10 years of IntuUniversity
Dr Rachel Carr, Chief Executive and Co-Founder of IntuUniversity, looks back to the modest beginnings of the charity.

Levelling the Playing Field
Mary Ann Sieghart reflects upon the significance of the role of parents and the impact of socio-economic background on a child’s academic success.

Insight
Updates, reviews and highlights from IntuUniversity’s network of centres.

Spotlight
Exclusive interview with entrepreneurs, philanthropists and activists Dr Ros Smith and Steve Edwards.

Class of 2012
Emmanuel Abiola
IU North Kensington
University of Nottingham
Civil Engineering

Looking back at the evaluation forms they filled in I can see they were both appalled by and entranced with the Jeremy Bentham cabinet at UCL, loved hiding under the table during our simulation of an air raid and were fascinated to see where Winston Churchill slept. ‘I like learning but enjoy things when they are fun,’ wrote Ruby, ‘This week was beyond fun! I have absolutely loved this week, 10/10.’ It was comments like these that encouraged us to keep trusting our belief that working with primary school students was essential.

Since those early days, our Primary FOCUS programme has developed considerably. It is now a series of interventions for 9–11 year-olds with workshops on what a university is and support with the transition to secondary school. Yet the FOCUS weeks we still run look remarkably similar to those enjoyed by the Oxford Gardens pupils eight years ago – we now have mortar boards for our graduations but the university day remains the highlight of the week. We now run weeks on topics from Journalism to Maths, the Olympics to Shakespeare – but this year we have already run another two World War Two weeks, and HMS Belfast was again a highlight. Since 2004 we have run 200 FOCUS weeks and taken 5000 primary school children to visit a university. In this 10th anniversary year alone we will run 87 FOCUS weeks.

In 2008 the National Council for Educational Excellence recommended that ‘Every primary school should devote time to work on raising student aspirations to take up a place in Higher Education. Schools … should try to ensure that every pupil visits a Higher Education campus.’ And in 2012 our initial conviction was publicly recognised when we were awarded a London Education Partnership Award for ‘Starting the Journey’ to university for primary school children.

Those Oxford Gardens children have grown up. They are now young women and men who have reached university age. Ruby is on a gap year and is applying to read English Literature at university in 2013. Sarah achieved three As at A-level and is going on to read Medicine. Amy is in her first term reading History at Queen Mary’s College. Suad has just started a Politics and International Relations degree at the University of Westminster. And Lea, who told us that one of the three things he enjoyed most was visiting King’s College because it gave him a better understanding of university has just become a King’s undergraduate. In all 56% of that first cohort have progressed to university – a 27% improvement on other disadvantaged students from the same local authority. A further 20% of that cohort have graduated.

We are proud of you all.
Mary Ann Sieghart reflects upon the significance of the role of parents, and the impact of socio-economic background on a child’s academic success.

I’ve always considered my job as a parent to have three parts: to love my children unconditionally, to lay down happy memories for them, and to help them get into good universities. One is at Cambridge and the other has just started at UCL. ‘Phew!’ I thought to myself the other day. ‘Job done.’

That’s such a middle-class attitude, isn’t it? Well, I do anything to help our children succeed academically, from reading to them as babies, choosing the best nursery, paying private school fees or buying a house in a good catchment area, employing tutors, taking them to theatres and museums, asking our professional friends to give them experience. High educational achievement, for girls as well as boys, is even more important now in middle-class families than it was a generation ago.

So think what a disadvantaged child is up against. He or she may have parents who don’t particularly value education. And that is the most important determinant of success. After all, the best performing pupils in Britain at GCSEs are Chinese girls, but the second-best are Chinese girls on Free School Meals. What that shows is that attitude, expectations and hard work are more important than a bulging bank balance.

If children don’t have parents who expect them to be high achievers, they are going to find it very hard to compete against those who do, unless they are preternaturally self-starting. Ideally, all bright but disadvantaged children would have teachers doing the job that middle-class parents do: turbocharging pupils’ aspirations, demanding excellent results, pushing them through the system. In practice, many children are not so lucky.

There has been a lot of hand-wringing about the relative scarcity of poor students at top universities. The universities – particularly Oxford and Cambridge – are then blamed for discriminating against pupils from low-income homes. But, as a recent paper published in Fiscal Studies showed, the problem arises not at the university entrance level, but way before.

The problem arises not at the university entrance level, but way before.

Pupils in the top fifth of the income distribution are nearly three times as likely to go to university as those in the bottom fifth. Yet other things being equal, a disadvantaged sixth-former has pretty much the same chance of getting into university, and into the top Russell Group universities, as a rich one. The trouble is that other things aren’t equal. The disadvantaged student is less likely in the first place to get good A-level grades and to apply to universities, let alone the top ones. So the problem needs to be tackled much earlier.

All the way through, the children are expected to be high achievers and to aim for that ultimate driver of social mobility: a university education.

