



WorkingOptions

IN EDUCATION

ANNUAL REVIEW 2020/21

“Being involved with Working Options will definitely help me with my future goals and prospects.”

WELCOME

Working Options in Education has had a busy and productive academic year, in some very challenging times. Our employability and life skills sessions for young people have remained virtual, and we've delivered 161 sessions in partnership with schools and colleges - more than last year.

The pandemic has impacted education delivery, exam preparation and results, short and long term employment prospects and mental health. Without direct intervention, the implications will be significant for young people, disproportionately so for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This year, we reviewed our programme to ensure it would remain fit for purpose post-pandemic. We listened to students, educators and businesses to understand their concerns about future employment prospects and the emerging skills deficit. We responded by designing our new Career Pathways Programme. Organised in five steps, it empowers students (14-19) to take ownership of their options and opportunities and help them see the full journey ahead. As part of this, we launched a Masterclass series, the first of these, with ITV, saw over 3,000 young people participate online.

Our programme is a vital support for young people navigating the challenges resulting from the Covid pandemic. We know that the disruption to their education has had a massive impact on students mental health and self esteem, and a big focus for us is to help rebuild their confidence. Society needs the potential young people provide; early support is the key to unlocking it. The role for businesses in helping us bring the world of work alive for young people remains as strong now as when we were established in 2010 and we are thankful for their commitment and support.

We're excited about delivering more for young people in the coming year.



Paul Monk (Founder) and Rachel Roxburgh (CEO)



ABOUT US



Working Options in Education helps young people fulfil their potential by developing employability and life skills. Since 2010, we have worked in close partnership with more than 150 schools and colleges in England and Wales to deliver our Career Pathways Programme, prioritising those from disadvantaged regions.

We aim to transform the life chances of young people (14-19), by helping them to take early control of their education or career journey, so they can overcome barriers, develop a clear picture of their future, find motivation, and negotiate each step along the way. Support starts at age 14, when the choices they make start to shape their future.

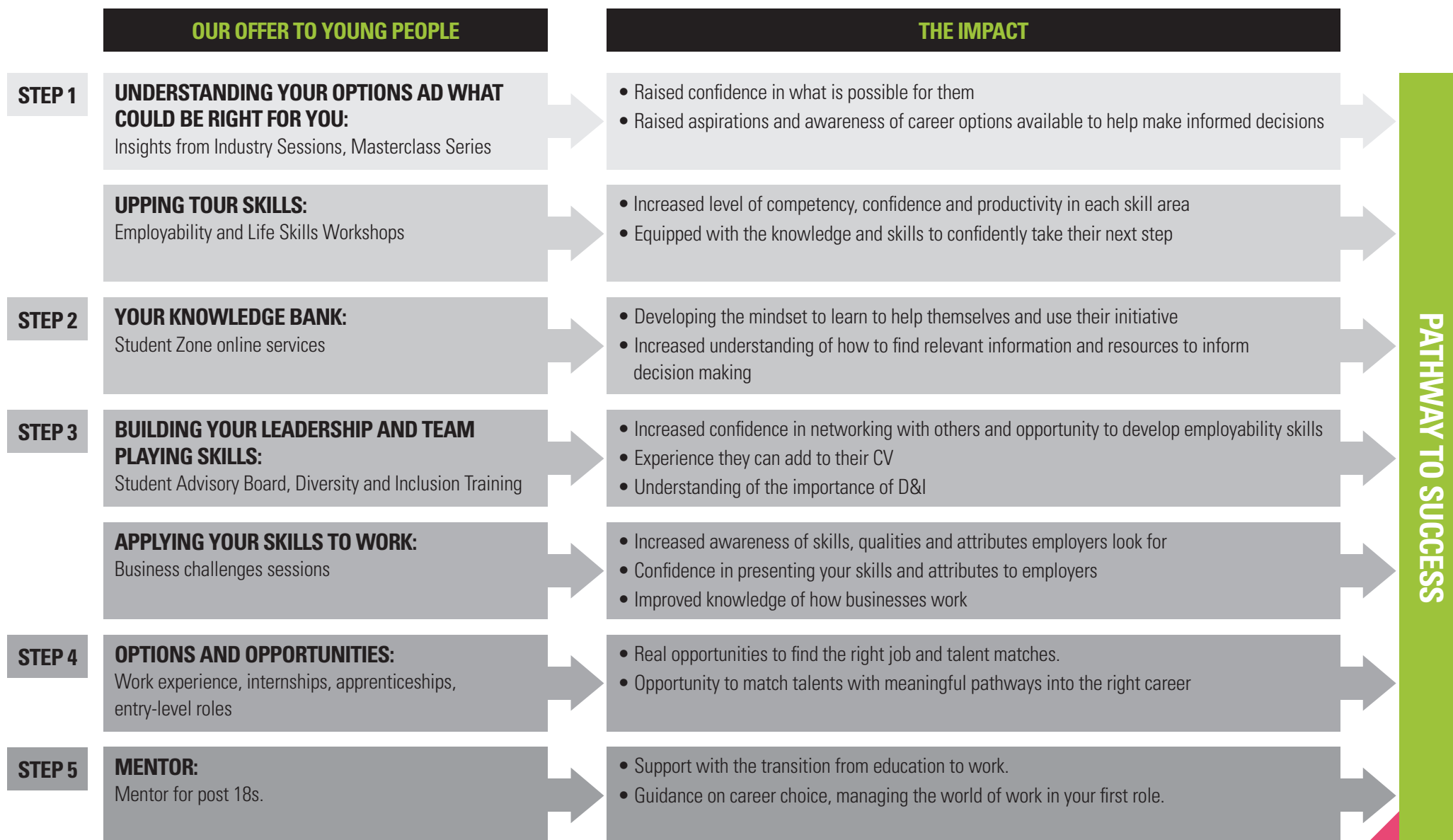
Our programme includes self-directed online learning, employability and skills masterclasses, talks from industry volunteers, mentoring, business challenge sessions, and access to work experience, apprenticeships and entry level jobs.

