In this issue
Take a look inside to see a summary of our 2019 Impact Report, our research into attainment, our inspiring photo case studies and video ethnography study, and our exciting data visualisation microsite: The Impact Map.

‘My favourite place near here is the park. I like the zip wire the most because you can go really fast and it feels like flying. Coming to Into University has made me a bit more confident. They’ve helped me with long multiplication and grammar. That makes me feel happy.’

Hanna, Brighton, one of our students profiled for the photo case studies.
A photo is worth a thousand words

Impact measurement is not just about data. It is also about the stories and experiences of young people.

We commissioned Elliot Manches, from Close Up Research, to produce a video case study of our centre in Brent and photo portraits of our students and he speaks about their impact below.

**What makes a photo or video impactful?**

“In an ethnographic project like this, we’re interested in people’s lived experiences, so we spend time with people in their own environments, to explore and document how they think, feel and act.

Asking the right questions is crucial, as is listening attentively to the replies. We’re looking for a balance of emotional resonance and engaging story-telling. When it comes to the storytelling aspect, we want each image or soundbite to tell, or at least imply, a narrative that provides some kind of context, which can bring to life any statements of fact or opinion.”

**Do you think photos and videos are more effective than data?**

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‘The best ethnographic videos and photos should be designed based on good data, and good data is typically best communicated visually. For the project, with the photography, we had data on the different demographics of students, and we wanted to reflect that in the portraits.

For the video, Renasi (see back page) were already doing an excellent job collecting data. This emerging work helped inform the approach of the video ethnography – and conversely, the depth insights from the video case study then fed back into the report.’

When you are making films about, or taking photos of, people it’s vital for participants not to be objectified or patronised.

At the same time, I think that occasionally what counts as positive or negative can be a subjective judgement from the viewer. So the best approach is just to explore things ‘as they are’, with as much context as possible, and hope that this framing evokes empathy from your audience.

For the video, that meant not shy away from, or hiding any of the challenges that the students and their community may have, but also to balance that with hopes and aspirations. After all, that’s what IntoUniversity is all about – focusing on helping people move forward the best they can.

I felt that what would really bring the portraits to life would be a focus on ‘what brings the most joy’ to each young person.

What was brilliant was that, whilst everyone experiences the same emotions, the way their enjoyment manifested in the portraits was different for each young person.

For the photos, Mat’s story of going from unengaged to A-star student, full of excitement and illustrations on paper.’

**What brings me the most joy?**

“IntoUniversity Brent has made me have less detentions, because in Year 7 I didn’t do that much homework, but when I come to IntoUniversity they make it more interesting and more enjoyable.

I got really interested in being a lawyer, so in Year 11 I’m going to do my GCSEs, and if I make it into university I would do the degree for it, and go on from there.

For the top three things I enjoy in life, football is one of them. And my mum’s food is one of them. I’ve had my football stolen three times already though. Streaming and gaming is another one of them. And my mum’s food is one of them.”

For the video, I was humbled to hear Steffi talk about the positive impact IntoUniversity has had on her mental health and overall confidence.

For the photos, Hamza’s story of going from unengaged to A-star student. Full of excitement for the future, was really tough to hear as was Hamza’s tale of getting fewer detentions and deciding to become a lawyer. I hope everyone will be able to take something away from at least one of the portraits.

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Hamza, Hammersmith

Photo Ethnography: **Into University Brent**

**Video Ethnography: Into University Brent**

Four videos telling the story of Into University Brent are available to watch on our YouTube channel.

www.youtube.com/user/IntoUni

Get aspire in your inbox – email aspire@intouniversity.org to subscribe

www.intouniversity.org
Communication and Transparency

The Impact Map: a new way to share our data

Thanks to generous funding from a grant-making foundation, we commissioned a data visualisation company, Furthr, to construct a data visualisation microsite: The Impact Map. The Impact Map displays our data in a clear, engaging way, that allows stakeholders to interact with, and interrogate our data.

The Impact Map shows demographic data of the communities and students we work with, and data on the impact we are having on our students, from where our students attend university to the cost per student to student numbers at specific centres, our aim is to be as transparent as possible with the people who support us. As well as our impact data, the site will also have photo and video stories from the photo and video ethnography research (see page 2 and 3). The entire site is designed to deliver one simple but powerful message: IntoUniversity’s centres make a real difference to students’ lives. The wider point is that universities are a powerful way to lift people out of poverty, so IntoUniversity is doing society a favour too. Great work!

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It is not easy to process large sets of data without a visual aid. If asked to think of every value of the graph y = x² including decimals, it would be impossible for all but the most diehard human calculators. To visualise it on a graph, however, is easy:

Data visualisation, put simply, is story telling and has been happening since there were stories to tell. Logographic alphabets, like ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs and modern Chinese Hanzi, have their origin in telling simple stories through a picture. Whilst cave paintings would not be quite as artistically pleasing (to some) if there were stories to tell.

When Europe adopted Arabic numerals in the early Middle Ages, managing and reporting large sets of numerical data became easier. http://www.impact.intouniversity.org saw 500000000CHIC students last academic year! Just left very snappy. Once the precursors to modern statistics were developed during the 17th and 18th centuries, pioneers like Florence Nightingale recognised the power of visualising data to empower their arguments.

The advent of modern computing combined with satellite mapping allowed much more complicated stories could be told: the advent of modern computing combined with satellite mapping allowed much more complicated stories could be told.

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The hardest part of every project is the same: where do you start? Most people give up reading anything new within three seconds, so you have to capture audiences in the blink of an eye. You have three seconds to answer three questions: is it relevant, is it timely, is it exclusive? So getting that across is critical. And it is very much zero sum. If you fail, no one will read your data and the whole thing is a complete waste of time. No pressure! Look in the top left corner of the IntoUniversity microsite and you will find the answers to those questions within a second or two.

