

2024 Youth Business Fair



Impact Report

1. Executive Summary

In November 2024, Ultra Education hosted its largest-ever Youth Business Fair at Wembley Stadium, bringing together 150 young entrepreneurs for a day of enterprise, creativity, and community.

The fair provided a powerful platform for youth to build confidence, test business ideas, and connect with peers and customers in a real-world setting. Participants gained hands-on experience in public speaking, sales, branding, and financial literacy.

Key outcomes included:

- Boosted self-confidence and communication skills
- Real-time customer feedback and product refinement
- A strong sense of belonging and cultural representation, especially among Black youth
- Deepened parent-child collaboration through shared learning

The event affirmed that with the right platform, young people can thrive as entrepreneurs and that continued investment can unlock even greater impact.



2. Introduction

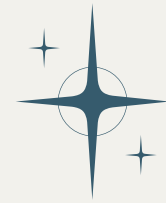
Ultra Education believes that every young person - regardless of background—deserves the opportunity to unlock their potential through entrepreneurship. At its heart, Ultra's mission champions young people from Black, Asian, and other underrepresented communities, addressing long-standing inequalities in access to entrepreneurship and business education. By creating spaces where young people can see themselves reflected and celebrated, Ultra helps to challenge stereotypes and widen pathways into enterprise.

For over a decade, Ultra has built platforms where creativity, ambition, and entrepreneurship are nurtured from an early age. The Youth Business Fair 2024, held in the iconic Wembley Stadium, was not just a showcase of youth enterprise - it was a celebration of representation, inclusion, and lived experience. It provided a rare and vital stage for young entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds to turn passion into purpose and inspire others to do the same.

This impact report captures the voices, outcomes, and learnings that emerged from the 11th Ultra Education Business Fair. Drawing on mixed-methods research including surveys and in-depth interviews, it offers a comprehensive view of the fair's reach and resonance. It reflects the experiences of young entrepreneurs, their families, and attendees, while identifying opportunities to strengthen and scale future programming. For funders, partners and champions of youth empowerment, it documents what has been achieved, what we learned, and how this informs future work.



3. Event Introduction



In November 2024, Ultra Education transformed Wembley Stadium's Great Hall into a vibrant hub of youth innovation and entrepreneurship. The Youth Business Fair 2024 - the 11th fair hosted by Ultra Education - was the largest to date, featuring 150 young entrepreneurs (ages 7–30) showcasing their businesses to the public.

This full-day event (12–5pm) drew an enthusiastic 2000 visitors and international participation, underscoring Ultra Education's mission to empower young people through entrepreneurship. The atmosphere was electric: more than just a marketplace, the fair was “a celebration of talent, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit”, complete with youth-led product stalls, live performances, and even a fashion show by young designers.

By providing a world-class venue and platform, Ultra Education demonstrated how young entrepreneurs can turn passion into purpose on a grand stage, capturing the attention of the community and media alike.



All photographs in this report are used with the informed consent of the young people and their parents/guardians; case study images are matched to the stories where indicated, and all names are real as specified.

4. Methodology

This impact report employs a mixed-methods approach to assess the outcomes of the Ultra Education Youth Business Fair.

Combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the fair's reach, relevance, and results - particularly in relation to the development of entrepreneurial confidence, peer learning, and practical business outcomes for young participants.

The evaluation was conducted by a youth and volunteer-led team, using a flexible, field-based model of data collection suited to the dynamic nature of the event.



4.1 Surveys: Quantitative and Qualitative Insights

The primary method of data collection was a single structured survey that included both closed-ended (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) surveys (n= 54). The survey was distributed to participating young entrepreneurs, enabling us to gather data on:

- Participant demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, business sector)
- Experiences during the fair (e.g., sales, confidence, peer interaction) (see from the survey)
- Perceived skills gained (e.g., communication, budgeting, marketing)
- Feedback on the support received from Ultra Education
- Reflections on what could be improved

The mixed format ensured measurable indicators while also capturing participant voice and experience. Crucially, responses were anonymised to protect participants' identities and encourage open, honest feedback. To support participation, goodie bags were provided as a small token of appreciation to those who completed the survey





