



BUILDING THE FUTURE

Theory of Change

Emerge Leadership UK CIC

Professor Errol Lawson | 2026

Building the Future exists to inspire, connect, develop, recognise, and mobilise the next generation of construction professionals through a collaborative ecosystem that brings together employers, educators, industry leaders, and communities to solve the sector's long-term talent challenge.

The Challenge

The UK construction and built environment sector faces one of the most significant workforce challenges in its history.

An ageing workforce, persistent skills shortages, under-representation of women and minority groups, and limited awareness of career opportunities continue to restrict the sector's ability to deliver the homes, infrastructure, and regeneration projects the nation requires.

Too many young people remain unaware of the breadth of opportunities available within the built environment. Those who do enter the sector often lack access to networks, mentors, role models, and structured pathways for progression.

At the same time, employers recognise the need to invest in future talent but frequently face barriers including limited capacity, fragmented engagement with education providers, and difficulty delivering meaningful social value outcomes at scale.

The result is a disconnected talent pipeline that fails to fully connect young people, educators, employers, and industry leaders.

Our Vision

A thriving and diverse construction and built environment sector where every young person, regardless of background, can access, develop, and succeed in a rewarding career, and where employers, educators, and communities work together to build the workforce needed for the future.

Our Long-Term Goal

To create the UK's most connected and effective talent development ecosystem for the built environment sector, inspiring, connecting, developing, recognising, and mobilising the next generation of industry professionals.

Building the Future has its roots in the West Midlands and is building toward national reach, creating a replicable model that connects regional industry need with local educational and community capacity.

Why Building the Future?

Many organisations deliver careers fairs. Many provide mentoring. Some run awards. Fewer still offer an accredited training programme and professional network for early-career professionals.

Building the Future is unique because it connects all of these into a single, coordinated talent development ecosystem. Rather than delivering isolated interventions, Building the Future creates a continuous pathway that inspires young people, connects them with opportunities, develops their capabilities through accredited training, recognises achievement, and mobilises future leaders to support the next generation.

This means sponsors, funders, and partners invest in a system, not just an event. Every pound committed to Building the Future works harder because each element of the ecosystem reinforces the others.

Real Impact: Voices from the Community

The most compelling evidence of what Building the Future does is not found in statistics. It is found in what people say when they experience it.

Award Winners

“

I received many job offers as a winner and am now in a better, more stable job. This award brought success into my life and career.

Heba Al-Radi

Architectural Technologist, ARC Partnership

“

Winning gave me the confidence that my work is recognised and demonstrates that I am making a positive impact.

Khumehra Mohammed

Project Manager, Pareto

“

Never did I think I could be nominated for such an award, let alone win it. With the right support, you can achieve anything and be successful.

Damien Belle

HS2 BBV

“

Winning Young Planner of the Year 2025 is a proud moment in my journey. It reflects my passion for forward-thinking planning and creating better communities.

Munashe Mhemba

Marrons

“

This award isn't just recognition of the work that I've done in the industry, but it's also a wonderful opportunity to network with extremely high-achieving people in the industry.

Marisa Kurimbokus

Raeon

Young Engineer of the Year, BTFA 2025

Education Providers

“

We're proud to win Best FE Provider Supporting Careers in Construction. The award recognises our staff's dedication to helping students into meaningful careers.

Steve Connell

Assistant Principal, Leeds College of Building

“

This award is a wonderful acknowledgement of the dedication our staff show every day and the achievements of our learners as they take their next steps into the industry.

Sarah Sunderland

Head of University Centre, Leeds College of Building

Best HE Provider Supporting Careers in Construction, BTFA 2025

Training Programme Endorsements



Construction is a Team Sport bridges a long-standing gap. While curricula have traditionally emphasised technical ability, they have often overlooked the interpersonal, behavioural, and leadership capabilities that employers consistently identify as critical.

