"Young people do not want for aspirations. What they lack are meaningful opportunities to achieve them."

Are we ready?

Enterprising education for an enterprise culture

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1. Foreword by Valerie Hannon

This report could not be more timely. At a time of a national debate about the urgent need for growth, the single aspect of it around which there is clear consensus is that our national prosperity depends upon the development of human capital. The question then becomes: is our education system well-suited to that task?

The evidence indicates that it is not. Youth unemployment is high, and is rising. Moreover, graduate status is now no guaranteed path to employment, as the rising unemployment rate (as well as debt) amongst this segment shows. Meanwhile, despite these data, employers indicate that they are unable to fill the higher-skill vacancies they hold; and that new employees frequently lack the kinds of dispositions and competencies needed in the new conditions of the C21st workplace.

But it would be a mistake to conceive of this challenge as merely that of 'workforce preparation'. Rather the challenge is more profound. Taken together, the evidence globally shows that 'good growth' in economies is increasingly dependent upon people who can create work and not just find it – irrespective of whether they are involved in start-ups or larger established organisations.

To ignore this dimension of young people's development is irresponsible. Fortunately, the foundations exist in the practice of organisations such as *Ready Unlimited* to incorporate engaging and effective programmes, which – as this report shows – are in addition more likely to *improve* conventional educational achievement than detract from it.

ESRO's textured portraits of the impact of the *Ready Unlimited* programme on young people's lives cannot fail to inspire those who are seeking better to involve young people in meaningful, purposeful, engaging learning. This is a global challenge: but we have available a nationally-grown solution.

Valerie Hannon

Board Director, The Innovation Unit

Author of*: Learning A Living: radical innovation in education for work (Bloomsbury, 2013)*

2. Introduction

ARE WE READY FOR ENTERPRISE EDUCATION IN ENGLAND?

At the time of writing, the schools system in England is undergoing a radical transformation that leaves the precise future role of enterprise and entrepreneurship in education unclear. The national curriculum itself has been under review by the Department for Education since the beginning of 2011, along with a separate review of the current role of non-statutory PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) programmes in schools. During these review processes, there have been calls to embed enterprise education in the national curriculum, not least from *Ready Unlimited,* (the commissioner of this report[1]) but with the changes not due to be finalised and implemented until 2014, there have been few signs yet that this is likely to happen[2].

Changes to the ways that schools are funded and to their relationships with local authorities also mean that it is increasingly likely that those subjects that are *not* made part of the national curriculum will be taught (or not taught) according to the wishes of individual schools and head teachers; local variance in the structural implementation of reforms means that the picture across the country (or even within regions) is unlikely to be uniform.

In some places, schools may remain closely partnered with local authorities. In others, coalitions, alliances and partnerships between schools may see strategic group commissioning and across the board there will be primary and secondary schools that behave, for all intents and purposes, entirely independently.

It is in this context that *Ready Unlimited* have launched as a not-for-profit social enterprise aiming to promote a culture of enterprise in education and beyond. The strategic goal of *Ready Unlimited* is clear, "*… to transform the life and work chances of young people by enabling educators to provide teaching and learning that is relevant to the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.*" But in order to achieve it, there needs to be a clear case for schools, education policy makers and commissioners to buy into and share that vision.

To some extent that case has already been made and accepted. Straitened economic times have almost inevitably led to countless articles, think tanks, organisations and politicians repeating the truism that we need young people to be equipped for the world of work, entrepreneurial, and ambitious

1 www.readyunlimited.com

2 *Enterprise Education in Schools* Parliamentary briefing SN/SP/6176 (Gillie, 2012)

in a dynamic and challenging global economy[3]. The 2010 Department for Education-published *Evaluation of Enterprise Education in England* for example opens with the following paragraph:

"We are now living in a fast-changing global economy and the UK needs to become a world leader in skills in order to keep up with these changes and ensure economic prosperity. As learners and the workforce of the future, young people are key to facilitating this change. They need to be resilient and have transferable skills. It is important that they clearly understand and are able to demonstrate what singles them out from all the rest. Enterprise Education is ideally positioned to equip them with these skills, helping them to be creative and innovative, to take risks and manage them, and do this with determination and drive."

Similar statements and sentiments can be found emanating from sources as diverse as the The Young Foundation[4], the CBI[5] and representatives of all of the major political parties. One particularly impassioned plea can be found in the personal perspectives of experts from Yorkshire in The Smith Institute's *Perspectives on Aspiration and Ambition* (Brian, 2008)[6].

But the devil is in the detail. The question remains: How exactly are these lofty ambitions to be achieved? And it is here that consensus breaks down.

META-STUDIES OF ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

Evidence from meta-studies of enterprise and entrepreneurship education around the world is beginning to suggest that there is measurable value to embedding enterprise and entrepreneurship training specifically in primary and secondary schools. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's global study of *Entrepreneurship Education and Training* (2010) for example, invited contributions from teams of experts in 30 countries to take part in a survey looking at the current state of entrepreneurship education and training, as well as desk research into entrepreneurship in 38 countries. Their literature review shows a number of specific-country cases in which there is a demonstrable link between enterprise/entrepreneurship education and the kinds of skills and attitudes that are more likely to lead someone to an entrepreneurial career. They also present data to show a correlation between macro-economic improvement and entrepreneurial activity, thus drawing an indirect link between enterprise/entrepreneurship education and national economic success.

Further, they argue, that up to a point, an increase in entrepreneurship training in countries like the UK leads to an increase in entrepreneurial activity. In particular they show that, across the 38 countries monitored, entrepreneurs were more likely to have received entrepreneurial training (33% had received formal or informal training) than those who were not entrepreneurs (of whom only 20% had received formal or informal training).

As a final adjunct, they also point out that the most likely source of enterprise/entrepreneurship education across the sample was in primary and secondary school. In other words, schools seemed to be the best place to introduce enterprise education, in order to reach the widest proportion of the population. With this suggestion of course, comes the necessity to ensure that those who are charged with delivering enterprise education in schools, namely teachers, are well trained[7]. A number of studies in recent years note the importance of having excellent teaching staff in schools and the tangible, positive effects that well-trained, knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers can have on student outcomes and expectations of themselves[8]. In this report, we refer obliquely to a number of different educational experiences that respondents to our primary research had had. It quickly becomes clear that for those wishing to see more enterprise education in schools, teaching the teachers is as important as teaching the students.

Of course there are problems with the kind of study that the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor has done. First, the conclusions they draw are very much based on interpretations of tendencies and indications, rather than on strong empirical evidence of enterprise/entrepreneurship education leading to specific outcomes among specific populations; a point the authors very much acknowledge. Second, and again as the authors acknowledge, the overarching nature of the study masks the diversity within each of the countries in terms of the different types of and differing levels of quality in the enterprise education that is being delivered, not to mention who it is being delivered to, and in what contexts. The European Commission's report into *Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe* (2012)[9] goes further in unpicking this variety but the report only serves to highlight *practice*, lacking the data to go so far as to say what might constitute '*best*' practice. These kinds of problems, largely related to a lack of strong empirical data being collected at ground level in schools and classrooms, are common throughout the literature.

3 See for example comments by former Business and Enterprise Secretary Vince Cable: *"We want to transform the ambition and aspiration of young people through real business experience. To rebuild our economy and create new jobs, we need to inspire the next generation to seriously think about starting their own company."* Or by the Business and Enterprise Secretary Mark Prisk MP: *"We need to inspire young people to strike out on their own, and also give them the practical tools to help. It is vital that everyone has the opportunity to develop their ideas and learn the skills needed to succeed in business."*

4 www.youngfoundation.org/blog/education/skills-success-bridging-education-work-gap

5 www.cbi.org.uk/business-issues/education-and-skills/

6 *Perspectives on aspiration and ambition* The Smith Institute (Brian et al., 2008)

7 This general point about the need for 'good' teachers is well noted by the Parliamentary education committee's paper *Great teachers: attracting, training and retaining the best* published in April 2012

8 A good summary of this research can be found in *Improving the impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK* (Sutton Trust, 2011)

9 *Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe: National strategies, curricula and learning outcomes* European Commission – Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (March, 2012)

IMPLEMENTING ENTERPRISE/ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Calls to integrate enterprise education into schools in the UK are not necessarily new. In 2002, the Davies report for the then Labour government, noted that various initiatives had been in place for over 20 years[10]. The report also renewed the call for a concerted effort to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship education in schools and colleges, arguing that there were many indications that it had a positive effect. The conclusions were mainly derived from the positive narratives and accounts of teachers and observers of enterprise education programmes in schools.