That’s where IntoUniversity comes in. In effect, the charity mimics what ambitious middle-class parents like me do for their children. From the age of seven, it helps pupils with study support after school. It takes them to theatres and museums. It introduces them to careers they might never have thought of through workshops given by professionals such as journalists, architects or lawyers. It gives them a week devoted to discovering the fun of university learning. It pairs them up with mentors who are already at university, and advises on subject choices and UCAS applications. All the way through, the children are expected to be high achievers and to aim for that ultimate driver of social mobility: a university education.

And it works. More than 77% of IntoUniversity leavers get into university, compared with just 18% of all students on Free School Meals (and that percentage includes further as well as Higher Education). It’s a long haul: the pupils who start at seven will have spent about 12 years on the programme. But that’s exactly what’s needed to put these students on a level playing field with the offspring of ambitious parents like me.

Mary Ann Sieghart
Mary Ann spent 19 years as an Assistant Editor and columnist on The Times before leaving to pursue other interests. She presents Newsnight on the BBC World Service and Profile on Radio 4, is an equity partner in World Service and Profile on the new website, Radio 4, is an equity partner in World Service and Profile on the new website, Radio 4, and sits on the board of Henderson Smaller Companies Investment Trust and on the Council of Tate Modern.

IntoUniversity’s 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner

On 15th November, 250 guests joined us to celebrate this special milestone for our charity at IntoUniversity’s 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner, supported by UBS and hosted at the Museum of London. The evening was a fabulous opportunity to look back over the past ten years, to celebrate our young people’s achievements and to look ahead to our ambitious plans for the future.

IntoUniversity’s guests in the Museum of London’s Sackler Hall

Student speaker Adekunle Awodele, Head Boy of Burlington Danes Academy
## Insight

Updates, reviews and highlights from IntoUniversity’s network of centres.

### IntoUniversity Norway?

Nasser Latif

Nasser Latif joined us as a Graduate Trainee Education Worker in August 2012. Prior to joining IntoUniversity, he studied for an undergraduate degree in Sports Development at Leeds Metropolitan University. He then completed a PGCE in Secondary Physical Education, and after graduating spent time teaching English in China.

### Mentoring Q&A

Kate Pickles

Visual Merchandising Coordinator – Emerging Markets, Burberry

Kate was paired up with her mentee, Shaban, a student at the Central Foundation Girls School in Tower Hamlets and regular attendee of Academic Support sessions at IntoUniversity Bow, at the start of the 2011 academic year when Shaban was embarking upon her A-level year. In this short interview, Kate gives us an insight into her experience of being an IU corporate mentor.

1. **How did you first hear of IntoUniversity?**
   
   A
   
   I got an email through work asking for graduates who might be interested in helping first generation applicants to university.

2. **Why did you become a mentor?**
   
   A
   
   I'd wanted to do something personally enriching for a while, but hadn't come across anything that struck a chord with me. This opportunity really appealed because university was one of the most beneficial and character shaping experiences of my life, and if there was something I could offer in the way of support or advice to other people then I wanted to be a part of that.

3. **How did you and Shaban use your one-to-one mentoring sessions?**
   
   A
   
   The sessions are very much driven by Shaban and what she feels she needs help or guidance with. They are also pretty organic and natural, usually an informal chat about my experiences or how I dealt with certain situations at university.

4. **What was the best part of being a mentor, and conversely, what did you find to be the biggest challenge?**
   
   A
   
   The best part of being a mentor has been seeing the achievements that Shaban has made. I got to go to an award’s performance at her school where I saw all of her A-level work and met all of her tutors who had obviously made an impact on her work. The biggest challenge is probably time constraints in terms of work and Shaban being based at a centre that is quite far away from where I work.

5. **Shaban began reading Media and Communication Studies at the University of Greenwich in September this year – a fantastic achievement. How often were you in touch? Will you stay in touch now that Shaban has progressed to university?**
   
   A
   
   We are in touch a lot less than we would like to be because Shaban doesn’t have access to the internet at home. I would say that at the moment it’s probably about once a month or so. But yes, we will definitely stay in touch and hopefully it will be much easier to talk more regularly with Shaban soon.

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### IntoUniversity is expanding rapidly and has solid evidence of the programme’s effectiveness.

#### What are the outcomes for IntoUniversity School Leavers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have a university place</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are applying to HE or on an access/foundation course</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are in work, apprenticeship or further study</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are unemployed, undecided or occupation unknown</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### How do IntoUniversity students compare with other students nationally?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Students supported this year</th>
<th>New centres launched in 2012/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IntoUniversity School leavers</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leavers nationally progressing to HE</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STUDENTS SERVING AN ADDITIONAL**

18% of all maintained school students on FreeSchool Meals
34% of all maintained school students
52% are unemployed, undecided, or unknown

**STUDENTS supported this year**

**NEW CENTRES LAUNCHED in 2012/13**

**Publications**

**7.7** of an estimated cohort of 1150

**Graduate Trainee Education**

**7.8** after completing a PGCE in Secondary Metropolitan University. He then

**Sports Development** at Leeds for an undergraduate degree in

**Graduate Trainee Education**

**7.1**

**School leavers**

**77.1%** of all maintained school students on FreeSchool Meals
34% of all maintained school students
52% are unemployed, undecided, or unknown

**STUDENTS supported this year**

**NEW CENTRES LAUNCHED in 2012/13**

2,700 **STUDENTS**
Dr Ros Smith and Steve Edwards have been supporters of IntoUniversity since 2008. Here they talk about their remarkable career journeys to date and discuss why education is an issue that they both hold so close to their hearts.

