

# LLAKES Newsletter

Issue 7, Autumn 2014



**Professor Karen Evans,  
LLAKES Theme Leader,  
'Youth, Inter-generational  
Mobility, and Civic Values'**

Contents	Page
Comment	2
Current research	3
Recent conferences	5
LLAKES news	7
Events and Publications	8

## Editorial: How can we help young people thrive in an increasingly difficult world?

The Scottish Referendum vote has brought into sharper focus the pivotal position of young people in our societies. Competing visions of the pathways to prosperity and a fairer society for them and for future generations have been hotly debated.

At the same time, widening gaps between the prospects for young people and the older generation have become headline news. An Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) report published in July 2014 has revealed the extent of the growth of the wealth gap between the generations. A substantial decline in real living standards between 2008 and 2013 has affected the young, while no such decline is found for the older generation.

Support also appears to be falling among older people themselves for higher public spending on the retired population, interpreted by some commentators as an indicator of 'inter-generational solidarity'. These debates are at the heart of

LLAKES current research, which has prioritised 'Youth, Intergenerational Mobility and Civic Values' as a major Theme for 2013-17.

As public expenditure cuts have taken hold, joblessness amongst young people has risen disproportionately when compared with other groups in the workforce. When young people are on temporary, part-time or probationary contracts, their positions in the labour market become increasingly precarious.

We see these trends with greater or less severity in many other European countries affected by the banking crisis and its aftermath. As recessions damage young people's employment prospects for many years to come, their participation in social, civic and public life is also affected. Rising rents in major cities make accommodation unaffordable to many young people, and this affects employment options, scope for personal independence, social life and family formation. This adds further barriers to mobility for a generation whose jobs and earning prospects are poor, and who will be paying increasing contributions to sustain the pensions of their parents. On various measures, young people appear at risk of being 'shut out' from opportunities as economies start to recover.

So what can be done? As well as achieving better understandings of the roles of aspiration and

motivation in steering young people on their paths to adulthood, LLAKES researchers are working to develop new knowledge about the ways in which harsh economic conditions are affecting young people's social attitudes and the relationships between the generations.

We know that young people and adults alike alter their behaviour and attitudes in response to such changing social contexts. As educational, labour market and housing opportunities become tougher, there is increasing pressure on young people's initiative and abilities if they are to thrive in this more difficult world. LLAKES researchers are working on four interconnected projects (see box) which shed light on how they might be better supported. These projects are multifaceted, team endeavours into which researchers bring many different ideas and perspectives.

The LLAKES approach is to research youth issues not in isolation but in relation to the whole of the life course and the wider socio-political and educational landscapes that influence learning and life chances. As young people who have been affected by harsh economic conditions enter their thirties and start to shape the lives of their own children, questions about their well-being, economic security and prospects for learning as adults take on long term significance. Parents (and grandparents) cast long shadows over the lives and prospects of future generations, in ways LLAKES aims to understand better.

In this newsletter, individual researchers offer examples of their own current thinking on these Theme topics. Avril Keating discusses how the interplay of EU policies and national priorities influences the educational landscape, from higher education to citizenship education. Rachel Wilde reflects on what internships have to offer young people. Clare Callender explores how higher education policies have affected lifelong learning opportunities for those who seek to study part time in adult life while Martin Weale reports some emergent LLAKES findings on the influences of grandparents on their grandchildren.

Two international expert seminars on youth have made important contributions to the Theme: Ingrid Schoon reports on the ESRC 'Young People and the Great Recession' while Nikos Papadakis and colleagues review the 'Early school leaving: causes, impact, remedies and policy responses' seminar mounted jointly by LLAKES and the Greek General Confederation of Labour's Centre for the Development of Education Policy. Finally LLAKES takes pleasure in introducing another early-career researcher who has recently joined the team – with a profile of Golo Henseke.



