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Risk and Resilience in the Transition to Adulthood - The Role of School experiences

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UCL Leading Edge Day
What does resilience mean for educational psychologists?
28 March 2017

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Outline

- What is resilience?
- Challenges in the transition to adulthood
- What is a successful transition?
- The role of schools in building resilience

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What is Resilience?

➢It is a dynamic process, involving
  ➢'bouncing back' from adverse experiences, to succeed despite adversity
  ➢continued positive or effective functioning in adverse circumstances
  ➢recovery after a significant trauma
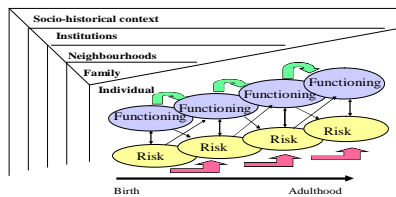
Rutter, 1987, 2012; Masten, 2001, 2014;
Schoon, 2006, 2012, 2017

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Resilience – a developmental process

- Resilience is not a personality characteristic
  - it can only manifest in situations of adversity
- The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age shape an individual's capacity to respond to external shocks or adversity
  - Critical importance of experiences, opportunities and relationships – their timing, duration and associated circumstances
- It is a developmental process
  - Involves ongoing interactions between a developing individual and changing context
  - it can accumulate and develop or reduce over time

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A Developmental-Contextual Model of Resilience

Schoon, 2006

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How to identify resilience?

- Resilience is not directly measured - it is a relational process
- Its identification is based on two judgements:
  - is there now or has their been any significant risk or adversity to be overcome?
  - is the person doing ok?

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The Concept of Risk

- Focus on single risk factors
  - Parental psychopathology
  - Family instability
  - Poverty
- Accumulation of risk effects -> multiple risk models
- Plurality of meaning - the context of risk
- Domain specific effects
- Duration and timing of risk effects

Schoon, 2006, 2012, 2017

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Positive Adaptation and Functioning

➢Doing ok (Masten, 2001, 2014)
- Adjustment within the average for a normative cohort
- Meeting developmental tasks
  - focus on multiple interlinked dimensions, e.g. physical, cognitive, social, emotional, self-determination

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Protective factors

- Protective factors instigate processes that alter the effects of adversity on outcomes
- The presence of protective factors explain why some young people appear resilient while others do not
- It's a balancing act
- Negative outcomes are more likely where the risk factors outweigh the protective factors
- Resilience interventions focus on increasing the amount of protective factors in order to improve mental health and well-being

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The 'Short List'

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Family and Social Networks
- Effective care-giving and parenting
- Close relationships with other capable adults
- Close friends and romantic partners

Wider community
- Effective schools
- Effective neighbourhoods

Individual characteristics
- Problem-solving skills
- Self-control, emotion regulation, planfulness
- Motivation to succeed
- Self efficacy

Masten, 2001, 2014

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The Transition to Adulthood

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- Pivotal in setting the scene for adult functioning and adjustment; is both formative and risk laden
- Demographically dense period involving assumption of multiple, interlinked social roles: The Big 5
- Shaped by previous experiences and current conditions

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Current Debates

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- Normative approach – emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000)
  - Ideal type of late and protracted transitions (Billari & Liefbroer, 2010)
- Increasing individualisation
  - De-standardisation of transitions (Modell et al., 1976; Beck, 1986; Buchmann, 1989)
  - Entrepreneurs of the self (Foucault, 1979; Ehrenberg, 2009)
- Cumulative (dis)advantages and polarization of experiences
  - fast versus slow transitions (Bynner et al., 2002; Jones, 2002; Ross et al., 2009)
  - optimal versus problematic transitions (Kerckhoff, 1993; McLanahan, 2004, 2014)
- Diverse Pathways View – (Schoon, 2015)
  - Multi-directionality, multi-finality, plasticity -> more than one optimal pathway
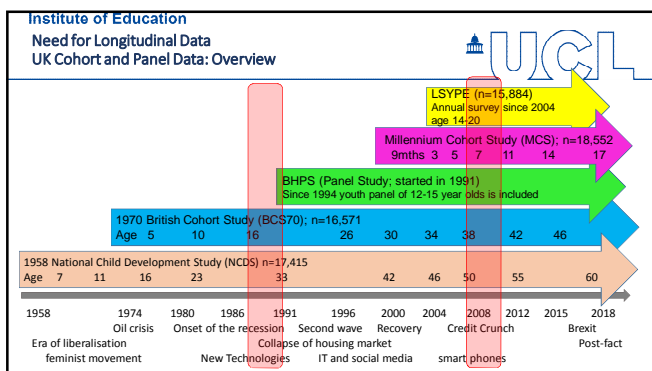
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Diverse Pathways View