Working Options in Education helps young people fulfil their potential by developing employability and life skills.



OUR CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAMME

AN OVERVIEW



HARRY - WORKING OPTIONS ALUMNUS



Harry from Fleet in Hampshire attended a local state school and then Farnborough College of Technology. Harry didn't have much interest in school, wasn't particularly academic and was more keen on having a good time. He knew he didn't want to go to University, but was concerned he wouldn't get the sort of job he wanted straight from college.

"I just wanted to get out of school and in to work as soon as possible, but knew I had to attend college to obtain a decent entry level job. There was the pressure that most people went off to Uni but this was just not something I wanted to do."

Before leaving Farnborough College, where Harry studied a BTEC level 3 extended diploma in Business, he had no plan about what he'd do next. At the time he participated in the Working Options in Education programme, he was working in a supermarket, hadn't signed up for Uni, had no interviews in the pipeline or any idea what he wanted to do. He was thinking he'd stay on at the supermarket while looking for entry level roles in London and fall back on working for his self-employed father if that was unsuccessful.

After attending one of our Insights from Industry sessions at his college, Harry was introduced to Starflight Aviation who highlighted a trainee role and how to apply. Harry secured a trainee broker role two weeks after leaving college and still works for Starflight.

"When I was first introduced to Working Options, and consequently was introduced to the possibility of a job at Starflight, it was an eye opening moment and I immediately thought the role was perfect for me. I remember saying, that is exactly what I am going to do. I kept telling my mum not to worry, I'll just get that job at Starflight - fortunately I did!"

Harry is now a full-time Charter Manager with Starflight Aviation and is very optimistic about his future. He says he's not sure how his life would have looked from 18-24 without the opportunity Working Options opened up to him.

"When I was first introduced to Working Options, and consequently was introduced to the possibility of a job at Starflight, it was an eye opening moment..."

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

97% students said their confidence in what is possible for them has increased

93% students feel equipped with the knowledge and skills to take their next step

100% students have increased career aspirations

12,000+ students engaged through online sessions and digital content

8267 students participated in our Insights from Industry sessions or employability workshops

3796 individuals visited our online Student Zone

150 state schools and colleges on board

161 virtual student sessions delivered

447 business volunteers

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

93%

students have used the Working Options programme to inform their next step after school or college

36%

increase in income, with new funders including Garfield Weston, The Thomas Wall Trust and The Moondance Foundation

£12,000

raised by volunteers and staff for our Bridge the Gap fundraising campaign



We continue to be the charity partner for Quality Food Awards

3,300

students joined our live webinar Masterclass with ITV

98%

of our educators would recommend our programme to other schools and colleges

100%

of our business volunteers want to continue providing support to our young people

We've continued to work with partners including **Movement to Work** to create apprenticeships and early career roles, **Youth Employment Group** and **The Careers & Enterprise Company**



