

# Tackling educational inequality in the UK

A portfolio of partnerships for **collective impact**



**UBS**

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# Introduction

The education system in the UK is not providing all young people with the education they deserve. The gap in achievement between the poorest and the wealthiest is entrenched, regional disparities are widening, and the disruption caused by the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities. In the aftermath of COVID there is increasing recognition of these issues however, and the foundational role that teachers, schools and the wider education system play in creating fair and prosperous communities.

Philanthropy can help catalyze innovative, collaborative and multi-sector solutions to help close the disadvantage gap in UK education.

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Education is one of the most powerful tools for lifting the socially excluded out of poverty and into society. It narrows the gender gap and lays the foundation for all young people to reach their potential. Beyond the value to the individual, education contributes to greater productivity, innovation and economic growth. Investing in education at every level brings positive public returns to governments. The acquisition of skills is increasingly critical in competitive economies, while higher levels of education translate into better health outcomes and greater levels of civic participation.

In the UK, current trends in educational outcomes place these benefits to individuals and society in peril.

Disadvantaged children are starting school behind their more advantaged peers, and the gap in achievement increases as they progress through school. Those who've been in poverty the longest are falling further behind, and regional disparities are widening. The pandemic had an adverse impact on many young people's mental health, but poorer pupils and those with special educational needs or disabilities are not recovering as quickly. Socio-economic status still dictates the type of destination young people enter post-16, and the gap in progression rates to university has grown.

While the relationship between disadvantage and educational outcomes is complex, the principle that a child's success in life should not be limited by their socio-economic or ethnic background is not. Success will require a holistic approach, a long-term time horizon, as well as collective and collaborative approaches between multiple stakeholders. It will also pay long-term social and economic dividends.

Philanthropy can play a catalytic role in driving this change. Philanthropists can provide flexible funding to pilot innovative solutions. They can mobilize their networks and work with governments and educators to scale proven interventions. And they can use their resources to ensure that the communities affected have a voice in designing the solutions needed.

This guide highlights some of the organizations that are already bucking the trend and tackling key challenges in UK education. The UBS Optimus Foundation's UK Education Collective Portfolio has been launched to help ensure that all children, regardless of their background, can thrive in education and beyond. Whatever role you want to play as a philanthropist, we look forward to helping you navigate the challenges and explore the best ways to address them.

Your UBS UK Social Impact and Philanthropy Team

# The challenges at a glance

There is a significant and persistent disadvantage gap in education in the UK.

The Fair Education Alliance's most recent assessment of progress in addressing educational inequality in the UK<sup>1</sup> makes sombre reading. The attainment gaps between disadvantaged\* young people and their wealthier peers are now wider than ever at **every stage** of a young person's educational journey:

- Disadvantaged children are starting school on average 4.6 months behind their better off peers
- Attainment gaps at both primary and GCSE are each at their highest levels in over a decade
- Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are on average over 3 grades behind by A level
- The gap in progression rates to university has grown over the past decade, especially for the most selective universities
- Disadvantaged young people are more than twice as likely to be NEET\*\*

The impact of the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis has widened existing educational inequalities<sup>2</sup>. One in 20 teenagers in their GCSE year are missing at least half of their lessons<sup>3</sup>.

The mental health and well-being of poorer pupils and those with SEND\*\*\* has failed to bounce back from pandemic lows. Those with care experience have significantly poorer educational and life outcomes than the general population on average and are underrepresented in higher education<sup>4</sup>.

Educational inequalities by ethnicity are nuanced and there are significant differences within broad ethnic groups. Despite the educational success of some ethnic minorities however, young people from non-white backgrounds continue to face disadvantage in apprenticeships and in the labor market<sup>5</sup>.

Place also has a role in shaping outcomes and the inequalities between them, and regional disparities in educational outcomes are widening, particularly in the wake of COVID<sup>6</sup>.

The relationship between disadvantage and attainment is complex<sup>7</sup> but the overall picture is clear: our education system is currently failing the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.

\* Pupils are classed as "disadvantaged" if they were eligible for free school meals in the past six years, and "persistently disadvantaged" if they were eligible for free school meals for 80% of their time in education. Education Policy institute.

\*\* Not in Education, Employment or Training.

\*\*\* Special Educational Needs and Disability.

## The Disadvantage Gap



4.6 months behind on **starting primary school**

1 year behind by the time they **leave primary school**

18 months behind **at GCSEs**

3.1 grades behind by **A level**

20.2% Gap in progression rate to **university**

2x as likely to be **NEET\*\* later in life**

The 'disadvantage gap' is a measure of the difference in educational attainment between disadvantaged students and all other pupils. It is a key measure of social mobility and an indicator of progress in reducing inequalities in education.

 4.2 million

Children living in poverty in the UK<sup>8</sup>.

 1 in 5

school aged children now have a probable mental health condition<sup>9</sup>.

 760

Number of youth centers that have closed since 2010/11<sup>10</sup>.

 £22.2 billion

Cost to the UK economy of low essential skills<sup>11</sup>.

 120 thousand

Number of children missing at least half of their time in school<sup>12</sup>.

 41%

Amount by which the Government missed its target for recruitment of secondary school teachers in 2023.

3x

Disadvantaged pupils are **3x less likely** to

- Achieve above expected level at age 11
- Achieve above expected level at GCSE
- Attend the most selective higher education institutions.