Please can you tell us about your educational backgrounds and early careers? We were both educated in state schools. Steve went on to Oxford University to do Physics, and Ros went to Cambridge University to study Biological Natural Sciences.

After university Steve joined Logica and worked as a programmer developing their in-house relational database, quite an innovative project at the time. Ros went on to do a PhD in Neuroscience and then joined Cambridge Interactive Systems as a programmer. Working with inspirational people early on is very important because you can learn so much from how they approach problems and how they behave towards their colleagues and customers.

What did having the opportunity to go to university mean for you both? Having the opportunity to learn from people who were leading their fields was tremendously exciting, and very daunting. A university education is not just about the subject, but about developing your mind and gaining skills that you use throughout your life.

The skills that we developed, along with a whole pile of good luck and a great team of people, helped us to develop our business which was eventually sold in 2001. The proceeds from which have allowed us to support many charitable causes. It sounds corny, but we know that our lives have been enriched by our university education, and we have achieved much more than we would have without it.

Together you generously support a number of charitable causes. Please can you tell us about your philanthropic interests? We are passionate that other people should have the educational opportunities that were given to us. We therefore support a number of educational charities and projects. We are especially excited about making opportunities for children whose background and environment means that they do not have access to the same levels of resources and support as those available to children from privileged backgrounds.

The main organisations or projects that we have supported are Murray Edwards College Cambridge, St Edmund Hall Oxford, IntoUniversity, BestCourse4Me (which we founded and fund), and a small school in the North of England. We also support individual students from time to time.

Please can you tell us a bit more about your relationship with Murray Edwards College? Ros studied at Murray Edwards, then New Hall. Murray Edwards has always been committed to giving opportunities to students with potential but who do not necessarily fit into the standard mould. The College puts a great deal of effort into supporting students as they adjust to the tough intellectual environment. It was easier as a student from a comprehensive school to adapt to life at New Hall than it was at some of the older, more traditional colleges.

Now Murray Edwards, the college has its own programme called the Gateway Programme. Starting with Gateway Scholarships, the programme supports students before they arrive at Cambridge. Once at Murray Edwards, it then provides coaching to enable students to make the most of their university education and helps them make a good start to their careers after they graduate.

What are your views on the on-going ‘access to Oxbridge’ debate? This is a complicated question. Oxford and Cambridge, together with Imperial College and University College London, all rank within the top ten universities world-wide. They are therefore very competitive and international in their outlook. We know that both universities put a lot of effort into attracting state school students, and provide generous bursaries to help poorer students with fees, making Oxbridge the cheapest place for financially deprived students to study. However, there are clearly still problems with the image of the two universities putting off a lot of able students. In reality though, Oxbridge students come from a wide range of backgrounds, and students rarely have a problem fitting in.

You launched your website, BestCourse4Me, in February 2010. Please can you tell us about this recent venture and what inspired its creation? BestCourse4Me provides a rich information source to help students in making A-level and degree choices. It was the idea of Professor Anna Vignoles who is a leading researcher in the outcome of a university education. She found that access to future careers depends very strongly on the subject studied at university and there was no convenient source of this information.

How and why did you initially become involved with IntoUniversity? Ros was introduced to IntoUniversity by Tessa Stone, Director of the Brightside Trust and a Trustee of IntoUniversity. We were looking for opportunities to work in widening participation and social mobility. She met Rachel Carr and heard about the work of IntoUniversity. We both felt that we had found an organisation that was working exactly where we wanted to help, developing aspiration and achievement in children from under-privileged backgrounds. When we worked with IntoUniversity more closely we discovered that the organisation and all of the people we met were incredibly positive and affirmative in everything that they do, not just with the children. The standards of the organisation are incredibly high. The Trustee Board is outstanding and the organisation makes excellent use of the skills of its Trustees.

Impact analysis shows very high levels of success of the students compared with those from the same socio-economic cohort who have not had access to IntoUniversity. Such high quality work and very high levels of impact encouraged us to support IntoUniversity because it is so successful in achieving its objectives, which are also our objectives.

Do you have any plans for future philanthropic initiatives? We have a few ideas, but we are fully committed for the next few years so we’re not planning on taking on any more projects just yet!

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 Emma an email at emma.sacchi@intouniversity.org or call us on 020 7243 0242. You can also follow us on @IntoUniversity www.facebook.com/IntoUniversity