

Providing policy-makers and practitioners with resources to improve
the social dimension of the European Higher Education Area



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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

The Social Dimension in European Higher
Education 25. – 27. February 2015, Vienna, AT

CONTENTS

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OVERVIEW	6
KEYNOTES	7
The Social Dimension in European Higher Education	7
Spot on Action: First generation students: From a student's experience to a support network	7
Spot on Institutions + Research: The institutional role in student support	7
TOWARDS A NATIONAL STRATEGY	8
National Strategies for the social dimension within the Bologna Process	8
On the way to a national strategy: PL4SD Country Review in Lithuania	8
On the way to a national strategy: PL4SD Country Review in Armenia	8
On the way to a national strategy: PL4SD Country Review in Croatia	8
ACCESS 26.02.2015 11:15 - 12:45	9
EUROSTUDENT V Results: Students' entry access routes - S. MISHRA	9
Developing national alternative admissions schemes for socio-economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities - G. EDGE, S. QUINN	10
Initiatives to widen access to higher education in the urban context: London, Europe & Beyond - G. ATHERTON	11
Inequality in University Attainment in Armenia – K. GEVEN	12
SPECIAL STUDENT GROUPS 26.02.2015 11:15 - 12:45	13
EUROSTUDENT V Results: Social background of students – K. HAUSSCHILDT	13
Bachelor and Master Students' Socio-economic Situation in Georgia – M. TSERETELI, M. MCHEDLISHVILI	14
Who dares, wins? A sibling-analysis on tertiary education transition in Germany – T. KELLER, G. NEIDHÖFER	15
Mapping participation in higher education in the UK – L. BAGHERLI	16
MOBILITY 26.02.2015 11:15 - 12:45	17
EUROSTUDENT V Results: Mobility and internalisation – N. NETZ	17
International Mobility Students in Western Balkan Countries – M. SAVIC, M. KRESOJA, I. ZIVADINOVIC	18
Motivations and expectations for international student mobility: some evidence from Italy – V. CAVIEZEL, A.M. FALZONI	19
STUDENT SUPPORT & FUNDING 26.02.2015 11:15 - 12:45	20
EUROSTUDENT V Results: Students' housing situation – C. GWOSC	20
Does student accomodation support the Social Dimension of Higher Education? – B. GORMLEY	21
Grant for accomodation scholarships – L. Trojanova	22
ACCESS 26.02.2015 14:30 - 16:00	23
Widening access through transition from College to University – D. MEHARG, J. TIZARD	23
Student Experiences of Widening Participation in Initial Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland – E. KELLY-BLAKENEY	24
'Backpacker' routes to 'exotic' destinations: pre-paration for entry to & experience of elite higher education – investigation into two widening partici-pation routes to Scottish Medicine degrees - J. LEWIS	26

Tackling Educational Disadvantage through Academic Capital Formation: Examination of how the College for Every Student Project Influences Access to Higher Education in Socio-economically Disadvantaged Students - K. O'SULLIVAN, R. SMITH, B. TANGNEY, C. HANNON	27
SPECIAL STUDENT GROUPS I 26.02.2015 I 14:30 - 16:00	28
The social dimension of students in France: national and local perspectives – J. MURDOCH, C. ERARD, C. GUEGNARD, X. COLLET, P. CORDAZZO, L. MINASSIAN	28
The Link between Students' Socio-Economic Background, Field of Studies and Employability: A Case Study on Ethnic Roma Students in Central and Eastern Europe – S. GARAZ	29
Roma Education Funds' Programme for Increasing the Access to Higher Education for Ethnic Roma in Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe: Experience and Lessons Learned – D.P. DOGHI	30
MOBILITY I 26.02.2015 I 14:30 - 16:00	31
Underrepresentation in student credit mobility – A. GRABHER	31
Promoting Equity of Access to International Education – A. SILTALA	32
Access to and outcomes of international student mobility – N. NETZ, F. KRATZ	33
Studying abroad an students' academic performance - A.M. FALZONI, V. CAVIEZEL, S. VITALI	34
STUDY & WORK I 26.02.2015 I 14:30 - 16:00	35
More focused on studying? Differences in time spent studying between students that work and students that do not - E. HOVDHAUGEN, I. REYMERT	35
Working status and aspirations of students in Western Balkans - D. STANOJEVIC, I. ZIVADINOVIC, J.C. MARKOVIC	36
Part-time studies – smoothing the transition between studies and employment? – C. SCHOLZ	37
Study performance and employment - L. DÜNSER, K. LEDERMÜLLER, O. VETTORI, J. ZEEH	39
STUDENT SUPPORT & FUNDING I 26.02.2015 I 16:45 - 18:15	41
EUROSTUDENT V Results: Students' resources and costs – C. GWOSC	41
Policies of emergency financial assistance for students in the University of Oviedo: background and current situation – L.J. RODRIGUEZ-MUNIZ	42
Students' integration into community of university - A. UZDANAVICIUS	43
EXPECTATIONS & STUDENT ASSESSMENTS I 26.02.2015 I 16:45 - 18:15	44
EUROSTUDENT V Results: Students' assessment of studies & future plans – F. WARTENBERGH-CRAS	44
The perception of higher education from the perspective of mature students in Ireland – T. BRUEN	45
Students least satisfied with social aspects of medical education: a repeated measure study at school of Medicine, Split, Croatia - K. JELICIC, K. BRADARIC, M. MALICKI	46
The student experience and targeted interventions: a mismatched approach? – C. DCOSTA	47
SPECIAL STUDENT GROUPS I 26.02.2015 I 16:45 - 18:15	48
EUROSTUDENT V Results: Special focus on underrepresented groups – M. UNGER	48
Conceptualisation and surveying of students with disabilities - P. WEJWAR, I. SCHWARZENBACHER	49
Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities at Charles University in Prague – K. SAMALOVA	50

RETENTION & SUCCESS 26.02.2015 16:45 - 18:15	51
Student diversity survey at the University of Vienna – D. HOSNER, H. REICHERT	51
Maximising outcomes for HE students from disadvantaged backgrounds – S. HOWLS	52
The Student Parent Support Service: Providing 360 holistic support to student parents and expectant student parents in Higher Education – N. HURLEY, D. KENNELLY	53
Complexities and Challenges of Researching Student Completion and Non-completion of HE Programmes in Europe: a comparative analysis between England and Norway – E. HOVDHAUGEN, L. THOMAS	54
STUDY & WORK 26.02.2015 16:45 - 18:15	55
Workshop: The student job – a ticket to a scientific career? Expanding an original career management tool – A. TRÜBSWETTER	55
TOWARDS A NATIONAL STRATEGY 27.02.2015 09:00 - 10:30	57
The genesis and the development of concept of social dimension in the European higher education policy sphere – K. MIKLAVIC	57
Opening up Higher Education: Reflections on a German Initiative” – E. EPPING	58
The new Higher Education Reform and Higher Education Law in the “social dimension” perspective - the Albanian case – E. MEHMETI	59
SPECIAL STUDENT GROUPS 27.02.2015 09:00 - 10:30	60
Workshop: How do European universities follow the implementation of policies and strategies for lifelong learning? – H. SMIDT	60
RETENTION & SUCCESS 27.02.2015 09:00 - 10:30	61
Higher Education: Making the paradigm shift – G. LAYER	61
Learning Matters: An alternative perspective on the value of the social dimension – B.FLEMING, R. WYNNE	62
The development of a national ‘quality label’ to enhance equity and social inclusion in higher education: Insights from Croatia – L. THOMAS, N. SCUKANEC	63
What are main dropouts factors in the University of Oviedo? – L.J. RODRIGUEZ-MUNIZ	64
THE EUROSTUDENT NETWORK 27.02.2015 09:00 - 10:30	65
Being a student in a post-transition country – Insights from student surveys in new EUROSTUDENT countries	65

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

25.02.2015					
	Pre-conference: Eurostudent V wrap-up				
	Beginning of the conference				
14:30-16:30	Welcome Speeches				
16:30-17:15	Discoursè Cafe				
17:15-18:15	The Social Dimension in European Higher Education Key Note				
18:15-21:00	Discourse Cocktail & Buffet and Spot on: Action First generation students: From a student's experience to a support network				
26.02.2015					
09:00-10:30	Spot on Institutions & Research: The institutional role in student support Key Notes				
10:30-11:15	Discoursè Cafe				
11:15-12:45	Towards a national strategy	Access	Special student groups	Mobility	Student support & funding
12:45-14:30	Lunch				
14:30-16:00	Towards a national strategy	Access	Special student groups	Mobility	Study & work
16:00-16:45	Discourse Cafè				
16:45-18:15	Student support & funding	Expectations & student assessments	Special student groups	Retention & success	Study & work
19:00-22:00	Networking Dinner				
27.02.2015					
09:00 - 10:30	Towards a national strategy	Special student groups	Retention & success	The Eurostudent Network	
10:30-11:15	Discourse Cafè				
11:15-12:45	Spot on policy: The Future of the Social Dimension in the European Higher Education Area				
	End of the conference				
14:30-16:30	Post-conference: Eurostudent VI Kick-off				

KEYNOTES

25.02. 2015 | 17:15 – 18:15

The Social Dimension in European Higher Education

J. SADLAK

(President of the IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence, former Director of UNESCO--European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO--CEPES))

25.02. 2015 | 18:15 – 21:00

Spot on Action: First generation students: From a student's experience to a support network

K. URBATSCH

Arbeiterkind.de

26.02.2015 | 09:00 – 10:30

Spot on Institutions + Research: The institutional role in student support

B. DIVJAK

(former Vice--Rector for students and study programmes at the University of Zagreb, HR)

L. THOMAS

(Liz Thomas Associates--higher education research and consultancy, UK)

27.02.2015 | 11:15 – 12:45

Spot on policy (panel discussion): The Future of the Social Dimension in the European Higher Education Area

L. GEHRKE

(Chairperson of the European Students' Union)

L. ABRAHAMYAN

(Armenian National Students' Association)

B. POWER

(Head of Student Support and Equity of Access to Higher Education; Department of Education and Skills, IE – t.b.c.)

M. ANDERSEN

(European Commission)

TOWARDS A NATIONAL STRATEGY

The objective of this track is to follow on from the goal of the PL4SD project of thinking about how a national strategy or national action plan for improving the social dimension might look like. Whilst the social dimension has been a focal point for the Bologna Process, at least since it was expressly defined as objective for the European Higher Education Area in 2007, it has been difficult to translate it into a manageable policy agenda. This is largely because concrete definitions and the identification of concrete problems are needed for the social dimension, but these are national-context specific and evolving.

26.02.2015 | 11:15 – 12:45

National Strategies for the social dimension within the Bologna Process

B. POWER, E. GEHRKE

(Chairs of Bologna social dimension working group)

26.02.2015 | 11:15 – 12:45

On the way to a national strategy: PL4SD Country Review in Lithuania

P. CLANCY, PL4SD REVIEW TEAM,

A. AMBRAS (Ministry of Education and Science, LT-t.b.c.)

26.02.2015 | 14:30 – 16:00

On the way to a national strategy: PL4SD Country Review in Armenia

J. SADLAK, PL4SD REVIEW TEAM,

Z. ANDREASYAN (Ministry of Education & Science AM - t.b.c.)

26.02.2015 | 14:30 – 16:00

On the way to a national strategy: PL4SD Country Review in Croatia

J. BRENNAN, PL4SD Review Team,

I. RAMIC (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports CR)

EUROSTUDENT V Results: Students' entry access routes - S. MISHRA

Widening access to higher education within the context of the social dimension has been discussed repeatedly during the various communiqués. In the 2007 London Communiqué, ministers agreed that '*...the student body entering and participating in higher education should reflect the diversity of the populations* (p. 5)' (London Communiqué, 2007). In the more recent Bucharest Communiqué, ministers agreed '*...to support national measures for widening access by means of alternative access routes, flexible learning paths, and recognition of prior learning* (p. 1)' (Bucharest Communiqué, 2012). The Bucharest Communiqué thus clearly recognises the need for expanding entry routes to higher education by means of introducing alternative or second chance access routes (Orr & Hovdhaugen, 2014) to enable diverse student groups participate in higher education, irrespective of their prior formal qualifications (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2012).

Related with the access routes to higher education is also the transition pathway that different student groups follow to enter higher education. One of the ways of understanding students' transition pathways is to look at the group of students who delay their transition into the higher education. Against this background, this paper looks at students' transition into higher education across EUROSTUDENT countries and across student groups by examining different access routes to higher education, the time delay between obtaining a school leaving qualification and higher education participation, prior experience on the labour market, and the occurrence of interruptions during higher education.

