



COMPASS  ONE

JUNIOR CHEF ACADEMY SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI) REPORT



ABOUT

The Junior Chef Academy (JCA) is a transformative ten-week cookery course for schoolchildren, designed and delivered by Compass Group UK & Ireland in partnership with Brakes. It is a signature outreach programme, and is anchored in Our Social Promise, a commitment made in 2021 to support one million people inside and outside our organisation by 2030.

Bringing together Compass culinary teams and local schools and colleges, students are taught fundamental culinary skills using a range of different foods. The course culminates in a special graduation event where students prepare and serve a four-course meal for families, teachers and Compass guests – a memorable experience that celebrates their achievements and showcases their newfound skills and confidence.

The journey doesn't end there. JCA participants are subsequently encouraged to complete work experience in a Compass kitchen, providing them with valuable real-world experience. Those keen to pursue a culinary career are then provided with further careers information, opening doors to future opportunities.

ESS is a specialist business of Compass Group UK & Ireland, operating in the Defence, Energy, Government, Infrastructure and Marine & Aerospace sectors, and has supported over 200 students through the JCA. With plans to expand the JCA across Compass Group UK & Ireland, we took time to assess the programme's impact. We conducted a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study to measure its impact, and learn lessons ready for its expansion. SROI is a framework used to evaluate social value in relation to investment, focusing on value rather than purely fiscal benefit.

This study looks at the impact of JCA courses delivered by ESS during the academic year from September 2023 to August 2024. It assesses changes in relation to stakeholder wellbeing, following the standards and guidelines produced by Social Value International. Three courses were delivered during the timeframe under review.



KEY FINDINGS



£7.25
OF SOCIAL VALUE FOR EVERY
£1 INVESTED IN THE JCA



STUDENTS EXPERIENCED FIVE MAIN OUTCOMES:

1. **Increased** confidence in their abilities
 2. **Increased** pride in cooking skills
 3. **Improved** ability to speak up in a workplace
 4. **Increased** confidence in building relationships with new people
 5. **Improved** understanding of career preferences
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PARENTS / CARERS REPORTED:

1. **Increased** pride in their child's achievements
 2. **Improved** relationships with their child
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CHEFS REPORTED:

1. **Increased** job satisfaction
2. **Improved** work motivation
3. **Enhanced** leadership skills

METHODOLOGY

The study evaluated the impact of the JCA on stakeholder wellbeing, focusing on stories of change and the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. Unlike cost-benefit analysis, SROI uses money as a proxy to explore value rather than fiscal benefit. The evaluation adheres to the standards and guidelines set by Social Value International.

Data Sources:

- 8 one-to-one interviews with primary beneficiaries (students)
- 7 one-to-one interviews with parents/carers
- 6 one-to-one interviews with staff (chefs)
- Online surveys completed by students (5 responses), parents/carers (10 responses), and staff/chefs (13 responses).

All interviews and surveys were independently conducted, created, managed and analysed by external evaluators.

Scope:

Subject: Junior Chef Academy

Timeframe: September 2023 – August 2024

Courses delivered: Three

Research focus: Wellbeing outcomes experienced by stakeholders through primary research.

Social Value Principles: The methodology was informed by the eight principles of social value.

What is SROI (Social Return on Investment)?

SROI is a comprehensive measurement approach that quantifies the social, environmental and economic outcomes of a programme in monetary terms.

It helps answer critical questions such as:

- What value did this programme create?
- Who benefitted—and to what extent?
- Are we generating more value than we're spending?

It's not just about financial returns—it's about the meaningful impact we create.



OUTCOMES

Students:

- My confidence in my own abilities has increased
- The pride I feel in my cooking skills has increased
- Understanding my likes and dislikes when thinking about my future career has improved
- My confidence in building relationships with people I haven't met before has increased
- My ability to speak up in a workplace has improved

Parents/Carers

- The pride I feel in my child/young person's achievements has increased
- My relationship with my child/young person has improved

Chefs:

- The sense of satisfaction I feel at work has increased
- How motivated I feel by my work has improved
- My leadership skills have improved

Every stakeholder was asked explicitly about negative (and unexpected) outcomes, however none were reported. All outcomes were considered in light of deadweight (the amount of an outcome that would have happened anyway), attribution (who caused what change and in what quantity) and displacement (how much of the outcome displaced other outcomes elsewhere), with adjustments made accordingly to avoid over-claiming.



SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

When the combined quantity, value and causality of the outcomes was calculated, the total value to participants was calculated as follows:

OUTCOME	MONETARY VALUE
STUDENTS	
The pride I feel in my cooking skills has increased	£57,169
Understanding my likes and dislikes when thinking about my future career has improved	£36,928
My confidence in my own abilities has increased	£23,103
My confidence in building relationships with people I haven't met before has increased	£9,992
My ability to speak up in a workplace has improved	£7,537
PARENTS / CARERS	
The pride I feel in my child/young person's achievements has increased	£29,911
My relationship with my child/young person has improved	£11,800
CHEFS	
The sense of satisfaction I feel at work has increased	£7,754
How motivated I feel by my work has improved	£4,476
My leadership skills have improved	£4,156
Total Financial Input	£26,597
Total Present Value	£192827
Net Present Value Created	£166,230
Net Return	£6.25
SOCIAL RETURN	£7.25

Based on the findings of the study, we can conclude that the SROI generated by the JCA from September 2023 to August 2024 was £1:£7.25.

