

ASSETS – Assisting Social Enterprises To Succeed

2022 IMPACT REPORT



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"At Impact Hub London, we are delighted to have supported committed and passionate social enterprises on the ASSETS 2022 programme. Alongside Wates, we are proud to have created a unique, scalable and impactful programme which leverages our combined knowledge and networks to develop clearer strategy and achievable roadmap to scale their businesses within the UK constructor sector supply chain."



Angelica Santodomingo

Senior Programme Manager / Climate Lead – Impact Hub London



"The Impact Hub London team were great partners to work with; organised, knowledgeable, fun and with a great network of contacts that enhanced the programme."

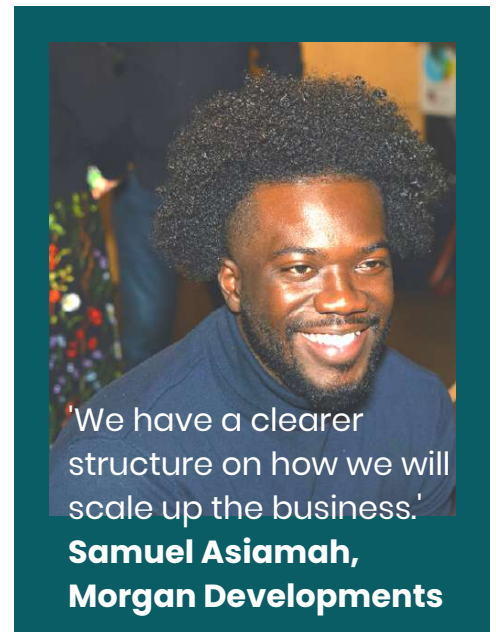
Su Pickerill

Head of Social Value – Wates Group

Executive Summary

ASSETS 2022 (Assisting Social Enterprises to Succeed) is an innovative 7 month curated programme headed by **Wates** and delivered in collaboration with **Impact Hub London**. **The objective is to support a cohort of 5 social enterprises (SEs) each with 3 Wates mentors, to achieve a clearer commercial roadmap to successfully scale their businesses nationally and add social and environmental value to the construction sector supply chain.**

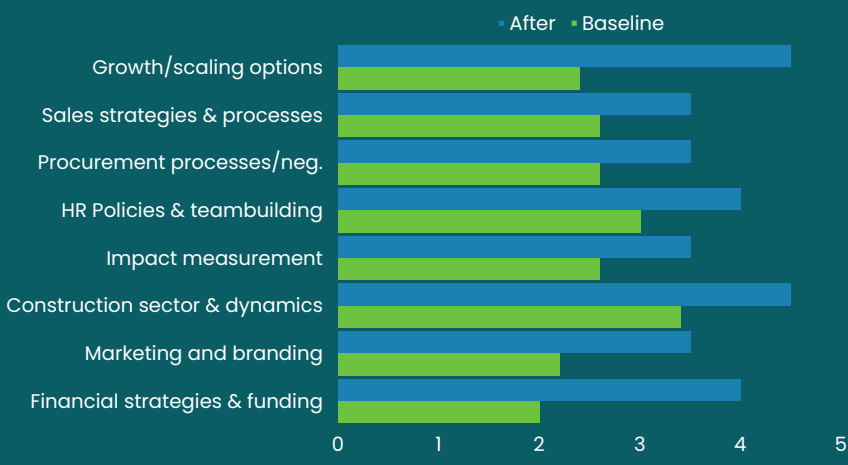
Figures published by Constructionline, show that in UK, construction accounts for approx 6% of GDP and employs +/-2.7 million people. Research reveals there is still trepidation within procurement about dealing with SEs with frequent significant dependency on established supply routes resulting in resistance to change. Wates are committed to creating opportunities to engender positive change in the supply chain and uplift impact to communities and the environment.



The 2022 cohort, reported that ASSETS greatly supported:

- **Increased commercial and long term goal development**
- **Improved understanding of contracts and tenders and corporate sector processes**
- **Enhanced personal leadership confidence**
- **Consolidated their enterprise value proposition & purpose**
- **Forged bonds with fellow participants with a view to a continuation of support, resource sharing and referrals.**
- **Objectives incorporated into their business plans as long term goals**

Participant Knowledge Ranking: (average rating out of 5)



Through the programme, it was reported by one enterprise that the programme was a 'game changer' in terms of upskilling commercial awareness. Participation represented an opportunity to support senior management to build on existing skills.

