

## Social Capital and Employability

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## Three Perspectives

- Transition to Secondary
  - Changes in networks from near end of P7 to end of S1; for one class of 23 young people
- Youth Club Connections
  - 18 young people, 12 to 14yrs; over 15 months
- Unemployed youth; aged 16 to 17
  - 7 young people followed through up to 5 interviews over 18 months

## Forms of Social Capital

- Bonding - strong bonds among group members eg, families, gangs. Helps people to “get by”
- Bridging - builds relationships with a wider, more varied set of people eg, colleagues, neighbours. Helps people to “get ahead”
- Linking – enables connections between people across differences in status eg, politicians, teachers. Helps people to get around

## Findings – the transition to Secondary

- Those with weak links in P7 have weaker links at end of S1;
- All 23 reported no trusted adult at school at end of S1; all 23 nominated trusted adult in P7 without prompting;
- Peer links at P7 with connections out of school are only ones that survive to end of S1; confirmed by Youth Club interviews.

## Forming Aspirations

- Most young people have clear aspirations by 12 years of age (confirmed in two case studies);
- Extended family networks inform and sustain these aspirations (Youth Club)
- Unemployed Early school leavers lack access to work or further education because family networks lack bridging SC

## Disadvantaged Youth

- All had multiple causes of deprivation including poverty; poor housing; poor physical health; mental illness; drug and/or alcohol dependency; low educational qualifications and learning difficulties.
- Family bonding imposed constraints on girls with caring roles;
- Family breakdown created tensions and housing problems

### Unemployment context of Disadvantaged Youth

- Lacked peer networks;
- Family bonding a barrier to bridging SC;
- No career aspiration – just a desperate desire to ‘get a job’ – and a house.
- Chaotic lifestyles
- Low self esteem

### Addressing Unemployment among Disadvantaged Youth

- Community socialisation course led to:
  - Changes in lifestyle;
  - Improved sense of well-being;
  - Limited development of new networks;
  - Access to gym, cooking skills, and media skills.
- Subsequent Progress depends on assignment of key worker

### Conclusions

- Youth form their aspirations from extended family networks by age 12 -14;
- The transition to Secondary can further marginalised disadvantaged youth;
- Establishing Linking and Bridging SC is crucial for success for disadvantaged early school leavers.
- Job skill competencies are neither the priority nor useful without SC – and where it is missing key workers have to make the links.

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