



LLAKES Newsletter

Issue 10, Spring 2016



Professor Ingrid Schoon, Chair of Social Policy, UCL Institute of Education

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2016 issue of the LLAKES Newsletter

This issue of the newsletter showcases a range of projects addressing the issue of intergenerational transmission of disadvantage, conducted within the LLAKES programme of research (in particular within Theme 1).

The contribution by Jake Anders and Richard Dorsett examines how transitions out of compulsory education have changed over the last four decades. Using data collected for four age cohorts born in 1958, 1970, 1980 and 1990 they identify three groups characterised by different patterns of youth transitions between ages 16 to 18: one group who remained in full-time education, one group more or less successfully entering the labour market directly after completing compulsory education, and one group encountering problematic transitions characterised by frequent job changes, long periods of unemployment or economic inactivity. The prevalence of this last group increased from 4% to 12% in the most recent cohort, while the employment focused group reduced from around 90% to about a third; and the group characterised by the accumulation of human capital increased from about 3% to just over 50%. There have thus been dramatic changes



in education and employment opportunities for young people after the completion of compulsory schooling, calling for policies and measures to help to smooth the school-to-

Contents	Page
Editorial	1
How have young people's routes from	
school to work changed over the past	
thirty years?	2
When and why do initially high achieving	
poor children fall behind?	4
Intergenerational perspectives: a study of	
Black African and Black Caribbean	
British families	4
Intergenerational learning - reframing	
generation gaps as learning spaces	6
Launch of the Centre for Global Higher	
Education (CGHE)	7
Staff News	7
LLAKES Events and Publications	8

work transition, especially for young people from less privileged family background, who are most at risk of encountering problematic transitions.

Asking when and why initially high achieving poor children fall behind in their educational achievement, Claire Crawford and colleagues used administrative data from the National Pupil Data base to compare the achievement trajectories of children from lower and higher socio-economic status families. They mapped the progress of children regarding their academic attainment between age 7 (Key stage 1) to age 20. In particular they tracked the trajectories of children at different locations of the social ladder and different attainment levels. They found that already at age 7 a large attainment gap had emerged which then widened as pupils got older. During secondary school poor children with high levels of academic attainment at age 7 started to fall behind children from more affluent background who were initially much lower achieving. Examining why initially highly able children from poor backgrounds did not sustain their performance the authors identified the crucial role of school quality: poor children tend to attend lower performing schools than their richer counterparts. They conclude that a vital leverage for

increasing opportunities for social mobility and improving opportunities for all is to provide access to good quality secondary schooling.

Michela Franceschelli reports on her latest research, examining the role of intergenerational transmission of learning engagement among Black African and Black Caribbean British Families. Asking how parents pass their values and aspirations on to their children she conducted a series of in- depth-interviews with families and their teenage children, exploring the implications of race and class on practices of upbringing. Her study showed that among parents education success was always the result of overcoming difficulties. In bringing up their children the parents made constant references to their own past experiences, using 'retrospective parenting' and examples of how difficulties can be overcome. encouraging their children to do their best in education and to build up their resilience. Teaching their children to expect adversities and inequality in opportunity they prepare them to become self-reliant, hard-working, and persistent in the face of adversity to learn the strategies that enabled them to gain control of their life chances.

Reporting from a recent international symposium on intergenerational learning held at the University of Masaryk in Brno, Czech Republic. The symposium was supported by the Asia-Europe Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning bringing together experts from different countries. Intergenerational learning is understood as learning from, with and about people from older and younger generations. Generation gaps are apparent in all societies, although they differ according to societal and cultural norms. The symposium highlighted that intergenerational solidarity can be built by reframing generation gaps as learning spaces, by sharing cultural and personal life experiences through forms of intergenerational learning. Within such a framework intergenerational learning is considered as bidirectional: the younger generation learning from the older and the older generation learning from the young. Moreover, it takes place in communities, building a support network that provides continued support for learners throughout their education and beyond. This can involve for example, support at the preschool level, at major transition points and mentorship programs at school or at the workplace. What is crucial though is to provide space for reflection, creating awareness about the nature of what is learned and how this is tied to settings, people and practices: learning with other as well as from each other.

