To cite this output:
Kerr, K et al (2011) Breaking the Link between Education, Disadvantage and Place: What Future For Area-Based Initiatives (ABIs)?
ESRC End of Award Report, RES-451-26-0683. Swindon: ESRC

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
END OF AWARD REPORT

For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the grant reference as the email subject, to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.
Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. ESRC reserves the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Reference</th>
<th>RES-451-26-0683</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Title</td>
<td>Breaking the link between education, disadvantage and place: What future for area-based initiatives (ABIs)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Start Date</td>
<td>01.01.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant End Date</td>
<td>31.10.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Amount Expended</td>
<td>£13930.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant holding Institution</td>
<td>The University of Manchester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Holder</td>
<td>Dr. Kirstin Kerr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Holder's Contact Details</td>
<td>Address</td>
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<td>School of Education University of Manchester Oxford Road Manchester M13 9PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone</td>
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</tbody>
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Co-Investigators (as per project application): 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Alan Dyson</td>
<td>University of Manchester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof. Mel Ainscow</td>
<td>University of Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ruth Lupton</td>
<td>London School of Economics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by ESRC to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. [Max 250 words]

There is a long established link between education, disadvantage and place, which has proved stubbornly resistant to policy. The last 40 years have seen many targeted programmes aimed at improving education in some of England’s most deprived areas. However, the evidence is that these Area-Based Initiatives (ABIs) have made little difference. Reflecting on this, this seminar series asked:

- Do ABIs have a future in efforts to break the link between education, disadvantage and place?
- How can they be made more effective?

The seminars examined a wide range of ABIs from across Europe – historical and contemporary, centrally- and locally-initiated – underpinned by different ideas about education’s role in disadvantaged places. Their limits and possibilities were explored.

It appears there is a future for educational initiatives which focus on disadvantaged places. However, their effectiveness will depend, partly, on an underlying shift from ‘area-based’ to richer ‘place-oriented’ understandings of what initiatives need to achieve. Place matters hugely in education, shaping everything from children’s identities as learners, to the challenges and possibilities facing schools, to post-school opportunities. Understanding these dynamic processes could make it possible to formulate powerful interventions. However, the series found traditionally-formulated ABIs have largely failed to develop such understandings. Instead, they have typically constructed areas in terms of more-or-less arbitrary boundaries on maps, and insufficiently problematised assumptions about how children within those boundaries live and learn. In arguing for a shift in thinking, and exploring its ramifications for research, policy, and practice, the series makes an important contribution to knowledge.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to the ESRC. [Max 200 words]

The series’ main aims and objectives were to:

1. Bring together a diverse range of participants, whose work is central to the series’ themes, including: (i) academics from a range of disciplinary perspectives and career stages; (ii) national- and local-level policy makers; (iii) professionals from a range of backgrounds involved in ABIs.

2. Create a strong network between participants, building capacity around what is currently a limited field in terms of research, local innovation, and partnerships between research,
policy and practice.

3. Generate a collective commentary, created through a dialogue between seminar participants, which uses research to interrogate policy and practice, and policy and practice perspectives to inform the development of research agendas. This commentary will provide collective answers to the series’ overarching research questions: Do ABIs have a future in efforts to break the link between education, disadvantage and place? How can ABIs be made more effective?

4. Develop collective recommendations for research, policy and practice, and shared agendas that can form the basis for future collaborative engagement.

5. Communicate seminar outcomes in the form of outputs appropriate to a variety of research users – e.g. holding a showcase seminar for policy makers and practitioners, and pursuing journal publications.

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with the ESRC. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder’s institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. [Max 200 words]

No changes were made to the series’ original aims and objectives, or the grant holders’ institutional affiliations or staffing. However, the series’ total expenditure is less than requested. The funds requested anticipated participants’ travel costs – calculated on peak-time rail fares – being reimbursed. While there was good attendance throughout the series, (venues were filled to capacity and Seminars 2 and 4 were oversubscribed), few participants asked for their costs to be met. For example, Sean Barr, Senior Inclusion Officer from Achieving Derry (an ABI in Northern Ireland) explained that the seminars he attended were so valuable to his organisation’s thinking, that Achieving Derry was happy to meet the travel costs involved, especially when the seminar itself was free (and the report distributed as a stimulus for discussions at Seminar 4 is now available to download from the Achieving Derry website). National-level policy figures, and those from national organisations, met their own costs, seeing their participation as integral to their work. Other participants were typically able to travel together by car to reduce costs, book advanced or subsidised fares, or plan other activities around their attendance which would meet their costs.
c) Methodology
Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. [Max: 500 words]