The alternative access routes to higher education exist in most of the EUROSTUDENT countries. In the majority of countries, especially students without higher education background, delayed transition students, and older students benefit from these routes. Similar findings were also reported in the last round of the EUROSTUDENT project and the recent Eurydice report. Specifically, looking at the share of delayed transition students, it is observed that these students tend to not have a higher education background and more often pursue their studies with low intensity. Further, students who experience an interruption during their higher education studies also share some of their characteristics with the delayed transition students. More often these students are without higher education background, older, study with low intensity, and are dependent on their own income.

This clearly highlights that the educational trajectories and the needs of the students who have entered higher education with a delay are different from the so called 'traditional' students. Different student groups require different levels and types of support during their higher education studies. Widening access to higher education within the context of the 'social dimension' entails supporting diverse student bodies in entering and participating in higher education.

Developing national alternative admissions schemes for socio-economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities - G. EDGE, S. QUINN

Although Ireland has one of the highest higher education (HE) participation levels in the European Union among 25-34 year olds, the participation rates of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities are comparatively low. Given the competitive HE admissions process in Ireland, particularly for high profile courses in professional areas, and in order to address the continued under-representation of these target groups, a number of Irish HEIs began small scale inter-institutional 'alternative' admissions schemes. By 2007, student numbers admitted through these schemes had reached a plateau, yet significant numbers of undergraduate places reserved for these groups remained unfilled.

In 2008, building on the objectives contained in a new national access plan and the previous small scale initiatives, a number of Irish Universities, Institutes of Technology and Colleges of Education came together to establish new national alternative admissions schemes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities. These schemes, the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and Disability Access Route to Education (DARE), were established to provide alternative admissions opportunities for students in the target populations sitting the Irish Leaving Certificate (final post-primary examinations). 20 HEIs now participate in the schemes and to date, 6,800 students have been admitted through HEAR and 4,920 through DARE. This year, 20% (12,500) of all school-leaving HE applicants made their application through HEAR and/or DARE. For more background information on both DARE and HEAR, please see the the PL4SD database on www.pl4sd.eu.

The transformation of these local initiatives to admissions schemes reaching a national applicant base has required significant levels of inter-institutional and cross-sectoral collaboration. Major project milestones include the agreement by all HEIs on uniform disability criteria across the full range of disability categories, and the establishment of a multi-indicator approach to determine socio-economic disadvantage. These criteria and indicators have been developed in full consultation with other stakeholders, to ensure their relevance to other key measures (eg governmental supports for disadvantaged schools, social protection and disability policies, etc.).

Collaboration across all partners ensures both target groups benefit from enhanced communication to key stakeholders (including students, parents, schools and communities) and nationwide outreach activities. The application, data management and admissions processes to HEAR and DARE are now integrated into the Central Applications Office (the clearing house for all applications to HE in Ireland) including the CAO web portal which allows the schemes to service a nationwide applicant base. An independent evaluation of DARE and HEAR was commissioned in 2012, to examine how the schemes contribute to the realisation of national and institutional targets, how they meet the requirements of the target groups and to look at issues of sustainability, scalability and replicability.

This presentation will explore with participants how collaborative HEI schemes can help meet agreed national targets, particularly in a competitive HE environment, and how the schemes can be used to address emerging new national targets and target groups. The presentation will also explore how an inter-institutional project approach can help individual HEIs to use scarce resources more effectively in their outreach work with target groups prior to applying to HE, and in their support for students from these target groups who have been admitted, leading to improved progression, graduation and employment rates.

Initiatives to widen access to higher education in the urban context: London, Europe & Beyond - G. ATHERTON

Inequalities in access to higher education (HE) by social background manifest themselves in different ways in urban and rural contexts. In its 2011 report on global urbanisation, the UN wrote that between 2011 and 2050, the world population was expected to increase by 2.3 billion, passing from 7.0 billion to 9.3 billion. At the same time, the population living in urban areas is projected to gain 2.6 billion, passing from 3.6 billion in 2011 to 6.3 billion 2050. Urban areas of the world are expected to absorb all the population growth expected over the next four decades while at the same time drawing in some of the rural population.

This makes developing initiatives to address inequalities in access to higher education in the urban context crucial. This paper will begin by examining work undertaken in London, United Kingdom to bring together stakeholders from across sectors (in particular HEIs) to form innovative and powerful networks for higher education equity. The AccessHE initiative is an alliance of over 200 schools, colleges and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) working together in London delivering a coherent support package to support the progression of learners, especially young people, from marginalised groups to HE. It was founded in 2010 and is a non-government organisation. It sits within, and shapes, a complex and differentiated 'access to higher education ecosystem' in London. The concept of the learning ecosystem and how it manifests itself in London will be unpacked in the paper but to learn more about the work of AccessHE please go to www.accesshe.ac.uk. After examining the work and impact of AccessHE the paper will examine how the nature of contemporary city environments shape the HE equity question, drawing on examples of work being undertaken in other European cities and globally.

The paper then considers whether there are specific challenges rooted in demography and diversity in urban settings that shapes HE equity work, but equally specific principles to orientate policy and practice that emerge from them. It will be argued that the specific nature of the urban HE equity challenge invites linkages of organisations and individuals who are working across urban spaces. Participants will be invited to consider how such linkages will be able to strengthen their work and opportunities to do this via the Global Access to Post-Secondary Education (GAPS) Initiative will be outlined. GAPS is building a worldwide network of organisations working together to increase access to post-secondary education. More information about GAPS can be found at www.gaps-education.org.

Inequality in University Attainment in Armenia – K. GEVEN

This paper aims to make three contributions to existing studies about inequality in higher education. **First**, it investigates the patterns of inequality in the Armenian university system, from before the transition from socialism to capitalism until the most recent birth cohorts. Until now, little empirical work has been undertaken about educational inequalities in the Caucasus countries, and never for Armenia. **Secondly**, this paper assesses whether a number of educational reforms in this period have led to growing or decreasing inequality in higher education. Major changes are a reform of the high school system, as well as a privatisation of the university system. The **third** contribution that this paper hopes to make is to see how educational inequalities develop in a context of growing social and economic inequality. Up until now, studies have focused on how inequalities may persist or reduce in a context of economic growth (Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993, Breen et al, 2009).

The analysis is based on an investigation of a pooled sample of several waves of the “Armenia Integrated Living Survey” from 2004-2012. This is a representative survey of households that measures the social and economic conditions of the Armenian population (around 10.000 households are sampled each wave). There is no dataset that systematically collects information on the social background of respondents. However, since Armenian households usually comprise many (more than two) generations, the data allows me to construct parental information as attributes of children, at least for those who are still living in the same household as their parents. In turn, this allows for an investigation of the association between various measures of inequality (parental education, poverty status and geographical location) with higher education attainment over birth cohorts from the 1960s until the mid 1990s. To assess the validity of the claims, the analysis is repeated with survey data from the “Caucasus Barometer” from 2013 that collects information on parental educational background of all respondents (but has a too small sample size for the purposes of this paper). Educational reforms were investigated during a weeklong field visit to Armenian policy-makers in the PL4SD project.

The paper will show that any Armenian policy initiative to combat growing inequality in university enrolments will have to take account of two historical trends that have affected educational inequalities: growing social inequality and the privatization of the university system. Each of these trends seems to have aggravated inequality in access to university, despite an enormous growth in access to university, particularly for women. Converse to sociological expectations, the data indicate that policy changes in the late 2000s may have a larger effect on inequality than broad social changes of the early 1990s. However, it may also be the case that the social changes took some time until they affected educational inequality.

26.02.2015 | 11:15 – 12:45

SPECIAL STUDENT GROUPS

EUROSTUDENT V Results: Social background of students – K. HAUSSCHILDT

The social dimension has been an important topic in the Bologna process since it was first officially mentioned in the Prague Communiqué (2001). The Bucharest Communiqué (2012) reaffirmed the centrality of the concept: *“The student body entering and graduating from higher education institutions should reflect the diversity of Europe’s populations. We will step up our efforts towards underrepresented groups to develop the social dimension of higher education, [and] reduce inequalities [...]”* (p. 1-2).

The most common interpretation of the social dimension is that a state of participative equity should be attained in European higher education. Participative equity is given when all possible social groups take part in higher education to the same degree (Mühleck, 2013). In principle, ideal participative equity would be attained when the make-up of the student population is exactly proportional to the make-up of the general population of the same age in all possible characteristic. In practice, specific groups known to be traditionally underrepresented in higher education in many countries have typically been in the focus of interest with regard to adequate representation in higher education. One such group is that of students without higher education background.

This presentation will present EUROSTUDENT V results on students without higher education background, also known as “first-generation students”, who make up between one and three quarters of the student population in the EUROSTUDENT countries. Results from EUROSTUDENT V indicate that this group is special in several respects: Students without higher education background tend to enter higher education later, which goes hand-in-hand with a higher average age of this group. Furthermore, in most countries, these students make up a larger share of students at non-university institutions as opposed to universities.

Quantitatively, students without higher education background are also underrepresented in the vast majority of EUROSTUDENT countries. A state of participative equity – defined as proportional representation of all educational backgrounds – has not (yet) been reached. In the majority of countries, students from the lowest educational background (fathers with ISCED 0-2, i.e. no higher than lower secondary education) are the group that is most strongly underrepresented. In slightly more than a third of countries, the medium educational background group, i.e. children of parents with educational attainment at ISCED level 3-4, are the most underrepresented.

A discussion of the findings closes the presentation.

Bachelor and Master Students' Socio-economic Situation in Georgia – M. TSERETELI, M. MCHEDLISHVILI

The goal of the paper is to present the results obtained from the national research conducted in Georgia within the frameworks of the 5th wave of EuroStudent.

The participants of the research were Bachelor and Master students of non-specializing state universities. Overall, 2501 students participated; out of these 1881 (75.2%) were pursuing undergraduate degrees, while 620 (24.8%) were pursuing graduate ones. 1544 respondents identified as female, and 957 as male. The average age of respondents was 20.2 for Bachelor students and 23.5 for Master students.

The research was carried out via the standard EuroStudent questionnaire, which has been translated to Georgian language and adapted to the Georgian higher education specifics. The questionnaire was conducted through both the on-line survey, as well as by the paper-pencil format.

This questionnaire was carried out during the spring of 2014. Data was weighted; currently, the data analysis is still in process, and is due to conclude by the end of December. The results received from the data will be analyzed with regards to respondents' gender, region, education level (Bachelors, or Masters), and educational program. These results will be presented at the conference. Moreover, we plan to analyze such parameters as student's regional migration and its influence on students' lives and socio-economical situations, assessment of students satisfaction with educational process and assessment of individual universities and programs through this factor, etc. This data will also be available at the conference. The results will be discussed in light of recently ongoing educational system reforms in Georgia.

Who dares, wins? A sibling-analysis on tertiary education transition in Germany – T. KELLER, G. NEIDHÖFER

Past studies found considerable impact of parental background on educational decisions. Our knowledge is however still limited regarding educational transitions later in life, like to tertiary education. Is parental background predominant for this relatively late educational decision or do individual talent and courage have an independent impact? We address this question decomposing probability of success – regarded as a major component in the explanation of educational choices by rational choice models in sociology – as a function of observable and unobservable characteristics using school grades and subjective perceptions about future educational success. To control for the overall effect of family background, a sibling analysis is performed. The data derives from German Socioeconomic Panel (SOEP), where we can follow pupils, who participated in the survey at the age of 17, later in life. Our results are twofold, indicating a strong influence of parental background (through school grades) at transition to university. Subjective perceptions, however, show to have an independent from parental background.

We confirmed that - following the framework of rational choice models - perceived probability of success is an important driver of educational decisions. Our findings give ample evidence to consider that some individual characteristics, namely those capturing subjective perceptions about future success, might maintain an independent effect and work as a jumping point from the selection mechanism of the educational system. Furthermore we established two interesting features which should play an important role and are, in our view, our main contribution. First, that probability of success should not be exclusively driven by easy-to- obtain signs as school grades, but subjective perceptions play also an important role. Second, that contrary to school grades, these subjective estimations seem to be independent from family background. One implication of this results in terms of policy recommendations might be that the social planner should foster methods that contribute to better self-knowledge of young individuals, to be able to find out latent skills which are important for the choice of knowledge-intensive educational scenarios. Finding individual-level characteristics which are independent from family-factors have the advantage that fostering at the individual level is much easier than to prescribe regulations for families.

JEL Codes: I23, I24, J62 Keywords: Tertiary education transition; Sibling analysis; Subjective perceptions; Rational choice theory; Equality of educational opportunities

Mapping participation in higher education in the UK – L. BAGHERLI

Participation in higher education in the UK has risen over the last decade. However, this growth has not been uniform and there are significant differences between areas. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has developed two key tools to understand this participation picture and help guide activity to widen participation in the UK higher education sector.