The newsletter also reports on the launch of the Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE).

How have young people's routes from school to work changed over the past 30 years?

Jake Anders and Richard Dorsett, National Institute of Economic and Social Research, London

Making a successful transition from education into the labour market is important for young people's long-term economic success. We know, for instance, that periods of early unemployment may have scarring effects on later employment and earnings prospects (Gregg, 2001). Furthermore, there are reasons to suspect deep-rooted and structural problems are preventing some young people from achieving a successful transition. We see this from the fact that NEETs – young people not in education, employment or training – have been a fairly constant feature of the youth labour market in the UK for as long as records exist.

Our recent research, published as a LLAKES Research Paper (Anders and Dorsett, 2015), considers the question of how young people's transitions out of compulsory education have changed as the labour market around them has evolved. We analysed the experiences of four cohorts of young people; born in 1958, 1970, 1980, and 1990, respectively. In doing so, we build on previous research which had considered only the 1958 and 1970 cohorts (Schoon et al., 2001), providing a major update to the literature.

We use sequence analysis (Abbott, 1995) to compare and quantify the differences between young people's month by month activities for a period of 29 months following the September after their 16th birthday (i.e. when education is no longer compulsory). Sequence analysis provides a means of measuring the similarity between individuals' experiences of different states such as education, unemployment and NEET over this period. At its simplest, for any two individuals, the measure of similarity is calculated as the number of month both have the same status. In practice, we weight particular types of differences to reflect perhaps that some states may be more similar than others (Lesnard, 2006); our paper gives more detail.

Sequence A	X	X	X	Y	Z
Sequence B	W	X	Х	X	Y
	$\overline{\hspace{1em}}$			$\downarrow \uparrow$	$\downarrow \uparrow$
	X			Υ	Z

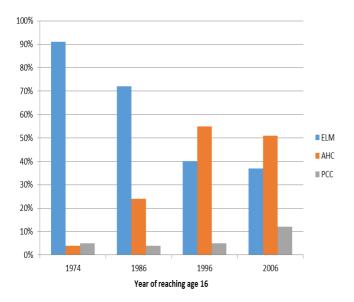
We use the measures of similarity obtained in this way to distinguish three broad groups of individuals:

1. An "Entering the Labour Market" (ELM) group, who move quickly from school into work without

completing much education beyond that which is compulsory.

- 2. An "Accumulating Human Capital" (AHC) group, who remain in full time education throughout the 29-month period that we observe them.
- 3. A "Potential Cause for Concern" (PCC) group, who appear to leave education but without successfully moving into stable employment. They may move in and out of work, report being consistently unemployed, or report being economically inactive.

The chart below shows how the distribution of these three groups has evolved over time. The most obvious change is hardly surprisingly. The dominant experience has gone from being a direct transition between school and work to a transition involving at least two additional years of education beyond that which is compulsory. More than 90% of young people in our earliest cohort were in the ELM group, but less than 40% in the most recent. Over the same period, the AHC group grew from 4% to over 50%. This reflects the changing nature of the labour market, in which there are now fewer jobs available that do not require additional education.



However, another more worrying trend has accompanied this change. An increasing proportion of young people experience a transition that we characterise as being a "potential cause for concern". The proportion categorised as potential cause for concern (PCC) has risen from 4% in the earliest cohort to 12% in the most recent one. In the earlier cohorts, young women and those from non-white ethnic background are more likely than their male or white peers to be categorised as PCC. However, by the later cohorts, these positions have reversed, with young women and those from non-white ethnic background less likely to be in this group than their male or white peers.

By contrast, coming from an advantaged background has remained a strong predictor of avoiding the PCC route across all four cohorts. It seems likely that the changes described stem from the higher likelihood of staying in education for young women and those from non-white ethnic backgrounds, leaving them better-placed, on average, to avoid a difficult transition into the labour market.

