

International
Skills
Partnerships



Using skills excellence to build back better nationally and internationally





Introduction



As countries around the world emerge from the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, attention is focused on strategies to accelerate economic recovery on a global scale.

In the UK, the government has pledged to deliver a skills-led recovery with significant investment in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). However, we believe we will be selling our young people short if we don't better leverage WorldSkills policies and practices to help focus on championing higher quality training standards alongside this vital investment in skills development. This is the way to create world-beating skills systems to boost economic productivity and competitiveness and to help create rewarding careers for the next generation.

At WorldSkills UK, we stand ready to play our part in developing a 'skills economy'. Working with partners from across the WorldSkills membership, we want to share global best practice in skills development. Together, we can set a new level of ambition, with our sights on excellence



Dr Neil Bentley-Gockmann OBE
CEO, WorldSkills UK

as the standard the next generation should expect from technical education and training. By creating an exchange of knowledge and skills through people, organisations and governments we can drive innovation and excellence in the quality and delivery of TVET nationally and internationally to help boost inclusive economic growth.

I hope that you will join us in the International Skills Partnerships to make a real difference to young people in your country and across the world. We look forward to working with you through this exciting initiative to support the workforce of tomorrow in leading the charge towards global recovery and economic growth for the prosperity of all.

Dr Neil Bentley-Gockmann OBE
CEO, WorldSkills UK

Ben Blackledge
Deputy CEO, Technical Delegate,
WorldSkills UK



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Deputy CEO, Technical Delegate,
WorldSkills UK



Setting the foundation for global success

The UK has been a member of [WorldSkills](#), the global hub of skills excellence, for over 65 years. This international network is second to none in the world of TVET and this access has given us a unique insight into skills development practices from the world's leading economies.

We have been harnessing insights from our work internationally to help turn global best practice into everyday practice here in the UK. This is enabling us to support the development of more educators to upskill more young people to reach the higher standards employers need. The value of our training ecosystem was recognised last year in [diagnostic research by the University of Oxford](#), which highlighted the potential gains from scaling up our work and insight gained from participating in WorldSkills.

We are now developing new ways to do this. For example, through our new Centre of Excellence in



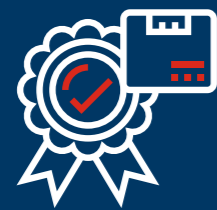
Gillian Keegan MP
Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills



partnership with UK skills body NCFE we are working in-depth with college leaders to pass on the key elements of our world-class training methodology to educators with a direct benefit to some 40,000 young people. We are developing a suite of digital resources so that educators and young people can access insights on curriculum innovation and high-performance mindset developed from our international competitions experience. Our International Skills Summit brought together prominent politicians, educators and employers from around the world to discuss themes including the importance of developing digital skills, international benchmarking and the need to embed excellence across skills systems to help economic recovery.

By working with WorldSkills members we hope to build on these innovations and share our insights, to enable WorldSkills to reach many more young people throughout the world to help them achieve their potential and start their journey towards successful careers.

"The national and international networks forged through the global benchmarking of technical skills excellence, offers the UK an opportunity to showcase our technical provision globally whilst also bringing back world-class standards into our own national skills systems."
Gillian Keegan MP
Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills



Championing demand for world-class technical education & apprenticeships

The 'Skills for Jobs' White Paper set out clearly the government's blueprint for post-16 learning for England. At WorldSkills UK, we welcomed the focus on driving up the quality of teaching and training to better prepare young people to meet employer and economic development needs.

However, our work on international benchmarking, conducted with WorldSkills members, shows that the UK has been falling behind other major competitor global economies who are ahead of us in valuing high quality skills to help drive their competitiveness and productivity.

We know that driving forward the development of high-quality skills to support key sectors will help attract more economic inward investment in potential growth areas of the economy, like green tech, digital and advanced manufacturing. It will also support the creation of high-quality jobs for the next generation.