Since the Davies report, a number of evaluations of the state of enterprise education and training in schools have taken place. And whilst hard quantitative evidence of impact remains elusive, consensus has grown around what issues need to be addressed and, reading them together, a set of principles that *might* guide best practice, is emerging.

By way of example, landmark studies by OFSTED[11], The Department for Education[12] (or the then Department for Children, Families and Schools) and recently, the Pearson Think Tank[13] have identified many of the same issues and offer similar guidance:

THE NEED FOR CLARIFICATION

In one form or another, all of the reports noted the need for clarity around terminology, especially with regard to the term '*enterprise education*' itself, which could be interpreted in different contexts and by different practitioners in a number of different ways. Examples showed the term being used to refer to everything from the softer skills and attitudes relating to ambition and aspiration, through to harder business know-how and the day-to-day specifics of becoming an entrepreneur.

THE NEED FOR EVALUATION

Though there are perhaps some inconsistencies in the way the different bodies call for effective evaluation of enterprise education initiatives, there is agreement around the need. Effective evaluation would require, of course, clarity of terms and goals, effective data collection at school level, and a robust set of measurement tools.

All agree that the time has certainly come to move on from the (albeit positive) anecdotal evidence of teachers, and develop a firm evidence base around the value and impacts of enterprise learning.

10 *A review of enterprise and the economy in education* Her Majesty's Stationery Office (Davies, 2002)

11 *Economics, business and enterprise education* ref. 100086 OFSTED (June, 2011)

12 *Evaluation of Enterprise Education in England* Research Report DFE-RR015 Department for Education DFE (McLarty et al., 2010)

13 *Enterprise education: Value and direction* The Pearson Think Tank (Coiffait et al., 2012)

THE NEED TO DEVELOP AND DISSEMINATE 'BEST PRACTICE'

Pearson note with candour that despite the relative explosion of interest in enterprise education in recent years, and the profusion of literature outlining different implementations "*comparatively little is known about how impact varies with different delivery approaches or between different types of school*" (p.10). The report from the Department for Education also points out that where good practice *has* been identified and collated in resources like the www.enterprisevillage.org.uk website, teachers and practitioners are all too often unaware of it.

Despite these outstanding issues however, the three reports make remarkably similar recommendations to those tasked with the actual implementation of enterprise education programmes:

EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

As OFSTED note: "*The schools visited where the economics and business education curriculum was outstanding tended to have very good links with local employers, which were used to good effect to enhance teaching and learning.*" (p.24). This aspect of enterprise teaching, as we shall see, was also prominent in the minds of those students we present later in this report.

APPLIED LEARNING AND LEARNING BY DOING

Pearson found in their interviews with enterprise education experts and throughout a good proportion of the literature they studied, support for the idea of teaching through activity rather than theory. Practitioners in particular felt that pupils and students engaged far more with enterprise learning when taking part in specific enterprise projects. [*This tallies strongly with our own findings presented here.*]

SPECIALIST ENTERPRISE SUPPORT, TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND PRACTITIONERS

All sources agree that there is a need to make sure teachers and providers of enterprise education are properly trained, that they are knowledgeable about good practice and that they are aware of the resources available to them. The DFE report also recommends specifically, integrating… "*teaching of the value of Enterprise Education, including impact on pupils' attainment and work readiness, into: the Initial Teacher Training programme for new teachers; and training for Senior Leadership Teams.*" (p.108)

CROSS-CURRICULUM EMBEDDING OF ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

All three reports find that where enterprise education is most effective, its success has been due (at least in part) to the fact that the values of enterprise education have been embedded across the curriculum and not confined to specific hours or initiatives.

ACCREDITATION AND AWARDS

There is some suggestion in the literature, that where students and pupils can gain credit or acknowledgement for the time and effort they put into enterprise learning, they are likely to gain more from it and engage more deeply. The same may also be true for teachers. For example, teachers can apply on a school's behalf for the Warwick CEI National Standard for Enterprise Education (a quality mark for existing and developing provision in school), or even work with a university on professional development / action research modules which can gain credits towards an MA.

CONTINUITY

An emerging element of good practice seems to be to ensure that enterprise education is carried through all stages of education.

Ready Unlimited has already embedded many of these areas of good practice into the programmes and tools that they offer, as can be seen in the findings of this report. Again though, the key challenge for *Ready Unlimited*, as for many other practitioners in the field, is in making schools and colleges aware of the benefits of enterprise education and of the expertise that already exists.

ABOUT ***READY UNLIMITED*** AND ***ROTHERHAM YOUTH ENTERPRISE***

Ready Unlimited is a new social enterprise that has evolved out of an acclaimed school improvement programme devised and delivered by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in partnership with Yorkshire Forward (the Regional Development Agency). Launched in 2005, *Rotherham Ready* (as the local programme is known), set out to transform attitudes and achievement amongst local school children, by introducing enterprise and entrepreneurship into their schools' curriculum. Since then, participating schools have won awards including the Warwick Award for Excellence in Enterprise Education, the Warwick Platinum Award, and the country's first Leading Aspect Award for an enterprising curriculum. The programme played a significant role in Rotherham being named 'The Most Enterprising Place in Britain' by BIS (The department for Business Innovation and Skills) in 2010. OFSTED has also recognised the programme as being a valid vehicle for school transformation.

Rotherham Ready's growing profile led to the replication of some or all of the aspects of the programme in schools and colleges in other areas, including Hull and Lincolnshire.

In 2012, Rotherham Council was selected as one of the leading innovative local authorities by Nesta's Creative Councils programme, and with Nesta's support, *Rotherham Ready* was able to establish the service formally as an independent, not for profit social enterprise called *Ready Unlimited*. To date, the organisation has worked with over 200 schools and 2000 teachers from Derbyshire to Deptford and from Norfolk to Spain[14].

THE *READY UNLIMITED* APPROACH

The *Ready Unlimited* approach is designed to be a blueprint for how business and enterprise can be developed and sustained in the classroom.

Importantly, the strategy aims to create a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship that lasts beyond the boundaries of just a 'package' or 'programme'. It has been designed to pass on not just the skills, tools and knowledge required for effective enterprise teaching, but also the passion and drive to create enterprising school and community environments in the long term.

Key partnerships strengthen the approach. For example, partnerships with the local council education department, local 'Young Entrepreneurship' programmes and Warwick University have been influential when engaging with schools, and the involvement of the local Chambers of Commerce has also supported local business involvement in the promotion of individual programmes, such as "Make £5 Blossom", and of school-business links more widely.

Ready Unlimited is now replicating its programmes nationally, offering a co-ordinated strategy to change practice in schools and colleges by training and developing teachers and educators, supporting them to make external links with families and communities, businesses, entrepreneurs and the world of work, and inspiring them to support and encourage children and young peoples' aspirations.

14 Also referred to in this report, Rotherham Youth Enterprise is a partner project, based in Rotherham, and forms a critical part of the borough's 14–19 enterprise entitlement. Rotherham Youth Enterprise has been credited with helping to achieve some of the highest business survival rates in the UK. In particular, it offers favourable business incubation rates and accommodation for start-ups in the town, as well as tailored business coaching for 16–30 year old entrepreneurs.

THE IMPACT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

With a mind to much of the literature criticising the lack of solid evidence around the impact of enterprise education and teaching on students and teachers, *Ready Unlimited* has developed an evaluation framework to run alongside its work with schools: The *Ready Unlimited* Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF). It was created by *Ready Unlimited* in partnership with Warwick University, Lappeenranta University of Technology (Finland) and David Butler, an ex- schools inspector (HMI) and Ofsted Lead on Enterprise Education.

The IEF is primarily an online tool that enables school heads, teachers and pupils to collect their perceptions and experiences of enterprise education before and after undertaking professional development and implementing enterprise learning changes in schools. The surveys differ for pupils, teachers and heads. At the time of writing, the tool has already been deployed and a first set of baseline measures have been collected from participating schools.

This structured approach to evaluation is admirable. At a practical level, schools will be able to learn iteratively from the results, gaining instant access to qualitative and quantitative feedback on the programmes and changes they are implementing. At a programmatic level too, it allows *Ready Unlimited* to build an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in its programmes. But perhaps most importantly of all, at least from a researcher's point of view, it begins the process of collecting a standardised set of impact data around enterprise learning and teaching.