### ***Theme 1: Youth, Inter-generational Mobility, and Civic Values***

Leader: Karen Evans; with Chiara Rosazza Bondibene, Claire Callender, Richard Dorsett, Michela Franceschelli, Alison Fuller, Andy Green, David Guile, Bryony Hoskins, Germ Janmaat, Avril Keating, Pauline Leonard, Geoff Mason, Nicola Pensiero, Ingrid Schoon, Martin Weale, and Rachel Wilde

#### **Projects**

Project 1: *What Part do Intergenerational Factors Play in Shaping the Learning Engagement, Life Chances and Well-Being as Young People Make Transitions to Independent Adulthood?*

Project 2: *The Crisis for Contemporary Youth: Young People, Opportunities and Civic Values*

Project 3: *Getting in and Getting on in the Youth Labour Market: Entry Practices, Under-Employment and Skill Formation in Regional Economies*

Project 4: *Student Debt, Higher Education Participation and Intermediate Skills Development*

# What influence does the EU have on its member countries' education policies?

By Avril Keating

The European Union (EU) has become an important site of policymaking and policy ideas for member states. Intergovernmental policy discussions now span all levels of the education system and encompass virtually every aspect of education and training. Yet the EU still has limited formal power in this area, and member states retain control over the structure and content of their education systems. Indeed, until relatively recently, the EU's role was heavily constrained and largely limited to higher education, vocational education, and the rather abstract notion of the 'European dimension' to education.



How then can we explain the emergence of the EU as an important player in national education policies? In my new book *Education for Citizenship in Europe: European policies, national adaptations and young people's attitudes*, I argue that this European influence has come about gradually and incrementally. Along the way (and particularly since the 1970s) the EU has steadily developed a wide range of instruments with which to influence the education policies of its member states.

These include the traditional tools of 'hard' governance (such as financial incentives or legal edicts), but given its legal and financial constraints, its policy influence can more often be attributed to 'softer' modes of governance, such as monitoring, learning, socialisation, and opinion-formation. These 'soft' governance measures seek to persuade rather than impose, and they often work in concert to circumvent the limited legal powers of the European institutions and to increase the EU's power to create policies at the European level and to shape policies at the national level.

Using these tools, the EU has been remarkably successful at increasing its role in national education policy discussions and overcoming initial strong opposition from national governments. Yet while the EU must be treated as increasingly influential and independent actor in education policy across Europe, it should also be remembered that the tools that it has been able to

use along the way have varied considerably, both over time and across policy areas.

In particular, the EU's role in higher education far exceeds its role in areas such as citizenship education policy. Moreover, we should not assume that this is a top-down process in which member states have no say. Member states continue to be powerful actors in this process, and far from passively accepting European policy agendas, they can ignore or obstruct European education policy initiatives, or at the very least re-frame the policies and use them to their own ends. This is a key argument of the later chapters of *Education for Citizenship in Europe*, which trace the ways in which the European citizenship project has been received (and re-framed) in national citizenship education curricula.

In short, while the EU's competence in the field of education may appear to be increasing, this book argues that the implementation and 'impact' of European education policies continues to be uneven, and it is far from certain that their intended outcomes will be achieved. That said, the role of the EU is likely to continue to expand, and understanding the processes, powers, and tensions that stem from this relationship is one of the key challenges now facing comparative education policy.

**Avril Keating** holds an ESRC Future Research Leader award, and is Senior Lecturer in Comparative Social Science at LLAKES. She is the author of [\*Education for citizenship in Europe: European policies, national adaptations and young people's attitudes\*](#), which was published by Palgrave Macmillan in April 2014.



# Are young people taking a leaf out of Grandpa's book?

By Martin Weale



It is well-established that parents cast a long shadow over their children's lives and prospects. There is good evidence from a range of countries that sons' incomes are influenced by their fathers' incomes, even if it is not clear what makes this happen. One possible route is that parents with high incomes invest more in their children's education. Another is that some combination of socio-genetic influences, which have made a father a high earner, are transmitted to children.

But what of the influences of grandparents? We might expect these to be transmitted overwhelmingly through their influence on parents. Nevertheless, it is perfectly possible that, even when we control for parents' socio-economic characteristics, we find some influence from grandparents.

The British Household Panel Survey and its successor, Understanding Society, make it possible to explore this question. The survey does not interview extended families, but adult respondents are asked as to what their parents' occupations were, when they themselves were aged 14. Some of the children of respondents in the early years of the survey reached their twenties by the later years of the survey and have remained in the sample. This makes it possible to combine information on these people in their twenties with what was learned from their parents some years earlier. This includes the occupations and thus social status of their grandfathers. We use the information on grandfathers only because a substantial number of mothers were not working. We are particularly interested in the influence of grandfathers on the educational attainment of children once they reach the age of twenty-two.

International studies often measure educational attainment by years of full-time education. With this measure, there is no evidence that grandparents influence their grandchildren's educational attainment directly. All the influence seems to be transmitted through the educational attainment of the parents.

