

## What is civil society's contribution to education?

### Overview

The civil society education sector is diverse both in terms of the variety of institutions that comprise the sector and also the range of opportunities and activities on offer to the learner.

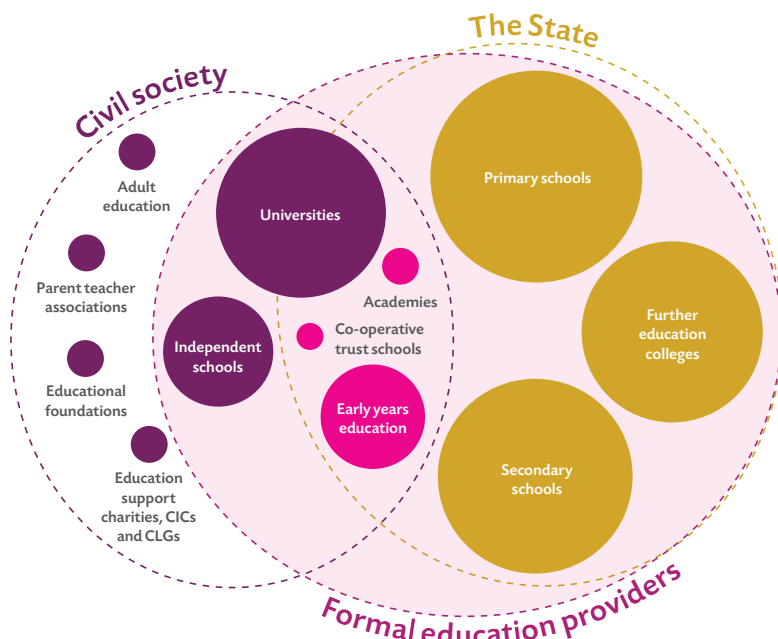
In 2007/08 civil society was involved in education by providing:

- 628,000 independent school places<sup>1</sup>
- 2,395,505 university places<sup>2</sup>
- 497,900 playgroup and nursery places<sup>3</sup>

And through:

- 13,700 parent teacher associations<sup>4</sup>
- 8,000 educational support charities<sup>5</sup>
- 30 co-operative trust schools<sup>6</sup>

### An overview of civil society's involvement in education



Note: The diagram is not comprehensive of the education sector but is designed to give an overview of the types of civil society involvement, notably it does not attempt to include the private sector.

<sup>1</sup>NCVO, DCSF, GuideStar Data Services, Scottish Council of Independent Schools, Department of Education Northern Ireland, Independent Schools Council

<sup>2</sup>Higher education statistics agency, Universities UK

<sup>3</sup>Treasury, NCVO, GuideStar Data services

<sup>4</sup>NCVO, GuideStar Data services

<sup>5</sup>Mutuo Yearbook (Mutuo, 2009)

<sup>6</sup>Helping out: a national survey of volunteering and charitable giving (NatGen/IVR, 2007) [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/third\\_sector/assets/helping\\_out\\_national\\_survey\\_2007.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/third_sector/assets/helping_out_national_survey_2007.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>Auditing, benchmarking and evaluating public engagement. Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt

<sup>8</sup>Community-University Partnerships in Practice (NIACE, 2007)

<sup>9</sup>List of open academies (DCSF, 2010) [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/academies/projects/?version=1](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/academies/projects/?version=1)

School Funds, Scouts, Social Clubs, Social Enterprise, Sports Clubs, Synagogues, Theatres, Townswomen's Guilds, Trade Associations and Professional Bodies, Trade Unions, Training Providers, Trusts, Universities, University of the Third Age, Victim Support, Village Halls,

# £58 MILLION

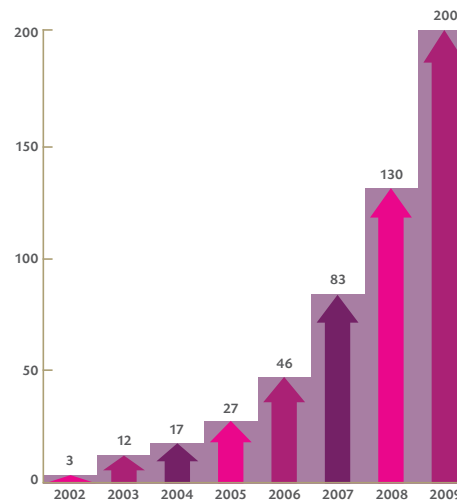
The amount of legacy income to UK universities in 2007/08<sup>4</sup>

## The place of universities in civil society

Universities form a fundamental part of the civil society landscape. They share a number of characteristics with other civil society organisations in that they are independently governed, rely upon donated income and most have charitable status. Their inclusion within civil society however, rather than the public sector, is considered by some to be contentious.

In the past 50 years, there has been a large increase in the number of universities and in the number of students. Universities often play an important role in their local communities, by providing public access to facilities, encouraging economic regeneration and transmitting knowledge.<sup>7</sup> There has been a growing trend for universities and voluntary organisation to build collaborative relationships undertaken in the spirit of civic engagement, with a goal of knowledge exchange and of equal partnerships, for example the Community-University Partnership Programme at the University of Brighton<sup>8</sup>. University students are also actively involved in contributing to their local community through their participation in volunteering schemes. The commitment can be substantial. In 2003 there were 42,000 student volunteers who gave 3.5 million hours to volunteering.

### The number of academies, 2002-2009<sup>9</sup>



## The role of academies

Elizabeth Reid, Chief Executive  
Specialist Schools & Academies Trust

Academies are independent, all-ability, state-funded schools, supported by a sponsor. They are often in areas of deprivation and disadvantage and usually replace existing schools facing challenging circumstances, or deemed unsuccessful. There are currently 202 academies open with a further 100 or so expected to open in 2010.

Academies often admit higher proportions of students eligible for free school meals and with special educational needs, and a lower proportion of students of higher Key Stage 2 ability, compared to the proportion living in the local postcode districts they serve. Despite this they continue to make improvements: in examination performance, in behaviour, in attendance and in widening participation.

Academy sponsors play a vital role in these successes. They bring commitment, varied expertise, networks of their own and a sense of urgency to the task of school transformation. Their impact extends further: sponsors and academy leaders recognise the advantages of their independent status, as well as their responsibilities to their local communities and to the education system as a whole.

A growing number of higher education institutions, further education colleges, high performing schools and independent schools are now actively involved in sponsoring academies, leading to increased opportunities for cross-sector collaboration and understanding.

### Find out more

Higher education in facts and figures (Universities UK, 2009)  
[www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/FactsandFigures09.aspx](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/FactsandFigures09.aspx)

# 31%

Proportion of volunteers supporting educational institutions in 2007<sup>8</sup>

Volunteer Bureaux, Voluntary Organisations, Wildlife Trusts, Women's Institutes, Women's Refuges, YMCAs, Youth Clubs, Abbeyfield Societies, Advocacy Groups, Air Ambulance Services, Animal Protection, Armed Forces Charities, Benevolent Societies, Brass Bands, Building Societies, Care Services, Churches, Citizen's Advice Bureaux