4.2 In-Depth Conversations and Observations

Alongside the survey, volunteers social researchers engaged in informal, in-depth interviews (n = 20) with a cross-section of participants throughout the event. These qualitative interviews focused on the lived experiences of young entrepreneurs and explored themes such as:

- How and why they started their business
 - Specific ways Ultra Education supported their journey
 - Reflections on the fair itself: confidence to sell, customer interaction, peer learning
 - Social outcomes: whether they made friends, collaborated with others, or received mentorship
 - Challenges faced and suggestions for improvement
- The conversations offered rich contextual insight, with many participants noting that the safe, inclusive atmosphere of the fair gave them the confidence to speak openly. Responses were captured through field notes and transcripts.



4.3 Strengths of the Approach

This multi-layered methodology enabled triangulation between survey results, interview insights, and direct observations. The advantage of this approach lies in its ability to capture both broad trends and individual stories, ensuring the report reflects the diversity and depth of young people's experiences.

By involving volunteers in data collection and observation, the research also fostered a more relational, peer-based method of impact assessment, aligned with Ultra's ethos of youth empowerment.

- › Age of the volunteers - women - easier to build connections - also young
- › Goodie bag - good engagement strategy - motivation
- › Timeframe of data collection - user friendly research design fit into their business fair schedule - observation across at different stages



4.4 Limitations and Critiques

While the methodology was intentionally flexible to accommodate the pace and format of the event, several limitations are acknowledged:

- The response rate for surveys, while healthy, was not universal - limiting representativeness.
- Interviews were conducted in a public, time-constrained setting, which may have affected depth.
- As many businesses were family-supported, it was sometimes difficult to differentiate between parental and child perspectives.
- The short-term nature of the evaluation captures immediate outcomes but cannot assess long-term impact on business growth or continued engagement.



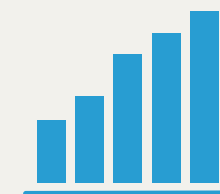
5. Key Outputs



Strong community engagement: Over 2,000 attendees and visitors participated, reflecting exceptional reach and interest.



Diverse and inclusive participation: Young people aged 7–24, primarily from Black and Asian minority backgrounds, took part — with 68.5% female and 31.5% male entrepreneurs represented.



Wide range of business sectors: More than 10 distinct industries (Food and Drink, Art and Craft, Fashion and Accessories, Music and Media, Health and Beauty, Books, etc.) were showcased, demonstrating the breadth of skills and innovation among participants.



Thriving marketplace: 150 youth-led stalls created opportunities for direct sales, networking, and real-world business experience.

Outcomes

1. Strengthened Entrepreneurial Confidence and Communication Skills

Participation in the Youth Business Fair significantly bolstered the confidence of young entrepreneurs, particularly in their ability to articulate ideas, present products, and engage with unfamiliar customers. The immersive, real-world nature of the fair required participants to think on their feet, refine their pitch, and adjust to diverse customer feedback - leading to noticeable improvements in self-expression and initiative. Many children and teens, especially those who identified as shy or introverted, emerged with a stronger sense of self-belief and leadership. This growth was also observed and affirmed by parents, who described the fair as a “turning point” in their child’s confidence journey. One parent shared that their child, who had previously avoided eye contact, was now “leading conversations at the stall” and taking ownership of the business narrative.

Evidence: Participant satisfaction averaged 3.63 out of 4, and one young entrepreneur reflected, “I’m very quiet, so this helped me bring out my inner voice.”



Evidence

Key Statistics

- **72.7%** reported improved business communication skills
- **63.6%** improved sales techniques
- **54.5%** improved networking skills
- **36.4%** improved time management
- **50%** strengthened business planning skills

(Youth Business Fair 2024 Survey, n= 54)

Participant Voice

“I’m very quiet, so this has helped me bring out my inner voice.” - Young Entrepreneur

“The more you talk about things, the more you learn.” – Skai Made It

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“For me, it's about confidence... the belief that they can do stuff using their creativity.” - Doteri Design (Young Entrepreneur’s Mom)

“My son now leads conversations at the stall - something I’ve never seen before.” – Parent Survey Response

“You’re never too young to do something that can change people's lives.” – Families on the Go