The first tool identifies the differences between areas, where local areas across the UK are grouped based on the proportion of young people that go into higher education. This allows the national picture to be explored, to see where young people from particular local areas are, on average, more or less likely to progress into higher education than those from others.

The second tool goes a step further and explores the differences between areas by looking at participation in the context of pupils' attainment. It groups local areas by whether the level of young people participating in higher education is different from where it might be expected to be. These differences are referred to as 'participation gaps'.

Identifying areas these ways allows certain area types to be focussed on. For example, areas classification based on participation rates is already has an established use as a tool for UK higher education institutions to help target their outreach activity.

Used in conjunction, these tools can give a rich picture of young participation in more detail. For example, a local area might be classified as disadvantaged where very few young people participate in higher education. By identifying whether this low participation rate is related to low pupil attainment helps to guide what types of activities might best support young people's progression in this area.

Published as interactive maps, these tools on young participation are part of an interactive tool kit, designed to allow users explore detailed data on higher education in England and complimentary economic data. This tool kit also includes maps on higher education provision, graduate mobility and employment data for England. Similar research might equally be undertaken by other countries, where these tools have been powerful and useful in the UK.

26.02.2015 | 11:15 – 12:45

MOBILITY

EUROSTUDENT V Results: Mobility and internalisation – N. NETZ

The temporary international mobility of students continues to be a focus area of higher education policy in Europe. At the 2012 Ministerial Conference in Bucharest, the European ministers responsible for higher education have underlined this by adopting the Mobility Strategy 2020 for the European Higher Education Area. The ongoing interest in this topic is also reflected in a growing body of research on access and obstacles to international student mobility.

Against this background, the presentation examines the extent to which different groups of students realise different types of international student mobility. Special emphasis is placed on differences by students' educational background. Moreover, differences in mobility rates by field of study are considered.

Intending to complement other policy-relevant studies on obstacles to mobility, the presentation then delivers an up-to-date picture of students' perceptions of obstacles to an enrolment period abroad. This assessment is followed by a more objective analysis of students actually organise and finance their enrolment periods abroad. Moreover, the extent to which their periods of enrolment abroad are recognised at home is investigated.

As they are both an important prerequisite and a desired outcome of international mobility, students' foreign language skills are then examined. Special attention is paid to differences in foreign language skills by educational background.

While desirable, it is unlikely that all students can spend part of their studies abroad. For students not having the opportunity to go abroad, elements of internationalisation at home may be attractive. Such elements can also be regarded as a preparation for later physical mobility. As an important example of internationalisation at home, the presentation briefly looks at the extent to which students' national study programmes are taught in foreign languages.

International Mobility Students in Western Balkan Countries – M. SAVIC, M. KRESOJA, I. ZIVADINOVIC

According to OECD data, international student mobility has been rising significantly faster during the last thirty years in comparison with total international migration. This difference is becoming increasingly in recent years.

Increase of international student mobility in European countries is one of the main objectives in the process of developing European Higher Education Area (EHEA). One of the six objectives in the Bologna Declaration (1999) is promotion of student mobility. It should be facilitated by the harmonisation of the HE national systems (that started with significant legislative changes and introduction of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and is still ongoing in most Western Balkan countries) and by removing obstacles to recognition of qualifications across Europe. According to Leuven Communiqué (2009), the goal for 2020 is to have at least 20% of students graduating in EHEA with experience of studying or training abroad.

In the case of Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, implementation of Bologna Process have started almost ten years ago and today we can say that HE systems of these three countries have reached significant level of harmonisation, but increasing international mobility proved to be one of the most challenging goals. Students from Western Balkan countries are significantly less involved in international mobility in comparison with their counterparts from Western European countries.

International mobility is undoubtedly an under-researched phenomena within the region. One of the main obstacles for researchers for conducting comprehensive analysis was the lack of relevant data about student population.

For the first time in the history of HE in Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have a consistent and comparable data about international student mobility within the region, which can facilitate research studies in that area.

Using the data from the EUROSTUDENT survey that was conducted in 2014 in Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina we will try to discover factors influencing the student's decision to be involved in international mobility in this paper. By developing an econometric models we want to explain propensity to international mobility in correlation to students' socio-economic background.

Second goal of this paper is to compare students from three Balkan countries and to discover whether there are any significant differences between them and to identify the main obstacles for increasing student mobility within the region. Revealing the structure of this phenomena in correlation with factors that influence students mobility can be used by respective policy makers in all three counties to better understand the phenomena and to, consequently, develop strategies that will promote and intensify international mobility of students in the region.

Motivations and expectations for international student mobility: some evidence from Italy – V. CAVIEZEL, A.M. FALZONI

Over the past 25 years, in most of the Italian and European universities, there has been an increasing emphasis in all activities related to internationalization. These activities have gradually increased in terms of number of students and teachers involved, have become more complex and now cover many aspects of the university education. The University of Bergamo, a medium size university of the North of Italy, in particular in recent years, has aligned, making internationalization one of the main guidelines for the future development.

Following this line of interest, this contribution aims to identify the motivations that lead a student to spend a period of study abroad through an exchange program and the expectations and evaluations on the international experience.

With this goal, the authors prepared a questionnaire structured according to the following three main sections: i) Why spend a period abroad; ii) During the period abroad; iii) Coming back to Bergamo. We asked the students of our university to respond on the important choice factors to decide to study abroad and to decide the host country / university. They were required to compare the experience abroad to previous experience in Bergamo in terms of teaching and assessment methods, and average exams evaluation. Finally, the respondents were asked to evaluate the impact of studying abroad on communication skills, ability to work in team and so on, and to judge the fulfilment of their expectations.

Our sample of around 1300 students is composed by all the credit mobility experiences done by students of the University of Bergamo during the last six academic years (from the academic year 2008/2009 to 2013/2014). Students belong to all the university departments: Engineering; Foreign Languages, Literatures and Communication Studies; Human and Social Sciences; Law; Letters and Philosophy; Management, Economics and Quantitative Methods. In addition to the responses to the questionnaire, our dataset provides - for each student - administrative information collected at enrolment: age, gender, region of residence, field of study, secondary school achievement, etc.

The respondents are around 500. Graduate and undergraduate students belonging to the Foreign Languages and Management, Economics and Quantitative Methods Departments are the majority. Our results show that the most important factors in motivating the decision to study abroad are to improve the linguistic abilities and to live a new experience. Respondents' expectations result satisfied, particularly in terms of personal development, language skills and interpersonal skills.

26.02.2015 | 11:15 – 12:45

STUDENT SUPPORT & FUNDING

EUROSTUDENT V Results: Students' housing situation – C. GWOSC

Housing can generally fulfil several needs. It does not only satisfy the need for shelter, but may also satisfy social needs, i.e. for integration, communication, and organisation of family life as well. For students, there is also a special type of housing that is supposed to be supportive for their academic lives. Thus, housing is a key element for living and studying.

Based on e.g. personal preferences, financial restrictions, societal norms, and available housing space, students utilise different forms of housing. A main distinction with regard to student housing can be made between students living with parents and those not living with parents. For the latter group, further differentiations between several types of housing can be made. The presentation of EUROSTUDENT V data shows the extent to which students use certain types of housing and the differences between countries that are sometimes fundamental.

Special attention will also be paid to student accommodation as the typically least expensive form of housing available to students outside the parental home. Apart from the typically lower expenses, student halls of residence also offer students the possibility of socialising with other students, thus facilitating social integration and orientation. Additionally, living with fellow students may be stimulating for intellectual development, be it study-related or not. Among other things, it is analysed whether there are groups of students making use of student accommodation to varying extent. According to the findings, there are differences across countries by e.g. students' age, study-intensity, and their dependency on a specific income source.

Furthermore, the satisfaction students themselves express with their housing situation will be looked at. The accommodation type in which students ultimately live may simply express their preference for a certain type of housing. However, sometimes the realised option may not be what the students would in fact have preferred but rather a need-driven result which was influenced by limited residential properties and budget constraints. Results on students' satisfaction will be presented with regard to students living with parents and not living with parents as well as students living in student accommodation.

Does student accommodation support the Social Dimension of Higher Education? – B. GORMLEY

This research studied four different student cohorts to examine differences in their living and social conditions and their levels of student engagement. The cohorts were differentiated by their living arrangements: those living in student halls; those living with their parents; those living in private rented accommodation; and those students who owned their own home. Much of the previous research into student residential arrangements has taken place in the US, and this study would indicate that the US research may not be applicable to the Irish situation. The presentation is based on empirical research, primarily secondary data analysis of the last three Eurostudent Surveys (III, IV, and V) in Ireland.

The research indicates that, contrary to international research (primarily from the US and the UK), students who live at home with their parents in Ireland are not from lower socio-economic groups. Indeed, they rank highest on many socio-economic indicators. International research has also found that first generation college students were more likely to live at home with their parents. However in Ireland, first generation students were more likely to live in the private rented sector, or to own their own home. As annual household income increases, the likelihood of a student living with their parents increases. Correspondingly, as household income decreases, the likelihood of a student living in private rented sector increases.

The study found that student halls in Ireland primarily serve students from higher socio-economic groups. Student halls would not appear to serve the needs of mature students, or those returning to learning, particularly those with children. Mature students were more likely to own their own home or live in the private rented house/apartment.

International research would indicate that living in student halls has a positive impact on student engagement, which is not supported by this research. Students living in student residences spend a lower amount of time in educationally purposeful activities. Those in rented accommodation or living in their own home spend the most time on these activities. However, students living in student halls do spend the most amount of time on college activities (extra-curricular), which is positive for student engagement. Students living in student halls were more likely to drink, and consumed more alcohol than other cohorts, and were more likely to exceed safe limits for alcohol consumption on a regular basis.

The research has several policy implications for student accommodation provision. Firstly, the provision of student halls in Ireland is often viewed as a revenue source for Universities – rents in student halls are typically higher than the private rented sector. This may exclude groups who are traditionally under-represented in higher education in Ireland. The development of a European model where student accommodation is provided as part of a student support package would be beneficial. Secondly, students in residence halls would benefit from a closer alignment with the academic mission of the University to encourage student engagement with educationally purposeful activities. In practice, the development of Living-Learning-Communities in student halls may serve to increase student engagement.

Grant for accomodation scholarships – L. TROJANOVA

Objective of the measure: student support

Type of the measure: funding incentives for institutions

Target group: from rural or remote regions

Description of the measure

Since 2005 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports provides HEIs with a lump sum grant which the HEIs use for scholarships for students to contribute to their housing costs. The intention was to provide all students who seek accommodation with a kind of subsidy not only those who lived in a special student dormitories. The sum is calculated according to a formula based on the number of students who fulfil certain requirements - a student does not live in the district where the HEI is located, he/she studies his/her first degree programme (at the respective level), he/she studies in on-site-mode of study. These indicators are used to calculate the sum the HEI is provided with by the Ministry. Each HEI can add additional amount of money and use modified rules for its distribution. Usually HEIs increase the sum provided by the Ministry and divide it among higher number of students.

Impact of the measure

The lump sum grant is provided since 2005. In 2005, 2006 there was 840 mil CZK, and then it grew up to 1.2 billion CZK in 2009. Because of the austerity measures since 2010 the amount slightly decreased to roughly 900 mil CZK. The scholarships are awarded to approximately a half of students (in 2012 to 196 thousand, in 2011 to 194 thousand of students)

Overall assessment

The measure works well. The intention was to allow subsidised accommodation to all students not only to those who lived in student dormitories. It proved working well.

26.02.2015 | 14:30 – 16:00

ACCESS

Widening access through transition from College to University – D. MEHARG, J. TIZARD

In Scotland, one strategy for increasing participation at university for people from deprived socio-economic areas is to provide academic pathways from vocational courses at college to university. Using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, college students can use their vocational qualifications to enter into the second or third year of a four year degree. A government initiative (Scottish Funding Council, 2013) has created a five year programme to give additional funding to universities to enhance the experience of college students on this route. During 2013/14, the School of Computing's Associate Student Project at Edinburgh Napier University, UK, introduced a range of partnership and bridging initiatives to link college and university experience for associate students studying Computing in partner colleges. The work is underpinned by a research project, enabling previous research to be drawn on and evaluating the outcomes of this project to inform work across the university and beyond.

College entrants to year 2 or 3 of university programmes face a number of challenges. Whereas it is recognised that year 1 of university study provides an induction programme, college entrants in the second and third year have previously been required to make a comparable transition with little support. Under the Associate Student project, additional academic support is offered to students at the college during their first two years of study. Perhaps as importantly, they are given opportunities to visit the university, meet staff and students and to attend lectures. College staff are offered support with their teaching and a curriculum working party has identified areas where additional materials need to be developed to support articulation.