If, however, we look at educational attainment in terms of qualifications the picture is rather different.

The component of fathers' educational attainment which is determined by their fathers' social class appears to influence the educational attainment of children. Measured in the same way, however, the educational attainment of mothers does not seem to have any influence on the educational attainment of children. Nevertheless we find that the social class of the maternal grandfather does have an influence on the educational attainment of children. This points to a difference in the mechanism by which the family background of the two parents is transmitted to their children.

*Martin Weale is Senior Research Fellow with National Institute of Economic and Social Research*

# Internships and Unequal Opportunities

By Rachel Wilde



As part of the LLAKES Theme 1 Project *Getting in and Getting on in Youth Labour Markets*, I have been doing some research on interns at one of the 'Big Four' audit and professional services firms.

Internships have received negative press in the last year or so. In many careers, internships are a prerequisite for gaining a paid appointment due to the need for work experience.

However, some internships are unpaid. This is particularly prevalent in the creative and cultural sectors, even when interns perform the same work as paid employees, which is illegal under employment law. Moreover, the lack of pay means that only young people with another means of supporting themselves (usually their parents) can afford to take this route into employment. This leaves large numbers of young people unable to gain the necessary experience for these careers.

Other sectors do pay interns. At our audit firm, they receive the same rate as first years on the graduate programme. They undertake internships of six weeks in the summer of their second year at university.

Competition for these internships is steep. Students must have good grades, and pass online numerical, logical and/or verbal reasoning tests. They undergo an interview concerning a set of

competencies before they are sent on an assessment day and then have a second interview with a partner or director of the firm. Once they are through this process, unless they do something very wrong during the internship, they are offered a place on the graduate scheme once they finish university. For the majority of the business areas, interns are only recruited when there are vacancies available.

As the interns told me, this programme is great for them. They get real work experience, can test out whether they like the career and the firm and, if offered a place, have the security of a job after university without having to worry about applications during their final year when they need to concentrate on their studies.

The firm likes the internship model because it enables them to conduct an extended interview which checks that the interns are really suited to the career and the firm. It has a high conversion rate, usually 95% are offered and accept a graduate position. They can identify talent early on, and the training and experience means interns find their feet quicker once they begin the graduate programme.

Both parties get to “try before you buy”, as the training staff told me. However, even though this internship has all the elements of excellent career preparation - real work experience, payment and a job offer - it does little to ensure equal opportunities for young people. The assessment process recruits the most competent young people, those already closest to the labour market.

Lower skilled young people, those who are more vulnerable or less confident, those who lack support and guidance about careers and professional behaviours, do not get through to experience the one-to-one mentoring and ‘buddy’ support system evident in the best internships programmes. The firm does have other schemes aimed at these groups, but they are far less successful.

**Rachel Wilde** is a Research Officer at LLAKES

**LLAKES project 1.3**, ‘Getting in and Getting on in Youth Labour Markets’, looks at how young people access work and progress in their early careers.



## Children of the recession: an international conference

Ingrid Schoon and John Bynner organised an international Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) workshop on ‘Young People and the Great Recession: Comparative Analysis of international longitudinal data resources’ in June 2014 at the Institute of Education in London.

The workshop was inspired by Glen Elder’s seminal work on the ‘Children of the Great Depression’, and it was a great honour to welcome Professor Elder as a conference delegate and speaker.

Papers examined the effect of the most recent recession on youth transitions (including participation in education and employment, independent living, partnership and family formation) as well as psycho-social outcomes, such as health, outlook to the future and civic engagement, and taking into account previous trends.

The findings presented suggest that the effect of the recession has been small, is not consistent across outcomes, and varies by countries and for different subgroups of the population. They point to the role of institutional levers as well as individual characteristics in shaping opportunities. Across the different studies education appears to be a significant predictor of subsequent demographic behaviour.

In the concluding discussion, delivered by Glen Elder (University of Chapel Hill) and Walter Heinz (University of Bremen) in collaboration with John Bynner and Ingrid Schoon, the delegates agreed that a book publication based on the papers presented at the conference should be produced. The aim is to get a manuscript ready for 2015.

**Ingrid Schoon**, Professor of Human Development and Social Policy, Institute of Education

# How funding reforms have made part-time study unaffordable for many



By Claire Callender

The increasing use of student loans to fund higher education students is a global phenomenon, fuelling HE expansion and participation, and social mobility. The policy goals

underpinning loan schemes around the world vary. In England loans seek to reduce public expenditure by shifting more costs onto students and their families while simultaneously facilitating, or making more acceptable, tuition fee increases.

