

# Promoting diversity and inclusion within STEM and IP

By Luke Mckelvey

In2scienceUK gives young people from low-income backgrounds the opportunity to gain essential insights into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics ('STEM') careers with dedicated professional mentors. Since 2011, The In2scienceUK programmes have provided young people with the experience, skills, and confidence they need to reach their potential in STEM further education opportunities and careers. The young people that take part in In2scienceUK programmes are recipients of free school meals, have parents with no higher education experience and live in areas in which progression to higher education is low. However, with salaries 20% higher in STEM careers compared to other sectors, The In2scienceUK programmes aim to provide these young people with a better future.

In2scienceUK programmes offer high-quality work placements enabling participants to undertake real research and experiments with STEM professionals. Programmes also include workshops and skills days giving high-quality information and guidance on CV writing, interview and application skills which are of vital importance to the lives. Young people from low-income backgrounds often lack the networks needed to gain highly relevant work experience placements. In2scienceUK programmes provides young people with positive role models and the support networks needed for progression towards further education.

In 2022, In2scienceUK was able to provide 766 young people with high-quality, STEM-relevant, work-placement opportunities with a wide range of STEM education and research institutions. By providing individually tailored STEM experiences, we are allowing young people to gain experience within relevant fields of STEM that they wish to pursue. Sadly, only 11% of young people that are recipients of free school meals progress to top-tier universities. However, In2scienceUK programmes has had a significant impact, with 80% of the participating



young people progressing onto higher education, and 46% enrolling to top-tier universities. By working with a diverse array of STEM organisations, we hope to foster greater inclusion of underrepresented groups.

The lack of inclusion and access to research opportunities and skilled careers within the STEM sector is limiting the development and resulting in long-term relevant staff shortages. For example, the most recent research conducted by The UK Commission for Employment and Skills in 2015 concluded that job vacancies in high-level STEM occupations are almost twice as likely to be left unfilled due to a lack of staff with the right skills. STEM skills play a vital role in a range of other sectors, including specialised manufacturing, research and underpinning crucial technological areas, including computer programming. In light of this STEM skills shortage, In2scienceUK has launched its innovative In2research and In2Careers programmes to provide young people with access to research opportunities, training and connection to a wide range of STEM employers. By developing programmes in line with current industry shortfalls and continuing our work with local communities across the UK, we aim to support greater social mobility.

In2scienceUK was awarded The Queens Award for promoting opportunity through Social Mobility in 2021, and we aim to continue our work to ensure more young people reach their potential in a diverse range of STEM-relevant careers. IP partners have supported over 75 young people through In2scienceUK programmes and provide information regarding access to careers in IP. By working in collaboration with the wider IP sector, we aim to enable more young people from low-income and underrepresented backgrounds to gain the experience to progress within STEM careers. The Intellectual Property Office's Inclusion & Diversity Report 2020-2021 highlights

the need for greater gender equality and access to specialist skills development for underrepresented groups. By working in collaboration with In2scienceUK, leading IP industry partners are introducing diverse groups of young people to careers in IP and contributing to social mobility.

In2scienceUK would like to thank current IP law partners and IP Inclusive for enabling In2scienceUK to expand and develop new programmes in line with young people's needs. We are proud to be partnering with the following IP firms and industry regulatory partners:

- IPReg
- The IP Federation
- Appleyard Lees
- HGF
- GSK IP
- D Young & Co

Every year In2scienceUK receives over 2,000 applications from young people passionate about STEM careers. If you would like to sponsor a cohort of young people and make a positive contribution to diversity, inclusion and social mobility in IP, please email Luke In2scienceUK's dedicated Development Manager, [luke@in2scienceuk.org](mailto:luke@in2scienceuk.org).

Luke Mckelvey is the Development Manager at In2scienceUK - [www.in2scienceuk.org](http://www.in2scienceuk.org)

**In<sup>2</sup>science<sup>UK</sup>**

"The Programme has really helped me build my confidence. I struggled to meet new people, but this experience has taught me not to be so nervous and that by having a go you have nothing to lose."

**Mia, In2scienceUK Participant**