



End of Project Report

CITB Reference Number: EVO-PIC-19-01	
Name of Lead Organisation: Ethos VO Limited (Building Pathways Ltd)	
Project Title: CITB Pathways into Construction	
Project Start Date: July 2019	Project End Date: November 2020 (Notice of Termination date)
Date Form Completed: 30/11/20	
CITB Funding Amount (Total): £413,104	Match Funding Amount (Total): £338,009
Overall Project Value (Total): £751,113 (value of original project)	

Executive Summary

Building Pathways has been successfully providing support to underrepresented groups of people for the construction industry since its launch in July 2019, under the Pathways into Construction commission. The programme targeted 5 distinct cohorts (veterans, women, CBE students, long term unemployed and NEETs) who are underrepresented in the construction industry. It was delivered mainly across three South London boroughs, including Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark where we had existing links, with a plan to expand nationally.

Its specific objectives were to:

- To provide excellent pre employment support to individuals from under represented groups that helps prepare and connect them to relevant career and work outcomes.
- To facilitate and support individuals' access to industry-led careers information and advice, skills training, coaching and mentoring, pre-employment support, work experience placements and employment opportunities.

Despite its suspension as a CITB funded programme in May 2020, and final termination in November 2020, the programme has achieved some very significant and 'against the general run of play' outcomes:

- **Established** a growing network of over 38 Tier 1 and SMEs construction contractors and developers operating across London, including Wates, Sir Robert McAlpine, Kier, Reliable Contractors, VGC group, AE Elkins and others
- **Identified** 38 industry professionals of which 16 participated in online mentoring training delivered by Building Pathways
- **Engaged** 252 beneficiaries from across south London, organising and delivering 11 community based construction information events. Of those who have registered, 58 have completed job specific training, 246 have received 121 IAG (Career Information, Advice, Guidance) and employability support, 20 participated in work experience placements and 6 so far have gained permanent employment or started an apprenticeship.
- **Collaborated** with a range of independent training providers, FE colleges, job brokerage schemes and local JCPs to provide our target groups access to employer-led career advice and guidance services, career information events, employability support, work placements and jobs
- **Established** our identity as a 'connector' organisation that understands and addresses the needs of businesses and providers across different sectors to help them achieve their strategic objectives and goals.
- **Helped** mobilise and support referral partners and employers to fulfil their objectives towards promoting construction careers and enhancing progression pathways in the UK construction industry
- **Achieved** over £730,000 of Social Value (as measured by National TOMS)

In March 2020, we were **awarded** the 'Lambeth Made Award Charter' for our work in supporting construction and built environment diploma students into work placement and apprenticeship opportunities, recognising our ability to lead, negotiate and coordinate activities effectively between employers and training providers has already helped economically inactive people gain employability support and work placements.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, we **transformed** the operating model rapidly to adapt to a virtual service, offering induction, IAG, mentor training, mentoring and

job specific training (accredited and unaccredited) to our beneficiaries and employers.

Recommendations Overview

1. **Adopt** a flexible and holistic approach to careers advice and guidance
2. **Engage** organisations that work with a wide spectrum of community leaders and organisations to inform diverse beneficiaries
3. **Establish** a greater collaborative working culture amongst projects to ensure the sharing of best practice and avoidance of duplication.
4. **Create**, where possible, a localised approach
5. **Commission** independent providers and specialist organisations to deliver and support **apprenticeships** in the industry.
6. **Promote** the industry by providing clear examples of **minorities** who have progressed into senior and executive level roles
7. **Provide** accessible and real time labour **market intelligence** to providers

The outlook on construction skills is uncertain. However, CITB recognises that recruitment levels are likely to increase because of displaced workers and the need for new entrants, through driving and widening apprenticeships and working with employers to increase training and development. BP has re-aligned its work to fit CITB career priorities outlined in its 2021-25 strategy. Subject to accessing future funding, we plan to establish an advisory group of existing employers within our network to understand their needs better and address retention by supporting the delivery of apprenticeship programmes for unemployed, unskilled and skilled people (re-joiners), and up-skill workforces through mentoring training.