Our research has highlighted fundamental changes over the past 40 years in the early experiences of young people beyond compulsory schooling. It suggests a clear need for policies to help smooth the school-to-work transition (Dorsett and Lucchino, 2014; Schoon, 2015). It does not appear to be the case that early difficulties will generally prove to be temporary. For our earliest two cohorts, we are able to examine this by considering also experiences up to age 24. We find that PCC status in the short run is strongly predictive of PCC status in the longer-run. Consequently, effective support at age 16 has the potential to bring lasting benefits.

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When and why do initially high achieving poor children fall behind?

Claire Crawford, Lindsey Macmillan and Anna Vignoles

How well a person does in life, in terms of their earnings, is strongly determined by where they come from, in terms of their parents' economic success. Perhaps it has ever been thus. But for many years successive UK governments of all complexions have tried to reduce the strength of this intergenerational relationship. Improving the educational achievement of poorer children is seen as one of the key ways through which we might hope to break the link between a child's success and the socio-economic status of their parents, because education is such a strong predictor of how much people earn. Indeed the UK Government now actively tracks levels of educational inequality as a leading indicator for longer term trends in social mobility (Cabinet Office, 2011).

In recent work we have investigated the educational progress of children from poorer backgrounds. It is of course common knowledge that the achievement of poor children is, on average, far lower than that of their more advantaged peers. What was less clear from existing evidence is at what age poorer children start to fall behind their wealthier counterparts. We were particularly interested in tracking the progress of children who, at age 7, had similar levels of educational achievement but came from different socio-economic backgrounds, to understand whether and at what point their performance diverged. To do so we used administrative data from the school system to compare the trajectories of children from lower and higher socio-economic status families, from primary school right through to university. We looked at what might be driving the different trajectories of richer and poorer children, focusing particularly on the schools they attended.

Similar to the situation in the United States, we found that very large differences in the educational achievement of richer and poorer children had already emerged by age 7. These already stark differences increased as pupils got older - by around two thirds by the end of compulsory schooling (age 16). Indeed, poor children who came into school with high levels of achievement started to converge, in terms of their academic achievement, with children who were initially much lower achieving but who came from richer backgrounds. Much of this convergence happened between the ages of 11 and 14 during the transition into secondary school. So in other words children from poorer backgrounds who performed well in primary school were unable to sustain their high performance, and children from richer backgrounds who had started behind began to catch up with them.

It may not be a great surprise that poorer children, even those who are initially higher achieving, start to fall behind their richer counterparts. What is important,

however, is to understand why this might be so. We found that one contributing factor is that poor children tend to attend lower performing schools than their richer counterparts: once we compared pupils who went to the same schools, we found little difference in the performance of rich and poor children who had below average achievement at age 7, and initially high achieving poor children did not fall quite so far behind their initially high achieving richer counterparts.

We cannot prove that attending different quality schools is the cause of the patterns we observe since there is substantial sorting into schools on the basis of both family background and initial achievement. Nonetheless, the fact that rich and poor children attend different secondary schools appears to be a big part of the relative academic decline of poorer children. This would seem to suggest that ensuring poor children have access to good quality secondary schools may be one way to reduce education inequalities and potentially improve social mobility. To achieve this one would need to think of ways to reduce the reliance on geographical proximity to a school as the main entry criterion, since this has resulted in property prices around good schools being higher which effectively excludes poorer children.

Even if we cannot change which schools pupils attend, we could still try to affect what happens to them whilst they are there. A lot of policy attention has already been focused on trying to improve the achievement of poor children, with incentives provided to schools to focus more attention and resources on the academic achievement of these children (e.g. via the Pupil Premium). It is at this stage difficult to determine the impact of these policies. However, our work suggests that researchers and practitioners need to focus their efforts on better understanding why it is that higher achieving poor children struggle to translate their early educational success into continued achievement in secondary school.

Intergenerational Perspectives: A study of Black African and Black Caribbean British families

Michela Franceschelli

As part of the LLAKES project with a focus on intergenerational relationships - What part do intergenerational factors play in shaping the learning engagement life chances and well-being as young people make transitions to independent adulthood? — we conducted an in depth-study with Black African and Black Caribbean families in London.

