



**BACKING
THE BEST**
**OUR WORK WITH
THE ACCESS PROJECT**

IMPETUS – THE PRIVATE EQUITY FOUNDATION (IMPETUS-PEF) TRANSFORMS THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS BY ENSURING THEY GET THE RIGHT SUPPORT TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL, IN WORK AND IN LIFE.

We find, fund and build the most promising charities working with these young people, providing them with a unique package of support, and we influence policy and decision makers so that all young people get the support they need.

We work shoulder-to-shoulder with our charities:

- making them stronger
- delivering better results year after year
- reaching more disadvantaged young people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Photography by Liam Arthur.

Pictures are not of the case studies featured unless expressly stated.

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↳
WE MAKE CHARITIES STRONGER

We help develop charities' leadership, impact management and sustainability, using our bespoke outcomes framework as a guide.

↳
WE BACK CHARITIES TO DELIVER BETTER RESULTS

We put the building blocks of impact management in place so that our charities can deliver better results for young people.

↳
WE HELP CHARITIES REACH MORE YOUNG PEOPLE

We support our charities to grow, so that they are able to help more young people succeed.

↳
WE DO ALL THIS BY PROVIDING OUR CHARITIES WITH CORE FUNDING, THE EXPERTISE OF OUR DEDICATED INVESTMENT TEAM AND ACCESS TO OUR WORLD CLASS PRO BONO NETWORK.

01

INTRODUCING THE ACCESS PROJECT

It may be a cliché to tell young people to reach for the stars, but in the case of K-Ryan, that's exactly what The Access Project has helped him to do. Not only has the 18 year old from Cradley Heath in the West Midlands got into university – he and two sisters are the first generation in their family to do so – but he achieved the top grades needed to study astrophysics at the University of Birmingham.

He got there with the help of another first timer, The Access Project's volunteer tutor Rob Laker, a local tech entrepreneur, was also the first in his family to go to university. In their weekly tutoring sessions, Rob helped K-Ryan study for his physics A level, and also taught him how to use a high-specification telescope.

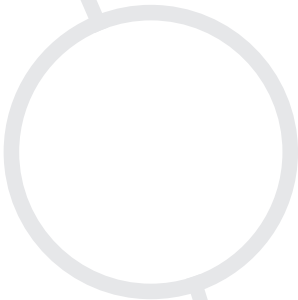
"We set it up in Rob's back garden. We could see the surface of the moon, and look at different constellations," says K-Ryan. "He also had a solar adaptor, so we could look at the surface of the sun, where we saw sun spots and flares. I'd never used a telescope up until that point. When I first saw the moon I was amazed at the clarity and amount of detail you could actually see. It will stay with me forever."

The Access Project's support didn't end with the tutoring, they also worked with K-Ryan on his university applications. "They helped me narrow down what I was looking for in a university, and prepare for the admissions tests and interviews," he says. "It made a big difference to the choices I made – I felt like I knew what I was looking for."

K-Ryan is just one of the 1,360 pupils supported every year by The Access Project, which helps bright students from disadvantaged backgrounds to get in to top universities. The Access Project provides 14-18 year olds with free personalised tuition, in-school support, mentoring, and university admissions guidance.

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are hugely under-represented in top universities. Pupils eligible for free school meals are half as likely to go to university than their better-off peers, and only 5% attend Britain's most selective universities – compared to 11% of their peers.

Even high-achieving students from less affluent backgrounds are less likely to apply to a selective university. Even if they do apply, they're less likely to be offered a place. This has a direct impact on their future earning potential, as graduates from selective universities earn on average 24% more than their peers from other universities.



“

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K-Ryan, student

LIFE CHANGING SUPPORT

For The Access Project’s Chief Executive, Andrew Berwick, this educational inequality is an issue of fundamental social justice. “Attending a selective university confers a range of benefits in terms of social and cultural capital, and future earning potential,” he says. “Those who go to selective universities are more likely to end up with power and influence in society.”

Andrew became aware of the issue as a child. He went to school in Southwark, South East London, but then found himself in a very different educational environment when his parents moved out of the capital.

“At that time educational outcomes in London were terrible,” he says. “I moved from a school where people had no hope or aspiration in terms of higher education, to one where students expected to go to university, and many of them to selective universities. It’s amazing what you internalise at that early age – even then I felt very keenly that it was not right.”

