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***Children and young people's experiences
and views of poverty and inequalities:
Policy and practice implications***



Final project report

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1. Programme Overview

This Programme was part of the 'Equality 2015- Increasing Equality and Realising Human Potential in the Context of Post-Referendum Scotland' funding scheme, supported by Scottish Universities Insight Institute in 2014-2015.

The lens of inequality has been considered by many as the vantage point to examine the negative impacts of poverty on individual outcomes (Sutton Trust 2005, 2006, 2010; Commission on Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission 2014; Scottish Government 2013). As children are one of the groups most likely to be poor (McKendrick *et al.*, 2014), this Programme focussed on inequalities as experienced by them. The Programme aimed to voice to their experiences, identifying remaining challenges in tackling deprivation and reviewing the evidence on possible new solutions to increasing equality in Scotland. Although inequality has been a central aspect of ongoing debates, its implications for young people's lived experiences and long-term opportunities and the implications for policy and practice, in Scotland and beyond, are in much need of evidence on 'what works'. This Programme focussed on an equality-based argument (Dworkin, 1978) and poverty as a human rights issue (Vandenhoe, 2014), linked to the characteristics of the social contexts in which individuals find themselves, and also examined policies aimed at tackling socio-economic inequalities and their effectiveness.

The Programme aimed to address the Call theme by focussing on inequities in policy and practice in relation to four main areas: Education, Health, Rights, and Social Participation of young people in post-referendum Scotland. It also engaged with Children & Young People (Scotland) Act (2010) and reflected on the duty on public authorities to have regard for children's right to a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (UNCRC, 1989). Through a multitude of activities and outputs, including *four research-based policy briefings*, an arts exhibition and virtual arts exhibition video and research and theory presented at *two international knowledge exchange seminar events*, the Programme provided new insights and aimed to impact on the delivery of children's services for children and young people living in conditions of poverty and disadvantage. *Children's* workshops and the *arts exhibition* engaged non-academic audiences with the issues of inequality, child poverty and rights. While focussing on post-Referendum Scotland, the Programme built on international evidence and contributed to ongoing international debates on social inequalities and issues of social justice.

2. Programme Aims

The Programme explored the multiple, intersecting dimensions of inequality (Crenshaw, 1991), as experienced by young people, and provided a platform for dialogue, to identify solutions to current challenges in Scotland and possibly beyond. The Programme aimed to:

- **Facilitate a range of knowledge exchange activities** to engage diverse groups of young people, policy makers, practitioners and researchers from education, social work, social policy, children's rights, social justice, in debates about the current disadvantages people experience in Scotland and beyond and best approaches to increasing equality;
- Generate new knowledge and inform national and international debates on approaches to tackling inequalities through **four policy briefings** which summarise the evidence on 'what works' and **two events** with international participation;
- Create **opportunities for networking and sustained collaborations** across disciplines and between practitioners from a range of services and engage them in discussions about best approaches to tackle unequal opportunities through effective service provision;
- **Raise awareness of the multiple inequalities** experienced by children and young people and help tackle social stigmas around poverty and inequality by engaging with the general public through an '**arts exhibition**'.

3. Programme Activities and Outputs

This section summarises all programme activities and main outputs.

3.1. Policy Briefings

Four policy briefings were produced for this series, through sustained collaboration between the project partners. They summarised existing evidence in relation to the impact of poverty on children's education, health and well-being, access to services and social participation, children's rights and political engagement.

Briefing 1: Poverty and children's education

Authors: Daniela Sime (University of Strathclyde), Joan Forbes (University of Aberdeen), Jennifer Lerpiniere (University of Strathclyde)

Available at:

http://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Portals/50/Children%20&%20YP%20Inequality/PolicyBrief_SUIIProgramme_Education.pdf

Briefing 2: Poverty and children's health and well-being

Authors: Mark Willis (CPAG), Daniela Sime, Jennifer Lerpiniere (University of Strathclyde)

Available at:

http://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Portals/50/Children%20&%20YP%20Inequality/PolicyBrief_SUIIProgramme_Health.pdf

