



Positive discrimination in European education and training systems - lessons from the implementation of area-based initiatives for policy and practice

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Lessons from area-based initiatives in education and training

An independent report authored for the European Commission by the NESET network of experts



Authored by Professor Carlo Raffo with Professor Alan Dyson and Dr. Kirstin Kerr,
University of Manchester

on behalf of the NESET network of experts

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This is an independent report compiled for the European Commission by the Network of Experts on Social aspects of Education and Training (NESET). Its main author is **Professor Carlo Raffo** with **Professor Alan Dyson** and **Dr. Kirstin Kerr** at the Centre for Equity in Education, School of Education, University of Manchester, UK.

Other members of the NESET network and other experts in this field provided input and reviewed drafts.

All responsibility for the choice, analysis and interpretation of the data and opinions presented in this report lies with the authors.

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Executive summary

Educational outcomes within countries are **spatially patterned**, with young people in richer neighbourhoods, cities and regions tending to participate in education for longer and achieve higher qualifications than those in poorer areas.

Since the 1960s, many countries have put in place "positive discrimination" measures in education policy aimed at narrowing the achievement gap between rich and poor. These have included many **area-based initiatives** – interventions aimed at specific places. This report reviews the available evidence about the nature and impact of area-based interventions.

The evidence suggests that across the EU area-based initiatives in education and training have **varying degrees of success**. While many interventions produce some positive outcomes, impacts tend to be small-scale and to be distributed unevenly across different aspects of the intervention and different sites of implementation. Factors that explain why area-based initiatives often have fewer measurable outcomes are:

- *Administrative difficulties* - Area-based initiatives are often ineffective because of inaccurate targeting. Difficulties also arise from the need to work with different government departments which have different funding streams, different priorities, objectives and time-scales.
- *Service delivery and partnership problems* – Genuine inter-professional collaborations at the point of service delivery are difficult to achieve. Service providers may have different perspectives on initiatives from people operating at the policy and administration levels. Furthermore, there are problems with partnership working and partnership overload, the amount of additional bureaucracy and in some cases a lack of integration between initiatives dealing with the same problem or the same client group.
- *Community engagement* - The realities of community involvement in area-based initiatives on the ground can prove complex.
- *Short lifetime of projects* - an additional difficulty faced by the vast majority of area-based initiatives is the short life span of projects before they get either disbanded or merged into other programmes. Key personnel and projects disappear when the funding stops, if not sooner. Embedding change requires sustained and long-term commitments. Too many area-based initiatives programmes lacked the political will to support such long-term commitments.
- *Inadequate funding* – most area-based initiatives were generally poorly funded in relation to the issues they are seeking to address.
- *Limited scope of ABIs* - Area-based initiatives tend to focus narrowly on educational deprivation rather than engage with the broader socio-economic inequalities that cause poor educational outcomes in disadvantaged areas – such as poverty, poor housing and poor health.
- *Policy conflicts* – Area-based initiatives are often embedded in an *unsupportive wider policy framework* which privileges practices and outcomes which compete with those developed within area-based initiatives. For example, policies of "school choice" in many EU contexts undermine the link between schools and the areas they serve by offering families the opportunity to send their children to distant schools.
- *A lack of focus on structural inequalities* - Area-based initiatives tend to attribute the manifestations of disadvantage in an area to local factors and to overlook the extent to which those local manifestations are the result of structural factors that operate well beyond the confines of the designated area. There is also a tendency of area-based initiatives to pathologise

disadvantaged populations, blaming them rather than structural factors for the problems they experience, and to misrepresent the distribution of disadvantage, overlooking the uncomfortable fact that most disadvantaged people live outside targeted areas.

Lessons learnt

The evidence suggests that area-based initiatives in education and training need to be locally-developed initiatives that work on their own terms, as determined by the areas they focus on and the issues they are setting out to address. This means *there is no simple "recipe" for creating an effective ABI*. However, the following principles and measures are likely to increase the effectiveness of area-based initiatives:

- *The use of resources*

The resources available to education-oriented area-based initiatives have typically been very small, in relation both to the size of the issues being faced, and the amount of resource already available to the services in the area.

- *Sufficiently broad aims*

Although area-based initiatives try to marshal coherent efforts to tackle disadvantage, it is often challenging to bring together all the actors and institutions that serve an area. In practice, too many area-based initiatives concentrate their efforts too narrowly on schools. This means they can make little impression on area factors that are beyond the reach of the school. *While the scope of the initiative has to be manageable, it also has to identify and bring together the range of partners who are best placed to make a difference.*

- *Perseverance and long-term planning*

Many area-based initiatives in education and training have typically been funded only for a few years and then abandoned in favour of the next initiative. This has made it difficult to develop long-term strategies, or for small improvements to be built up over time and to lead to more fundamental change. It can also make

potential partners unwilling to "give their all" to an initiative which they know will not last. *Professionals and policy makers need to think long-term. This is not just in terms of building up to bigger outcomes, but also of building the capacity across partner organisations to sustain an initiative over time.*

- *Community involvement*

Although a number of area-based initiatives in education and training recognise the need for community involvement, in practice the vast majority have been dominated by the views and priorities of professionals. This often means that they have been unable to develop an understanding of how people live in an area and what they need. Equally, they have been unable to call on the resources of local people to tackle their own problems. *Area-based initiatives need to find ways to access the views of local people and to take these into account in constructive ways. Local professionals cannot simply impose what they think are the right "solutions" for an area. Unless local people support these activities too, they may simply never opt-in to anything the initiative tries to do.*

- *Alignment to wider policy*

There is only so much that area-based initiatives in education and training can achieve, and many of the issues they seek to address have their origins outside the area. *Given that area-based initiatives typically have small effects, they are highly unlikely to make a difference if they swim against the tide of other social, economic and policy trends. Some alignment of what happens locally and what is happening centrally is important.*

- *Clarity of purpose and design*

Some area-based initiatives lack clarity as to their purposes, or how they are going to achieve their desired outcomes. *It is important to have a clear design which shows how an initiative's actions will engage with local dynamics; the outcomes it hopes to achieve; and how, in practice, it will do this.*

- *Governance and accountability*

Some of the evidence for why area-based initiatives struggle point to service delivery and administrative issues that require appropriate governance and accountability arrangements. *These would then enable area-based initiatives to generate a collective focus on the area rather than on the performance of individual services per se.*

- *National support*

In general, area-based initiatives will need support at national level. As a minimum, they need "permission" to take charge of their own agendas. National policy makers need to ensure that the pursuit of "localism" is not only rhetorical and that area-based initiatives are not undermined by regulatory prohibitions, central mandates, or accountability requirements that cut across area-based strategies.

Introduction

Educational outcomes within countries are **spatially patterned**, with young people in richer neighbourhoods, cities and regions tending to participate in education for longer and achieve higher qualifications than those in poorer areas. Although not all socio-economically disadvantaged young people achieve poor educational outcomes or are located in spatially concentrated poor areas, significant percentages of those young people who achieve the lowest educational outcomes do in fact live in the poorest neighbourhoods of de-industrialised cities, towns and ports. Evidence suggests that such concentrations may create "neighbourhood effects" which compound the existing disadvantages people experience.

This report reviews the available evidence about the nature and impact of positive discrimination interventions in education and training in the EU and beyond focusing particularly on **area-based initiatives**, on interventions in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. It documents predominately the extent to which education-related area-based initiatives have improved the educational attainments for those groups of young people in primary, secondary and post compulsory education that are relatively poor, live in the most disadvantaged of areas and who have historically achieved the lowest educational attainments.

Scope of the report

As will be seen, most area-based initiatives in the EU and beyond that focus on education/training or have an education/training component within them predominately concentrate on improving the educational attainment of socio-economically disadvantaged young people in the education sector rather than on improving their labour market transitions through vocational education training programmes. Such provision is often organised via mainstream national training policy mechanisms or supported at regional/national level via the EU (e.g. Structural Funds) but is not area based (apart from at the very broadest levels) as defined in this report. However the report does make reference to ABI programmes that contain specific training and/or skills development remits in such sectors. Given the main emphasis of most area-based initiatives the report will document predominately the extent to which area-based initiatives have improved the educational attainments for those groups of young people in primary, secondary and post compulsory education that are relatively poor, live in the most disadvantaged of areas and who have historically achieved the lowest educational attainments. The report will to a lesser extent examine the impact of area-based initiatives on training and labour market transitions. As such the report will focus on the extent to which area-based initiatives have narrowed the achievement gap between those young people that are more and less economically and educationally advantaged. Although the report examines the extent to which area-based initiatives have impacted on young people's educational attainment, it will also discuss improvements in various other social, economic, cultural and political outcomes for families and neighbourhoods that are due to the direct or indirect impact of aspects of ABI policy; particularly if these improvements appear to support the educational improvements and labour market transition of young people.

Although the report's focus is on educational/training interventions in socio-economically disadvantaged areas there is a recognition that in such areas socio-economic disadvantage is intertwined with issues of ethnicity and gender and in particular issues of ethnic demographic segregation that have resulted in enhanced levels of disadvantage for certain groups. The report will therefore examine area-based initiatives that deal with interlocking issues of demographics and educational disadvantage. However, the report will not in any detail examine educational/training interventions that have been developed to deal solely with specific groups of young people such as ethnic minorities, religious minorities, linguistic minorities, disabilities, indigenous minorities and gender.

Where these groups are spatially located in disadvantaged areas, attend schools or engage in training provision in those areas and are also socio-economically disadvantaged, then the report will include those area-based initiatives that have dealt with these disadvantages, even where the predominant focus has been on providing additional funds to educational and training providers that then use these funds to meet the educational and training challenges associated with specific group characteristics (for example language barriers, special educational needs, gender issues etc.).

Although the report provides a comprehensive account of educational area-based initiatives in the EU and beyond it is not exhaustive or microscopically forensic. Firstly the report relies on reports written in English and therefore potentially excludes studies in other languages that may detail particular examples of area-based initiatives. However, the report does attempt to examine pan – EU projects that engage with research from numerous EU country contexts. However, given this constraint there is more evidence in the report that reflects the work of area-based initiatives in English speaking countries. Secondly, although the report does provide information about the broad strands of ABI activity in each of the documented initiatives, it does not provide specific details about the precise micro implementations at school level. It was judged that these would be too multifarious and complex to aid appropriate understanding of the more general themes of ABIs activity and their impacts on educational outcomes. In addition many of the smaller and specific ABI programmes sponsored or funded through broader programme interventions in various EU and other country contexts were deemed too small scale and time limited to be included in the analysis, although specific examples of small scale and localized interventions were used to demonstrate educational strands in more generic ABI programmes. In addition the report will generally not examine in detail many small-scale ABI interventions that had no or very poorly developed evaluation strategies. Finally the report attempts, where possible, to document those area based initiatives in the EU and beyond that have an evaluative impact evidence base associated with them. The report will, in addition, provide brief updates where appropriate on the current state of affairs of area based initiatives. The report will not however draw out recommendations from such updates due to the lack of an evidence base associated with them. Therefore building on the substantive evidence contained in the report, recommendations will be made as to how the principles and practices of ABIs, in general terms, might be improved.

What is an area-based initiative?

The term "area-based initiatives" has been used by policy makers in EU and other country contexts to denote specific social, cultural and economic interventions in particular areas that are geared to improving various place and people specific well-being indicators of inhabitants living in those areas e.g. housing, transport, health, crime, employment and education indicators.

The term "area" has not been used in any fixed spatial way to suggest a particular defined scale and demographic but instead has generally been utilised to denote an area of concentrated poverty as measured by various indexes of deprivation, sometimes as clearly defined as a neighbourhood and at other times more broadly defined as town, city or sub-region. "Areas" in this sense tend not to coincide with the administrative divisions within which policies are made and resources marshalled (although the report does contain examples of such approaches to defining areas). Typically, they are smaller than such divisions, though there are examples of initiatives that transcend administrative boundaries. However "areas" in this report are not defined as large geographic regions of EU countries. In whichever way, focusing on the area makes it possible to configure services and resources in ways that are difficult within "normal" policy and practice. Areas are also likely to be experiencing particular manifestations of interrelated economic and social disadvantage, including poor levels of health, housing,

employment and education, high levels of crime and disorder and problems of social cohesion. Area-based initiatives have therefore attempted to deal with these challenges by either developing specific programmes to deal with particular aspects of disadvantage in an area e.g. health or education or through the development of more general programmes that recognise the interrelated problems that groups of people are experiencing in those areas. In the latter case area-based initiatives may have multiple foci and may, to a lesser or greater extent, attempt to deliver interventions in more integrated ways.

For the purposes of this report the term ABI will be used as a short hand for exploring area based interventions that focus clearly on education and training initiatives. This may, however, include the educational or training dimensions of more general ABI policies.

Although not all socio-economically disadvantaged young people achieve poor educational outcomes or are located in spatially concentrated poor areas, evidence from within the EU and other industrial nations suggests that significant percentages of those young people who achieve the lowest educational outcomes do in fact live in the poorest neighbourhoods of de-industrialised cities, towns and ports. Evidence suggests that such concentrations may create "neighbourhood effects" which compound the existing disadvantages people experience. Different neighbourhood characteristics shape children's educational outcomes over and above the effects of social class or the overall deprivation levels of the areas. Young people's aspirations are shaped significantly by a wide range of characteristics of where they lived rather than simply by the level of deprivation. These include particular orientations to local labour market and related views about vocational education and training. In addition to these neighbourhoods effects there is also evidence to suggest that disadvantaged young people living in disadvantaged places are also more likely to attend schools whose intakes reflect greater segregated concentrations of poverty than the neighbourhoods from which they draw. Taken together this data suggest that there is something about areas that merits specific interventions to deal with some of these dynamics.

Categories of area-based initiatives

Although ABI policies in EU country contexts and beyond have been of many kinds, frequently emerging and disappearing within the space of a few years, they can perhaps be best categorized under three main headings:

- ABIs targeted at schools and their communities in disadvantaged areas that predominately enrol a high proportion of disadvantaged or poor students
- ABIs co-ordinating policies in disadvantaged areas across education, health and social welfare;
- ABIs that focus on broader area regeneration initiatives (e.g. infrastructure, housing, employment etc.) that include an education and/or training component, and in particular focus on links between education, vocational skills development and employment.

For each of the three categories there is also a distinction between centrally-mandated area-based initiatives (i.e. where area-based initiatives are set up in response to government policy) and locally-developed area-based initiatives, where local actors use the flexibilities within national policies to develop their own area approaches, but where these are not mandated by or necessarily funded by central government. In addition, some education systems in the EU have considerable local flexibility whilst others are much more centrally-directed and so area-based initiatives will often have different meanings in these different systems.

The main strategy for ABIs targeted at schools and their communities is to provide **additional resources** to schools (based on a variety of index of deprivation funding formulas) in the poorest areas in order to help engage disadvantaged young people, in the main, and their families with education and to improve their educational attainments. In terms of the totality of area-based initiatives reviewed, these types of approaches appear to be the most common. They include:

- England – Educational Priority Areas, Education Action Zone, Excellence in Cities, City Challenge, RSA Area-Based Curriculum
- France - Zones d'Education Prioritaires (ZEP)
- Portugal – Educational Zone for Priority Action (TEIP)
- Cyprus – Educational Priority Zones
- Belgium – ZEPs (in French speaking community)
- Spain – PROA programme
- Australia – Disadvantaged Schools Programme

Common features to most of these ABI comprise a focus on enhanced teaching and learning strategies, specialist support to assist students with additional educational needs, parental/community engagement programmes, behaviour improvement programmes and numeracy and literacy improvement strategies.

A number of area-based initiatives focus on co-ordinating policies in disadvantaged areas across education, health and social welfare. These approaches recognise the multifaceted challenges that young people in particular places face. Some of these initiatives concentrate on locating a variety of education, health and social welfare services in neighbourhood community schools. Other initiatives focus on neighbourhood-located centres that contained a variety of services that were managed through a local consortium of providers overseen by local government and focused on early years interventions. Others again cover a wider geographical area of disadvantage but in a more holistic way. This involves co-ordinating and purchasing various types of service level provision in that area in order to (a) meet the different age specific educational requirements of young people and (b) provide parents and the community more generally with support that might enable young people's educational progress. In seeking to engage with the complex nature of children's ecologies these types of area-based initiatives anticipate that particular outcomes in one aspect of a child's life could influence their outcomes in other aspects. Examples of ABIs in this category included:

- England – Sure Start Children Centres, Full Service Extended Schools (FSSES)
- Flanders – Community Schools
- Netherlands – Community Schools
- US – Tulsa Area Community Initiative (TACSI), City Connects initiative in Boston, The Redwood City 2020 initiative, Harlem Children's Zone

Paralleling the EU's Urban Community Initiative and Structural Funds Programme, there are area-based initiatives that focus on broader area regeneration initiatives (e.g. infrastructure, housing, employment etc.) and that at the same time include educational and training strands (with many of these focusing on the links between education and employment). This category of ABI is perhaps the most complex to define, in that many of the educational and training strands are part of a more general ABI dedicated to holistic improvements of particular zones or areas. Many of these area-based initiatives have diffused and localised governance strategies that include strong components of community representation. However, many of the educational and training interventions that develop as part of such programmes are a complex mix of intersecting and overlapping projects. In addition, although they appear to be part of a more strategic ABI approach, many educational and training strands are predominately school and/or college/training provider-focused and provide few opportunities for engaging in integrated strategies at the local level – the strongest element of such integrating work focusing on educational interventions that attempt to improve the links between schooling and employment. However it is in this category of ABI where the majority of area-based training programmes are most apparent. Examples of this more general category of ABI include:

- England – National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Single Regeneration Budget, New Deal for Communities
- Sweden – The Swedish Metropolitan Policy and Malmo Commission

However, there is a useful example from beyond the EU that is quite different to many ABIs in this category. The Porto Alegre project in Brazil, although not strictly an ABI as defined by this report, has developed a mainstream democratic participatory budgeting programme for undertaking city wide improvements that include a major and integral educational strand of activity.

In summarising the nature and type of ABIs reviewed by the report, the evidence suggests that the vast majority of area-based initiatives have tended to reflect single strand, school/vocationally focused and government/local authority/school/college led approaches. Although this is what might be expected, the report asks questions about the extent to which area-based initiatives have engaged with the complex ecology of disadvantaged places or the extent to which they have democratically engaged with communities in those places.

The later chapters of the report concentrate on the impact of area-based initiatives. It has to be acknowledged that this has often been less than had been hoped-for. The report therefore goes on to consider some of the explanations for why area-based initiatives have fewer measurable outcomes than anticipated by their advocates.

The report concludes by arguing that, despite limited impact, area-based initiatives remain an important strategy for addressing social and educational inequalities but that if they are to be more successful they need to be reconceptualised.

The main body of the report contains references to the studies and policy documents reviewed in the study. A bibliography of key research papers, evaluation reports and policy documents linked to each section of the report is included in Annex 1.