It is too early for us to look at the emerging data in detail here, but praise must be given to *Ready Unlimited* for recognising the need to robustly evaluate their programmes and to contribute to the currently insufficient evidence base around enterprise in education.

THE RESEARCH

The rest of this report deals with real-life case studies of young people in Yorkshire who have engaged with *Ready Unlimited's* enterprise education tools and local programmes. We would hope that the stories we tell are relevant to the context of enterprise education in the UK outlined so far, and can help to make a persuasive case to those interested in providing or implementing enterprise education for young people.

The research findings and case-studies outlined represent the outputs of a small-scale ethnographic study of 7 children and young people from a mixture of different backgrounds, living in and around Rotherham. All but one of the respondents had been involved in, or touched by, *Ready Unlimited*'s local enterprise education programme *Rotherham Ready*.

The research aimed to develop a rich understanding of the role of the programme in the context of these young people's lives and more specifically in their education and career pathways.

At the outset, we intended to simply produce seven in-depth case studies that would support the on-going development of *Ready Unlimited* programmes nationally. A separate report has been provided by the researchers to the *Ready Unlimited* team outlining key recommendations and feedback on the nuts and bolts of their services. However, as we collated stories and dwelt on the compelling characters that we had encountered, it became clear that, whilst the number of people we worked with was small, the implications of what we found could have wider significance.

There is still a need for more research looking at the longer term impacts of enterprise teacher training and enterprise education programmes like *Ready Unlimited,* and at the ways different parts of the programmes impact on different types of people at different times in their education and careers. We would hope however, that this report can serve to provide some initial insights, and contribute to this process of evidence building.

KEY RESEARCH MESSAGES

Aside from the key feedback given to the *Ready Unlimited* team, there are a number of wider messages that emerge from the work presented here. Most of these points will become clear to the reader as they read through the stories, but they could usefully be summarised here.

[We should sound a note of caution however. The research could not be said to have been carried out with a robust or representative sample of children and young people who had encountered *Ready Unlimited* programmes or initiatives, or of enterprise education more widely. Our sample of young people had engaged with the localised *Rotherham Ready* programme, and teachers who had been trained as Enterprise Champions by *Rotherham Ready*

and the project's partners, such as *Rotherham Youth Enterprise*. Findings that appear to apply more widely should be taken only as indicative, and all of our suggestions point toward a need for further research.]

'Talent spotting': Whilst the *Rotherham Ready* initiative had differing levels of impact on the young people, it was also clear that the programme had provided a unique opportunity and route to success for some. Importantly, that route to success may not have been made available to these young people by other parts of their educational journey. In fact routes to success may have been closed off due to poor or average academic performance, or because of the lack of professional development training that their teachers had received in terms of recognising the value of enterprise skills.

Our learning was clear. Enterprise education programmes like *Ready Unlimited* may be able to support teachers in identifying talented individuals who could be missed by merely looking at results in traditional academic fields.

Making learning 'sticky': For all but one of our respondents (the one person in our sample who had not been involved in the *Rotherham Ready* programme), the experience of enterprise education was a positive one, often leaving them asking for more. For two or three of them, engagement with enterprise education had directly provided both inspiration and practical support that had enabled them to move on with business ideas or into business careers. For the younger children, enterprise skills and values had become firmly embedded in their thinking about the future and in their general educational learning.

In other words, enterprise learning had proved 'sticky'; its principles and lessons seemed to linger long in the minds of the young people we studied.

'Far-reaching': There is strong evidence in the case-studies that for those who managed to get a lot out of the *Rotherham Ready* programme, the impact was reaching beyond the individual participants themselves. Family members had often become involved in projects, and seemed to be getting inspiration to start thinking entrepreneurially about their own economic lives. And beyond immediate family members, the young people were also involving friends and peers in their ventures, actively encouraging them to be more adventurous and entrepreneurial too.

3. Talent spotting

DEBBIE – THE SERIAL INNOVATOR

We meet Debbie at a small branch of a well-known coffee company where she works as a manager. The shop is located on a windswept junction of a main road on the outskirts of Rotherham. A steady flow of customers comes in through the back entrance, shaking off the rain that has splattered them on the short dash from their cars. Staff in dark uniforms busy themselves with machines and steaming milk, gently pushing cakes and biscuits as orders of hot drinks are taken and fulfilled.

On another day, Debbie would wear the same uniform and perform the same routines. Today however, Debbie is not working. We order a hot drink and she begins to tell her story.

Debbie had chosen the coffee house as a place to meet simply because it was close to where she lived with her parents, but the anonymity of the setting and the fact that on another day, in another context, we might have met her there and thought nothing of it, serves as a metaphor for the research findings in general. Talent and ambition can be found anywhere and perhaps everywhere, but there is a need to find effective and imaginative ways of identifying and nurturing it. For Debbie, now in her early twenties, a mixture of self-motivation and some timely opportunities had led to an interesting story of enterprise and entrepreneurialism that leaves the distinct impression that she is someone likely to succeed in whatever field she chooses to pursue.

She grew up without any particular advantages, living in a relatively low-income household. Her mother cared full-time for her father who was suffering the long-term debilitating effects of a serious injury and Debbie had had her own problems with a disability that affected her mobility throughout much of her early childhood; though operations and medical interventions mean that she can hide the long-term effects well.

Her first foray into the world of entrepreneurialism came in the summer break between her GCSE's and A levels. She had firmly told her mother that she didn't want to do a '*boring job for no pay*', and began scouring the internet to find something more interesting she could get involved in. She found a woman in Manchester who was making her own bath products for wholesale, and put in a small order. When she received the bars of soap and salts, she cut them, re-packed them, and sold them on at a small profit. These profits were reinvested in more stock, and she created a brand and a website. Sales went so well that she and her mother even built a small shed in the back garden to house a makeshift production line.

The business ran for 3 years until Debbie had to move in to a new house to start university. But with a final flourish, she put the business up for sale on an internet auction site and sold her web presence, brand and remaining stock for a small fee.

Debbie's entrepreneurial drive had other outlets in this time. She had been pro-active in changing school because she had felt that where she was could not offer everything she wanted. And at her new school she came into contact with a teacher who was a *Rotherham Ready Enterprise Champion*. This teacher encouraged Debbie to become involved in the fledgling Rotherham Young Chamber [of commerce] project that was being trialled at the school. Debbie took to it with gusto.

Although the Chamber had started with a number of older students, most, she says, gradually faded away, leaving Debbie to lead a group of younger pupils, and shape the projects it undertook. They ranged from school discos to charity activities and break-time coin-flipping competitions; but the biggest and most successful was a 'smoothie bar' that ran during school lunch times. Debbie mentored the younger children through a process of creating a brand, developing a number of differently flavoured products, purchasing a smoothie-maker from America, and building a stall to sell from in the school dining area. From a nominal initial start-up sum that the Young Chamber had provided, the stall ended up making £250 per week.

Debbie insists that the projects taught her every bit as much as the A level business studies course she was taking; and she was adamant that it wasn't the theoretical ideas that were so powerful, but the opportunities that the structure of the Young Chamber project provided. They allowed her to explore her own ideas and explore the mechanics of business in action.

The lessons were well learned. After leaving school, and winding up the bath products business, it wasn't long before Debbie embarked on her next project. During the second year of her business degree, she was asked to create a hypothetical business plan. Debbie used the opportunity to fulfil long-term ambitions, and drew up plans to create a milkshake bar.

The idea had been gestating for a long time. Debbie had even taken work experience in a local branch of a milkshake bar chain (working as a 'shakette') to learn more about the industry. She had also been saving. And although she couldn't afford to buy her own franchise, she had saved enough to rent a retail space in a shopping centre. She and her mother built the milkshake bar in just 8 weeks, investing, in the process, in a waffle maker, an expensive Chinese-made milkshake machine, and van-fulls of IKEA furniture.

Unfortunately, the milkshake bar didn't last. Debbie says that it wasn't well located, and that just as she had begun to turn a profit, based largely on sales to students from a local sixth form college, the summer holidays took away her customer base. She had invested a fair amount of money, but didn't want to go bankrupt or into debt for what was essentially a small project. Today, her ambitious nature won't allow her to see the project as a success, but as a step up in entrepreneurial terms, there is no doubt that she learned valuable lessons. Furthermore, the project had done no harm to her long-term plans of teaching business. Her degree was still going well and now she had practical experience on which to draw.