It was estimated that the ASSETS 2022 programme was responsible for approximately an average of 25% growth.

Background



In early 2021, Wates and Impact Hub London partnered to develop a pilot Accelerator programme. **The ambition was to create a mechanism support the scale up of social enterprises in the construction industry to increase their social and environmental impact adding intrinsic value across the supply chain.** The objective was to combine Wates' sector leadership and procurement expertise with Impact Hub London's experience in capacity building programmes for social enterprises from idea to scaling.

Wates is a leading supporter of the Social Enterprise sector. Up until now, this has focused mainly on trade, as well as advocating for the sector. However, as more businesses recognise the benefits of supply chain partners that trade in order to invest their profits into a social or environmental purpose, **there is a risk that demand may start to outstrip supply.**

Statistically, there are still too few Social Enterprises in the built environment and significant spend is still reserved for the service sector, ie office supplies or cleaning and there is a resistance across construction to embed wider reaching change through procurement.

To achieve greater impact and support more social Enterprises in the construction sector, Wates' **Creating Opportunities Social Value** strategy set an objective to support 5 SEs (social enterprises) to achieve national scale by 2025.

For Impact Hub London, this is a natural partnership. The construction sector is one of the UK's major industries and employers and there is an increased focus on adding social value to the supply chain and becoming climate positive. **Supporting more impactful suppliers to succeed and scale up would therefore drive a more positive value chain.**

ASSETS 2022 (Assisting Social Enterprises to Succeed) is an innovative seven-month curated programme headed by **Wates** and delivered in collaboration with **Impact Hub London**. The objective of ASSETS is to support a cohort of 5 social enterprises (SEs) to develop a clearer commercial strategy and achievable roadmap to successfully scale their businesses within the UK construction sector supply chain.

Post-programme, enterprises are ready to attract larger, national contracts and compete commercially with confidence and reinforce social value and increased positive environmental impact across their businesses, supply chain and society.

Figures published by Constructionline, show that in the UK, construction accounts for approximately 6% of GDP and employs around 2.7 million people. Prioritising enterprises that deliver social value, create opportunities for change and significant differences to communities and the environment.

According to **research** and stakeholder interviews* evidence revealed there is some **trepidation within procurement around dealing with SEs; often there is a significant dependency on established supply pathways resulting in resistance to change.**

The main aims of the programme were to support these social enterprises to:

Build operational readiness: processes in place and efficiencies implemented to enable scale and growth

Develop a clear scaling strategy

Improve commercial awareness

Strengthen their business model to grow in lockstep with their impact model

Strengthen their value proposition to be able to compete on an equal footing in the construction sector

SEs felt that their competency may be undermined due to negative perceptions that social enterprises would provide lower quality services and may lack capacity to handle large contracts.

“It can often be challenging for contractors to make the mind-shift from treating us like a charity to treating us like any other business. We don't want to be treated like a charity”.



“RESP #1 (Martin Losemore, Barriers to Social Enterprise in the UK Construction Industry)

ASSETS 2022 was refined to tackle uncovered current commercial challenges. Feedback emphasised the earlier need to **develop stronger infrastructure, develop commercial skills and embed good practices**. Although there were significant differences between the service provision, organisation size and structure of the 5 selected enterprises, there were commonalities in the challenges they faced, which were addressed through workshop sessions and mentoring.

An **increase in stress and anxiety is a concerning trend in the construction sector**, according to HSE. Published statistics show that during 2021-22 the number of workers suffering from work-related illnesses rose from 1.7 to 1.8 million, with 914,000 (over 50% of cases) attributed to stress, depression or anxiety. **The need to support entrepreneur wellbeing and resilience is crucial** to ensure that workplace culture extends to the wellbeing of the workforce, enabling a trickle-down of positive action from senior management.

Research and evaluation including the 2 previous ASSETS programmes, showed that social enterprises face obstacles to scale up in four main areas (below).

Evaluation consisted of interviews with **ASSETS alumni, potential participants, mentors, key stakeholders and partners** along with results of detailed questionnaires. Research included investigation of other construction sector programmes and analysis of the current marketplace. Results showed a strong focus on clean tech and R&D without focus on skills development crucially needed by social enterprises to successfully scale in the UK construction sector.