COMMENTS FROM STUDENTS

"I just feel better about the future now. School doesn't make me feel good about myself but this helps me see that I have things I can do well and things I'll be able to do after school that I'll actually be good at."

"I was interested in doing something practical outside of school but then I didn't think I'd be any good. I was worried about the chefs at the start and that they'd be mad at me for getting things wrong. I started being able to ask questions coz the chefs were so nice and other people were asking too...then I just kept getting better at skills and things like using the knives. I was showing my mum how to do things right by the end of it!"

"I could do a few simple things before I started it [the JCA] but I can't believe how much I've learned. I can use different tools now and know what they do or why you use them and I think it's amazing that I know how to cut all sorts of meat up properly. I've never thought about how you put different food together really but now I think about combinations. I'm really proud of what I've learned and what I can do now."

"I always loved cooking and I like doing practical stuff but it's not at the top of the priority list at school and not seen as something you should spend your time on. The JCA made me see this a proper serious job and helped me see the difference between cooking and what a chef or a kitchen really does. I really want to do an apprenticeship now and I can see that work doesn't have to be exactly like school...it's ok for me to like different things if you know what I mean."

"I've never really been anywhere that wasn't school or just with family or mates. I don't really feel like I can talk normally to teachers to be honest. I didn't speak to anyone for the first 2 weeks at the academy coz I was so nervous...but everyone was really encouraging and I liked doing all the tasks so that made it easier to start talking to people and getting to know them."

"I don't speak a lot at school coz I don't always feel very interested or good at things. I was really scared of the chefs before I started [the JCA] and knew I would just keep quiet. But then they were really nice and I started to feel more ok about asking questions coz I really wanted to do well...and I loved being in a proper kitchen and feeling like we were properly working. It was like being at work and having responsibility rather than just being a kid that gets told what to do."



COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

"The young people involved in JCA loved the experience. They were very excited to come into school on the Thursday to talk through the recipes they had learnt and what they had done at JCA. They talked positively about the experiences with the different range of chefs and chef has become a huge role model in their eyes. The introduction of different chefs from different areas of Compass has also made them consider different ways they could approach a career in Cheffing. For some of these students this was not something they had considered before. They LOVED having chef whites and their own knives. This made the experience professional and not 'like they do in school.

"Behaviour has also changed - for students with poor behaviour the focus that JCA had and the desire to want to attend JCA has improved behaviour. Conversations about professional behaviour and the way industry works has had a positive impact.

"Students are proud of what they have contributed and have shown they are able to achieve. Students who achieve in practical areas sometimes struggle in academic areas. This has given students the 'feel good factor' to be able to try to complete things they might not have attempted.

"I have benefited from JCA. I have been able to build relationships better with students and parents - this means I can praise them and have positive conversations which means tricky conversations are easier to have.

*"The other positive that JCA has brought is opening their options to different careers and where cheffing can take them, the Compass apprenticeships and sites that they work on has given students 'food for thought' and made them think about post 16 options." **School Teacher***

*"It gave my son confidence to have the opportunity to do something where his achievements were then celebrated. I've not had the money to pay for classes or activities outside of school so the fact this was free to attend, it's something that would be good to see more of for youngsters." **Parent***

COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

"I do not know of any project that is similar to JCA locally or nationally. We are new to JCA this year and I am totally in awe of the work and dedication Compass have done for these young people. I also do not know of any project that would have had the same impact.

"In general the JCA has been a hugely positive experience for all students and this has come back into school.

- *Improved skills and confidence*
- *Improved relationships with students and parents*
- *Improved desire to learn and improve*
- *Increased desire to explore post 16 options."*

School Teacher

*"I witnessed many positive changes in the students, from growing in confidence, to working together with other students, being excited and amazed at the dishes THEY prepare, cook and serve." **Chef***

LEARNINGS

JESS PAYNE

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL VALUE FOR COMPASS ONE

We've always believed the work we do can optimise the wellbeing of our people, and uplift communities, but to know this requires us to conduct rigorous data collection and analysis to establish credible causal links between what we do and the impact we make. Equally, we recognise that meaningful impact is best achieved through co-creating programmes with stakeholders and remaining responsive to feedback, ensuring our approach evolves in line with real-world needs and insights.

The SROI process serves both the accountability and learning dimension of social impact measurement – to shift from “proving” to “improving”. The study has

allowed us to consider how we can improve our impact, and we have therefore committed to implement:

1. Pre- and post-programme outcome measures, including gathering feedback from students who withdraw early, and conducting follow-up evaluations 6-12 months after programme completion.
2. Conduct future evaluations with larger sample sizes to help validate and expand upon these findings.
3. Widely socialise our findings to ensure future impact is maximised.

The Compass One social value team commissioned Nicola Lynch (LynchPin Support Ltd) to produce this evaluation in collaboration with Tim Goodspeed (morethanoutputs).

Nicola and Tim are both Social Value International Level 3 Advanced Practitioners of Social Value and SROI. They are also part of the SVI Accredited Trainer community in the UK.





COMPASS  ONE

The logo for Compass One. The word 'COMPASS' is in a white, serif font. To its right is a circular symbol composed of two concentric, slightly offset white rings, creating a glowing effect. To the right of this symbol is the word 'ONE' in a white, serif font.