

## **EVALUATION OF '1 IN 5: RAISING AWARENESS OF CHILD POVERTY' IN EDINBURGH**

**DR BRIEGE NUGENT**

### **AIMS OF THE PROJECT**

The project set out to:

1. Reduce the cost of the school day
2. Improve equal access to opportunities
3. Reduce poverty related stigma for young people and their families

### **BACKGROUND**

- Impact on attainment
- Left out and dropped out
- Poverty is costing the UK around £78 billion in public services of which £6 billion is dedicated to child poverty alone, and about £1 in every £5 spent on public services making up for the way that poverty damages people's lives (Bramley et al. 2016).

### **METHODOLOGY**

- Views gathered from 212 teachers (23 interviewed), twelve parents and thirteen pupils.
- Seven participating establishments were especially focused on, three primary, three secondary and one nursery and all at different stages of engagement with the project.
- Schools were also chosen based on their catchment area, to have a spread of schools at different ends of the spectrum in terms of levels of poverty experienced.

### **THE CHOSEN 'SITES'**

Broughton High School  
Portobello High School  
James Gillespie's High School  
Sciences Primary School  
Prestonfield Primary School, Liberton High School  
and Cameron House Nursery were all part of the same 'cluster' group  
St. Ninian's Primary School

....Thank you!

### **A 'CALL TO ACTION'**

- Credibility of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team
- Training is an innovative model
- Empowering – people taking onus
- Participatory – all invited to come up with ideas
- Promotes Dialogue

### IMMEDIATE RESPONSE...

Really made me think....we're doing lots but need to do more. It is appalling that children and families are in this situation. We are only a small cog in society but we can and we must make an impact!  
(Teacher)

### KEY FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

- 93% (150) had increased their understanding of the scale of child poverty as a result of the training.
- 91% (147) understood more now about the impact of poverty on children's outcomes.
- 84% (136) understood more about the causes of poverty.
- 76% (123) felt better able to identify children in their class who may be affected.
- 41% (66) felt pupils had an increased awareness of the causes on poverty.

### SIX MONTHS LATER...

- 78% (126) felt that the financial implications of homework and charitable events were now being considered.

### COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY...GOOD PRACTICE

- Stationary was being provided in all six schools.
- Uniforms were being handed out to those identified as needing this. Five schools had created a 'swap shop' or 'vintage store.'
- No one enforces payment for dress down days or buying in costumes that can be reused.
- Some schools no longer attending Book Fair and swap shops for books created.

### CHALLENGES

- Some teachers still chastise children for not having a pen or pencil. Not providing stationary could be regarded as violation of the Education Act.
- Limitations regarding procurement.
- The costs involved with Craft, Art, Design, Technology, Home Economics, Drama.
- Biggest challenge of all – helping families overcome the shame and stigma they feel.  
ENTITLEMENT

### FOOD...GOOD PRACTICE

- St. Ninian's assertive outreach regarding school meals
- Breakfast Club
- Nairn's Oatcakes regular donations to Prestonfield Primary Schools to ensure all children have healthy snacks.
- Happy birthday or not?
- Building lifelong habits – e.g. Cameron House Nursery 'what's in the fridge?', Prestonfield Credit Union

### IMPROVED EQUAL ACCESS

- 88% (142) felt that the school was now helping more and considering the financial implications of trips and excursions as
- 71% (115) felt that social events were being considered.
- 61% (99) felt that the costs involved with the prom and leavers' dances were also now being reviewed.

### IMPROVED EQUAL ACCESS...GOOD PRACTICE

- 2 PS - rule is 'everyone goes to everything.'
- The main trip in one school is free.
- In one high school the cost of trips for one child- £7,000 – prompted re-evaluation
- Prestonfield supported by Bailie Gifford
- Parent Council's offering financial support.
- Support for afterschool and homework clubs – ripple effect, access to the internet

### IMPROVED EQUAL ACCESS...CHALLENGED

- In one school they simply decided – no more trips!
- Those most disadvantaged automatically discount themselves from trips- scaling back mentally.
- Raising awareness and encouraging parents to take up support.
- Access to the internet at home.
- Gap in those who can afford tutoring and those who cannot.
- Cost of Life – e.g. Christmas

### REDUCE POVERTY RELATED STIGMA

- Changing mindsets e.g. administrators
- End 'top fund raiser'
- Reaching out e.g. calling parents in advance of PTM
- Being brave to 'ask the hard questions.'
- BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
- GETTING OUT THERE – the 'Walking Bus'
- CHAI, Community Health and Advice Initiative

### WANTING TO DO EVEN MORE...

72% (106) of teachers would like more training in benefits.

71% (105) – more training on social and economic equality.

61% (89) more training in welfare reform and financial advice.

36% (53) more support with home energy advice.

42% (68) felt they better able to signpost pupils affected to relevant support.

75% (120) felt that they were now more capable of supporting the children in their class affected.

### IMPACT ON PUPILS

- Unlocked empathy
- Pupils opening up and revealing the truth

This is better than my old schools, before if I had a problem I didn't tell anyone. Here, I know that it is good to open up and tell people and I feel like it is not a problem...I think that all kids like me who are having financial problems should open up and tell the teachers because they can sort it out. If you don't tell anyone you are the one that is left out from trips and you will feel guilty, you need to open up and tell. (Peter).

This issue is really important to me because it is so close to home...pupils and teachers are affected by this...this needs to be spoken about and should not be hidden...There should be things put in place to help people get access to equal opportunities. (Steven).

### BEING DIFFERENT...

Sometimes I don't have the right sports equipment. I am going to breakdancing this Saturday and I imagine myself wearing my jeans and polo top and being the odd one out because of what I am wearing. Then I realise that it doesn't matter what I wear as long as I am enjoying myself and feel part of it. (Peter)

Because of the stigma associated with poverty it can be hard to make friends...I spent a lot of time by myself and indoors...Awareness gets rid of the stigma...I think if I had had that I might have made friends quicker...My journey might have been different to making friends and being part of a community quicker. (Steven)

### A BETTER LIFE NOW

#### Impact on Attainment:

I used to worry about money a lot more before. I think I am doing better in this school. (Peter)

#### No longer automatically opting out of trips

I can tell the teachers and I know they will understand. They care...I kind of rely on the school as well as my mum as they have helped me in the past and they are like family... I imagine that there is a big wall and everyone in the school is a bit of the wall and I am in that wall, I am glued to the middle and can't be taken off. (Peter).

### ADVOCATES FOR CHANGE – A CALL TO ACTION

I feel it is good that I can be the voice for other kids because I have the experience and know about this. I'll understand more about financial stuff and speaking out because sometimes when it is in front of a crowd, I am kind of nervous but I can speak out. (Peter)

'I am glad that I have been a part of this and I will never stop caring about this because it is what I have come from and I feel really strongly about it...I would like to look back in twenty years and see that there have been changes made.' (Steven)

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- This should be rolled out across Scotland.
- It is vital that schools continue to take onus of this project and arrive at solutions for 'their' school, taking 'their' needs into account.
- The 'systems' within schools should be revised so that those who are entitled to free school meals are identified from the outset, rather than having to claim this.
- Good Food Nation Bill
- Reach out to local businesses
- Routine Enquiry
- Whose shame is this? Time to reframe this as being about entitlement!