As our research drew to a close, we wondered whether the closure of the milkshake bar hadn't significantly affected Debbie's finances and perhaps her confidence in taking risks in the future. She said that yes of course, she had lost money from the venture – though nothing that she couldn't recover from… and as she opened her car door and got ready to leave, she turned back and smiled: "… I've always got my web shop."

So Debbie has already moved on, setting up a small online shop selling design work for small businesses. In fact, she had already been selling to customers all over the world and by working as little as one or two hours a week whilst studying, she was already earning enough to support her daily costs while finishing her degree.

There are many important lessons to be learned from Debbie's initial attempts to be entrepreneurial: the importance of an action-learning approach, the key role of structured, business-learning opportunities, and the significance of even small amounts of capital and parental support. But perhaps most tellingly of all, Debbie's story reminds us that talents can be hidden. Debbie was an unassuming girl from an unassuming place. She had not been a super-star academic student, or come from a particularly well-resourced family. It took an eagle-eyed teacher, trained by *Rotherham Ready*, to give life to Debbie's existing ambitions.

There can be no doubt that Debbie was largely self-driven, and required little encouragement, but the simple recognition of talent was still important. What would have happened if Debbie had not had any opportunities put in front of her? And more to the point, how many more like Debbie go un-noticed and un-nurtured?

TAMMY – THE YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR

There are many similarities between Debbie's story and Tammy's. Like Debbie, Tammy had not been a star achiever at school – though she had reasonably good GCSE grades – and, like Debbie, she had harboured a long-term dream of teaching. But unlike Debbie, her experience at secondary school and with A levels did not go well. She felt that the teachers had taught the wrong course and that she, and many of her peers, achieved lower grades than they deserved.

She tried to remedy her poor results by signing-up for a post A-level beauty therapy course at a local college. And although the course served primarily to confirm that she didn't want to become a beautician, it did give her a potted introduction to managing the finances of a small business. And it was this small part of the course that inspired her to re-enrol at the college on a business course. The course did not go well. Troubled relationships with staff and fellow students got in the way of Tammy getting the most out of her time there. Nonetheless she persevered and ended up being one of only very few who passed.

One component of the business course in particular proved formative: a business-planning competition organised by *Rotherham Ready* and *Rotherham Youth Enterprise*. Teams of students from ten schools and colleges were invited to create a business plan and submit it, Dragon's Den style, to a panel. Tammy's team won. Her team's winning entry was a plan to create a 'retro' sweet shop in Rotherham.

For Tammy, this real world application of what she had been learning, revealed new talents. After completing the course, she immediately started a small retail business selling handbags and jewellery at her parents' electrical shop. But she held on to the business plan she had created for the competition, and stayed in touch with one of the judges, a business coach from *Rotherham Youth Enterprise*. With the help of his experience and knowledge, support from council business schemes and the help of her parents, she used the business plan as a starting point to open her own shop. She even kept the same brand; although the resulting boutique is a little more ambitious than the small sweet shop she had originally conceived.

Tammy's boutique sits on a hill just above the main Rotherham shopping centre. The brick facades of Rotherham's old town centre are broken up by the profusion of bright pinks in its window display. Tammy runs the shop on her own; sitting behind a small counter, surrounded by handbags and handicrafts and draped in the aromas of soaps and scented candles. It's a slow day, but a broken stream of customers (mainly women) comes into the shop, attracted by the offer of brightly-coloured, home-enhancing paraphernalia. Tammy is always bright and friendly. She is also immaculately turned out, a living embodiment of what the shop has to sell.

When the customers leave, she demonstrates willingness to get her hands dirty, moving heavy tables around and diving in and out of the store-room below the shop floor. She wants the shop to go further than selling just small objects and is expanding into the world of furniture and restoration. She had already made a good profit on some initial pieces she had refurbished and sold. Given the speed with which she got the shop up and running, it is no surprise that she is already

spreading her wings, and at the time of writing she is already making her first steps towards expanding the retail space, her first significant investment risk.

Again, Tammy's story highlights the importance of business-learning opportunities as a forum in which talent can emerge. Her story also shows the potential for business learning to lead to concrete and successful business start-up. To be sure, Tammy, like Debbie, had the support of her parents (of which more later) and perhaps had a measure of pre-disposition towards entrepreneurial ambition, but this is no guarantee of success, and the role of the programmes she took part in should not be underestimated.

Perhaps even more importantly, for Tammy, taking part in real entrepreneurial and business challenges, meant meeting people who were willing to support and nurture her ideas and her talent. It was about being involved in an environment in which her latent entrepreneurialism was allowed to flourish.

BILLY – THE GREEN-FINGERED GARDENER

Whilst Debbie and Tammy are both in some senses *outstanding*, perhaps always destined for success by one measure or another, Billy's story is different. Billy had always struggled at school. His grades had been well below average from a young age. Although he was diagnosed early on in his school career as having a severe form of dyslexia, the extra help he received could only go so far in terms of helping him to achieve good grades and exam results.

Before taking his GCSEs, Billy was chosen to take part in a *Rotherham Ready* project that aimed to provide a business experience opportunity to students who were at risk of leaving school without significant qualifications. The school had a garden on site and the project involved taking the various fruit and vegetables that grew in the garden and selling them on a market stall in town. For Billy, the idea was daunting. He loved gardening and growing, but the thought of interacting with customers and fronting a stall was terrifying. With encouragement however, he faced his fears and thrived: "*At first I was too nervous to do it but then I thought I should get more confident…. By the end of the year I was proper confident to go and talk to people and work on the stall.*"

In fact, Billy's dedication to the project became one of the hallmarks of his school's participation: "*I was out in the garden most of the time… any weather I would be out in it doing the veg."*

The confidence Billy gained on the market stall project encouraged him to sign up for another course for young people who wanted to learn about farming. That course too, left a huge impression on Billy. To this day, he feels like he must always have had it in him to be an entrepreneur: "*I might have had a go at doing it on my own – who knows? - But I wouldn't say I would do as good a job as I have done there* [on the market stall]."

In the end, Billy didn't do well in his GCSEs, but with the support of thoughtful teachers (and his parents) Billy doggedly enrolled at a local college to take his education further. He is now studying on a horticultural course that has enabled him to continue gardening and growing. His parents have even helped him to build a greenhouse in the family back garden – and he is still selling what he grows there in his mother's gift shop. He now harbours a long-term ambition of running his own commercial farm.

Whether Billy will succeed in reaching his goal, is difficult to predict. But we *can* say that the business projects he took part in have had a profound impact on his chances, and on his personal sense of achievement. They gave him the confidence to continue in education despite the difficulties he has with formal learning, and they have given him vital real-world experience. Billy has been transformed from the kind of student of whom little was expected, to being seen as a student with talents and interests to nurture.

CONCLUSION: FINDING FUTURE SUCCESS IN THE HERE AND NOW

These case studies are illuminating. They show that with the right kinds of business and entrepreneurship learning opportunities, young people can identify and exploit talents that, in some cases, they never knew they had. They also show that, once nurtured, these talents can have a lasting impact – even leading to business start-ups that have the potential to provide economic benefit beyond just the individuals concerned.

More prosaically, the stories also highlight a number of issues concerning the way that enterprise education programmes should be evaluated. For example, they show the need for long-term tracking of pupils and also the need to find a way to measure the impact of enterprise professional development with practitioners. Benefits of enterprise learning initiatives cannot only be measured during or immediately after courses take place, and their successes may not be visible in exam results or course grades. The stories also suggest that success can look different depending on the different individuals involved and that proper evaluation should not focus on only one set of criteria for all.

Perhaps most interestingly, the stories also begin to suggest that business-learning opportunities provide a different kind of educational environment, that has the potential to identify high-achievers who may not be identified in more traditional curricula and educational measurement. This idea also requires more research and a different kind of evaluation, but if true, it raises a powerful argument for the inclusion of enterprise education programmes and enterprise teacher training in educational environments, and for the need to look beyond core academic subjects for signs of talent.

There is also perhaps more to be done and considered in relation to the measurement of impact on teachers of CPD (Continuous Professional Development) particularly in relation to training in how to teach and embed 'enterprise' learning. We might even consider the potential merits of introducing enterprise in initial teacher training. What effects might such an approach have on the ability of teachers to enable enterprise focussed environments within schools? Could a movement of enterprising teachers working in schools, colleges and Universities be a catalyst for identifying entrepreneurial talents early, and perhaps even changing the future of the UK economy? *Ready Unlimited* has already been exploring this approach for some time in partnership with Sheffield Hallam university, with some measure of self-reported success. Again though, these questions require deeper consideration elsewhere.