Chapter 1. What is the broad rationale for education-oriented area-based initiatives?

OECD reports (OECD, 2012a, 2012b), EU reports (Ballas et al, 2012), national government reports (Chowdry et al, 2009) and other international research (Raffo et al, 2007) all point to an on-going educational attainment gap in most affluent countries between more and less socio-economically advantaged groups of young people. The evidence suggest that the relationship between educational outcomes and socio-economic status of young people and their families is perhaps more enduring than any other demographic variable, including gender and ethnicity. That being said the interrelationship of low socio-economic status (SES) with particular dimensions of gender and ethnicity does point to particular socio-economically disadvantaged groupings performing least well in most education systems (e.g. Roma children). In addition evidence from within the EU and other industrial nations suggests that many of those young people who achieve the lowest educational outcomes are concentrated in the poorest neighbourhoods of de-industrialised cities, towns and ports, with the ensuing potential of "neighbourhood effects" exacerbating the existing disadvantages people experience (Kintrea et al, 2011). Quite how these effects arise and operate is still not fully understood, but various combinations of stressed services, limited social networks, and restricted education, leisure and employment opportunities might be implicated.

It is also clear that different areas create different dynamics, pose different challenges and offer different opportunities. Areas with similar levels of economic disadvantage differ, amongst other things, in the composition of their populations (for instance, in terms of ethnicity), the accessibility, quality and organisation of services, their transport connections to other areas, the range of leisure facilities, the nature and availability of employment opportunities, and the character and quality of housing stock. Not surprisingly, therefore, in-depth studies repeatedly find that the experience and implications of living in areas that appear to be similarly disadvantaged are in fact markedly different. For example certain studies have found that different neighbourhood characteristics shaped children's educational outcomes over and above the effects of social class or the overall deprivation levels of the areas (Webber & Butler 2007). Similarly, other studies found that young people's aspirations were shaped significantly by a wide range of characteristics of where they lived rather than simply by the level of deprivation (Kintrea et al, 2011, Lupton & Kintrea, 2011).

In addition to these neighbourhoods effects there is also evidence to suggest that disadvantaged young people living in disadvantaged places are also more likely to attend schools whose intakes reflect greater segregated concentrations of poverty than the neighbourhoods from which they draw (Duckworth, 2008). Although this to a lesser extent as always been the case, such concentrations are partly being exacerbated by the mechanism of school choice and competition in most EU country context that allows those families with the greater means and greater knowledge of the school system to choose 'better' schools for their children out of their immediate neighbourhoods. The residualising effect is a growing number of poor young people in schools in poor neighbourhoods with greater levels of low aggregate educational attainments.

Historically there have been attempts in many EU country contexts to combat educational inequalities associated with low socio-economic status. Over the last 40 years or so educational policy in many countries has tended to respond to educational inequality in predominately one of two ways that have, at times, operated simultaneously. The on-going and main focus for improved educational fairness has been attempts to raise educational quality for all by raising outcomes across education system as a whole and by improving the fairness of distribution of such outcomes. In many countries this has included the development of a powerful mix of target-setting, national curricula and pedagogical development, and high stakes accountability. The underlying argument to such an approach is that all schools, no matter what the intake or where they are located, should be able to achieve broadly similar results with a broadly similar curriculum.

However, educational data from across the EU and beyond continues to suggest that although improvements can be made through the school systems of most EU countries, these tend to be sporadic and inconsistent. The continuing difficulties that many schools in poor EU contexts face in improving educational outcomes has therefore resulted in a plethora of interventions that have provided additional compensatory resources to those schools and their areas. Many of these interventions can be classified as area-based initiatives and positively discriminatory in that their focus is on providing additional resourcing for educational improvements in schools in poor area contexts.

But what are the explanations for why young people in affluent countries that are relatively poor, and that live in areas of relative poverty, do not achieve the same level of educational attainments, in general terms, as their more affluent counterparts? Much international research (Raffo et al, 2007) that examines the link between poverty and poor educational outcomes in affluent countries do so based on one or more of three different levels of analysis:

- the individual
- immediate social contexts
- broader social structures and inequality

1.1. Explanations focusing on the individual

Many research studies examining the link between educational outcome and poverty focus on the experiences and action of individuals and in particular highlight the growing importance of choice in the way young people navigate their educational experiences and trajectories. Arguments developed by such studies include ideas such as the growing dissolution of traditional socio-cultural dynamics such as class in pre-ordaining the educational outcomes of young people. The emphasis is on young people's individual educational identity and actions, recognising, however, that these are constrained by family and peer networks of influence that pertain to the individual and that are reflected in the dynamics of poor places (see below).

Other more controversial studies focus on individual young people's inherited intellectual capability and intelligence that pre-ordains one's ability to succeed in society. The arguments developed in such studies suggest that inherited capabilities mean individuals have fewer opportunities to improve the position in to which they are born. Research based on this approach suggests that individuals that are poor achieve poorer educational outcomes because they are more likely to be cognitively less capable. It has to be recognised, however, that this approach has been heavily criticised methodologically, theoretically and morally.

1.2. Explanations focusing on the immediate social context

These studies examine the social and cultural effects that peer groups, families and neighbourhoods have on young people's aspiration towards, and attainment within, schools. The studies also looked at how schooling and other public services located in poor neighbourhoods and servicing poor people have aided or constrained educational achievement.

A number of main themes emerge in this work. Firstly, that poor neighbourhoods are characterised by a lack of employment and effective public services that are likely to affect self-esteem and self-confidence. These psychological challenges are also compounded by a lack of resources that results in poor health and diet. All of these taken together affect the ability of families to support young people through education. Secondly, different neighbourhoods and communities can provide different levels of material, cultural and social support (social and cultural capital) to young people and families. These can alleviate some material aspects of poverty and improve opportunities for educational success for certain groups of young people. But the opposite is also true. Where neighbourhoods have poor opportunities for developing social and cultural support, then young people are often constrained in what they see is possible and what then they can achieve educationally. Thirdly, research evidence points to effective parenting as being central to young peoples' educational success. This is linked to the educational aspirations of parents, support and stimulation for young people in the home, secure and stable home environments and participation within school. Because of the material, social and cultural challenges that poor parents experience, there is evidence to suggest that parents struggle to provide this educationally engaged support. Fourthly, schools can make a difference in poor areas. However, as was stated above this is heavily influenced by the make-up of schools, the constraints that poverty exerts on the schools, the capabilities of teachers and the nature of educational markets in such areas. Fifthly, improved public sector service delivery can improve access and support for young people within school but professional and organisational boundaries often constrain effective multi-agency working.

1.3. Explanations focusing on broader social structures and inequality

These studies tended to see the relationship between poverty and education as resulting from underlying social structures (though, of course, individual characteristics and immediate social contexts also have an impact). Many analyse the impact of globalisation and the resulting forms of social exclusion. This is reflected in aspects of "ghettoization", health inequalities, high levels of unemployment, poor housing and poor infrastructure for such individuals and communities. Together these factors are linked to, and compound, poor educational attainment.

Although much of the research documented above focused on ameliorating the way poor young people might engage or be helped to engage with education, a substantial number of studies were more critical of such a general approach at all three levels of analysis. They argue that education in its current form in many affluent country contexts is marginalising for many disadvantaged young people and that this reflects unequal distributions of power and resource in many societies. These studies suggest that education should both challenge existing power structures and enable democratic development but that current forms of education create, reproduce and enhance inequality. As a response to these inequities, many of these studies focused on neighbourhoods, community radicalism, and different curricula and cultures within schools. They examined accounts of people's lives in neighbourhoods and communities with an emphasis on more radical and democratic approaches to running classrooms and schools - for example, in relations between teachers and pupils and in how school governance relates more directly to community needs. In particular there was a focus on educational interventions

that focused on developing community radicalism for empowered engagement with the education system in order to create more equitable educational opportunities.

Although these three broad levels of analysis dominated research in relation to poverty and educational outcomes there were also important studies that adopted an ecological system perspective, integrating all three levels into their explanations. Rather than focusing on single "presenting problems" within the context of a particular level of analysis, an ecological systems theory sees the child as interacting with a series of "systems", which together, form an "ecology" which shapes outcomes. As indicated these comprise variables at all three levels of analysis and include: the family, the school, the neighbourhood, the wider social and cultural context in which these are located, and the links between these different levels and contexts. These different "systems" may influence the child directly, but they can also have an indirect influence as one system interacts with another – for instance, changes to family tax credits at national level can directly influence how families live, which in turn influences children. It follows that explanations for outcomes are never going to be simple. It is never enough to say simply that the family "causes" the child to do better or worse, or that the school "produces" educational outcomes, or that the family doctor "ensures" good health. Each system plays its part – some with powerful direct effects, some with weaker and more indirect effects. The key to explaining outcomes is to understand these complex interactions, and the key to improving outcomes lies in being able to intervene in these interactions. The report suggests that a broad "ecological" approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to understanding the way disadvantage young people engage with and succeed in education is central to analysing the essence and potential impacts of area-based initiatives.

Chapter 2. Key dimensions of the links between education and disadvantage – implications for area-based initiatives

Given the research evidence above documenting the impact of poverty and place on educational engagement and outcomes, what might one expect to see, in broad terms, as the key dimensions of ABI policies in EU country contexts?

Based on the research highlighted there is evidence to suggest that area-based initiatives need to recognise structural barriers to educational engagement and success that result from a lack of resources for neighbourhoods and for individuals and families that live in those neighbourhoods. This lack of resources is linked to unemployment or poorly paid employment and is exacerbated by the poor infrastructures of health, housing and transport in such neighbourhoods. Area-based initiatives, therefore, need to deal with barriers to educational access, aspiration, progression and opportunities for lifelong learning. They also need to respond to the risk factors of poverty for families, communities, peer and ethnic groups and some of the challenges that schools and other public services in such areas experience. Area-based initiatives also need to be aware of young people's individual educational identity and actions and the role of individual choice.

Given some of the broader issues highlighted, there is a recognition that ABIs would need to be part of a wider set of economic strategies that would maximise the opportunities for wealth-creation inherent in globalisation, whilst minimising the sharp polarisations which globalisation seems to entail. This seems to imply particular sorts of national and EU wide economic development policies, complemented by broader area-based initiatives in the more economically-vulnerable areas. These might well be accompanied by redistributive and 'safety-net' policies that provide a progressive universalism, such as child poverty reduction strategies and financial support mechanisms for young people and their families. These universal policies aim to enhance equity and provide support for all who experience disadvantage.

However, these responses need to be configured differently and may need to be intensified in areas of concentrated disadvantage. For example, the difficulties of providing appropriate parenting for those families living in poverty are suggestive of the need for area-based initiatives to engage in effective family support. Whether current models of parenting classes and parenting networks are appropriate is a moot point. However, as the child development literature suggests, area-based initiatives might profitably focus at the pre-school and early school ages.

The evidence also points to ABIs developing the appropriate values and norms in young people to facilitate their success in education and to help parents provide support for their child's learning. It is clear from various "risk and resilience" studies that interventions which create protective factors for young people in their immediate social context or create opportunities at a distance that help to moderate various immediate risk factors can be implemented at various stages in a young person's development. What this literature suggests is that young people do have agency and can construct paths that enable the developments of new identities and, consequently, of what they want to achieve from life and through education. The various research studies point to those factors that appear to influence this agency. For example, close, warm, adult relationships or role models are seen as being protective for individuals experiencing a number of risk factors. These could be in the guise of effective teacher/student relationships, through close mentoring roles or via the aspirations of parents. What these relationships can do is enable young people to re-imagine their identities, desires and choices with regards to

education. There are also indications that identities developed through being part of positive networks of support, influence and reciprocity, are also important frameworks for explaining the differences in experiences and response that particular individual and neighbourhoods make to living in poverty.

Area-based initiatives that provide young people with supportive networks might well be part of a wider set of strategies to develop social capital in neighbourhoods of disadvantage. Research also highlights how environmental factors can have an impact on IQ attributes. There seems to be good evidence that an enriched environment with sustained levels of stimulus and support for young people can, over time, improve IQ, and that, conversely, deprived environments with low levels of stimulus and support can reduce IQ levels. It seems that living in poverty is likely to result in impoverished environments that are insufficient to maintain IQ levels. The ABI policy implication is that young people living in such environments might need to be targeted for enriched and sustained opportunities for enhanced and stimulating experiences to compensate for environmental deficits.

In addition, there are factors that reflect the multi-faceted nature of some of the problems that young people and their families face. They point to the need for area-based initiatives to work in a multi or inter-agency ways so that joined up solutions are developed with families and young people that deal with their holistic concerns.

However, there are also issues about the nature of schools, schooling and educational markets in areas of disadvantage that are also creating problems for educational success for young people and their families that live in poverty. These include the need to examine compositional mixes of pupils in schools, the types of neighbourhoods that schools are located in, the effective leadership styles and approaches that succeed in schools in challenging circumstances and the teaching ethos and curriculum provision that most successfully retains young people in education and generates educational success in such schools.

Finally, from a more critical perspective, ABIs need to identify at least some interventions that seek not simply to "improve" aspects of educational systems, but to redistribute power within those systems. Current examples might include student councils, the local governance of schools, the increasing capacity for local groups to establish and manage their own schools, the ability of learners to chart their own way through alternative learning pathways, and the involvement of local communities in shaping education services through regeneration initiatives, locally-commissioned children's services and extended schools. To these initiatives can be added countless school and classroom practices that are in some way participatory and/or emancipatory. The implication for ABIs is that changing the distribution of power within education systems may be a matter of shifting complex balances rather than of large-scale reversals of existing patterns.

In considering these broad range of activities with which education-oriented area-based initiatives might serve, the table below¹ integrates many of the above ideas into five main propositions about how the relationship between education, disadvantage and place is understood, the key issues area-based initiatives would need to engage with to intervene in this, and how this might be reflected in their design. These ideas are adapted slightly for a wider international audience:

¹ Based on Lupton, R. (2011).

Table 1. The purposes of education-focused ABIs

	Proposition	Key issues	Key elements in initiative design
1	“Schools are contextualised organisations”	Disadvantaged areas create additional challenges and organisational demands and exert downward pressures on school quality	Additional funding and organisational designs for schools in disadvantaged areas
2	“Area dynamics shape learners’ identities and engagement with school”	Area dynamics help shape the formation of youth identity aspirations and interests. If education ignores this, it is likely to pass some disadvantaged young people by.	Curriculum and pedagogies tailored to local areas.
3	“Different areas need different kinds of educational outcomes”	Education should serve local areas in terms of providing the skills that local employers need and helping build local citizenship	Residents, organisations and agencies in an area ‘visioning’ desired futures and working collaboratively towards them
4	“Educational outcomes in an area are a shared responsibility”	Regional and city wide authorities and schools working in the same area have collective responsibility for outcomes in the area	Schools and city/regional authorities working together to share resources and practices that lead to best outcomes overall
5	“School can’t compensate for society”	Poor children are held back from education on many fronts (including poor housing family poverty, conflict, mobility etc.). Attainment gaps can’t be closed unless these issues are tackled	Residents and agencies working in the same area need to work together with schools to tackle wider disadvantages, and take on a community education remit

These propositions, and the broad actions of which they are suggestive, are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Nonetheless, they illustrate how different understandings of the relationship between education, disadvantage and place – or emphasis on different issues within a complex understanding – can lead to the development of ABIs with distinctly different purposes. For instance, all the approaches set out in Table 1 might be expected to make a contribution to narrowing spatial inequalities in educational attainment, though some more directly so than others. But they also suggest other kinds of educational outcomes – for example, building the capacity for active citizenship, or community participation, or progression to skilled employment – to be valuable, and to require that an ABI’s actions and monitoring processes are suited to achieving these outcomes. Although the report focuses on ABIs impacts on educational attainments it is important that these differences are surfaced. This is not least because in order to make judgements about the merits of any ABI and fair comparisons between them, the ABI’s purposes; the outcomes it might be expected to achieve, through what mechanisms and over what timescale; and the limitations inherent in the ABI’s operational scale and scope of action, amongst other factors, would have to be taken into consideration.

Chapter 3. Past and present area-based initiatives and their links to particular periods and contexts

Given the various explanations and perspectives that explore the link between poverty, area and educational outcomes and the various approaches that area-based initiatives might take, what different forms of area-based initiatives have historically and more recently been developed and implemented in the EU and beyond? What have been the similarities and differences in their approaches in terms of the underpinning explanations of the link between poverty and educational outcome? Perhaps as importantly what are the similarities and difference in different country policy imperatives and histories associated with such ABI developments?

Although ABI policies in the EU country contexts and beyond have been of many kinds, frequently emerging and disappearing within the space of a few years, they can perhaps be best categorized under three main headings:

- ABIs targeted at schools and their communities in disadvantaged areas that predominately enrol a high proportion of disadvantaged or poor students
- ABIs co-ordinating policies in disadvantaged areas across education, health and social welfare;
- ABIs that focus on broader area regeneration initiatives (e.g. infrastructure, housing, employment etc.) that include an education and/or training component, and in particular focus on links between education, vocational skills development and employment.

For each of the three categories there is also a distinction between *centrally-mandated* ABIs (i.e. where ABIs are set up in response to government policy) and *locally-developed* area-based initiatives, where local actors use the flexibilities within national policies to develop their own area approaches, but where these are not mandated by or necessarily funded by central government. In addition some education systems in the EU have considerable local flexibility whilst others are much more centrally-directed and so ABIs will often have different meanings in these different systems.

This approach to classifying and categorising ABI policies is perhaps far from perfect, and one might argue that there is some overlap between these different foci and approaches. Nonetheless, it is a useful way of making sense of what otherwise might seem to be a complex and perhaps chaotic policy scene. For each classification of ABI the report will examine a variety of major EU, and beyond EU, country initiatives that reflect the essence of the category. The report will also examine in broad terms the specific locus of power and control of each ABI in order to ascertain the extent to which different stakeholders of such initiatives are involved in their development and/or delivery. In addition there will be an attempt to indicate the spatial scale of each ABI and the extent to which area is understood as logistical and geographic tool for the dispensation of additional resources to schools in such areas or as methodological approach for understanding the dynamic of particular places and their impact on education. Furthermore, the report will attempt to provide broader historical and socio-political contexts in order to understand policy rationales underpinning each country ABIs.

