



European  
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WHO IS WHO

## EMPOWERING SCHOOLS

### EVIDENCE - INFORMED POLICIES FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

*EENEE and NESET II Conference  
Brussels, Place du Congrès 1*

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Education  
and Culture

# EMPOWERING SCHOOLS

## EVIDENCE - INFORMED POLICIES FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

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### MEHTAP AKGÜÇ

Mehtap Akgüç has been a Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) since March 2014. After studying economics as an undergraduate at Koç University in Turkey and obtaining her Master's degree in Mathematical Economics at Toulouse School of Economics in France, Ms Akgüç obtained her Ph.D. in Economics from Toulouse School of Economics in 2013. During her Ph.D. studies, Ms Akgüç also obtained an MPhil in Advanced Quantitative Economics. Her main research interests lie in the field of empirical labour and development economics using both macro and micro level data from various countries and regions, including France, China, and Europe. She is particularly interested in studying issues related to migration, economic development, growth, labour market institutions, and inequality with an emphasis on educational attainment and human capital. Before joining the Jobs & Skills Unit at CEPS, Ms Akgüç worked at the Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA) in Germany as a Resident Research Affiliate from 2012 to 2014. She has also worked as a consultant for the World Bank (Washington, D.C.), where she collaborated with the Development Research Group and the economist team from the Sustainable Development Network.

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### ANDREU ARENAS

Andreu Arenas is a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Operations Research and Econometrics at Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) in Belgium. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the European University Institute and an MSc from the University of Warwick. He is an applied economist interested in policy evaluation and does research in political economy and the economics of education. He has studied the determinants of inter-generational and social mobility, such as social segregation, school inequality, and the state of the business cycle at the time of making educational choices. His work on political economy has focused on the role of incentives in collective action problems, such as government fragmentation. His research has been published in the Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization.



### MIROSLAV BEBLAVÝ

Miroslav Beblavý has been a member of the Slovak Parliament since 2010, and a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) since 2009, where he heads the Jobs & Skills Unit. He was also Associate Professor of Public Policy at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia until 2014. Between 2002 and 2006, he was the State Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in Slovakia. His areas of interest include employment and social policy, education policy, fiscal policy, governance and corruption. In January 2017, Mr Beblavý became the Deputy Scientific Coordinator of the European Experts Network on Economics of Education (EENEE).

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### MARIA DE PAOLA

Maria De Paola is Associate Professor of Economics at the Department of Economics, Statistics and Finance, University of Calabria, Italy. She obtained her Ph.D. in Economics from the Sapienza University of Rome. Her research interests include the economics of education and training, labour economics, policy evaluation, and economic politics. Ms De Paola has published her work in the Journal of Labor Economics, Journal of Public Economics, European Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, and Journal of Economic Psychology, amongst others.



## RIMANTAS DUMČIUS

Rimantas Dumčius has been a Research Director and partner at the Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI) since 2001. He is also Deputy Scientific Coordinator for the Network of Experts on the Social dimension of Education and Training (NESET II). With 16 years of experience as a policy researcher, Mr Dumčius has developed a very broad perspective on education policy. Many of his assignments have been linked to innovation in education policy and practices in response to contemporary challenges, such as early school leaving, inequality of opportunity in education, and inclusion of newly arrived immigrant children into EU education systems. Mr Dumčius recently directed the Study on Supporting School Innovation in Europe, where systemic level factors supporting and inhibiting school innovation were analysed based on data collected through 39 national policy and research reviews and 12 in-depth case studies.



## DANIEL GROS

Daniel Gros has been the Director of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) since 2000. He serves as an adviser to the European Parliament and is a member of the Advisory Scientific Committee of the European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB) and the Euro 50 Group of eminent economists, among his other current activities. He has held positions at the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission, and has served as advisor to several governments, including the UK and the US, at the highest level. He is the editor of *Economie Internationale* and *International Finance*. Mr Gros holds a Ph.D. in Economics

from the University of Chicago and is the author of several books and numerous articles published in scientific journals. His main areas of expertise are the European Monetary Union, macroeconomic policy, the economics of transition to a market economy, public finance, banking, and financial markets.