4. Sticky Learning

ALAN – LITTLE LORD SUGAR

Alan (11) could clearly remember the enterprise skills in Rotherham Ready's enterprise education materials. He listed them almost by rote: "the importance of a positive attitude; being organised; being able to 'negotiate with and influence people'; the ability to 'deal with money'; the importance of being a 'risk taker'; the need to display qualities of 'creativity and innovation.'" And then he carefully explained why he would make a good businessman: "I'm good at taking money and giving change… the right amount of change… Running different activities that may not be suitable for a class and running two activities at once… smiling when people come to me… You cannot have a glum face."

It comes as no surprise when Alan announces later that at school he gets called 'Alan Sugar'. "I'm a last-minute person for homework," he admits, "but not for enterprise." Even his parents seem to recognise and encourage this moniker, or at least its connotations, by nurturing him in his various home-based 'business' activities, which include: giving out advice on the family weekly shop with reference to his research of different prices on comparison websites, and devising the most efficient routes and petrol prices for his father's commute to London.

At 11, Alan seems remarkably erudite about business and entrepreneurialism. On the one hand, his interests in the mechanisms of buying, selling, price and profit, have been driven by his father, who takes a disciplined approach to structuring Alan's (and his two younger brothers') learning. On the other, it is very clear that Alan's vocabulary and understanding come directly from the lessons in enterprise that he has been in engaged in at school. His confidence using the terminology and (as we shall see) applying them elsewhere, feels jarring in one so young, but perhaps only because we are not familiar with the idea of business and enterprise being taught to children. If he had been reciting the basics of geometry, or fractions and percentages, we wouldn't bat an eyelid.

He has learned about business in a number of different settings. He has taken part in class business exercises and projects, sold cakes on stalls at school events and listened to talks by local business leaders invited into the classroom. And he has initiated a number of different projects himself, some with the support of the school, and others perhaps under the radar (selling his duplicate stickers from a sticker collection to other students, for example). He is proud of the fact that at school, he is often given the trust of his teachers to set up and manage his own business projects.

Perhaps even more interestingly, Alan's enthusiasm for business has provided him with the very means of taking part in many of the normal, staple activities of young peoples' lives. He has a number of 'simulator' computer games, for example, that allow him to run virtual business empires, carefully manipulating prices and investments to beat high-scores (and more importantly perhaps, his brother's scores). And, his ability to 'organise' has enabled him to take part in school football, as a referee for junior games. Being interested in business has even provided opportunities to see a life beyond school – with link-up days at a university business department, and face-to-face contact with local employers.

Some of these activities took place because Alan's school had been involved with *Rotherham Ready* as an enterprise champion school; others had grown out of Alan's willingness to take on board the lessons learned, and drive new activities and ideas.

In some ways then, Alan provides another example of someone whose special talents have emerged after being given the opportunity to learn about business, but there is perhaps a more important point to be made concerning the ease with which Alan has integrated business and enterprise learning into other parts of his life. He uses his skills not just to think about business *per se,* nor just to excel at school, but also to help him construct a social life and a social identity. The lessons he has learned, he takes into the varying contexts of young people all over the country: football and computer games being resonant examples. Perhaps, when business and enterprise learning is as normalised for all as it has been for Alan, the skills and traits it teaches will become a more integral part of educational and cultural life. They might become 'sticky' in the collective consciousness.

ANITA – THE MEMENTO KEEPER

Anita is 12 years old. We meet her at her house on a Sunday morning and are quickly shown a box that Anita calls her 'memento box'. Inside is a collection of brochures and photos relating to Rotherham Ready; mementos of the time Anita had spent doing enterprise-learning activities at her previous school.

The lessons have clearly stuck with her and she launches into an explanation of the current economic crisis, "The government is in a state. They owe a lot of money, and people are being made redundant", though she admits that she doesn't fully understand tax, loans and interest rates.

Though Anita's mother runs her own fitness classes, no one in Anita's family has spent their career running a business. Her older brothers too look destined for different kinds of employment. The strongest example, or role model, in terms of business that Anita has encountered was a young, female entrepreneur who had come to her previous school to talk about the

business she had created with a loan she had received from *Rotherham Youth Enterprise*.

Like Alan, Anita could easily list, off the top of her head, key points associated with enterprise skills as taught by her classroom teacher, (a *Rotherham Ready* trained Enterprise Champion): *"Dealing with money, communication, creative thinking, leadership, teamwork, organisation and planning, risk taking."*

She also explained how skills such as communication were taught during her normal lessons: *"…when working in groups, class members had to pick their own leaders; "risk-taking involved putting up your hand in class when you're not sure of the right answer."*

She described participating in the *Rotherham Ready* "Make £5 Blossom" programme. Pupils were partnered with local businesses who had loaned schools £150 for the project. This money was shared amongst pupils and then used to invest in and buy materials in order to sell creations of their own devising. The profits could be used as the children wished; in Anita's case, to fund a trip to the cinema. She described in detail how it had taught her… "*…how far your money was going to go, organisational skills, the importance of planning ahead, talking with people, and learning to listen to others.*" Despite this, Anita's early enthusiasm for business had been dampened.

Later we ask her what it means to be an entrepreneur:

"What is an entrepreneur?"

"A young person becoming …. getting … like making their own business."

"Can you be an entrepreneur?"

"I'm not really… really sure. As an entrepreneur, I'm less likely to succeed now as there is less input [from Rotherham Ready trained teachers], *I'm less confident than before. I'm not sure about the future."*

Anita's uncertainty seemed to stem from two things: 1) The fears she had developed about the national economy from listening to the news, and her parents talking about the current financial crisis and 2) the fact that her new secondary school has not engaged as much with *Rotherham Ready* as her previous school had. She feels that she is no longer in an environment in which she is actively encouraged to think entrepreneurially or being given the tools and opportunities to do so.

Anita's father is blunt about what he feels the impact of her change in school is: "*They* [the schools] *should be pushing it* [enterprise and entrepreneurialism] *at a later age…. Once they've done their exams… It's alright putting ideas* [in their minds] *at primary school, but they need to follow it up! They haven't followed it up… and it has died a death.*" For Anita's father, there was a great deal of pride around his daughter's enthusiasm for entrepreneurial learning. The fact that it is now dissipating disappoints him.

At her previous school, Anita had developed a strong idea of starting up dancing classes. She had become quite attached to the idea as a possible future career. But it was evident that taking away the enterprise teaching, and removal from an environment in which her entrepreneurial spirit was positively encouraged, meant that she no longer saw it as a strong possibility: "*we're not doing so much money and business [in the secondary school], whereas in year six you could ask your teachers, now it's not happening*."

The idea for the dance classes had come from a combination of her mother's classes and the talk given by the entrepreneur that had taught Anita how you got a loan to start a business. As with Alan, the combination of personal interests, active opportunities and business learning had proved a potent way of making the enterprise skills and lessons stick and have meaning for Anita.

But in both Anita and Alan's case, it was not only personal interest that drove their learning. Both had become involved in organising sales and competitions at school in ways that were beyond their own immediate interests. As with Alan, and others we have written about, Anita had thrived in this part of her old school's curriculum, and even found a vision of the future in the opportunities she was being given. The enterprise education that she had received had certainly been proving 'sticky'.

However, for Anita and her father, there was an increasing risk that the valuable lessons that Anita had learned were going to come to nothing, without the continuity of enterprise learning opportunities in her secondary school. In the introduction to this report we cited emerging evidence that enterprise learning was most effective when it was embedded across the educational spectrum and curriculum, we can certainly hypothesise that continuity of enterprise learning across different educational stages is also likely to be important. Even learning that is initially very sticky, is likely to be forgotten or side-lined if not touched upon again for the first five years of secondary education. Perhaps even more important than the formal learning however, is the notion of a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurialism in primary and secondary schools. If the culture isn't there, students might feel that they can't *ask for*, never mind access, the same opportunities that Anita and Alan have been able to in their primary schools.

CONCLUSION: CREATING AND SUSTAINING AN ENTERPRISE CULTURE

It is clear that for all of the students and former students that we have spoken about so far, the substance of the enterprise education, and especially those practical skills and lessons that were taught through real-world applications, proved memorable. In this sense, *Ready Unlimited* can already lay claim to

having created teaching materials and an approach to enterprise teaching that makes learning 'sticky'. Of course, this small sample of students do not tell us a lot about the way whole populations of students, in different schools and environments will retain and apply enterprise lessons. However, Anita and Alan's stories perhaps suggest two other ways in which we might consider the long-term educational impacts of enterprise learning.