The seminar programme was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning from past ABIs</td>
<td>George Smith (Oxford University), Jean-Yves Rochex (Université Paris VIII)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Areas and their effects in relation to education and disadvantage</td>
<td>Carlo Raffo (Education, University of Manchester), Brian Robson (Geography, Manchester), Keith Kintrea and Annette Hastings (Urban Studies, University of Glasgow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Learning from current innovative ABIs</td>
<td>Tony Powell (New Charter Housing Trust), Harriet Rowley, (PhD student, Manchester) Elaine Ayre (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Policy frameworks – what is needed to support ABIs?</td>
<td>Naomi Eisenstadt (former Director of Sure Start and the Social Exclusion Taskforce), Sir Alasdair MacDonald (Head teacher, Tower Hamlets), Patrick Leeson (Education and Care Director, Ofsted), Jon Coles (Director-General, Schools Division, Department for Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What future for ABIs?</td>
<td>Mel Ainscow (Government Advisor to the Greater Manchester Challenge), Alan Dyson and Kirstin Kerr (Manchester), Ruth Lupton (LSE), David Cracknell (University of Chester), Peter Shaw (former director-general of three government departments including education, and private secretary to Sir Keith Joseph).</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The series’ objectives were successfully met. It attracted a diverse range of participants – academics ranging from PhD students to Emeritus Professors, from across education, geography, urban studies, and sociology; nationally- and locally-influential policy makers and commentators; and professionals involved in ABIs. Participants came from: 13 universities; 8 local authorities, 7 schools, 5 government departments, 4 think tank organisations, 3 regeneration organisations, 2 registered charities, a housing trust, a community arts project, and a commercial enterprise. Three recruitment strategies were employed: sending targeted invitations (based on the seminar theme) to named contacts; snowballing – with contacts forwarding the invitation to appropriate colleagues; and open invitations to specialist audiences, e.g. at a seminar on educational inequalities at the North of England Education Conference (07.01.2010).

A strong network of participants developed as those attending the first seminar were invited to the second and so on. In addition to the series investigators, a diverse core group of 9 participants emerged (all attending 3 or more seminars), including participants from the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), Shared Intelligence (a national regeneration organisation), local authorities, PhD students, a head teacher, and a professor of geography.

After each seminar, a cumulative commentary summarising inputs and learning to date was developed and distributed as pre-reading for the next seminar. Comments were invited and speakers responded to the emerging analysis. This iterative process validated the ongoing analysis and informed the development of collective recommendations for policy, practice and
Indeed, the series was particularly timely in respect to developments in national policy. That nationally-influential government figures agreed to present at Seminars 4 and 5, and in doing so, publicly engaged with issues raised in the series’ commentary, is clear evidence of this. In Seminar 5, Peter Shaw’s presentation explicitly demonstrated how important the series’ findings were to current policy developments, and he advised how best to disseminate these to government. A briefing document for policymakers and practitioners is now in preparation, along with journal articles and conference presentations targeting the series’ full range of participants.

**d) Project Findings**

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on ESRC Society Today. Any future research plans should also be identified. [Max 500 words]

**i. Demand**

Seminars 1 and 3 attracted c.30 participants, Seminars 2 and 4 c.50 participants, and Seminar 5, targeting core group members, 20 participants. Seminar 4, especially, attracted an impressive range of national and local policymakers, practitioners, union representatives, and third-sector organisations. Following the election, it was clearly seen to provide a valuable opportunity for exploring the implications of the changing policy context in relation to the series’ overarching questions.

**ii. Feedback**

A challenge for those concerned with area-based issues in education is that there is no ready-made community bringing together the diverse range of knowledge and expertise needed to explore these. An important series outcome is that it started to create such a community, and participants valued the rare opportunity to connect with others from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Typical (uninvited) comments include:

- Leaders of a community arts project in Wigan said that lying outside mainstream services they often felt isolated in their work. The series was helping them to see ways of linking to wider-area concerns.
- After Seminar 1, John Houghton from Shared Intelligence, (who became part of the core group), commented he was surprised to find how relevant the seminar was to his concerns given he worked outside education. After Seminar 5, he emailed: “I really enjoyed the seminars and the discussion applying what we know to the future”.
- Typical comments from academics included “[the seminar] was a very stimulating day” (Prof. Fiona Devine, Sociology, Manchester) and that “the experience was particularly valuable” (Prof. Jane Waldfogel, Columbia University).
- George Smith (speaker, Seminar 1) noted the value of linking historical and contemporary concerns throughout the series, writing: “Much enjoyed learning about what is developing in the field – which made me much encouraged as there are these strange arcs from the 1960s and 70s, which jump over developments of the 1980s and 90s.”
- Prof. Mel Ainscow, Advisor to the Greater Manchester Challenge, reported that key figures in the government’s City Challenge programme were finding the seminars’
iii. Activities
Activities have included:


- Through Patrick Leeson (speaker, Seminar 4) Ruth Lupton is working in collaboration with Ofsted, using their inspection data to analyse relationships between area and institutional characteristics, and school quality.

- Alan Dyson and Kirstin Kerr have submitted a proposal to AHRC to explore how connections between schools and communities can be developed to support place-oriented initiatives.