## JEAN HINDRIKS

Jean Hindriks obtained his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Namur, Belgium. He is now a Senior Fellow and founding member of the Itinera Institute and a Professor of Economics at the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) in Belgium. He was previously a Lecturer of Economics at Queen Mary University of London and at the University of Exeter (UK). He also served as Co-director of the Center of Operations Research and Econometrics (CORE) and as Director of Postgraduate Studies in Economics at UCL. His research focuses on taxation, education, performance evaluation, public and political accountability.

He has published widely and internationally on issues of public economics and political economy. He is the author (with Gareth Myles) of the globally-used textbook *Intermediate Public Economics* (2nd Edition), published by the MIT Press in 2013. He is also Associate Editor of the *Journal of Public Economic Theory*, and was on the editorial board of *Fiscal Studies* (2007-2014) and the *European Journal of Political Economy* (2006-2009). Mr Hindriks has been a member of the Belgian Academic Board of Pension since 2015 and of the Belgian Scientific Committee for the Price Analysis since 2012. Previously, he was also a member of the Belgian Commission for Pension reform 2020-2040.



## JANA HUTTOVA

Jana Huttova is Scientific Coordinator of the Network of Experts on the Social dimension of Education and Training (NESET II). Her fields of expertise are education and educational policy development. From 2002 to 2006, she was Director of Education Support Programme of the Open Society Institute in Budapest, and has since worked as a consultant, researcher, evaluator and reviewer for several international organisations. She has participated in numerous policy analyses and research studies on issues related to equity and inclusion, particularly on the education of migrant and Roma children from

early years throughout their compulsory schooling. Dr Huttova has been active in several European and international networks (Soros Foundations Network, Euroclio, Sirius, NESET II) and has served on the boards of several European and international organisations (Euroclio, IARTEM, SIRIUS).

## CLAUDIA KÖHLER

Claudia Köhler is a sociologist with expertise in the areas of education, migration, youth and community development, and cooperation between Europe and Africa. She is a Senior Researcher at the European Forum for Migration Studies, the Executive Director of the Farafina Institute, and a consultant. She has recently conducted comparative studies on migrant education and the educational opportunities of refugees in Europe, and on youth capacity building and exchange projects in Europe and Africa.

She is a board member of Policy Network on Migrant Education (SIRIUS), Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society (SACHES), and Southern African Policy and Development Nexus (SAPDN).



## KAROLIEN LENAERTS

Karolien Lenaerts has been a researcher at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) since June 2015. Ms Lenaerts obtained a Ph.D. in Economics at Ghent University in Belgium in 2014, specialising in the economics of globalisation. Her dissertation was empirical in nature and focused on foreign direct investment, productivity spill-overs from multinationals to domestic firms, global value chains, and firm-level heterogeneity. While finishing her Master's degree, Ms Lenaerts focused on inequality and social segregation in education.

Her research interests include international economics, labour and the future of

work, and inequality. As a member of the Jobs & Skills Unit at CEPS, Ms Lenaerts contributes to a number of projects on a range of topics in the area of education and skills, employment, welfare and mobility. Before joining CEPS, she worked as a researcher in the R&D Department of the Free University of Brussels, where she contributed to a project on the career perspectives of young researchers.

## TOBIAS LEY

Tobias Ley is Professor of Learning Analytics and Educational Innovation at Tallinn University in Estonia. He heads the Centre of Excellence in Educational Innovation, a university-wide interdisciplinary research centre that contributes to creating innovations in teaching and learning in schools and universities as well as for lifelong learning. He has led numerous national and EU research projects to develop digital technology and to research its impact in workplace learning and in higher and vocational education. His work appears in over 100 scientific publications and has earned him an Outstanding Paper Award (Journal of Knowledge Management) and a Best Interdisciplinary Paper Award (European Conference on Technology-enhanced Learning). He is a member of the editorial board of IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies. Mr Ley holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Graz, Austria.



