



## **THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOUNDATION**

The Award challenges young people age 14–24 to build essential Human Skills such as resilience, leadership and empathy through a globally recognised non-formal education framework. By stepping beyond the classroom into self-guided learning, participants develop the foundational capabilities needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. It is through experiences that require persistence, focus, teamwork and character that young people develop vital skills for life and work.

- Founded in 1956 by HRH Prince Philip, The late Duke of Edinburgh
- Delivered in more than 130 countries and territories
- 1.2 million young people from all backgrounds participate annually

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*What I value most about my Award experience is the way it pushed me to grow –not just in skills, but as a person. It wasn't just about ticking boxes or completing tasks, it was about discovering what I'm truly capable of when I step out of my comfort zone.*

- A young woman from Nigeria, age 14, achieving her Bronze Award

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## THE FRAMEWORK

Young people create their own path through the Award by setting personal goals across four key sections: Voluntary Service, Physical Recreation, Skills Development, and an Adventurous Journey. Supported by adult mentors, participants progress from Bronze to Gold, increasing their time and commitment as they go.

### SECTIONS

- SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
- PHYSICAL RECREATION
- VOLUNTARY SERVICE
- ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

### LEVELS

- BRONZE (age 14+, 6 months min)
- SILVER (age 15+, 12 months min)
- GOLD (age 16+, 18 months min)

Young people and practitioners tell us the Award reliably produces a shift from “I can't do this” to “I can”. In an age where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping what young people need to know, self-belief may be the most consequential capability we can help them build.

## ADVANCING HUMAN SKILLS

We are championing the term Human Skills to provide a unifying language for capabilities often described as soft, transferable, or meta-cognitive skills. These competencies need to be understood as essential not only for employability, but also for civic participation and individual well-being. Crucially, Human Skills form the foundation that enables individuals to acquire and apply digital and technological skills effectively.

RESILIENCE

CREATIVITY

CRITICAL THINKING

TEAMWORK

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*As machines get smarter, Human Skills matter more.*

- Andreas Schleicher, OECD Director for Education and Skills

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## THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

Despite widespread recognition of their importance at a global level, Human Skills are often overlooked as optional rather than essential in national policy-making. National policy mechanisms to develop, assess, and recognise these skills remain limited, with coordination across education, employment and youth sectors often fragmented.

**Countries that invest in these capabilities will be better positioned to translate technological advancement into sustainable economic growth and societal resilience.**

## WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

We are driving a coordinated global effort to elevate Human Skills to a core and distinctive priority in education and youth policy – gathering insights on practical operational delivery to support leaders with actionable direction that can inform policy, guide implementation, and align priorities across systems. The defining question is not only how young people will utilise new tools, but whether they possess the Human Skills to apply them with judgement, purpose, and accountability.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Work with us to ensure all young people have the opportunity to develop strong Human Skills. As a versatile personal development framework, the Award is delivered in more than 130 countries through ***schools, universities, employers, youth programmes, refugee camps, and juvenile custodial settings, among others*** – making it adaptable to a wide range of policy contexts.

### AWARD PARTICIPANTS REPORT:

ENHANCED  
PROBLEM-SOLVING

91%

STRENGTHENED  
TEAMWORK

90%

VALUING COMMUNITY  
STEWARDSHIP

89%

IMPROVED  
COMMUNICATION

86%

# SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE AWARD & GLOBAL SKILLS FRAMEWORKS

## UN Sustainable Development Goals

- **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being
- **SDG 4** Quality Education
- **SDG 5** Gender Equality
- **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth
- **SDG 16** Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

## World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs 2025

WEF Skills On The Rise (2025-2030) identified as vital by employers:

- Creative thinking
- Resilience, flexibility, and agility
- Curiosity and lifelong learning
- Leadership and social influence
- Environmental stewardship

## ILO: Global Framework on Core Skills 2021

Core skills for life and work in the 21st century include:

- Cognitive and meta-cognitive skills (e.g. problem solving and decision-making, self-reflection, and learning to learn)
- Social and emotional skills (e.g. communication, collaboration, and teamwork)

## World Bank: Skills for jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Skills to succeed in the labour market include:

- Foundational and higher order skills (e.g. cognitive skills that allow learning from experience)
- Socio-emotional skills (e.g. leadership, teamwork, grit)
- Specialised skills (e.g. knowledge, expertise)

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