Sales & Bidding Process

Social enterprises feel insufficiently equipped to compete for larger contracts through the bidding and tender process and find more obstacles in building relationships with procurement stakeholders.

Marketing

Social enterprises feel insufficiently experienced to communicate their value proposition to best advantage and lack knowledge of marketing to the construction sector.

Organisational Capacity

Social enterprises feel insufficiently experienced to communicate their value proposition to best advantage and lack knowledge of marketing to the construction sector.

Business Strategy

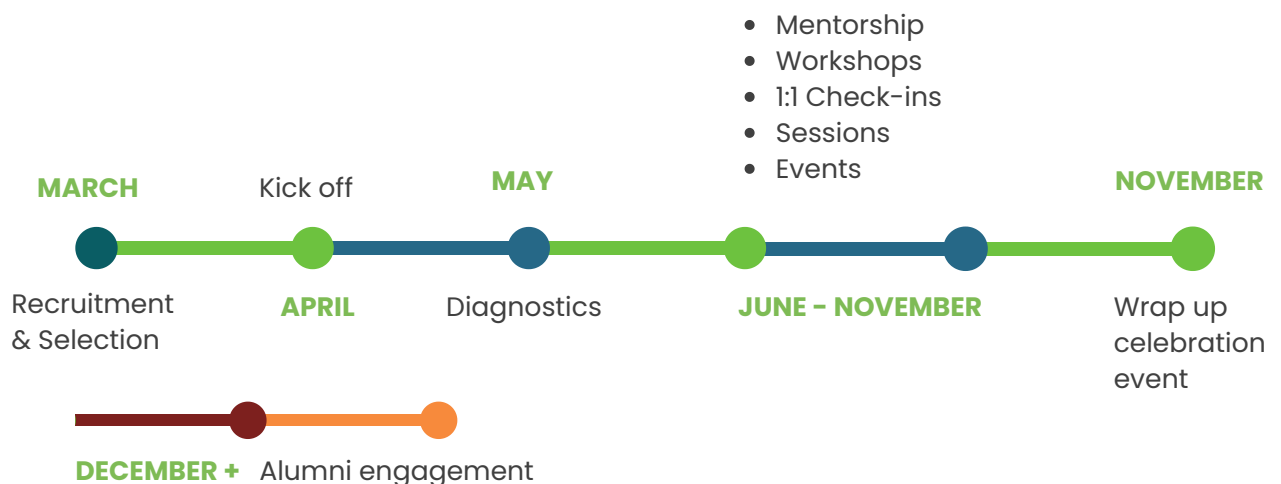
Social enterprises state they feel unclear about their business strategy and growth plans. Commercial strategies and business plan creation and recommendation to support growth.

Programme Structure

ASSETS 2022 Programme structure

- **ASSETS 2022 programme was delivered over seven months: May - November**
- **In person events at start, mid-point and end through virtual delivery and mentorship (in person mentor visits also)**
- **Cohort 5 social enterprises based across the UK**
- **Mentors selected according to area of expertise and matched in groups of three per enterprise**
- **Participant expert consultancy his translated to approximately 150 hours of support**

Programme Timeline



Delivery

To accomplish the goals of the enterprises, the participants received a tailored programme of workshops, expert consultancy and resources:

Business Diagnostics & Development Plan

Each enterprise received an initial 2-3 hour deep dive session to review their business structure, capabilities, challenges and scaling ambitions. From information gathered, achievable target objectives were collated to guide the enterprise individual programme journey and underpin the bespoke workshop series.

8 Online Expert-Led Workshops

Delivered by Wates employees and external experts from the Impact Hub London network. Covering key challenges/opportunities drawn from diagnostics evaluation, topics included:

- Commercial strategy
- Tender writing/contract review
- Procurement processes & specification
- Entrepreneur resilience in challenging circumstances
- Impact measurement
- Marketing - theory and best practice

Enterprise Mentoring Sessions

15 Wates mentors working in groups of 3, to guide and advise the social enterprises utilising their available experience and resources.

8 Online Peer-to-Peer Sessions

To share challenges, best practice, and personal expertise from their respective sectors, and bonding with fellow programme participants.

25 hours Programme Coach Check-ins

Monthly online meetings for each participant enterprise with their Impact Hub London Programme Manager to ensure goals are achievable and help ensure delivery remains on track.