- Ecological approach of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)
- Life course theory (Elder, 1998, 2004) with its emphasis on time and timing of transitions
- Developmental regulation (Heckhausen, 1999)
- Person-environment fit (Eccles et al., 1993)
- Person-centred: variation in how experiences combine within individuals (Magnusson, Bergman & El-Khouri, 2003)
- Longitudinal – following lives over time

Schoon, 2015

PATHWAYS TO ADULTHOOD

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Need for Longitudinal Data
UK Cohort and Panel Data: Overview

LSYPE (n=15,884)
Annual survey since 2004
age 14-20

Millennium Cohort Study (MCS); n=18,552
9mths 3   5   7   11   14   17

BHPS (Panel Study; started in 1991)
Since 1994 youth panel of 12-15 year olds is included

1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70); n=16,571
Age 5   10   16   26   30   34   38   42   46

1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS) n=17,415
Age 7   11   16   23   33   42   46   50   55   60

1958	1974	1980	1986	1991	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2015	2018
	Oil crisis		Onset of the recession		Second wave	Recovery		Credit Crunch			Brexit
Era of liberalisation			Collapse of housing market								Post-fact
feminist movement			New Technologies		IT and social media			smart phones			

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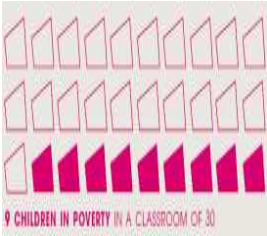
Challenges in the Transition to Independence

- Unequal life chances
- Gap between aspirations and reality
- Youth unemployment (even among graduates)
- Precarious employment (short term contracts, low pay, under-employment, insecurity and lack of progression)
- Housing

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Children living in poverty

- In 2014-15 there were 3.9 million children living in poverty in the UK. That's 28 per cent of children, or 9 in a classroom of 30.
- Child poverty reduced dramatically between 1998/9-2011/12 when 800,000 children were lifted out of poverty. Since 2010, child poverty figures have flat-lined.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2016.
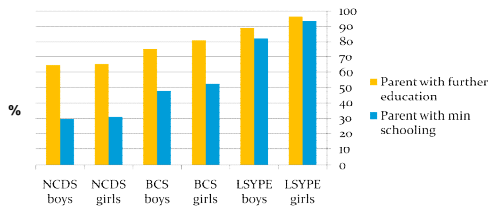
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Social inequality

- Children and young people growing up in relative disadvantaged families (characterised by low levels of parental education, low income, low social status, family instability) have less resources
  - More stressed parents with less energy for effective parenting
  - Poor housing, disadvantaged area, less resourced schools
  - Lower levels of academic attainment and socio-emotional capabilities
  - School drop-out and early school leaving
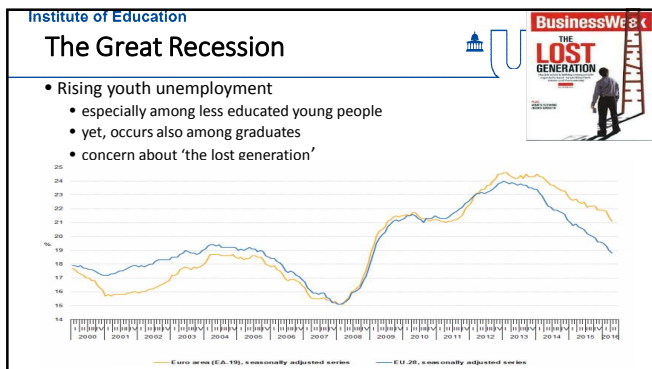- Cumulation of disadvantages and adversity – a vicious cycle

