



Everyday Impact Award – New Enterprises

Name of organisation or individual nominated

Children's University (CU)

1. What were you trying to change? (maximum 200 words)

Help us understand the vision, aims and objectives

The Children's University aims to promote social mobility by providing high quality out-of-school-hours activities to children aged 7-14 and engaging the wider communities as learning partners in the realisation of this. At the heart of its work is the ambition to raise aspirations, boost achievement and foster a love of learning, so that young people can make the most of their abilities and interests, regardless of their background. The CU aims particularly to reach children and young people facing socioeconomic disadvantage through targeting grants to, and promoting activities in, areas of deprivation. It is here, we believe, that the benefits of high quality provision will be felt most. An important principle of the CU is that participation is voluntary. It is intentionally something other than school – with a different feel, different activities and often a different location, staff and peer group. So the ultimate testament to the effectiveness of the Children's University is that young people give up their time to attend and that they begin to realise that learning can be "... a satellite navigation system to better places in life..." Comments and recommendations from parents, teachers and the children themselves show the children are engaged and inspired.

2. What did you do to make change happen? (maximum 200 words)

Tell us about what actions you took, who you worked with, what resources you had to use etc.

During 2010, the CU worked across 62 local CU centres in England with 85,000 children aged 7-14 for 1,075,000 hours of high quality out-of-school-hours learning, working with 2,500 schools; by April 2011 70 local CUs were members with a waiting list of 30. CU presence in Scotland and Wales involves nearly 17,000 children and 239,000+ hours of learning. 46 of the 86 most deprived areas of England now have CU provision. Over 100,000 Passports To Learning have been issued where children collect stamps in validated Learning Destinations that lead to national certificates and graduation ceremonies at Universities. 1,500+ Learning Destinations have been validated by 500 CU Validators trained through Planning for Learning to quality assure activities. Curriculum provision has developed significantly and includes Stagecoach, Shakespeare4Kidz, the Kunsthalle Bielefeld, University of Paderborn (Germany) and the Palazzo Strozzi (Italy). Other partners include BBC,

B&Q, Nationwide, Teach First and the Ministry of Defence. The CU engages with Higher Education Institutions to raise the aspirations of children. The national CU Chancellor is the children's author Michael Morpurgo. A national CU Volunteering accreditation and Passport To Volunteering will be introduced in 2011 to nationally and locally take a lead in the Government's 'Big Society' agenda.

3. What were your tangible results? (maximum 200 words)

Outline what happened as a result of the work and the impact it had

Consecutive independent evaluations of the national CU by Professor John MacBeath, University of Cambridge, recognise that "CU pupils attend better by virtue of the activities which enhance their school experience ... achieve better by virtue renewed self-confidence in their own potential ... enjoy learning more because they extend their repertoire of interests and see learning in a new light." The findings of the third evaluation (published January 2011) were as follows: 1. Being in the Children's University significantly improves school attendance. 2. Achievement is significantly better at Key Stages 1 to 3 for children who participate in CU compared with non-attenders. 3. The further children engage with CU, the better their attendance and achievement. 4. CU provides an environment for self-driven, confident and collegial learning. 5. CU provides a safe haven and models positive relationships. 6. Pupils and teachers testify to life changing experiences. 7. 'Opportunity costs' are high for children in disadvantaged areas who do not attend CU. 8. Certificates, credits, Passports To Learning and graduations are valued incentives and rewards. 9. University settings help to inspire and raise aspirations for children, and their parents. 10. CU has helped to "make learning a reality beyond academic studies."

Additional Nomination comments from others

Across the country 85,000 children aged 7 – 14 have experienced exciting learning in the arms of dedicated Children's University staff. Children's Universities provide high quality validated learning experiences that inspire children to love learning, raise aspirations and improve attitudes to learning. We know that children benefit from being part of Children's University because an independent evaluation states that children who are in Children's University do better in school than those who are not involved. There are Children's Universities in 46 out of the 86 most deprived areas in England and altogether there are 70 local centres with more waiting to join. Also included in these is the world-wide Service Children's CU for the children of armed forces personnel. How does it work? Children own a 'Passport to Learning' and visit the validated Learning Destinations to gain credits. Learning Destinations can be schools, museums and nature reserves or anywhere that offers fun, quality learning outside school. Once they have collected over 30 hours of learning they are awarded national recognition and receive certificates at graduation ceremonies at Colleges and Universities all over the country. Children's University hope that children use them as a 'satellite navigation system to better places in life'.