Professor Mujib Rahman PhD CEng FICE

Head, Department of Civil Engineering, Aston University Birmingham



Construction is a Team Sport is an inspirational guide to the human side of construction. A must-read for building careers and teams.

Siu Mun Li

Most Influential Woman in Construction 2024 (CITB)



It goes beyond technical skills to highlight what truly drives success in construction: communication, emotional intelligence, and the courage to lead authentically.

Charlene Wall

CEO, Wood Manor Properties

Our Core Belief

We believe that young people are far more likely to enter, remain, and succeed in the built environment sector when they:

- • Can see people like themselves succeeding.
- • Have direct access to employers and industry professionals.
- • Receive meaningful mentoring and support.
- • Understand clear career pathways.
- • Feel recognised and valued for their achievements.
- • Belong to a professional community that supports their development.

We also believe employers are more likely to invest in future talent when engagement is coordinated, measurable, and aligned with their social value objectives.

Key Assumptions

- • Exposure to industry professionals raises aspirations and broadens career awareness.
- • Mentoring and real-world experiences improve confidence, employability, and career readiness.
- • Accredited soft skills training improves retention, professional effectiveness, and progression.
- • Recognition and visibility increase retention, progression, and motivation.
- • Employers that experience positive social value outcomes are more likely to sustain investment in talent development.
- • Schools, colleges, universities, and employers achieve greater impact when working collaboratively rather than independently.
- • A consortium approach creates opportunities and experiences that no single organisation can provide alone.
- • Long-term workforce challenges require long-term ecosystem solutions rather than one-off interventions.

Inputs

Building the Future brings together resources, expertise, and investment from across the sector, including:

- Leadership and programme management provided by Emerge Leadership UK CIC.
- The NOCN-accredited Construction is a Team Sport training programme and published book by Professor Errol Lawson.
- Strategic industry partners and employer consortium members.
- Sponsor investment and social value funding.
- Schools, colleges, universities, and careers hubs.
- Construction employers, contractors, consultants, and housing providers.
- Industry ambassadors, mentors, judges, and volunteers.
- Event venues, digital platforms, and programme infrastructure.
- Alumni networks and sector-wide relationships.
- Partnerships with policymakers, local authorities, and regional stakeholders.

Delivering Measurable Social Value

Building the Future provides employers with a scalable and measurable social value solution. Through the consortium model, employers can collectively support mentoring, careers education, work-related learning, site visits, and industry engagement, while generating measurable social value outcomes for young people, schools, communities, and the wider economy.

For social value managers and ESG leads, Building the Future offers a structured, reportable vehicle for workforce development investment, with clear outputs, defined beneficiary groups, and outcomes that align directly with Social Value Act requirements, CITB levy objectives, and local authority procurement expectations.

Our Talent Development Ecosystem

The five stages below are not isolated activities. They form a connected system in which each stage reinforces the next, creating a self-sustaining cycle of inspiration, development, and advocacy.

<p>Stage 1 Inspire</p>	<p>Construction Summit and Careers Fair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young people are introduced to the opportunities available within construction through employer engagement, workshops, demonstrations, and direct interaction with industry professionals. 250 students from 16 schools attended the 2026 Summit at University College Birmingham. <p>BTF Social Value Programme</p> <p>• Students participate in structured employer-led activities spanning Stages 1 to 3, mentoring</p>
<p>Stage 2 Connect</p>	<p>Young people build meaningful relationships with employers, mentors, colleges, universities, and apprenticeship providers.</p> <p>Employers gain direct access to future talent and strengthen their links with education providers.</p> <p>The consortium model ensures no single organisation carries the burden alone, while every partner benefits from shared impact and visibility.</p>

Stage 3
Develop

Construction Is a Team Sport: NOCN-Accredited Training

- Five-module programme: Confidence, Professional Communication, Teamwork, Initiative, Emotional Intelligence.
- Participants earn a nationally recognised NOCN certificate in Construction Soft Skills Development.
- Endorsed by Aston University, CIOB, and CITB. Available as intensive 5-day, five-week, or blended formats.

