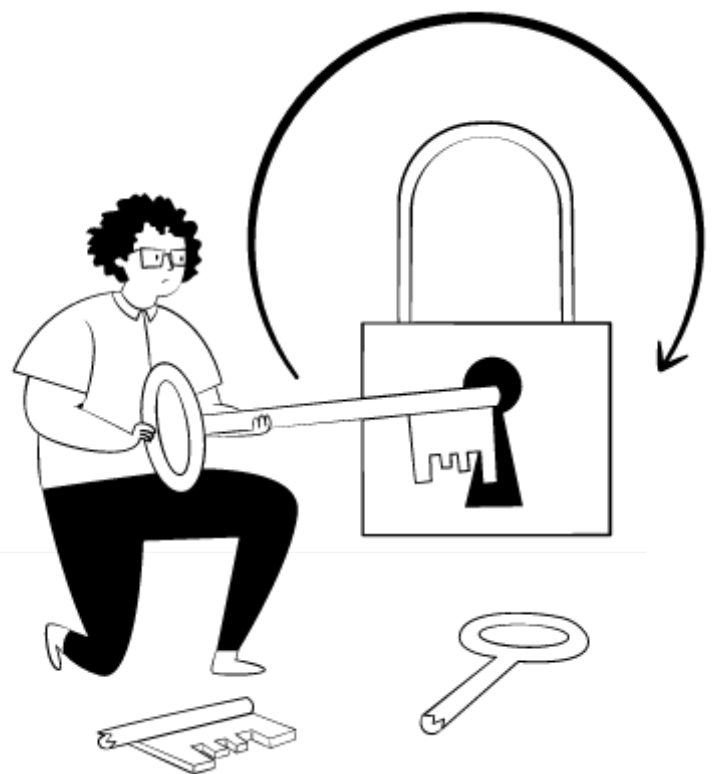


2024-2025

TOWARDS YOUR FUTURE NATIONAL IMPACT REPORT



CELEBRATING
25
YEARS
OF IMPACT

**BUSINESS
IN THE
COMMUNITY
IRELAND**

Introduction

Towards Your Future (TYF) is a national senior cycle post-primary programme that supports skills development in DEIS (disadvantaged) schools. The programme is delivered through a partnership approach between school and business and supported by company volunteers, principally through CSR and employee engagement programmes. The programme supports students to remain in school through developing workplace readiness and soft skills that in turn are a gateway to fulfilling careers and positive life choices.

The programme is typically delivered to 4th (Transition Year) and 5th year students, who gain first-hand insights from company volunteers into diverse career paths, professional development, and key employability skills. It equips them with practical tools including CV writing, interview techniques, personal branding tips, workplace insights through a site tour, and strategic goal setting, all of which inspire them for life beyond school.

Throughout the 2024–25 academic year, TYF has successfully run a nationwide pilot, engaging **728 senior cycle students across 26 individual programmes**. The programme was delivered in counties Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Mayo and Tipperary.

Andrea Lazenby Simpson
Interim TYF Programme Manager

This programme is delivered through a partnership approach of schools being supported by local businesses. Thank you to the many participating companies who fund their programme engagement and support its practical delivery through corporate volunteers. These companies are listed in the Acknowledgements.

Thank you also to our programme headline funder **Tusla**.

Thank you to our headline funder





Programme Objectives

01

Helping students relate to education as a gateway to future careers.

02

Increasing student confidence and communication skills, through activities with business volunteers.

03

Developing employability skills, including CV writing, interview techniques, and workplace exposure.

04

Inspiring for the future by showing students tangible pathways and how to navigate the first steps in life beyond school.