After graduating from Cambridge University, Andrew wanted to do something to redress this inequality and applied to the Teach First programme which sent graduates into challenging schools. He worked as an English teacher in a secondary school in Hayes, West London.

“As a teacher, I saw the same story played out that I’d seen as a child 20 years before,” he says. “All kids are brilliant, all of them have talent, potential and ambitions. The tragic thing about academic disadvantage is that by the time you see those kids in year 12 and 13, you already know that they’re not going to be able to realise that potential.”

Andrew joined The Access Project in 2012. At that point it was a young charity based at Highbury Grove School in North London, set up in 2008 by Alex Kelly, another Teach First alumnus.

Alex had noticed that his students, though bright, were not making the grades to get into top universities, so he began to ask his City friends to volunteer as tutors. The programme proved successful and by 2012 was operating in a second school.

“ALL KIDS ARE BRILLIANT, ALL OF THEM HAVE TALENT, POTENTIAL AND AMBITION.”

Andrew Berwick, Chief Executive, The Access Project

“The question at that point was: can we grow this?” says Andrew. “We managed to convince some more schools, and recruited a cohort of programme co-ordinators.”

Between 2012 and 2014, they expanded into 13 more schools. “We learned a lot in that early phase,” says Andrew. “We refined our business model and our delivery model. But it was still very much a promising start-up.”

02

OUR PARTNERSHIP



It was at this critical juncture that The Access Project started talking to Impetus-PEF, looking for support to help the charity grow. Impetus-PEF in turn recognised The Access Project's potential for growth, but emphasised that growth in outcomes – getting more of the children The Access Project was working with getting into university – was just as important as expanding to more schools.

That really resonated with me," says Andrew. "We'd been rolling out our programme, and we'd made some important steps forward. But we were very conscious that we hadn't been able to really test the programme to make it the best it could be. We'd been so focused on delivery."

In 2014, Impetus-PEF made an initial grant of £100,000, to be provided alongside management support from an Investment Director, Sebastien Ergas. For Sebastien, the charity's work aligned with Impetus-PEF's mission to give young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the best chance to succeed, in education and work.

"Their approach addressed two key barriers to university entry: attainment, and applications skills," he says. "Most access programmes deal with either one or the other."

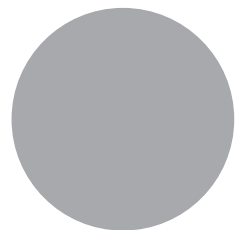
Sebastien was impressed by The Access Project's clear focus: to increase the proportion of disadvantaged students getting into selective universities. The quality of the management team was another factor. According to Sebastien, "they are exceptional, disciplined thinkers, and it felt like they would be receptive to an external point of view."



“

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Andrew



Next chapter: with our help,
TAP has become stronger ➔

03

WITH OUR HELP, THE ACCESS PROJECT HAS BECOME STRONGER



The partnership with Impetus-PEF started with an intensive series of ‘driving impact’ workshops. This process, says Sebastien, is “highly introspective,” and geared towards helping a charity think through some of the big issues that don’t necessarily come up during the busy day-to-day running of an organisation.

“It was an opportunity to get down to some fundamental questions about our mission and our delivery,” says Andrew. “Some questions were tough, but actually I think a lot of the frontline staff were really grateful to have the opportunity to discuss what was working, and what wasn’t.”

According to Tamara Baleanu, Head of Impact at The Access Project, there was “no question more challenging for us than whether we had been working with the right people.”

The process helped the team to recognise the need to work with schools to identify those pupils who needed the extra support to get to a top university, rather than those who were already likely to get in.

Equally, they realised that another danger was taking on students who were simply not going to be able to make the grades in the time they had, even with The Access Project support. “The workshops really helped The Access Project to more clearly define which pupils it needed to enrol in the programme, and to identify aspects of the programme that needed to be strengthened,” says Sebastien.

By the end of the driving impact workshops, The Access Project’s senior management had committed to:

- Increasing the proportion of pupils from a disadvantaged background enrolled on the programme from 56% to 80% within three years
- Increasing the duration and intensity of the programme by offering more tutoring hours and supporting a cohort of pupils through a four-year programme (previously enrolment was on an annual basis and student attrition was 50%)
- Providing a more structured form of university applications support and standardising this across all schools
- Tailoring tuition content more closely to the individual needs of pupils
- Tracking the progress each pupil was making and the support they were receiving to ensure the programme was getting the pupils to where they needed to be to make a successful application.