In the study we sought to understand how parents passed on their values and aspirations to their children. We also focused on their views and experiences of education and explored how they compared to those of their teenage children (13-19 years old).

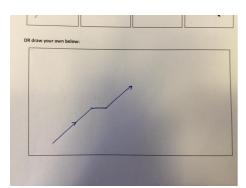
In thinking about this research we were particularly influenced by the findings of the American sociologist Annette Lareau, who researched families in Philadelphia during the 1990s. In 'Unequal Childhood' (2003) Lareau concluded that parenting was deeply shaped by the social class of the families. Middle class parents employed 'concerted cultivation' which involved sending their children to a range of strict organized activities from sport to music aimed to 'to cultivate their talents'. Working class parents could not afford to invest so much in the leisure time of their children and their priorities were more focused on essential aspects of upbringing such as 'love, food and safety'. The leisure time was left to children to manage and Lareau defined this type of parenting as 'natural growth'. She concluded that:

'The role of race in children's daily lives was less powerful than I had expected (...) Still, in terms of how children spend their time, the way parents' use language and discipline in the home, the nature of the families' social connections, and the strategies used for intervening in institutions, white and black middle-class parents engaged in very similar, often identical, practices with their children.' (Lareau, 2002: 773).

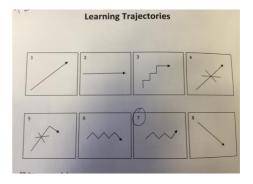
Our research questions drew on Lareau's findings and so we were interested in exploring the implications of race and class on practices of upbringing, but we were also open to identify other factors and strategies shaping the discourses of parents as emerging from the data.

Overall, we spoke to 10 Black African (Nigeria and Ghana) and Black Caribbean British families in South London (our sample included 30 people). The families were a mixed of working class, lower middle-class backgrounds and only two were from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. As the main researcher involved in the fieldwork, I visited each family several times interviewing family members separately and also taking notes to contextualize the interviews.

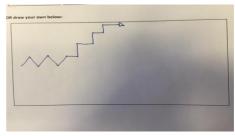
We asked parents and young people to draw maps, which summarized their experiences in education. Most maps were not smooth journeys and even the most successful and positive stories involved several ups and downs (see the examples below).



Black Caribbean Mother



Black Caribbean Father



Black Caribbean Daughter

We found that most parents, even those who finally succeed and had a degree, spoke about their struggles in education and so in their stories, achievements were always the results of overcoming difficulties. When speaking about how they were bringing up their children parents made constant references to their past experiences. For Lydia's, a 43 years old mother from Caribbean background, her daughter Alyssa was an 'excuse to re-live her childhood' doing anything that had not been possible to her because of her family circumstances at that time. A Caribbean father spoke about how 'Your past makes who you are' and 'how everything you do is a part of how you was grown, and the things you didn't get sort of thing'. We called these parenting practices with constant references to parents' own past biographies 'retrospective parenting': by looking behind to their past and using it as example of how difficulties can be overcome, parents sought to encourage their children to make use of the present opportunities and particularly do their best in education.

Another related aspect of the way parents brought up their children was a strong focus on building up their resilience to prepare them to overcome difficulties in education and more generally in life. The underlying assumption of parents was that their children would face difficulties of different types, including racism. To face those, parents employed what we call 'narratives of resilience'. These narratives reflected the parents' attempts to negotiate awareness about the inequality of opportunities and the possibility of experiencing racism with a belief in the ability of individuals to shape their own future. The emphasis on pushing their children to become self-reliant and hard-working which were perceived as the only ways to control future life chances. If barriers were foreseen, parents urged not to give up, as one Black Caribbean mother said:

'I mean ... I always say to my children there is nothing that you can't do, if you want to become something you can if you work hard at it.'

Statistical evidence has identified contrasting trends for Black British groups: they are being increasingly more mobile, but they are also more likely than most other ethnic groups to experience unemployment (Platt; 2005). Black British African and Caribbean pupils also remain the lowest performing group at KS4, although they have shown the largest improvement¹. The possibility of experiencing institutional racism at school, the negative impact of a lower family background and the complex journeys of parents in education that this research highlights, are hard barriers to overcome. In this context, the 'narratives of resilience' of parents and young people reflected an awareness of barriers, limited opportunities and an attempt to improve the future life chances.

