

# Her Untapped Potential Year One Evaluation

A report from  
Savannah Wisdom Foundation

**SAVANNAH  
WISDOM**

**Her Untapped Potential: Including young British Asian women in growth strategies to support their greater work force participation and integration.**

By Savannah Wisdom Foundation  
In Partnership with UBS Optimus Foundation

***Ensuring better integrated communities  
in partnership through social mobility.***

Autumn 2019

## Introduction to Savannah Wisdom Foundation

Savannah Wisdom is an independent charitable foundation based in the North West of England which is committed to social change for a better world. Our mission is to work towards a more peaceful, equal and just global society where there is opportunity for all, without barriers. Our UK work is focused in the North West of England due to the diverse communities who live and work in the region and Savannah Wisdom being based in the area. The North West of England has enormous potential to grow as an economic and cultural force within the UK. A vast part of this growth needs to be realised through the skills and character of the region's workforce. Ethnic minority groups in Greater Manchester are less likely to be employed than others with a 20% gap between ethnic minority women and other women. Young women of South Asian heritage are an important part of that workforce potential, however, they are currently underrepresented in the work place. More information on Savannah Wisdom Foundation can be found at: [Savannah Wisdom online](#)

## Background to *Her Untapped Potential*

Savannah Wisdom in partnership with UBS Optimus Foundation are seeking to increase the potential economic contribution South Asian girls can make to the North West of England. Savannah Wisdom Foundation's *Her Untapped Potential* programme was created in 2018 based on research and recommendations to stakeholders which led to an in-school pilot project in Greater Manchester in partnership, following five programme principles.

In our work we believe that the inclusive growth gained via the economic and social mobility of South Asian girls and young women will also result in greater community cohesion and better integration. We aim to achieve this by tackling evident early drop-out of a notable number of young women of South Asian heritage from the labour market, despite typically high educational attainment. Girls of all ethnic groups consistently outperform boys in compulsory education, people from ethnic minority groups are more likely to go to university than their white counterparts, and despite the huge potential these figures show, South Asian women typically have a lower level of economic activity. A headline statistic to set the scene is that 16-24 year old women from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian backgrounds are 22% less likely than their white/white British counterparts to be economically active. Savannah Wisdom's *Her Untapped Potential* Brief of March 2019 provides further information here: [Her Untapped Potential Brief](#)

Our combined research concluded that Savannah Wisdom's philanthropic work should contribute to achieving inclusive growth by removing barriers and giving broader opportunities to a number of girls of South Asian heritage who are facing actual or perceived barriers to future employment. We understand that these barriers are not faced by all girls of South Asian heritage, though our research has identified a need to support a number of girls. Our aim is to provide new kinds of support for girls of South Asian heritage, supported by their parents and communities, on the girl's journey from education to early employment. We believe that improving economic and social mobility will have many benefits for individual lifestyles and also lead to better integration.

## *Her Untapped Potential Programme Overview*

Our primary focus is the low labour market participation of young women of South Asian heritage in the North of England. To give context, Asian women aged 16-24 in North West and Yorkshire & The Humber are more likely to have 'never worked' or be long-term unemployed (12.94% and 16.05%) than white/white British counterparts (7.66% and 7.96%). The Millennium Cohort Study (CLS, 2018) stated that among women with a degree, the young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and black Caribbean women with degrees take home between £90 and £35 per week less than their white counterparts. The Greater Manchester (GM) Community Cohesion Commission states in their 2018 recommendations report that whilst GM is an ethnically and culturally diverse region, there are high levels of inequalities in the region.

Our research demonstrated that parents from a variety of communities are the biggest influence on a young person's career choice (Joseph Rowntree, 2011), but many parents are not aware of all the employment options available. Our engagement with careers advice experts also highlighted that multiple interventions of careers advice and employment planning support over a period of time for young people would have the most positive impact.

Based on our research we follow five best practice principles in designing and delivering our programme work:

1. Parental engagement to raise their awareness of the wide variety of future employment opportunities and the related potential pathways for their daughters;
2. Medium term interventions whilst in education for girls to build their pathway to future employment;
3. Variety of quality and co-ordinated training and skills development to enable girls to make choices, supported by their parents and communities;
4. Engagement with employers to offer a wider variety of schools careers interventions and achieve a diverse workplace in the longer term;
5. Role model involvement to inspire girls and assure parents in appropriate future employment opportunities.