Introduction

Building Pathways (BP) was launched in July 2019 by Ethos VO Limited to provide pre-employment support, job specific training, access to construction careers advice and facilitating access to work placements or apprenticeships within the construction industry. Its overall aims are to connect people from under-represented groups with mentoring, skills training and career opportunities in the construction industry, so they can achieve fulfilling careers and reach their potential.

BP's main funding has come from CITB Pathways into Construction programme with some match funding from industry professionals and partners. Our key target groups included:

- young people not in education training or work,
- long term unemployed
- service leavers
- women
- full time CBE learners, and care leavers (non CITB funded).

BP's contribution to CITB strategic priorities

Over the past 12 months, BP has worked towards meeting the following strategic priorities:

- Increasing access to the right training
- Reducing skills shortages
- Increasing the appeal of working in construction
- Increasing the added value per employer

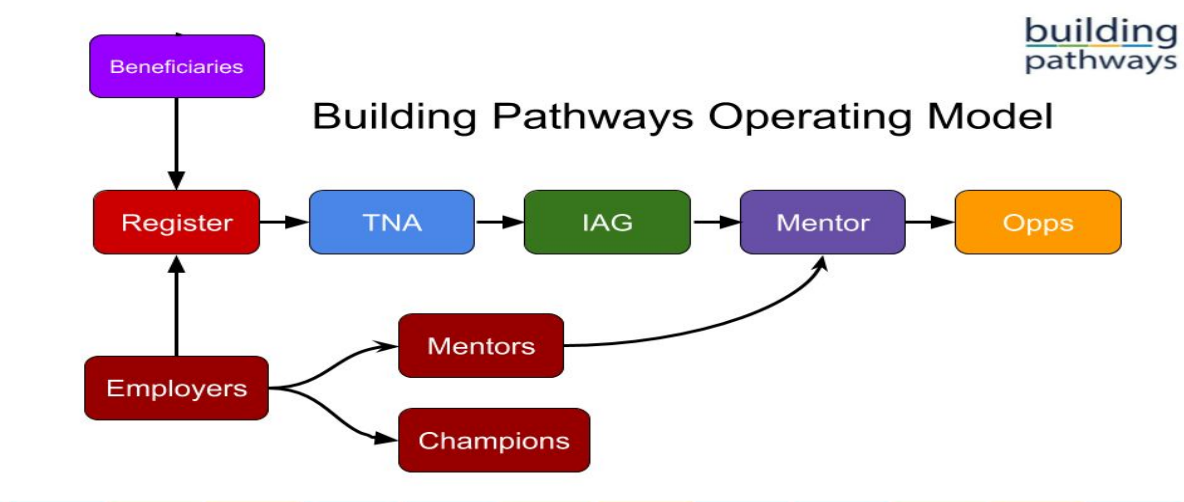
Background to Building Pathways

The project started with the appointment of Ethos partners, Mike Davis-Marks (Project Director), Pete Eldridge (Commercial Director), Philip Mills (Project Manager), Tracy Davis Marks (Project Worker), Fran Mullins (Marketing and Communication Manager) and Richard Blandford (Website Designer). We have since increased capacity with the recruitment of project staff Rosie Okumbe and Usha Chadha, and social media volunteers, Omar Awad and Jenny Dines.

The project has mainly focused on the employment-related needs and career interests of our target groups who are London residents. BP addresses three distinct challenges for the sector:-

1. The skills gaps in construction businesses
2. Lack of engagement in construction industry as a career choice
3. Unemployed people facing disadvantage getting into employment, or specifically employment in construction.

Operating Model & Core Activities



Delivery model process

- Working with stakeholder organisations and partners to identify relevant and effective support interventions and attract candidates to register via the project website
- Undertaking individual assessment of eligibility/needs over the telephone
- Identify appropriate training providers and referral partners
- Developing a network of principal and SME construction employers and advertising their opportunities on our jobs board
- Offering online mentoring training to industry professionals
- Providing light job brokerage support services to move candidates into progression destinations.