IN SOME WAYS, THE BIGGER CHALLENGE WAS IMPLEMENTATION. IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IS ALL VERY WELL, BUT HOW DO YOU ACTUALLY MAKE THAT HAPPEN ON THE GROUND?"

Sebastien Ergas, Investment Director, Impetus-PEF

The next challenge was to come up with a plan to reach these ambitious goals. "In some ways, the bigger challenge was implementation," says Sebastien. "Identifying areas for improvement is all very well, but how do you actually make that happen on the ground?"

In 2015, Impetus-PEF invested £841,000 over the next three years to support The Access Project to make the changes their leadership team believed would significantly increase their impact. This came with continued management support from Sebastien, and access to Impetus-PEF's pro bono network. Pro bono projects included change management support and leadership mentoring, and development for Andrew and his senior team.

When The Access Project first started working with Impetus-PEF, they were fairly typical of a small charity in that they'd always relied heavily on their founder Alex, and then Andrew, as CEO. "Small charities often invest too late in senior management, they develop an over-reliance on one or two people at the top. No matter how great those people are, it becomes unhealthy," says Andrew.

With advice from Sebastien on defining the right roles, The Access Project developed a new leadership structure around the CEO. In addition to Tamara's appointment as Head of Impact, with a team behind her putting impact at the centre of the charity's operations and ethos, Impetus-PEF also funded and helped to recruit a Finance and Operations Director.

"These new appointments made quite a statement," says Andrew. "They signalled a real commitment to making the programme work."

For Andrew, Sebastien has been the source of invaluable support, and challenge. "Being a CEO can feel quite lonely," he says.

"The relationship I have with our Investment Director is exceptional. Impetus-PEF Investment Directors only work with two or three charities at a time, so they really put the time in and as a result they develop a depth of understanding of an organisation that is really rare."

04 WITH OUR HELP THE ACCESS PROJECT IS DELIVERING BETTER RESULTS



The Access Project had always had a strong commitment to becoming a high impact organisation, but they hadn't found an approach which helped them to develop an impact strategy. For Andrew, Impetus-PEF's impact-focused, data-driven methodology – inspired by the work of David Hunter, an American strategy adviser to the non-profit sector – instantly made sense.

“I'd say we had an unarticulated desire for something like the methodology that Impetus-PEF introduced us to,” he says. “David Hunter's book and Impetus-PEF's 'driving impact' approach were the missing pieces for us.”

Previously, The Access Project had measured impact by assessing students at the end of the programme.

Although this gave a good sense of outcomes, it didn't capture whether each student was progressing satisfactorily during the programme, or give The Access Project the opportunity to make the changes needed to keep them on track.

Impetus-PEF worked with The Access Project on a major review of its curriculum. As part of this, they developed scales to assess each student's needs when they enrolled in the programme and to measure progress on an ongoing basis, so that University Access Officers (UAOs) could plan how best to support them.



PEOPLE OFTEN THINK IMPACT MANAGEMENT IS PRIMARILY ABOUT DATA AND SYSTEMS BUT, UNDERLYING THOSE THINGS, IMPACT MANAGEMENT IS ABOUT MIND-SETS AND BEHAVIOURS.”

Sebastien



BY 2017, OVER 90% OF THE ACCESS PROJECT PUPILS CAME FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS AND OF THOSE, 85% APPLIED TO A SELECTIVE UNIVERSITY, AND 53% GOT IN.”

This became the basis of a new set of outcomes frameworks, tracking the progress of each pupil over the four years of the programme.

As a result of the new measures, the whole organisation became more evidence-focused. “Their habits changed: people started looking at pupil-specific outcomes data more regularly,” says Sebastien. “That’s a big shift towards frontline staff and their managers taking responsibility for The Access Project’s results, one student at a time.”

Impetus-PEF linked The Access Project up with high quality IT support via its pro bono partner PwC, to help build an IT platform which could support the new data gathering and make it as easy as possible for staff to track progress in a more live way, for every single student enrolled on the programme.

Sebastien worked closely with the Head of Impact to embed this impact management culture across The Access Project. They encouraged the use of impact data for improving delivery and increasing accountability for results up and down the organisation. “People often think impact management is primarily about data and systems but, underlying those things, impact management is about mind-sets and behaviours.”

The new approach not only enabled The Access Project understand its impact better, it contributed to an upturn in outcomes.