2. Early Market Validation and Business Strategy Refinement

The event provided a low-risk environment for young entrepreneurs to test their business ideas in a live setting, allowing them to better understand product-market fit, pricing sensitivities, and branding effectiveness. Many participants adapted their sales approach throughout the day - learning which items attracted attention, how to communicate value, and when to adjust their pricing. The process of receiving customer feedback in real-time helped sharpen their commercial instincts and identify areas for improvement, such as visual branding, packaging, and sales scripting. For some, modest sales and positive reactions reinforced the viability of their ideas, while others recognised gaps they could address in future iterations. This iterative learning process was often self-driven and reflective, supporting foundational business skills that go beyond classroom learning.

One participant remarked, **“We realised people liked the idea, but our prices were too high—next time we’ll test smaller bundles first.”**



Evidence

Key Statistics

- › **86.4%** attended for business exposure
- › **68.2%** aimed to sell more products
- › **45.5%** wanted new business connections
- › Sales ranged from £50 to £145
- › Most made **2–4 new business connections** during the day



Participant Voice

“We realised people liked the idea, but our prices were too high - next time we’ll test smaller bundles first.” – Young Entrepreneur

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“Not everybody will be interested in what you do, and that’s absolutely fine, but keep going.” – Skai Made It

“Marketing is one of the big challenges and trying to market and gain online sales.” – Khamani

3. Stronger Sense of Belonging and Cultural Representation

The fair cultivated a deep sense of inclusion and belonging among participants, especially for those from Black and underrepresented communities. By showcasing a diverse cohort of entrepreneurs and celebrating different cultural heritages through products, branding, and storytelling, the event fostered a space where young people felt seen and valued. Many spoke about the significance of “seeing others like me doing this,” which not only validated their presence in the entrepreneurial space but also inspired a sense of collective possibility. This cultural visibility and peer affirmation played a critical role in dismantling stereotypes and reinforcing aspirational identities, particularly in an economic context where representation is often limited.

As one young entrepreneur expressed, **“There weren’t a lot of cards that looked like me or my family, so I made my own.” Over 85% of attendees identified as Black or Black British.**



Evidence

Key Statistics

- Over **85%** of attendees identified as **Black or Black British**
- Several businesses were founded to fill cultural representation gaps in the market

Participant Voice

“I noticed there weren’t a lot of cards that looked like me or my family. So I wanted to do something to represent us.” – Skai Made It

“The business is about representation... trying to empower young people with belongings and toys that look like them.” – Doteri Design

“Seeing others like me doing this... made me feel it’s possible.” – Young Entrepreneur



4. Experiential Learning and Real-World Problem Solving

Unlike traditional forms of enterprise education, the business fair immersed participants in the day-to-day challenges of running a microbusiness - from managing logistics and stall layout to dealing with unexpected drops in footfall. These experiences facilitated rich experiential learning, where young people had to problem-solve on the spot, negotiate roles within a team (often family members), and build strategies to attract customers. The act of “learning by doing” created lasting impressions, helping participants understand the operational complexity of even the simplest business ideas. Many also demonstrated growth in financial literacy - calculating costs, tracking sales, and weighing up value-for-money propositions across the day. These insights often emerged informally, through trial and error, rather than structured instruction.

One participant noted, **“The more you talk about things, the more you learn. Friends gave me ideas - it inspires me; they’re my age.”**



Evidence

Key Statistics

- **50%** improved **business planning skills**
- **27.3%** improved **problem-solving skills**
- Many adapted their strategies mid-day to address footfall and engagement challenges

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Participant Voice

“How not sitting down, going around, talking to people and bringing them in... it takes you out of your shell.” – Families on the Go

“The more you talk about things, the more you learn.” – Skai Made It

“Aside from putting everything on social media, you also need to have business cards and stuff, which I didn't do.” – 15-year-old Entrepreneur



5. Parent-Child Co-Learning and Family Engagement

The fair also created a unique platform for intergenerational learning, with parents stepping into roles as co-learners, supporters, and observers. Many parents described the event as a moment of pride and discovery - where they witnessed their child navigate customer queries, manage money, and overcome anxiety. In some cases, parents realised their children had absorbed more entrepreneurial thinking than expected, particularly in relation to problem-solving and customer service. The event blurred the boundary between home and enterprise, strengthening family involvement in a shared developmental journey. It also prompted practical conversations at home about budgeting, marketing, and long-term planning - conversations that may not have occurred otherwise.