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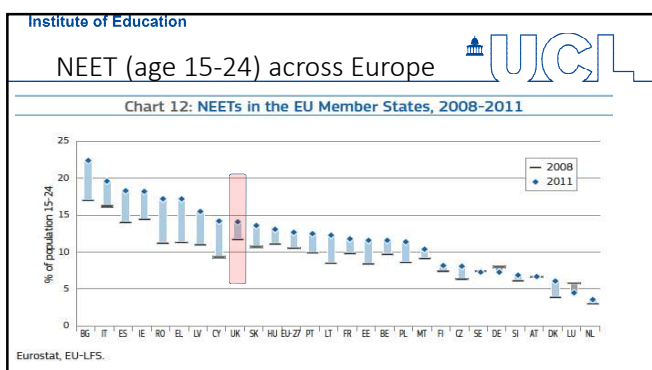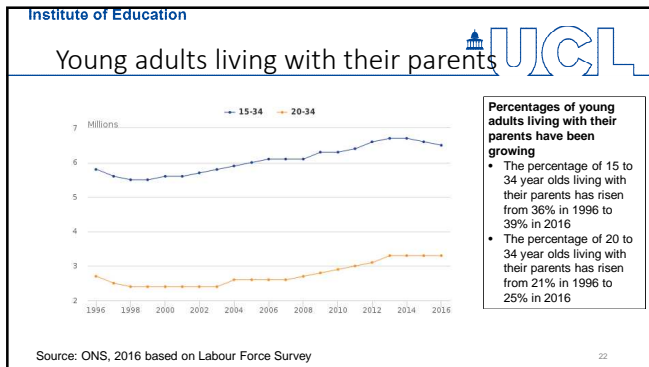## Teenage expectations for further education by gender and parental education

Schoon, 2010

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The Great Recession

- Rising youth unemployment
  - especially among less educated young people
  - yet, occurs also among graduates
  - concern about 'the lost generation'

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Increase of the "Gig Economy"

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NEET (age 15-24) across Europe

Chart 12: NEETs in the EU Member States, 2008-2011

Eurostat, EU-LFS.

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Young adults living with their parents

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15-34   20-34

Millions

Percentages of young adults living with their parents have been growing
- The percentage of 15 to 34 year olds living with their parents has risen from 36% in 1996 to 39% in 2016
- The percentage of 20 to 34 year olds living with their parents has risen from 21% in 1996 to 25% in 2016

Source: ONS, 2016 based on Labour Force Survey

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Transition Experiences

Evidence from the Cohort Studies

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Transitions in historical context

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Comparing experiences in two age cohorts

	BCS: born 1970, aged 18 in 1988	LSYPE: born 1990, Aged 18 in 2008
FT Education	25%	45%
Employed (with or without training)	68%	40% (33% paid work, 6% apprenticeships)
Out of the labour force (NEET)	7%	16%

Focus on the most recent cohort

Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) born in 1989/90

Sequence analysis of monthly activity data collected between September 2006 to May 2010 – 45 months period following the end of compulsory schooling: FT education, FT employment, Apprenticeships, NEET

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Transitions between age 16 to 20 (LSYPE)

- Mostly education (45.2%)
- Early work orientation(21.1%)
- Apprenticeship (6.5%)
- Unemployment after further education (7.1%)
- Employment after further education (15.5%)
- NEET (5.6%)

Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2017

Predictors of Transition Pathways

Multiple interlinked influences:

- Area characteristics (IMD)
- Family socio-economic background
- School characteristics
- Individual characteristics (gender, ethnicity) as well as competences - both cognitive and socio-emotional competences play a role:
  - Academic attainment
  - Academic self concept
  - School engagement
  - Education expectations
  - Goal certainty

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Interaction Effects

- Does agency play a significant role in high risk conditions?
- We identified 2 significant interaction effects:
  - socio-economic risk by forethought: higher likelihood to enter employment after some further education
  - socio-economic risk by self-efficacy: higher likelihood to be unemployed after some further education