Our Year in Numbers

728

Students

26

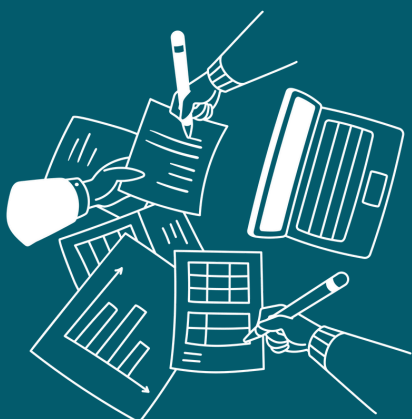
Schools

695

Business Volunteer Hours

26

Companies



Headline Data



98% of all stakeholders would RECOMMEND the Towards Your Future programme to a peer/ colleague.



Student Profile:

- **60%** of participating students were in Transition Year, and **40%** in 5th year.
- **67%** of the students are studying for the traditional Leaving Certificate, **23%** the Leaving Cert Vocational Programme and **10%** Leaving Cert Applied.



School Attendance and Retention Supports:

- **9%** of students had considered leaving school but the programme encouraged them to stay and complete their education.
- A further **30%** stated that the programme helped them realise the importance of the Leaving Certificate in the context of future employment.



Programme Benefits:

- **78%** of teachers 'strongly agreed' that the programme helped improve students' confidence and communication skills.
- **74%** of teachers 'strongly agreed' that students were motivated to think about what they would like to do after school.
- **96%** of companies confirmed a programme benefit for employees as 'being able to make a difference in a young person's life'.
- **70%** of companies 'strongly agreed' that 'making a positive social impact on education' was a benefit of participation.

Impact on Business



Company co-ordinators noted the following **business benefits** from participation in the programme:

- **65%** Supports the company to attract and retain talented employees
- **87%** Contributes to our CSR or ESG strategy
- **90%** Making a contribution to the local community
- **73%** Mechanism for employee development within the company
- **82%** Mechanism for enhanced employee engagement
- **97%** Making a positive social impact on education
- **78%** Public relations and raised profile locally

96%

of company co-ordinators listed the top volunteer benefit of the programme as being able to make a difference in a young person's life.



Company co-ordinators rated the following as the top volunteer benefits from participation in the programme.

- **83%** A feel good factor and enjoyed the volunteering experience
- **43%** Improved interpersonal skills
- **57%** Increased employees awareness of their local community
- **22%** Raised employees' profile within the organisation
- **57%** Opportunity for employees to show pride in their work and their organization



Impact on Business

“ One of the most memorable days was when we conducted mock interviews. We had spent time helping the students develop their soft skills and refine their CVs, and seeing them put these skills into practice was incredibly rewarding. The students were engaged and enthusiastic, and it was clear that the experience was beneficial for them. It was a pleasure to witness their growth and confidence throughout the process. ”

“ The programme provides employers with the opportunity to engage in a real and meaningful way with younger people and create an awareness of our business while hopefully assisting schools with the overall development of skills amongst their students. ”

“ For a small amount of time to sacrifice there are so many positive benefits a company will reap from this programme. ”



Businesses Commented

“
The programme allows us to live up to our CSR values in a tangible way. It's also a lot of fun and interesting, and a unique development opportunity for the staff involved.
”

“
The programme provides employers with the opportunity to engage in a real and meaningful way with younger people and create an awareness of our business while hopefully assisting schools with the overall development of skills amongst their students.
”



“
For our employees, this programme is a way where we can encourage the whole population of the office to get together and help out. We include as many new staff members and graduates to this programme as possible, it makes our new staff and graduates feel included and part of the office community.
”