On this measure of educational disadvantage [the disadvantage gap at GCSE], England ranks in the, **bottom half of developed nations**.

**Educational Inequalities, IFS Deaton Review**  
August 2022



# Promising solutions

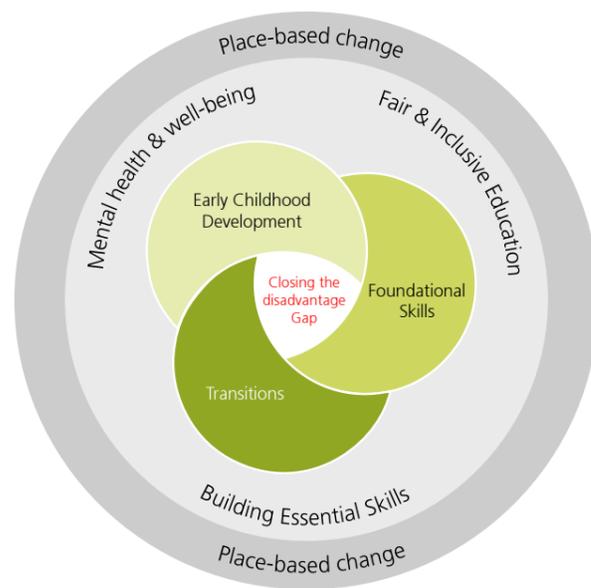
The issues facing the UK's education system are challenging and complex, but there are individuals and organizations successfully bucking the trend in educational inequality in the UK.

UBS Optimus Foundation's UK Education Collective Portfolio has been launched to shine a light on some of them.

# UBS Optimus Foundation

## UK Education Collective Portfolio

### Closing the disadvantage gap – a holistic approach



Addressing the disadvantage gap in UK education requires a holistic approach to dismantle barriers to education, both within and outside of school. Collectively, the organizations we are partnering with support and deliver interventions working across all stages of a child's education journey, from cradle to career.

Our UK Education Collective Portfolio has three core areas of focus:

- **Early Childhood Development**
- **Foundational Skills** (literacy and numeracy)
- **Transitions** between educational stages and beyond into employment

We also look to address a number of cross-cutting themes: **mental health and well-being**, developing **'essential' skills** and building a **fairer and more inclusive education system**.

And we know that **place matters**. Sustainable change requires social impact organizations to contextualize their work, working in partnership with and learning from the communities they are looking to support. Our partner Right to Succeed is an exemplar of excellence in **place-based change** and we are exploring partnerships with other organizations who are carefully stewarding this approach. Place also matters to philanthropists who often have deep connections to the communities of which they are a part.

The UBS Optimus Foundation's UK Education Collective Portfolio supports organizations that are working to transform educational outcomes in the UK to help ensure that all children, regardless of their background, can thrive in education and beyond.

### Scaling evidence-based solutions to drive systemic change

Our UK Education Collective Portfolio has been carefully curated to channel resource to programs and organizations that are tackling deep-rooted inequalities in the UK education system.



The portfolio includes both 'delivery' partners – organizations working directly with schools, teachers, pupils and their carers, as well as 'pipeline' partners – organizations working to identify and strengthen other organizations. Some of our partners have well-established interventions that they are scaling nationwide, others are relatively early stage or have a more focused geographic nexus. UBS is also the founding corporate partner and provides support to the Fair Education Alliance, a cross-sector coalition of organizations working to support fairer educational outcomes in the UK.

Our portfolio will continue to evolve over time.

#### How we ensure impact

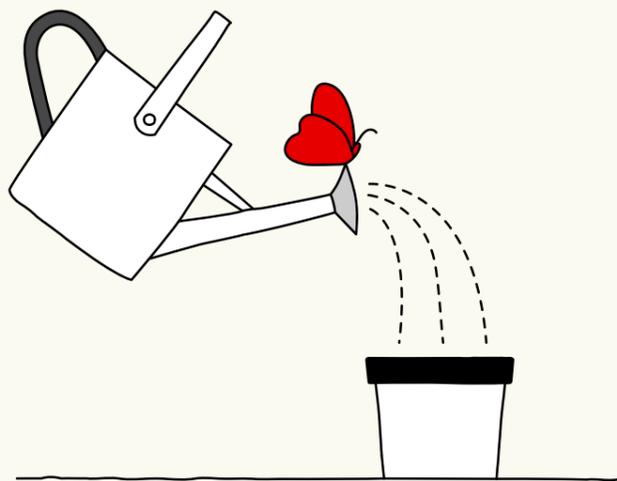
UBS Optimus Foundation partners are carefully identified and assessed against a global framework for evaluation and impact. Our UK Program Directors work closely with partner organizations on a long-term basis to help scale their impact. Funding is transferred periodically under structured grant agreements to minimize administrative burdens for our partners and ensure Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all donations are clearly agreed. Partnerships are actively managed against the agreed KPIs, with on-going monitoring and evaluation, and periodic reporting. Wherever appropriate we look to provide outcomes-based, unrestricted funding to trusted partners at an organizational level. We leverage the full spectrum of UBS resource in support of our partners, providing skills-based volunteering support, access to UBS premises for events, and connections to our networks.

# Supporting early childhood care and development

The early years of a child's life are fundamental in shaping their educational and life outcomes.