Direct support for candidates

- Signposting and making referrals into skills training provision, work experience opportunities, mentors and career advice and guidance
- Coordinating and facilitating work experience opportunities
- Supporting individual progression into work by offering a light brokerage support, including sending CVs to employers, identifying and sending information about career -related events and basic career guidance.

Monitoring and improving practice

- Use of an internal CRM system
- Quantitative measure tracking + perception surveys
- Holding regular feedback meetings with stakeholders.

Working Environment

As an organisation, Building Pathways operates without physical offices and employees work from home. Therefore, the project operated a remote model of delivery. We mapped our target areas (beginning in South London) to better understand what existing provision and services were available to local residents, sought to identify the gaps in relation to construction pre-employment support and established relationships with various local stakeholders to reach and engage our target group. We undertook extensive outreach activities in sites and venues that our target groups were familiar with such as colleges, community centres and job centres. This localised area approach enabled us to identify and utilise existing community resources, whilst being flexible and working in collaboration rather than duplicating services.

Building Pathways progress on its distinct operational outputs

BP recognises the value of building strong and collaborative relationships with colleagues at all levels across all sectors. We wanted to build meaningful engagement with employers by aligning ourselves with people and organisations

that share our passion and vision to create recruitment pathways that help to increase diversity across construction workforces.

Employer Engagement & Mentors and Champions

Deliverables	Year 1 target	Actual (up to May 20)
B1: Employers engaged	27	38
B2: Industry mentors recruited	81	38

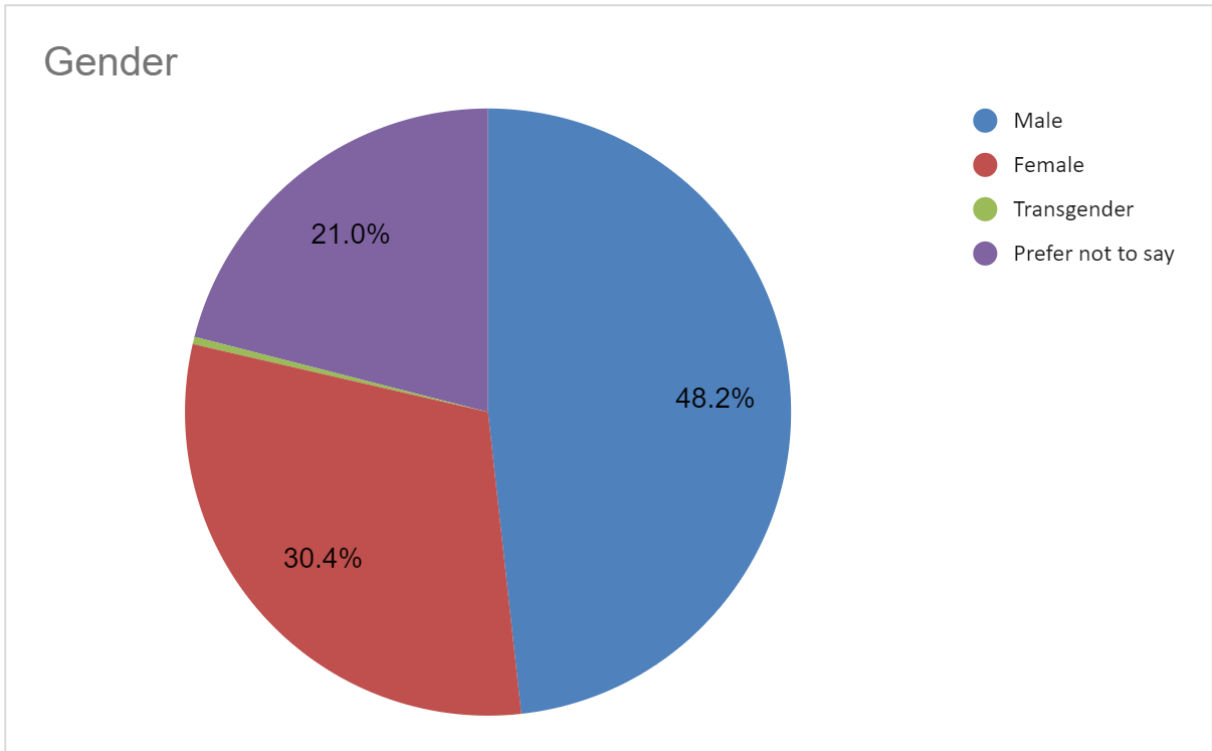
One example of this was our partnership with AE Elkins and Lambeth College. Here we liaised with the employer to identify, plan and coordinate a mixture of 5 day block and extended work placements for CBE Diploma students, representing different trades, from civil engineering to electrical installation.

