



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland



Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation in Northern Ireland: The ILiAD Study

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Context of ILiAD study:

Many studies worldwide link high-level deprivation (poverty plus other factors) with low educational achievement outcomes (Sirin, 2005; National Equality Panel, 2010; Kerr & West, 2010).

Notwithstanding the strengths of these correlations, this study proposed that educational achievement within deprived areas may be more complex than is suggested by quantitative analysis alone.

NI contextual features: Small nation emerging from protracted conflict

System has academic selection of children at age 11; most children also attend religiously-separate schools (Catholic or Protestant). 7% attend integrated schools.

GCSE and A level are consistently top in the UK. The tail of underachievement however tends to be longer than the average. 96% grammar and 44% non grammar achieve 5 grade A*-C

According to international evidence, the link between socio-economic background and performance in NI is weaker than most OECD countries at primary school level (age 5-11) but stronger than average at post-primary (age 11-18) (Perry, 2013).

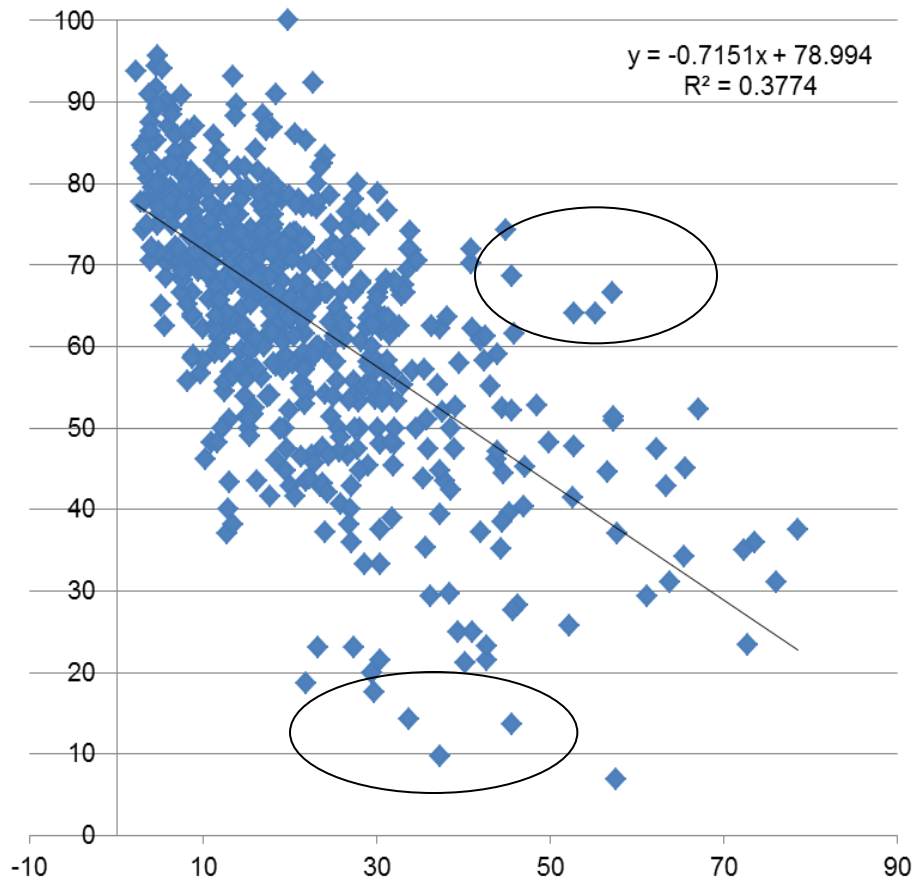
OFMDFM 2006-2016, has a 10 year strategy for children and young people emphasizing the need to improve the educational progress of all and to tackle inequality, based on rigorous research evidence (Sullivan et al, 2010, p.6).

Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation (ILiAD) aims to inform and contribute to this evidence base



Where ILiAD started: pattern

Scattergraph showing the relationship between the level of multiple deprivation (NIMDM) of neighbourhood areas and the percentage of five or more GCSE passes



- Various anomalies and outliers identified:
- There are areas of high deprivation where achievement is higher than in areas with less deprivation
- There are areas of less deprivation where achievement is lower than areas with high deprivation
- Variations are evident between predominantly Catholic and Protestant areas, but also between Catholic areas, between Protestant areas, and between mixed-religion areas

X axis: Multiple deprivation score (higher score = higher deprivation)

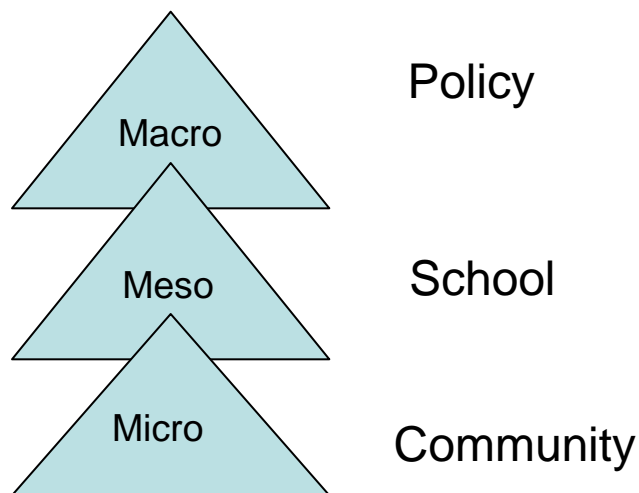
Y axis: Percentage of young people with 5 or more GCSE passes (A*-C) 2005

Research Design

Design

Based on secondary data analysis.

