



CASE STUDY: Mace – Inspiring the next generation

Three years ago Mace established 'Foundations For Your Future' (FFYF), our student outreach programme that aims to inspire the next generation to consider a career in construction.

With Mace Group Board Director, Mark Castle, as the programme's board representative, FFYF's ultimate aim is to improve the diversity of people and skills across the construction industry for the long-term. Initially, we targeted girls' schools to address gender diversity but it soon became apparent that our materials and volunteers were well placed to impact ethnic diversity too. The FFYF programme acts as a measured approach to educating students aged between 13 and 18 on the wide variety of opportunities available to them within the construction industry, whatever their strengths and skillsets.



Mace volunteers present to students with the use of simple FFYF presentations and teaching materials that have been tailored to each year group, particularly those that are due to select the subjects that will shape their career choices later on. Through activities, talks and discussions, the presentation aims to break the stereotype of construction being confined to on-site labour. We take pupils through the scope of careers available, the diverse paths our own staff have taken, and explain how to steer their choices towards a career that interests them.

Targeting all skillsets and abilities

What's different about FFYF is that it's not about attracting top university graduates, we're targeting students at all levels to help them see the career potential that comes with apprenticeships, technical roles and the wide variety of trades associated with construction.

Increasing interest by 40%

We've found that on average students end up 40% more interested in working in the sector than they were before we spoke to them. Following FFYF sessions, many of the students that we've presented to have since attended Mace careers events and expressed interest in our apprenticeship programme.

Improving diversity and social value

A key focus for FFYF is to encourage people from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds to join the industry. To date, we have prioritised schools that have a diverse population of students, striking up a number of partnerships in the process. FFYF makes a point of advertising the industry's history of employing a particularly high intake of young non-graduates and developing and progressing them to senior leadership positions. We want them to see construction not just as a job, but as a career in which they can thrive.



An important factor in FFYF's success is that the programme is employee-driven: we appeal to the younger generation by Mace volunteers sharing their own stories and career routes. The materials were intentionally designed to enable any Mace employee to arrange a presentation with a school and report on their activity and the school's feedback, helping Mace to track the social value of the programme's impact.

Piloting at Notre Dame High School

We collaborated with teachers and careers advisors to develop our FFYF materials and piloted the project at Notre Dame High School in Southwark, an all-girls comprehensive school attended by students from diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. FFYF volunteers presented to twenty Year 8 students and gave them an insight into their roles in marketing and legal, illustrating the variety of careers available. The session received great feedback:

"I liked how each person explained what they do and explained different roles that I never knew about." – **Chanelle, student, Notre Dame High School**

"I liked that they really told me about what happens in detail and it gave me an idea of me working one day in construction." - **Mamusa, student, Notre Dame High School**

"Most of them [the students] were surprised by the range of roles available in construction, and they were genuinely excited to hear about some of Mace's amazing buildings and projects." – **Gareth Lewis, COO of Construction at Mace**

The success of the event led to a community engagement partnership with the school and one of Mace's nearby projects, Highpoint.

Gaining momentum

In 2017 alone, our volunteers presented to over 1500 students and took FFYF overseas, launching in South Africa. The programme also [gained recognition in Construction Manager Magazine](#), with our COO of Construction, Gareth Lewis, emphasising why it's vital that we change young people's perception of construction.

Maranatha Christian School, Johannesburg, South Africa

Back in October 2017 we launched FFYF overseas - four Mace volunteers presented the FFYF material to 90 students, aged 11-12, at Maranatha Christian School in Johannesburg. Like the UK, the South African construction industry also suffers from a lack of diversity, except it is largely a black male environment. Helping the pupils break down the misconceptions of what and who is involved in construction, the FFYF presenters illustrated the wide variety of jobs available to the students, no matter what their skills or career route. At the beginning of one session, just four students said they would consider a career in construction. By the end of the workshop, fourteen students said they could see themselves in a construction job.

"We were very impressed with the recent visit of representatives from Mace and the Gr. 7 learners were thrilled with the new vision of future career opportunities! We would love to get involved in working together with the Mace SA office. We need to help our learners develop their true potential and explore the industry, taking the 'blinkers' off!" – **Judy Oberholzer, Principal of Maranatha Christian School**

"The kids were so responsive and engaged. They really enjoyed interacting and asking questions, and especially enjoyed the drawing activities." – **Faye Burnett, FFYF volunteer**

Mace's message is clear and it's going global: whatever your background or education, the scale of opportunity for young people in construction is boundless.