In 2014, when Impetus-PEF first started working with The Access Project, just over half of the pupils the charity was working with were from disadvantaged backgrounds and of these, 66% applied to a selective university and 33% got in. By 2017, over 90% of The Access Project pupils came from disadvantaged backgrounds and of those, 85% applied to a selective university, and 53% got in. These results mean that an Access Project student is now twice as likely to get into a top university than another student with a similar background and academic record.

Next chapter: with our help, TAP is reaching more young people ➔

05

WITH OUR HELP THE ACCESS PROJECT IS REACHING MORE YOUNG PEOPLE



“The story of our partnership isn’t just about getting even better outcomes,” says Sebastien. “It’s about getting even more students achieving better outcomes.”

Since 2014, TAP has expanded from 15 to 31 schools, more than doubling the number of young people they work with. What began as a programme operating in a cluster of schools in North London, is now a multi-site programme with operations in the East and West Midlands.

To facilitate growth, Impetus-PEF have worked with The Access Project to assess the funding opportunities open to them and to diversify their funding model. The Access Project now sees money coming in not only from schools and corporate partners, but from major donors, grant-making trusts, and universities.

Impetus-PEF enlisted strategy consultants OC&C to undertake a significant pro bono project looking at how The Access Project could access funding from university widening participation budgets (this is dedicated funding for widening university participation mandated from universities charging the higher level of fees).

A member of Impetus-PEF’s fundraising team, who specialises in high net worth donors, also worked with The Access Project on their donor engagement strategy. As they’ve seen results from this engagement come in, The Access Project have decided to appoint their own major donor fundraiser to build on this.





THE PARTNERSHIP WILL NOW SHIFT. WE NEEDED TO DEVELOP THE PROGRAMME AND DEMONSTRATE RESULTS. NOW IT'S TIME TO LOOK AT FUTURE GROWTH."

Sebastien

"The backing from Impetus-PEF has been really helpful in terms of approaching other funders," says Andrew. "Impetus-PEF is seen within the sector as the gold standard; people know that their due diligence is incredibly rigorous. Being in their portfolio immediately gives you a level of credibility."

The partnership will now shift to a new phase, says Sebastien. "We've been pretty internally focused so far. We needed to develop the programme and demonstrate results. Now it's time to look at future growth."



IMPETUS-PEF IS SEEN WITHIN THE SECTOR AS THE GOLD STANDARD; PEOPLE KNOW THAT THEIR DUE DILIGENCE IS INCREDIBLY RIGOROUS. BEING IN THEIR PORTFOLIO IMMEDIATELY GIVES YOU A LEVEL OF CREDIBILITY."

Andrew

06 WHERE NEXT FOR THE ACCESS PROJECT



With the impact of the programme now well established, The Access Project is set to embark on what Sebastien describes as, “their most ambitious growth plan to date.”

The charity plans to double again its number of students, with the aim of working with 2,500 by 2021, across 50 schools, and moving into a fourth region.

In 2018, Impetus-PEF committed another £900,000 to The Access Project, to take the partnership to 2021 and to bring new funders in to help The Access Project deliver on this ambition.

For Andrew, the results of working with Impetus-PEF, and two formal evaluations by the university admissions body UCAS, have provided clear evidence that The Access Project should take its programme into new parts of the country.

“As a teacher, I was used to getting very clear feedback from my students about whether I was doing well,” he says. “One of the odd things about being a CEO is that it’s hard to get validation – you don’t always feel that you know whether what you’re doing is making a difference. The great thing about having all this evidence about impact is that I can say, with full confidence, that our programme works.”

By 2021
2,500 students

Across
50 schools



THE ACCESS PROJECTS PROGRAMME IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF THE SUSTAINED, TARGETED, COLLABORATIVE AND ROBUSTLY EVALUATED WORK WE NEED INTO THE FUTURE.”

Chris Millward, Office for Students

The biggest challenge of taking The Access Project into new regions is volunteer recruitment. In order to scale up, they need to find a way of recruiting, training and retaining high quality volunteers like Rob Laker, all over the country. They've hired their first director responsible for volunteer recruitment to lead work on this, and they're testing online tuition.

For Sebastien, the partnership has been about “providing a space for The Access Project's management to tackle the deeper questions that sit underneath the day-to-day running of the charity.”

He's confident that they have a realistic and investible growth plan that will prove attractive not only to other funders, but to policy makers, keen to demonstrate that inroads are being made in the university access gap.