The period from birth to five years old is crucial for brain development, forming the foundation for future learning, behavior, and health. Children's experience of love and protection as well as their living environment affect their future learning trajectory.

Because learning builds on previous foundations, improving early childhood care and development is one of the best opportunities to improve future academic, economic, health and well-being outcomes<sup>1</sup>.



29%  
of UK children live  
in poverty<sup>2</sup>.

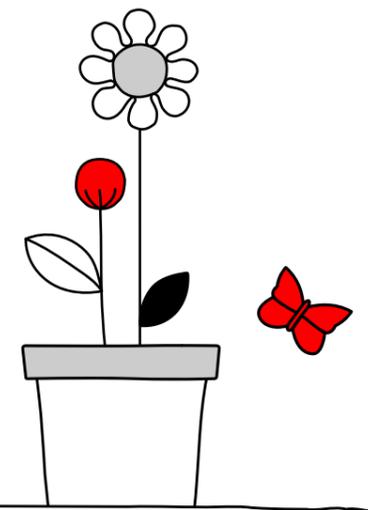


Children who have lived in persistent poverty during their first seven years have cognitive development scores on average 20% below children who have never experienced poverty<sup>3</sup>.



The most vulnerable and in need families are the least likely to know what school readiness means or how to access support<sup>4</sup>.

Helping parents to provide materially and emotionally for their children in their first years of life, providing high quality early years education and breaking cycles of abuse for the most vulnerable can all play a key role in providing young children from more disadvantaged backgrounds with the best start in life.





## Purposeful Ventures

Families in need often struggle to obtain essential items – despite other families having an excess of baby and children’s clothes and equipment that can be reused.

Baby banks like **Little Village** and the national **Baby Bank Alliance** help to bring local communities together to provide clothes and essentials to help tackle vulnerable families’ immediate needs, as well as connect them to broader networks offering support and advice. Both organizations form part of **Purposeful Ventures** Children and Families portfolio.



## Learning with Parents

A child’s parents and home learning environment during the early years have the greatest impact upon long-term life outcomes, above any other factor<sup>5</sup>.

**Learning with Parents** supports parent-child interactions to build positive learning experiences, particularly in disadvantaged communities. They work with schools to make it easy and fun for parents and children to learn together, breaking down barriers through home learning programs in English and maths.

Activities are open-ended and accessible for everyone and Learning with Parents are currently expanding their primary school offering into Early Years.



## Ark Start

**Ark Start** provides subsidized high-quality, teacher-led early education with a focus on working with parents and training nursery staff. Their model is currently being piloted in two nursery settings in Wandsworth and Croydon, with plans to open at least two more in 2024.

“When children join my Reception class from Ark Start, I can instantly tell the difference. They communicate well, can manage their emotions and settle into school ... For children whose home life is quite stressful, spending a few mornings a week at Ark Start makes a huge difference.

**Reception Class Teacher**  
Ark John Archer Primary Academy



Improving the home learning environment, particularly for the most disadvantaged families, can boost learning outcomes in reading and maths, particularly for younger children.

“Learning with Parents has helped make learning at home fun.

**Iwona**  
Parent

Around one in five children in the UK experience domestic abuse, often starting when they are still in the womb<sup>6</sup>.

Supporting the most vulnerable children and families can help break cycles of abuse and transform life chances<sup>7</sup>.

## For Baby’s Sake

**For Baby’s Sake** works with expectant parents with domestic abuse in their relationship. Embedded within local multi-agency systems and children’s services, the program takes a whole-family approach to deal with the entire cycle and history of domestic abuse. Therapeutic support is provided individually to both parents, supporting them to play a positive role in raising their child. By breaking repeated cycles of trauma and adversity, the program achieves genuine transformation in the physical and mental well-being and life chances of babies and their families.

“After over 30 years in social work and early help family support I know we need to develop the best service to babies by offering effective help to their parents. The focus on trauma and domestic abuse that For Baby’s Sake have developed in this unique program and the learning we gain across the sector has the potential to change lives.

**Head of Early Help, Social Work and Youth, Social Work and Youth Offending**  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

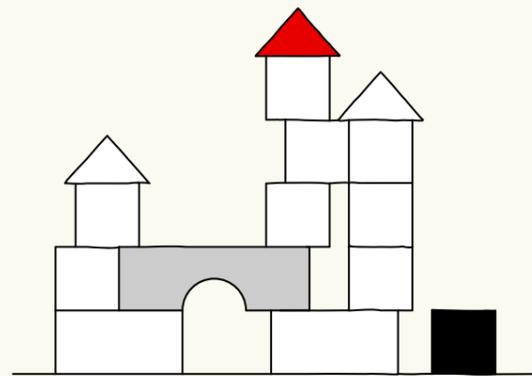


# Building strong foundational skills

Literacy and numeracy are the foundation of every child's education.

**Reading** is the gateway to learning and pupils who struggle to read fall behind their peers and have difficulty accessing the wider curriculum, leaving them disadvantaged for life<sup>1</sup>.

**Maths and STEM\*** are essential for a child's future success, equipping children with numeracy, financial literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.



"If pupils are not able to read well, they will not be able to access the full curriculum. Reading is the gateway to learning. Being able to read accurately by age 6 has a strong correlation with future academic success".