Briefing 3: Poverty and children's access to services and social participation

Authors: Joan Forbes (University of Aberdeen); Daniela Sime and Elspeth McCartney (University of Strathclyde), Archie Graham and Anne Valyo (University of Aberdeen), Gaby Weiner (University of Sussex)

Available at:

http://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Portals/50/Children%20&%20YP%20Inequality/PolicyBrief_SUIIProgramme_Services.pdf

Briefing 4: Poverty and children's rights, civic and political engagement

Claire McDiarmid, Dorota Szpakowicz, James Davies (University of Strathclyde)

Available at:

http://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Portals/50/Children%20&%20YP%20Inequality/PolicyBrief_SUIIProgramme_Rights.pdf

The briefings were distributed throughout the other activities- including the two international seminars and the arts exhibition, in addition to dissemination through social media and to existing contacts.

3.2. Two International Seminars

Two seminars with international participation took place on 14th May 2015 (University of Strathclyde) and 26th June 2015 (University of Aberdeen).

Seminar 1- 14th May 2015 Children's unequal outcomes in Scotland and beyond: research and implications for policy and practice

This seminar addressed the following questions: What do we know about children and young people's experiences of poverty in Scotland? What can we learn from other countries about approaches to tackling social inequalities? How does poverty impact on children's subjective wellbeing across countries in Europe and the marginalisation of children and young people? What can the fields of education and health contribute to our understanding of the structural inequalities which children experience?

Speakers included:

- Douglas Hamilton, Commissioner, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, and Director, RS Macdonald Charitable Trust – *'Ending children poverty'*
- Joshua McCormick MSYP, Convener of the Scottish Youth Parliament Justice Committee, Cunninghame South on *'Young people talking about poverty'*
- Prof Sue Ellis, University of Strathclyde, on *'Poverty and underachievement in Scotland'*
- Prof Ferran Casas, Universitat of Girona, Spain on *'Poverty and children's well-being in Europe: Children's Worlds project and the case of looked after children in Catalonia'*

In addition, participants attended the arts exhibition (see 3.4) and contributed in one of three workshops offered in the afternoon with the overall question of *'How can services in Scotland help mitigate the effects of poverty on children and families?'*

Workshop 1- Sara Spencer, Child Poverty Action Group, Scotland
Cost of the school day project

Workshop 2: James Davies, PhD student, University of Strathclyde
Poverty and young people's opportunities for volunteering

Workshop 3: Dr Giovanna Fassetta, University of Strathclyde
Poverty and ethnicity- the case of Roma in Scotland

The knowledge exchange seminar was attended by over 50 participants, with some of the organisations represented including Glasgow City Council, Police Scotland, Scotland's Commissioner for Children & Young People, Scotland's Youth Parliament, Glasgow Housing Association, MRC Pathways, NHS, BEMIS, Falkirk Council, Glasgow Life, University of Stirling, University of Dundee, Child Poverty Action Group, Glasgow School of Art, University of Aberdeen, Gather Together, COSLA, Govan Law Centre, Scottish Government, University of West of Scotland, local schools and nurseries.

Seminar 2- 26th June 2015 Poverty as a human rights issue: Rights, social participation and ways of increasing children's voice in the debate

This seminar, held at the University of Aberdeen, addressed the following questions: How is the children's rights agenda relevant to the issues of inequality? What can services do to help tackling social inequalities, especially in a climate of austerity? How does poverty impact on children's access to services, social participation and opportunities for civic engagement? How can research with children and young people contribute to our understanding of the structural inequalities which they experience?

Speakers included:

- Prof Wouter Vandenhole, UNICEF Chair in children's rights, University of Antwerp, on 'Child poverty and children's rights: an uneasy fit?'
- Goretti Horgan, University of Ulster- 'Poverty and young people- foregrounding young people's perspectives'
- Anne Valyo, University of Aberdeen- '*The art of getting by*' – using art as a medium to explore issues of poverty with children and young people
- Prof Stephen McKinney, University of Glasgow – '*The relationship of poverty and deprivation to school education*'

A selection of workshops included:

Workshop 1- Dr Jennifer Lerpiniere and Emma Young, CELCIS
Poverty and looked after children

Workshop 2 - Dr Archie Graham, University of Aberdeen
Embodiment, student voice and inclusion

Workshop 3- Dr Nigel Dower, Aberdeen for a Fairer World/Montgomery Development Education Centre
Education for a fairer world

Workshop 4- Dr Joan Forbes, University of Aberdeen & Prof Gaby Weiner, University of Sussex
Poverty and intersecting inequalities, including gender

This knowledge exchange seminar was attended by over 40 participants, with some of the organisations represented as follows: Fife Council, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Education Scotland, Scottish Government, Home Energy Scotland, NHS Scotland, Tillydrone Community, University of Sussex, University of Aberdeen, Befriend a Child, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, local schools and nurseries.