Our skills and insight makes us uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to creation of a world-class skills system. That is why we want to work in partnership with WorldSkills members to use international benchmarking to mainstream excellence in skills and help the government deliver on the ambitious package of reforms to help more young people and the economy succeed. We will do this by:

- implementing international benchmarking for training and the economy, forging a national and international network for research, evidence and learning to influence policy and practice
- improving standards of teaching, training and assessment based on identified international best practice through our professional development networks to help boost sector capability
- boosting supply of high-achieving young people, from all backgrounds, with the skills set and mindset employers need, showcasing UK investment in high-quality skills.

Top: Members of the China and UK Plumbing Teams

Above left: Competitors in Kazan 2019

Above right: Liz Truss MP, Secretary of State for International Trade with Team UK member Jack Goodrum



International benchmarking



The International Skills Partnerships will see WorldSkills UK and WorldSkills members working together to deliver impact across:



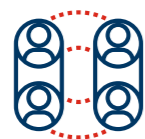
Policy

Research, evidence and learning to influence policy and practice.



Workforce development

Professional development and peer exchange of organisations, practitioners, educators, experts and young people.



Best practice exchange

Collaboration through the WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence to include seminar programmes linked to international innovation, benchmarking and matters of mutual interest



Skills development

Developing transformative approaches to training, assessment and benchmarking through virtual pressure tests and skills training camps for young people and experts preparing for international competitions and disseminating the learning to drive high quality skills development.



Promotion

Raising the prestige and profile of TVET and the economic and social significance with a focus on diversity and inclusion.

Chris Humphries
President, WorldSkills

Chris Humphries, President, WorldSkills said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for our members to work together and share best practices to drive up excellence in the quality and delivery of TVET on a global scale. During 2021, we want to use the WorldSkills Year of Innovation to continue connecting young people through a series

of exciting and innovative programmes that will inspire more of them to take up skills, and the WorldSkills UK 'International Skills Partnerships' programme delivers just that. I would encourage all our members to get involved and I look forward to seeing the long-term and sustainable impact of this collaborative work in the years ahead."



The International Skills Partnership: Benefits of getting involved



Working together, we will seek to deliver the expertise and resources that can help you meet your objectives for the development of your TVET systems and programmes across a range of elements that may include:

- creating greater impact and value through WorldSkills partnerships to build on investment and skills development beyond competitions
- developing and driving skills solutions that deliver impact in partnership with us, a forward-thinking organisation championing change across TVET
- capitalising on WorldSkills UK's positioning with over 65 years' experience in leading and championing change through skills competitions
- drawing from the experience and wealth of knowledge from UK experts, education and industry partners who work in one of the most developed and respected vocational educational systems in the world
- utilising the UK brand, which is seen throughout the world as one earmarked by quality, excellence and pioneering thought leadership
- working with UK TVET institutions which have a positive track record of developing bespoke skills solutions to help countries meet global labour market demands
- opportunities to access innovative and world-leading education technology, which UK providers are at the forefront of developing and bringing to market
- accessing a range of UK governmental departments including the Department for Education and Department for International Trade, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including the British Council and the UK Skills Partnership
- the important role placed on the English language by emerging and developed economies in contributing to employability, economic development and global connectivity
- supporting young people with training and cultural exchanges will help create a new generation of globally mobile, culturally-agile citizens who can succeed in an increasingly globalised world
- promotional opportunities highlighting the work of the International Skills Partnerships.



Case studies



WorldSkills UK partners with WorldSkills China to deliver virtual showcase and skills competition

WorldSkills UK working with the Department for International Trade in the UK and the Chinese Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) delivered a two-day event in November 2020 to demonstrate how skills competitions can be used to raise standards in skills development.

The first day of the event focused on sharing best practice between the UK and China, with a skills competition in Industrial Electronics taking place on the second day. The competition featured apprentices from China and Wales.

The event was broadcast live with more than 2,000 Chinese and UK educators and students invited to watch to understand each country's approach to training for the event and experience it from an international perspective. In the UK, the event generated six pieces of media coverage and over 2,000 positive engagements on WorldSkills UK's social media channels.