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/at tachment_data/file/280689/SFR05_2014_Text_FINAL.pdf

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Intergenerational learning – reframing generation gaps as learning spaces

Karen Evans

How do demographic changes related to ageing populations influence intergenerational communication and learning? How do changes in family structures and alternative lifestyles shape the circumstances for intergenerational learning in the family? These are two of the questions were considered in recent international symposium held in the University of Masaryk, in Brno, Czech Republic. The symposium, which I attended with the support of the Asia-Europe Foundation, was co-sponsored by the Asia-Europe Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning and featured discussions of LLAKES research findings in the context of international debate.

Almost a decade ago, the UNESCO Institute of Education recognised and started to promote the

concept of intergenerational learning as part of its lifelong learning programme. Intergenerational learning encompasses the 'cross generational mobilization of learning resources' to support the process of accumulating knowledge and wisdom in order to grow and mature throughout life.

Research–based inquiries bring critical questions and perspectives into the exploration of this notion. Intergenerational learning, understood as *learning from, with and about people from older and younger generations*, other has both benefits and risks: for whom is intergenerational learning beneficial and for whom is it risky? And what conditions or environments support intergenerational learning, and which prevent it?

Research that focuses on intergenerational transmission within families brings into view the knowledge, habits, ways of thinking and capabilities that are passed on. Traditionally, the focus has been on the ways in which the older generation, parents and grandparents, transmit knowledge and experiences to the other as the younger generation learns from the older. The intergenerational project in LLAKES Theme 1 is showing how grandparents influence their grandchildren's decisions continue in education after 16, independent of parents. But intergenerational learning takes place in both directions, as for example, older family members learn from the younger about digital devices and changing work practices.

Intergenerational learning processes that take place within the family can fundamentally shape life chances. Many projects that seek to promote positive youth development through family interventions recognize the power of intergenerational family learning. But we also need to remember the role of educational institutions in interrupting the process whereby the education of young people comes to depend too much learning between generations in families, with the social reproduction that entails. So understanding the ways in which intergenerational learning can benefit more than the already privileged becomes a priority. This entails further consideration of the conditions under which we can realise intergenerational learning in communities?

LLAKES analyses of learning and life *transitions have* shown the need to strengthen the bond between older and younger generations in schools and community development projects. Considering the role of early and cumulative socialisation experiences in shaping transition experiences, we know that interventions need to start early – ideally at the preschool level – and provide continued support for children and learners throughout their school career as well as during transition periods. For example, in order to create sustainable intervention programs, schools can form coalitions with parents, employers, and the wider community to build a support network and facilitate exposure to multiple positive influences from different sources.

Focusing on intermediary networks and organisations reveals how far the spaces for learning associated with or created by a wider range of institutions, communities or network can become more conducive to intergenerational learning. For example, in workplaces, mentoring is an established intergenerational practice that can be enhanced by triadic and knowledge —aware approaches that focus more closely on the nature of what is learned and how what is learned is tied to settings, people and practices. In intergenerational learning, older and young people, 'newcomers and old-timers' learn with each other as well as from each other.

At the macro level, the collectively shared political and cultural experiences of generations are significant for intergenerational learning. In LLAKES Theme 1, research that focuses on civic attitudes and the crisis of contemporary youth is able to use cohort studies to explore patterns and shifts in attitudes over time. We have also used an intergenerational lens to explore how adults retrospectively make use of therapeutic narratives to make sense of culturally embedded experiences of education and social mobility. Multiple flows of intergenerational influence and their significance for learning become apparent in both cohort analyses and in micro-sociological family studies.

The Brno Symposium has, for me, helped to unpack what the 'cross-mobilisation of learning resources between generations' of policy-speak can actually mean in practice. Generation gaps are apparent in all societies but their dimensions vary considerable according to societal and cultural norms such as filial responsibility. We need to understand better how cultural and personal life experiences of generations can be shared through forms of intergenerational learning that are culturally sensitive as well as responsive to social, political and technological changes. Reframing generation gaps as learning spaces that can contribute to the building of intergenerational solidarity depends crucially on support for the intermediary organizations and networks that are shown to have a pivotal role.