Materials from both seminars are available online at:

<http://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Programmes/Equality2015/ChildrensViewsofInequalityPoverty.aspx>

3.3. Children and young people's workshops

Over 140 children in four primary schools in Glasgow and a Aberdeen took part in drama workshops led by the Scottish Youth Theatre and in Aberdeen, also by Anne Valyo, Lecturer in Drama, to explore the issues of poverty and inequality from children's perspective. The workshops elicited children's views on what is like to grow up in poverty, how poverty impacts on children's education, well-being and access to services, and what could be done to tackle child poverty in Scotland.

Children then worked with students from Glasgow School of Art, Anne Valyo, University of Aberdeen and school teaching and support staff, to produce materials for an arts exhibition on the theme of poverty.

3.4. Arts Exhibition

An arts exhibition produced by children and young people entitled '*The art of getting by: Young people exploring poverty*' took place between 1-17 May 2015 at Scotland Street School Museum.

A video presentation on the exhibition in the form of a 'virtual arts exhibition' is available here:

<https://vimeo.com/130802192>

A digital version of the exhibition can be seen at:

[flickr.com/photos/94070022@N06/sets/72157653416632101](https://www.flickr.com/photos/94070022@N06/sets/72157653416632101)

The exhibition aimed through presenting children's own ideas, artefacts and voices to raise awareness of children's experiences of poverty and their views on inequality in Scotland and beyond. The exhibition attracted wide interest in Glasgow and further afield and received over 2,500 visitors over two weeks.

The project team recognise and value in particular the central contribution and unending enthusiasm of the students from Glasgow School of Art who led the art workshops and put together the exhibition—Robyn Anderson, Elain Ang, Hayley Dawson, Natasha Fletcher, Maya Kincaid, Heather Lane, Mairi MacLeod, Katarzyna Rymanis Murawska, mentored by Rachel Mimiec (curator), and Maria MaCavana.

An evaluation of the art exhibition took the form of a small-scale research project led by Jennifer Lerpiniere, Emma Young and Ninetta Santoro and included some focus groups with young people and interviews with some of the teachers, art students and mentors. This will be developed into a publication, once data is analysed.

4. Outcomes and additional outputs

The Outcomes of the Programme of activities were:

- *Increased knowledge and understanding of poverty issues* - by developing communities of enquiry involving education, health, children's rights and a broader range of children's services' providers, researchers, ECRs, students and young people, and voluntary sector workers to share expertise in delivering services for children in severe poverty;
- *A greater understanding of children's views of poverty and inequality* - through the active participation of children and young people in workshops aimed at understanding their experiences of inequality and views on how services can be better tuned to needs will help develop grassroots capacity and inform policy and practice;
- *Wider dissemination of current evidence on poverty and its impact on children and young people* – through the collaborative research, authoring and dissemination of four policy briefings to inform multi-agency service provision for children whose lives are affected by poverty, by documenting evidence on experiences of inequality and effective approaches to tackling this;
- *Increased research and evidence-based practice capacity* - through participation of academic and non-academic participants, policy makers, and including students and children and young people in the central belt and in the north-east of Scotland in events, we developed capacity in the organisations involved, and geographically across the country, and fostered a more in-depth understanding of children and young people's experiences of inequality;
- *Sharing of research from the international arena to stimulate evidence-based practice in Scotland* - the two seminars, held in different geographical locations, with international participation, provided a unique platform for practitioners, policy makers and researchers to share knowledge and understanding on current developments in integrated service delivery and inform future policy and research on poverty and children.