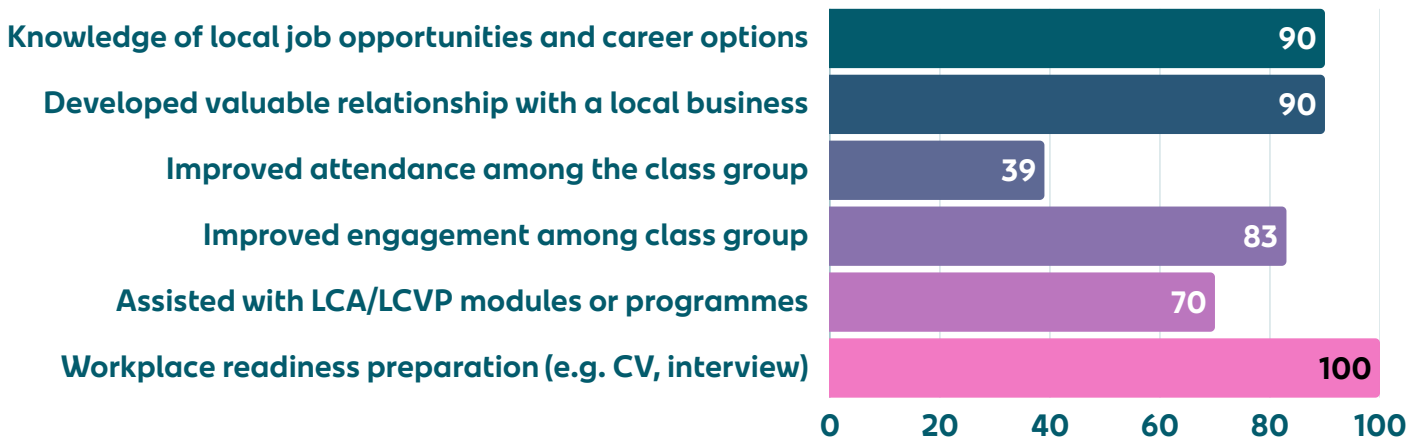
“
Being present in local disadvantaged communities is something that we value a lot. It's great to feel a sense of contribution, and that maybe we can make a difference in a child's life. Even if the kids have no interest in what the company does, building their soft skills and giving them an insight into life after school is something we want to continue to provide.
”

Impact on Schools

Teacher Feedback



Teachers noted the following elements of the programme benefitted the school the most:

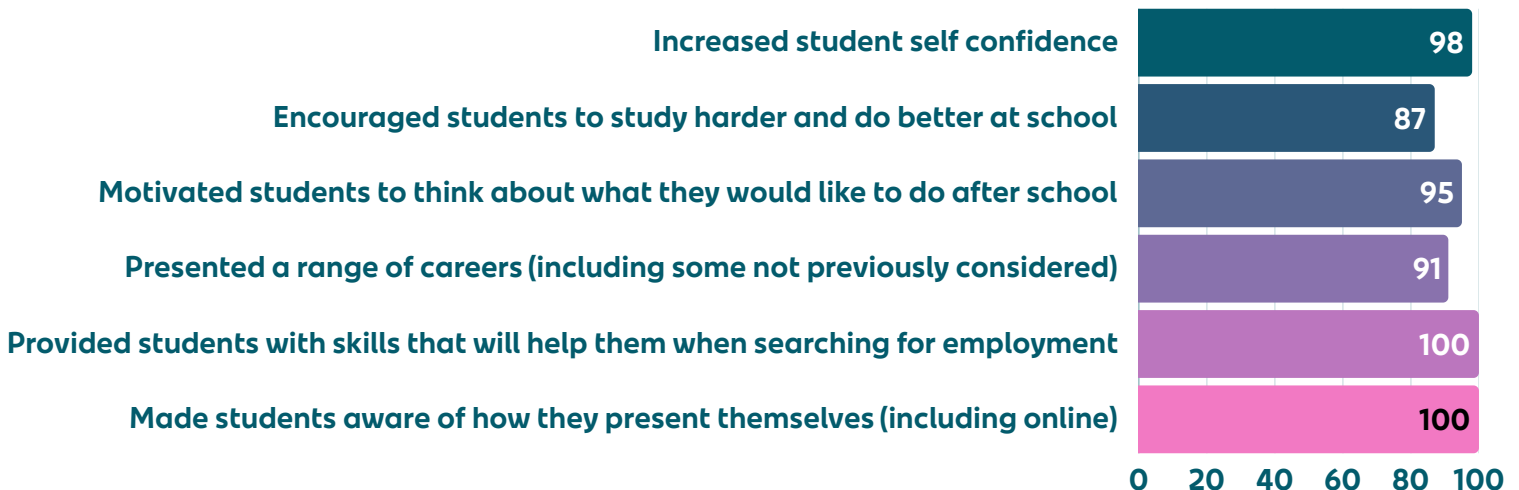


43%

of co-ordinating teachers reported that participation in the programme contributed to retaining a student at school, who was otherwise likely to leave school this year.