“Building Pathways clearly work very hard to build relationships with colleges and local employers and they have made the process very easy on us. I look forward to continuing to work with them to provide more opportunities to local people.” Ayesha Wright, Continuous Improvement Coordinator at AE Elkins.

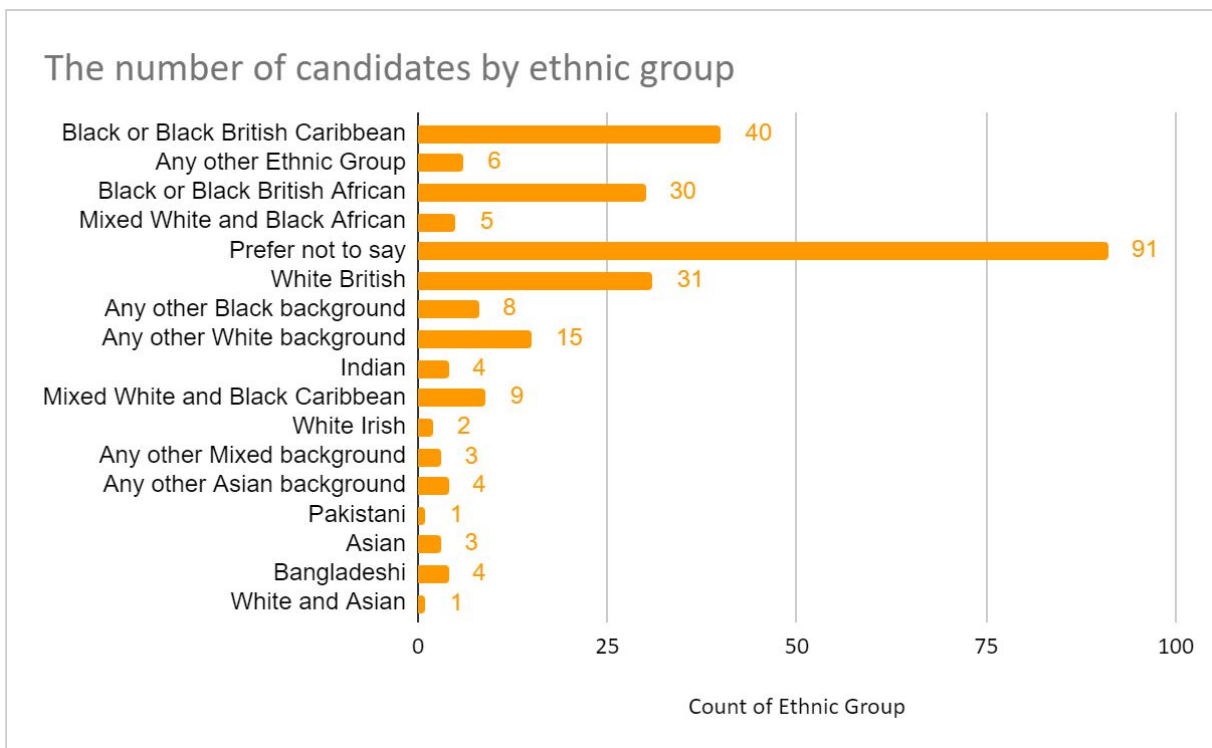
Beneficiary Engagement & Recruitment Events