Kick off and Final Celebration Events

with mentors and other key stakeholders to open and introduce the cohort and subsequently, showcase the achievements of the social enterprises.

Impact Hub Global Network

access to Impact Hub's global community of 16.5k changemakers and impact-driven enterprises across 108+ Impact Hubs.



Participants ASSETS 2022



Morgan Developments

is building economic justice for disenfranchised communities in the UK. Their vision is to become a leading major fit-out specialist social enterprise operating nationally, with 75% of profits reinvested in youth employment and to support a BAME-led supply chain.

www.morgandevelopments.com



Nuneaton Signs

provide meaningful employment and training for people with disabilities through the manufacture and sale of signs - including road, legacy and internal signage.

www.nuneatonsigns.co.uk



Paint 360

recycle and re-engineer unwanted paint and paint pots destined for landfill or incineration, employing young people with barriers to employment.

www.paint360.co.uk



ABC Life Support CIC

delivers physical and mental health first aid training to companies and individuals UK wide. They offer statutory workplace first aid training and use profits to offer training to disadvantaged groups who otherwise would lack access.

www.abclifesupport.co.uk

Programme Outcomes

Choosing an accelerator programme is a critical decision for social enterprises seeking guidance on their journey of innovation and growth; an investment of time and personal resources.

“I found the ASSETS programme very beneficial to be able to learn new skills and talk to other SE's about common issues and work together to support resolutions. I also learnt a lot of new skills”.

Becky - Nuneaton Signs



Response from participants following ASSETS 2022 was that entrepreneur time investment reaped valuable returns in terms of:

Increased commercial awareness and development of long term goals

Improved understanding of contracts and tenders

A better understanding how large scale construction sector businesses operate

Enhanced confidence in their personal leadership attributes

Consolidated their enterprise value proposition and purpose

Forged bonds with fellow participants with a view to a continuation of support, resource sharing and referrals.

Objectives incorporated into their business plans as long term goals



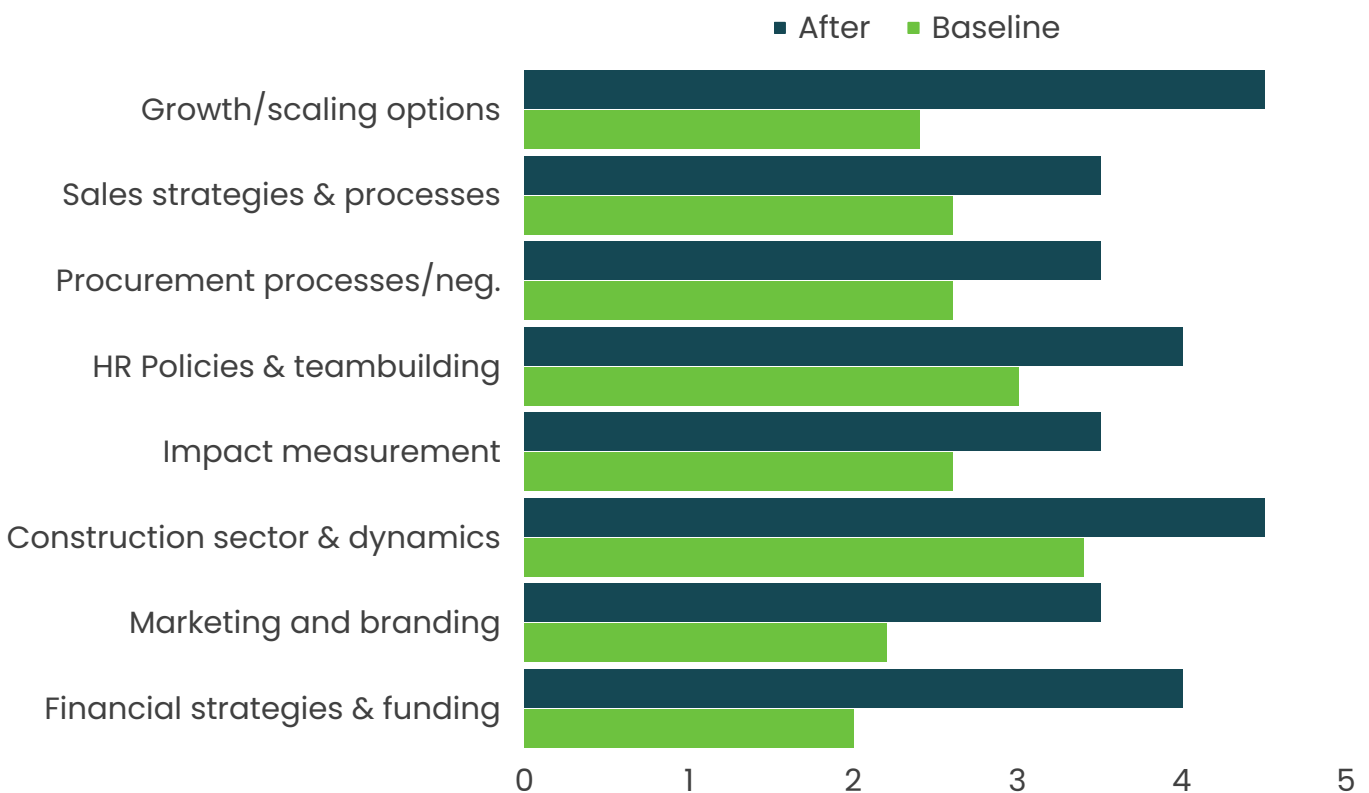
“It was a rollercoaster. I have gained so much in terms of structure, ideas, confidence and renewed enthusiasm”.