Getting all pupils reading, **Ofsted**  
August 2023

While GCSE attainment in the UK has been increasing over time, average improvements at a country level tend to mask inequalities.

**Disadvantaged students** are over

**25%**

less likely to earn good GCSEs.

And as many as

**4 / 10**

disadvantaged pupils in England fail to reach the new GCSE "standard" pass mark of a grade 4 in maths<sup>2</sup>.

"Mathematical skills predict health outcomes and improve financial decision making, democratic participation and the ability to spot misinformation, amongst other things".

The mathematics pipeline in England, **University of Nottingham**  
March 2023

\* Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

Focusing resource to accelerate learning for those who perform below average or who are at higher risk of falling behind, can help address educational inequalities. One way of doing this is through individualized support with a tutor.

## Tutor Trust

Tutor Trust partners with schools in the North of England to provide high-impact 1:1 and small group tutoring in English, maths and science. The charity focuses its work on those children and young people who need it the most – those from low-income families, in the care system, or who have been excluded from school. Tutors (predominantly university students or graduates) are trained and paid to work with the same group of young people every week over the course of an assignment (normally 15 school weeks).



### The impact of tutoring

In 2017, the Education Endowment Foundation carried out a large scale Randomized Control Trial (RCT\*) on Tutor Trust tuition involving 105 primary schools and 1,290 pupils across Greater Manchester and Leeds. It found that pupils in the intervention group who received tuition made an additional three months of progress in maths compared with the control group.

On average, this progress was the outcome of just

**12** hours of tuition. | **1:3** tutor to pupil basis. | **£112** per child.

The intervention made the biggest difference to pupils on Free Schools Meals and pupils with low prior attainment.

**£4.34bn**

boost to the UK's economy from tutoring during 2021–22 and 2022–23<sup>3</sup>.



Schools should consider the Tutor Trust's model as a cost-effective way to boost attainment for struggling pupils.

#### Sir Kevan Collins

Former Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation and former UK Government Education Recovery Commissioner for England, now Chair of the Youth Endowment Fund

\* A Randomized Control Trial (or RCT), is an experimental form of impact evaluation in which the population receiving the program or policy intervention is chosen at random from the eligible population, and a control group is also chosen at random from the same eligible population. It can be a highly effective method for evaluating the impact of an intervention.



## SHINE

Supporting teachers' creativity and the role they can play in addressing diverse educational needs can play a key role in educational innovation and development.



**SHINE** works in partnership with other organizations in the North of England to improve educational outcomes in the areas of greatest need. Their Let Teachers SHINE program is a national competition to identify, fund and support some of the brightest minds in teaching to try out new ideas in the classroom. As well as grant funding, SHINE provides support across program evaluation, product and business development, and bespoke coaching for grantees who are on a significant trajectory to scale.

One such social venture is **DrFrostMaths**, an internationally acclaimed tuition platform established by a talented teacher that engages and empowers students and teachers, making maths fun for millions of children all over the world. In its early days DrFrostMaths received support from SHINE, and the platform is now being supported to scale by Purposeful Ventures.

“My child has been disinterested in maths at best – DrFrostMaths has completely changed their attitude to the subject. The format of questions and example videos has allowed them to self study, and for the first time they're enjoying maths and even going as far as saying how easy it is, given their new found understanding. Your site has been quite likely life changing for my child.”

Email from parent

## Mission 44

Mission 44 is also working to expand career pathways into STEM and motorsports (see further page 30.)



Maths and STEM skills are crucial for the UK's productivity, and a shortage of STEM skills in the workforce is one of the UK's key economic challenges<sup>4</sup>.

## Purposeful Ventures

Recently spun out of the education charity Ark, **Purposeful Ventures** builds and strengthens other social sector organizations that help young people to reach their true potential. Their STEM Excellence portfolio organizations work to uncover talent among disadvantaged young people and remove barriers for those who want to pursue STEM-related careers.



The interventions they support to scale help students progress in STEM education and beyond, as well as promote maths and technical subjects within the education sector. DrFrostMaths is now being supported by Purposeful Ventures.

Another initiative is the **Martingale Foundation** Postgraduate Scholarship, which supports passionate and talented students facing financial barriers to pursue Masters and PhDs in STEM subjects.

## Axiom Maths

Every year 30,000 children who were top performers at the end of primary school don't go on to get top GCSE grades in maths. Half of top performers who were on free school meals aged eleven are no longer top performers by sixteen.



**Axiom Maths** exists to change this. They partner with schools to help every child with the head and heart for maths realize the potential of their power.

They have also recently started working with Tutor Trust to support high prior achievers in their maths tutoring.



# Opening up pathways to higher education and beyond

Many young people in the UK do not have the opportunity to access the range of benefits that higher education can bring.



6x

Students from the most advantaged areas of the UK are over six times more likely to secure a place at a highly selective university than those from the most disadvantaged areas<sup>1</sup>.



This imbalance exists despite the fact that

50,000

students from low opportunity backgrounds achieve top GCSEs each year.



with only 1/3

of them attending highly selective universities (and even fewer securing elite graduate careers<sup>2</sup>.)



Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are almost twice as likely to drop out of higher education in their first year<sup>3</sup>.



While a good degree is likely to be a good investment for young people from all backgrounds, the effect is greatest for students from the lowest income families<sup>4</sup>.