Deliverables	Year 1 target	Actual (up to May 20)
A1: Recruitment events held	8	11
A2: Beneficiaries engaged	209	252
C1: Beneficiaries receiving 1-1 IAG and employability support	78	244

The percentage breakdown of individuals by gender who have benefited directly from the project:



Below shows the number of individuals by ethnic group who have benefited directly from the project:



Job Specific Training

Deliverables	Year 1 target	Actual (up to May 20)
C2: Beneficiaries completed job specific training	59	53

In addition to our work with WiC to facilitate access to job specific training, BP partnered with online training company, Vital Skills Training, to provide a number of online job specific short courses. These non-accredited short courses included COSHH Awareness, Asbestos Awareness, Electrical Safety Awareness, Fire Safety Awareness, Risk Assessment Awareness and Manual Handling Awareness.

Aziz, who completed both the Risk Assessment and Asbestos Awareness courses, said they were **“both great preparation for a career in construction and his ultimate goal of being a Risk Assessment Manager”**. Being able to do the courses remotely gave Aziz the opportunity to be flexible and complete to courses at his own pace.

For Fatima, who completed Risk Assessment Awareness as well as the Electrical Safety course, she said: **“I think these courses will help me because I would like to work as a project management assistant, so I will already have some solutions in mind for some situations that will be presented to me in the workplace...”**They were not difficult to complete because I studied. I need to keep most of this information in mind. Therefore, they are really valuable to me”.

Work Placements & Jobs

Deliverables	Year 1 target	Actual (up to May 20)
D1: Number of beneficiaries completing work placements	39	20
D3: Number of beneficiaries successfully gaining employment in construction	18	9 ¹

Work experience placements helped to promote and deliver equal access to opportunities for diverse people from all segments of society to access the workplace and kickstart their careers.

Kyle said: **“they (AE Elkins) gave me a chance to use my initiative and I really enjoy all the work we are doing and I have built a good working relationship**

¹ Includes three individuals who began employment after May 2020.

with my teammates. I really enjoyed the work placement, thank you. I wish it was an actual job for me as would much rather be there than at college. Just wished to say thank you & your team for the assistance, I appreciate you”.

Marshalee, who was offered work experience through our partnership with Women in Construction said: **“It was really helpful to have had the experience on site, as I can now use the skills that I learned at Ardmore with my new employer”.**

Key Partnerships (stated in the original proposal for funding)

Spectra First: Young People NEET, Long term Unemployed, FT learners, Women

DWP: Long Term Unemployed, Service Leavers

CTP, MOD (DRM), Military Charities, Service Associations: Service Leavers

Women into Construction, BuildLondon: Women

Training Providers/Skills Academy: FT learners.

Referral Organisations and Training Providers

Over the past 12 months, we have established ourselves as a ‘facilitator’ organisation that addressed the skills gaps by connecting candidates, FE colleges, independent training providers, referrals agencies and employers from across south London. We have formed strong links with a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations including Lewisham and Lambeth Councils, FE colleges (primarily Croydon College, Lambeth College and Lewisham Colleges), Streatham, Forest Hill, Peckham JCPs, Lewisham Construction Hub, Care Leavers Services, and the charity, Bounce Back. In addition, we set up referral channels with other CITB Pathways into Construction funded projects, such as Construction Youth Trust and Croydon Works.

These community links provided a rich source of opportunity for effective signposting and referrals, bringing together different organisations across sectors with shared commitments to reduce unemployment and increase access to skills training.

“Building Pathways have excellent connections with a wide range of small and large sized employers across the construction sectors. By working in collaboration with providers and businesses, Building Pathways are able to meet the future skills needs of employers by connecting them with tomorrow's workforce today. They have helped the students at Lambeth College to gain occupational insight and make informed choices about their

skills needs through inspiring projects and placements. I would not hesitate to recommend them!” Clive Lissaman, Employer Engagement Lead at Lambeth College.