Research indicates that college entrants are less likely to take an active part in class, less likely to feel part of the academic community and less likely to get involved in student representation (Higher Education Academy, National Union of Students, 2013) (Ingram & Gallacher, 2013). Initial research by the Edinburgh Napier University Computing team (Meharg & Fotheringham, 2013) argued that giving college students the status of Associate Student of the university did not, in itself, support students to become more effective learners. Focus groups with articulating students suggested that social integration could improve retention and academic performance. A large scale survey of students in the School of Computing has examined differing attitudes and approaches between college students and continuing students at the university. Findings from these investigations has led to the development of new interventions addressing social relationships (Tinto, 1997 & Crisp, 2010), increasing the role of peer support for college to university transition, in addition to academic support. These measures are designed to increase social integration and give a voice to a group of students who have sometimes been considered invisible (Christe, Barron, & D'Annunzio-Green, 2011).

The paper will discuss the extent to which articulating from college to university creates an educational pathway that is a genuine opportunity for degree achievement. It will also examine the effectiveness of a range of strategies for removing barriers and providing additional support for students on this route.

Student Experiences of Widening Participation in Initial Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland – E. KELLY-BLAKENEY

The Irish *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2020* (DES, 2011), prioritised equity of access and increasing participation in higher education (HE) by under-represented groups as one of five high-level objectives. In the Irish context, there has been a call for ‘further examination’ (Kelly, 2010:x) of the post-entry experiences of students who gain access to HE as a result of widening participation (WP) initiatives. This paper addresses this issue by providing an overview of a recent study which explored the experiences of students who entered full-time undergraduate initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in the Republic of Ireland by WP routes.

The issue of WP is particularly pertinent for ITE in Ireland given that a prevailing feature of the make-up of the ITE student body is that it remains relatively homogenous, with students from minority ethnic groups and lower socio-economic groups under-represented (Byrne, 2002; Coolahan, 2003; Conway et al. 2009; Drudy, 2006; Heinz, 2013). It is also pertinent because undergraduate ITE programmes typically recruit from the top 30% of school-leavers (Hyland, 2012), and entry to the field is described as highly competitive (Aitken & Harford, 2011; Mooney et al., 2010).

The theoretical and conceptual work of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977; 1986; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) informed the methodological approach adopted for the study. In Bourdieu’s three-level approach to studying a field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:104-107), levels one and two are concerned with a ‘mapping’ of the field, while level three focuses on ‘analysing the habitus of agents’. This paper reports on the findings from level three – the narrative interviews employed to investigate the ‘background, trajectory and positioning’ (Grenfell, 2008:223) of nine non-standard entry-route (WP) ITE students (agents) in two higher education institutions. Individual, open-ended, face to face interviews were conducted and thereafter analysed using a framework informed by Polkinghorne’s (1995:12) approach to ‘narrative analysis’.

Derived from the narratives, a schematic representation of orientations within the dual-field (of ITE) finds students positioned as either ‘*Adjusting*’ or ‘*Belonging*’, with positions being independent of entry-route. As well as illustrating the heterogeneous nature of students’ experience of ITE, students’ narratives shed light on the nature and forms of capital which non-standard entry-route students have upon entry to ITE programmes and how capital is accumulated and exchanged as they negotiate the dual-fields of higher education and the teaching profession.

The results suggest that for many of the non-traditional students in this study, knowledge of WP routes and their eligibility to apply via these routes occurred by chance. This indicates a need for awareness-raising regarding WP at the pre-entry stage to remain a policy priority. At the post-entry stage, evidence from this study points to a requisite for WP entry-routes to ITE to be more visible, more valued and ultimately normalised. In adding the voices of students of ITE to the debate about how HE is experienced by those who have entered by non-standard routes, this study adds to the knowledge base of the field of WP as well as the field of ITE in the Irish context. This is timely, given that a requirement for a more consistent representation of under-represented groups across all disciplines and professions has been raised by policymakers in the consultation process for the next National Access Plan (HEA, 2014).

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‘Backpacker’ routes to ‘exotic’ destinations: preparation for entry to & experience of elite higher education – investigation into two widening participation routes to Scottish Medicine degrees - J. LEWIS

Medicine is an example of elite HE provided by elite institutions & is fiercely competitive. Most successful applicants enter Medicine through “traditional” routes, such as achieving senior secondary school qualifications at high grades, along with strong personal statements, references, interviews, relevant work-experience, & a good score in the UKCAT. Medicine has “traditionally” been over-represented by individuals from higher socio-economic groups &, until recently, access to a degree in Medicine was extremely rare outside of the traditional entry route. More recently in Scotland, there have been increasing opportunities to reflect universities’ commitment to widening access to professional HE – driven by government policy – which enable learners undertaking certain widening participation (WP) pathways to have more realistic opportunities to study Medicine.

The focus of my empirical qualitative Doctoral study was of two different WP pathways into Medicine:

Tertiary-based Access to Medical Studies programme for adult returners.

School based REACH (access to the professions) programmes.

Whilst Access routes have been long-recognised WP routes into HE, until recently they did not provide learners with opportunities to study Medicine. It remains a very non-traditional route into Medicine. The second pathway is “traditional” only insofar as it relates to traditionally aged & traditionally qualified learners by qualification type (i.e. Scottish Highers). It is “non-traditional” in that the participants in these WP programmes come from schools with low participation in HE – exceptionally & disproportionately low participation in terms of gaining access to Medicine. The research relates to two of Scotland’s “ancient” universities & was interested in learners who were successful & unsuccessful.

While such programmes provide enhanced opportunities for “non-traditional” learners, they do necessitate participants having to undertake additional activities, some of which is challenging as a result of the extent of their social & cultural capital. For the institutions, additional work for certain staff is a necessity – generally one which is enthusiastically welcomed.

My central research question was “What are the experiences & outcomes for students entering Medicine through non-‘traditional’ pathways?” I used the critical theoretical approach of Pierre Bourdieu to look at the impact of individuals’ social & cultural capital & habitus, specifically in relation to social class & age, & how these influenced their educational aspirations, choices & experiences.

My research methodology included semi-structured questionnaires & email interviews for student participants & “structural actors” (e.g. university admissions & WP staff, clinical & academic staff involved in selection, & WP programme directors/coordinators).

My aim is for the research to contribute to WP research generally, & into access to Medicine in Scotland specifically. An additional aim is for the research to be used to help inform & influence policymakers & university admissions to consider such WP programmes into hard to reach professions more widely.

This qualitative study provides useful exemplification of how changes in policy priorities at sector, national & institutional levels can help overcome some of the structural obstacles experienced by learners seeking progression into medicine from “non-traditional” backgrounds. It should provide transferable value to other countries experiencing their own policy & other structural impediments to professional HE, notably Medicine.

Tackling Educational Disadvantage through Academic Capital Formation: Examination of how the College for Every Student Project Influences Access to Higher Education in Socio-economically Disadvantaged Students - K. O'SULLIVAN, R. SMITH, B. TANGNEY, C. HANNON

In Ireland, national research has demonstrated the persistence of inequalities in higher education participation. For example, rates of participation for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are significantly lower when compared to national averages. Over recent years, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) has supported targeted programmes in schools with low progression rates. These programmes include the Schools Completion Project and DEIS. The HEA also provides performance-related funding to higher education institutions on the basis of their efforts to deliver outreach programmes to such schools; some of which are aimed at developing diversified admission routes. These national initiatives have resulted in significant increases in participation rates by the relevant cohort. However, there is concern that the benefits are being accrued from higher Socio-Economic Groups.

The issue of access to higher education in socially disadvantaged students is not exclusive to Ireland. In the U.S., only half of low-income students who graduate from high school prepared for higher education actually enrol in degree courses. In fact, since the 1970's, greater inequalities in postsecondary opportunities are observed despite marked increases in the policies aimed at bridging this gap. In 1991 College For every Student (CFES), a non-profit organization was established to address the inequality issue. CFES organises school-college partnerships that support the development of three core practices; pathways to college, mentoring, and leadership. These practices align with St John's work on Academic Capital Formation (2006) which positions concepts such as human capital, social capital and social class reproduction within the three CFES practices.

In 2013, CFES and the Trinity Access Programmes, partnered to pilot CFES in a social-economically disadvantaged school in county Dublin. The project was a whole school implementation of the three core practices of CFES. One hundred and forty four students completed a pre and post evaluation of the project. The presentation will discuss the impact the pilot had on academic capital formation in these students; focusing specifically on changes in human capital formation. It will examine the differences between the U.S. CFES scholar cohorts and the Irish counterparts. In 2014 funding was secured from Google for implementation of the CFES project in 11 Irish schools. A total of 1100 2nd year students will participate in a three-year CFES program run in conjunction with the Trinity Access Programmes. The presentation will discuss the project to-date, and present baseline data from the schools making comparisons with the larger U.S. cohort.

26.02.2015 | 14:30 – 16:00

SPECIAL STUDENT GROUPS

The social dimension of students in France: national and local perspectives – J. MURDOCH, C. ERARD, C. GUEGNARD, X. COLLET, P. CORDAZZO, L. MINASSIAN

The quantitative democratisation of the access to higher education in France has led to a more diversified student population particularly within universities both in terms of academic profile and social background. The different tracks (i.e. academic and vocational) within upper secondary school prepare differently students for higher education, and can lead to different study conditions and experiences within higher education. Indeed, the students from the vocational tracks are less well prepared to adapt to the difficulties of student life. In our presentation we will focus on first-year students and the different dimensions of their student life (academic, social, gender and regional).

The aim of our presentation is twofold. First we wish to present the national situation of student life using national and international data for France (OVE, Eurostudent) drawing attention to student study conditions (accommodation, employment during studies, etc.) and the socio-economic, demographic and academic profile of students.

In the second part, we wish to illustrate more specific challenges across different regions of France. Using the examples of higher education institutions in the regions of Alsace, Brittany, Burgundy and Pays de la Loire, we will discuss certain local priorities in terms student profiles (e.g. foreign students in Strasbourg, students with health issues and disabilities in Rennes, urban vs. rural students in Burgundy, and vocational school students across the Pays de la Loire, etc.). We will look at the relation between these different profiles and their specific study conditions, experiences and activities (cultural and recreational), as well as programme choices (and the processes behind these choices), success (both retention and graduation) and study projects. The regional case studies will show the combined effects of the changes in the student population, study habits, student life, and material constraints. We will highlight how social inequalities in student life are reflected in these local contexts. Indeed, if country level data provides a useful insight into the social dimension, it is necessary to look deeper into more micro analysis of local dimensions to have a better understanding of what the social dimension means, for whom and where.

The Link between Students' Socio-Economic Background, Field of Studies and Employability: A Case Study on Ethnic Roma Students in Central and Eastern Europe – S. GARAZ

Higher education used to be accessible mainly for the socio-economically privileged. However, in 1960s higher education started to expand, with gross enrolment ratios in Europe attaining 26% in 1970, 35% in 1990 and 67% in 2010 (UNESCO). As a result, higher education became more and more accessible to socio-economically disadvantaged people. Referring to the increasing ratios of female and minority students in higher education, as well as of students with working-class background, the academic literature often use the terms “massification” and “de-elitization”. But has higher education given up its elitist elements?

This study seeks to bring evidence in support for the argument that despite the increasing improvements in the access to higher education for the unprivileged groups, the elitist opportunities in tertiary education have been preserved in other ways, one of these ways being the access to specific fields of studies. Since some fields have better employment prospects than others, the more “marketable” fields are more competitive at enrolment and therefore less accessible for the disadvantaged.

In relation to this argument, this study focuses on the analysis of the socio-economic background and academic profile of ethnic Roma students in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). A glimpse at the available data suggests that Roma students enroll more frequently in humanities and social sciences as compared to the mainstream students; there is also empirical evidence suggesting that Roma students in CEE generally come from less privileged socio-economic background than mainstream students (Garaz, 2014). Consequently, the study explores the question whether Roma students in CEE enroll in specializations providing less secure employment prospects, as well as the degree in which this choice is linked to their socio-economic status.

The methodology of the study is based on statistical analysis, using data from EUROSTAT on the employability prospects of various specializations in each analyzed country, from EUROSTUDENT on mainstream students' academic profile and socio-economic background, and from Roma Education Fund (REF) on Roma students' academic profile and socio-economic background. REF collected such data on Roma students from 16 countries of CEE for the last 4 academic years, on a sample of about 3000 Roma students from the region. This data collection is conducted every year as part of REF's scholarship program and at the moment constitutes the most comprehensive data collection on tertiary-level Roma students in Europe.