However, the gap in progression rates to university has actually grown over the past decade, especially for the most selective universities<sup>5</sup>.

Tailored interventions that identify, empower and enable young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to raise their aspirations and successfully transition to the next stage of their education or employment journey can break down barriers to social mobility.



## IntoUniversity

**IntoUniversity** supports young people through a network of local learning centers across the UK which provide them with a safe space to learn, explore and succeed. Their centers are situated in the heart of local communities, targeting areas where young people are most likely to live in poverty and least likely to attend university.

IntoUniversity intervenes early, starting when children are seven years old and providing support until after they have left school. Centers run a combination of after-school academic support, mentoring, and aspiration-building experiences in partnership with universities, corporate partners and cultural institutions. The program supports young people to reach their academic goals, develop vital skills and gain experience of the world of work so that they can realize their full potential. IntoUniversity has expanded from a single center in North Kensington to 41 centers across England and Scotland, with a strong reputation for the quality and effectiveness of its work, and has ambitions to expand to 50 centers by 2027.



**61%**

of IntoUniversity students finishing school in 2022 achieved a university place, *compared to only 28% of students from similar backgrounds nationally.*

**17%**

of IntoUniversity students finishing school in 2022 progressed to a Russell Group university, *compared to 9% of students from similar backgrounds nationally.*

## Zero Gravity

**Zero Gravity** supports low-opportunity, high-potential students into top universities across the UK and then into top graduate careers. Joe Seddon, its founder, comes from a low-income background and defied the odds to make it to Oxford University. Seeing how tricky that journey could be, he left university with a clear mission – to start an organization that could truly level the playing field, using the power of technology to scale opportunity across the UK.

Zero Gravity uses a custom-built algorithm to identify high potential, low-opportunity students. By harnessing the power of technology together with mentoring, scholarships and a membership community, Zero Gravity breaks through barriers to social mobility to propel students from low-opportunity backgrounds into university and on to their dream graduate careers.



To date Zero Gravity has powered **8,000+** students into 115+ universities.

and deployed over **£1.5m** scholarships to 470+ students from low-opportunity areas.

## Inspiring Scotland

Set up in 2008, Inspiring Scotland strengthens and supports civic society organizations working in Scotland by helping them build their strength, resilience and reach. The charity does this through a venture philanthropy model, providing high potential Scottish charities with a combination of grant funding and capacity-building, harnessing the power of private, public, and voluntary sectors. They have eight thematic portfolios and a further nine funds managed on behalf of the Scottish Government.



### Our Future Now

In 2018, despite low youth unemployment there was a group of approximately 35,000 young people in Scotland<sup>6</sup> who were unable to succeed without intensive support. Research undertaken by Inspiring Scotland showed that this cohort of young people were on the margins, often unable to access mainstream schooling or provision because of a host of personal barriers exacerbated by care, education, health, and mental health systems operating under sustained pressure.

Our Future Now is Inspiring Scotland's fund aimed specifically at supporting disadvantaged young people into education, employment or training. The program is a successor to Inspiring Scotland's 14:19 fund, which had a 10 year track record in reducing youth unemployment.

42%

of young people engaged with Inspiring Scotland ventures, report mental health concerns.

11.2%

Youth unemployment has also increased from 3.9% to 11.2% in the period from May to July 2023 compared to the same point in 2022.

Skills Development Scotland  
September 2023

2x

In the last decade the number of pupils with additional support needs has more than doubled.

Scottish Government Annual  
Census of Pupils and  
Teachers in Publicly Funded  
Schools 2022

### During the first four years, Our Future Now has supported

16,474  
young individuals

Of these, 11,863 have successfully achieved their goals:

28%  
into employment

45%  
into education

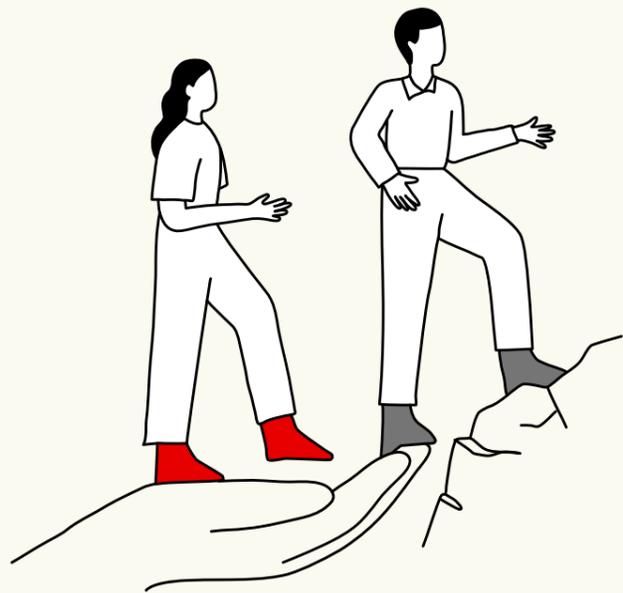
25%  
into training opportunities

\* Almost 2/3 of young people supported through OFN live in the top 3 deciles on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). (Data collected by Inspiring Scotland on each young person-sample size circa 9,000 and overlaid on SIMD data.)



# A holistic approach to dismantling barriers to education

The relationship between disadvantage and attainment is highly complex, and interactions between different dimensions of inequality mean that some pupils face multiple disadvantages.