3.1. ABIs targeted at schools and their communities in disadvantaged areas that predominantly enrol a high proportion of disadvantaged or poor students

In many respects area-based initiatives targeted at schools in disadvantaged areas was, for many EU countries, about creating a logistical device for providing additional or compensatory resources to support disadvantaged young people with their education. The general argument underpinning this approach is that schools in disadvantaged contexts will tend to enrol a greater percentage of disadvantaged young people because of the indices of deprivation associated with such areas. These young people are also most likely to achieve the lowest attainments within the education system. Whereas some area-based initiatives within this categorisation have clearly prescribed strands of educational activity defined by national/local government and then locally enacted by schools the vast majority of interventions are standalone activities such as teaching and learning programmes or improved behaviour mechanism designed by individual schools or small local federation/network/cluster of schools (often across the age range). Equity approaches articulated by such interventions include notions of social inclusion and coherence, equality of opportunity and improved social mobility linked to meritocratic educational attainments. Although in the minority there are also ABI approaches that focus on the combined work of schools and their communities and in particular curricular work that is place orientated. The equity concern for these sorts of initiatives is the disconnection that many young people in areas of disadvantage have with the schooling and the way that communities in disadvantaged areas are pathologised as being in social and cultural deficit.

3.1.1. Within the EU

England - Perhaps one of the first of the ABI policy developments in the EU was the Educational Priority Areas (EPA) initiative in England of the 1960s and 70s (Antoniou et al, 2008). The initiative was developed in response to what were viewed as equity failings of the education system of the time that had resulted in large proportions of young people living in poor and disadvantaged context achieving either no and poor levels of educational attainments. The political values at that time for greater levels of societal equality chimed with the need for education to play its part in bringing about this equality of opportunity. EPAs in essence were about providing compensatory resources to make good the equality of opportunity deficit in education and therefore in society at large. EPAs provided additional resources to particular local authorities to support schools in designated priority areas. These resources were to be used for generating smaller classes, for more experienced and successful teachers, with salary incentives to attract them to work in EPAs; for priority in new or replacement school building, and in the expansion of nursery education; for teacher aides, teachers' centres and more school-based social workers. Programmes were developed by schools and local educational authorities to meet the specific needs of such area.

Building on such notions, later articulations of ABIs in England in the 1990s included the Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme in England that was developed from the earlier Education Action Zones (EAZs). The political arguments about equity in England at that time resonated with other EU country contexts approaches, focusing more on notions of the basic entitlements required for social inclusion rather than equality of opportunity or outcomes. Here the argument was about ensuring that all young people were provided with a minimum educational entitlement that allowed them to operate as full members of society. As part of this entitlement EAZs were guided by the principle of positive discrimination where compensatory and additional resources were provided to support schools working in the most challenging circumstances to bring about greater levels of social inclusion. EAZs were run by a small number of 'partners' including local authority, business, voluntary sector and community representatives. Such partnerships drew in local and national agencies and charities involved in, for example,

health care, social care and crime prevention and also linked up to Health and Employment Zones and projects funded by the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). A typical EAZ consisted of around twenty schools (usually two or three secondary schools plus their feeder primary schools). EAZs received government funding of up to £750,000 per annum for three to five years to support them in this task, which were supplemented by £250,000 per annum sponsorship in cash or "kind" from the private and/or voluntary sector.

Given some of the operating problems of EAZs highlighted by programme evaluations, the programme was merged with the Excellence in Cities programme in 1999. Paralleling the EAZ initiative, the aim of the EiC programme was to raise standards and promote inclusion in disadvantaged inner cities and other urban areas. However, the main focus was on providing additional funds primarily to schools to improve processes and outcomes around a nationally prescribed set of educational concerns that included school leadership, behaviour, and teaching and learning. Initially just based in secondary schools, the programme quickly expanded to include primary schools. The programme attempted to tackle underachievement in schools through nationally prescribed specific strands of activity targeted at underachieving or disadvantaged groups. So: Learning Mentors worked with underachieving students in schools; Learning Support Units were established to provide for students at risk of exclusion from school for disciplinary reasons; a Gifted and Talented pupils programme was developed; and City Learning Centres were established to enhance adult learning opportunities (particularly through information technology) for local people. The programme lasted for much of the late 1990s and 2000s.

Whereas many of the initiatives highlighted above provided additional resources to targeted areas across England, the London Challenge was an example in England that recognised the distinctive difficulties facing schools in the capital. These difficulties included, high levels of disadvantage, low levels of educational achievement, the challenges of a multi-ethnic population, and the balkanisation of governance of London education. The Challenge deployed a range of strategies to address these issues, including programmes aimed at increasing teacher recruitment and retention, a gifted and talented programme, targeted intervention with low-performing schools, developments in vocational education and support to local authorities in managing their education systems. Similar programmes were set up in other major cities in England. City Challenge was underpinned by a belief that the educational problems facing urban areas should be addressed at area level, and that Local Authorities and schools needed to work together to achieve this. Thus it aimed to improve educational provision and school performance across broad geographical areas, not simply in a specific group of participating schools. City Challenge focused on all aspects of the education system: working strategically at area level and with Local Education Authorities, community organisations, parents and pupils and developing a range of specific school interventions which were closely focused on the intended outcomes of City Challenge. There was no single view of what schools needed to do to improve; all the interventions involved local solutions with key stakeholders (including head teachers and LAs) centrally involved in the decisions. The various activities and interventions were characterised by a belief that school-to-school collaboration had a central role to play in school improvement; a recognition of the importance of school leadership; and a data-rich approach to tackling issues and sharing learning. It also attempted to build on a body of research about school improvement that emphasised the importance of effective leadership, networking and collaboration, system leadership roles and sustainability.

Although the above ABIs focused on allocation of additional resources for schools to develop strategies for school improvement, other programmes examined the specifics of the school curriculum. In England this is perhaps most clearly articulated by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) Area Based Curriculum programme (RSA, 2013). Emanating from similar work in the US, it is curriculum based and is the result of the co-construction of teaching and learning materials between schools and their communities. The rationale for an area-based curriculum is the disconnection

of children from the places where they live, and the probable effects of this on their learning, wellbeing and achievements. It also includes a critical interpretation of previous area based initiatives highlighted above such as Education Priority Areas, Education Action Zones, Extended Schools and City Challenge, noting their association with a deficit view of communities and a psychological account of educational failure (passed down between families) rather than a structural critique of socio-economic factors leading to disadvantage.

In terms of educational equity the RSA Area Based Curriculum is a means by which communities and schools can work together to ensure that schools draw on the knowledge and resources of communities to create diverse approaches to learning. Communities and schools may take on different roles in supporting one another to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to engage. By developing curriculum on a local level and with a local community the argument suggested is that the system stands a far better chance of meeting the needs of all children. Conceptually and practically, this process of collaboration is the most distinctive feature of the initiative. The creation of new partnerships for curriculum and learning design became in practice both a means to tackle the 'disconnection' issue identified above, *and* a goal in its own right. In principle, at least, the rationale points to the rich opportunities for creative curriculum development and for democratic professionalism, which includes a more community-connected activist role.

France – In France (Etienne et al, 2008 & Rochex, 2012) one of the most important and longest running priority educational policies for disadvantaged young people was the Zones d'Éducation Prioritaires (ZEP). Inaugurated in 1981, ZEP's priority objectives were focused on correcting social inequality in the country by the selective additional resourcing of schools in zones and social environments with highest level of educational disadvantage. It was about targeting regions selected according to the socio-economic and educational characteristics of the populations that lived and attended school there. The focus of the intervention was about providing additional resources for education professionals to design and implement collectively educational projects appropriate to the difficulties they were encountering within those regions but without prescription from national government. Funding was based on submitted plans that were in principle about schools aiming to overcome what appeared to be socially determined learning problems through more engaging schooling strategies. The programme is now over 25 years old and has had different levels of national support and funding and directions and criteria based on the national government priority of the times.

In the early to mid-80s there were approximately between 350 and 400 ZEPs. ZEPs generally comprised one or more secondary schools and their associated primary schools. They accounted for approximately 6.5% of schools, 8.5% of primary students and 10.5% of secondary students. Over the years the number of ZEPs increased, as did the percentage of schools and pupils that were represented by ZEPs. By the late 1990s there were some 770 zones covering approximately 20% of all pupils with the number of districts containing zones moving from several dozen in the early 80s to several hundred by the late 1990s. In 2005 these zones were re-classified into 3 levels of priority that would reflect the severity of challenge that schools and zones were encountering.

On average over the period of time of the programme statistical data suggested that students educated in a ZEP were likely to benefit from 10-15% additional resourcing than non-ZEP students. Although there was much diversity in ZEPs, the school intervention projects supported by ZEPs included (i) actions aimed at improving learning, predominately centred on reading and writing, the mastery of language and artistic and cultural activities with more limited development of mathematical and scientific literacy (ii) support for out of school activity such as homework and additional classroom assistance (iii) improved ethos of schools including behavioural issues, attendance and notions of school and community citizenship, (iv) actions aimed at improving school-parent relationships (v) continual professional development of teachers in ICT and broader aspects of school life.

As the programme developed it became apparent that the initial focus of ZEPs on social and educational disadvantage linked to zones of disadvantage and poverty had become transmogrified into a discourse about the individual needs/talents of students in schools. Schools in ZEPs became more concerned with developing pedagogy and curriculum to meet the diversity of talents, interests, aptitudes and capabilities of young people around a more individualised set of priorities that reflected a more "meritocratic" ideology linked to notions of social mobility and a widening participation agenda for those most "able" to take advantage of such additional provision and support.

Given some changes in ZEPs and the challenges that continued to be experienced within the French education system (see evaluations later in the report), in September 2012, ZEPs were replaced by the program of schools and colleges for ambition, innovation and success (ÉCLAIR). The programme was established for 339 institutions, including 303 colleges and schools in their catchment areas. The objectives of the 'ECLAIR' programme are to improve the academic results of pupils by:

- establishing an academic environment which favours success for all;
- reinforcing the stability of school teams;
- favouring equal opportunities;
- developing academic ambition.

Portugal – Based on similar policies undertaken in France and the UK, the Educational Zones for Priority Action [TEIP] programme (Abrantes et al, 2013) was launched in Portugal in 1996. It included 105 school clusters around the country (nearly 10% of all primary and lower secondary schools). The aim of the programme was to reduce social and educational inequalities through the creation of specific mechanisms to identify, support, protect and supervise schools in poor, segregated and marginalised districts. The programme was also partially funded by the EU. The core aim of these programmes was to improve facilities, services and resources and develop specific strategies in schools located in poor segregated areas, as a means of overcoming became defined as their "environmental deficit".

In the last 50 years, Portugal has undergone a dramatic change, from a traditional and rural society to the present situation in which most people live in the city. The revolution and adoption of a democratic system in 1974 and membership of the EU in 1986 were important turning points in the process of social change. However, since the 1990s, a number of concerns emerged, particularly in relation to the poor living conditions and increasing unemployment experienced increasingly by the descendants of immigrants (mostly from the African ex-colonies), the children of Roma and many indigenous white working-class families. These different groups have concentrated in certain urban and suburban areas and there was increasing evidence that disadvantaged young people attending schools in those areas were increasingly underachieving. So although according to PISA Portugal had seen continuous improvement in its aggregate attainments, early dropout remained a serious concern. Around 40% of young people, mainly from the disadvantaged categories of young people highlighted above, repeated years during their basic education or dropped out of school before completing their upper secondary education.

At the same time the educational system of Portugal had changed considerably during the 1990s and into the new millennium with various governments taking a much stronger interest in raising educational attainment and reducing dropout rates by developing centralizing educational policy and goals to bring about these improvements. These educational equity concerns set the stage for the creation of the TEIP programme, which was launched in 1996.

The programme aimed to enlarge school resources in segregated areas by providing tools normally not available in state schools, in particular by allocating more equipment, teachers and other educational experts (e.g. psychologists, social workers and mediators). The specific aim was to: (1) enhance learning processes and reduce dropout rates; (2) create vocational courses and (3) create strong links between school and local communities. Thirty-five school clusters located in poor suburban areas around Lisbon and Oporto were invited to create their own local projects to achieve these goals, with extra economic support and advice from the administration. The creation of school clusters, which were usually composed of a secondary school and a number of primary schools and kindergartens within the same zone, provided a means for sharing a unified educational project, board and principal. The explicit aim was to promote territorial strategies that integrated various educational stages through appropriate educational policy developments. During 2006, after some years of political disinvestment, the TEIP programme was reviewed and expanded. It established four main priority areas: (1) the quality of school careers and achievement; (2) failure and dropout rates; (3) the transition to the labour market and (4) schools as educational and cultural agents within local communities. The number of school clusters involved has increased and spread to all regions of Portugal (except the islands of the Azores and Madeira) and now includes 105 school clusters around the country (nearly 10% of all primary and lower secondary schools)

Cyprus – The policy of Educational Priority Zones (EPZ) was proposed in 1999 by the Interdepartmental Team of Work for the Confrontation of School Failure and Functional Illiteracy (Spinthourakis et al., 2008) The Permanent Team of Work for the Promotion of Literacy and School Success undertook the planning of EPZ and initiated a programme of implantation in 2000. EPZs consisted of a selected school network that included Elementary Schools, a High school and the main Kindergartens. The schools were located in socio-economically disadvantaged areas and the majority of the student body came from poor families with low levels of education attainment. Criteria for the designation of a region as an EPZ were as follows:

- 1) high rate of school failure and functional illiteracy
- 2) high percentage of immigrant students
- 3) large number of drop outs
- 4) high incidents of violence and challenging behaviour

Some of the basic principles underpinning the establishment of EPZs included:

- Development of school practices based on pedagogical research that focused on: (a) child-centred teaching and cooperative teaching and learning strategies (b) the social - cultural and individual uniqueness of each child
- Ensuring educational continuity between the three levels of education through a Network of Education Priority.
- Development of cooperative learning skills amongst students.
- Decreasing classroom staff-student ratios.
- Advancing oral and writing skills as a major education priority.
- Developing guidance teams to ensure the sharing of information and support to educational groups at schools and to act as coordinators between the varying school sectors.
- Development of systematic cooperation with parents.

- Development of cultural and athletic activities.

The methodology of work in EYP schools was based on action planning. This included each EYP developing a three-year plan of action that focused on an analysis of the particular local educational needs. Each school unit within the EYP shaped its own plan of action consistent with the general action plan of the EYP. They were first piloted during 2003-2004 in two school regions around Faneromeni in Nicosia and Saint Antoniou in Limassol. In 2004-2005 the EYP was extended to Theoskepasti in Paphos. In 2011-12 Education Priority Zones expanded further by adding two new areas: the first one in Larnaca (Xylofagou) and the second one in Limassol (Agia Varvara). More recently the Cyprus government in 2013 have pledged to protect education budgets that focus on pupil welfare, educational reform and special educational needs.

Belgium – In Belgium priority education projects were historically differently configured by the three different communities that make up the state – these being the French, Flemish and German speaking communities (Frian et al, 2012). The Flemish community approach to educational equity focused on notions of equal opportunity where additional funds followed educationally disadvantaged individuals who had been diagnosed as having additional educational needs based on a medicalised model of assessment. Funds therefore followed individuals to the school that they attended and were not premised specifically on socio-economic disadvantage or on a spatial diagnosis of disadvantage associated with ABI. In addition, and more recently, there has been a focus on developing Community Schools which have focused on developing interagency programmes located in schools to deal with the complex needs of young people and families in disadvantaged urban contexts (see later). The German speaking community had less well developed notions of priority education policies and the French speaking community, albeit informed by general notions of equality of opportunity, perhaps was the only one of the three that had developed ABIs that focused on the socio-economic background of students and their families and the schools and areas where they are located. These were initially inspired by France’s ZEP model but over time morphed into differently configured programmes. However, a unifying theme for all variations of the programme was the provision of additional compensatory resources to schools in poor contexts that recruited socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. For the purposes of this report, the focus will be on the French speaking community’s evolving approach to ABIs.

In 1989 the priority education zones (ZEPs) were founded. Unlike the solution adopted in France, the selection of schools was centralised. It was based on education criteria (course of study, orientation, number of school years repeated, etc.) and socio economic and cultural criteria (poorly educated parents, unemployment rate, poverty, etc.) that were identical for all schools. The ZEPs were commissioned based on the evaluation of the quality of the projects developed in the zone for promoting academic success and did not correspond specifically to an administrative area. There was no mechanical system for attributing additional resources to schools but instead funds were allocated on the basis of the nature of the intervention designed by the school. The philosophy underpinning ZEPs were based on the principles of positive discrimination that focused on measures that would be specific (i.e. directed specifically towards the underprivileged public), preventive, pupil-centred, and engaging of parents and community life more generally. However, over time funds were allocated to all schools within the zones that resulted in similar levels of resources being spread thinly between many schools. In addition traditional and long-standing schools educating privileged pupils that were in disadvantaged urban areas were allocated similar additional resources as disadvantage schools.

Due to these problems and anomalies the ZEP were replaced in 1998 by mechanisms of *positive discrimination*. The term *positive discrimination* in the French-speaking Belgian context signalled a distinction that benefited standard fundamental education and secondary schools, organised or subsidised by the French Community, on

the basis of social, economic, cultural and educational criteria. The positive discrimination mechanism consisted of a modulated allocation of resources to schools according to the socio-economic background of the pupils who are enrolled there. This allocation of additional resources to schools identified as providing education for an underprivileged population was undertaken by ranking the qualifying schools according to an average *socio-economic index*, and allocating additional means to the least privileged schools according to this criterion. The socio-economic index was initially allotted to each district of the Kingdom, on the basis of 12, then 11 variables. Each pupil was allotted the socio-economic index of the district he/she lived in. This index was a normal distribution metric variable that varied between -3.5 and $+3.5$ and was recalculated every three years on the basis of the latest statistical data available. The average of the socio-economic indices of the pupils was then taken at the level of the site. The schools were then ranked from the least to the most privileged. The most underprivileged schools, that cumulatively totalled approximately 12% of the pupils, received positive discrimination. The socio-economic index was again to be used as a basis for a mechanism for modulated allocation of additional resources in 2004, when differentiated funding for schools was implemented, following the refinancing of teaching. In 2009, additional funds were allocated to more schools with similar beneficiaries and the situation today is less clear as to whether and how ZEPs will continue in the future.

Spain - In Spain the main area based policy measure to reduce/address educational inequalities in areas of disadvantages is the PROA Plan (Reinforcement, Guidance and Support Plan). The PROA Plan for schools is a joint project between the Ministry of Education and the autonomous communities of Spain. It aims to improve students' academic performance during compulsory education, particular in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. It has been running since 2005. Currently all Autonomous Communities are involved. Participation by schools and students is voluntary and depends on signed agreements between schools and the Autonomous Community in which they are based. PROA can be considered both as a prevention and intervention measure. It is preventive in that it aims to address additional educational needs associated with the students' disadvantaged socio-cultural contexts through a set of whole school support and reinforcement programmes for schools in such contexts. The intervention components of the programme focus on guidance and support activities by young mentors or teachers for students facing difficulties in the last two years of primary education and the first three years of secondary education. The aim of the programme as a whole is to improve academic results and therefore contribute to improved social cohesion and inclusion. The PROA Plan is therefore composed of two types of programmes:

- School mentoring Programme for primary education and secondary education. Support is provided to pupils with difficulties outside of regular school hours from young mentors and/or members of the teaching staff. Pedagogical activities are organised in small groups and the objective is to improve students' academic performance, their social integration and therefore, facilitate their continuity in the educational system. During the academic year 2011-2012, 369 primary schools and 1, 096 secondary schools participated in the programme.

