

# BBC micro:bit shown to increase teacher confidence and student team work across the Western Balkans

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The British Council has commissioned an IPSOS Strategic Marketing report which shows the positive impact of the BBC micro:bit amongst students and teachers in the Western Balkans.

- 86% of teachers believe that micro:bit is useful in teaching a curriculum
- 90% teachers believe that the micro:bit will **inspire** students about computing and coding **outside the classroom**.
- 93% of teachers thought the micro:bit would be inspiring for students in the classroom
- 100% of teachers thought it was a useful teaching tool

*“This micro:bit is an extraordinary thing, well done to whoever made it, there are plenty of functions.” – Teacher, Montenegro*

## Socialisation

The report clearly stated that teachers find the micro:bit to have a positive effect on all aspects of socialisation and in the specific area of “improving teamwork skills among students due to mutual cooperation.” Teachers believe that activities with micro:bits increased socialisation of students with each other, as well as “increasing the exchange of knowledge among students”. In addition, highlighted that “improved cooperation and mutual communication with other teachers.” While students were keen to talk about the new friends, they made in Code Clubs.

*“As soon as they took the micro:bit in their hand, their imagination gone wild, they started asking questions, “what if we try this?”, “what if we connect the micro:bit with this?”, “what would happen if we do this?”. That is the key, learning to solve non-routine problems. Children are becoming creative and in my opinion that is very important.” – Teacher, Serbia*

## Disengaged Students

*“Even those students who have bad grades became active and were more interested in lectures than excellent students. In some of my classes there are also some very disinterested students who are interested only in computer games, so when the micro:bit was introduced they immediately became interested and I let them code games with the micro:bit. Now they are the ones who are constantly asking me “When are we going to work with the micro:bit again?”. They became interested in mathematics” – Teacher, Montenegro*

Teachers were “thrilled” to find that “students who are usually indifferent and do not get involved in anything happening in class, were the first to engage with the micro:bit”. The report went on to say that teachers reported that some students showed “some completely new potentials, indicating that they just needed different approach”. The report said it was an “eye opener for teachers”.

*“There is one student with ADHD in one of my classes. I had tried almost everything, but I couldn’t calm him down. He couldn’t do anything for informatics. Then I showed the micro:bit to him and showed him how to code rock, paper, scissors, he was so thrilled and from now on I’m always finding a way to get him involved with the micro:bit” – Teacher, Serbia*

## The Report

The report was commissioned as part of the British Council's' 21st Century Schools' programme in the Western Balkans. It has the objectives of imparting critical thinking and problem solving skills to students aged 10 to 14, alongside digital and coding skills.

The programme achieves this through building the skills of teachers and school principals in schools in six countries across the Western Balkans. The British Council's ambitious goal is to aid “Regional stability by focusing cooperation with governments in the region, through empowerment of students and skills mobility” which fits with the Foundation’s mission of “Inspiring every child to create their best digital future”.

The Foundation has been closely involved in the project since the initial stages in 2017 when it supported teacher training and donated over 1,000 micro:bits. The Foundation has been instrumental in supporting the pilot across 60 Western Balkans primary schools, involving about 550 teachers primary from STEAM fields (science, technology, arts, engineering and maths) and 60 school principals.

All went through five days of induction training on how to introduce three skills (CTPS, DL and coding on the micro:bit) in their teaching and learning process. The induction training took place in early 2018. Support was provided by 17 National Core Skill trainers, trained by British Councils in-house experts and Micro:bit Educational Foundation staff.

For this pilot Ipsos Strategic Marketing conducted quantitative analysis via 6941 written questionnaires (including questions on micro:bit training) and qualitative in the form of interviews with students (1 or 2 groups per country) and teachers (1 group per country) from selected schools, while interviews were held with representatives of national institutions. micro:bit questions focused on;

- Experiences with the micro:bit (perception of the micro:bit, activities with micro:bit, intentions for the future, imagination and creativity with the micro:bit)
- Programming and relationship with physical computing; Learning & knowledge, Assessment of teachers related to the micro:bit, Cross-curricular implications, micro:bit clubs

*“It took some time for us to absorb knowledge about the micro:bit, while students are generally more promptly to embrace the technology, so it has caught their attention more quickly” – Teacher, Albania*

## Conclusion

Ipsos Strategic Marketing summarised that “Teachers see micro:bit as an innovative and useful tool which is inspiring for students and which gets them more interested in computing and coding, while it also positively affects their motivation and cooperation between each other. When it comes to

students, the micro:bit is seen as an interesting tool which enables them to turn their ideas into reality, through endless possibilities. The fact that the micro:bit is something physical, which they can touch, take with them and see results of their work on it is extremely motivating for them.”

## **What is Next ?**

In July 2018 the [UK Prime Minister announced a package of measures](#) to promote a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic Western Balkans which included committing £10 million to help build digital skills and employment prospects for young people in the Western Balkans. The British Council will provide training to up to a million children in over 4,500 schools. The Micro:bit Educational Foundation is proud to be supporting this 3 year project starting in January 2019.