**“I think Building Pathways is a great way of giving people opportunities in construction working life, you got to try your best and you guys help people to get into things not like other agencies that put you on a register”.
Electrical Apprentice, 17 years old**

Have you identified any other early outcomes from your project?

- ❖ Training providers have a better understanding of skills/training needs
- ❖ Employers have a better understanding of translatable skills from diverse groups
- ❖ Candidates are linked to and guided by industry professionals
- ❖ Increased number of our target group have developed the right skills to enter construction
- ❖ Increased awareness and enthusiasm for construction careers amongst candidates
- ❖ Sustained and secure work experience placements for candidates
- ❖ Increased awareness of careers in construction among target groups
- ❖ Increased number of sustainable employment outcomes fulfilled by target groups.

Local Recognition

In March 2020 we received the Lambeth Made Charter 2020 award in recognition of our commitment to Lambeth Borough residents. Working alongside Lambeth College and local employers, we helped to plan, coordinate and facilitate work experience placements for CBE students at Lambeth College. Through work experience, the students gained insight into industry, applied their skills and developed their confidence.



Speaking of the benefits to the college, the **Employer Engagement Lead** at the college said: **“by working in collaboration with providers and businesses, Building Pathways are able to meet the future skills needs of employers by connecting them with tomorrow's workforce today.”**

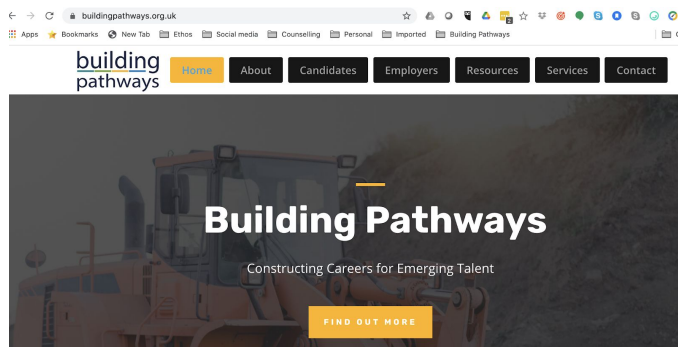
Communications, Marketing & Branding

The marketing & communications activity was planned and implemented in 3 key phases - launch (July - Aug 2019), phase 2 (Sept 19 - Apr 20) and phase 3 (April - Aug 20).

Activity and results can be summarised as follows:

Launch

- Logo, tagline, vision, mission, target audiences, objectives, strategy and key messaging established



- Design and production of [website](#) with information, resources and registration forms and auto-respond emails for individuals and employers

- A5 printed & pdf [flyers](#) for recruiting individuals and employers/mentors - printed and electronic distribution
- 2 pull up banners for events
- Email to key contacts and targeted individuals from the BuildForce list
- [Press release](#) published on website and to industry media contacts



Phase 2

- Website development - pages for training courses, opportunities, careers advice, support services, Traineeship programme, [media resources](#), [success stories](#), credentials, employer network
- [Posters x 4](#) produced for colleges and training providers
- Leaflets for events - eg Lewisham job fair, Streatham JCP event, Peckham JCP event
- Filming & editing of [intro video](#) - publish on website and YouTube channel



- Launch of profiles & regular activity - 2+ post per week - on all major social media platforms - [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#)

Phase 3

- Covid-19 response
- Increase in social media activity and engagement strategy
- Website - case studies, news stories & quotes published regularly
- Re-focus on virtual programme
- Launch of bi-monthly [email newsletter](#) to 234 beneficiaries & stakeholders. With issues deployed in April, June, September & November 2020.

Key metrics

- Email newsletter - 286 subscribers to date, OR 30-43%, CTR 7-16.4%
- Analytics to date for website and social media profiles

01/07/19 - 30/11/20	Users	New Users	Sessions
Website	1521	1518	2421
Social Media	Followers	Posts	Engagement
LinkedIn	124	104	618
Instagram	247	90	446
Twitter	135	112	417
Facebook	22	96	264

Have any case studies or significant change stories emerged from the project?