- Support and Reinforcement Programme for secondary education. This programme aims to improve the quality and equity of secondary schools containing a high number of students from socially and educationally disadvantaged contexts, living in challenging and poor environments. The programme provides additional resources to schools in order to develop a number of strands of action. These include school organisation and students' engagement, cooperation with families and the development of the school environment including mentorship programme, extra curricula activities, and prevention of school absenteeism interventions. Schools specify their needs and their priority areas of action. The most implemented actions have been in relation to academic reinforcement and collaboration with families. During the academic year 2011-2012, the plan was implemented in 727 secondary schools. For example, in Madrid, there are specific programmes to help young immigrants learn Spanish. In Aragon and Cantabria there were intercultural mediation programmes. In addition there have been a large number of social educators in areas with socio-cultural problems working directly with families to help reduce students' absenteeism. Policy and practice emphasis in the implementation of the programme emphasises collaboration and coordination between local, regional and national governments on the one hand, and between teachers, school counsellors, families and social educational mediators on the other. The focus is very much on a cross-sector, multi-disciplinary approach. The Ministry of Education has been setting the design of the programme and the educational authorities of the Autonomous Communities have co-financed 50 % of the programme (until 2010) and are responsible for the selection of schools. They support, monitor and assist these schools in the evaluation designed for this purpose which is held every year. In turn, the schools participating in the programme analyse their needs and are committed to its integration into the school management procedures.

3.1.2. Priority education policies that are not area-focused

Although there are numerous other examples of resources being diverted to priority educational policies in many EU country contexts, the focus of these funds are more often than not targeted at other particular categories of disadvantage that students experience, rather than familial or placed based socio-economic disadvantage of the area within which they live and of the schools located in those areas. So for example in the Czech Republic and Romania the focus for additional resource is very much based on the classification of the child e.g. as SEN/Gifted, belonging to national minorities or Romani, although there are moves to develop some ZEP provision for in areas of socio-economic disadvantage in Romania and in particularly in poor rural areas where there are concentrations of Romani families. In England, the pupil premium of approximately 900 euro per year per child follows children from poor backgrounds to the school that they attend. In Sweden new funds, scheduled to be spent between 2013 and 2016, are part of the government's efforts to address sinking academic performance of foreign-born children who arrive in Sweden after the age when primary school begins – around 7-years-old. The money will be used to expand lesson times for newly immigrated students in grades 5 through 9, the final year of compulsory education in Sweden. And there are countless more examples that one could point to but these are beyond the remit of this report.

3.1.3. Beyond the EU

Australia – Although there are numerous examples of school focused ABIs from around the globe. The Disadvantaged Schools Programme (DSP) in Australia ran from 1974-1997 and was perhaps one of the most extensive and longest running compensatory ABI initiatives in the world (Williams et al, 1991). The DSP aimed to improve the participation and outcomes of students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Since its inception it provided extra funding to schools serving the poorest 15 per cent of students, calculated by a socio-economic status index using Australian Bureau of Statistics data. Allocation of funds was based on submissions from state authorities who developed their own mechanisms for managing the programme and distributing funds. The most important feature of the DSP was that it focused on whole-school change and improved school-community relations rather than on dealing with what might be defined as the individual deficit of students. The focus was very much on how school structures, curricula and pedagogies contributed to the reproduction of educational disadvantage across generations. An argument made for the DSP's longevity was that the programme both in policy and in practice reflected a doctrine of democratic decision-making and community involvement. The programme generated networks of DSP teachers, contributing to a distinctive 'DSP culture' within the states. Consequently, reforms in DSP schools were more likely to be institutionalized and less vulnerable to the movements of particular teachers. Perhaps what was more enduring is that the DSP remained as a component in most state systems as a mechanism for providing support for students from low socio-economic backgrounds with holistic and community-based programmes. For example, Queensland described its version of the DSP, the Special Programme Support Scheme, as characterized by a willingness to advocate for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and to provide leadership in ensuring that issues related to achieving quality outcomes for those students are addressed. It argued that this was enhanced by assisting regions and school communities to address specific issues related to poverty and education at the regional and school level.

3.1.4. Summary

Although the above initiatives were developed by different governments, in different country contexts, over different historical periods and underpinned by different notions of educational equity, the main focus for many of these particular ABIs was to provide additional resources to schools in the poorest urban areas in order to help engage young people, in the main, and their families with education and to improve their educational attainments. The specific aims and objectives were both complementary and yet different depending on the peculiarities of country perspectives on ideas about educational equity and the purposes of education. Likewise the funding formulas and other systems of additional compensatory funding reflected particular approaches to defining socio-economic disadvantage in areas and the nature of schools in those areas. In terms of the totality of ABIs reviewed, approaches that focused on disadvantaged zones/areas and schools in those areas were perhaps the most common type of ABI in the EU and beyond. And yet at the same time there were limited examples of schools and their communities working in different ways, where the focus was much more on curricula issues and in particular how that curriculum might be co-constructed between school and its communities to help engage educationally disconnected young people.

3.2. ABIs co-ordinating policies in disadvantaged areas across education, health and social welfare

Running parallel to schemes that focus primarily on schools in disadvantaged areas are other ABIs that attempt primarily to co-ordinate policies and practice across education, health and social welfare in particular areas. The theory of change underpinning these approaches recognise the multifaceted challenges that young people in particular places face engaging effectively with education. These approaches also resonate with research evidence more generally that suggests that perhaps up to 70% of the variance in young people's educational attainment lies beyond the school. Some of these initiatives focus on locating a variety of education, health and social welfare services in neighbourhood community schools where the approach is multi-agency but school led (e.g. the notion of Full Service Extended Schools developed in many country contexts). Other initiatives focus on neighbourhood located centres that contain a variety of service delivery and are managed through a local consortium of providers overseen by local government and focused on early years interventions (e.g. Sure Start Children Centres in England). Others again cover a wider geographical area of disadvantage but in a more holistic way by co-ordinating and purchasing various types of service level provision in that area in order to meet the different age specific periods of education requirement – from 'cradle to college' – but with parent and community support that might be needed to support this progress (e.g. the Harlem Children Zone and the Promise Neighbourhoods in the US documented later in the report). In seeking to engage with the complex nature of children's ecologies that the report discusses above, these types of ABIs anticipate that particular outcomes in one aspect of a child's life can influence their outcomes in other aspects.

3.2.1. Within the EU

England – The policy initiatives in England that perhaps best reflect this category of ABI include the Sure Start Children's Centres and the Full Service Extended Schools (FSES) programme (Raffo et al, 2010, Antoniou et al 2008).

Sure Start Children's Centres were set up in England to enhance the functioning of children and families living in disadvantaged areas by providing additional services in local programme areas. In many respects these centres reflected the research of early child development studies and of programmes such as Head Start in the US. Such programmes were aimed at providing additional resources to disadvantaged preschool children with the purpose of delivering programs and services that would prepare preschool children for elementary school. Typically services included parenting support, access to health provision and childcare and educational facilities for young parents. Sure Start Children Centres were strategically situated in areas identified as having high levels of deprivation and were designed to enhance the life prospects of young children in disadvantaged families and communities. The transferred outcomes suggested by the initiative is that although programmes did not work directly with young people to improve their educational attainment, the support provided to carers and parents would then transfer to improved outcomes for young people as they engaged with schools.

FSES in England also constituted focal points at which strategies for raising overall educational standards were supported by additional resources. These resources were targeted at schools serving disadvantaged population and were utilised for developing strategies for tackling neighbourhood and family problems. Hence FSESs were expected to intervene in the multiple problems that beset children, families and communities living in disadvantage. However, at the heart of these interventions was a commitment to education as the pathway to achievement and hence to employment and social inclusion – and to raised expectations as a necessary precondition of raised achievement. The FSES initiative therefore focused on both the educational development needs of young people and the requirements for enhanced family and community engagement. These latter requirements were supported in FSES via the provision of parenting classes, crèches and skills development

programmes that recognised the need for a more integrated multi-agency approach to delivering core public in one accessible location. Once again, however, this strand of ABI provision was about diverting additional funds to schools and other agencies to help improve the integrated support for both disadvantaged young people and families' engagement with, and attainments in, education.

Flanders and Brussels - The development of community schools in Flanders and Brussels is relatively new. At policy level, interest in the concept developed in 2004. Community schools in Flanders were developed based on a typical 'bottom-up' process. From 2006 until 2009 the Flemish minister of Education granted subsidies for 17 pilot projects. In the final report recommendations about the implementation of community schools in Flanders and Brussels were written. The pilot projects showed that the local authorities play an important role in what the focus of community schools is, as they focus on the immediate needs of children and youngsters in a specific environment. Further research by the Centre for Diversity and Learning (Ghent University) showed that municipalities work on different tracks to support community schools. In four bigger municipalities, community schools are supported by the municipality, not only in funding, but also through training, and the provision of a facilities coordinator. Not every municipality has a common framework supported by the council. Where this is the case more cooperation between different services at the municipality level is possible and different schools are included in the network of community schools.

The idea of a cities starting up a community schools occur mostly in underprivileged areas. Community schools in Flanders are seen as a way to tackle inequalities in society. However, community schools do not want to stigmatize underprivileged groups or keep them in their deprived situation. It is exactly the mix and exchange of experiences, visions and ideas that create enrichment in such school. The aim of the community schools include:

- broad development of children and youngsters - for children and youngsters not to be in the margin of society, they have to develop numerous competencies. The role of community schools is to stimulate and promote these competencies.
- a broad learning and living environment - children and youngsters move through a multitude of learning and living domains, and learn within formal as well as informal contexts: school, sports associations, cultural initiatives, youth work, neighbourhood, peer group, family. Community schools in Flanders stimulate and link the experiences and competencies they acquire everywhere, by increasing interaction between these different domains.
- getting to network - in community schools partners collaborate to achieve a common goal through a broad network. Partners actively look for possible connections and opportunities, common goals, shared concerns and joint actions. Municipalities and/or organizations which are active at supralocal or meso level can provide a facilitative role.

The Flemish Education Council has made no specific recommendations on community schools The Council organized a seminar on the theme of 'Community schools' in December 2011. A report and presentations can be found at <http://www.vlor.be/verslag/seminarie-de-brede-school>.

Netherlands - Although varied in many respects, community schools in the Netherlands are similar to other country approaches in that a large number of community-based activities and services are integrated. Community schools in the Netherlands are found in urban as well as in rural areas and are focused on making a link between education and other key children and parents' services like parenting support, child day care, health centres, etc. The underlying philosophy, similar to other international approaches, is that combining services in a network or in a shared building, they become more accessible. The common principles underpinning community schools in the Netherlands are:

- The school aims to develop children and parents' social skills as well as offer cognitive education
- Although the school offers a daily context which encourages social commitment and responsibility, it cannot succeed without the educational input of others (pedagogical professionals, volunteers, parents, etc.)
- Collaboration between schools and other institutes and facilities should benefit the children, young people and their parents as well as the organizations involved
- The geographical location of the service providers and facilities is an important decisive factor in terms of accessibility. Furthermore, joint efforts between the different services should be promoted (for example by moving into one building)
- In a community school it is relatively easy to combine various opening hours and staff working hours in order to meet the needs of the attending children and parents as much as possible
- Integrating services in a traditional school setting or its immediate vicinity seems only natural; since children attend school every day.
- Parents are encouraged and motivated to have regular and close contact with the school, which will not only increase parent participation but also promote community school activities

Although there are a set of common principles, community schools in the Netherlands are very localized initiatives - brede scholen – that have been termed over time and in different contexts as "Window Schools", "Open District" or "Neighbourhood Schools" and "Integrated Schools". Examples of what are developed in such localized initiatives include, collaborations between schools and pre-school facilities, neighbourhood networks for child and youth care and close links between the "extended school day" or "out-of-school day care" and traditional community work. Each community school chooses its own organizational structure that may include some or all of the following:

- Complete day-programmes or periodical after-school activities for children and young people;
- Combinations of educational activities within and outside the school;
- Various and diverse activities for parents and the community;
- Partners in different locations or most in one building
- Different ways to organize staff, management and board functions. Most important is that the structure should be designed to serve the contents and targets.

The rationale for developing community schools has historic precedents in the 1970s when the trend was towards closer links between services for children, young people and their families. Neighbourhood networks were set up with close collaboration between different services. Professionals from various care institutions in a community or

neighbourhood aimed to identify problems in children and young people at an early stage in order to prevent problems later in life. At around the same time research identified major differences in the educational achievements of different groups of children in the Netherlands. Children from black and other ethnic minority groups were doing less well than their white Dutch counterparts. Another discrepancy was evident between children of working-class parents and children of higher and highly educated parents, often with better-paid jobs.

Changes that started to encourage the development of community schools arose from the Education Disadvantages Policy, as part of the Education Priority Policy in the early 1980s. The EDP was a two-track policy aimed at the prevention and decrease of educational disadvantages. One track focused on extra staff for schools with a high number of pupils from risk groups, known as the "Staff Component". The other track focused on extra resources for schools in areas with a relatively high percentage of children from risk groups, mostly referred to as the 'Area Component'.

In September 2006 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science introduced a whole number of measure with the main one being on devolving the responsibility for policies/practice in and around issues of educational disadvantages onto schools and municipalities. Schools were therefore granted more freedom to decide how to spend their budget and yet at the same time were guided and supported by local municipalities to take an integrated approach to resolving educational disadvantage. Particular municipalities support this approach by promoting a local cohesion amongst the general youth policy services, including school attendance, early dropout, reporting and supervision. Furthermore, municipalities were responsible for the implementation of the local VVE-policy (Pre-school educational programmes for very young children from risk/disadvantaged groups) that included the development of Local Educational agenda through multi-agency collaborations.

In the Netherlands community school development and its funding is linked to local rather than national policy. However, at a national level there are several supporting policies that stimulate the development of the community school concept. These include Early Childhood Education, the Education Disadvantages Policy, Youth Participation and the Urban Areas Policy as well as policies to combine work and care and to improve disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In this set-up community schools are partially and indirectly financed by the national government. The activities and buildings are managed and funded by the municipality, school boards and other bodies, such as social work, child day-care, and sports and cultural organisations. The task of the government is to provide resources for support, research and communication. For example, a community school report containing facts and figures is published every year. In addition, a website provides general and extensive information about community schools (www.bredeschool.nl). These activities are coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and conducted by the National Supporting office community schools (Landelijk Steunpunt Brede Scholen, since 2009).

As already stated the approach to community schooling in the Netherlands is based on the notion of localized flexibility. The structure and shape of community schools depend on local potential and needs. For example, the local authority of Groningen decided to relocate Window Schools in deprived neighbourhoods in the city into a newly developed building that were to house all the participating organizations. Currently, there are different types of community schools in different areas: Window Schools (agencies based in the same building) and Window Areas (collaborating organizations from the same area). Furthermore, Window Schools have been introduced in new-housing areas and neighbourhoods with mainly double-income families. In contrast the community schools in Rotterdam (since 1996) have always made use of the existing facilities and services in their vicinity and have therefore developed differently due to neighbourhood history and the available budget and services. Currently, in Rotterdam 160 primary schools and 45 secondary school sites and their 'partners' are working on a continuous

educational roster, including pre- and afterschool activities. Since the start of the first community school in Amsterdam, in September 2000, other community schools have been established in almost every part of the city. The Amsterdam city council has invested considerably in combined functions within the municipality to promote the development of community schools.

Because of the community school's diversity in the Netherlands results, such schools can work with many target areas and groups such as:

- all the young people from a specific school, city, neighbourhood, or district;
- specific age groups;
- specific target groups e.g. based on ethnic, gender or socio-economic background;
- parents and community/neighbourhood;
- specific high-risk areas.

Germany - The *One Square Kilometer of Education* is a ten-year program organized by the Freudenberg Foundation in conjunction with the authorities of a number of cities including Mannheim, Berlin, Hoyerswerda, Bernsdorf, Wuppertal, Herten. The aim of the One Square Kilometer of Education project is to invest in a local alliance for education, identify and close gaps in the support provided to children by the educational institutions of the district, and ensure a high level of understanding between day-care centres, youth welfare centres and schools. One Square Kilometer of Education was first started in the Reuter neighbourhood in Berlin's Neukölln district in the spring of 2007, and the Moabit district of Berlin followed in 2008. The programme is now also running in the cities of Wuppertal, Herten, Mannheim, Hoyerswerda and Bernsdorf.

Berlin's two *One Square Kilometer of Education* projects are located in the two very similar districts of Neukölln and Moabit. Each has a population of 18,000 to 20,000, the majority of whom are poor, have immigrant backgrounds and depend on government subsistence payments. Both are part of the "Socially Integrative City programme", having joined in 2002 and 2000 respectively. Over time there have been many efforts to promote urban development and the reform of local education structures. However the many different educational approaches initiated to solve these difficulties have often competed with one another, were not long term and focused only on limited sections of the educational process. In addition they often do not have broad support of the various the educational institutions in the city area. The One Square Kilometer of Education programme was set up to respond to such failures. In Neukölln, for example, the programme works in schools and day-care centres with models of self-assessment, project planning and educational workshops as places to learn through discovery; in Moabit, the focus is on language skills and the inclusion of parents.

The partners involved in the project group themselves around a core primary school and the day-care centres associated with that school. Since primary schools are the educational institutions most closely connected to the neighbourhood, primary school teachers are well placed to know in some detail the various educational challenges that pupils and families have in their neighbourhoods. A pedagogical workshop is at the heart of any neighbourhood's Square Kilometer programme that has core elements of developing and supporting the learning of young people. The workshop includes professionals, volunteers and parents and is facilitated by pedagogical workshop project teams. These teams take responsibility for working together with day-care centres and schools to develop pedagogical learning conditions as well as engaging in evaluation and quality development activities. Thus the project team and the workshop form a support system for the relevant neighbourhood and also cultivate

the concept behind “One Square Kilometer of Education”. The pedagogical workshop provides a collection of tools, processes and instruments for developing the quality of education, training personnel and improving organization in day-care centres and schools.

In Neukölln, for example, this means that “One Square Kilometer of Education” acts as an intermediary between the “Campus Rütli” project initiated by the municipality, which brings together various educational institutions in one area and the “Gemeinschaftsschule” (new comprehensive school), a project which stems from the recent reform of the education system. In this respect, it is viewed as a structure that ensures pedagogical quality through the support of teachers. And is also viewed as an integrating element between the relatively limited (in geographical terms) “Campus Rütli” and the broader educational alliance of the entire Reuter neighbourhood – a neighbourhood which is subject to complex changes and considerable variations in external involvement.