Three-year, in-depth qualitative case study of seven Ward areas across NI (3 predominantly Catholic, 3 predominantly Protestant, 1 mixed-religion)



Participants

- People in the local communities (young people, parents; community representatives; residents' associations; community leaders etc.);
- Children and young people attending school/outside school (eg informal or post-compulsory education incl. youth clubs)
- Teachers, school principals, Governors;
- Key informants from statutory bodies and voluntary sector organisations

Data collection methods

- Secondary data
- Multiple sources of evidence being sought through site visits:
 - Visual /ethnographic
 - Semi-structured individual interviews
 - Focus groups
 - Electronic survey
 - Photo elicitation
 - Consultation conference

Case study areas included in ILiAD

15+ year trends: % of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE passes at Grade C or above

Ward	Council	Deprivation rank ³	96/97	99/00	01/02	05/06	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Duncairn	Belfast	14	29%	21%	21%	30%	25%	56%	50%	45%
Dunclug	Ballymena	83	51%	39%	50%	50%	44%	46%	48%	48%
Rosemount	L/Derry	44	40%	44%	57%	72%	69%	67%	57%	63%
The Diamond	L/Derry	12	48%	49%	64%	67%	57%	68%	64%	64%
Tullycarnet	Castlereagh	109	24%	26%	16%	29%	30%	24%	31%	32%
Whiterock	Belfast	1	25%	23%	20%	36%	52%	56%	58%	59%
Woodstock	Belfast	39	25%	9%	24%	21%	26%	40%	50%	41%



Sample Research Questions

- ❑ How is it that children and young people in some Wards with high level deprivation perform well educationally, relative to their counterparts in similar or less deprived Wards?
- ❑ How can differential educational attainment be explained between Wards that are very closely matched as regards multiple deprivation?
- ❑ What are the main factors/discourses within each Ward that account for patterns for achievement ?
- ❑ What explanatory value is offered by 'social capital' theory?

Cross-cutting themes

Each Ward is unique, however overarching analysis reveals the following:

Value placed on education varies

- (counter) discourses of achievement
- role models

Parental Capacity and Engagement

- social issues
- key skills /parenting skill

Academic Selection

- Impact on aspiration/self-esteem
- Grammar school 'creaming'



Cross-cutting themes (cont/d)

Demographic shifts and loss of 'community'

- incomer communities
- outward migration

Place of the school in the community

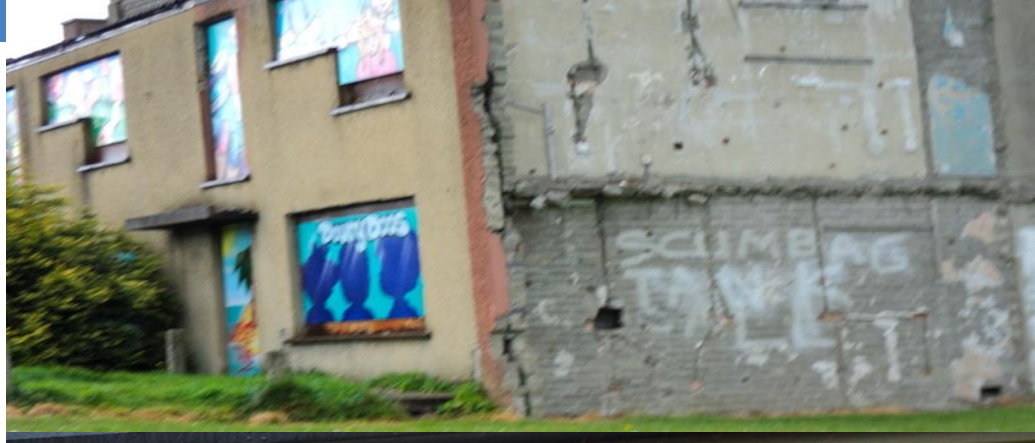
- Extended School
- Visibility

Others include Special Educational Needs, school leadership, teacher relationships, curriculum flexibility/vocational opportunities etc



Case illustration

**DUNCLUG (MIXED
MD; 83rd
48% A*-C**



Drivers

1. Stable home environment
2. Explicit value placed on education within home
3. Explicit work ethic within home
4. Encouragement from parents/carers
5. Practical support from parents/carers
6. Safe environment provided by youth groups
7. Opportunities for formal and informal learning provided by youth groups at local level
8. Opportunities provided for personal/self development provided by youth groups at local level
9. Opportunities for adult learning/development provided at local level (e.g. in local schools)
10. Opportunities for community interaction/integration provided at local level (e.g. in local schools)
11. Schools seen as 'open' and accessible by local community
12. Overall 'partnership' engagement between schools and local community