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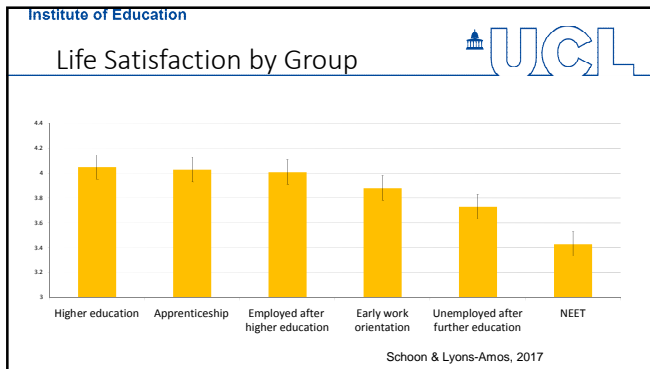
What is a successful transition?

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What is a successful transition?

- Doing ok
- Adjustment within the average for a normative cohort
- Meeting developmental tasks
  - Objective achievements (education, occupational position, income)
  - Subjective evaluation (life satisfaction, health and wellbeing)
- Timing and sequencing
  - Normative, or 'on-time transitions' are 'culturally prepared' by socialization and institutional arrangements (Model, 1989) and are understood to be psychologically salutary
  - those who are 'off-time': too early or too late are thought to be the target of negative social sanctions and experience psychological strain (Heckhausen, 1999; Rossi, 1980)
  - Can vary by age, culture and historical context

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Life Satisfaction by Group

Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2017

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Risk and Resilience in the Transition from School to Work

The role of protective factors and processes

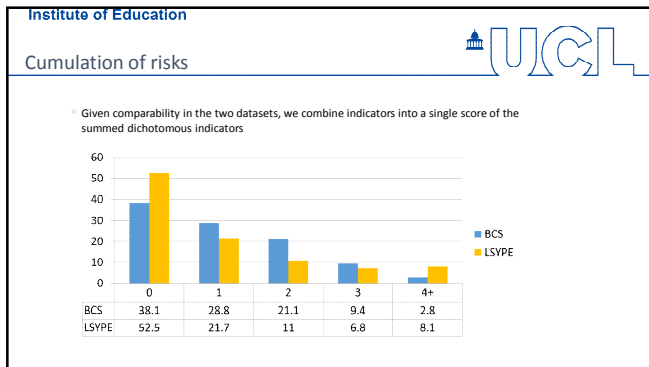Comparing experiences in two age cohorts (BCS70 and LSYPE)

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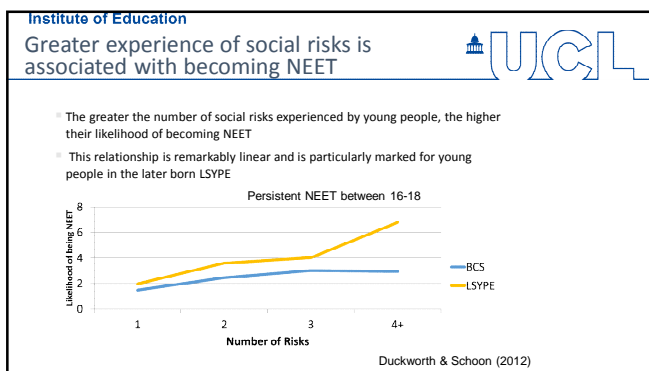---

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Indicators of social risk in two age cohorts growing up twenty years apart

Dichotomised indicators of social risk that are comparable across the two cohorts

	BCS (%) Born 1970 Aged 16 in 1986	LSYPE (%) Born 1990 Aged 16 in 2006
Low parent education (<NVQ2)	.49	.16
Low parent SES (routine occupations)	.18	.23
YP lives in a lone parent household	.03	.17
YP was born to a teen parent	.08	.07
YP lives in social housing	.28	.12
YP lives in a workless household	.04	.09

Duckworth & Schoon (2012)

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Cumulation of risks

- Given comparability in the two datasets, we combine indicators into a single score of the summed dichotomous indicators

	0	1	2	3	4+
BCS	38.1	28.8	21.1	9.4	2.8
LSYPE	52.5	21.7	11	6.8	8.1

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Greater experience of social risks is associated with becoming NEET

- The greater the number of social risks experienced by young people, the higher their likelihood of becoming NEET
- This relationship is remarkably linear and is particularly marked for young people in the later born LSYPE