Chris Millward, Director of Widening Participation and Fair Access at the Office for Students, commends TAP for “demonstrably helping young people to unlock their potential...Their programme ... is a great example of the sustained, targeted, collaborative and robustly evaluated work we need into the future.”

Andrew says simply that Impetus-PEF “partnering with us means we have become the kind of organisation that we wanted to be. With their support, I'm excited to see just how far that can take us.”

07

THE ACCESS PROJECT AND IMPETUS-PEF: FACTS AND FIGURES

The value of Impetus-PEF's
support to The Access
Project (2014 – 2017)

Investment team support:

£413,000

Date entered
portfolio:

2014

Years in portfolio:

4



Pro bono services donated:

£603,000



Grant funding:

£776,000

Number of pro
bono projects:

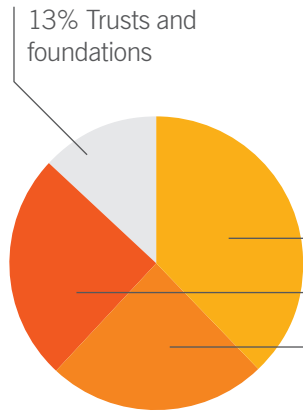
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Total audited support package:

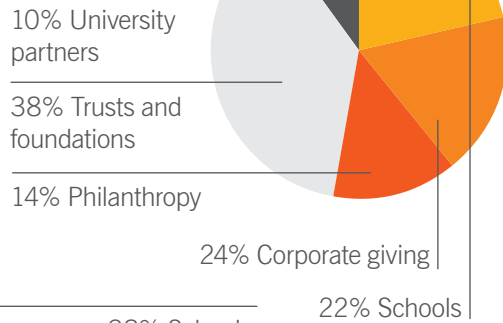
£1,792,000

Funding mix

2015



2018



Number of geographical locations, centres, or programmes:

Number of Schools (across three regions: London, West Midlands, East Midlands)



2014: 15
2015: 18
2016: 18
2017: 23

2018: **31**

Charity turnover

£524,000 2014
£782,000 2015
£1,000,000 2016
£1,400,000 2017

£1,800,000
2018

Outcomes for young people

Students supported by TAP who applied to a Top 3rd university

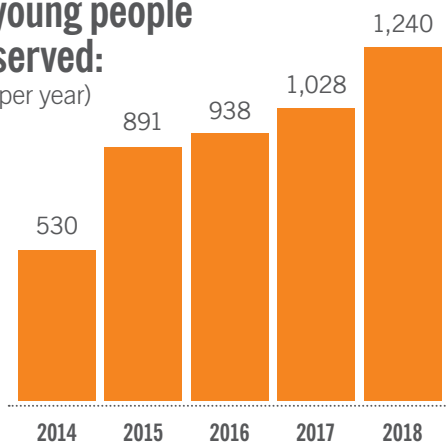
2014: **66%**
2017: **85%**

Students supported by TAP got a place at a Top 3rd university

2014: **33%**
2017: **53%**

Number of young people served:

(per year)



Benchmark

Two Outcome Measures vs. a control group (UCAS Study) for 2016/2017

Applications to: Top 3rd Universities

85%

of supported students by TAP (Year 13) applied to a Top 3rd university vs.

35%

of the UCAS control group



Places at: Top 3rd Universities

62%

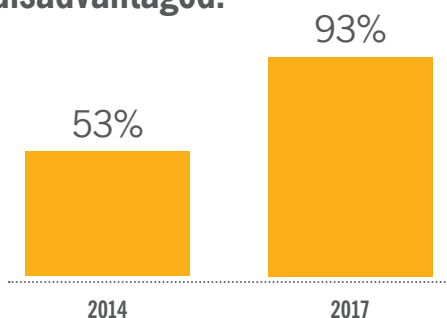
of students supported by TAP (Y13) who applied to a Top 3rd Universities got a place vs.

51%

of the UCAS control group



Proportion of young people served who are disadvantaged:





K-RYAN IS NOW IN THE SECOND YEAR OF HIS ASTROPHYSICS DEGREE AT BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY. HE'S EXCITED AND RE-ENERGISED TO BE STUDYING AN AREA OF PHYSICS THAT HE ENJOYS. K-RYAN IS LOOKING FOR INTERNSHIPS THAT WILL IMPROVE HIS JOB PROSPECTS, HELP HIM TO MAKE CONNECTIONS AND IMPROVE THE SKILLS HE'S LEARNING AT UNIVERSITY."





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