The relevance of this study for the policy field is related to the debates about the best ways to improve the access to tertiary education for underprivileged groups, specifically for Roma. Until now there have been several attempts to implement programs based on affirmative action principles in various CEE countries aimed at facilitating the access to tertiary education for Roma, but with very few efforts to adjust these policies in a way to avoid the overrepresentation of Roma in specific fields. The evidence that this overrepresentation is associated with Roma's underprivileged socio-economic status on the one hand, and with relatively less prospects for decent employment upon graduation associated with the fields in which they are overrepresented on the other hand, may be used for further policy adjustments aiming at creating a more diversified palette of occupations among Roma graduates.

Roma Education Funds' Programme for Increasing the Access to Higher Education for Ethnic Roma in Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe: Experience and Lessons Learned – D.P. DOGHI

Roma constitute the most deprived ethnic group in Europe. Their low socio-economic status and marginalization has perpetuated throughout generations and placed them on a mutually reinforcing spiral of poverty and exclusion. One of the ways to overcome this seemingly unsurmountable obstacle is to help Roma to access quality education and reach higher education, which is a prerequisite for standing real chances of obtaining decent employment. The access to quality education for Roma is the main area of intervention of **Roma Education Fund** (hereinafter: **REF**), a non-governmental foundation with the headquarters in Budapest created in 2005 and operating in 16 countries of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. In its mission to close the gap in education outcomes between Roma and non-Roma, REF implements programs at all levels of education. The aim of this presentation is to share REF's experience and lessons learned in the process of facilitating the access of Roma to higher education.

REF's higher education support program contains four scholarship schemes for Roma from 16 countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, enrolled in higher education within their countries, or abroad. Each year REF receives about 2500 applications and accepts up to 1500 individuals for support, based on a set of criteria mainly related to applicants' academic standing, as well as on a pre-established country quota. The support generally consists of a basic scholarship covering part of living expenses, and covering tuition fees. In addition, students have access to the program's alumni e-community in their country, through which former and ongoing beneficiaries communicate throughout the academic year to exchange information on academic and professional opportunities, as well as on Roma-related issues, but also to organize common initiatives. A limited number of students also benefit of additional financial support for attending foreign language courses, trainings, conferences, internships, and also for implementing small-scale projects for Roma community development in their own localities. Since these scholarship schemes were initiated, over 5000 individuals received support.

There are many lessons that REF has learned in the process of implementing this higher education support program, among which the following:

- Only financial support is not always sufficient in facilitating Roma's access to higher education. The support schemes combining financial and mentorship support are more effective in decreasing dropout, particularly for students in the first years of study; furthermore, programs encouraging networking and community-building between Roma students in first stages of higher education and Roma students in more advanced stages, are even more effective in ensuring high retention rates and successful graduation.
- It is well known that with the general tendency of "massification" of higher education, having a higher education degree does not guarantee a decent employment anymore; the experience of REF suggests that this is even more the case for graduates coming from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, such as is the case for Roma. This can be explained through many reasons, among which their overrepresentation in less employable fields of studies, their lack of a personal network that may facilitate access to decent employment, and their lack of "soft" skills acquired in parallel with formal higher education programs, such as foreign language and computer literacy, self- presentation, and networking skills.

This presentation will discuss details on how REF adjusted its actions over time as a response to the lessons learned.

26.02.2015 | 14:30 – 16:00

MOBILITY

Underrepresentation in student credit mobility – A. GRABHER

Based on the findings of a report which was commissioned by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research as an input for the BFUG Working group “Mobility and Internationalisation” (Grabher et al. 2013) the present contribution for the PL4SD-conference displays differences and inequalities in student mobility in the EHEA from two perspectives: while the main part of the contribution focusses on underrepresented groups in credit mobility the second part deals with imbalances in long-term degree mobility flows between countries.

For the identification of underrepresented groups of students and the reasons for selective participation to credit mobility student survey data retrieved from the EUROSTUDENT IV database was used (25 countries). This data includes the percentage of 5A students (ISCED classification 1997) who have a permanent residency and finished prior education in the country of survey and have already enrolled abroad as well as an assessment of obstacles hindering students to participate in credit mobility. For 17 of these 25 countries the research team was able to obtain additional data which allows for more detailed analysis.

Overall, research showed a number of reasons for underrepresentation of certain groups of students, which can be observed in the majority of European countries. Descriptive and correspondence analyses of the data indicate that underrepresented groups in credit mobility are primarily students from low education background, students with delayed transition and older students. Furthermore, financial issues as well as living conditions were identified as the most hindering factors to temporary enrolment abroad, although there are country-specific differences regarding the importance of these two factors. An in-depth analysis of the Austrian data reveals more underrepresented groups such as students with impairments as well students from certain fields of study.

The analysis of imbalanced degree mobility is based on data from the UNESCO – Institute for Statistics on (long-term) degree mobility of students in tertiary education (ISCED 97 level 5 & 6) which displays the presence and distribution of mobile students in the EHEA. Imbalanced mobility flows across EHEA countries are examined from a national, bilateral and a regional perspective. For the identification of imbalances regarding the mobility flows between two countries or regions a twofold approach has been developed: These two approaches reveal imbalanced mobility flows in absolute and relative terms. The “absolute imbalance” approach deems mobility flows between two countries or regions imbalanced when incoming mobile students from one country/ region outnumber outgoing students from the other country/ region to a certain extent. The “relative imbalance” concept compares the size of the incoming student population from two countries by taking the national student population of the receiving country into account.

Promoting Equity of Access to International Education – A. SILTALA

This presentation is based on a project run by the Centre for International Mobility, CIMO, in Finland focusing on equity in internationalisation of education. The project looked at the topic from a theoretical and a more practice oriented point of view, analysing mobility statistics, previous studies on international mobility as well as current practices in different mobility programmes.

The theoretical study was conducted by the Finnish Institute for Educational Research at the University of Jyväskylä. It provided a conceptual framework as follows:

Equity of access to international education refers to equal access to internationalisation regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, special needs, ethnic background or place of residence.

Equity can be seen as

- **formal** equity of opportunity: obstacles and discriminating practices are removed.
- **actual** equity of results: positive discrimination is allowed to secure participation.

The practice oriented study was conducted by CIMO which is the National Agency for several EU and Nordic mobility programmes.

Polarisation or equity in internationalisation?

During the past years international mobility has increased considerably. This fact has enabled to analyse whether access to international education is equitable. In higher education, equity in internationalisation has been achieved in the sense that all students who wish to take part in mobility can do so thanks to the large number of mobility programmes.

Or can they? Concerning participation in mobility, there are differences between higher education institutions, between fields of education and between various student groups: **actual equity is not fulfilled**. For example, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are not as keen to take part or even consider mobility as are other students. Also gender is an issue: there is a clear overrepresentation of women in all kinds of mobility.

Several studies have shown that students are reluctant to become mobile for a host of reasons, most commonly because of relationship issues (family, boy/girlfriend). Other major reasons include concerns over delayed graduation or recognition of studies completed abroad.

In addition, international opportunities are often grabbed by the same individuals when they proceed from one educational level to another. On the other hand, students who have not participated in mobility do not generally regret this choice.

How to promote equity?

The project issued a number of recommendations on how to promote equity in international education both at national and at HEI level. The recommendations aim at helping as many people as possible to reap the benefits of internationalisation.

Conscious action is recommended in the following areas:

- Leadership and management: e.g. setting explicit goals for internationalisation
- Communications: e.g. motivating students to become mobile for the first time
- Guidance and other student services: e.g. making mobility periods into a learning process with specified learning outcomes. After return, guidance professionals should help reflect on the students' learning to help them make their international competences visible in their CVs.
- Project and grant management: e.g. considering positive discrimination of under-represented groups in selection criteria and utilising accessibility grants for students with special needs. The impact of the project and the recommendations remain to be seen in the next year's mobility statistics.

Access to and outcomes of international student mobility – N. NETZ, F. KRATZ

Intending to prepare future high-skilled workers for an internationalising world, numerous mobility programmes such as Erasmus have been established in European higher education. Substantial public funds have been invested to this end. At the same time, various studies have shown that international student mobility (ISM) is highly socially selective. In most European countries, students from high social backgrounds are more likely to spend part of their studies abroad.

Strikingly, it is hardly examined whether ISM yields career-related returns for the mobile individuals. However, this question is relevant for sociological research on inequality reproduction, as finding career-related returns to ISM in combination with social selectivity would constitute evidence that globalisation processes increase social inequalities. Against this background, our study examines monetary returns to ISM and the mechanisms explaining these returns.

In a first step, we develop a conceptual framework explaining which mechanisms may cause monetary returns to ISM. We test this framework using data from two German graduate panel surveys. Based on these data, we estimate growth curve models and Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions.

The results indicate that ISM-experienced graduates enjoy a steeper wage growth after graduation and a higher medium-term wage. This is partly attributable to their favourable self-selection. Even under control of self-selection effects and competency gains from ISM, however, two mechanisms so far disregarded in the literature can explain returns to ISM: The steeper wage growth results from the higher likelihood of ISM-experienced graduates to realise wage increases through employer changes. Linked to this, their higher likelihood of working in companies with favourable opportunity structures explains their medium-term wage advantage.

Studying abroad and students' academic performance - A.M. FALZONI, V. CAVIEZEL, S. VITALI

In the last decades, an increasing number of European students have spent at least a semester abroad during their university studies. Studying abroad is perceived by students as a way to expand their knowledge of other societies, cultures and business methods, to improve language skills, and to leverage their labour markets prospects.

The importance of international mobility on the skills and employability of students is generally recognized. However, much less is known about the relationship between international student mobility and students' subsequent academic performance. Does studying abroad have lasting influences over students' entire university career in terms of grades, timing, and achievement of the degree?

This paper aims to shed some lights on this issue by making use of a rich dataset based on a sample of more than 1000 Italian students enrolled in a medium size university of the North of the country: the University of Bergamo. Our sample is composed by all the credit mobility experiences done by students of the University of Bergamo during the last five academic years (from the academic year 2008/2009 to 2012/2013). Students belong to all the university departments: Engineering; Foreign Languages, Literatures and Communication Studies; Human and Social Sciences; Law; Letters and Philosophy; Management, Economics and Quantitative Methods.

For each student, the dataset provides administrative information collected at enrolment (age, gender, region of residence, etc.). In addition, we have complete information on students' academic career: number of credits earned in each subject of study and grades and dates of every exam before, during and after the experience of international study mobility. Linking all these information, we obtain a very rich dataset at the student level.

We empirically analyse students' academic performance before and after the international mobility experience in terms of credits earned, grades, and timing of the graduation. We control for a number of students' characteristics (gender, secondary school achievement, family income, etc.), for a detailed list of subjects of study, and for the characteristics of the mobility (country of destination, timing, duration, etc.). Our analysis shows that, on average, grades after the mobility period are essentially in line with the pre-mobility period, while the grades obtained during the mobility are slightly higher. Nevertheless, results differ when we look at different fields of study.

Our analysis may have implications on the debate regarding the ways of improving educational outcomes and the reasons for countries and for public and private institutions to facilitate international student mobility.

26.02.2015 | 14:30 – 16:00

STUDY & WORK

More focused on studying? Differences in time spent studying between students that work and students that do not - E. HOVDHAUGEN, I. REYMERT

Introduction:

A common argument why some students do not spend a lot of time studying is that they have to work while studying in order to support themselves. Earlier studies have shown that it is common for students to work while studying and this is also true for students in Norway, around 60 percent of students work while studying (Orr et al 2011). In addition do we know that there are great differences in time spent studying between students in different programmes (Hovdhaugen & Wiers-Jenssen 2014). For example do students in medicine or law spend more time than average on studies, while students in general liberal arts programmes (humanities or social science) and teacher students tend to spend less time. These differences may be related to the type of study, or to the type of students that choose to take on that specific programme. However, there may also be other explanations to these differences.

Research question:

Since there are differences between programmes in time spent on studies, to what degree are these differences also influenced by difference in time spent working while studying? This paper analyse differences in time spent on studies between students that work and students that do not.

Data and methods:

By using a data set that covers students in bachelor's and master's programmes in Norway we can compare time spent on studies between students that work while studying and students that do not work, and see if this has any substantial impact on their allocation of time. The data set is based on a survey conducted among students in their second (bachelor's) and fifth (master's) year at a Norwegian public higher education institution in the autumn of 2013. The response rate was 32 percent, but the answers covers students in 70 percent of all major higher education programmes at Norwegian public higher education institutions.