In addition to the Outputs mentioned in section 3 above, other outputs include:

Publications

Forbes, J. and Sime, D. (forthcoming, 2016) Child poverty and its impact on migrant children's education and well-being in Western societies, *Education Studies, Special Issue: Place-based Partnerships and New School Designs to Address Poverty, Social Exclusion, and Social Isolation*.

Sime, D. (2016) Poverty in Scotland, in Libor, G. (ed) *Poverty in Europe*, University of Silesia Publishing House.

Sime, D. (2016) Migrant children and young people's 'voice' in healthcare, in Thomas, F. (Ed.) *Handbook of Migration and Health*, Edward Elgar Publishing.

Santoro, N.; Sime, D.; Young, E. (in preparation) *Using art as a medium to address issues of social justice through the curriculum*.

Conference papers

Forbes, J. & Graham, A. (2015) *Tackling child poverty and inequalities – designing-in participation space for children*. Seminar series, University of Aberdeen, School of Education. 16 December 2015.

Forbes, J., Graham, A., Valyo, A., & Shiach, L. (2015) *Poverty and inequalities: Children's experience and views*. Scottish Education Research Association Conference, Symposium on Poverty, Aberdeen, Nov 2015

Forbes, J., Graham, A., Valyo, A., & Shiach, L. (2015) *An interactive café: Children's experiences and expressions of poverty*. 24th June 2015, Lunchtime Seminar, School of Education, University of Aberdeen

Research applications

Sime, D. (2015) *Getting By: Young people's experience of poverty and stigma at the intersection of ethnicity, class and gender*, submitted to the British Academy, £100,000

An application to the Horizon 2020 scheme is currently under discussion.

5. Conclusion

This has been an exciting and innovative Programme, which has used a range of activities to inform a wide range of audiences on current developments in the field of poverty research and good practice and also to examine these issue from the perspectives of children and young people. Thousands of participants have interacted with the findings through the arts exhibition and hundreds of practitioners and policy makers have benefited from the seminar events, the exhibition and the policy briefings. These continue to be disseminated and used by local policy makers and practitioners in a range of services across Scotland and beyond, the policy briefings have been uploaded to academic research platforms such as Academia and Research Gate and have been downloaded globally from these sites.

We would like to thank all presenters, seminar participants, contributors to briefings, Glasgow School of Art students and mentors, teachers, children and parents from the schools involved, for taking part in the events and sharing their experiences and views. Special thanks to the Scottish University Insight Institute for funding the Programme and to Nicola Alan and Ann Logie for their invaluable advice and support.

6. Further Resources for addressing issues of Poverty

All materials from the Programme are available at:

<http://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Programmes/Equality2015/ChildrensViewsofInequalityPoverty.aspx>

The Scottish Government's web page on 'Income and Poverty' statistics
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/IncomePoverty>

Child Poverty Action Group, Scotland Website - useful for information on facts, figures and relevant policy documents
<http://www.cpag.org.uk/scotland>

A map of child poverty in the UK
<http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/why-end-child-poverty/poverty-in-your-area>

Scotland's Commissioner for Children & Young People website, with materials on children's experiences of poverty in Scotland and around the world
<http://www.sccyp.org.uk/ufiles/Learning-Lessons.pdf>
<http://www.sccyp.org.uk/news/in-the-news/austerity-bites-4-stories-from-young-people-in-brussels>

Scottish Youth Parliament's campaign on tackling poverty- useful toolkit for teachers and other professionals working with young people
<http://www.syp.org.uk/poverty-see-it-change-it-W21page-602->

Understanding Glasgow- project run by Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH), looking at indicators of a set of health, well-being and 'progress' indicators
<http://www.understandingglasgow.com/>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation has published several reports on the impact of poverty on children's education, well-being and life aspirations
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/monitoring-poverty-and-social-exclusion-scotland-2015>
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/reducing-poverty-in-the-uk-evidence-reviews>
Save the Children's website on tackling child poverty
<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/child-poverty>

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) State of the Nation: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain Report
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/367461/State_of_the_Nation_-_summary_document.pdf

Prof. Danny Dorling's website, University of Oxford, with lots of publications on inequality
<http://www.dannydorling.org/>

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