The above examples demonstrate that the One Square Kilometer of Education programme attempts to focus on children and adults, and institutions willing to learn and change something in their community. For regional government authorities, communities and foundations, this alliance aims to provide a development platform for long-term engagement in the district. The programme is about placing the needs of children and adolescents at the centre of its activity which includes processes of change within families, institutions and communities. In doing so, it takes on a bridging and mediating function.

3.2.2. Beyond the EU

US – One of the most enduring forms of ABI policy development in the US that has attempted to integrate the service delivery of educational, social welfare and health provision in areas of disadvantage have been variously ‘badged’ as examples of Full Service and/or Community Schooling (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002). Similar to the approach of English FSEs the underlying principle behind the concept of the full-service or community school in the US was founded on the recognition that schooling, for many, can only be approached once a range of welfare and health services were in place. In the US, the notion of schools, community, social, welfare and health agencies working together have been known by many other names, including school-linked services, school-based services, assessment centres, community education, and family service centres. The essence of full-service and community school delivery in the US conveyed the message that existing schools and education systems are failing in the most disadvantaged of urban contexts as they can no longer meet the complex needs of their students. Schools are thus unable to adequately cope without specialist service delivery in areas such as the social, health, emotional, and cultural needs of young people.

In addition the full-service school initiative in the US was a product of shifts in thinking that moved away from thinking of segregated programmes where agencies, institutions and individuals worked in isolation, to an inclusive, more “holistic” approach to providing support for educational, social, emotional and physical needs. The notion that needs should not be met in isolation, or by particular institutions or agencies acting alone, was thus a key theme permeating US-style full service/community schools. In addition, however, and in distinction to level of social service provision in the EU, failures in existing systems of social welfare in the US were highlighted as being crisis orientated and insufficiently funded and without functional communication between the many public and private community service agencies.

Given these challenges, however, there is no one model or blueprint of full-service/community school service delivery in the US. Evidence suggests that there are many interpretations that reflect grass roots movement representing a local and popular response to problems. However, common key components include having clear aims and purpose; strong leadership; administrative excellence, consistent, long term funding from a variety of sources (both public and private); community and parental involvement; effective publicity and dissemination; an appropriate designated location; opportunities for extended curriculum and out of hours learning. Based on these key components full service/community schools in the US can be identified along a continuum of school-based programmes in relation to service delivery models ranging from simple one-component partnerships to complex multi-agency collaborations.

Examples of full service or community schools at the multi-agency collaborative end of the spectrum include the Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative (TACSI). The initiative operates in schools in high-poverty districts, offering interventions in early care and learning, health and health education, social care, youth work, family and community engagement, neighbourhood development and lifelong learning. Other examples in other US city contexts includes the City Connects initiative in Boston MA which identifies children and young people 'at risk' in schools and then links them to a customised package of services. These might include sports and physical activity, health and wellness curricula, arts enrichment programmes, classroom-based health intervention, academic support, family support and counselling. In addition the Redwood City 2020 initiative brings together a range of local organisations, including but not restricted to schools, in pursuit of a wide range of outcomes for children and young people.

Perhaps one of the most elaborated forms of full service provisions in the US is the *Harlem Children Zones* (<http://www.hcz.org/>) that builds on ideas of holistic and collaborative working between agencies in a single area overseen by a single governance structure. HCZ is a geographically based non-profit organisation. It currently serves around 100 blocks in Harlem, New York, which is predominantly home to low-income black families. It offers them access to an interlocking network of education, health, family, and social welfare services. These are not simply wrap-around services, but have been designed to create a 'pipeline' of support for children from cradle to career. To this end, HCZ has established an integrated package of programmes to support children's education in early childhood, elementary school, middle school, high school and college contexts, and it runs its own charter schools called Promise Academies.

HCZ's wider programmes of family and community support are built around this education-oriented pipeline that link to a wider network of support. This pipeline of activities starts with early years interventions that include a *Baby College* that provides a series of parenting workshops for parents of children aged up to three living in the Zone designed help them to provide a nurturing and stimulating home environment. In addition there is the *Three-Year-Old Journey* programme that concentrates on how best to promote children's language and learning skills. It is for the parents of children who, at age three, secure a place to attend one of HCZ's Promise Academy charter schools. The *Harlem Gems* is an all-day pre-kindergarten programme for three-year-olds who hold a Promise Academy place. Children benefit from a 4:1 adult-to-child ratio and are taught in English, Spanish and French. The emphasis is on school readiness.

During school years the HCZ runs two Promise Academy charter schools, catering for elementary, middle and (increasingly) high school students. These have an extended school day, including after-school and weekend tutoring, and a wide range of enrichment activities. Students are given freshly prepared meals and have onsite access to medical, dental, and mental health services. In addition there is an *academic case management*

programme that is open to all 5th to 12th Grade students where case managers track students' individual progress (academic, social and emotional), creating and implementing a support plan for every student.

In terms of preparing students for College and employment the HCZ runs a number of programmes. These include the *HCZ Employment and Technology Centre* that promotes technology skills as well as academic support for high school students. The *Learn to Earn programme* helps high school students improve their academic skills as well as prepare for college and the job market and the *College Success Office* helps students with all aspects of college access, from financial aid applications to academic issues and time management.

Wider family and community programmes including *parenting support programmes* that range from parent reading groups to cooking classes and support with managing their children's chronic health conditions – for example, the HCZ asthma initiative. In addition the *HCZ Community Pride programme* aims to support and energise tenant and block associations to improve living conditions and the *Family Development Program and Family Support Center* help to strengthen at-risk families and run foster care prevention programmes. *HCZ Peacemakers programme* employs young adults to work in public school classrooms as teaching assistants and run after-school programmes and the *Beacon Community Centers* are shop front access points to all of HCZ's support services.

All those resident in the Zone have the opportunity to access its full range of school- and community-based provision. Places at HCZ's Promise Academy schools are, however, limited and allocated through a random lottery, which is also open to children outside the Zone. This means that not all children who live in the Zone attend one of its schools – though they may benefit from its other community-based supports. Equally, children living outside the Zone may secure a Promise Academy place but not access its full range of community provision. Recent data indicates that approximately 1,300 children attend Promise Academies and have access to HCZ's full range of additional supports. A much greater number – more than 10,000 children and 10,000 adults – access other services offered by HCZ.

3.2.3 Summary

Area-based initiatives under this heading were specifically focused on educational improvements but located within a perspective that recognised the importance of attending to a whole host of "beyond school" factors that were clearly having central and mediating roles in the educational engagement and attainment of the most disadvantaged young people. These approaches in their various ways perhaps best reflected aspects of the ecological systems highlighted at the beginning of the report. The spectrum of activity included some additional extended school activities that focused on providing particular forms of support to young people all the way to a double holistic approach that focused on providing targeted and staged support and development of students across their educational life course and also support to their communities and families to enable appropriate and transferred engagement and support.

3.3. ABIs that focus on broader area regeneration initiatives (e.g. infrastructure, housing, employment etc.) that include an education and/or training component, and in particular focus on links between education, vocational skills development and employment.

Although one can trace the development of different types of area-focused educational interventions, this policy approach has historically been repeated across many aspects of social and economic policy within many EU and other national country context. In the report we include examples of educational area based initiatives in the EU that are part of broader area regeneration programmes. We also provide a detailed case of a major broad based area based initiative in Brazil that provides an alternative perspective on developing and implementing ABIs - one that focuses more strongly on equity issues of democratic recognition and representation as a foundation for developing compensatory redistributive measures.

3.3.1. Within the EU

As way of introduction perhaps one of the most extensive **EU wide** approaches to developing both place and people specific aspects through an area based initiative was the URBAN Community Initiative (CI). This initiative was a neighbourhood focused urban regeneration programme aiming to address the economic, social and environmental disadvantage faced by neighbourhoods across the EU (Carpenter, 2006). The programme was implemented between 1994 and 1999, in what were then 15 Member-States of the EU, taking an approach that particularly focused on issues of process, partnership and capacity building through regeneration. It was financed through the European Structural Funds programme in response to the growing awareness at the EU policy level of the challenges facing Europe's towns and cities. Pockets of high unemployment and socioeconomic deprivation existed in many urban areas, with certain social groups at risk of exclusion, particularly ethnic minority communities and migrants. Certain neighbourhoods were also facing severe environmental degradation and were in need of physical regeneration. Although these challenges were not experienced by all urban neighbourhoods, in most towns and cities, even the most prosperous, there were certain areas that were affected. The aim of the URBAN Community Initiative was to address these issues, to improve the living conditions of citizens in these areas and to promote sustainable urban development. The strategy adopted was a combination of place-based and people based initiatives, depending on the particular local, regional or national context, recognizing the need for individual strategies to meet locally specific challenges. Although very few resources in the programme were utilized by member states to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged young people, it was an approach that was strategically and symbolically important in terms of thinking about ABIs in more holistic ways. In many respects the approaches adopted by the URBAN programme mirrored the country specific examples highlighted below from Sweden and England.

England – Perhaps one of the most important national strategies in England that dealt more generally with area based disadvantage emerged from reports produced by Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) under the Labour Government of 1997 that recommended a greater joining up of strategies for combating both the physical and the socio-cultural degradation of the poorest of urban areas. The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR) was developed in response to SEU reports and attempted to establish minimum standards below which no neighbourhoods should fall. The strategy focused on supporting interventions that would improve the conditions in socio-economically depressed areas, particularly in relation to crime, education, health, housing and the environment, and jobs. However, the NSNR was not a programme per se, nor a policy but a strategy that sought to influence the direction of a large number and diverse range of policies. These policies related to crime reduction, health inequalities, welfare to work, sustainable communities, education and skills. In many cases they already

existed and were being delivered by a range of government departments. It was a highly complex system whereby the strategic framework provided by the NSNR encouraged policies and programmes to be increasingly focused on the neighbourhood level in ways that would improve social, economic and environmental outcomes and reduce disparities within society as a whole. The multi-faceted approach that the Strategy adopted included a desire to improve joining-up across Government. The Strategy was heavily dependent on government departments fully engaging at national, regional and local level, and for Local Strategic Partnerships to join up, set priorities and drive forward change at the local level.

Operating within the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund policy arena, the Single Regeneration budget (SRB), which began in 1994, engaged in joined-up government by bringing together a number of programmes from several Government Departments and united resources from four government departments – Environment, Transport, Education and Employment, and Trade and Industry – into a single flexible budget for implementation of programmes elaborated by local partnerships (Trickey, S.). SRB partnerships expected to involve a diverse range of local organisations in the management of the scheme. In particular they were to harness the talent, resources and experience of local business, the voluntary sector and the local community. The types of programmes that received support from SRB differed from place to place and depended on local circumstances. To receive funding, projects had to meet at least one of the programme's eligible objectives in areas such as education, employment, social exclusion, environmental protection, infrastructure, housing, local economies and businesses, crime and drug abuse and community safety.

Due to highly localized and diffuse nature of the SRB it is difficult to provide a detailed overview of the educational projects that were funded by such an approach. However, as way of demonstrating the type of interventions that were commonly funded by the SRB the report includes an example of a well-developed education programme implemented in an area in the north of England (Trickey, 2012). The area was within in a deprived region which had suffered from the decline traditional high–employment industries. The educational project was to address these problems and, at the same time, enhance business education links.

In 1995, the percentage of children achieving 5 or more GCSE passes A*-C in the area in question was 29.8% compared to the national average of 43.3%. The total percentage of absences from school (both authorised and unauthorised) was 11% compared to 8.7% nationally. In addition, the proportion of Y11 pupils continuing in full-time education was 44%, one of the lowest rates in the country and well below the average for England and Wales of 68%. There were several pockets of unemployment in the region as high as 19%, compared to the national figure of about 6% at the time.

The main focus of the ABI was the local Business Education Partnership that had been established some years earlier to develop, deliver and research education business link activities. These activities aimed to contribute to the preparation of young people for the world of work, the raising of achievement in schools, the development of a work-related curriculum and the professional development of staff from education and business.

The Partnership was involved in many initiatives such as: the Compact Agreement, the Phoenix project, supporting work experience and careers education, Young Enterprise, mentoring, providing industry days, enterprise workshops, primary education business links and the National Science week. The Compact Agreement was aimed to help year 10 and 11 pupils developed skills and attitudes valued by employers. If pupils achieved high attendance and punctuality, completed work experience and all schoolwork, and attended all public exams scheduled for them, they would achieve eight Compact goals and thence a Compact Certificate. In the Phoenix project, youngsters with poor self-esteem and low academic achievement took part in out-of-school self-awareness and

team building exercises, simulated business activities and employability skills awareness exercises during work placement and residential.

In the mentoring initiative, pupils in schools or colleges who were judged likely to benefit were paired with an older more experienced person from business or a public sector organisation who visited the pupil on a fortnightly basis for about a year to provide support and advice. The main purposes were to befriend the youngster, provide a good role model, and build confidence and self-esteem so that the youngster would gain motivation to succeed in study and progress to suitable employment or further education. The major initiatives set up by the advisory staff included special initiatives, teacher placements, a work related action research project, a pupil referral unit, key skills development, literacy, oracy and numeracy initiatives, and a literacy and numeracy centre.

Under the generic title of special initiatives the advisory service encouraged schools to bid for funds to improve achievement and to help parents understand assessment and recognise under and low achievement. Successful bids included topics such as phonic improvement, improving spelling and mental mathematics, family literacy, differentiation, pace and challenge and raising parents' awareness of their role in the education of their children and individual achievement.

The placement of teachers in business or public sector organisations was one of the key activities to be funded by the project from the outset. The purpose of the placements was to enable heads, deputy heads and teachers to gain personal and professional development in an alternative working environment, or to enrich aspects of the national curriculum, or to gain help in management development and strategic planning and to enhance school and business links.

The work-related action research project was one of about 20 similar projects across the country to see how schools, along with other partners, could help to raise achievement by providing a more vocationally orientated curriculum for disaffected KS4 (age 15) youngsters. Another initiative was the setting up of a pupil referral unit to provide part-time education, work related learning and support for alienated and disaffected pupils, excluded pupils and persistent poor attendees.

A further strand of ABI work based on the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal was the New Deal for Communities Programme (NDC) that was launched in 1998 (Batty, 2012; Lawless and Beatty, 2013). This was designed to help turn around the poorest neighbourhoods and thus reduce the gaps between these areas and the rest of the country. The 39 NDC Partnerships were to attack problems within areas consisting of, on average, 9800 people. Ten were located in London and most of the others within deprived areas of city-regions including Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. Because each of England's nine regions received at least two NDCs, some were sited in relatively less deprived cities including Plymouth and Norwich. However, a consistent pattern across all 39 was that they tended to be located in the most deprived areas within their parent local authority. Each Partnership was allocated a 10-year £50 million budget, the Programme as a whole costing around £2 billion. Each NDC was to achieve change by working with delivery agencies and by placing the local community at the heart of the initiative. Partnerships were charged with attempting to secure change across six outcomes. Three were designed to improve these 39 'places': crime, the local community, and housing and the environment; and three outcomes were for local residents: health, worklessness and education. However, one constant theme emerged in relation to the education theme and that was the push on initiatives within schools to enhance attainment at all levels. By 2004, all 39 partnerships were funding projects to support schools and 34 were funding educational attainment schemes. And with regard to outcomes, 26 were hoping to improve Key Stage 4 attainment levels (for those aged 16). After 2004 the programme merged into general support developments for areas that had a more

a diffuse set of operating mechanisms This continued to be the case until 2008 when funding for the programme ceased.

Sweden – The majority of the individuals or families experiencing poverty in Sweden are currently immigrants and about one child out of four who experience poverty have one or both parents born abroad. The situation is most difficult for immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa. For those groups unemployment is four times higher than for those born in Sweden and only 30 percent were self-sufficient in 2002. In addition the poorest of immigrant families are increasingly segregated into the most disadvantages neighbourhoods of most Swedish metropolitan areas that have been giving rise to challenging social problems of social cohesion over a number of years. In 1997/98 the Swedish Riksdag passed the Swedish Government’s Proposition which stated guidelines for “a metropolitan policy for the 21st century”. In 1998 the Swedish parliament came to a decision about “Storstadssatsningen” - The Swedish Metropolitan Policy (Hartsmar, 2008; Bunar, 2011).

The overall aim of the policy was to give financial support to the most vulnerable areas in the biggest cities in Sweden in order to lessen segregation, to stimulate economic growth and to improve living conditions for people. Between 1999 and 2005, the Swedish government together with seven municipalities invested almost 400 million Euros in the social restructuring of 24 urban neighbourhoods in the Stockholm region, Gothenburg. The focus was on people rather than places with the initiative being marked by an almost total absence of physical renovation. The predicament of these neighbourhoods was not deemed physical decay but it was their inhabitants’ position in the social and cultural structure of the city. The Metropolitan Policy aimed at breaking segregation, creating more social justice and conquering discrimination within all realms of social politics. The Policy also stipulated some compulsory regulations. Among the most important were: co-operation of institutional actors present at the local level, long-term perspective orientation (including implementation of best practices in the ordinary administrative structures and methods) and active involvement of citizens in the implementation processes.

For the first time, the government also required that the entire initiative from the beginning must be followed up and evaluated by externally contracted researchers and evaluators. The largest portion of the money was reserved for projects that combated unemployment and included supporting businesses, promoting ethnic entrepreneurship among local populations, matching the available workforce with the needs of manufacturing and service companies as well as providing re-education and skill-increasing measures that are better able to prepare local populations for a fluid and fast-changing labour market. Since education was highlighted by the government as being vital in combating segregation, about 40 per cent of the money was reserved for investment in pre-schools and elementary schools. Finally, a smaller part of the economic package was aimed at supporting local cultural activities, initiatives for and by young people, crime prevention, health care and local democracy. This report will focus only on the educational segment of the Metropolitan Policy.

Two documents laid down the overall principles for regulating relations between the Metropolitan Policy and local educational structures: the governmental proposal *Development and justice: a big-city policy for the 21st century* (1997/98:165) and a set of local covenants signed between the government and the municipalities selected to participate in the programme. Principles included the strengthening of the position for the Swedish language and in particular that all students should not leave elementary school without sufficient knowledge of Swedish/Swedish as a second language, English and Mathematics. In the covenants, these aims were further specified but merely in quantitative terms stating what percentage of students were about to improve their grades, accompanied by the principles of co-operation, empowerment, long-term perspective orientation and the implementation of successful projects into the ordinary school structure. No specified working methods were spelled out in any of

these documents, leaving the entire field open for educators and local communities to set up projects that the actors thought would best serve the purpose.

The total amount of resources allocated to local public pre-schools and elementary schools was about 80 million Euros, which is a considerable amount of money, given that the ordinary budget had already covered all basic needs and that the external resources were supposed to finance only new methodological approaches to teaching, learning and strengthening ties with the community.

As highlighted earlier in the report, the focus in Sweden has recently moved towards providing increased levels of support for foreign-born children who arrive in Sweden after the age when primary school begins in order to support their educational needs and developments. In particular some of this work has focused on issues of health and education that is perhaps most clearly exemplified by the Malmo Consortium programme. This programme started in 2010 and although not directly related to education, recognises the interrelated issue of poverty, ethnic diversity, health and education for improved general well-being.