## ABIGAIL MCKNIGHT

Abigail McKnight is Associate Professorial Research Fellow at the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, at the London School of Economics. Dr McKnight has researched many aspects of inequality and conducted a number of evaluations of government policy. Her research spans topics including low wage employment, evaluation of active labour market programmes, the design of cash transfer systems, earnings inequality and mobility, the graduate labour market, cognitive and non-cognitive skill development, household wealth inequality, and household debt. She has researched many features of social mobility, including the often-

overlooked aspect of downward mobility. She is the author of the research report "Downward mobility, opportunity hoarding and the 'glass floor'" for the UK Social Mobility Commission. The report highlights the advantages enjoyed by children from well-off family backgrounds that limit opportunities of equally able children from less advantaged families. She also wrote a blog with Richard Reeves (Brookings Institution) titled "Glass floors and slow growth: A recipe for deepening inequality and hampering social mobility", which draws on UK and US research to examine how slow growth is likely to place further limits on improving upward mobility. Both of these works highlight the role that school processes and structures play in exacerbating inequalities.

## DANIEL MÜNICH

Daniel Münich is Professor of Professional Practice at Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education - Economics Institute (CERGE-EI) in Prague, which is a joint academic workplace of the Charles University and the Czech Academy of Sciences. In addition to his university teaching and rich empirical research agendas in the areas of labour economics, economics of education, and evaluation of R&D, he serves as a Senior Advisor to the European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE) and has contributed to several EENEE reports. As an expert, he has also provided policy related advising to the Czech government and international organisations, such as the European Commission, OECD, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. He has also participated in numerous teams preparing national and international policy strategies in the areas of education, skills, schooling, the labour market, and social insurance policies.



## ERNA NAIRZ-WIRTH

Erna Nairz-Wirth is Associate Professor and Head of the Education Sciences Group at Vienna University of Economics and Business. She has designed, conducted and published numerous studies on education and inequality, and specialises in the fields of educational pathways, school development, best practices in dropout prevention, and teacher professionalisation. Dr Nairz-Wirth is a national and international expert in the field of early school leaving, and an editorial board member of the European Toolkit for Schools. She is an expert partner and consortium member of the FP7 project RESL.eu (Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe), and an active member of the Network of Experts on the Social dimension of Education and Training (NESET II).

## IDESBALD NICAISE

Idesbald Nicaise has a background in economics and wrote his Ph.D. thesis on poverty and human capital, investigating the relationship between persistent poverty and inequalities in the education system. He has worked since 1989 as a Research Manager and Head of the Education and Lifelong Learning Unit at Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA), which is a multidisciplinary research institute of Leuven University in Belgium. He further specialises in social policy, and more precisely in the relationships between education, labour market policy, and social inclusion. He has a part-time teaching assignment for the Department of Education Sciences at Leuven University, teaching various subjects such as the economics of education, lifelong learning and equal opportunities, and education and society. Previous subjects taught include general economics, social profit management, labour economics, sociology of education, and social security economics.



## JENS NYMAND CHRISTENSEN

Jens Nymand Christensen is the Deputy Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture at the European Commission. He holds a Master's degree in Business Economics and International Economics. He has been working for the European Institutions since 1979, and was a Director in the Commission's Secretariat-General from 2003 to 2014. He has also been a Member of Cabinet of Vice-President Henning Christophersen, and Head of Unit for International Food, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Questions. He headed the European Commission Representation in Denmark and was an advisor at the Danish Permanent Representation to the EU, dealing with the Convention on the Future of Europe and the preparations of the Inter-Governmental Conference for drafting a Constitutional Treaty for the European Union.

## JAN PAKULSKI

Jan Pakulski is Head of Unit «Evidence-Based Policy and Evaluations» at the European Commission Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, and joined the EC in September 2009. Prior to taking this assignment, he spent 16 years working for the World Bank (Washington, D.C.) where he held numerous positions. He has an extensive record of project management, primarily in social sectors, and has held management as well as advisory positions related to operations funded by the World Bank in Europe and Central Asia. Before joining the World Bank, he worked as an expert in social development for the Netherlands Government, the European Commission PHARE programme, the Council of Europe, and other agencies. He also worked as Executive Director of a Netherlands-based international NGO network, working in the area of development education and social justice, for which he travelled extensively through the developing world. Mr Pakulski holds an M.A. in Economics from the Warsaw School of Economics and a Ph.D. in Development Economics from Erasmus University Rotterdam.