Coalitions like the Fair Education Alliance advocate for a **holistic** approach to supporting a young person's education, taking into account the factors both inside and outside of school that will affect their well-being, and taking active steps to dismantle systems of inequality.

Supporting mental health and well-being, developing essential skills for employability, and building a fairer and more inclusive education system are therefore a critical part of addressing educational inequality in the UK.

# Addressing mental health issues

Poor mental health and well-being will impact a child's ability to thrive.

One in five school-aged children now have a probable mental health condition and the rising cost of living is taking its toll on young people's mental health, particularly for children from the poorest households<sup>1</sup>.

A 2022 survey of almost 13,000 young people across England found that poor mental health among 16- and 17-year-olds has increased by more than a quarter since 2017, with over 40% reporting elevated psychological distress. Those who experienced major life events during the pandemic, such as being seriously ill or suffering from food affordability issues, were also more likely to report elevated psychological distress. Gender disparities were also revealed, with young people who identify as women or non-binary reporting greater distress<sup>2</sup>.



A key policy recommendation from the 2022 COVID Social Mobility & Opportunities study<sup>3</sup> was the implementation of a 'whole-school approach' to well-being to build a culture and environment that promotes and protects the mental health and well-being of both students and staff, as well as access to an independent counsellor for students.

## Place2Be

**Place2Be** is the UK's leading school-based mental health charity, with nearly 30 years' experience working with pupils, families and staff in UK schools.

Place2Be's pioneering model is to adopt a "whole school approach" to create a mentally healthy school community. Working in both primary and secondary schools, the program addresses mental health issues during children's formative years through training for school leaders and teachers, in-school counselling services, and support for family relationships.

They also use evidence and experience from their work to inform public policy across the UK.

I want to thank you for caring, because a lot of the time given the situations I have been in, I feel like no one cares about me. But I feel like you were always there to listen.

**Amy**  
16 years old



# Supporting youth provision

Youth centers have a proven, positive effect on young people's lives, enhancing their experiences, opportunities, skills and ability to overcome difficulties.

For many young people their local youth center is a vital hub of belonging and connection, helping them make friends, build rich social lives, develop and grow in safe spaces designed to support them<sup>4</sup>.

## OnSide

**OnSide Youth Zones** are purpose-built spaces across the UK that provide young people aged between 8 and 19 (or up to 25 with a disability) affordable access to high-quality sports, arts and leisure facilities and activities. Their state-of-the-art youth centers are built in the country's most economically disadvantaged areas and belong to the communities that help co-create them.

As well as enrichment activities, the centers also provide programming for job readiness and a talent academy. The zones are staffed by skilled and dedicated youth workers who truly believe in young people – helping them see what they could achieve, and giving them the skills, confidence and ambition to go for it.



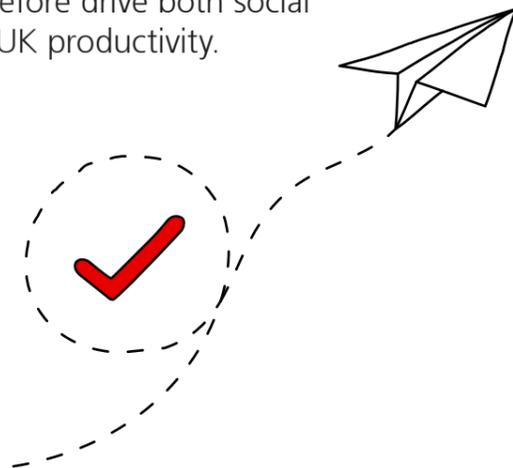
# Building essential skills

Essential skills are those highly transferable skills like problem solving, teamwork and leadership that are needed for almost any job.



These skills work as a platform for developing other skills, including literacy and numeracy. At an individual level, people with higher levels of essential skills experience improved social mobility, employment, earnings, job satisfaction and life satisfaction<sup>1</sup>. Students from the most disadvantaged communities tend to have fewer opportunities to build these skills and as a result have lower skills levels and go into lower-skilled, lower-paid jobs – this is sometimes referred to as the “skills trap”<sup>2</sup>. At a country level, the cost to the UK economy of low essential skills in 2022 was £22.2 billion<sup>3</sup>.

Supporting the most disadvantaged children to learn and develop essential skills can therefore drive both social mobility and UK productivity.



**97%**  
of **teachers**, and  
**88%**  
of **young people**

say that essential skills are at least as important as academic achievement for future success<sup>4</sup>.

**22.2 billion**  
Cost to the UK economy of low essential skills<sup>5</sup>

## Skills Builder

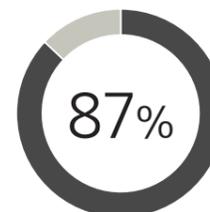
Skills Builder’s Universal Framework is the world’s leading taxonomy for essential skills.

It brings clarity and consistency by focusing on eight essential skills:



Each skill is broken down into 16 teachable and assessable steps which anyone can teach and assess on the path to mastery.

Skills Builder worked in partnership with organizations from across the education, charitable and business sectors to develop their universal framework.



of UK secondary schools and colleges have a touch point with the Skills Builder Partnership, and its Essential Skills Universal Framework is used by educators, employers and impact organizations both in the UK and globally to provide a **practical solution to the skills gap**.