Preliminary results:

The majority of Norwegian students, about 55 percent, holds a job while studying. This finding is consistent with earlier findings, both in Norway and internationally (Beerkens et al 2011, Orr et al 2011, Ugreninov & Vaage 2006). However, among those that work most students work part-time, up to about 10 hours a week. Students in master's programmes tend to work a bit more than students in bachelor's programmes. For students in master's programmes it seems to be a clear correlation between the number of hours students work, and the number of hours they spend studying, but for students in bachelor's programmes this relationship is not as clear.

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Working status and aspirations of students in Western Balkans - D. STANOJEVIC, I. ZIVADINOVIC, J.C. MARKOVIC

Significant changes were made during the first decade of 21st century within the higher education systems in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Respective laws on higher education were changed in accordance to the Bologna process and by the end of the 2010 all higher education institutions in all three countries introduced not only reformed programmes but also the new systems of studying that was based on the ECTS system which contained elements of both workload and of learning outcomes. In practise that meant that students were obligated to attend classes and to spend much more time not only at the higher education institutions, but also working on assignments from home on a daily basis. Many feared that the reformed HE system will have a significant impact on students with lower socio-economic status that typically need to work in order to pay for their studies. In addition, analysis of the labour market conditions in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro showed that flexible employment patterns are much more limited in comparison with the most EU countries which leaves students with not many options for financing their studies, and in the end leaving them dependent on their parents. Last but not least, available state student loans are neither enough to cover expenses of studying nor do they target students who need them the most. Recent graduate surveys conducted in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro showed that at the time of graduation 31% of graduates who studied according to the reformed systems in all three countries started working while studying while that percentage was much higher for graduates who finished their studies according to the old system of studying (58%). In this paper we will try to explore who are students who are working and studying in parallel, what is their perception of their working prospects and to what extent, if any, their socioeconomic background has an impact on their choices. In the end, we will examine whether there are regional differences in relation to the specifics social context and in what way students in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro are reconciling working and studying. The main data source will be the EUROSTUDENT survey conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia in 2014 while recently conducted graduate survey will be used for additional analysis.

Part-time studies – smoothing the transition between studies and employment? – C. SCHOLZ

Teichler (2011) suggests that the development of a three-cycle degree structure was supported in the Bologna Process not only to facilitate student mobility within and to the European Higher Education Area, but also to allow for more flexible entry and exit points to and from the labour market as is also evidenced by the call in the Bologna Declaration (1999) for Bachelor qualifications to give access to employment.

This paper intends to look into this link between studies and work based on the example of part-time students in Malta drawing on data from the national student survey carried out in the summer semester 2013 and delivering data for the 5th round of the Eurostudent project. Part-time studies as a formal student status appear to be not very common in Europe, which is also reflected in Eurostudent data referring instead to low-intensity students with a weekly study-related workload of up to 20 hours as a proxy for this group. In Malta, however, this student status formally exists and generally constitutes half the workload associated with the corresponding full-time programme. While students enrolled in full-time programmes spend between 44 and 46 hours per week on study-related activities, students enrolled in part-time programmes spend approximately 19 to 20 hours per week (see Figure 1 and 2). These figures also show that part-time students have a considerable weekly workload associated with paid jobs, namely between 37 and 41 hours per week, which notably exceeds the employment related workload of low-intensity students. This makes part-time students a particularly relevant group to study with regard to the transition between studies and the labour market and the possibility of lifelong learning alongside employment.

Figure 1: Student workload by study-related characteristic of students living with parents in hours per week (arithm. mean)

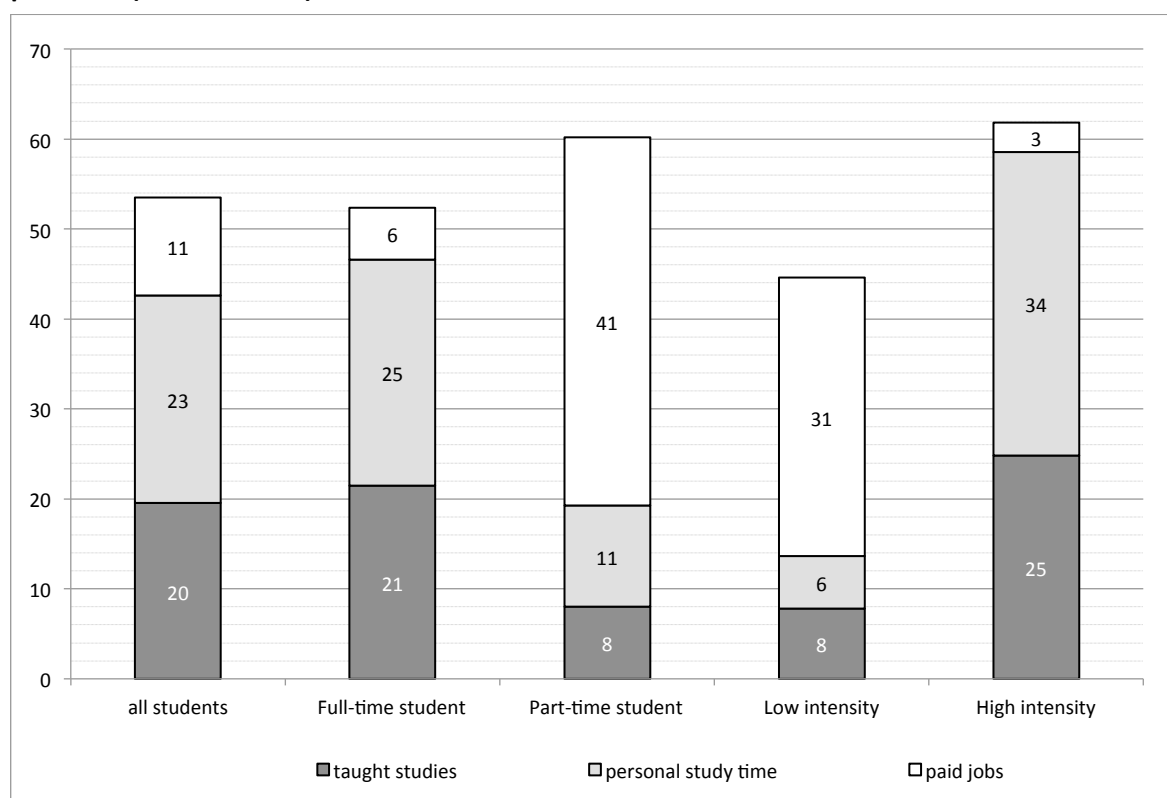
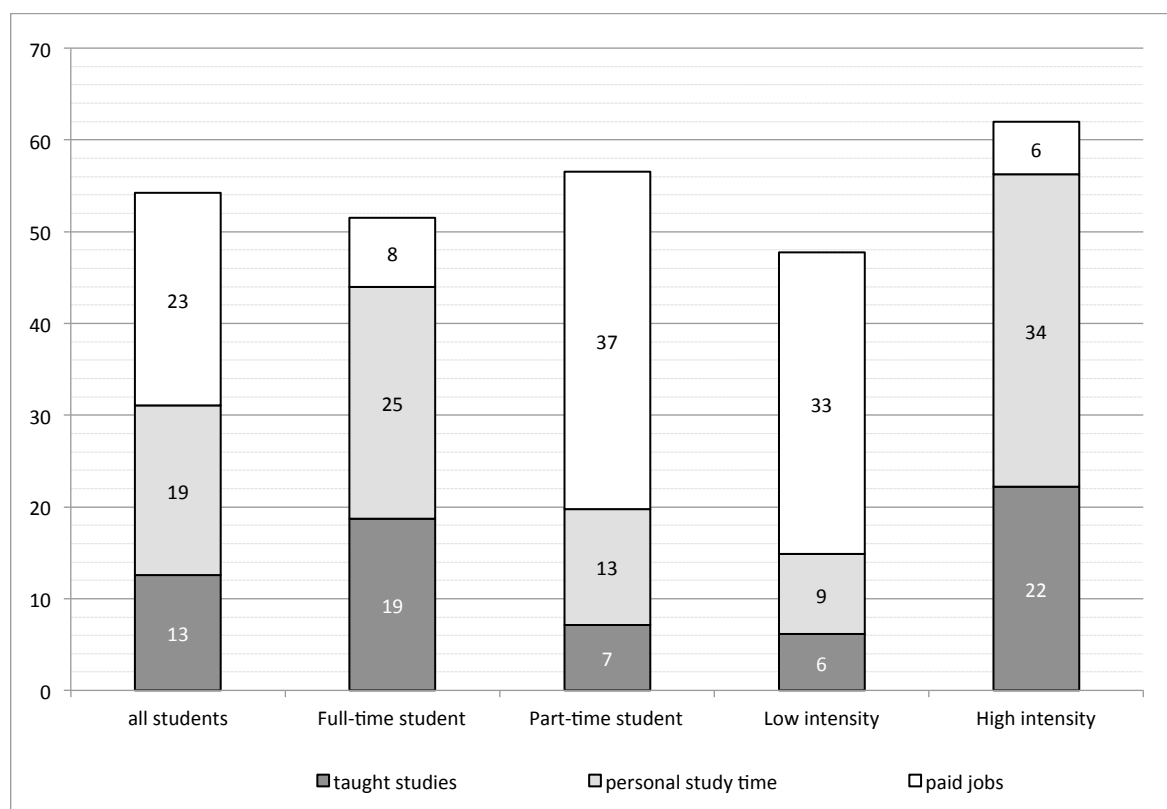


Figure 2: Student workload by study-related characteristic of students not living with parents in hours per week (arithm. mean)



This is all the more relevant for Malta in view of its persistently low higher education attainment among the 30-34 aged population. Between 2007 and 2013 it increased from 21.5% to 26% when compared to 29.9% to 36.8% in the EU-28 during the same period. Therefore, in an effort to open higher education to a more diverse student population and increase higher education attainment in Malta when compared to the EU average, part-time studies may prove useful in allowing flexible entry and exit pathways to and from employment as well as for lifelong learning.

This paper intends to look into the extent to which this holds true by focussing on the group of part-time students, including their entry routes into higher education; the level at which they are enrolled in; their social background; living conditions; assessment of their studies and future plans based on the national student survey carried out in Malta in the summer semester 2013 as part of the Eurostudent V round of data collection.

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Study performance and employment - L. DÜNSER,
K. LEDERMÜLLER, O. VETTORI, J. ZEEH

A wide range of publications show that study success is to a wide extent effected by variables, which are directly or indirectly connected with the socioeconomical background (such as: student employment, which is the focus of this research project) of students (Hackl und Sedlacek 2002; Brandstätter und Farthofer 2003; Schiefele et al. 2007; Heublein et al. 2009; Unger et al. 2011). Historically, student success was defined by student drop out ratios or study duration. Due to the resulting ex post perspective on study success, individual study paths could usually not be modeled in an adequate manner. As effects of changes in the lives of the students could not be properly considered, the interpretation of the study progress and the study context tended to be oversimplified. In order to observe such effects (e.g. starting to work) in the context within they occur, study success has to be monitored continuously during the entire studies (ex tunc perspective). In the case of this research, study success was operationalised in ECTS per student year and measured continuously, based on the student data base of WU, the University of Economics and Business Vienna (n~54.000 studies).

In the case of WU, several publications already show that employment has a significant effect on study success (Hoffmann 1987; Häfke-Schönthaler 1999; Hackl/Sedlacek 2002), albeit from an ex post perspective. Following from this research, a three-stage multi-method approach was developed to investigate the interrelation between student job market integration and study success during the time of study. These three stages show (1) the most common patterns of study activity in ECTS/year, (2) analyses of the job market integration of twelve different activity patterns and (3) comparisons of the effect of employability on student success with other influencing factors. The concrete stages and their methodological approach are shortly described below:

In the first stage, individual study paths (based on student performance per study year of 54.000 studies) were aggregated with the help of n-gram analysis* and then structured towards typified study patterns. Here, twelve different main study patterns were identified. The patterns range from studies that follow a high (or low) activity level in all observed student years, to patterns that show high performance variance during the time of studies.

Using the student monitoring approach of Unger et. al. (2014), job market integration of the twelve different study pattern groups were subsequently analyzed in the second stage. Unger et. al. (2014) monitor job market integration by matching data from the institutional student data base, with job related information from the social security database (type of contract; wage; industry of company...) of the federal ministry of labor, social affairs and consumer protection.

In order to analyse student employment in relation to other student performance influencing factors, the third project stage controls the effect of employment on student success to a wide range of socioeconomic and person based perceptions (as covariates). Student perceptions were observed via questionnaires of the WU Student Panel Project (n~1.500). Within the WU student panel project students receive questionnaires at the beginning, during, at the end and 3-5 years after their studies. The questionnaires, which can be linked to a student panel, cover a wide range of topics like the student perceptions used in this project. Methodologically, structure equation models were applied to show the effects of the variables on student success as well as the interdependencies between all factors.