3.3.2. Beyond the EU

Brazil – Porto Alegre, Participative Budgeting and the Citizen School. Although not strictly an ABI policy that is either below or beyond administrative boundary levels, the Porto Alegre project is included because it provides a way of thinking about holistic, integrated and democratic approaches to the development of a city, and in particular the education of the most disadvantaged in the city, within existing administrative structures. Its focus on a participatory budgeting system provides an interesting alternative to the very many different ways in which area-based initiatives are governed, controlled and managed (Gandin & Apple, 2002).

Porto Alegre is a city of 1.3 million people, situated in the southern region of Brazil. It is the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul and the largest city of the region. Since 1989, it has been governed by a coalition of parties and the municipal administration is the self-entitled the 'Popular Administration'. One of the most striking features of public administration in Porto Alegre, and which makes it different to the examples from within the EU, is the adoption of a system of popular participation in the definition of public investment, called the Participatory Budget. The first full participatory budgeting process was developed in the city starting in 1989. Participatory budgeting was part of a number of innovative reform programs to overcome severe inequality in living standards amongst city residents. It occurs annually, starting with a series of neighbourhood, regional, and citywide assemblies, where residents and elected budget delegates identify spending priorities and vote on which priorities to implement. Porto Alegre spends about 200 million dollars per year on construction and services; this money is subject to participatory budgeting. Annual spending on fixed expenses such as debt service and pensions is not subject to public participation. Around fifty thousand residents of Porto Alegre now take part in the participatory budgeting process (compared to 1.5 million city inhabitants), with the number of participants growing year on year since 1989. Participants are from diverse economic and political backgrounds. The participatory budgeting cycle starts in January and runs along the year in many assemblies in each of the city's 16 districts, dealing with many areas of interest to urban life. The meetings elect delegates to represent specific neighbourhoods. The mayor and staff attend to respond to citizen concerns. In the following month's delegates meet to review technical project criteria and district needs and agree a resulting budget that is binding. Only the Mayor may veto the budget, or remand it back to the Municipal Council of the Budget (this has never happened to date).

Research evidence suggests that participatory budgeting has led to direct improvements in facilities in Porto Alegre. For example, sewer and water connections increased from 75% of households in 1988 to 98% in 1997. The number of schools quadrupled since 1986. The system has been recognized as a successful experience of interaction between people and the official administrative spheres in public administration and, as such, has gained a broad impact on the political scene nationally and internationally, being interpreted as a strategy for the establishment of an active citizenship in Brazil.

The distribution of investment resources planning that follows a part of the statement of priorities for regional or thematic meetings, culminating with the approval of an investment plan that works and activities program broken down by investment sector, by region and around the city. The high number of participants, after more than a decade, suggests that participatory budgeting encourages increasing citizen involvement. Also, Porto Alegre's health and education budget increased from 13% (1985) to almost 40% (1996), and the share of the participatory budget in the total budget increased from 17% (1992) to 21% (1999).

The educational project linked to Participatory Budgeting for the city was named the *Citizen School* and was implemented by the Municipal Secretariat of Education. The Citizen School is pushing in the same direction as the City more generally and aims to initiate a developed version of education for citizenship very early in the formal education process. Like Participatory Budgeting, through clear goals and innovative institutional design the Citizen School project has been transforming formal education in Porto Alegre. In order to construct the principles that would guide the actions of the Citizen School, a democratic forum was created – the Constituent Congress of Education. Through detailed engagement with school communities a Congress was constructed whose objective was to guide policy development for schools in Porto Alegre. The process involved the following phases: (1) creating thematic groups in the schools; (2) holding regional meetings; (3) building the Constituent Congress of Education; and (4) elaborating the internal regulations for the schools. The interconnections among these phases in the Citizen School were designed to avoid serious separation between the determination of the goals and the creation of the mechanisms to implement these goals. The goals that guided practice in the schools were collectively created through a participatory process. Here, a government that created channels for the determination of collective goals replaced the traditional relationship of distant government officials managing schools from afar. From the Constituent Congress, the main goal for education was defined as democratization in the municipal schools along three dimensions: democratization of management, democratization of access to the school and democratization of access to knowledge. This involved creating more democratic relationships inside the schools, between the school and the community and between the school and the central administration. It required the creation both of mechanisms that enabled the full participation of teachers, staff, parents, teachers and administrators in the construction of democratic decisions about education in Porto Alegre and of a system of monitoring that guaranteed that the collectively constructed decisions were being implemented.

The decision making and monitoring processes in education occurred at various levels: the establishment of a larger policy for education in the city and a constant evaluation of it; deliberations about how to invest the money allocated by the central administration to the school; and decisions about creating mechanisms of inclusion for marginalized and impoverished students. The three major mechanisms that provide the essence of the Citizen School and that attempt to guarantee empowered community involvement, participatory deliberation and democratic decision making include the Municipal Congress of Education, the Educational Configuration of the Schools and the School Council.

The Municipal Congress of Education was set up to guarantee that central government acts in conformity and implements the collective will of the city in terms of education. The Educational Configuration of schools included several mechanisms that guaranteed the inclusion of students through 'progression groups' where students who come from other school systems (the state, for example) and have experienced multiple failures are given more close attention so that they are ultimately integrated in the cycle. The policies include a learning laboratory, a space where students with special needs are helped, but also a place where teachers conduct research in order to improve the quality of the regular classes.

In addition, the integration within the Citizen School of a new conception of curriculum was central to development of Citizen schools. The starting point for the construction of curricular knowledge was the culture(s) of the communities themselves, not only in terms of content but in perspective as well. The starting point for this new process of knowledge construction was the idea of 'thematic complexes'. Through action research the main themes from the specific community were listed. Then the most significant ones were constructed in the thematic complex that guided the action of the classroom, in an interdisciplinary form, during a period of time. The traditional rigid disciplinary structure was broken and general interdisciplinary areas were created. These areas of study were given the names of social expression, biological, chemical and physical sciences, socio-historic and logic-mathematical. In terms of the final mechanism the School Council complemented and the Congress of Education. School councils are composed of teachers, school staff, parents, students and one member of the administration. Each School Council has 50% of the seats for teachers and staff and 50% for parents and students. One seat is guaranteed to the administration of the school, usually the principal (elected by all members of the school). The rules concerning parents and students are democratic. Students who are 12 years old or more, and parents or legal guardians of students who are less than 16 years old, can vote and be elected. When the number of parents or students cannot be reached, because of these legal conditions, more students or parents (depending on the specific case) are added until the percentage of 50% for the parents/ students segment is reached. The task of the School Councils is to deliberate about the global projects for the school, the basic principles of administration and the allocation of economic resources and also to monitor the implementation of these decisions. The Principal and her/his team are responsible for the implementation of the policies defined by the School Council. Schools also manage their expenditures according to the goals and priorities established by the School Council. Decisions about the curriculum are also part of the council's deliberations. The inclusion of parents, students, support staff and teachers in this process is one of the most innovative aspects of the model. Yet, in such changed circumstances, teachers themselves needed to learn new roles, dispositions and skills as well. In order to ensure that the teachers participated knowledgeably in the project, the Popular Administration also implemented a process of ongoing education on the job.

3.3.3. Summary

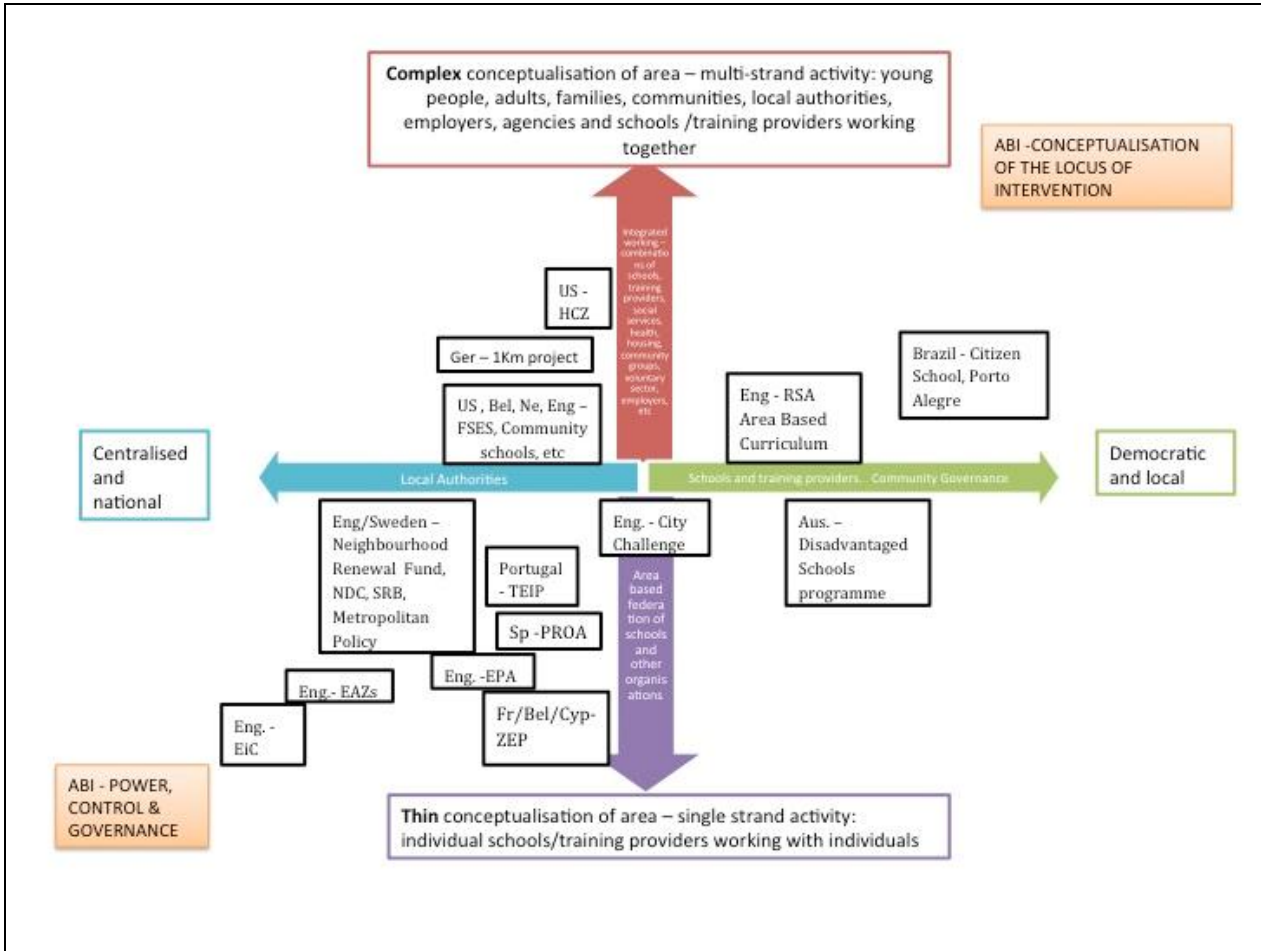
This category of ABI is perhaps the most complex in that many of the educational strands are part of more general ABIs dedicated to holistic improvements of particular zones or areas. Many of these ABIs have diffuse and localised governance strategies that include strong components of community representation. However, many of the educational interventions developed as part of such programmes were a complex mix of intersecting and overlapping projects that were difficult to conceptualise in terms of the theory of change that underpinned them. In addition although they appeared to be part of a more holistic approach, much of the evidence about the educational components was that they were predominately school focused and provided little opportunities for engaging in more integrated strategies at the local level – the strongest element of such integrating work focusing on educational interventions that attempted to improve the links between schooling and employment. Again,

however, we do have an example of an ABI that is different to the many, with the educational component integral to the city-wide approach to improvement. The Porto Alegre project and its participatory budgeting scheme is clearly not an EU programme but it does provide an example of a common approach to developing city wide improvements, including a major educational strand of activity, which may be of some benefit to EU policy makers.

Chapter 4. A Framework for conceptualising area-based initiatives

In order to make sense of the myriad of approaches to area-based initiatives so far documented in this report, the framework below is suggested as an organising and classificatory tool:

Figure 1 – framework for conceptualising ABIs



4.1. Rationale for the framework

An examination of educational area based initiatives in different country contexts has revealed a whole number of approaches, perspectives and underlying rationales. To provide some coherence to what at first sight appears a fragmented and chaotic field, the report has developed a mapping framework that attempts to configure in broad terms these initiatives around two intersecting explanatory axes: (a) power, control and governance of ABIs and (b) conceptualisation of locus of intervention of area-based initiatives.

Axis (a): ABIs -Power, Control and Governance

One of the important defining features of the area-based initiatives documented in this report is who has power over resources and governance and therefore who controls decisions as to how area-based initiatives will be developed, configured and implemented. Based on the evidence in the report ABIs can be located along a continuum that has, at one extreme, governance, power and control in the hands of national government policy makers and professionals that generally operate within a mainstream perspective on the purposes of education and explanations for the link between education and poverty. A number of area-based initiatives reviewed in the report tended to be located towards this end of the spectrum. For example the Excellence in Cities initiative in England had a clearly delineated set of activity strands (such as learning mentors, talented and gifted provision etc.) laid down by government that schools then fine-tuned to meet their particular needs. Moving along the spectrum are ABIs that are locally professionally driven. For example the French ZEPs, although funded and licensed to operate via the government's education department, developed local interventions that were school based and school planned. In other words, as long as education plans were developed that reflected the broad strand of educational equity articulated by the governments ABI policy, schools in the ZEP were autonomous to develop and deliver interventions as they saw fit. Towards the other end of the spectrum were a minority of ABIs that emphasised localised structures of democratic engagement that reflected a more critical perspective towards mainstream educational purposes and approaches and where education and other professionals worked in authentic partnership with communities and families to plan and deliver educational provision. The most radical of ABIs documented in this report that reflected this position on the spectrum was the Porto Alegre Citizens schools that were part of a democratic participatory budgeting approach for the city more generally. Less radical and yet with a clear emphasis on school-community relationships was the RSA Area-Based Curriculum project that focused on the co-design and co-delivery of curricula emanating from the schools' neighbourhoods and communities.

Axis (b): ABIs – Conceptualisations of the locus of intervention

The review of area-based initiatives suggest that the nature of the interventions can at the one extreme focus on the funding of various single strand, in-school processes for improving the outcomes of those individual young people living and schooled in the most disadvantaged areas. In essence this approach to ABIs suggests seeing poor areas within which schools operate as a backdrop to the educational challenges that schools by themselves need to overcome. The focus is on how schools in disadvantaged areas can variously target ways in which to support specific young people to succeed within the context of the school. So for example, the ZEPs in Belgium allocated funds on the basis of the nature of the intervention designed and implemented by the school. As one moves along the spectrum the City Challenge ABI in England, although focused in schools, had a clear remit of working collaboratively within a family of networked schools to improve the performance of pupils within that area. At the other extreme are ABIs that are multi-strand and that conceptualise areas as complex places, with complex demographics, cultures and schooling histories, all of which have strong influences on the way young people engage with education. Interventions, therefore, reflect a holistic and integrating approach to making impact on educational outcomes. This is about schools being part of a coherent and scoped strategy of working with other agencies, organisations and sectors to bring about improved outcomes for families and communities as well as for young people. This theory of change suggests that it is the experience of the interrelationship of specific area based variables that generates disadvantage and hence cannot be ignored if young people are to succeed educationally. The issue of transferred outcomes is central to this approach in that aspects of regenerating physical places, improving health and crime, creating employment and supporting families and communities through various forms of social welfare, although not directly focused on young people themselves or their education, is likely to indirectly

impact on them in such a way as to enhance aspirations more generally and enable greater opportunities of accessing, engaging with and succeeding in education. Perhaps the most developed example of an ABI that demonstrated this approach was the Harlem Children Zone that served around 100 blocks in Harlem, New York, predominately populated by low-income black families that offered access to an interlocking network of education, health, family, and social welfare services.

What the mapping framework demonstrates is that the vast majority of area-based initiatives reviewed in this report have tended to fall in the single-strand, school-focused, and government/local authority/school led approach. Although this is what might be expected, given where such policies emanate, it certainly asks questions about the extent to which area-based initiatives have really engaged with the complex and multi-faceted issues of disadvantaged places or the extent to which they have democratically engaged with communities in those places. Given the "ecological" systems approach for conceptualising how young people's development is influenced by a whole host of both close/immediate and transferred meso- and macro-level experiences one would expect ABIs to have multiple strands located at different points on the framework, reflecting who is best placed to engage with what issues and at what spatial scale.

Chapter 5. Impact of ABIs on educational attainment and skills development

Given the framework and the array of perspectives and approaches to the development and implementation of ABIs what does the evidence say about the impact of area-based initiatives on educational attainment and in particular in narrowing the educational gap between more and less disadvantaged young people? In addition what does the evidence say about ABI improving vocational qualifications and skills development?

In broad terms evidence on the impact of education-focused area-based initiatives across EU countries and beyond is decidedly mixed. Although there is evidence that many of the interventions produce some positive outcomes and impacts they tend to be small-scale and to be distributed patchily across different aspects of the ABI and different sites of implementation. Crucially, there seems to be little evidence that area-based initiatives in the EU and beyond have transformed outcomes in designated areas to the point of equalising outcomes between them and other areas. However, there is a growing evidence base that longer term, holistic and place orientated programmes that are democratically focused in their recognition and representation of young people and families and their communities, and appropriately embedded in wider structural reforms are perhaps starting to generate some systemic improvements. There is some partial evidence that the limited number of vocational education and training programmes as part of ABI did have some positive impacts on skills development for young people and adults who lived in socio-economically disadvantaged areas.

5.1. Impacts of ABIs within the EU

England – Research on England’s EAZs shows that relatively few of the programme’s original objectives were realized (Power et al, 2002). Even in terms of attainment targets, there was little measurable improvement and in some EAZs there was even a negative zone effect. More convincingly, Excellence in Cities has been subject to a substantial evaluation – government commissioned but carried out by an independent research organisation (Kendal et al, 2005). On the one hand, the evaluators reach some positive conclusions that suggest that such programmes can have an impact on students in their teenage years, that they can be cost-effective with compensatory resource-based policies showing some positive results, even when the resources expended are relatively modest. On the other hand, the evidence also suggests that the initiative probably did little to reduce the gap between more and less disadvantaged students in participating schools.

The national evaluation of City Challenge (Hutchings et al, 2012) also demonstrated some improvements in narrowing the attainment gap that were able to be attributed to the programme although these were not always consistent across the age range or the various areas in which it was operating.