The first is the idea that embedding enterprise learning at a young age could lead to a more general acceptance of the values of business and entrepreneurialism in young people's social lives. It is surely through the normalisation of the kinds of enterprise skills and vocabularies that these students have been taught, that we can truly speak of an enterprise 'culture' being created.

Second is the importance of developing continuity in educational terms, around enterprise learning. Whilst the older students we have written about so far have clearly been able to grasp fleeting opportunities, the younger children have benefitted from enterprise learning that has been more broadly implemented into their curriculum. Fleeting interaction with occasional business or enterprise learning opportunities would surely be less impactful in the midst of other pressures if they are not reinforced over time and in different ways, across different schools and educational stages. Again, the idea calls for further research and exploration, and urgently so, because if enterprise learning is always being 'trialled' in piecemeal fashion, it may remain unknown what the greater benefits of broader and more committed implementation may bring.

5. Reaching out

In this section of the report, we explore the ways in which enterprise education and teacher training can be used to reach beyond individual students and mentees and begin to create an environment in which more people can become connected to, and benefit from, the spread of enterprise skills.

RICHARD – THE EXPLORER

Richard's story is perhaps the richest of all those we recorded. Confident and adventurous, the sheer variety of Richard's interests and the zest he has for putting them into practice, make him a compelling character. His story could easily have fitted into any section of this report. This was a young man who was both a hidden talent, and someone who had benefitted from early business lessons that have stuck with him. In this section however, we are interested in highlighting another aspect of the role of enterprise learning; the encouragement of a wider base of interest in enterprise and entrepreneurialism, beyond the individuals who engage with formal teaching materials.

Richard's first love had always been music. Even an abortive attempt to continue music education after school, by studying for a music degree, had not weakened his passions. Today, in his small house, and despite the piles of empty pizza boxes, one room is dominated by a grand piano that he bought for only £80. For Richard, the piano is as essential as bread and water; a pressure valve for unspent creative energies.

Music had however, proved a tough business in which to earn a living, and after leaving the music degree course, Richard had moved home and found a job in a nearby shopping centre to pay his way. He says he learned a lot there, especially being in a work environment with people much older than him. But he couldn't stay there forever, and was soon on the look out for something more fulfilling.

Counter-intuitively perhaps, given his affable nature, he tells us that he found his feet working in tele-sales. At a seemingly dreary office, he was taken under the wing of a charismatic sales manager, and excelled; for a while at least. It was certainly there, he says, that he learned about the rewards available to those who worked hard. But 12-hour working days soon took their toll, and he burned out. A less intense (if no less exciting) life beckoned and he found a job in a local newspaper selling advertising space that demanded fewer hours and a less aggressive mind-set.

Whilst working at the newspaper Richard learned a lot about advertising, picking up very practical skills like design and copy-writing along the way. He says that these are skills that he still uses to this day. But the drudgery of formal employment rankled, and he quit a year later. Soon after, reading the very adverts that he had once been selling space for in the paper, he saw an advert for a job in Holland. A single interview and barely two weeks later he found himself working at an airport across the sea.

He says that this experience was formative. He had never really lived anywhere but the small village outside Rotherham where he had grown up, and now he was learning that there was a big wide world to explore. He loved the characters he met in Holland, many of whom lived a peripatetic existence, travelling and sharing stories and banter. The informality allowed him space to think and plan. He re-discovered his love of music and a desire to teach.

The job in Holland had only ever been temporary, and he soon returned home, with renewed vigour, and a plan to explore the possibilities of teacher training. Whilst waiting to apply for new university courses, he took a job at a pizza restaurant and the rest, as he says, is history.

Following Richard's story and trying to pin down the precise influences in his life is difficult, but it is easy to see that he had a fertile mind (perhaps unsuited to formal employment) and a drive to seek new and better things. It is perhaps no surprise then that Richard was to become an entrepreneur.

It was whilst waiting for his applications to university to be answered and working at the pizza restaurant that Richard came up with the idea of setting up a pizza party business. He began, with the help of a small loan from one of his older brothers, by simply taking his new idea to friends and family, running informal parties in his spare time, and, with initial successes, took his business plan to the Prince's Trust who helped him with a small business loan, on condition that he attended an event in Rotherham to help publicise their work. Here, Richard met a young woman who had started a similar business with help from *Rotherham Youth Enterprise*. He made contact with *Rotherham Youth Enterprise* himself and was able to take advantage of their scheme that provides small businesses with a business unit, at no cost, for 6 months.

Richard explained that from that point on he felt supported. One *Rotherham Youth Enterprise* business coach in particular, he says, was a constant source of guidance and support; never interfering, always helpful. His business grew steadily, and though he had to take part time jobs to earn money in the beginning, after 18 months of hard work (and a kind extension to the time that *Rotherham Youth Enterprise* lent support), it became a full-time concern and a fully-fledged enterprise.

Perhaps most interesting though, apart from Richard's obvious success, is the way in which Richard has sought to involve others in his project and its success. He recognises the input that others have had in his evolution from small-town boy to entrepreneur, from his colleagues at the shopping centre, to his brother's small loan and the invaluable support of *Rotherham*

Youth Enterprise; and he wants to give back. He has involved two friends in his pizza business, providing mentorship and advice along the way. Relationships have been fraught at times, he says, but not to the point of causing real problems. And he has begun to give his own time to act as a *Ready Unlimited* 'Young Entrepreneur', often working with young people who are not doing well in mainstream education and as a role model to primary school-aged young people, demonstrating how they can turn a skill, passion or interest into a viable business.

His relationship with *Rotherham Youth Enterprise* has changed, he says, "*from getting business administration advice, to having a role as a mentor to young people*". Richard makes regular presentations on how to start a business.

"*For kids who don't have a clue what to do… It would have been nice to have someone like that* ['when I was young']. *My career advisor just talked about my brothers and having put all my details in, a computer told me I should think about becoming a fencing contractor! I'm better at learning from watching people and then doing it myself. At school I was told I needed nine GCSEs to go to college, not that I needed nine good GCSEs to go to a GOOD college. At college I didn't know what I was doing… I wish at school, someone had told me about being an entrepreneur.*"

The significance of Richard's journey should not be underestimated. It was his ability to soak up life and business lessons that led him to where he now stands. At no point did he let an experience pass him by without taking something valuable from it, and using it to build the next stage of his career. By the time he came into contact with *Rotherham Youth Enterprise*, he already had a business plan and plenty of motivation. *Rotherham Youth Enterprise*'s resources gave him a route to realising his ambitions, but also allowed him to see the value to others of the lessons he had learned. In fact he has become an advocate for the types of earlier enterprise education programmes like *Ready Unlimited*.

In the long-term, Richard would like to be able to step back from his business, perhaps developing a franchise model that would give him time to go back to the music world. But in the meantime he is building a successful business life. In fact, he already has a foot in the door of a new project involving local energy generation. As with many of those described in this report, you wouldn't bet against him. But one reason to hope for his success in particular, is that we can be sure that Richard will sweep others along with him.

SPREADING SKILLS TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Our research with the different young people constantly brought up the theme of skills and knowledge sharing. Friends, family, peers, colleagues and other young people were all drawn into the activities of those who had immersed themselves in enterprise learning. We have alluded throughout the report to those occasions when parents lent both monetary and practical help to their children's endeavours, but in many cases this marked more than just unidirectional parental support, it demonstrated a two-way learning process. Debbie's mother for example, did not have a business or entrepreneurial background at all. She was working nightshifts at a local supermarket, but she still found time to help to organise Debbie's initial production line in her back garden. Debbie suggested that this experience had helped to build her mother's confidence at work, and empowered her to seek better hours and even a promotion.

Debbie, like Richard, also had a strong desire to teach and pass on her skills. She was already involved with her former secondary school – running lunchtime business activity classes for a small group of interested students. She had also become involved with *Rotherham Ready*, and was hoping to help with providing mentoring, training and skills to other young people in Rotherham.

Billy's parents had already been quite entrepreneurial in setting up their own shop, and had helped Billy develop his interest in gardening by building a greenhouse to grow vegetables. But, more interestingly, Billy's mother had become quite taken with his enthusiasm for running his own farm and had begun scoping potential farming properties that the family might be able to move into. This would be a shift for the whole family rather than just a plan to help Billy himself.