Ingrid Fawcett – ABC Life Support Ltd

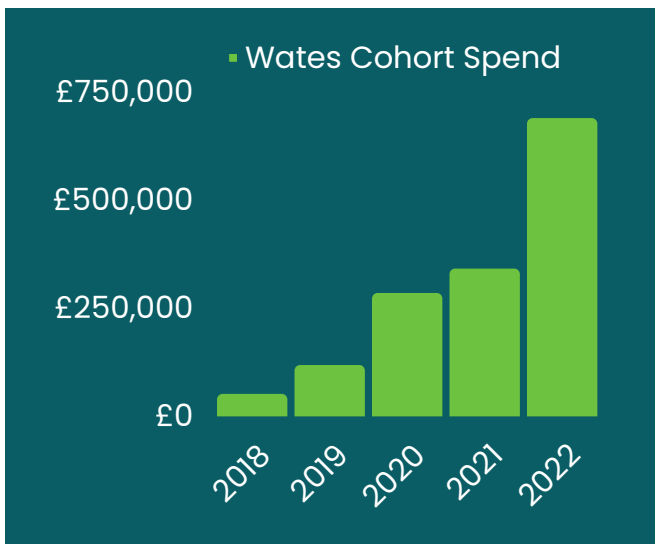
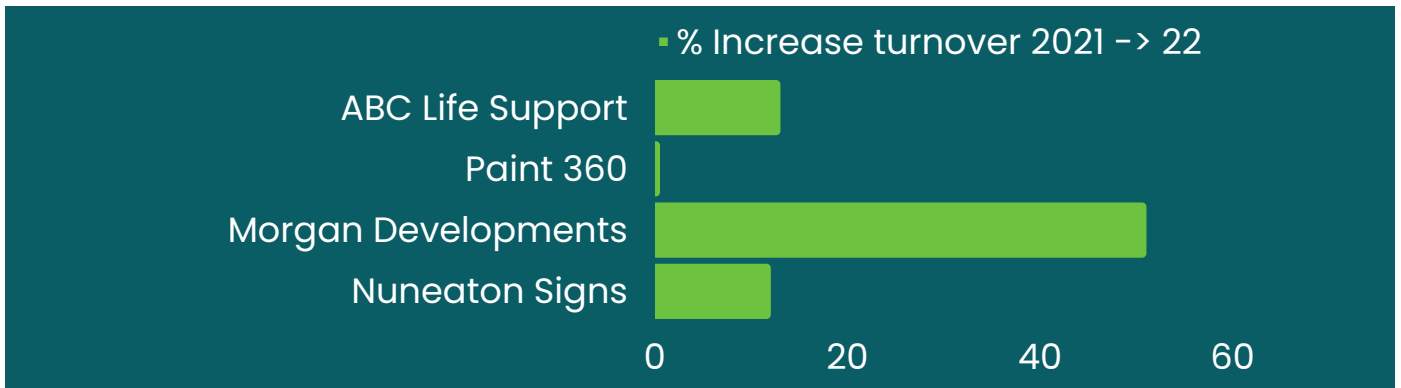
Skills Outcomes

A key outcome achieved was the development of the participating SEs' business skills, confidence and commercial knowledge. The social enterprises reported higher average scores post programme compared to the initial survey across all skill categories, with the strongest gains in growth/scaling options, procurement and marketing.