With the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme it was widely assumed that educational projects would help to achieve improved outcomes, even if the processes through which this was to occur remained blurred. Consequently, it was not possible to trace the impact of specific interventions on particular outcomes. This problem was accentuated because Partnerships had relative freedom in planning their strategies and interventions. A 2004 analysis of Delivery Plans established that, on average, each Partnership then assumed five separate educational outcomes. More would have been learnt from the educational component of the programme if partnerships had supported a narrower range of projects, each based on a theory of change linking levels of deprivation, interventions and plausible outcomes. However, there is evidence of positive outcomes across the training and skills development components of the NCD. Data shows that the program increased the probability of jobless individuals entering employment in NDC areas compared to residents living in similar deprived areas used as

control group. The program had the greatest effect on those who were in job-training, full time education and in receipt of incapacity benefit before the program began (Batty et al, 2010).

A review of Sure Start Children Centres (Melhuish et al 2005), however, suggests that there were benefits to the programme but that it produced greater benefits for the moderately disadvantaged than for the more severely disadvantaged, resonating with other evaluations of similar interventions (e.g. Early Head Start in the US). As regards FSES, there was some evidence of positive outcomes with regards to raised attainment, increased pupil engagement with learning and a growing trust and support between home and school (Cummings et al, 2005, Cummings et al 2007, Cummings et al 2011). There was also improved multi-agency working that brought some benefits to children and their families. There is, however, some evidence for a partial intervening to break the cycle of disadvantage in some of the areas that they serve. In terms of the area based curriculum initiatives external evaluations suggest success in the primary schools, with a good triangulation between the independently-voiced claims of teachers, children, and key people in partner organisations, together with direct observations of pupil work and an evidence base that points clearly to the initiative making a tangible and positive difference to the learning of a large number of children. However, the evaluation was more ambivalent about area based curricula in the secondary sector with mixed results in secondary schools that arose from a combination of factors, including learning cultures with a strong "performative" orientation that positions subject teaching as insulated from (and superior to) other conceptions of educative purpose and which foster reluctance to depart from established practices. To some extent the original conception of the initiative underestimated such difficulties and given the very modest size of the programme there is little indication of how it would be scaled up nationally.

France – By the time funding for ZEPs ceased in France in 2006, there were some indications that ZEPs may have countered the increase in educational inequalities with some impressive local successes. However overall the project design and resourcing of ZEPs did not provide a model for breaking the systemic relationship between social disadvantage and poor educational outcomes (Bénabou et al, 2005). As Benabou et al (2005) note, ZEPs had no discernable effect on any of the four measures of students' academic achievement used: obtaining at least one degree by the end of schooling, reaching the 8th or 10th grade, and success at the Baccalauréat. Perhaps most notable was the absence of impact at the lower end of the achievement distribution (exiting school without any degree), which was the intended target of the policy. These results suggested that the combination of the increase in measured teaching inputs and the more "qualitative" dimensions of the ZEP program (which was meant to spur new educational projects, teaching methods, etc.) had no effect on academic achievement. Although some of ZEP projects may have been effective, it was clear that schools did not manage to develop any new substantive educational projects. Moreover, because of the lack of overall coherence in the ZEP program, there was no clear mechanism by which successful projects could spread to other schools.

Belgium – Although the ZEPs were extensive ABIs, there appears to be no data available from the French Community to provide a solid evaluation of the results of their ZEP policy and their particular variations over time.

Germany – Each One Square Kilometre project is locally evaluated and there appears to be little available evidence in the public domain that synthesises these evaluations into a coherent programme evaluation

Cyprus – The application of Education Priority Zones in Cyprus has, in many respects, been regarded as small-scale success (Spinthourakis et al, 2008). The main objectives of ZEP that included the reduction of school failure and improved literacy levels was accomplished in all three ZEPs that functioned in Limassol, Paphos and Nicosia. Although there was some evidence of positive outcomes from the various interventions based on small-scale action research projects these did not provide a strong enough evidence base to enable generalised findings. A

broader review suggested that some of the ZEPs' orientations, goals and objectives did not align strongly enough with the existing educational system and instead ran parallel to the main system, thereby failing to penetrate its structures in order to produce noticeable results. The suggestion is that the programme was perhaps cosmetic and failed to tackle the problem of educational underachievement in any fundamental way (Neophytou & Koutselini, 2008)

Sweden – Research evidence suggests that a number of projects aimed at improving pedagogical practices in relation to learning Swedish as a second language and integrating native language tuition into regular school programmes were developed through the Metropolitan policy and, according to the evaluations, the projects were very successful (Hartsmar, 2008). However, over time the specific educational components of the programme became truncated from more general people orientated policies of the programme and in particular became the preserve of educational professionals rather than evolving out governance mechanisms with stronger elements of community engagement that might reflect more holistic and rounded solutions (Bunar, 2011).

Spain - Evaluations have been carried out from 2005 to continuously improve and adjust the PROA programme. The latest evaluation corresponds to the academic year 2012, when 70.000 participants from centres throughout the country were evaluated. The evaluation focuses on the opinions of school staff, students and their families, concentrating on their perceptions about the benefits, strengths and weaknesses of the programme. Evaluations have shown that the programme has achieved a high degree of planning and those involved have shown a high degree of satisfaction, as well as improvement in their academic performance. In terms of how students perceive improvements in their own academic performance, 70 % of participating learners in primary education and 93 % in secondary education were satisfied with their own improvement. In the academic year 2010-2011, 89.8 % of the students in primary education, and 64.7% in secondary education involved in the 'school mentoring programme' passed their school year, and 80.1% of the students participating in the support and reinforcement programme also passed their school year. Although these appear to be impressive results there do not appear to be control groups/schools against which these statistics can be compared.

Netherlands – One particular study (Heers & Ghysels, 2013) evaluates the impact of community schools on several indicators of educational progress. A detailed, longitudinal and econometric evaluation of all primary schools, including community schools in a Dutch town was undertaken and matched to a national sample. The findings suggest that community school attendance as a whole has neutral to small positive effects on pupils' educational progress. The impact of different community school activities varied. Contrary to expectations, instructional activities were not unequivocally effective. Conversely, more indirect pupil-oriented activities like improvements of leisure options, parental involvement and the school climate proved most effective. A focus on the school environment appeared particularly positive for underperforming pupils. Increased coordination between agencies did not appear to be effective in terms of pupils' educational progress. Another study (Heers et al, 2012) examined the impact of Dutch community schools in Rotterdam on student dropout and in particular on pre-vocational education, where the prospect of dropout is seen as particularly high. A difference-in-differences estimation model was combined with an iterative matching procedure that ensured that only comparable regular school students were compared with community school students. The empirical findings highlighted that community schools were only as effective as regular schools in reducing student dropout. This suggested that actions taken by school with additional community school subsidy did not seem to have contributed to reduce student dropout. The study emphasized, however, that community school students may benefit from community school education in a different ways, particularly as they offer a more holistic approach to children's education and development that focuses on family and on student environments. A disadvantage of this holistic view, however, is that community

school programs do not define accurately enough which activities are undertaken and how these activities improve students' educational outcomes. Therefore, to be evaluated rigorously on their effectiveness community school programs and their objectives have to be more clearly defined.

5.2. Impacts of ABIs beyond the EU

US – In examining the research base for full service and community schools in the US, the report (Castrechini & London, 2012) concludes that there is a limited amount of large-scale and rigorous evaluation of such schools, with instead much in the literature exhorting the benefits of the schools without a suitable evidence base. However, there is emerging and robust evidence for the more developed multi-strand collaborative projects having a number of documented impacts. For example, there is strong evidence of the effects of these projects on health-related knowledge and behaviour and positive impacts on attainment, well-being, behaviour, attendance and drop-out reduction as well as on school climate and teacher's practice (Adams, 2010). The reported improvements are impressive in themselves but are doubly so given that the greatest gains are claimed to accrue to those who experience the greatest disadvantages. In relation to the most developed of these multi-strand initiatives – the HCZ – the evidence base suggests that academic attainment has improved in the zone. One study found that students attending Promise Academy schools do better than students of their backgrounds attending a typical public school in New York City (Dobbie & Fryer, 2011). Another study claims that gains made by Promise Academy students were enough to reverse the black–white achievement gap, at least in some subjects and for some age groups (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010). Both studies suggest that at individual programme level there is some evidence of positive impacts across the HCZ's wide remit. At the level of these wider effects, however, there is far less evidence available. The two independent evaluations, although focusing on attainment outcomes also tried to explore whether the other services provided by the Zone had any impact on attainment. Since other charter schools in New York do as well as the HCZ Promise Academies, and since children who do not receive additional services seem to attain as highly as those who do, they conclude that there are no cumulative effects from these services, and that it is the schools alone that make the difference – challenging HCZ's underpinning theory of action. HCZ itself has disputed some of these findings, arguing that the research was methodologically flawed. However, if the precise causal mechanisms are in doubt, there is no doubt to the evidence base that HCZ has important positive impacts on a range of outcomes for children, not least in relation to educational achievement.

Australia – While the Disadvantaged Schools program generated advocacy and leadership at school-based levels, the grassroots focus of the program prevented it from delivering on systemic change. There was little overall co-ordination and little development of more systemic policy frameworks that resulted in the DSP becoming somewhat marginalized (Williams et al, 1991).

Brazil – Much of the evaluation of Citizen Schools has examined the extent to which participatory engagement in the development of pedagogical practice and enlightened notions of democratic engagement that include the development of critical literacies by students has been achieved (Gandin & Apple, 2002). These types of more radical outcomes differ from the rather more conventional outcomes/attainment benchmarks that dominate many impact studies in mainstream EU policy contexts. However, there are some partial indicators of success that align more closely to the type of indicators recognized in standard evaluations of educational impact. There is some evidence that the changed curricula have had real and substantial effects on issues such as exclusion in schools. While data are limited, they do seem to show significant improvement in student dropouts. In 1989, when it took office, the percentage of dropouts in *elementary* schools was nearly 10%. Since the introduction of Citizen School the dropout rate reduced to 0.97% in 1998. This is an important educational achievement of the project. Another

telling fact is the virtual nonexistence of vandalism against the majority of the municipal schools. School vandalism used to be a serious problem in public schools (and still is in the state schools). Evidence seems to suggest that the community's active participation in the governance of the schools and their use of school space for the community activity has created a sense of responsibility and notion that public goods are the property of all.

Chapter 6. Explaining the low impact of area-based initiatives

Given the evidence base of impact, what are the explanations for the relative failure of most area-based initiatives to achieve systemic improvement in educational attainments for those young people most disadvantaged?

Based on the type of ABI approaches highlighted above, and the explanations provided for the links between poverty and poor educational outcomes, a number of explanations can be offered for the failure of ABIs to bring about more significant transformations in educational outcomes. Some of these are to do with the administrative, service, community orientated and time-bound delivery features of area-based initiatives.

In terms of administrative features there is an argument that suggests that ABIs represent an ineffective way of tackling deprivation because there are more deprived people living outside such areas than in them. In view of this, one might suggest that it may be worse to be poor with affluent neighbours than with other poor neighbours. On the other hand, other perspectives suggest that area-based initiatives may be an efficient, if not an equitable, way of distributing resources if it can be demonstrated that delivering services in clusters can take advantage of the possibilities arising from complementarity between different elements of interventions, for example on housing, education and employment, as some of the ABIs have demonstrated. Part of the problem here concerns the difficulties of coordinating programmes that are accountable to different government departments, and have different funding streams, different priorities, different objectives and different time-scales.

6.1. Service Delivery

From a service delivery perspective experience of service providers may provide different perspectives on initiatives from those immediately available to people operating at the policy and administration levels. Providers of services seem more likely to be concerned with issues relating to individual need and to be particularly aware of responses to interventions from children and families. The range and diversity of professionals that are involved in the development of services, as well as the style of their delivery, can have a negative impact on the provision of services to individuals and families. Where different initiatives (and different mainstreams) have different protocols for service delivery (e.g. in relation to client confidentiality and record keeping), these differences can inhibit joint working with individuals or families. In addition there have been concerns about partnership working and partnership overload, the amount of additional bureaucracy and, in some cases, a lack of integration between initiatives dealing with the same problem or the same client group. Some service provider arrangements are seen as little more than partnerships of convenience designed to satisfy requisite funding arrangements. The degree to which partnerships are of themselves able to change attitudes or activities has been raised. This has at times resulted in policy and practice to shift away from partnership working to the implementation of interventions as particular professional groups come to dominate the articulation of problems and suggested solutions.

6.2. Community Engagement

From a community engagement perspective, community development approaches formed the basis for many policy approaches, including attempts to create inclusive community-wide partnerships reflected in: the RSA Area based curriculum; aspects of the education strands of the Single Regeneration Budget and New Deal for Communities programme; the Disadvantages Schools programmes, and some components of ZEP style initiatives in various EU context. Perhaps most extensively is the example of the Citizen School in Porto Alegre and the Participatory Budgeting approach adopted in the city. However, the realities of community involvement on the ground can prove complex. The role and remit of community groups are not always clear (the Porto Alegre project

perhaps being the exception to the rule) and there may be a limited platform from which to launch community involvement. Formidable time demands can be placed on a small number of willing local community 'reps', leading to burnout, rapid turnover, and disillusionment. Recent work on communities and ABIs has also cast doubts on the links between neighbourhood and community and suggested that engagement can be frozen in time, unable to respond to changes occurring as a result of ABI designation. Commentators also argue that ABIs have proved willing to promote responsible but not challenging community involvement. As a result community development processes may be subject to attempts at control by local authority officials, councillors, service managers and representatives of regional and national levels of government. At the same time, however, evidence also suggests that it is not always clear whether community members are representing themselves or 'the community' (which isn't a unified body in any case), and the para-professionalising of community members so that they come to think professionally rather than to offer democratic challenge.

However, there are ABI approaches that recognize and have responded to such challenges. For example, the Porto Alegre project was able to mobilize energy and commitment at the 'grass roots' to realise beneficial externalities within the community. And although community participation makes such approaches less easily replicable, it does constitute a good reason for focusing on particular places, particularly if education and community development as well as poverty prevention is an objective.

6.3. Lifespan and resourcing of projects

Apart from some notable exceptions (the Disadvantaged Schools Programme in Australia) an additional difficulty faced by the vast majority of ABIs documented in the report is their general short life span before they get either disbanded or merged into other programmes. The difficulties of embedding change, and in particular the cultural change of people has been recognised as requiring sustained and long-term commitments. Too many ABI programmes lacked the political will to support such long-term commitments.

Although the above challenges are fraught with difficulties, in principle, at least, there is every possibility they might be resolved through more thoughtful and sustained policy-making. However, other explanations point to more fundamental issues with ABIs, and call into question the extent to which ABIs actually do or ever could constitute meaningful attempts to tackle educational disadvantage. It is striking, in particular, the extent to which ABIs are strategically and appropriately designed are in relation to the issues they are seeking to address. This is evident in their short-term nature, but also in the limited amount of resource they typically are able to deploy. In the case of EAZs, for instance, the amount of funding dedicated to the initiative amounted to a mere 0.05% of educational expenditure in England, and generally ABIs have delivered an uplift to resources in targeted areas that is small in relation both to overall educational resources in those areas and to the apparent scale of need. Although there are clearly differences in the level of funding of each of the ABIs documented, the vast majority still represent a tiny fraction of mainstream spending.

6.4. The scope and focus of projects

The under resourced aspects of ABIs is also compounded by the limited scope of many of the ABIs documented. Apart from some of the more holistic and at times emancipatory and perhaps radical examples highlighted in the report the majority of ABIs are restricted to a limited range of actions aimed at improving the performance of schools and offering additional support to students in those schools, even when these programmes are part of more general ABIs. There is little evidence of single strand school-focused ABIs, and in particular the educational strands of more general ABIs, engaging with some of the underlying causes of poor educational outcomes highlighted at the start of the report that include poverty, poor housing, transport and services, limited opportunity structures, or class and other social group cultures. These are seen as separate strands of activity that require separate interventions.

Finally, the impacts of many school focused ABIs are, ironically, limited by their being set in a policy framework which although located in aspect of place pays scant regard to area factors and their impacts on the way young people live and engage with education. Many of the reforms in the school focused ABIs listed are based on the assumptions that curriculum, assessment measures, pedagogy, and targets can be specified, without regard to local differences, even when the rhetoric of the local and community is extolled. Meanwhile, policies of school 'choice' in many EU contexts undermine the link between schools and the areas they serve by offering families the opportunity to send their children to distant schools, an issues that was particularly pertinent in the Belgian context. Moreover, a deliberate policy over many years in many EU country contexts of increasing school autonomy *vis à vis* local authorities means that the incentives for schools to prioritise institutional advantage are often greater than incentives for them to work for the well-being of a particular area.

Taking these factors together, some commentators have concluded that the vast majority of ABIs are too often school focused and based on a mistaken understanding of the relationship between the presenting problems of disadvantage in an area and the more fundamental causes of those problems (Dyson et al, forthcoming, Dyson et al, 2012). In particular, they charge, such ABIs tend to attribute the manifestations of disadvantage in an area to peculiarly local factors and to overlook the extent to which those local manifestations in fact emerge on the basis of socio-structural factors that operate well beyond the confines of the designated area. In support of this argument, these critics also point to the tendency of ABIs to pathologise disadvantaged populations, blaming them rather than socio-structural factors for the problems they experience, and to misrepresent the spatial distribution of disadvantage, overlooking the uncomfortable fact that most disadvantaged people live outside targeted areas.

6.5. A focus on individuals rather than areas?

Given these arguments there is view that educational disadvantage should be tackled in relation to the specific barriers that particular individuals and groups of individuals experience in their education and training due to their socio-economic disadvantage. In other words, that the focus of positive discrimination should not be in areas of disadvantage per se but should be assigned to those individuals most in need. Although beyond the specific remit of the review there is a sense in which reference needs to be made to these interventions so that area based interventions might be examined in relation to any complementarity or additionality that such approaches might engender.

To help illuminate this approach the report focuses briefly on the Pupil Premium - one of the latest policy developments in England that has attempted to positively resource the education of socio-economically disadvantaged individuals rather than to provide broad levels of additional compensatory funds for disadvantaged areas and educational institutions in those areas.