Tammy had a strong entrepreneurial role model in her father. He had set up his own business soon after being made a victim of mass redundancies in the area in the 1980s. In fact, Tammy had grown up in an environment in which business paperwork and accounting was being done from the front room of the family home, and she had worked in school holidays on stock management and logistics. For Tammy then, becoming an entrepreneur, whilst not at all in her plans growing up, did not come totally out of the blue. On the other hand, the fervour with which she had taken on the role of a businesswoman was infectious. Like Richard, she felt an almost evangelical need to spread the ambition. Her boyfriend had been working as a joiner in a building company, spending his money as he earned it. Tammy had been putting pressure on him to set up his own business and to begin saving in order to buy a van. She also involves her younger sister in her shop, letting her see how the business runs and of course, using her (wo)manpower when it is time to move stock.

She is more sceptical about the speed with which her friends might take to the life of an entrepreneur…

"Starting the business is the best thing I have ever done – but friends don't understand that it changes your whole life. They don't understand that you get

excited about the smallest thing.… My boyfriend didn't understand at first. But now he is getting excited."

… but she says she knows that she is having an impact on them, helping them to understand what can be done to make money and passing on anecdotes about setting up a business. During the day we spent with Tammy, she also devoted a couple of hours to helping a local youth business initiative create a window display of local businesses run by young people, to try and encourage and support the idea of young people (and generating some handy publicity for herself in the meantime).

Both Alan and Anita were also, in their own way encouraging their peers to think entrepreneurially. Both had been trusted by teachers to run their own events, often focussed on the idea of making and selling. Anita's father too, had become a strong advocate of enterprise learning after seeing Anita flourish, despite having no business background of his own. Alan's parents were perhaps already likely to have supported Alan with his business interests, but the scale of that support was nonetheless surprising. Alan's father had helped Alan secure iPods from his business friends in London to give away as prizes in a competition Alan had set up, for example.

What all of these case-studies show, is that the impact of enterprise learning had not been limited to the students and young people alone, but had created a 'business bug' that had infected those around them. Brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, friends and acquaintances had all been touched by, and in some cases immersed in, the projects that the young people had started.

There seems to be something about enterprise learning, especially where it involves learning-by-doing and practical application, that inherently leads to the involvement of others. This is not the kind of learning, it seems, that can be confined to solipsistic exercises in memory, or isolated grappling with homework tasks; it is learning that is social and active. Again, this often overlooked quality of enterprise learning is probably key to understanding how wider cultures of entrepreneurialism can be created and is perhaps an area in which enterprise-learning services can be expanded. How can they seek to involve wider participation of family members and friends, drawing in resources and reaching a wider audience? What are the wider community benefits of enterprise learning for young people? These are the kinds of question that are ripe for further exploration.

At the time of writing, *Ready Unlimited* has already developed a 'Family Learning' programme to support the development of enterprise learning between parents / carers and their children, in recognition of the important role that parents and families play in developing the aspirations of the young people we have been talking about here. It is also prototyping a "*Ready Hub*" model which aims to involve multiple local partners including parents, businesses, universities and local communities and getting them to work together to co-produce enterprise ideas.

REACHING FURTHER?

Our final story concerns Karen, the one young person we spoke to who had not had any contact with *Rotherham Ready* or enterprise learning of any kind. We describe her story here as an illustration of the kind of person who might benefit from the kinds of skills and opportunities that enterprise learning programmes have to offer.

Karen had grown up in the care system since she was 11 years old. As a youngster she had found school challenging and had been excluded several times for bad behaviour. She had since been enrolled on various courses aimed at young people outside of mainstream education but at the time we met her, at 17, she seemed unsure as to where to place herself within the formal education system, and feared its methods anyway.

"I prefer small group teaching, four at most… it means more contact time with teachers… I've got to feel comfortable, or I give up. If the environment or the people are not right, I don't finish the course."

Karen's discomfort in traditional learning environments was made plain during research when we visited the college where she was taking numeracy and literacy classes. She disliked the classroom environment and huddled with a small group of friends, trying to work on the tasks that had been set, but finding the theoretical application of numbers difficult to concentrate on.

After leaving the classroom, Karen and her friends began talking about the benefits system and the complicated ways it had to be negotiated in order to receive all that they were entitled to. We couldn't help but notice the marked contrast between Karen's difficulty in understanding the simple lessons being taught in the classroom and her nuanced understanding of the labyrinthine processes of the benefits system. It became clear that Karen did not lack intellectually (far from it), but rather struggled in traditional learning environments.

On the face of it, Karen may look like other young people in her situation, a statistic involving a young person with few job opportunities and lacking qualifications. But as always, there is more to her life than that. This was brought home to us starkly when we saw her in an environment in which she felt more comfortable. We went with her to see the supported housing project where she had grown up.

Inside the building, Karen is on first name terms with all the adult staff members. She helps sign us in and offers to make a cup of tea in the dining room, being careful not to use other people's cups. She appears more relaxed in this environment than when with the other girls and the college tutors. She leads us to a theatre space where there are play rehearsals taking place. The actors are all young children and adults who are living (or have lived) in local authority care. We sit in the auditorium and watch the young people come together: laughing,

jumping and shouting. One of the male adult staff explains that this is the last of the rehearsals for a show that will run for two nights.

The young people chat excitedly among themselves, some disappearing to a nearby fire escape where they congregate to smoke. Finally, T-shirts are distributed and rehearsals begin. An attending social worker explains that he (and others working for Rotherham Social Services) are helping to stage the event as a result of a consultation to determine ways of improving the experience of being in care. What resulted was a set of 'challenges' for the young people that encouraged them to undertake performances of short stories, skits and songs.

Given this challenge, Karen is thriving. She is comfortable in the social environment all of a sudden, confident that she knows where she stands. She dances and sings, leading groups of the younger children in their performance. It is a far cry from the shy Karen we have so far seen.

When we talked to Karen about her aspirations she could list a hundred things that she would love to do, from working in care, to running her own beauty therapy business, to becoming a medic, but the thought of college terrified her, and the stories of peers who had tried and failed to find a job made her think that her aspirations were nothing but pipe dreams.

We are constantly wary of resorting to the epithet that people like Karen lack aspiration. Karen does not want for aspirations. What she lacks are meaningful opportunities to achieve them, and instead of reaching for them, she sees her future as being an inevitable and constant battle with an unkind benefits system.

Karen is not alone of course. There are many young people facing challenges in the education system and with the world of work beyond. The question is whether the kinds of experiences we have outlined so far in this report, can be used to provide people like Karen with a different kind of learning environment and a different set of opportunities. Could she also have the same kinds of talents as Debbie or Tammy, if only she was given the opportunity to express them? Would she, like Billy, have stayed longer in education if she had received the same kind of personal attention, and opportunity to learn in a more focussed enterprise-learning programme? We cannot say for sure, of course. But we might be more confident in suggesting that there would have been value in offering those opportunities to her and to others like her.

6. Conclusion

Successive governments have talked about the need to encourage business and enterprise learning in young people's lives. There is now a marked political and rhetorical consensus around the need to encourage young people to think more entrepreneurially and ultimately, through them, to build a culture of enterprise in the UK.