## JAN PEETERS

Jan Peeters is Director of the Centre for Innovation in the Early Years, which is an early childhood education and care (ECEC) research centre at Ghent University in Belgium. He has over 20 years of research experience in areas including professionalism of teachers, diversity, and parental participation. He has conducted European policy-oriented research for the European Commission, Eurofound, and UNICEF. Dr Peeters regularly disseminates his research findings as an invited speaker, and provides ECEC training. He is an elected board member of the International Step by Step Association, which is an Eastern European and

Central Asian ECEC network. He is also a member of the core team of the Network of Experts on the Social dimension of Education and Training (NESET II). Dr Peeters is co-editor of the recently published book *Pathways to Professionalism* (2016) on professionalism in Europe.

## JENS SCHNEIDER

Jens Schneider is Senior Researcher at the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) at the University of Osnabrück, Germany. He studied Anthropology, Musicology and Ethnic Studies at the Universities of Hamburg and Amsterdam and completed his Ph.D. in Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Tübingen, Germany. He conducted post-doctoral field research in Brazil while affiliated with the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and subsequently co-coordinated the TIES Project at the University of Amsterdam on second generation Turkish, Moroccan and former Yugoslavian descendants in eight European countries. His current research interests include identity, education, social mobility in immigrant and non-immigrant working-class families, belonging and integration in super-diverse local settings, and the reflection of migration processes in cultural production.



## NIMA SHARMAHD

Nima Sharmahd is Senior Researcher at the Centre for Innovation in the Early Years, which is an early childhood education and care (ECEC) research centre at Ghent University in Belgium. She works on international research and projects, with a focus on professional development, accessibility, and family participation. She also collaborates with the Department of Education and Psychology of the University of Liège (Belgium), with the Department of Psychology of the University of Parma (Italy), and the Department of Education and Psychology of the University of Florence (Italy), where she completed her Ph.D. on the relationship between practitioners and families in ECEC centres.

## HANNA SIAROVA

Hanna Siarova is a Research Manager and Education Policy Researcher at Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI). She specialises in evaluating and analysing European early childhood and school education policies targeting different groups of children, with a particular focus on factors that explain student success in education. While at PPMI, she has contributed to and led a number of studies and research projects on policies promoting high quality and equitable education. She is currently finalising a study on supporting school innovation in Europe, which aims to analyse the systemic barriers to and enablers of successful student learning in school. She also represents PPMI as a Member of the Executive Board within the Policy Network on Migrant Education (SIRIUS), and coordinates several research activities of the Network of Experts on the Social dimension of Education and Training (NESET II).



## ADAM TYSON

Adam Tyson is Head of the Higher Education Unit within the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture at the European Commission. Over the past two years, he has been involved in EU education policy, the education strand of the Erasmus+ programme, innovation, the European Institute of Innovation & Technology, the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions, and DG EAC international relations. He previously held positions dealing with EU higher education policies and programmes, and coordinating education, youth, culture and sport policies. He has also led EU work on issues such as combating social exclusion and fighting discrimination, and has been responsible for communication and speechwriting for various Commissioners.

## LUDGER WOESSMANN

Ludger Woessmann is Professor of Economics at the University of Munich and Director of the Ifo Center for the Economics of Education at the Ifo Institute for Economic Research. His research mainly focuses on the importance of education for economic prosperity and the importance of institutions in school systems to ensure efficiency and equity, often applying microeconomic methods to international student achievement tests. He has spent several extended research visits at Stanford and Harvard Universities. His work has been rewarded with the Gossen Award and the Gustav Stolper Award of the German Economic Association, and the Young Economist Award of the European Economic Association, amongst others. He is a member of the International Academy of Education and the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, and coordinates the European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE).