DUNCLUG WARD

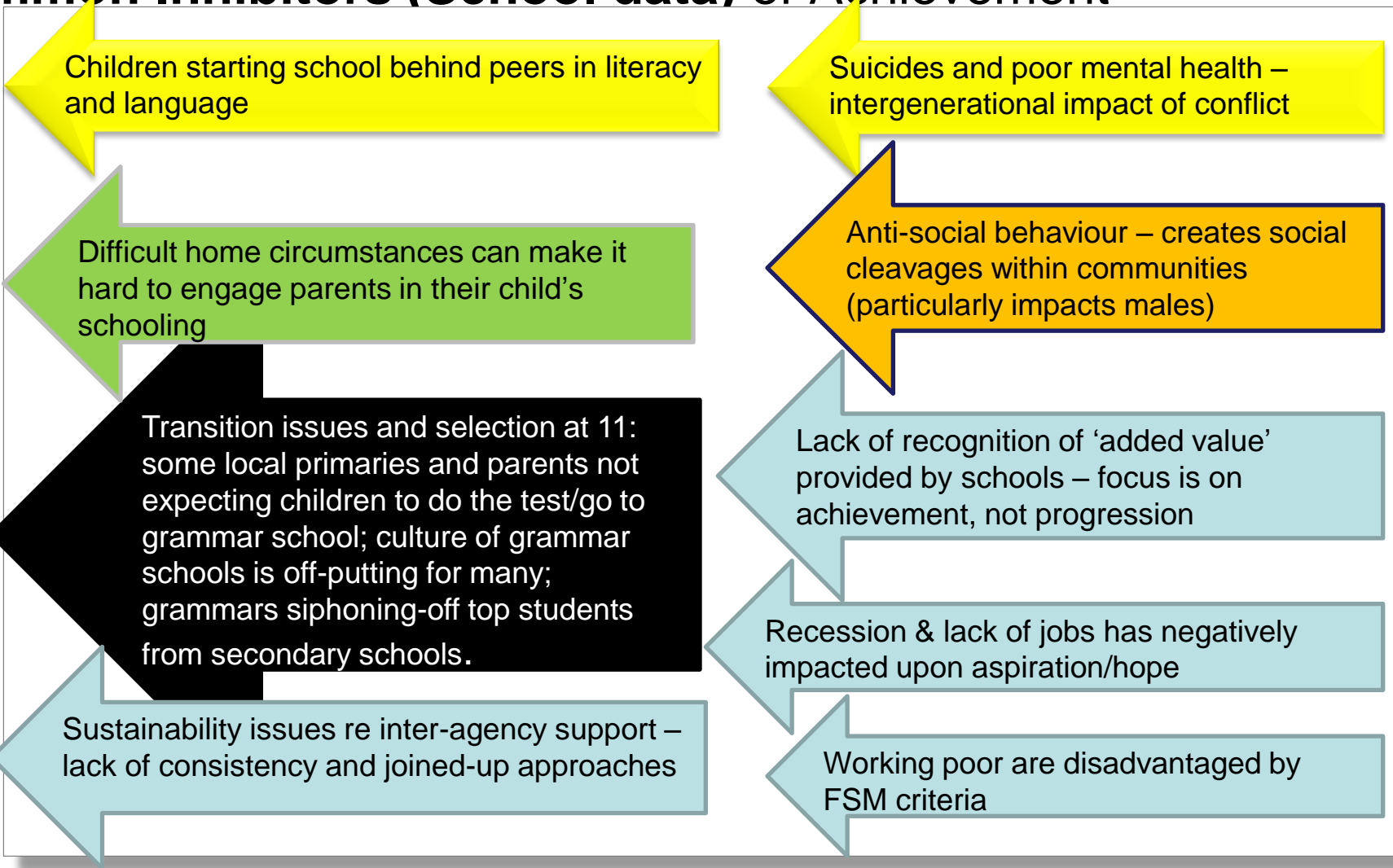
Present situation – 48% five GCSEs A*-C, Deprivation rank = 83

Inhibitors

1. Population flux at local level
2. Mixed population e.g. by religious affiliation / ethnicity
3. Perceived social and cultural 'division' within local population
4. Community tension / conflict based on perceived division
5. Social deprivation
6. Lack of community cohesiveness
7. Lack of/limited local level youth provision
8. Anti-social activity amongst young people
9. Poor / unattractive local built environment
10. Anti-social activity amongst adult population (e.g. crime, drug & alcohol abuse)
11. Alienation of local young people from social norms and values (e.g. re: education)
12. Lack of/limited self-esteem amongst local young people
13. Instability in home environment
14. Subordination of education to more immediate (problematic) day-to-day priorities
15. Lack of / limited parenting / carer skills
16. Lack of / limited parent / carer education
17. Mental health issues amongst young people

Common Inhibitors (School data) of Achievement

Non - Achievement





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TIME FOR COMMENT and QUESTIONS

Thank you

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