

# OUR FUTURE: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

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# PROJECT OVERVIEW

- ESRC Fellowship Project as part of the ESRC's research programme on 'The Future of the UK and Scotland'
  - 'Higher Education in Scotland, the Devolution Settlement and the Referendum on Independence'
- 3 strands to project
  1. Engagement work with young people
    - Film, teaching materials and in-depth interviews
  2. 'Key informant' interviews
    - Politicians, civil servants, university and college senior managers, trade unions & other relevant organisations
  3. Analysis of HESA data on cross border flow of students

# OUR FUTURE: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

- Topics covered:
  1. Participation in, and benefits of, HE
  2. Funding of HE
  3. Cross-border student flow
  4. Widening access to HE
  5. The referendum on independence
- 9 schools (1 independent) and 1 FE college took part
- Whole class discussions held with 143 young people aged 14 to 17
- 89 of the 143 young people were interviewed on camera
- Inclusion of 'experts'

# EMERGING FINDINGS:

- 80% of participants planned to go to university or college
- Benefits of going to university outweighed financial cost and other concerns
- Different ideas of fairness in relation to funding
- Evidence that outreach programmes have played a big role in forming young people's decisions about going to university
- Considerable number were still undecided how they would vote
- Desire for more information tailored to young people about the referendum and dislike of political point scoring:
  - *'Just tell us the consequences of voting either way'*

# FUTURE PLANS

- Conducting further in-depth interviews with young people in Scotland and England.
- 11 June: The Future of Higher Education in Scotland and the UK: Issues for Young People.

**View the film and teaching materials at:**

**<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/education/rke/centres-groups/creid/projects/he-in-scotland/he-in-scotland-teaching>**

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