Launch of the Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE)

The Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE), the largest research centre in the world specifically focused on higher education and its future development, launched in London last month.

Based at UCL's Institute of Education, CGHE will enable academics from across the globe to collaborate on research which will inform and improve higher education policy and practice. Its research will integrate local, national and global perspectives.

The Centre has been backed by more than £6 million in funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE), with partners including Lancaster University, the University of Sheffield and international universities including Australian National University (Australia), Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland), Hiroshima University (Japan), Leiden University (Netherlands), Lingnan University (Hong Kong), Shanghai Jiao Tong University (China), the University of Cape Town (South Africa) and the University of Michigan (US).

CGHE Director Simon Marginson said:



"Our job is to use research and critical analysis to anticipate developments in higher education in the UK and across the world – to help position higher education institutions and systems to better meet society's long term needs."

Professor Francis Green, the Deputy Director of LLAKES, is on CGHE's Management Committee.

Further details of CGHE's research projects are available at www.researchcghe.org, where you can also sign up to CGHE's newsletter.

Staff News

Professor Karen Evans retired from UCL Institute of Education, including her LLAKES role, on 31 March 2016. Karen was instrumental in the initiation and progression of the LLAKES Centre, and has served with distinction as a Strand, Theme and Project Leader since 2008. Her contribution to interdisciplinary, mixed method and multi-level comparative work in the centre has been at the heart of the Centre's mission. She will be designated as a LLAKES Honorary Professor, and will continue to work closely with the Centre.

LLAKES events and publications

Summer 2016 Events

19 April 2016

Susanne Wiborg and Francis Green

Free Schools in England: just like other schools? 16.15-17.45, Elvin Hall

25 April 2016

Stephen Lewis and Bob Lingard

PISA for Schools: Topological rationality and new spaces of the OECD's global educational governance' Free Schools in England: just like other schools?

16.15-17.45, Room 728

3 May 2016

Sheng-ju Chan

Massification of higher education in Taiwan: Shifting pressure from admission to employment 16.15-17.45, Room 780

17 May 2016

Patrick Ainley

Betraying a Generation: How education is failing young people. Followed by book launch 17.15-19.45, Clarke Hall

16 June 2016

Manuel Souto-Otero

New approaches to studying the link between education and the labour market: using big data to explore employer demands 16.15-17.45, Room 639

27-28 June 2016 Conference

Growing Up and Global Austerity: comparing youth opportunities, aspirations and civic values around the world

Drama Studio

All events are held at UCL Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL. To book places, please e-mail llakesevents@ioe.ac.uk

Publications

Karen Mundy, Andy Green, Bob Lingard and Antoni Verger (eds) (2016) *The Handbook of Global Education Policy*. Wiley ISBN 978-1-118-46805

Parker, P., Jerrim, J., Schoon, I. & Marsh, H. (2016, in press) 'Does tracking make a difference? A multination study of socio-economic inequality in high school choices', *American Educational Research Journal*

Schoon, Ingrid and Lyons-Amos, Mark (2016, in press) 'Diverse pathways in becoming an adult: the role of structure, agency and context', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*

Schoon, I. & Mullin, A.S. (2016, in press) 'Crime involvement and family formation among men and women. Evidence from the 1970 British Birth Cohort Study', *Advances in Life Course Research*

Symmonds, J., Schoon, I. & Salmela-Aro, K. (2016, in press) 'Developmental trajectories and emotional disengagement from schoolwork and their longitudinal associations in England', *British Educational Research Journal*

Wilde, R., Green, F., Taylor-Gooby, P. and Wiborg, S. (2015) 'Private Schools and the Provision of Public Benefit', *Journal of Social Policy*, 45 (1). pp. 1-20

Hande, I., Ying, Z., Gallie, D., Felstead, A. and Green, F. (2015) 'Direct participation and employee learning at work', *Work and Occupations*, published online, DOI 10.1177/0730888415580650

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