This approach also highlights the problems of a poorly co-ordinated careers service in the UK with isolated work undertaken by organisations and one-off short-term interventions as well as introducing parental engagement for the first time. These five principles align with the Gatsby Career Benchmarks recommended to schools by Government to improve careers advice for all young people. We have piloted these principles via a Year One pilot in 2018/19 in GM.

Savannah Wisdom's *Her Untapped Potential* Brief of March 2019 provides further information here: [Her Untapped Potential Brief](#)

## Evaluation Summary

Our pilot has been based on our theory of change which states better integrated communities through social and economic mobility. We aim to increase social and economic mobility by tackling evident early drop-out of young women of South Asian heritage from the labour market, despite typically high educational attainment.

Our in-schools 2018/19 pilot focused on supporting two groups of girls across two schools in Greater Manchester. We emphasized early parental engagement in discussions around career choices and meaningful employment in the future. Our pilot also focused on skills and confidence building and raising awareness of different career choices.

*“I thought that I wouldn’t be as confident presenting my ideas/solutions in front of everyone. . ., however when it actually came to presenting it, it wasn’t so bad. I actually really enjoyed it.” – Pupil*

We are grateful to the girls and teachers at Abraham Moss School and Whalley Range High School in Greater Manchester for agreeing to take part in the Year One Pilot during 2018/19. We are also pleased to work in partnership via a commission with NGO Enabling Enterprise to deliver an in-schools skills development and employment experience programme for Year One, supported by Manchester City Council.

*“During the trip I managed to learn new skills and also develop some skills that I previously had been struggling with. My team skills were excellent in my opinion, I was able to talk to my two peers without any arguments and we all had similar ideas and agreed on one another’s opinion.” – Pupil*

## Key Findings

We tracked the outcomes for a group of 24 girls of South Asian Heritage during 2018/19 and key developments identified from the Year One Pilot were as follows:

- Girls who took part in the project saw an increase in skills beyond that of their peers;
- The average increase in skill level across the eight indicators for the girls in the focus cohort was 2.7 levels. This was almost double that of the non-intervention cohort (1.5 levels);
- In terms of specific skills, involvement in the programme helped girls to be more analytic, attentive, and assured;
- This is reflected in the fact that the greatest areas of improvement for the girls were in the skills of problem solving, listening, and presenting;
- Almost all of girls involved self-reported an increase in their confidence;
- 80% of parents/carers reported an increase in their own personal knowledge of career paths for their daughters;
- The project allowed the girls to develop more in-depth relationships with each other, as well as with their teachers.

## Participant Feedback on the Pilot

A number of the pupils reported that they felt this increase in confidence had been at least partly derived from an increase in their skills. Through developing skills and knowledge in certain areas, this has in turn made the girls more confident in expressing themselves, particularly in front of larger audiences.’ The teachers involved also reported that girls who took part in the events are now interacting more around the school, and this peer interaction has helped to improve the confidence of many of the girls.

*‘My confidence levels increased nearing the end of the day as I discovered that I felt more comfortable putting my hand up and voicing my ideas.’*  
– Pupil

A number of parents also noted that they had observed an increase in confidence in their daughters, with 9 of the 10 parents surveyed stating that programme had been extremely helpful and their daughters had grown a great deal in terms of their confidence and/or skills. Enabling Enterprise who noted that: *‘There has been a noticeable improvement in the pupils’ confidence in speaking to the volunteers on employer visits. This has included asking more probing questions – for example, about career development and alternative routes into employment other than university’*

*‘I liked the thought provoking nature of the tasks as I believe that it increased my critical analysis skills’.* – Pupil

*‘The girls have gone from timid and reluctant to confident.’ – Teacher*

When surveyed, 8 of the 10 parents surveyed reported that they had experienced an improvement in their own understanding of the employment opportunities available to their daughter – with only two reporting there had been no change. Parental attendance at events was below the level that was hoped for. The impact on the development of their own knowledge was therefore limited and we are exploring ways to increase parental involvement in future years of the programme. The pilot also helped to increase the teachers’ own knowledge of career paths.

When the progression of the girls’ skills is measured against a wider cohort<sup>1</sup> of the same age who had not received the intervention and could therefore act as a control group (see below), it is clear that the girls have experienced an improvement in skills substantially higher than their peers.