Teachers reported that the programme helped students in the following ways:



Impact on Schools

“

I think the varied nature of the programme definitely helped with student engagement and retention, one student was at risk of early school leaving but now is considering a future as an electrician.

”

“

Students learned a lot that will help them moving forward in their careers and all material was relevant and practical. One student completed work experience, where he had the opportunity to work in marketing and finance, from which he gained valuable insight.

”

“

The CV & interview session had the most profound impact I feel on students. They were over the moon with the positive feedback they received and found the overall experience very worthwhile.

”

“

It really boosted their confidence for such a quiet group.

”



Teachers Commented

There was about 4 students who I feel through their interaction with the company, made a difference to them in terms of them seeing the possibilities and opportunities out there for them.



The company delivery and their genuine interest in the students came through in all sessions, this relationship that was built ensured that students got a great insight into the company. They were engaged asking questions participating in all activities.

This has a great impact, students really engaged with the sessions, it appealed to them as it was 'real world' experience coming into the class and conducting interviews (and preparing them), from 2 HR professionals.

The site visit was so well organised for students and everything was thought of. Students discovered so much insight into the company and other possible job opportunities available through them.

Impact on Students



98% of students enjoyed being part of the programme

Confirmed Student Benefits:

- Increased my self confidence **83%**
- Improved my communication skills **87%**
- Improved my teamwork skills **72%**
- Encouraged me to study harder and do better at school **67%**
- Got me thinking about what I would like to do after school **82%**
- I got ideas about career choices including some I hadn't previously considered **74%**
- Helped me with decisions about college courses and further education **72%**
- Helped me to improve my CV and interview skills **93%**
- I learned skills that will help me when I am searching for a job **88%**
- Helped me to become more optimistic about the future **79%**



I've discussed potential job opportunities and career paths with my friends and family, after the [workplace] visit. It has helped me realise that there are a lot more options available than I had previously thought.

Students Commented

I found it really helped my understanding of the future of the workplaces and allowed me to explore my future choices.

It helps you understand a lot of stuff that I didn't know before that I don't see any other opportunities to learn them.

Really loved this programme, gave me loads of new ideas.



You don't know how much you need this kind of thing until you get it.

It's great and helps you see other opportunities of work and they help you feel comfortable with the world of work which is nice and they're very encouraging and inviting.

This programme builds you up a lot as a person and you will enjoy it.

Acknowledgements

Programme Sponsors

The Towards Your Future programme is generously supported by **Tusla** who provides funding to this programme through TESS (Tusla Education Support Services) under its **School Completion Programme** Initiatives.

This programme owes its success to the dedication and support provided by the **21 partnering companies** below who fund their own engagement, and their generous volunteers from across these businesses, who kindly gave up their time to support educational disadvantage and social inclusion. The programme's success also owes a debt of gratitude to the **26 participating schools**. We appreciate their commitment, including the support of the Principals, teachers and career guidance counsellors who were programme champions.