Applying the ex tunc approach for all project stages, the research projects shows, (1) the most common study patterns, (2) job market integration of students within one study pattern and (3) the interaction between employability and other relevant variables, modelling student success (in ECTS/year).

* N-gram analysis is regularly used in log-file analysis (Andergassen et al., 2013)

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26.02.2015 | 16:45 – 18:15

STUDENT SUPPORT & FUNDING

EUROSTUDENT V Results: Students' resources and costs – C. GWOSC

Participation in higher education is a period of a few years which may cause a substantial financial burden for students. On the one hand, studies may increase students' expenses, e.g. due to the necessity of moving out of the parents' home and the payment of one's own living and study-related costs. On the other hand, it may be more difficult for students to generate income, especially as their availability for the labour market is limited due to the time they need to spend on study-related activities. Therefore, sufficient funds available to students can be viewed as a necessary financial condition for taking up and successfully completing higher education. The ministers responsible for higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have repeatedly referred to this point and its meaning for developing the social dimension of higher education (London Communiqué, 2007; Bucharest Communiqué, 2012).

The presentation of EUROSTUDENT V data includes findings on different aspects of the financial situation of students that can help assessing the status quo of the social dimension in the EHEA. With respect to students' resources, data are being presented on the magnitude and structure of students' average monthly income. In terms of the composition of student income different private and public sources were taken into account. Of particular importance are students' self-earned income, contributions from the students' parents, their partner, or other persons as well as public support. A special feature of contributions from family / partner is that not only cash transfers but also transfers in kind were quantified in order to get a comprehensive overview. Another focus is on the financial inequality of the national student populations. To this end indicators are presented that provide information on the distribution and / or concentration of student income.

With respect to students' costs data on the composition of students' expenses are being presented. In a fundamental way it is distinguished between students' living costs and study-related costs. In addition, there is a differentiation by payer, i.e. it is distinguished between students' out-of-own-pocket costs and costs paid by students' parents, their partner, or other persons in favour of the students. Some expenditure categories that are deemed being of special importance (such as accommodation costs or fees) will be looked at in more detail. Finally, data on the students' assessment of their overall financial situation are presented. The focus is on the question to what extent the students experienced financial difficulties at the time of the survey. In this respect there are not only striking differences between countries, but also between various students groups within countries.

Policies of emergency financial assistance for students in the University of Oviedo: background and current situation – L.J. RODRIGUEZ-MUNIZ

The University of Oviedo started in 2009 a program for emergency financial assistance for their students. The main goal of this policy was to provide economic bourses for paying the tuition fees to students not fulfilling the requirements to apply to a grant from the Ministry of Education, but being in urgent situations that could lead to a dropout due of economical reasons. The program has been continued during last five years, but important changes in the Ministry policy since 2012 about grants have recommended some adjustments in the University policy in order to cover more different situations than expected in 2009, as well as an increase of the amount of money dedicated to the program (multiplied by ten times in five years).

In this communication we present the background of this policy from its origin to the current situation. In particular, we focus on how it evolved in these years. At the beginning we were thinking only in students with unexpected needs, that appeared after they enrol, and that were not cover by Ministry grants (which are based on family's incomes in the last year, and, thus, do not pay attention to the present situation). But the combined action of changes in the Ministry policy (in particular, changes in the records required to obtain a grant) and economical and social crisis in Spain (unemployment over 25%, almost 50% for people under 25 years old) has produced new situations that are really urgent, further that the original causes that could happened unexpectedly after the enrolment. We try to describe different profiles of students that are affected by these new situations. Besides this description, we also provide a catalogue of our new goals within this policy for the following years.

Co-Author: Eduardo Rodríguez-Enríquez

Students' integration into community of university - A. UZDANAVICIUS

Vilnius University Students' Representation (VU SA) is using various means created by VU SA and adopted from the experience of other countries to take care of the integration of first year students into the University. Usually the means are implemented by the Universities' administration but in our case students themselves started to take this matter into their hands and it has been noticed that under the care of students the whole process becomes more acceptable and intimate.

The main means, which are implemented by VU SA, are three: Student Life Guide, Freshmen camps and Freshman Tutor Program. Student Life Guide is a publication for first year students that introduces the University, essential social and academic information, information about after-class activities, etc. Student Life Guide, along with a weekly planner calendar and a notes section, provides the most important and useful information for a first year.

The second means are the Freshmen camps. It is usually a three day event (it depends on the size of the faculty and can be a day shorter or a day longer) in which about half of the faculty's first year students can participate and during which the students hear lectures about the University from older students, teachers and representatives of the faculty's administration. Most of the activities are based on non-formal education methods with which members of the Students' representation who organize the camps are introduced during training. Also during various activities in the camps, first year students have the opportunity to get acquainted with one another. The camps are organized before the school year starts so having met a lot of people during the camps the students tend to feel more comfortable in the University during their first months.

The last means is the Freshman Tutor Program program. Each academic group of students (around 30 students) is appointed two tutors – senior students, who guide their first year students in the university, who can answer various questions regarding social and academic information and who organize unofficial meetings of their groups in order to acquaint the first years with one another.

After the first year students' camps and after the first semester, we collect feedback about the camps' relevance, the help of the tutors, suggestions about our practices. In this way, each year we can improve. This year we took a more integral look into the whole process and started to collect data about the process of integration. I would like to present precisely this "fresh" data about the efficiency of the means we have implemented.

Also, we have made an analysis of socially sensitive groups, in which we have related these groups' needs with the possibilities for them to study in higher education. I can also discuss this analysis during my presentation.

26.02.2015 | 16:45 – 18:15 EXPECTATIONS & STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

EUROSTUDENT V Results: Students' assessment of studies & future plans – F. WARTENBERGH-CRAS

Higher education is considered a process that allows students to develop their personality and, thereby, to become active and socially included citizens. Moreover, it is increasingly seen as a means to prepare students for the labour market and to raise their employability in the long-term. Whether these goals can be attained depends, among other things, on the quality of the study programme pursued. Against this background, students' assessment of their previous experiences in higher education is examined in conjunction with their plans for future studies.

In detail, the presentation shows how students in the European Higher Education Area currently assess four selected aspects of quality of higher education: the quality of teaching, the organisation of their studies and timetable, the administration's attitude towards students and their study facilities.

In reference to the employability debate, the presentation then examines how students assess their future chances on the labour market. As the employability debate has from the start not been restricted to individual countries but geared towards a strengthening of the European labour market, chances on both the national and the international labour market are investigated.

Moreover, the presentation depicts country differences regarding students' plans for continuing their studies and regarding the time frame during which they plan the transition to further studies (i.e. on completion of their current programme or after a longer break). It also shows that students' plans for continuing their studies depend on their educational background.

Educational aspirations not only concern the decision whether and what but also where to continue studying. Therefore, the presentation briefly investigates students' plans for international degree mobility (as a complement to the presentation on EUROSTUDENT data on international credit mobility). More precisely, it looks at the extent to which Bachelor students with the intention to complete a Master programme plan to continue their studies abroad. Again, differences by students' educational background are considered.

The perception of higher education from the perspective of mature students in Ireland – T. BRUEN

This paper examines the experiences of mature students on returning to the field of Higher Education within the Republic of Ireland. The central research question is ***“What do the experiences of mature students who are undertaking an under graduate degree programme in applied social studies reveal about the field of Higher Education in the Republic of Ireland?”*** A narrative approach was employed drawing on data from the narratives of 6 mature students within an Institute of Higher Education within the West of Ireland. The conceptual framework for the study is built on Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice, particularly the concepts of habitus, capital and field. Six key themes emerged from the narratives that related to their overall experiences of the field of Higher Education. These were; *Experiences of first and second level education; Family support; Going to college; Balancing study and work and family commitments; Supportive networks; Pleasant surprise.*

Through the use of Bourdieu’s concepts the data reveal that these students are initially greatly affected by their habituses and the lack of economic, social and cultural capital and this impacted upon their experiences of the field of Higher Education. The narratives revealed the need to consider the overall structure of the field of Higher Education aligning systemic and structural aspects with mature student’s requirements.

The inquiry has clear implications and suggests recommendations for educational policy and practice in relation to mature students to ensure equality of participation. Through a clearer understanding of the experiences of mature students gained from the stories recounted within this inquiry it may be possible to enrich the experiences of future mature students by relating the told experiences to educational policy, research and practice to improve the overall quality of the educational experience.

Students least satisfied with social aspects of medical education: a repeated measure study at school of Medicine, Split, Croatia - K. JELICIC, K. BRADARIC, M. MALICKI

Introduction: Students' academic success and institutional prestige depend not solely on the quality of teaching, but also on the social and environmental dimensions that accompany it.

Aim: To assess students' satisfaction with their study program, their working environment, and social opportunities, as well as burnout they experience during medical education.

Methods: In December 2012 and June 2013, we conducted a previously designed student satisfaction survey, as well as the Oldenburg and Copenhagen Burnout inventories on all students attending the six-year medical education program at the University of Split, School of Medicine.

Results: In total 351 (73%) of students returned the completed questionnaires in the first round of testing, and 317 (66%) in the second. A grade point average (GPA) of students was 4.0 (95% CI 3.9 to 4.1) with no differences between study years ($P=0.23$). Students' satisfaction with their studies was negatively correlated with their year of study ($r=-0.59$, 95%CI -0.52 to - 0.66) and ranged from an average of 4.4 (out of max 5.0) on their first to 2.5 on their sixth year. Students perceived study difficulty decreased from 4.3 on the first to 3.5 on the sixth year ($r=-0.18$, 95%CI -0.52 to - 0.66), however their disengagement increased from 1.9 (out of max 4.0) to 2.6 and their exhaustion from 2.3 to 3.0 ($r=0.32$, 95%CI 0.25-0.39 and $r=0.33$, 95% CI 0.26-0.40, respectively). Students were least satisfied with the opportunity to meet minority populations ($M=2.5$, 95%CI 2.4 to 2.7), the support provided to LGB individuals ($M=2.6$, 95%CI 2.5 to 2.7), financial support they received ($M=2.6$, 95%CI 2.5 to 2.7), and the ability to engage in extracurricular activities ($M=2.7$, 95%CI 2.5 to 2.8). No correlations were found between student GPA and their (dis)satisfaction scores (P values ranged from 0.10 to 0.98). Regression analysis confirmed that study year, burnout, and GPA were all independent predictors of students' satisfaction.

Discussion: Our study has confirmed the multifactorial nature of medical student satisfaction with their studies. Even though the students' GPA scores were not correlated with their dissatisfaction with social aspects of their studies, it provides an important roadmap for our schools improvement. Furthermore, our results may reflect the global raise in students' exposure to questions of minority populations and financial crisis. Further research should attempt to identify the trends and interventions for improving the social aspects of higher education.

The student experience and targeted interventions: a mismatched approach? – C. DCOSTA

The higher educational landscape in the UK is changing in several ways. A significant change is the increasing representation of different social groups, a possible outcome of the policy of widening participation (Bekhradnia 2003, Hart 2010). This attempt at social inclusion was probably needed since just 14% of students from unskilled backgrounds study for a degree, compared to more than 75% from professional backgrounds (Feinstein and Vignoles 2008). However, some commentators on higher education, such as Paul Ramsden (2008) and others, have raised concerns about these new-to-higher education students' experiences with retention and success. This research set out to explore these concerns which are often expressed along with the concept of the student experience, a key term in policies and practices at both the institutional and national levels of the Higher education sector in the UK.

The research focused on this concept, its framing, and the implications for the purported constituents of the concept - the students. The data, derived through observing several meetings of three committees of an educational institution for one academic year; through critical readings of documents circulated and discussed at these meetings; and through analyses of five key policy statements on higher education issued by the UK government, revealed that the student experience seems to be linked to identifying and targeting interventions to improve the retention of certain "at-risk" groups. This realisation prompted the need for another layer of inquiry - interviews with students - to determine whether the concerns of institutional and national policies were at one or at odds with the experiences and perceptions of the students.

This presentation shows that these apparently well-meaning measures seem to be based on the assumption that some students have a problem adapting to the higher education environment and should be "acculturated" and assisted. However, individual interviews with 15 students from diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds, revealed that although some of them did consider withdrawing from education, they did not lack the ability to cope with the demands of higher education. Having understood that the student experience is closely related to student engagement (Thomas 2002 and 2011, and Tinto 2008), the research tries to understand whether it is the students who need help to adapt to the higher education setting, or whether it is the culture and practices of the institution, which fail to engage them, that need to change. The findings I hope will be relevant to the UK and to other countries in developing appropriate policies and practices to address the social dimension of higher education.