Participant Knowledge Ranking: (average rating out of 5)



Commercial Outcomes



It was estimated that the ASSETS 2022 programme was responsible for approximately an average of 25% growth.

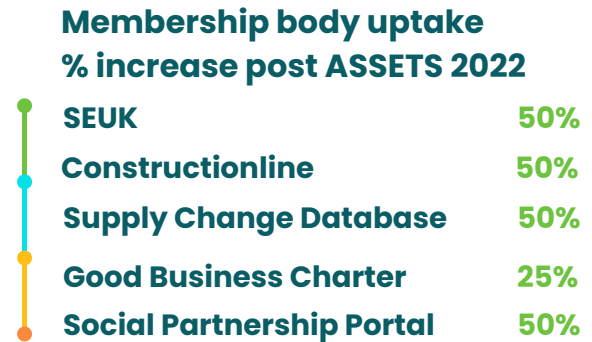
Wates is a leading advocate of social enterprise presence in a supply chain which delivers positive impact as well as providing employment to those furthest from the labour market and opportunity for career acceleration from disadvantaged groups. Their commitment is demonstrated through

increased spend year on year with participant social enterprises. The most marked increase was during 2022 with the current cohort of businesses. Enterprise directors reported that the programme directly contributed to knowledge development leading to actions:

- We are amazed at the doors and connections this programme has opened for us' ABC Life
- 'The development of our growth plan and marketing plan' Paint 360
- 'Developing our business plan' Morgan Developments
- 'My confidence has grown to be able to evaluate current practice and how they can be improved to assist in scaling up' Nuneaton Signs

Growth and Scaling Up Outcomes

All enterprises reported that they gained knowledge and experience to spur growth nationally in the construction sector



During the course of the programme, enterprises have acquired professional memberships and certifications, improving access to ongoing opportunities, knowledge sharing and thought leadership within the sector. For some participants, this manifested as greater commercial awareness for their team members and for some more direct commercial information which has helped consolidate growth plans and focus on priorities. Participants responded that they had a greater understanding of the importance both of impact measurement mechanisms embedded within a growth strategy and the benefit in terms of becoming attractive to social investors.

We have a clearer structure on how we will scale up the business.

Samuel Asiamah,
Morgan Development

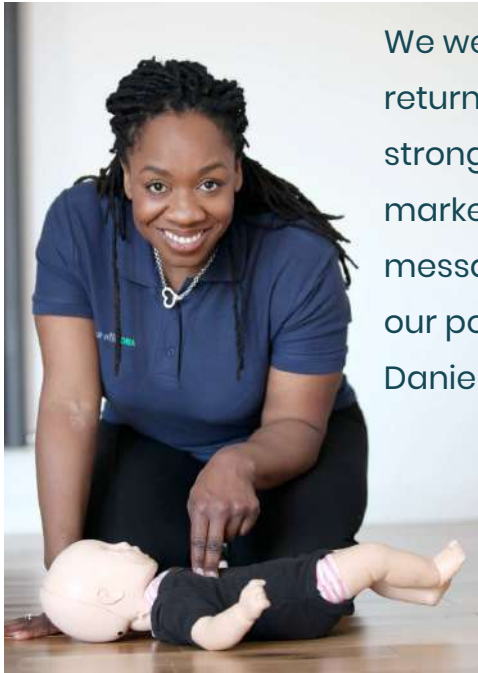


Construction Knowledge

The Construction Sector workshop was delivered by Wates and feedback reported that for the entrepreneurs with less experience of larger construction operators, this provided a valuable insight. For those who already have detailed procurement knowledge, the workshop enabled them to broaden their network and make new connections.

Sales & Marketing Outcomes

Participants reported that they had greater knowledge of how marketing could function better within their businesses, particularly as participants were sector experts within their field and not experienced marketers. So although in most cases, they would not be directly involved with marketing, they developed a better understanding of the importance of narrative and how to create more effective marketing briefs.



We were working a lot on referrals and return customers. We are now in a strong position to drive sales and marketing through better channels and messaging. Our reach has widened and our positions have improved
Danielle Bridge, ABC Life

Contracts/Tenders and Negotiation

Levels of expertise within the cohort varied, but there were similarities in terms of bidding and contract review. Participants attending universally reported that this had been useful and valuable both in the seniority and experience of the speakers and the diversity of content with working examples.