Persistent NEET between 16-18

Duckworth & Schoon (2012)

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What works to increase resilience

- Individual attributes
  - Previous academic attainment (Duncan et al., 2012; Heckman, 2006)
  - Educational aspirations and engagement (Appleton et al., 2006; Schoon, 2006); self regulation
  - Early engagement in the labour market (Mortimer et al, 1999; 2004)
- Characteristics of the family and wider social networks
  - Parental education aspirations (Eccles, 1993; Pillig, 1990; Schoon et al., 2004)
  - Parental monitoring
  - Close relationships with other capable adults
- Aspects of the wider social context
  - Effective schools (Rutter, 1989; Schoon & Bartley, 2008; Van Ryzin, 2011)
  - Effective neighbourhoods - area characteristics

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Beating the Odds

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NEET

		Yes	No
Risk	**High**	Expected Vulnerability	Resilient: Not being NEET despite high risk
	Low	Unexpected vulnerability	Expected positive adjustment

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Risk and Protection

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Reference group is the "Expected Vulnerability" group, i.e. YPs exposed to risks who become NEET

	Not NEET for 6 months or more between ages 16 – 19 years	
	BCS	**LSYPE**
Cumulative Social Risk score	.89	.72***
Female	.69***	1.07
Reading (age 10/11)	1.21*	1.19†
Maths (age 10/11)	1.05	1.26**
School motivation (age 16)	1.69**	1.51**
YP wants to stay on in education (age 16)	1.13	1.44***
YP does not truant (age 16)	1.93***	1.66***
YP has part-time job (age 16)	1.95***	1.24
Parent wants YP to stay on (age 16)	1.09	1.23
School characteristics (social indicators)	1.18***	1.20**

† p <.10; * p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001

Duckworth & Schoon, 2012

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Is resilience unlimited?

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- Resilience is, in part, dependent on the level of adversity
- Resilience and adversity are distributed unequally across the population and are related to broader socio-economic inequalities
- Resilient individuals often have poorer outcomes than those who have low-risk exposure
- Resilient individuals are not unharmed or invulnerable
- Even highly resilient individuals cannot overcome all, in particular severe levels of adversity

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School context is crucial

▪ Improving achievements

▪ Promoting school motivation and educational engagement

▪ Supporting transitions

➢ represent possible leverages for intervention as they are malleable and also carry spill-over benefits to capacity building and later attainments

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Implication for Education Policy

- Need to develop the 'whole child' with a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional competences
- Developmental focus
- Teacher training
- Strong partnerships
- Supporting schools and teachers

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Schools can help to improve competences

- Children are not born with a fixed set of abilities
- Schools, as universal free services can play an important compensatory role in the development of children
- Developing the 'whole child': children's wellbeing and happiness in school underpin their attainment and achievement (Ofsted, 2013)
- Promote engagement and involvement through creating a positive 'learning architecture' encouraging feelings of competence, belonging and autonomy
- Evidence on effective school-based interventions (Gutman & Schoon, 2015; Marmot, 2014)
- School based interventions depend on local context, experience, need and resources, and support from local authorities

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Developmental Focus

- Risks and child competencies develop and change over time
- Early experiences and adjustment influence later life outcomes
- Early years a crucial window of opportunity for interventions
- Yet, never too early – never too late
- Need to build sustainable support structures
- Supporting transitions

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Teacher training

- Invest in teacher training and professional development
- Consider issues such as low pay, status, poor working conditions, limited career mobility
- Recruitment and retention are major challenges
  - Investment in staff support, including training and guidance and structural conditions (ratios, group size, etc.)
- Pedagogical frameworks
  - Broadly focused on children's holistic development and wellbeing rather than narrow literacy and numeracy objectives
  - Flexible curricula developed in co-operation between staff, parents and children allow practitioners to experiment with different approaches
  - Focus on reflection and experience

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Strong partnerships

- Improve the quality of education for all, but for children living in poorer neighbourhoods in particular
- Interventions to improve resilience should aim for integrated service delivery, involving children, their parents, teachers and the wider community
- The school as a community hub – connecting parents and teachers, reinforcing community networks, engaging with employers and local business
- Support for life long learning
- Support from local authorities and government policy

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Thank you

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