



Jerome Ruddick

“I almost failed my A-Levels and I struggled to get into university, which wasn't a surprise; in primary school, a teacher had outright called me stupid and said I'd never succeed. So when I messed up my A-Levels, it was just confirming what I already thought I knew about myself.

I was lucky though, because my parents always believed in university, despite not having gone themselves, and because of that, I believed in it, and I fought, and I got in. And that's where my life changed. I thrived as a person and my academic confidence grew tenfold, so much so that I felt I could undertake a PhD.

So it was a no-brainer when The Brilliant Club came to me asking for tutors to help disadvantaged young people get into university. And when I accepted that placement and entered that classroom, I was struck by the fact that these young people were just like I had been. They weren't thinking about whether they would do well at university. They were questioning whether they even belonged there. I shared my experiences with them and supported them on the programme, and afterwards, they weren't asking if they could go to university, but when they could.

The Brilliant Club's mission means everything to me, and that's why I wanted to join the charity. And being here, I have been shocked at how open everyone is to opportunity. I expressed interest in learning about policy and strategy, and I was not only encouraged to pursue this, but my surrounding team were actively finding opportunities for me. I'm now working on a policy-related task and I'm an associate on the strategy team. I've never experienced anything like this in previous places I worked.

More generally, my advice on careers would be: work hard and keep your ear out for opportunities. Take every one available, because you never know where they'll lead!”