Participating Companies and Schools

Accenture
Aviva
Boortmalt Ireland
Bus Eireann
Chadwicks Group
Coca Cola Ballina
Complete Laboreatory Solutions (CLS)
Dairygold Co-operative Society Ltd
DHL Global Forwarding
ESB Group
Fexco
H&MV Engineering
Iarnród Éireann / Irish Rail
J&J Innovative Medicine
Kerry County Council
Kirby Group
Laya Healthcare
Roadstone Dublin
SSE Generation Ireland Ltd
Veolia
Zagg International

Athy Community College
Causeway Comprehensive School
Colaiste an Chraoibhin
Colaiste Eamann Ris, Cork
Colaiste Fionnchua
Colaiste Mhuire Co-Ed
Colaiste nabPiarsach
Colaiste na Riochta
Davis College
Ennis Community College
Gaelcholaiste Mhuire
Galway Community College
Grange Commnity College
Killinarden Community School
Killorglin Community College
Mayfield Community School
Moyle Park College
Moyne College
Nano Nagle College
North Monastery Secondary School
Rathdara Community School
Rosmini Community School
St Michaels Holy Faith Secondary School
St Aidan's Community College
St Brogan's College
St Patricks College, Cork

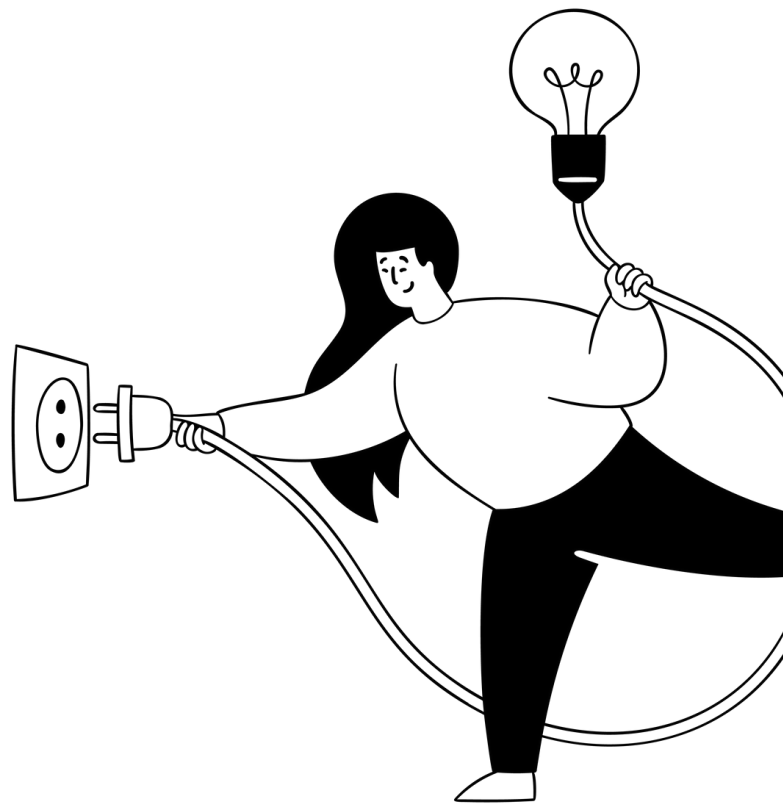
We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to social inclusion in Ireland.



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Grow Your Business with Our Volunteering Solutions



We Offer Best Solutions

Partnering with Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) provides companies with a unique opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of students while simultaneously enhancing your own business objectives.

Key Benefits of Partnering with BITCI

- ✔ **Impactful Community Engagement**
Through our programmes, your company can directly support students from disadvantaged areas, helping to level the playing field and provide pathways to success.
- ✔ **Enhanced Employee Engagement**
Our 'off the shelf' volunteering opportunities allow your employees to engage in meaningful, rewarding activities that boost morale and foster a sense of purpose.
- ✔ **Support for Diversity and Inclusion**
By participating in our initiatives, your company contributes to creating a more inclusive society, promoting diversity in education and the workplace.
- ✔ **Positive Reputation and Trust**
Demonstrating a commitment to education and community support enhances your company's reputation and builds trust within local communities.
- ✔ **Enhanced Employee Engagement**
Engaging with students through our programmes helps to nurture and develop future talent, ensuring a well-prepared workforce for tomorrow's challenges.
- ✔ **Strategic Alignment**
Our initiatives align with your Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals, providing a strategic approach to making a difference in education and society.

Find out more

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 www.bitc.ie

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