Building Pathways partnered with Women into Construction, an independent not-for-profit organisation based in London to provide women access to free training including: Site Safety Plus, CITB H&S card, employability, mentoring, supported site experience on live construction sites with major contractors and progression.



Martine was delighted to team up with the team at the Hill Motion project in Lea Bridge Road London E10 in 2019 to deliver two work placements in the technical team.

First into the role of trainee technical coordinator was Waltham Forest resident Rohany, a civil engineer student in her second year who was hoping to gain on-site experience

during the 4-week placement. She worked under supervision of Denny's Suarez (right) who was impressed with Rohany's knowledge and understanding of technical procedures and praised her ability for teamwork. Rohany moved on to a paid role as civil engineer intern straight after her placement in September 2019.

Local resident Jacqueline started her placement in September 2019 as technical trainee. With her background in housing she was pleased to gain inside knowledge of the industry helping her to decide where to take her career. She fully embraced her tasks and particularly enjoyed how quickly the site changed in the two weeks she was working with the team. Between Aug 2019 and May 2020:

- 49 women were engaged and received tailored advice and information,
- 13 women completed job specific training and participated in site experience on major projects,
- And, 6 women progressed into employment/apprenticeships.



Obstacles and Challenges

❖ Identifying and engaging Veterans / Service Leavers

Building Pathways set itself a very ambitious goal of supporting all 5 cohorts targeted by CITB in the Pathways into Construction commission. We were keen to support Service Leavers and Veterans, not only because of our previous experience in helping deliver the BuildForce project (2nd phase), but also because of one of the project teams' (Mike Davis-Marks) previous career in the Royal Navy. It quickly became obvious that identifying Service leavers and Veterans using the model we had, and accessing the normal channels (CTP, MOD, Service associations and charities) would involve competing with BuildForce (another Pathways into Construction project) and that would mean duplicating effort with no extra gain. Furthermore, DWP do not routinely record someone's military background in their records, making it difficult to identify veterans from the unemployment record, so we undertook to support other Pathways' projects like Project Recce, but were stymied by Covid just as we were about to set up our first joint event.

❖ **Responding to Covid-19 crisis:**

At the beginning of March 2020, BP was on track to complete another successful quarter (Q3), but as the spread of Coronavirus (COVID19 or CV19) increased, together with the changing Governmental advice and restrictions, it became apparent that BP would be significantly impacted. Already a number of events have been cancelled or postponed, and work placements (13) scheduled for this week similarly postponed. BP put together a strategy on what we can do, rather than what we can't do. The plan, which we published online, constituted some thoughts and practical steps about how we were going to operate over the next few weeks and months.

We also contacted some of our existing employer contacts to find out who is or isn't currently on furlough, to understand what employers priorities were over the coming months in relation to CSR and Early Careers to help direct and guide our work and begin promote our current offers of online courses and consultancy services to existing employers and their networks.

Whilst it is inevitable that some momentum would be lost, as it was for many projects and businesses worldwide, the BP team put together a strategy based on what we could do, rather than what we couldn't do. Or perhaps how we might do things differently until the situation returns to normal, so we adapted our model to include virtual IAG sessions to every new registrant during the induction phase, as this would be unaffected by CV19 as long as the beneficiaries continue to register. Fortunately, our numbers ran far in excess of targets (179 sessions vs 63 for end of Q3), with every new beneficiary receiving a virtual induction and IAG as part of the programme.

Similarly, having already invested in some online job specific training courses in partnership with Vital Skills (and latterly with The Digital College), were able to ensure that any training gaps or upskilling requirements identified from the induction sessions could be met.

Mentor matching is another area we looked at more closely as clearly F2F mentoring is going to be problematic, and we have adapted our mentor training to include virtual mentoring and encouraged our mentors to adopt these new practices.