Stage 4
Recognise

Building the Future Awards

- Outstanding individuals, teams, and employers celebrated before 600+ industry leaders.
- 2025 winners: BAM, Vinci Building, AtkinsRealis, Equans, Novus Solutions, Raeon, GMI Construction, Marrons, Soben, Aster Group.
- Recognition creates visibility, credibility, motivation, and inspiration for others.

Stage 5
Mobilise

Building the Future Alumni and Young Professionals Network

- Winners, finalists, mentors, and employers become ambassadors, role models, and advocates.
- The Network provides ongoing community infrastructure: events, peer learning, and mutual support.
- This creates a self-reinforcing ecosystem of talent development and leadership.

Outputs

Each year Building the Future will measure:

- • Number of students engaged through the Summit and Social Value Programme.
- • Number of schools, colleges, and universities participating.
- • Number of employers involved.
- • Number of mentoring and Social Value Programme sessions delivered.
- • Number of site visits completed.
- • Number of NOCN certificates awarded through the Construction Is a Team Sport programme.
- • Number of industry volunteers engaged.
- • Number of apprenticeship and career opportunities promoted.
- • Number of award nominations received.
- • Number of finalists and winners recognised.
- • Number of sponsors and partners engaged.
- • Media, digital, and social media reach.

Outcomes

Short-Term Outcomes (0–12 Months)

Young People

- • Increased awareness of careers within construction and the built environment.
- • Increased confidence and aspirations.
- • Improved employability skills through accredited soft skills training.
- • Improved understanding of apprenticeship, college, university, and employment pathways.
- • Greater engagement with industry opportunities.

Employers

- • Increased participation in social value activity.
- • Stronger relationships with schools and education providers.
- • Greater visibility as employers of choice.
- • Improved employer brand and visibility within the sector.
- • Increased access to future talent.
- • Enhanced social value performance and reporting.
- • Increased staff engagement through volunteering and mentoring.
- • Greater contribution to workforce development priorities.

Education Providers

- • Stronger employer partnerships.
- • Improved access to industry insight and opportunities.
- • Access to NOCN-accredited soft skills provision for students and learners.

Medium-Term Outcomes (1–3 Years)

- • Increased uptake of construction-related education and training pathways.
- • Increased apprenticeship applications and employment opportunities.
- • Improved progression and retention among early-career professionals.
- • Growth of a visible and engaged alumni community.
- • Increased employer investment in talent development programmes.
- • Expansion of the NOCN training programme into colleges, employers, and new regions.
- • Expansion of the consortium model across additional regions.

Long-Term Outcomes (3–10 Years)

- • A stronger and more diverse talent pipeline entering the sector.
- • Improved retention and progression of young professionals.
- • Reduced barriers to entry for under-represented groups.
- • Stronger collaboration between employers and education providers.
- • Increased social value impact delivered across communities.
- • A recognised national ecosystem supporting the future workforce of the built environment sector.

Impact

Building the Future contributes to a future where the construction and built environment sector has the skilled, diverse, and motivated workforce required to deliver the homes, infrastructure, regeneration, and net-zero ambitions of the United Kingdom.

Through collaboration between employers, educators, communities, and industry leaders, we contribute to economic growth, social mobility, workforce development, and the long-term prosperity of the West Midlands and the United Kingdom.

Indicators of Success

The following measures track Building the Future's progress and demonstrate impact to sponsors, funders, and partners.

Measure	Current Performance
Students engaged annually (Summit and Social Value Programme)	1,500+
Employers engaged (Awards and Summit combined)	500+
Schools and colleges participating	25
Social Value Programme sessions delivered	35
Award nominations received	175
NOCN-accredited training programme	Active

Our Mission

To inspire, connect, develop, recognise, and mobilise the next generation of construction and built environment professionals through a coordinated ecosystem of employers, educators, and industry partners.