Entrepreneur Resilience and Wellbeing

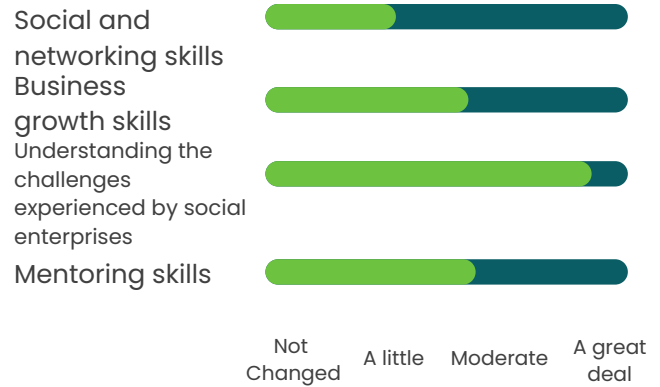
Initially, the participants were unsure about the value of this workshop, until they attended and it emerged that all directors found that at some level they experienced difficulties maintaining their own wellbeing and resilience, during a time of business growth. Particularly directors within larger enterprises reported that the workshop deepened their understanding of their team and leading from the 'top down' to ensure that buy-in and focus on goals remained buoyant. For others, it was about balancing and reframing their workload for longevity and avoidance of greater stress - leading to better decision making and healthier inter-team relationships.

About the Mentors

The volunteer group of 15 expert mentors was drawn from Wates and based nationally around the UK. Groups of 3 with complementary skills were allocated to each enterprise to guide and support their development goals. An initial mentor training workshop was held to lay a foundation for the programme and enable the group to bond. The feedback from the group about the training was positive.

During the programme, the mentors met at 2 peer to peer workshop sessions delivered by Impact Hub London. Feedback demonstrated that they found the session enjoyable and useful to hear everyone's experiences.

Mentor Development:



Great, and was lovely to meet the other mentors and hear about how they felt about the programme. It put us all on the same page'.

MICA JEMPEJI - Comm. Management Trainee Wates mentor

I found the approach to be very beneficial as each member of the team brought their own skill set as we we're all from different backgrounds. I learned about how small businesses are operated and the challenges they face when trying to expand. I also learned about teamwork and how different individuals can bring completely different skill sets to a team environment.'

DAVE IBBOTSON - Commercial Manager Wates mentor

Overall, 71% of mentors were highly likely to recommend the experience to colleagues.



Case Study

ABC Life Support CIC

ABC Life Support CIC have delivered front line first aid training to organisations across the UK for 10 years. Profit from corporate training courses are fed into delivery of lifesaving training skills to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Their manifesto is ‘to empower people to save lives. First Aid, physical and Mental Health should be a skill that is accessible to everybody regardless of financial or social limitations. [They] live and work within our purpose by engaging with socially conscious organisations who believe that community engagement is the way to access members of society who wouldn’t normally access this service. We do this by working alongside these organisations who are already engaged with our target beneficiary demographic’.



“ABC Life Support is a micro business with a macro mission and boy did explore this during our session! [.....] I also had Gina Ciotaki EnvDipNEBOSH with me, cheering me on and being a champion of ours in regards to how we are delivering impact for Wates Group via our place on the ASSETS program, headed up by Su Pickerill FICRS and Angelica Santodomingo at Impact Hub [London]. As we come to the end of the program, I reflect on the opportunities that we have been given to us which will take us well on our way to MACRO impact and capacity.’

What a ride! For the past 6 months we have had the pleasure of being part of the 2022 Wates Group ASSETS program. [...] it has been an intense rollercoaster ride of emotions and a chance to truly scale up. We have always been aware of our awesomeness, we rock at what we do, this has just given us an opportunity to learn the language required to show the construction industry what we have to offer. We have learnt the narrative around social value and social impact and what this means for corporate organisations. Truly a game changer for us which in turn will help us to continue our work with organisations such as Barnardo’s and One YMCA to deliver impact. Not looking forward to it ending next month, but happy with what we have in our toolbox to push forward!

