skills development at scale



## **Align infrastructure organisations**

We will strengthen relationships with those organisations who set the rules and norms for others to help make the Skills Builder approach the standard



## **Influence national policy**

We will engage with national government where we have learning to share and where we see scope to create more high quality opportunities to boost essential skills



## **Build global networks**

We have learnt a huge amount from our global partners and will continue to make the Partnership more global, sharing resources and materials in different languages and being part of the international skills conversation.

We have come an enormously long way from a handful of classrooms in 2008. Essential skills are more critical than ever before – and we now know how to measure them, how to build them for every individual, and have evidence that this can be done at scale. As a Partnership, we have a unique opportunity – let's seize it.

*Tom Ravenscroft*