It is far too early to know the long-term effects of the 2012-13 HE funding reforms, but one is certain – the rise of student loan debt. Nearly all English universities are now charging tuition fees of around £9,000 per year compared to £3,375 before the reforms. The vast majority of English full-time undergraduates are taking out student loans to cover these fees. They are also getting student loans of up to £5,555 a year towards their living costs. So in 2015, we can expect to see students graduating with debts of around £43,500 (compared to £10,299 in 2011-12). So in future, most graduates will owe more money than their parents earn in a year.

Our LLAKES study, *Student Debt, Higher Education Participation, and Intermediate Skills Development*, is looking at this grand social experiment. Specifically, it is examining prospective students' attitudes to debt and HE, and how these have changed over time. The study will ask whether concerns over debt and the costs of HE influence decisions about entering HE, where

and what to study, and mode of study? To what extent are potential students debt-averse, and which groups are most likely to be?

There is already some evidence that older students, and especially part-time undergraduates, have been deterred by the new arrangements. Part-time tuition fees doubled or trebled, but for the first time, part-time undergraduates can access student loans. However, only about a third are eligible for them, and take-up has been far lower than predicted. This suggests that loans may not be perceived as an adequate safeguard against the risks of part-time study. As seriously, the majority of potential part-time students do not qualify for loans. They have to pay these higher fees out of their own pocket.

The unwillingness of would-be part-time students to take out a loan or to pay high tuition fees for an uncertain return should not be surprising. Part-time students are older and have family and financial responsibilities. In times of economic hardship or uncertainty, mortgage repayments and basic provision for children are likely to take priority. Macroeconomic conditions, therefore, have a greater impact on the demand for part-time study than for full-time study, and part-time study is far more price sensitive. Put simply, part-time study has become unaffordable for many. And the net result is that, between 2010-11 and 2013-14, the number of UK and EU part-time undergraduate entrants to higher education institutions and further education colleges in England fell by 46%.

*Claire Callender is Professor of Higher Education Studies, Institute of Education*

## LLAKES hosts Greek teachers and scholars

LLAKES joined with the Centre for the Development of Education Policy of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (KANEP/GSEE), to organise a two-day seminar on 'Early school leaving: causes, impact, remedies and policy responses' in June 2014. Held at the IOE, it was combined with a study visit by 48 Greek teachers. The Seminar had two strands:

- **Research-based presentations** from IOE Professors and LLAKES researchers provided comparative insights on the multiple dimensions of early school leaving. Issues raised included the state of play on early school leaving in Europe, findings on the trajectories of early school leavers and those with low qualifications, volunteering as a route to employment, evidence on causes and consequences of early school leaving, the situation regarding NEETS (those not in education, employment or training) in Europe and Greece, curriculum developments and "staying on" (the UK perspective).
- **Three thematic workshops** on "Trends in Early School Leaving", "Policy responses on early school leaving" and "What can schools do?" gave Greek teachers the chance to present their experiences from the field (school daily practice); to raise institutional, operational, pedagogical and practical issues related to early school leaving and present their pedagogical and policy proposals.

## Probing the roots of adult underachievement

Why do English-speaking countries do relatively poorly on international comparisons of adult skills? A symposium of senior academics, policy-makers and practitioners from across the UK and Eire set out to answer this question and find ways to boost opportunities in their countries at a symposium in Dublin in May, 2014.

Andy Green, director of LLAKES, said social class background was still exerting a powerful influence on the skills of England's adults. He led a study showing that the gulf between the highest and lowest achievers in literacy and numeracy is exceptionally large and that the gap is widest for young adults. Northern Ireland's skills gap is almost as wide as England's.

The symposium was hosted by the Higher Education Research Centre (HERC) of Dublin City University in association with LLAKES and the Royal Irish Academy. Professor Maria Slowey, director of HERC, said: "The relatively poor results for adults in Ireland point to the need to find ways to widen access to education and training across all levels, and at all stages of life."

The symposium, "How to tackle intergenerational equity gaps in knowledge and skills?" offered an opportunity to locate Ireland in a wider international context. OECD's PIAAC study — which assesses the skills of more than 160,000 people in 24 countries in literacy, numeracy and problem-solving — was a key focus for discussion.

Speakers from both the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland said that, unlike in England, 16 to

24-year-olds' basic skills surpassed those of people aged 55-65.