The Pupil Premium takes the form of additional funding allocated to schools on the basis of the numbers of children entitled to and registered for free school meals - a proxy of socio-economic disadvantage - and children who have been looked after continuously for more than six months. Schools received £488 per eligible pupil in 2011-12 and £623 per eligible pupil in 2012-13. Although too early to examine the impact of the Pupil Premium on attainment, evidence (Carpenter et al, 2013) seems to suggest that schools welcomed the introduction of the Pupil Premium and saw it as an important resource they could draw on in supporting their approaches to tackling educational disadvantage. They particularly appreciated the flexibility it gave them to fund the interventions they thought most useful, in the interests of their pupils. In addition, the availability of a dedicated funding stream for which they were accountable caused some schools to focus more clearly on the needs of disadvantaged pupils and offered some degree of protection to provision for those pupils. However for most part, schools' approaches were already well-established, and the introduction of the Pupil Premium enabled schools to maintain or enhance them. In many cases schools pooled it with other funds in support of these approaches. The amount of funding schools were deploying in this way was typically well in excess of their income from the Pupil Premium. In addition there was some evidence of new forms of provision being established following the introduction of the Pupil Premium. However, it is not clear whether this provision was *additional* to that already being made, or was simply an evolution of what had previously been in place, drawing on schools' evidence as to what was effective in their contexts and the increased flexibility offered by the Premium. There was evidence that some schools had a strong and principled commitment to making provision for disadvantaged pupils. In line with this, many had recently increased their spending on this provision. By and large, they saw disadvantage as being more broadly defined than the criteria for the allocation of the Pupil Premium. They also felt that some children who met those criteria were, in fact, already doing well. Some schools experienced tensions, therefore, between their own understanding of which pupils were disadvantaged and what they perceived to be an external imperative that the Pupil Premium should be spent only on those pupils in respect of whom it was allocated.

Given these particular findings, there is evidence that such funding streams are not necessarily creating anything particular new or different in terms of making provision for socio-economically and educationally disadvantaged young people. It was perhaps more about providing additional funding for schools to develop and enhance current provision as they saw fit to meet the varying needs of pupils that appeared to be most disadvantaged. So for example many were offering a range of different types of support to help pupils they considered to be disadvantaged such as: additional support both inside and outside the classroom (including one-to-one tutoring and small group teaching); additional staff (which may include teaching assistants, extra teachers, learning mentors and family support workers – schools were not asked which of these they were using); school trips; out of hours activities; provision of materials or resources; parental support; and support from specialist services. Primary and secondary schools with higher proportions of Free School Meals (FSM) pupils tended to offer more types of support.

6.6. Are ABIs the solution to educational disadvantage?

On the basis of the totality of the analysis highlighted above, one might argue that ABIs of whatever ilk cannot be viewed as solutions to creating more equitable education systems and society where gaps in educational attainment or vocational skills development are likely to be narrowed. One might argue, of course, that they were never designed or envisaged as delivering systemic change and improvement, merely to offset some of the worst excesses of educational failure in the poorest of areas of EU countries. As such they stand within a suite of targeted activities or priority educational policies that include complementary approaches of dealing with educational disadvantage such as directing educational resources at socio-economically disadvantaged individuals per se (e.g. the Pupil Premium). In addition the design of ABIs in different country context reflects the historical policy contexts in those countries and also something about the political values of the time. However other criticisms point to the stated argument above that ABIs are a poor way of targeting disadvantaged people because most disadvantage people live outside designated areas. In addition ABIs may ascribe characteristics to their areas that are in fact simply the characteristics of the people who live in those areas, and then ascribe to all individuals in the area the aggregate characteristics of the population as a whole. Both are real dangers and arise from the failure of most ABIs documented in this report to think through their rationales.

There are, however counter arguments that suggest that focusing in on areas is important. Firstly, as the report suggests, there is no doubt that spatial concentrations of poverty exist and this creates different demands and opportunities for services (notably education) in different places. This alone would justify a spatially-differentiated response. Put crudely, a school dealing with a large percentage of socio-economically disadvantaged students would need to organise itself differently and develop different relationships with other services than a school with a low percentage of socio-economically disadvantaged students – even if all poor children entitled to FSM are held to be similarly disadvantaged regardless of place. In addition, as the rationale section documents earlier in the report there is good evidence that the characteristics of place cannot be reduced to the characteristics of individuals living in those places. This is because places are not simply containers for people, but are constituted by opportunity structures, interactions between individuals and groups, geographical features and lived experiences amongst other things. This is not necessarily a matter of ‘neighbourhood effects’ (i.e. additional disadvantaging effects **over and above** the disadvantages of individuals) so much as of neighbourhood differences (disadvantage works differently in different places). Again, different places call for different responses. Finally underlying some of the criticisms of ABIs highlighted above is the assumption that ABIs should be pursued as the **only** response to disadvantage, so that a choice has to be made between working through ABIs and tackling disadvantage in other ways. As we have started argue in the report it makes more sense to see ABIs as one part of a more comprehensive approach to disadvantage, which includes strategies at different spatial levels. In particular, efforts are needed at national policy level and through universal provision. ABIs are therefore constituted as one way of intensifying provision in a ‘progressive universalism’ model. So the issue is not that ABIs get the bulk of additional compensatory resources and other places get nothing, but that provision is targeted at need in different ways in different places. Given all that has been said is there anything that suggests potential for redesigned ABIs in the future?

Chapter 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1. Re-thinking ABIs

The report has documented the historical limitations of ABIs that have, in many instances, not been well thought-through, deserving the criticisms they have attracted. However, properly conceptualised area-based initiatives may have much to offer **alongside** other approaches. So although our claims for ABIs need to be appropriately modest, we can suggest that more integrated and spatially contextualised approaches may have something to offer as part of a more general policy toolkit for tackling educational disadvantage. In order to understand in what ways this might be the case, it is necessary to focus on examples of ABIs that reflect both place and people in integrated ways – examples that are perhaps best illustrated in the report by the HCZ and the Citizen Schools in Porto Alegre. Specifically, it is important to begin with the nature of ABIs as *place based* interventions, embodying assumptions about what ‘areas’ are, how they come to be, and, ultimately, about the relationship between them and social life. As we have argued area is not simply a pre-defined place which can be understood as the sum of its characteristics – its demographics, the quality of its services, the skills and qualifications of its residents, and so on – to which ABIs need to attend. Rather, it is a site in which a range of social processes become manifest and, indeed, which is produced by and reproduces those processes. So, for instance, as the report indicates many disadvantaged urban areas in the EU can be characterised in terms of their poor educational outcomes, the variable performance of their schools, and the complex patterns of ethnicity across their populations. However, these challenges need to be understood in terms, amongst other things, of the macro-economic processes which, for example, drew immigrants into various EU country contexts at various times, the collapse of manufacturing industry in many EU regions which left their residents poor and dislocated, the development of cultural identities which have taken place in different ethnic groups in ways that are both similar and different, the market-led national policies of many EU countries that have left these areas with residualised housing and schools, and the ways in which different groups and individuals inhabit the places where they live and that create both a sense of belonging and boundaries that cannot be crossed. Such understandings show how such areas are not simply the sum of presenting characteristics and problems, but the historical and continuing product of the dynamic interaction of complex social processes. Any attempt to intervene in these areas without such an understanding would seem to run a significant risk of failure.

In a recent analysis of their conceptual underpinnings, commentators have argued that, judged against more complex understandings such as these, many ABIs have tended to operate with an exceedingly thin conceptualisation of “area” (Lupton, 2010; Dyson et al, 2011). In effect, the account of areas on which they are based appears to be simply on a set of pathological characteristics whose interactions are loosely specified and where the search for underlying explanations is curtailed. Such a listing of problems and positing of close-to-hand explanations offers ready-made and manageable targets for intervention by policy-makers. However, they also beg a series of questions. Why do children from poor backgrounds fare less well than their more affluent peers? How, precisely do the high crime levels, poor health and poor jobs of disadvantaged areas translate into poor educational outcomes? How do local cultures develop, how widely shared are they, and how, if at all, can they be changed? Above all, where do these multiple disadvantages come from, and why do they concentrate in the same place? The absence of answers to these questions means that disadvantaged areas appear as unexplained coincidences of problematic features in space, rather than as the products of underlying social processes. We should not be surprised, then, if interventions tend to be directed towards these features rather than towards the processes out of which they arise.

To this extent, this spatial perspective on ABIs supports the argument that many ABIs fail to understand the connections between disadvantage within an area and wider patterns of inequality in society as a whole. However, it does not lead to quite the same conclusions, because the spatial perspective also asserts that place matters. In particular, acknowledging that places need to be understood in relation to macro-level social processes does not mean that places must be seen only as the products of those processes. It means that while those areas must indeed be understood in relation to patterns of disadvantage across EU societies as a whole, and to the processes that create those patterns, they must also be understood in relation to their own uniqueness and the ways in which macro-level processes are mediated by the uniqueness of the local. As the report demonstrates, macro-social processes across the EU have not produced places that are identical. Differences can be multiplied many times over, and together they mean that the characteristics of these areas, the social dynamics that sustain and change them, and the interventions that are likely to be appropriate within each are different.

7.2. "New style" ABIs

Such a view leads to a different set of conclusions about what the nature and configurations of area-based initiatives should be. This set of conclusions suggests that the problem with many of ABIs (particular the mainstream majority documented in this report) is not their area focus *per se*. Rather, it is that they have failed to build coherent interventions on the basis of a proper analysis of how local factors interact with each other and with more macro-level factors operating beyond the designated area. Not surprisingly, therefore, they have generated limited interventions of the sort described. However, examples such as HCZ and the Porto Alegre project have partially responded to some of these critiques through recognising that area-based initiatives need to address local problems through local action in designated areas. These approaches provide an advance on many of the mainstream, school focused, single strand area-based initiatives as documented in this report in three important respects. First, their scope is more appropriate to the task in hand. Although both of these initiatives involve schools, neither is narrowly focused on presenting problems within those schools. In both cases, the interaction of problems within schools, and the family, community, and area contexts under which children live is acknowledged. In both cases also, interventions to address this interaction are available, involving a range of community organisations and services, and going well beyond what can be done by schools alone. These initiatives are about reconfiguring major services for strategic purposes rather than simply targeting a small amount of additional funding toward school improvement and student support activities.

Second, the scope and complexity of activities in these initiatives demands, and is supported by, an increasingly appropriate contextual analysis as outlined earlier in the report, with theories of change aimed at articulating the situation the initiatives seek to address, the outcomes at which they aim, and the steps through which they expect their actions to generate those outcomes. It remains to be seen how searching and sophisticated these theories will be, and how far they will actually guide action amidst the day-to-day pressures of service delivery, but an attempt to articulate such an approach through multi-orientated stakeholder involvement delineates such initiatives from the under-conceptualised approaches of school focused ABIs.

These "new style" ABIs can be aided by a relationship to national and EU policy that is different from that of their predecessors. It is important that these are locally-driven initiatives within a national and EU enabling framework. Unlike centrally driven, school focused ABIs, they should not be designed by policy-makers remote from the issues they are seeking to address. There is therefore a stronger chance (to put it no more strongly) that these initiatives will be more fully thought-through than the loosely bundled interventions that have characterised many centrally-driven ABIs. It is also important, however, that they arise within the context of the enabling policy

framework outlined above and that is reflected in mainstream EU policy through its strong commitment to social and educational equity.

The broader implication of developing these new kinds of ABI is that they point to the possibility of – and need for – ways of aligning action within schools and the education system with broader social action. Moreover, they imply that such alignment might involve some radical rethinking of how education systems relate to other aspects of public activity and, more specifically, of how schools might be different as they become part of integrated socio-educational approaches. In every EU country, resources, opportunities, capabilities and outcomes are distributed spatially. That distribution will be very different in different places. Appropriate contextual analyses – and the policy responses that spring from them – have to be resolutely local; they cannot rely on generalisations about ‘globalisation’ or ‘the logic of late capitalist economies’; however, useful such generalisations may be as sensitising and explanatory frameworks.

7.3. Recommendations

Based on the arguments and evidence developed in this report there is a recognition that if ABIs are to have any impact in EU country contexts they need not to be left as stand-alone solutions to educational and training disadvantage but be used as part of a more wide-ranging ecological and strategic approach that require a range of policies at a range of spatial levels, including resources targeted at individuals (e.g. pupil premiums) in combination with structural resources targeted at regional and national levels. However at the area level ABIs need to be locally-developed initiatives that work on their own terms, as determined by the areas they focus on and the issues they are setting out to address. This means there is no simple ‘recipe’ for creating an effective ABI. However, some of the main factors that can limit initiatives have been documented. So too are some of the main principles which are likely to lead to the development of more effective ABIs. Adopted from a detailed current and historic review of ABIs (Dyson & Kerr, 2012), the authors suggest a number of recommendations for future EU policy action.

7.3.1. Learning from the limitations of ABI initiatives

In order not to repeat the problems documented in this report, it is important to learn from the limitations of many centrally driven, school focused ABIs. As has already been explored, it is necessary to have a rich understanding of an area and a clear sense about an ABI’s purpose(s). The following also appear particularly important:

The use of (additional) resources. The additional resources available to ABIs have typically been very small, in relation both to the size of the issues being faced, and the amount of resource already available to the services in the area. This suggests that simply targeting more resources at the area is unlikely to make much difference – and in the current EU climate is even less of an option. *Using whatever additional resources are available to facilitate the ‘bending’ of existing resources may be more effective.*

Having sufficiently broad aims. Although ABIs try to marshal coherent efforts to tackle disadvantage, the report has documented how it is often challenging to bring together all the agencies and institutions that serve an area. In practice, too many ABIs concentrate their efforts too narrowly on schools. This means they can make little impression on area factors that are beyond the reach of the school. *While the scope of the initiative has to be manageable, it also has to identify and bring together the range of partners who are best placed to make a difference. This will be important too to make best use of limited resources.*

Perseverance and long-term planning. As the report documents many ABIs have typically been short-term – funded for a few years and then abandoned in favour of the next initiative. This has made it difficult to develop long-term strategies, or for small improvements to be built up over time and to lead to more fundamental change. It can also make potential partners unwilling to ‘give their all’ to an initiative which they know will not last. ***Professionals and policy makers need to think long-term. This is not just in terms of building up to bigger outcomes, but also of building the capacity across partner organisations to sustain an initiative over time.***

Community involvement. Although a number of ABIs in this report have acknowledged the need for community involvement, in practice the vast majority have been dominated by the views and priorities of professionals (Porto Alegre is the exception). This often means that they have been unable to develop an understanding of how people live in an area and what they need. Equally, they have been unable to call on the resources of local people to tackle their own problems. ***ABIs need to find ways to access the views of local people and to take these into account in constructive ways. Local professionals cannot simply impose what they think are the right ‘solutions’ for an area. Unless local people support these activities too, they may simply never opt-in to anything the initiative tries to do.***

Having some alignment to wider policy. There is only so much that ABIs can achieve, and many of the issues they seek to address will have their origins outside the area. For instance, initiatives might deal with the effects of economic recession in an area, but ‘fixing’ the economy is outside their scope. ***Given that ABIs typically have small effects, they are highly unlikely to make a difference if they swim against the tide of other social, economic and policy trends. Some alignment of what happens locally and what is happening centrally seems to be important.***

Clarity of design. Some ABIs documented in the report have at times lacked clarity as to their purposes, or how they are going to achieve their desired outcomes. ***It is important to have a clear design which shows how an initiative’s actions will engage with local dynamics; the outcomes it hopes to achieve (in the short-, medium- and long-term); and how, in practice, it will do this. There is an issue about how far clarity of design is bought at the cost of narrower aims and ambitions, and a compromise will need to be struck that works for issues in the area.***

Governance and Accountability – Some of the evidence for why ABIs struggled pointed to service delivery and administrative issues that required appropriate governance and accountability arrangements. ***This would then enable ABIs to generate a collective focus on the area rather than on the performance of individual services per se.***

7.3.2. The principles of good area-based initiative design

To conclude this report, the bullet points below set out – in bold terms – some of the main principles underpinning an ABI’s design and the key considerations they raise. Drawing together the points raised throughout the report, they offer policy makers and professionals in their own EU country context a broad guide to developing their own bespoke ABIs as part of broader set of structural, social and economic policy reforms.

- Initiatives need to be based on a rich understanding of the areas they are working in. This means understanding how those areas ‘work’ to produce poor outcomes. This is a complex task, which deserves time and attention in its own right. Looking at statistical indicators is important, but is not enough. It is also important to understand how local people see their area, what professionals from a range of backgrounds understand about the area, what impacts national policies have had on the area, and what has been tried before. Some research may need to be specially commissioned. However, it is likely that there will be

considerable insights to be gained simply by talking to people. Some kind of provisional account of the area needs to be developed. It may not be definitive at first, but it can be revisited as the initiative learns more.

- On the basis of this account, an outline strategy needs to be developed. This is very different from an action plan, which focuses on short-term objectives and tasks. Instead, it has to set out long-term thinking – perhaps over a five-year, ten-year or even longer time scale. It has to set out the kinds of outcomes that are aimed at in that time scale, and the broad strands of action that are expected to generate those outcomes. Above all, it has to focus on changing the underlying dynamics and characteristics of the area rather than simply on tackling presenting, surface-level, problems. As with the account of the area, it may at first be provisional, and it needs to be revisited throughout the initiative’s lifetime so that it can be elaborated and updated. Only with this strategy in place can more specific action plans be formulated.
- As part of its long-term strategy, the initiative will need to plan for its own transformation. It is highly unlikely that the initiative will last in its original form for more than a few years. If nothing else, key players will leave and policy contexts will change. The initiative will therefore need to plan at the very least for a transition from a start-up phase to longer-term sustainability. It might be particularly useful to think in terms of embedding its approaches in the area, so that they are not dependent on the presence of particular individuals or the perseverance of a particular form of organisation.
- The resources available to the initiative need to be matched to the issues it hopes to tackle. It is likely that partners will need to be brought together from a range of organisations and agencies. It may well be that the original group of partners will need to change and expand as the initiative develops a better understanding of what it needs to do – and who, therefore, needs to play a part. There may be additional funding to support the initiative, but in any case existing resources – particularly in the form of people’s time – will need to be ‘bent’ to sustain its work.
- A governance structure will need to be developed that includes all partners and is not driven by the priorities of one or two. Thought will need to be given as to how to democratise this structure by involving local people. This may be by encouraging local people into formal decision-making processes. However, it may also be by ensuring that decisions are made on the basis of a real understanding of how local people see their lives and the place where they live, and what it is that they want. It may also involve some capacity-building work so that local people can progressively take control of the available resources and bring their own resources to bear.
- The outcomes of any initiative are likely to be uncertain, particularly when the aims are long-term. The initiative will therefore need to develop feedback loops so that it knows what impacts it is and is not having. Formal end-of-initiative evaluations have their place, but they are little help in steering the initiative as it develops. What is likely to be more helpful is some mixture of formal evaluation and intelligence gathering on an ongoing basis. Above all, at regular intervals, the initiative has to review its progress in the light of the evidence and revisit its understanding of the area and its long-term strategy.

- The initiative will need support at national level. As a minimum, it will need ‘permission’. National policy makers will need to ensure that any rhetoric in favour of localism is not undermined by regulatory prohibitions, or central mandates, or accountability requirements cutting across the initiative’s plans. Beyond this, central government will need to give local initiatives control over funding (even if ‘additional’ funding is unavailable). They will need to encourage the work of locally-emerging ABIs and acknowledge it publicly. They will need to put initiatives in touch with one another so that local professionals can learn from each other’s experiences. They will also need to learn themselves from successful initiatives, making expertise from this available elsewhere, and building policy frameworks based on what they have learned.

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