OUR IMPACT

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

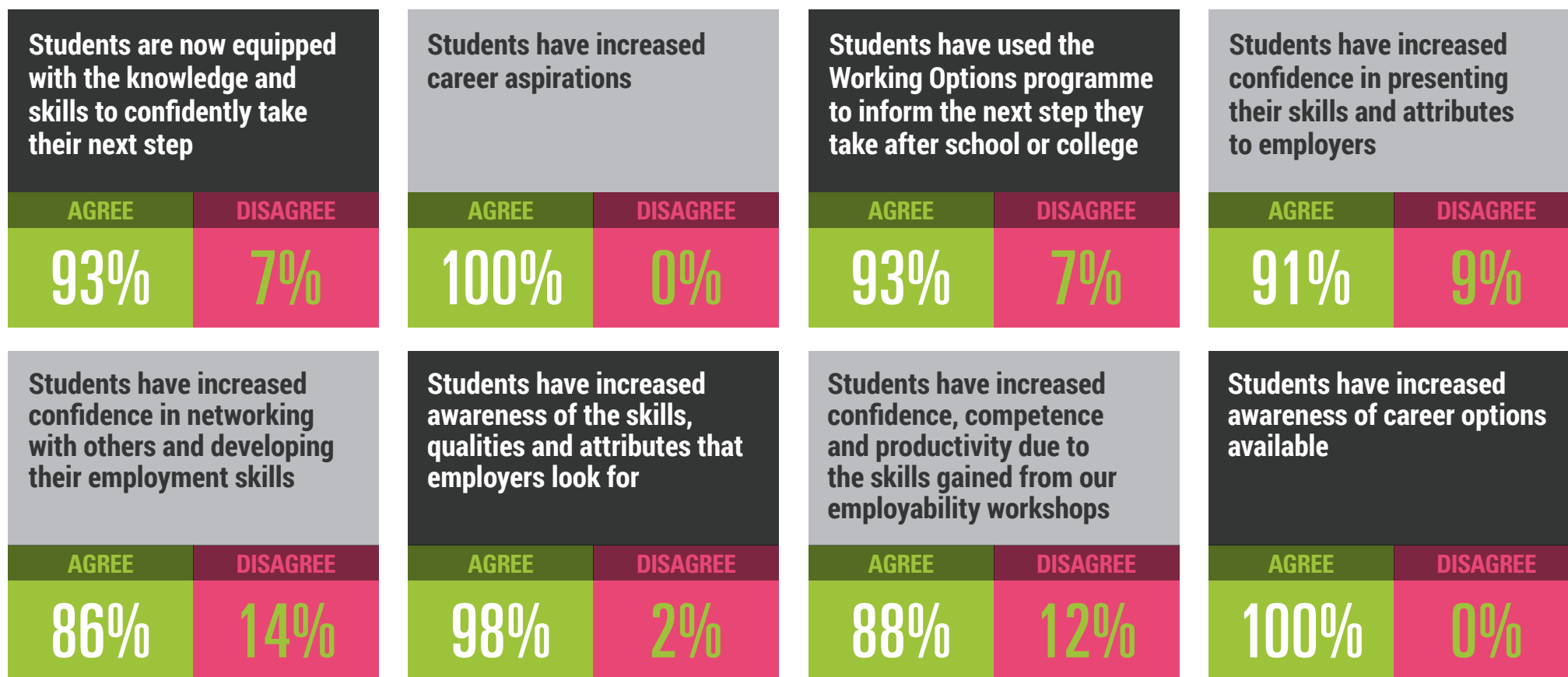
As demand for our work increases, we continually track data to develop understanding of our impact and to help the team and our volunteers to plan sessions that maximise impact.

We monitor near-live progress monthly, so we know where we're exceeding targets and can pinpoint where we need to work harder.

In a partnership with University College London's Knowledge Economy course, final year students developed an impact assessment strategy for us.

The Institute for Employment Studies invited us to participate in research to improve access to good quality work for young people.

With 12,000 students engaged over 161 sessions, the impact this year has been really positive



OUR IMPACT

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

98% of our educators would recommend our programme to other schools and colleges.

We now work in partnership with more than 150 state schools and colleges in England and Wales to deliver our Career Pathways Programme, 65% of these are in areas of high deprivation.

Despite disruption due to Covid, the demand for our programme has continued to increase and we've delivered more sessions than in previous years. This year, these were all delivered virtually.