Danielle Bridge – LinkedIn post

Key Learnings

The economic climate continues to challenge with additional pressures faced by the construction industry due to inflation unpredictability, supply chain bottlenecks and labour shortages; ASSETS 2023 remains agile and committed to refining the programme ensuring a new cohort of social enterprises can build the resilience and confidence to embed best strategic practices to future proof their sustainable businesses. A key element of supporting social enterprises has surprisingly been the impact of implementing strategies for positive mental health as an essential building block in the growth journey. Businesses can only remain healthy if leaders are fully present, focussed and resilient to navigate continuing challenges.

Wates and Impact Hub London have undertaken detailed surveys with the participants of 2022, alumni from the pilot project 2021, mentors and key stakeholders. Survey evaluations underpin and inform programme strategy as a process of continuous improvement with one eye firmly on delivering relevant and current content to ASSETS 2023 participants.

Alumni Support

Whilst programme alumni have remained consistently engaged, the intention is to strengthen the relationship beyond the programme timelines. To date, alumni have returned to join peer workshops, attend events and support existing participants and the commitment is to continue providing value and ‘keep the strategic relationship [and...] keep mentoring alive’. Alumni have commented that they would like to explore a 2-3 year programme to deepen market access and enable them at point of viability to pitch to WATES procurement teams.

Learning Programme

Within the a prolonged alumni programme, the intention is to maintain the relationship with Wates and key stakeholders through internal marketing and increase awareness of alumni growth. A strategy to achieve this will be through development of a learning document which ensures focus on results and how we can adapt and continuously improve the programme for future cohorts and maintain motivation among all stakeholders.





Mentor Engagement

Comprehensive mentor surveys and questionnaires established that Wates have a strong culture of staff members keen to ‘give back’ to communities and readily volunteer. There was a heartening positive response to the process with desire from mentors to work with participant enterprises in locations where on-site visits could be possible. The desire for face-to-face meetings was reiterated throughout the programme.

Similarly, the programme manager at Impact Hub London would benefit from on-site visits to deepen understanding of the social enterprises and gain valuable insight into their operational structure and team organisation.

Environment Talks

Impact Hub London will continue to broaden the sustainability message through the platform of Environment Talks, a lively and educational panel discussion held quarterly in person.

Delivered in partnership with in-house sustainability expert, Stav Friedman, the sessions cover a range of current topics and leave the audience with actionable takeaways to help drive their journey to sustainability. Speakers include Camilla Marcus-Dew of Connection Crew to share her ASSETS 2021 alumnus journey.



Conclusion

Feedback from the participants strongly indicated that ASSETS 2022 improved their commercial and entrepreneurial skills and embedded a greater understanding of team collaboration and buy-in from above and below the management tier. Another key element to programme success is the dedication of the mentors to develop greater understanding of their mentee enterprises and how to best support them in the changing landscape of the corporate construction industry.

All SE participants expressed that the programme met or exceeded their expectations and 100% are likely or highly likely to recommend to others.

The collaborative philosophy of ASSETS 2022, enabled bonding of both the cohort members and also within the mentor/mentee relationship which continues beyond the timeline.

The increasing recognition of emotional wellbeing in working lives, particularly for enterprises at the point of scaling, and especially with anxiety and depression prevalent across all sectors, inclusion of workshops to address entrepreneurial resilience is crucially relevant in the current economic climate. This works in lockstep with commercial objectives, inclusivity measures and sustainability goals.

The programme in its second iteration has continued momentum from the 2021 pilot and added additional emphasis on emerging trends and requirements for access to larger corporate supply chains. Evaluation of ASSETS 2022 has proved valuable in steering the course for the next expanded iteration during 2023.

ASSETS 2022 has delivered overall a significant increase in commercial awareness and entrepreneur skills and set a foundation for business growth.



What Next . . .

The ASSETS programme is set to expand and develop a larger cohort of social enterprises through 2023.

Interested in applying to the programme?

Reach out to Su Pickerill at: su.pickerill@wates.co.uk

Interested in delivering a programme with Impact Hub London?

Reach out to Angelica Santodomingo at:
angelica.santodomingo@impacthub.net

ASSETS – Assisting Social Enterprises to Succeed

Thank You

Our thanks to the support of Wates, a leading light in corporate support of the social enterprise sector. Bespoke programmes are only possible with the guidance of experienced construction sector mentors from Wates, who give their time in a voluntary capacity. Their insight is the catalyst for a new generation of suppliers to bring social value and impact to the UK supply chain.



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