❖ **Maintaining Employer Engagement with employer contacts:**

At the beginning of delivery we invited all the employers who had previously engaged with Ethos on Buildforce to remain on the mailing list

and receive information about Building Pathways, but had a poor response. We therefore, quickly focussed our efforts on establishing our brand, messaging and began carrying out intensive employer engagement. In order to identify suitable employers, establish relationships with key individuals and to build trust we first had to map out local firms using online platforms such as Construction Map and the Mayors Construction Hubs Academy, as well as utilise personal contacts. Understanding the needs of employers in relation to their CSR and social value objectives provided a basis for our work to maintain employer engagement.

Working with CITB

As part of the Pathways Into Construction programme, CITB set itself an ambitious target to attract at least 11,800 people into construction careers. At the time of applying for this funding, CITB highlighted that construction output was expected to grow by 1.3% per year with 168,500 jobs being created by 2023. With 16% of construction employees being female, and 7% from BAME backgrounds. Presenting a real challenge for employers to recruit more people from diverse backgrounds.

Until COVID, construction output was expected to grow by 1.3% per year with 168,500 jobs being created by 2023. There was an increased focus on direct support for employers, who are well placed to help make it easier to recruit workers into the industry and to access training. The lack of access to quality training to meet industry standards and work readiness amongst students was also identified as key factors to address the skills gap in the industry.

CITB also reported that only 22% of employers engaged with colleges to support their recruitment needs, and 26% to support their training needs. However, whilst some progress had been made in these areas, especially to identify and nurture a talent pool of under-represented individuals and groups through active community investment, with the recent Covid 19 pandemic, it is understandable that employers have reverted their focus and commitments towards staff retention and re-skilling. And in some cases, they have re-negotiated local targets and plans around Section 106/CSR.

Recognising CITB's expertise and understanding in this research, Building Pathways worked hard to forge a very good, working relationship with the appropriate Partnership Managers (notably Carl Licorish, local manager for London and his team), as well as a very strong bond with our contracts manager, Nick Edwards. Our sense is that we have a good understanding of CITB's strategic priorities and great respect for the members with whom we worked, and remain keen to work with you in the future.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Over the past 18 months, as a result of the funding from CITB, BP has become a recognised and valuable resource for training providers, employers and people seeking pre-employment support and training in the London area. We have progressed well towards achieving CITB targets, having exceeded expectations in many areas such as beneficiary engagement, IAG and employer engagement. Despite some unforeseen challenges, in particular the Covid-19 pandemic, BP has continued to press on. We've remained focussed on our vision to connect and prepare diverse people for the world of work and have / are learning about and exploring new ways of working so we can effectively respond to the needs of our target group and adapt our services accordingly, rather than draw back.

One of the by-products of this initiative was the interest and take-up of apprenticeships. Whilst this was a very beneficial outcome, there is no doubt that a more focussed programme to deliver apprenticeship opportunities for young people would provide considerable benefit to the industry. As a follow-up, we would strongly recommend that a focussed programme be commissioned to provide a more structured approach to apprenticeships in the industry

These **recommendations** are made to inform future work in the area of pre-employment support, especially for under-represented groups:

1. **Adopt** a flexible and holistic approach to careers advice and guidance that is industry-led to help change positively people's perceptions about the industry.
2. **Engage** with organisations that work collaboratively with a wide spectrum of community leaders and organisations to inform diverse beneficiaries, and motivate and support them into work or further training
3. **Establish** a greater collaborative working culture amongst CITB commissioned projects to ensure the sharing of best practice and avoidance of duplication.
4. **Create**, where possible, a localised approach (or approaches), where organisations and agencies across all sectors work together within a locality to create pathways for progression. This should involve the inclusion of 'specialist' or 'targeted' organisations at strategy level such as Women in Construction and Youthbuild who can offer expert knowledge about the specific needs of under-represented groups.
5. **Commission** independent providers and specialist organisations to provide more structured approaches that assist employers to deliver and support **apprenticeships** in the industry.
6. **Promote** the industry by providing clear examples of **minorities** who have progressed into senior and executive level roles within major construction firms will help to raise aspirations and change the perception of the industry amongst minority groups.

7. **Provide** accessible and real time labour **market intelligence** to providers, enabling more effective targeting of different groups, especially young people.