We've responded to more topic-specific session requests, started work with young people in care settings, further extended our reach into Wales and now offer company-led Masterclasses to showcase routes to early career roles and apprenticeship opportunities.

"I have just participated in the online session and wanted to let you know how invaluable I found it. Both volunteers offered practical and most of all accessible advice for young people on making their first steps into the work place. Hearing the stories of progression through their careers was fascinating. The message on staying true to yourself and developing self-worth was a clear one in making sure you end up doing something you love!"

Student participant in virtual Insights from Industry session



OUR IMPACT

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

MANCHESTER COLLEGE

Manchester College is a new addition this year. Over 400 students across four courses participated in an Insights from Industry session and four different employability skills workshops.

“Our students have found the sessions to be inspiring, informative and interactive. We booked multiple workshops to ensure our students across multiple faculties get access to employers and the communication from Working Options has been fantastic. Thank you for your help in being able to make this happen, it’s been great for the students to be able to engage in such a way. Now more than ever our students need the type of support, advice and opportunities that Working Options has to offer and we look forward to continuing to build our relationship with you.”

Tom Mantel, Head of Department, Employer Partnerships and Skills, Manchester College

CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE

A long standing partner college, we’re invited back every year to run our Insights from Industry and employability skills workshops.

“Working Options is an incredible organisation that genuinely has students at their heart. Wonderful support for us and something we as a college are so proud of. The sessions are always so informative and appropriate for students.”

Chris Jennings, Acting Head of Business Department, Cardinal Newman College

CARDIFF & VALE COLLEGE

On board for the first time this year, we’re looking forward to working with more Welsh schools and colleges next year.

“Your programme and provision offers a very diverse range of resources and industry links which are invaluable to a student’s journey.”

Cristina Negoescu, Careers Coach, Cardiff & Vale College

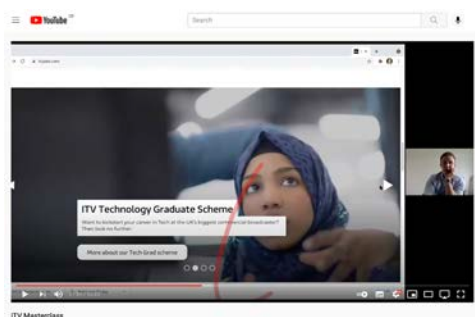
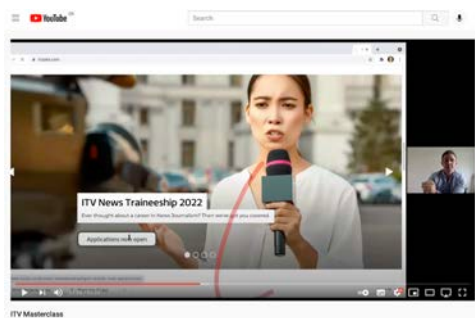


OUR IMPACT

WORKING WITH BUSINESS

Working with businesses remains crucial to our success and growth. Business volunteers continue to deliver our employability and life skills sessions to bring the world of work alive for young people.

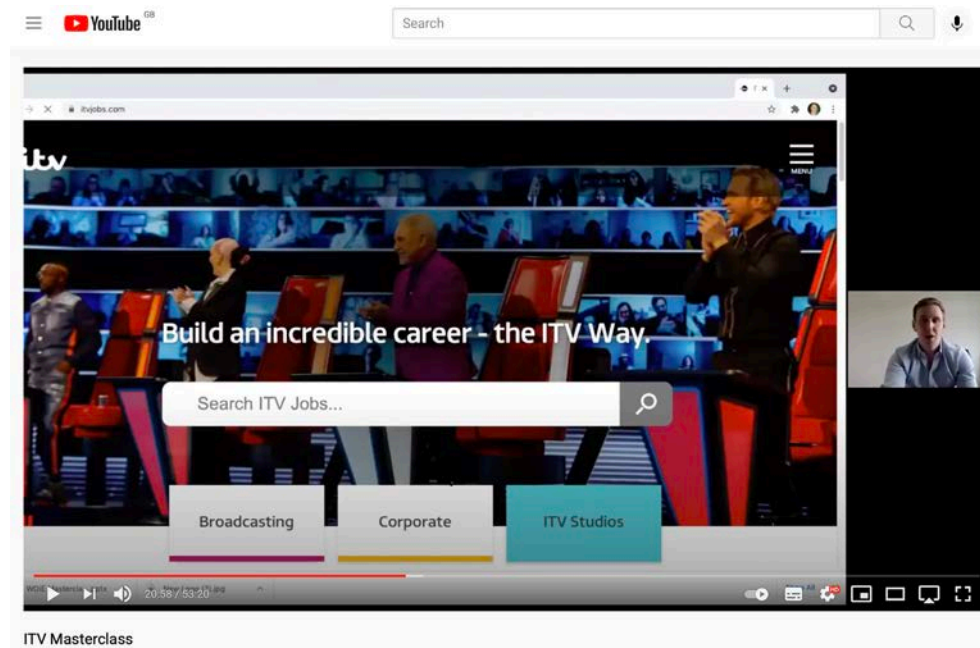
We have been working very closely with many companies to help them achieve their diversity and inclusion agendas and to encourage social mobility, for example, by giving them access to our socially diverse talent pool of students through our new Masterclass series.