The partnership provided a valuable platform to transfer knowledge and skills between the UK and China to help drive innovation and excellence in TVET. The virtual competition demonstrated that skills competitions can work effectively online within a covid-safe environment.

Hao Bin, Director of the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of China, said: "China is an emerging skill-powered country, and the UK is a skilled country. There is much to be done in strengthening exchanges between the two countries. I hope the youths of the two countries can compete with each other and show their friendship and level."



Mr John Edwards, British Trade Envoy to China from the Department of International Trade, said: "This master exchange class and online skill-friendly match reflects the common creativity and determination of the skill circles of the two countries. We hope that through the partnership between Chinese and British institutions, we will continue to promote cooperation in the development of skills between the two countries and jointly cultivate a team of highly skilled talents with international standards."





Seeing is believing: Constructing smarter

In summer 2019, we worked with NOCN, a market-leading international Awarding Organisation, carrying out research to understand the current position of the UK construction sector and what lessons could be learned from other countries to improve productivity in the sector.

As part of the research, observations were included from the WorldSkills Competition in Kazan, Russia. NOCN also met employers and skills development organisations from WorldSkills member countries: Australia, Denmark, France, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Germany, Russia and Sweden.

Following completion of the research, recommendations were presented to the UK government, employers and training providers on the insights from WorldSkills members and why these should be adapted by the UK construction sector to improve productivity through skills development.

Graham Hasting-Evans, Group Managing Director, NOCN said: *“ There was a great opportunity to partner with WorldSkills UK through its programme ‘Seeing is Believing: Accessing the World’s Best Skills Innovations’ to enhance and adapt the learning from other countries and build upon the progress the construction sector has made on skills over several decades. It gave us unique access to an expert global community through which we can benchmark and gain insights into the skills needed to drive world-class performance.”*



WorldSkills UK launches the Centre of Excellence

At WorldSkills UK, we have been harnessing insights from our work internationally to help turn global best practice into everyday practice, in order to support development of more educators to upskill more young people to reach the high standards employers need.

The value of our training ecosystem was recognised in [diagnostic research by the University of Oxford](#), which highlighted the potential gains from scaling up our work and engaging local leaders to help spread the benefits through a virtual Centre of Excellence. This research was undertaken following an initial study by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) which found that other countries have improved their skills systems by strategically integrating the use of WorldSkills competitions.

In partnership with NCFE, an awarding organisation, we set up a [Centre of Excellence](#) in 2020 to help mainstream our insights to boost teacher training in

colleges to standards of excellence, seeking to support the development of 40,000 young people. This has not only met pent-up demand from college leaders, with over a quarter of colleges in the UK seeking to be part of the first year, but also chimes with the public mood and economic need. Our recent opinion polling confirms there is broad public support for high-quality technical education and apprenticeships, with almost three-quarters of people saying it should be government priority.

We now have 20 colleges that are part of the Centre of Excellence and will be inviting more colleges to be part of the second year.

Dr Neil Bentley-Gockmann OBE, Chief Executive, WorldSkills UK said: *“This is a radical new way of working with college leaders to bring global best practice to local economies and level up skills across the country – ensuring that we can embed international standards into training programmes and deliver what employers need in order to kick-start the economy.”*



Get involved

We welcome contact from international partners to collaborate with on this exciting programme to drive innovation and excellence in the quality and delivery of TVET on a global scale.

On the initiation of a cooperative activity, both partners will:

- meet via a video call to discuss and then agree the scope and range of activities to be carried out as part of the International Skills Partnerships
- jointly agree the terms and general principles of a Memorandum of Understanding and identify key personnel to take forward the cooperative activities and partnership
- agree the scope and timelines for the cooperative activity
- jointly identify budgets (where necessary) or collaboratively seek investment through sponsorship
- establish a joint committee for the International Skills Partnerships and on a quarterly basis to regularly review the partnership and exchange information
- on completion of each respective cooperative activity, both parties commit to preparing a report evaluating on impact and learning outcomes for dissemination to governments, partners and media.

Get in touch



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