One parent reflected, **“It definitely helped my child see the difficulty of converting traffic into sales - and that selling isn’t as easy as it looks.”**



Evidence

Key Statistics

- **36.4%** of parents had attended multiple fairs, showing sustained family engagement
- Parents often contributed to product design, stall setup, and customer interactions

Participant Voice

“I am blown away by the confidence of the young people.” – Parent Survey Response

“My daughter is the one that was more interested in... how it can be cool for kids to use and drink water.” – Families on the Go



Case Studies

KEZIA'S KITCHEN

Kezia, a 16-year-old baker, turned her passion for baking into a business with “Kezia’s Kitchen.” At the fair, her booth displayed beautifully branded packaging and an array of her homemade cupcakes and pastries. Ultra Education’s mentorship helped Kezia polish her branding and pricing strategy, and to practice customer service.

During the event she sold out all her baked goods, impressing attendees with their quality. More importantly, Kezia gained confidence speaking with customers and managing real sales transactions. She networked with a local café owner about future orders, showing a pathway to growth.

“I never imagined selling my cakes at Wembley! Talking to so many customers made me much more confident about my business”.



ODU - MY AUTISTIC MIND



This 25-year-old entrepreneur, who is on the autism spectrum, founded “O – My Autistic Mind” as a platform to support neurodiverse youth. Ultra Education’s inclusive approach equipped him with coaching in business planning, branding, and adaptive communication techniques to effectively share his story. At the fair, he launched his venture publicly – offering informational materials, sensory- friendly products, and speaking with visitors about autism awareness. The supportive environment at the event enabled him to connect with families, educators, and potential collaborators, validating his concept. He exemplified problem-solving by turning a personal challenge into an innovative social enterprise.

“Being part of the Youth Business Fair was life-changing. Ultra Education gave me the courage and skills to share my story and build a business to help others like me.”



BARRETT PUBLISHING HOUSE

One of the fair's youngest CEOs, a 9-year-old boy, is the founder of Barrett Publishing House. With guidance from Ultra Education, he wrote and published his own children's book and proudly ran a stall to promote it.

Throughout the day he enthusiastically pitched his story to countless attendees, improving his communication skills and learning about marketing firsthand. He sold dozens of copies of his book, even catching the interest of a local librarian who discussed carrying his work. The experience proved that age is no barrier to entrepreneurship – it boosted his creativity and self-belief as a bona fide author.

"I loved telling people about my book. It feels amazing to be a real author at 9!"





Reflections, Learnings, and Recommendations

1. Strengthening Structured Support for Learning and Growth

Participants repeatedly expressed the need for more structured and age-appropriate workshops focused on practical business skills. Requests for sessions on marketing, financial literacy, business planning, and branding—tailored by age and business maturity—demonstrate a clear demand for deeper, skill-building content that can meet young entrepreneurs where they are.





Reflections, Learnings, and Recommendations

2. Expanding Opportunities for Meaningful Networking

While the fair fostered a warm and supportive atmosphere, many attendees noted a lack of formal networking formats. Introducing facilitated peer learning spaces, mentorship circles, and interactive industry engagement sessions could further enhance participants' ability to build confidence, exchange ideas, and form valuable professional relationships.



Reflections, Learnings, and Recommendations

3. Improving Event Logistics and Stall Accessibility

Several youth entrepreneurs highlighted challenges related to stall layout, visibility, and footfall, which in some cases impacted their ability to engage customers and make sales. Attendees also reported difficulty navigating the venue. Future events would benefit from clearer signage, equitable stall positioning, and greater setup support to ensure accessibility and fairness for all participants.



Reflections, Learnings, and Recommendations

4. Sustaining Engagement Beyond the Fair

There was strong enthusiasm for continued involvement in the Ultra Education ecosystem. Suggestions included year-round fairs, business innovation challenges, and mentorship programmes—underscoring the appetite for longer-term learning pathways and community building.