	Leading	Presenting	Listening	Staying Positive	Aiming High	Creativity	Problem Solving	Teamwork	<b>Average</b>
Focus cohort	2.2	3.6	3.3	2.8	2.3	2.2	3.0	2.5	<b>2.7</b>
Wider cohort	1.4	1.2	1.5	1.6	2.1	1.5	1.1	1.5	<b>1.5</b>

Table illustrating the difference in skill progression between the focus cohort and a wider cohort from January 2019 to July 2019

The *wider cohort* statistics are based on Enabling Enterprises’ work with children from other schools of the same age and provide an approximate control group.

*‘We went to a hospital and I saw so many different career opportunities for girls that I was not aware of.’ – Teacher*

This was echoed by the teachers, who stated that the girls are thinking about possible careers that they had no idea existed before. However, teachers also pointed out that the girls still harbour concerns over the appropriateness of certain careers in terms of how they interact with the expectations of their family and their culture – for example some girls expressed concerns about how working in a male-dominated workplace might be perceived.

*‘I realised that being a builder doesn’t require you to go out and build and that you don’t have to be a man, there are many jobs a builder can do.’*

- Pupil

## Learning from Year One to apply to Year Two

- **More strategic planning of time** for the programme to maximise time with the girls
- **More opportunities for girls to interact with role models**, especially women of South Asian heritage
- **Enhanced measurement of the confidence levels of the girls** with the continuation of NGO skills tools, but also especially asking the girls how they feel in terms of emotive measures, such as confidence or optimism for the future.
- **New cohort of girls to be mentored by the first pilot group** to provide support and allow them to ask any questions they may have about career choices. This is being introduced in the Year 2 pilot.
- **Extra staff time required from the schools to support the girls, supported by more tools from NGOs for teachers**
- **Helping the girls to balance family expectations with career decisions**, creating more opportunities to bring parents on-board to a greater degree and increase understanding and co-operation between students, teachers, and parents.
- **Implementation of a control group** to compare the impact of the pilot in building skills and confidence, and ultimately increasing social and economic mobility

A number of girls expressed concerns about how certain careers, particularly those which are male-dominated, may be perceived by their family (e.g. construction). Moving forward into Year Two, there may therefore be an opportunity to increase understanding and co-operation between students, teachers, and parents.

*'Ideas about my future has changed and I have set higher standards for myself.'* – Pupil

## Looking Ahead to Year Two

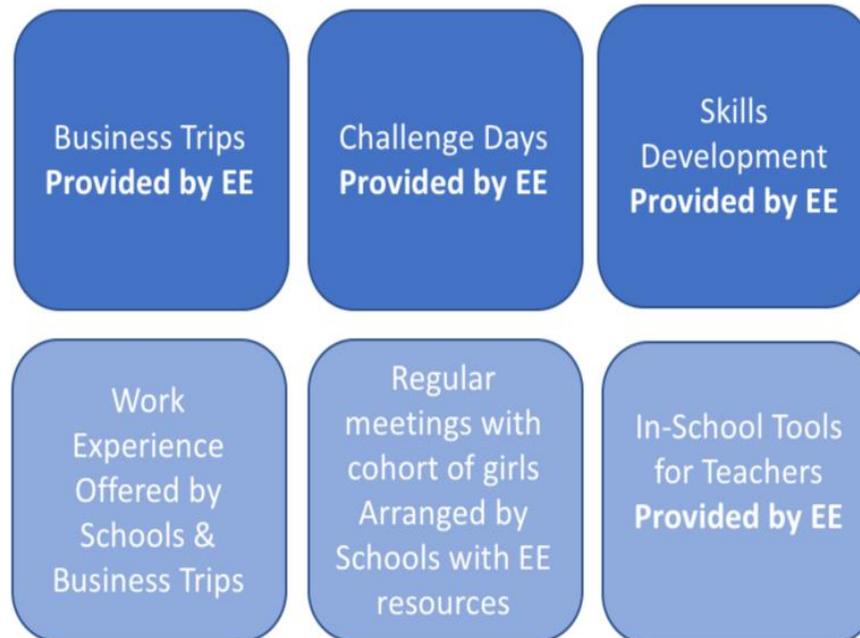
Based on this evaluation a second stage pilot will be implemented for 2019/20 with Enabling Enterprise to a new Year 10 group (Cohort Two). In addition Cohort 1, now in Year 11, will enter a mentoring programme with the Prince's trust Mosaic programme.

We are delighted that a number of enhancements are being added to the Year Two pilot programme, including improved parental engagement, additional NGO tools for teachers and the introduction of group mentoring with professional women and across school year group mentoring. The results of the programme will be evaluated in summer 2020.