John Field, Emeritus Professor of Lifelong Learning at Stirling University, said Scotland lacks the information it needs to boost adults' skills and job prospects, because the country decided not to take part in PIAAC.

Fiona Hartley, Executive Director of An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), the Further Education and Training Authority in Ireland, said examining the links and barriers between further and higher education could shed light on ways to narrow skills gaps.

## Lorna Unwin awarded OBE



LLAKES Honorary Professor Lorna Unwin has been awarded an OBE for services to vocational education and training. She is one of the world's leading academics in the field of vocational education and training, and has been especially influential in pushing for a transformation of the quality of apprenticeships within national policy.

The event – organised by LLAKES Director Professor Andy Green, in cooperation with Professor Nikos Papadakis (University of Crete), who is involved in the KANEP project, and Dr George Voutsinos, who runs KANEP – was attended by primary and secondary teachers from all over Greece. Associate Professor Manolis Koutouzis (Hellenic Open University, Projects Director, KANEP/GSEE), Dr Prokopis Pandis (KANEP/GSEE Scientific staff) and Ms Maria Mpampa (Institute of Educational Policy) were also involved.

The Greek teachers, who actively participated, with constant questions, remarks, comments and proposals, said they very much appreciated the high-level organisation and focused content of the Seminar, considering it extremely well-organised and fruitful, providing them with valuable food for thought. The whole Greek team is grateful to Professor Green, to the Seminar lecturers and to the LLAKES staff for providing a fruitful, interactive and research-based learning experience. The seminar took place within the context of the Operational Programme "Education and Life Long Learning", and more specifically the Project "Actions towards teachers' sensitisation and professional development", coordinated by the KANEP/GSEE and the Hellenic Institute of Education Policy (IEP).

***Nikos Papadakis, Manolis Koutouzis and George Voutsinos***



## Golo Henseke joins LLAKES as a research officer

I recently joined the LLAKES team as an Applied Economist. I work with Francis Green on research projects exploring areas such as skill formation and skill utilisation over the working life, as well as the role of job-quality on workers' wellbeing. We are interested in investigating inequalities in the opportunities and outcomes across groups of workers in Britain and Europe.

After graduating in Economics, I completed a PhD in 2011 on labor market consequences and challenges of demographic change. My dissertation investigated the role of job quality on the decision to extend working life. The findings suggested that a change in job demands at the end of the career has only limited influence on the subsequent decision to retire. The second part dealt with knowledge creation in ageing and shrinking societies. I analysed to what extent innovators' sources of knowledge differ by age and technological intensity in a sample of the German employed labour force. The outcome stresses the importance of tertiary education, learning-by-doing, and further training.

Previously, I was a research fellow on a project on occupational skills shortages in Germany. The goal was to unlock the employment potential of older workers to compensate for the shrinking working age population and stabilise the pension system. Alongside the potential impact on German policy-making, the project sparked interest from the media and specialists within the industry.

I believe the challenges from current technological change and the resulting job polarisation are, in conjunction with skills inequality, among the most pressing issues for social cohesion. Shedding more light on this issue at LLAKES will be an exciting opportunity.

## LLAKES events and publications

### Autumn 2014 Events

4 November: 'The UK's Productivity Puzzle: What do Workplace Data tell us?' Alex Bryson, NIESR. Room 709a, 15.00-16.30

11 November: 'Findings from the 'Hard Times' project: division and isolation following the tornado effect of the economic slump', Gabriella Elgenius, SOAS. Room 639, 15.00-16.30

25 November: "The Challenges of a Knowledge Economy", David Soskice, LSE. Room 728, 15.00-16.30

2 December: "Skills beyond School: The OECD review of post-secondary vocational education and training", Simon Field, OECD. Room 784, 15.00-16.30

9 December: "Conducting in-depth interviews with hard-to-reach youth: the benefits and challenges of peer-to-peer interviewing", Avril Keating, IOE. Room 784, 15.00-16.30

To book places, e-mail [llakesevents@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:llakesevents@ioe.ac.uk)

### Publications

Keating, A. (2014) *Education for Citizenship in Europe: European Policies, National Adaptations, and Young People's Attitudes*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN: 978-1-137-01956-1. 223 pages. Series "Education, Economy and Society".

Schoon, I. & Eccles, J.S. (eds) (2014) *Gender Differences in Aspiration and Attainment: A Life Course Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ISBN-13: 9781107021723