**2021–2022**  
The framework benefitted over **2.3m** learners globally<sup>6</sup>.

# A fairer and more inclusive education system

In the 2020–2021 academic year, just 35.9% of Black Caribbean pupils achieved a “strong pass” in GCSE English or maths, compared with a national England average of 51.9%<sup>1</sup>. Children from Black and ethnic minority groups are more likely to be living in poverty in the UK\*.



There also is a lack of diversity across the teacher workforce:

in 2021:



of all teachers in state-funded schools in England were from an ethnic minority.



of students are from an ethnic minority background<sup>3</sup>.

Research from the United States has shown that ethnic minority pupils taught by ethnic minority teachers are less likely to be excluded compared to those taught by non-minority teachers<sup>4</sup>.

\* Around 60% of Bangladeshi children, 54% of Pakistani children and 47% of black children are living in poverty, compared to 20% of all children nationally<sup>2</sup>.

## Mission 44

MISSION44

Geographic focus  
UK-wide

**Mission 44** was founded by Sir Lewis Hamilton in 2021 to transform the lives of young people from underserved communities, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, young people of color, care leavers, and those excluded from school.

The charity does this through grant-making and capacity-building, alongside advocacy and research – supporting and scaling interventions to improve outcomes for young people facing disadvantage and discrimination.

Mission 44 is one of the few grant-making organizations in the UK with a Black founder and CEO, a diverse trustee board and a diverse team. Their approach to diversity and inclusion is embedded within their own organization and their grantmaking approach. The charity has a unique reach to influence policy and drive systemic change.

### Recruiting Black STEM teachers

Mission 44’s two year partnership with Teach First aims to pilot a range of new approaches to identify best practices when recruiting Black STEM teachers, with the ambition to support the recruitment and training of 150 Black STEM teachers to work in schools serving disadvantaged communities in England. The partnership aims to create a framework for other educational bodies and recruiters to follow.

Mission 44’s ambitions are three fold:



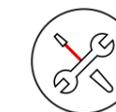
#### Education

To build a more inclusive education system led by diverse teaching staff.



#### Employment

To open doors to careers within STEM and motorsport.



#### Empowerment

To empower young people to become an influential force for change.

“I set up Mission 44 because I want young people from diverse backgrounds to realize their greatness and know their dreams matter just as much as anyone else’s”.

**Sir Lewis Hamilton**

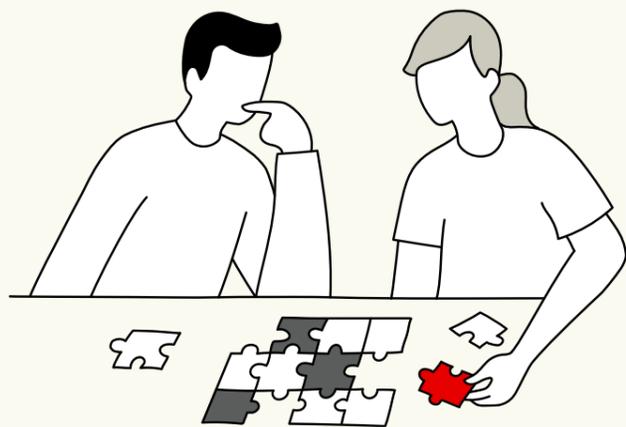
Seven Time Formula One World Champion

# Place-based change

Working in partnership with local communities.

Children and young people who live in areas of high deprivation face multiple and complex challenges to succeed and fulfill their potential.

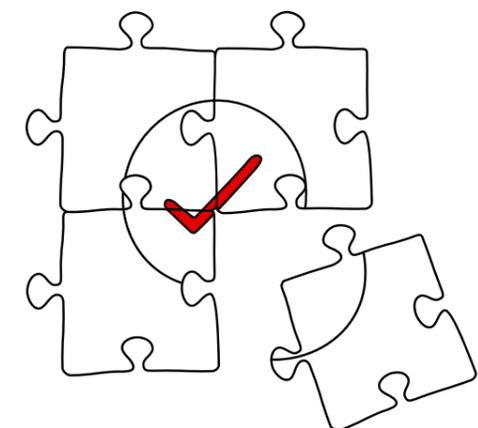
These issues can include lower levels of literacy, higher levels of suspensions and permanent exclusions from school, and lack of preparedness for the life of work<sup>1</sup>. While promising solutions exist to help address each of these issues, they are sometimes produced at a distance from the communities affected and without their involvement. Organizations are often working in isolation, focusing on one type of intervention or aspect of a child's life without looking holistically at the systems and communities that surround them.



Place-based change is a collective impact approach that involves creating a shared vision for change, agreement on how progress will be measured, and continuous communication and alignment to help achieve that vision.

It entails working on a long-term basis in partnership with a community, informed by the experience and relationships that are key to unlocking solutions to the particular issues that community is facing.

The role of a backbone partner – an organization that helps reinforce, coordinate and support all the different actors involved – is critical.



Ensuring individuals and communities affected by an issue have a voice in designing solutions is a hallmark of effective philanthropy. It's not just the right thing to do, it helps all relevant perspectives be taken into account and increases the chances of developing more effective and sustainable solutions.