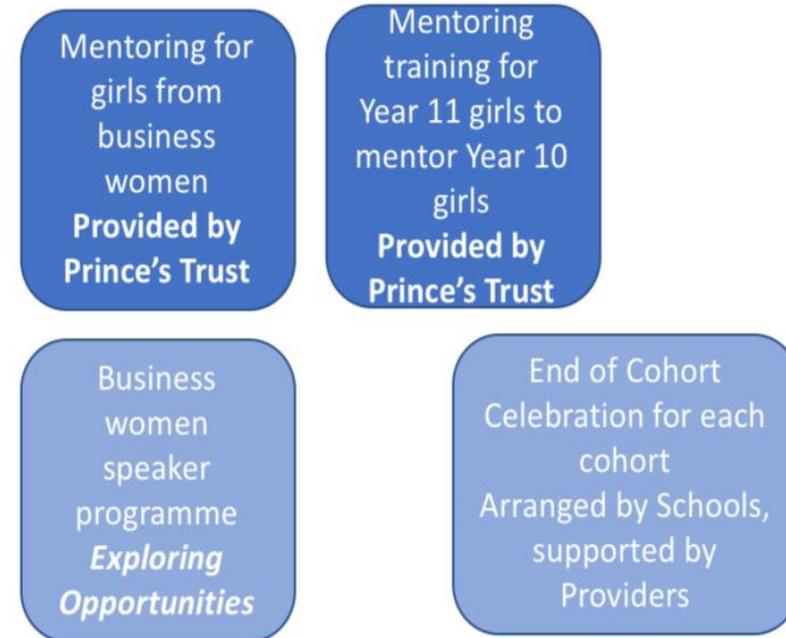


## Overview of the Pilot In-Schools Programme for 2019/20

### Year 10: September 2019 – July 2020



### Year 11: September 2019 - Spring 2020



## Our Future Plans

Savannah Wisdom Foundation wishes to play two philanthropic roles in this current and future work:

- As a convener, working in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sector, particularly in line with the national Government's Integrated Communities strategy and the work of the GM Community Cohesion Commission;
- As a supporter of innovations for the primary benefit of a number of South Asian girls and young women in the North West who are facing barriers to employment with the aim for those innovations to be scaled up in partnership and by others.

Through our NGO and public sector partnerships we wish to encourage the alignment of policy and practice in the field of social mobility for vulnerable young people as well as to encourage others to scale-up city region and national projects, using this evaluation as a basis.

We aim for NGOs and public sector partners to learn from and embed relevant findings from our work on *Her Untapped Potential*, primarily introducing and tracking multiple interventions of careers advice and employment skills development over a longer period of time, and the engagement of parents in this process to support young people to consider broader employment options and related pathways.

Our strategic focus will continue to be on the economic and social mobility of South Asian girls and young women which will result in greater community cohesion, integration and an increase in the productivity of the region. We wish to support more widely vulnerable young people through partnerships. We will continue to work in line with our Theory of Change of better integrated communities through social mobility.

## Methodology

All external data provided in this report has been sourced via Enabling Enterprise through their two reports: 'Progress Report to the UBS Optimus Foundation' and '*Her Untapped Potential Project - Additional reflections for Savannah Wisdom Foundation*'.

Primary data collection was conducted with pupils, teachers, parents, and facilitators during 2018/19.

Enabling Enterprise's Skills Builder tool tracked the skills development of the girls involved across eight key skills areas from the start to the end of the pilot in 2018/19, supported by teachers. This data tracked each girl's skill development during each intervention, such as Business Trips and Challenge Days.

Pupils were asked to provide written feedback at the end of the first year of the project in summer 2019. This was then supplemented via the use of questionnaires and interviews with parents and teachers in order to capture the difference made.

A base-line questionnaire was distributed to parents at the start of the pilot in order to understand how they felt about their daughters and their career opportunities (Abraham Moss only). This was then followed up at the end of the year with a second questionnaire to ascertain what change in knowledge or attitudes may have occurred.

Interviews were conducted with teachers to understand how they felt the project had progressed and the difference it had made to the girls.

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### **Savannah Wisdom Foundation**

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The logo for Savannah Wisdom features the word "SAVANNAH" in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font. Below it, the word "WISDOM" is written in a smaller, lighter blue sans-serif font. The two words are stacked vertically and centered.