We spoke to Andy from Furthr to find out more about the importance of embracing new ways to visualise data and created the Impact Map.

"Everyone has data. Sooner or later, it will be visualised. There are scientific studies that confirm data visualisation can aid effective decision-making. Charities have always had to account for every penny they spend. However, following recent scandals in the charity sector, transparency, as well as showing impact, is more important than ever. Data visualisation is very good at both those things.

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### IntoUniversity's falling progression rate is a good sign

In 2019, 68% of IntoUniversity students who had reached school leaver age achieved a university place. This is higher than all of the benchmarks we use for comparison, suggesting that the IntoUniversity programme is having a positive impact on students’ chances of going to university.

![Graph showing progression rate](image)

However, since 2014, IntoUniversity's progression rate has been decreasing. Does this mean that we are having less impact on our students?

Not at all. What is happening is that we are working with more students from higher-need communities.

In 2014, 13% of the students in our progression data sample were from outside of London, where background progression rates are lower. By 2018, this figure had risen to 34%.

![Graph showing progression rate by year](image)

While the overall rate has fallen, our uplift on the background rate of progression has remained very similar over the past six years.

These findings indicate that it is more meaningful for IntoUniversity to talk about uplift on the background rate rather than an overall percentage.

### Our impact on soft skills

High aspiration alone may not be enough to succeed. We also aim to equip our young people with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in school and beyond, including important soft skills.

A recent report from the Confederation of British Industry has found that 60% of employers rank soft skills amongst their top three priorities when recruiting, yet 58% are not satisfied with these skills amongst applicants.

Our evaluations assess improvements in communication, teamwork, leadership and confidence across all of our programmes.

The data shows that students develop soft skills across all of our programmes, although some of our programmes develop certain skills more than others.

![Graph showing uplift in soft skills](image)

### An inside look at data and impact at IntoUniversity

Alex Quinn, Head of Data and Impact at IntoUniversity

Alex has worked in our Data and Impact team for close to six years, overseeing the last three impact reports and coordinating our latest impact project.

I think a key outcome of our impact work is to make clear our commitment to transparency and to be honest with our data. As far as we know, we’re the first charity in our sector to have exactly the same experience. Students join the programme and the first to have our key impact metric externally assured.

One of the things that makes the IntoUniversity programme particularly difficult to evaluate is the complexity of the programme and the many different ‘student journeys’ with IntoUniversity. I think it’s almost true to say that no two IntoUniversity students have exactly the same experience. Students join the programme at different ages, with different levels of educational engagement and prior attainment, and the journey they follow through the programme can vary considerably dependent on their particular needs.

We’re looking to take more advantage of external data sources to try and better understand higher Education outcomes for our students.

For example, we know that nationally, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to drop out of university, but we don’t currently know how many of our students drop out. We’re exploring whether we can use data from HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) to get a better idea of what the dropout rate is for our students. This will give us an initial idea of whether our existing work to build students’ resilience and academic confidence is having any impact on this area, and help us to see whether this is an area where we may need to do more.

We’re looking to develop our measurement of intermediate outcomes for students. The Renaisi work (see back page) has helped us to clarify what outcomes we should be measuring. Over the next five years, we’ll explore how we can use pre- and post- validated surveys on our other intensive programmes.

This will enable us to better evaluate whether our students are achieving the intermediate outcomes that link to longer term success.
Impact on Attainment

Attainment is our aspiration

We know that the students we support are more likely to progress to university than other young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, but it is harder to know if these improved progression rates are the result of our impact on attainment.

The link between attainment and young people’s subsequent progression to Higher Education is an important question not just for IntoUniversity, but the widening participation sector as a whole. IntoUniversity commissioned Renaisi, a social enterprise focused on research, to produce a qualitative research report detailing the impact that IntoUniversity has on the attainment of the students we support.

How we collected the data

The research involved engaging with over 300 people across eight IntoUniversity centres, including young people, parents, teachers, IntoUniversity staff and volunteers, and other local stakeholders. This provided the opportunity for an in-depth exploration of people's experiences, drawing on their knowledge and insight into the difference IntoUniversity makes for our young people.

‘The centres that were included in our case study sample for the research were so supportive in setting up research visits – we couldn’t have asked for anything more. It was a bit more challenging to talk to young people taking part in Secondary FOCUS as these workshops are in schools. However, we spoke to many young people who were in Year 13, or who had just left school and had been involved with IntoUniversity for years, and their perspectives on being involved in many different programme strands were invaluable.’

Louisa, Renaisi

The results

Throughout the qualitative research, young people and parents provided many examples of increased attainment, which they attributed in part to their engagement with IntoUniversity:

- Moving up levels of sets in school
- Receiving better marks
- Gradual improvements in core academic skills
- Catching up when they were behind

Importantly, the research found that in some cases impact on attainment can be achieved over a relatively short period of time.

The research confirmed that the key outcomes that IntoUniversity focuses on are all important for helping young people to progress to Higher Education. However, stakeholders found it harder to isolate which outcomes made the most difference to young people's grades.

The key message of this research is that IntoUniversity delivers a holistic and supportive programme and we can be confident that there are many ways in which this supports increased attainment.

This attainment model captures the journey of our students to improved attainment, and begins to address the complex relationship between all of IntoUniversity’s work and its impact on attainment.

Young people need grades that reflect their potential and enable them to take their desired pathway. A key moment in a young person’s educational journey is their KS5 results.

We would love to hear your feedback about aspire.

To get in touch or to find out more about IntoUniversity please visit our website www.intouniversity.org, drop Vicky an email at aspire@intouniversity.org or call us on 020 7243 0242.

You can also follow us on

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