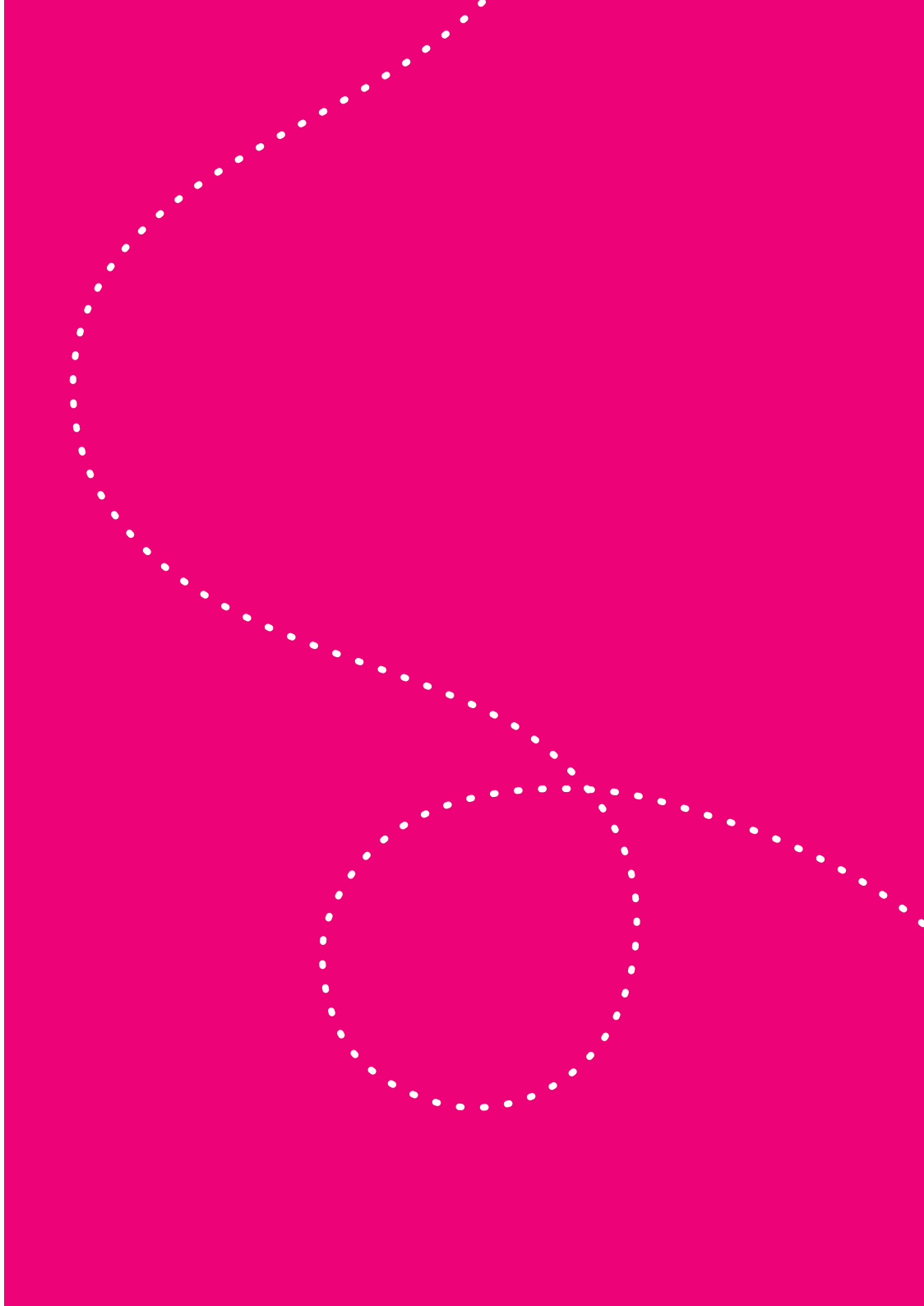
For many experts and commentators, the best way to achieve these aims in the long term, is to place enterprise learning at the heart of education. However, following a raft of reforms to the education landscape of the UK, it looks likely that national educational frameworks are *not* going to mandate enterprise teaching and learning in schools in the immediate future. Furthermore, the number of bodies charged with commissioning services for schools (including professional development training and/or extra-curricular programmes like enterprise learning) is only likely to multiply.

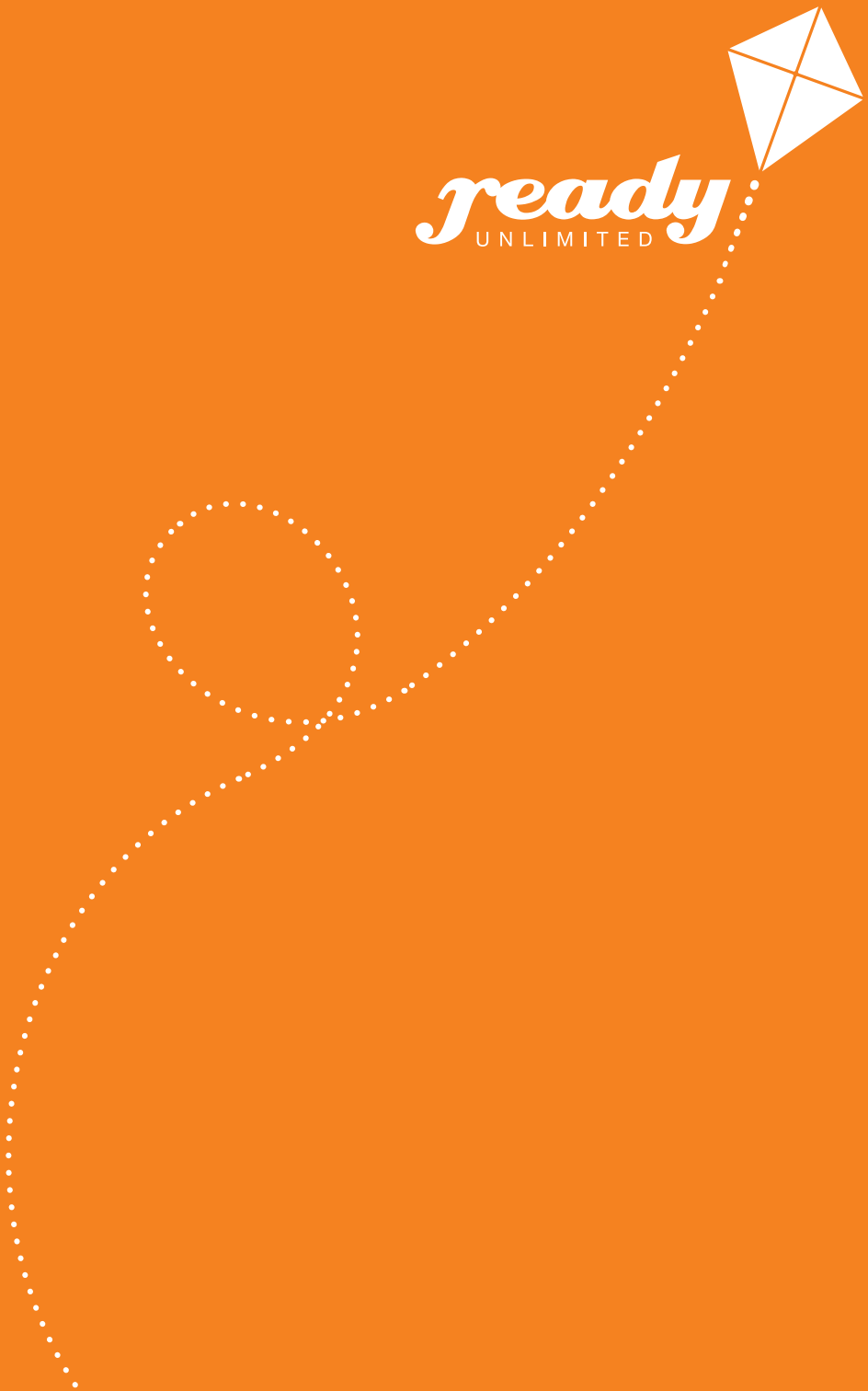
This all means that organisations hoping to deliver enterprise education in schools will have to make their case to more stakeholders than ever before. They will need to persuade not only local authorities, but also individual schools, schools consortia and of course, individual head teachers and education stakeholders. It will be those providers like *Ready Unlimited* that can show a strong track record and a strong suite of resources, who will be better placed to make the case for the value of enterprise education. And whilst there is still a need for more systematic and robust evidence around the impacts of enterprise education programmes on outcomes for teachers and young people, the stories and case-studies presented in this report certainly provide a powerful basis on which to build this case.

We have tried to use the case studies to provide a richly contextualised picture of how enterprise learning *can* fit into, and even shape, lives and outcomes for young people. We deliberately sought to move beyond the kinds of formal impact and evaluation questions that are better suited to surveys and questionnaires, of the kind that *Ready Unlimited* has now deployed for its users. In doing so we identified three ways in which enterprise teaching and enterprise learning opportunities might have impacts beyond those commonly measured by formal evaluations.

1. Enterprise learning and teaching can be used to spot hidden young talent; talent that might remain hidden if we were to search for it only in the grades and achievements of traditional educational curricula.
2. Enterprise education can be used as a building block for the creation of a broader 'enterprise culture' promoted by a legion of business-ready and entrepreneurial young people, for whom business and economic concepts are a normal part of their social discourse and social lives.
3. Enterprise education can be used as a way of reaching out beyond the confines of the schoolroom to engage family members, peers and even communities more widely, in business and entrepreneurship.

This report remains only a first step. It represents the findings of a small, explorative study. But we hope that an intelligent reading of the stories it contains will encourage belief in the potential for enterprise education to change lives and sow the seeds of an enterprise culture that so many, from all parts of the political spectrum, want to see.

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