## Right to Succeed

**Right to Succeed** works to transform children and young peoples' outcomes in the most disadvantaged communities\* in the North of England through a collective impact approach. It brings together residents, professionals and decision-makers to co-design bespoke programs that result in stronger communities where every child is supported to succeed.



Founded in 2015, the charity has expanded from its first Inclusion and Literacy project in Blackpool to work with communities in Greater Manchester, the Liverpool City Region and Great Yarmouth. Right to Succeed's model of excellence in place-based change is based on deep localized solutions developed in partnership with the communities they seek to support. These communities are empowered to take the leadership role in breaking cycles of disadvantage and transform the educational outcomes and futures of their children.

### Blackpool – Key Stage 3 Literacy\*\*

In Blackpool, Right to Succeed's collective impact project focused on improving the literacy capability of 11–14 year-olds through a research-informed approach. Early research by the program found low literacy was correlated with high risk of exclusion in Blackpool. Schools worked with Right to Succeed to identify pupil needs and design solutions based on evidence with careful monitoring and reflection to inform future delivery. The focus on literacy has been part of a town-wide approach to inclusion and improving children's educational outcomes.

\* Right to Succeed works in communities that are at the bottom 10% of the indices of multiple deprivation and serves the majority of the bottom 20 geographical wards in England for disadvantage.

\*\* Key Stage 3 is Years 7–11 (aged 11 to 16 years old).

The Blackpool KS3 Literacy Project is a world leading example of evidence-informed implementation in schools.

**Professor Jonathan Sharples**  
Education Endowment Foundation

*During the first 3 years of the Blackpool Literacy program?*

**12** 12 months of progress in reading by the end of year 9 (on average).

**57%** decrease in the number of permanent exclusions (vs. 47% nationally)

**19%** reduction in pupils attending alternative provision (compared to +14% increase nationally.)

**The Bridge Academy** is UBS's flagship Community Impact partnership in Hackney, and was developed using the principles of place-based change. Established in response to chronic education issues then facing the Borough, the academy built upon a long-standing program of UBS support for education in east London. A partnership between the local community, the local educational authority, the Department for Education and Skills, a Wealth Management client and UBS saw the school open its doors in 2007.

Closing the disadvantage gap lies at the heart of the vision for the school and the ethos of the ongoing UBS partnership. Despite a school population falling within the most disadvantaged nationally, the Bridge has gone from strength to strength. In 2022, **80%** of Bridge students accepted university places (**63%** of whom were the first generation in their family to do so). Since it was established, **over 10,000** UBS employees have volunteered over **79,000 hours** to support students and staff at the school, which provides excellent and inclusive education.



The Bridge Academy, Hackney

# How you can get involved

Team up to tackle educational inequality in the UK.

## Support one of our partner organizations

Make a donation to support one (or more) of our partner organizations through the UBS Optimus Foundation. You can specify which portfolio organization you'd like to support, and in some circumstances the area of the UK where you would like your funding to have an impact\*. UBS will add a **10% matching contribution\*\*** to make the impact of your donation go even further.

## Join our UK Education Giving Circle+

Our **Giving Circle+** brings together philanthropists who want to work collaboratively to tackle educational inequality in the UK.

**Giving Circle+** members co-fund initiatives associated with our UK Education Collective Portfolio. Donations will be pooled and allocated by our expert UBS Optimus Foundation Program Directors. Members also have access to an on-going insight & learning program, that will provide opportunities to meet with experts and leading organizations, join visits to see the impact of the programs they are funding, and take part in philanthropy workshops.

**Giving Circle+** members are asked to donate a minimum of GBP 50,000 per year, to which UBS will add a **25% matching contribution\*\***.

## Strategic partnerships

We are keen to collaborate with funders and foundations who are interested in working together as strategic partners to scale evidence-based solutions to drive systemic change.

As well as adding a matching contribution, UBS meets all the running costs of the UBS Optimus Foundation and **Giving Circle+**, so that you can be certain that 100% of your donation will go to charity.

\* Subject to agreement with our partner organizations.

\*\* Subject to match funding availability. Our 25% matching contribution applies to Giving Circle+ donations only.



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# Your UK Philanthropy Services Team

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**Sarah Payne**

*UK Head of Social Impact and Philanthropy*

Sarah has over a decade of experience working with corporate and private donors to help them maximize the impact of their giving. As UK Head of Social Impact and Philanthropy, Sarah leads UBS's philanthropy services offering, as well as the delivery of UBS's own commitment to support the community in the UK. Sarah led the establishment of the UBS UK Donor-Advised Foundation, which was launched in 2014 and plays a key role in supporting UK clients' philanthropic goals.

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Julia joined the UK Philanthropy Services team in 2018 and advises individuals and families on how to meet their philanthropic goals. Her advice encompasses the full spectrum – from developing a vision and giving strategy, to identifying philanthropic opportunities and maximizing impact, or introducing new approaches such as social finance.

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Libby joined the team in London as a Philanthropy Advisor in early 2023. Prior to joining UBS, she worked in other areas of financial services, including an impact investment firm.

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*Vice Chair of Social Impact and Philanthropy*

With over 20 years of working in social impact, and a further decade working in mainstream international finance, Nick brings enormous expertise and experience. He has been a member of numerous taskforces, notably in the areas of Social Investment and Education. Under his guidance and leadership UBS developed a multi-award winning Community Impact program.

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