ITV MASTERCLASS

This year we've formed partnerships with businesses who want to recruit talented, socially diverse young people, through our new Masterclass Series. The first of these live webinars was with ITV; over 3,000 14-19 year olds from across the UK attended.

- 99% said they see ITV as an exciting, diverse and interesting place to work
- 64% said they would now like to apply for one of the entry level roles
- ITV has booked two more Masterclasses and others have signed up for next year



“We really enjoyed working closely with Working Options to begin delivering Masterclasses to help students understand what we do, our inclusive culture and how they can apply for our opportunities with some useful tips along the way. It's important for us to get the best future talent into ITV and Working Options helps us reach across educational establishments for entry level roles in media.”

Robbie Morton, Senior Resourcing Manager, ITV

OUR IMPACT

WORKING WITH BUSINESS



SACLA' SCHOLARSHIPS

Sacla' a long-time supporter of Working Options recognised the need to improve the diversity of their workforce and were keen to support talent from disadvantaged backgrounds. This year, with our support, they awarded three further financial scholarships for students embarking on a food or business management related degree course. Students will gain work experience and the possibility of employment at the end.



“We are so excited to support these students in the next stage of their education. We hope others will share our enthusiasm and extend support to help those from less advantaged backgrounds reach their potential.”

Clare Blampied, Managing Director, Sacla'

“Receiving this award means I don't need to worry about finances regarding university so I can focus on my degree. The work experience will help me to identify the business area that I would like a career in. I'm excited about the work experience and look forward to expanding my knowledge regarding the business.”

Ceana Agbro, Sacla' scholarship awardee, King's College London undergraduate



TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

A BIG THANK YOU

Our business volunteers inspire and motivate young people about what is possible for their future, help them acquire the necessary employability skills and create pathways to employment. This year, we have increased the number volunteers, the sectors and disciplines in which they work. Our volunteers have responded flexibly to our shift to virtual sessions and we're so grateful for their continued support.



“Young people need inspiration and real-life examples of what they can achieve with focus, positivism and hard work. They are our future leaders and Working Options acts as the key to help us unlock their potential. To help others is the greatest currency there is and even if I can impact one person, that is another person's life on the way to a bigger and brighter future.”

Ranu Sharma, Head of International O&T Finance, Vocalink

“I've seen first-hand just how well received the insights from industry sessions can be. The young people are engaged and have a genuine interest to learn, develop and grow.. I feel that young people can often leave school/higher education without the necessary skills or advice they need to build a sustainable future in employment – only amplified by the ongoing pandemic. So to be able to give back, is not only fulfilling for the young people but the volunteers also.”

Adam Taylor, Vice President, Corporate - UK & Ireland, Marsh



100% of our business volunteers want to continue providing support

“I volunteer for Working Options to open the eyes of the young people, let them know there are many routes to success that can work for them and to play to their strengths. I want to give back and make them see there is a future for each and every one of them. At one [virtual] session we had over 200 people listening. It was so impactful and motivationally I was buzzing after it. Whenever I have these sessions planned in my diary I look forward to them, because I can play a part in influencing young people and what their potential next steps could be.”

Amanda Holbrook, Head of Business Support, Network Rail



“Our volunteering day in partnership with Working Options is a great way for our team to use their skills to help young people at a time when youth employment prospects are so adversely affected and they need support to prepare for their futures more than ever.”

Andrew Hawes, Founder, Newton Europe

TO OUR SUPPORTERS

A BIG THANK YOU

Working Options in Education has been working hard to diversify its income streams, in what is probably the toughest fundraising environment seen for decades.

We have been thrilled with the support we have received from trusts, foundations and businesses that have invested in our work this year.