- Seminar findings have been presented at the:

**e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)**
If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative’s objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. [Max. 200 words]

A condition of the series grant was that links were developed with the award RES-451-26-0704, led by Dr Maarten van Ham. These were established as follows:

- Maarten van Ham attended Seminar 1 in Manchester
- Ruth Lupton attended the first two seminars for award RES-451-26-0704 on neighbourhood effects and neighbourhood dynamics respectively. Thinking from these informed the issues addressed in Seminar 2 on understanding areas.
- Carlo Raffo, who spoke at Seminar 2 on why areas matter in education, will also be presenting at the third seminar for award RES-451-26-0704 (7-8th April 2011 in Glasgow). He will be speaking on the causes and consequences of spatial concentrations of underachievement in education, and in doing so will refer to the thinking developing during this series.

These actions have supported the series in achieving its aims. In starting to create a community of researchers, practitioners and policy figures who are actively concerned with breaking the link between education, disadvantage and place, these links have helped the series investigators to incorporate explorations from other disciplinary perspectives. At the same time, these links have also ensured that thinking from the series is being disseminated to more established communities of interest around neighbourhood effects.
3. EARLY AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

a) Summary of Impacts to date

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on ESRC Society Today. This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. [Max. 400 words]

In terms of scientific impact, the series has made a strong case for a shift in educational thinking away from area-based initiatives, to place-oriented initiatives. This would mark a fundamental change from a ‘people-versus-place’ model of reform, targeting tightly-bounded and poorly understood areas, to one concerned with people, and education, in place, and the dynamic processes which shape their experiences.

Although the term Area-Based Initiative has typically framed policy debates, during the series it became clear that notions of place – rather than area per se – are of most importance to education reform. A wide range of understandings were revealed about why place matters – from its influence on young people’s identity formation, to questions about whether different outcomes are appropriate to different places, and if so, how place-based equity can be determined. Newly emerging initiatives were found to be grappling with these issues and starting to develop their own fluid and dynamic understandings of place.

Greater clarity about what this emerging shift signifies – conceptually and in practice – will be fundamentally important in shaping future initiatives. Educational thinking must be aligned with understandings about the complexities of place being articulated in other disciplines (see, for example, Taylor (2010) – who attended Seminar 1 – on the geography of education). By involving speakers and participants from geography and urban policy studies – including Brian Robson, Keith Kintrea, and Annette Hastings – the series has started to create the links needed to achieve this.

Such scientific impacts also inform the series’ societal impacts. The RSA’s ‘concept note’ on area-based curriculum has drawn on the series. Carlo Raffo (speaker, Seminar 2) has been invited to lead the development of RSA’s Continuing Professional Development activities to support this, and Alan Dyson is now a Trustee of RSA’s Opening Minds programme. Already influential in the City Challenge programme, the series’ findings are likely to have wider impacts through Mel Ainscow’s role in advising government on the development of national strategies for addressing low-performing schools.

As the policies of the coalition government are elaborated, evidence from the series will further help to stimulate thinking about models of collaborative leadership, governance and service-delivery, which could support effective place-oriented initiatives. For example, in exploring innovative developments, the series found that where academies were sponsored by organisations which were active within the local community and saw their role as supporting sustainable community development, sponsors could be influential in bringing partners together to tackle ‘wicked issues’.
b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. [Max. 200 words]

A major contribution from the series is in offering some conceptual clarity about why place matters, and the sorts of place-oriented interventions might follow and be effective. To disseminate this, and make links to policy developments around localism and Big Society, the following outputs are in preparation, targeting the different groups participating in the series:

- An article for Journal of Education Policy, about why place matters and what sorts of interventions might follow
- A book proposal to Policy Press spanning learning from the series as a whole
- A policy briefing document, targeting policymaker and practitioner audiences
- An article for New Start magazine (a monthly publication aiming to bring together all those working to regenerate communities across the UK) on the possibilities of place-oriented initiatives

Additionally:

- The series investigators will aim to present at the North of England Education Conference (NEEC) 2012 for local authority officers. Although by invitation only, Ainscow and Dyson presented at NEEC in 2007, 2009, and 2010.
- A CASE-seminar will be hosted at LSE in summer 2011 to present findings to a cross-disciplinary audience, with the aims of exploring and establishing further links to wider academic and policy developments.

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.
4. DECLARATIONS
Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed. Please note hard copies are NOT required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick ONE statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section.

i) The Project

| This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report. | X |

ii) Submissions to ESRC Society Today

| Output and impact information has been submitted to ESRC Society Today. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available. | ☐ |
| OR | This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to ESRC Society Today as soon as they become available. | X |
| OR | This grant is not listed on ESRC Society Today. | ☐ |

iii) Submission of Datasets

| Datasets arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the Economic and Social Data Service. | ☐ |
| OR | Datasets that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the Economic and Social Data Service has been notified. | ☐ |
| OR | No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant. | X |