Our volunteers have actively participated in challenges to raise money and as always our Trustees have been very generous in their support.

We are grateful to our ongoing supporters including Monkey Business Foundation, Newton Europe, Quality Food Awards, St Pierre Groupe and Finsbury Foods.

This year, we received new funding from The Connolly Foundation to increase young people's awareness of opportunities in the growing social care sector, from The Moondance Foundation to help us take our services into more schools and colleges in Wales. Garfield Weston, The Souter Charitable Trust and The Thomas Wall Trust all invested in extending our Career Pathways Programme. Thanks also to staff at St Pierre Groupe and Clasado for fundraising for our Bridge the Gap campaign.

And lastly, huge thanks to Media Zoo for producing our new fundraising film for us pro-bono. Students from St Xavier Sixth Form College not only starred in it, but also got great work experience shadowing the crew.



“I watched your ‘We did everything’ video on your website today and it’s brilliant! Really powerful message from young people, in their own words. It was authentic and moving.”

WHAT'S NEXT?

ONS job statistics hammer home the inequity of this crisis. Young people will continue to bear the brunt of the economic impact of the pandemic. We need long-term solutions if we are to avoid a generation's future being blighted by the scarring effects of high worklessness. We plan to tackle this head on.

IN 2021/22 WE AIM TO:

Increase our knowledge

- We will strengthen our Advisory Boards with experts from education and industry to ensure we're adapting appropriately to the changes young people face.
- We will focus on collaborating even more closely with schools, colleges and students to understand their needs and ensure our programme is fit for purpose.

Increase our income

- We will look at ways to diversify our income and build on the incredible partnerships we have with businesses, trusts and foundations, while also making sure that our supporters continue to enjoy fundraising for our work.

Increase our impact

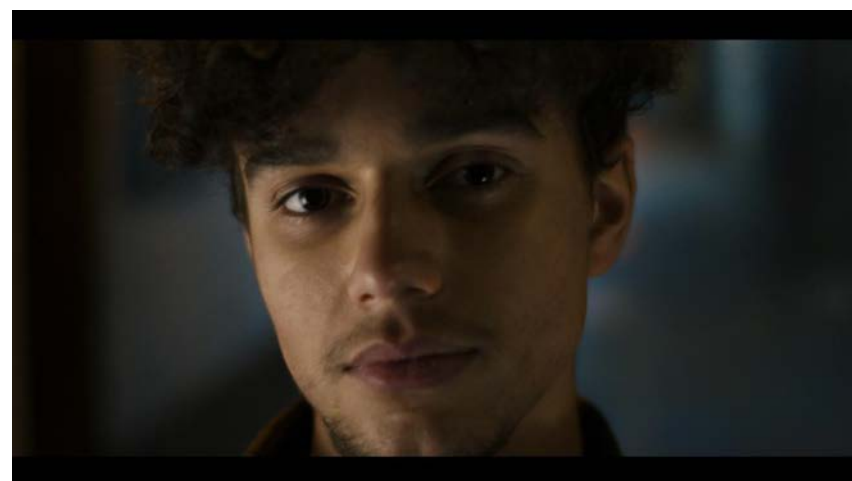
- We will ensure we keep listening to our young people. We need to hear their concerns and learn how our volunteers can further support and develop them. By understanding our young people's aspirations, we can make certain that we always provide the best interventions.
- We will develop more performance management tools to track their progress.

Increase our reach

- We will bring more schools and colleges (and other young people settings) on board with a particular focus on areas of high deprivation.
- We will continue to deliver our sessions virtually and reintroduce face to face options when educators are ready.
- We will improve online support by enhancing our Student Zone and plan to develop an app to provide live information on opportunities and training for our students.
- We will continue to recruit more volunteers from more diverse sectors and businesses.

Increase our collaboration with business

- We will invite more employers to become partners, providing opportunities for them to activate their diversity and inclusion strategies and support social mobility - by delivering Masterclasses, offering apprenticeships, work experience and scholarships.
- We will set up a Volunteer Advisory Group from industry, to complement our existing Student and Educator Advisory Boards, to ensure we understand the skills needed and where the opportunities are for young people in business.



GET IN TOUCH

Please email:

sarah.honey@workingoptions.org.uk

to discuss how you, your business, your school or college can get involved in supporting or delivering our Career Pathways Programme.



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Registered address: Bridge House, 2 Bridge Avenue, Maidenhead, SL6 1RR