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26.02.2015 | 16:45 – 18:15

SPECIAL STUDENT GROUPS

EUROSTUDENT V Results: Special focus on underrepresented groups – M. UNGER

To identify underrepresented groups in Higher Education in order to enable policy makers, Higher Education Institutions and stakeholders to develop measures to tackle these equity issues is since a long time discussed within the Bologna Process. The first Bologna working group on the social dimension (2005-2007) proposed *“that each country develops its own strategy, including an action plan, for the social dimension. Initially such a strategy will call for the identification of possible underrepresented groups, eg gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography, within each country.”* Currently, a strategy for the social dimension, which ministers should adopt on their next summit in May, is discussed within the Bologna Process. It contains again the idea to first identify underrepresented groups for developing secondly targeted measures to combat inequality.

EUROSTUDENT is the only data source providing information on a variety of potentially underrepresented groups in higher education. However, the measurement of such groups is not easy, a lot of conceptual work has still to be done and, moreover, cross-country comparison has to face different cultural perspectives (eg disability) and historical trajectories (eg shift of borders impacting the definition of migration).

Nevertheless, the presentation provides an overview of different student groups potentially underrepresented by socio-economic background, gender, disability and migration background. Issues of measurement difficulties and definition problems will be discussed. These must be kept in mind to interpret the empirical results properly. Such an international comparison can however only provide an overview of the situation in different countries, i.e. it describes the “How”. In contrast, the “Why” needs further research on national level: What are the reasons for the underrepresentation of certain groups in each national Higher Education System? Why do some countries perform much better in integrating widely underrepresented groups? What are the barriers to overcome and which measures seem to have a positive impact? The nationally collected data of the EUROSTUDENT project enables participating countries to analyse such questions. This presentation provides hints where to look deeper.

Conceptualisation and surveying of students with disabilities - P. WEJWAR, I. SCHWARZENBACHER

A crucial challenge for research addressing the social dimension in higher education is the improvement of surveys examining disability and disability related discrimination. This presentation focusses on the issue that surveys examining the situation of students with disabilities often lack to include all relevant dimensions of disability.

As a basis for the further development of surveying instruments there is the need for a broad and differentiated view of the terms “disability” and “impairment” and various theoretical concepts of disability. There are three conflicting theoretical approaches conceptualising disability: (a) The individual or medical model, (b) the social model and (c) the cultural model. The medical model is based on medical definitions of disability that define physical or intellectual impairments as the sole cause of disability. It implicates that disability is an individual problem and demands that persons with impairments adapt themselves to the given circumstances. In contrast, the social model distinguishes between “impairment” as functional limitation caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment, whereas “disability” is defined as the loss or limitation of opportunities for participation due to physical and social barriers. Hence, societal circumstances are responsible for disabling people, not their impairments. However, the cultural model criticises both the individual and the social model for their negative view on disability as problem and appeals to understand disability more positively as a diversity dimension. The cultural model does not define persons with disabilities as minority that has to be integrated into society but as integral part of society (Waldschmidt 2005).

When it comes to definitions and classifications of disability as well as related support measures at higher education institutions, the medical model still is predominant. However, the social and cultural dimensions have to be considered as well in order to include all dimensions that are relevant for students with disabilities.

Most surveys examining disability related discrimination solely are addressed at students who consider themselves as impaired (e.g. the Austrian Student Social Survey). However, in order to include the social and cultural environment, the surveys in this area have to address the student population as a whole. Attitudes towards students with disabilities have to be focused since perception of disability has a relevant impact on integration/ exclusion of students with impairments (Fröhlich 2008). Studies from Germany and Austria show that institutional support, which in most cases sticks to definitions that follow the medical model, can only be part of the support. Seemingly independent of the degree of formalisation, respective support structures can only take away part of the obstacles that students with health issues or disabilities face.

In order to include all relevant dimensions of disability, survey instruments examining disability at higher education institutions have to be revised and complemented with the societal perspective. Based on a case example (the Austrian Student Social Survey), this presentation is the starting point of an attempt to improve survey instruments, implementing a broader scope of disability.

Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities at Charles University in Prague – K. SAMALOVA

Charles University in Prague is an accredited public university, and thus an autonomous scientific and educational establishment. Charles University was founded in 1348 and is one of the world's oldest universities. Today it has 17 faculties and more than 7,500 employees. Over 51,000 students, roughly a sixth of all students in the Czech Republic, study at Charles University in more than 300 accredited degree programmes and 660 study disciplines.

Students with disabilities form a distinct group amongst the student population at Charles University, most frequently consisting of students with a physical or sensory disability (sight and hearing), specific learning disorders, chronic illness or weakness, physical disorders, communication disorders or combined disability.

It is necessary to ensure that this potentially disadvantaged group of students, or applicants for study, receives equal access to university education and that comparable conditions for study are in place, allowing disabled students to achieve similar results in their studies to students without disabilities. The university's efforts in this area are realised through the systematic and purposeful functioning of support services and measures.

The presented contribution aims to present the results of a quantitative research study carried out at Charles University in Prague on the entirety of the university's disabled student population. Research data was obtained from questionnaires received from 127 disabled students. The results provide information on several crucial topics for students with disabilities. These are, primarily, the issue of barriers that, to varying degrees, impede disabled students in their studies and the resources that can be used to overcome them. The resources and barriers evaluated eventually became the basis for the measurement of the success of students in the course of their studies based on the frequency of the re-sitting of exams and the length of study period. The academic performance was examined from both a subjective and objective point of views. The received data was analysed based on the application of single- and multidimensional data analysis technique.

The theoretical starting-point of the presented study is one of the most widely-used models of student retention at universities, as formulated by modern American sociologist, Vincent Tinto (Tinto, 1975). Based on this concept several key variables influencing the academic performance were revealed.

In-depth analysis of the research outcomes has served as basis for taking new effective measures and improvements as well as developing longitudinal university policies in the field of support provided to students with disabilities at Charles University in Prague.

26.02.2015 | 16:45 – 18:15

RETENTION & SUCCESS

Student diversity survey at the University of Vienna – D. HOSNER, H. REICHERT

Currently topics like educational justice, social inclusion and social mobility are widely discussed in the context of higher education in Europe. Especially the issue of how higher education institutions foster a social selectivity of their current and prospective students is of interest in this context. The Austrian secondary education system has been known for its socially selective effect, which has its impact on the composition of the students heading on for tertiary education. Therefore, the number of students from poorly educated social strata stays relatively low.

The University of Vienna is an important player in the field of higher education in Central Europe, constituting of more than 90.000 students. Until recently, only few data were available, though, to analyze the question of social inclusion, e.g. how many students with a migrant background or from poorly educated social strata are enrolled at the institution. As one of the aims is to achieve a better knowledge about the different groups of students, their social composition and also their specific needs and challenges, in January 2014 the University of Vienna started to conduct an online survey among all enrolled students. Thereby a pioneering role is hold concerning diversity management in higher education institutions in Austria. The overwhelmingly high return rate shows that the topic of diversity is currently high on the agenda.

The survey included questions about the key dimensions of diversity, and focused on the following social dimensions, which play a pivotal role in the context of higher education: educational background of the parents, migrant background (of the students) and psychological/physical impairments. The presentation contains main outcomes of the survey, along the lines of the above-named groups. It compares issues like studying situation, financial situation, psychological problems and experiences with discrimination and identifies vulnerable groups. The presentation concludes with some proposals for prospective fields of action for a successful implementation of a social inclusion perspective at the University of Vienna.

Co-Author: Sylwia Bukowska, Ursula Wagner

Maximising outcomes for HE students from disadvantaged backgrounds – S. HOWLS

In March 2014, the UK Government published the National Strategy for Access and Student Success. This is a strategy for England which the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) developed with the Office for Fair Access. The national strategy reiterated the importance of taking a student lifecycle approach to widening participation in England, a concept that first appeared in HEFCE guidance to universities and colleges in 2001. The strategy identified a number of priorities most of which match those that HEFCE continues to take lead responsibility for.

A key policy priority for HEFCE is to understand and address unexplained differential outcomes of HE study for certain groups of students. Recent analysis undertaken by HEFCE has shown that, once factors such as entry qualifications, subject area of study, ethnicity and sex are taken into account there are unexplained differences in degree attainment, employment and entry to postgraduate study outcomes for students from different groups. These groups include students from different ethnic minority groups, men, students from more disadvantaged backgrounds and disabled students not in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance. HEFCE is in the process of commissioning a critical review of research and practice to better understand the drivers for these differences, what approaches some universities and colleges might be developing to address them and what HEFCE could do through its future policy and funding to galvanise, challenge and support HE providers across the sector to actively work to understand and address differences in their own student populations.

Furthermore, HEFCE is also concerned to ensure that we are able to more robustly evidence the impact of the work HE providers undertake to widen access, improve retention and student success and support progression to further study or employment. HEFCE is working with researchers and leading economists to develop an outcomes framework that will seek to gather evidence of the impact of this work in terms of the outcomes for individual students, local communities, the economy and society more broadly. This is a challenging agenda and involves developing new forms of data return from HE providers to HEFCE, combined with a long-term programme of externally commissioned, robust sociological/economic research and a rolling programme of in-house statistical analyses of national data.

All of the work outlined above and the analysis of participation outlined in the parallel HEFCE abstract on mapping young participation is playing a vital role in helping us to shape our future policy on and funding for widening access, improving student retention and success and supporting progression to employment or further study.

The Student Parent Support Service: Providing 360 holistic support to student parents and expectant student parents in Higher Education – N. HURLEY, D. KENNELLY

This presentation will look at the Student Parent Support Service (SPSS) which offers physical, emotional, social, educational and financial support to students who are parents and also expectant student parents within Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. It is a unique service within the Irish higher education system.

The service was established in October 2007 following a call by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme for creative and innovative projects aimed at achieving the CPP's objectives at that time. Separately, Mary I Students' Union (MISU) had just completed a childcare survey on the experiences of childcare provision for student parents. The survey identified that this cohort faced a myriad of challenges on a day to day basis and that their college experience was dramatically different from that of the traditional student. The survey results strongly recommended the need for a dedicated first point of contact for this cohort. The findings prompted MISU to respond to the HSE CPP call for funding and as a result a student parent co-ordinator was appointed to provide 'practical information and emotional support for students experiencing crisis pregnancy, and student parents, in the event of them experiencing difficulties in any area of student life'. The service began in October 2007 as a pilot project and has been part-funded by MISU since 2008.

The initial pilot project has evolved and expanded into a full time support service delivered by the Student Parent Support Service Co-ordinator with administrative support and assistance from MISU. Now in its eighth year, the provision of one to one support is the gateway for the majority of students who engage with the service. Facilitated networking, on campus family friendly activities and ongoing research all serve to support and compliment the one to one aspect which is the cornerstone of the service.

Sharing the learning and experiences of the service to date, the presentation will examine the different experiences and wide ranging needs of student parents and expectant student parents within higher education. The provision of crèche facilities and childcare financial assistance is just the first step in assisting this diverse group. The presentation will demonstrate how particular student needs can be identified and targeted in practical and creative ways to ensure that student parents are supported and empowered to complete their third level education.

The presentation will be delivered by Nicola Hurley, Student Parent Support Service Co-Ordinator and Dee Kennelly, General Manager of Mary I Students' Union (MISU).

Complexities and Challenges of Researching Student Completion and Non-completion of HE Programmes in Europe: a comparative analysis between England and Norway – E. HOVDHAUGEN, L. THOMAS

There is a growing interest in policy research on student completion and non-completion and bodies such as the European Commission and OECD are focusing on the subject. There is also increasing national interest in the issue in many countries and countries look to each other for input on effective policies. However, there are significant social, economic and educational differences between national systems across Europe, making this a very challenging project. The aim of this paper is to study challenges and complexities in researching student non-completion of higher education programmes in Europe. We use the case of two contrasting countries — England and Norway — to help to identify some of the differences, challenges and complexities that are relevant when creating an approach for analysis that can be used more widely to explore ‘non-completion’ across different countries in Europe and beyond. This analysis is particularly informed by the experience and outcomes of students from non-traditional groups.

26.02.2015 | 16:45 – 18:15

STUDY & WORK

Workshop: The student job – a ticket to a scientific career? Expanding an original career management tool – A. TRÜBSWETTER

According to the European Commission's Roadmap for Equality, "[T]he participation of women in science and technology can contribute to increasing innovation, quality, and competitiveness of scientific and industrial research, and needs to be promoted" (European Commission 2006). Simultaneously, research and science in Europe still barely utilises women's potential. Their proportions are low and decrease with each successive step of the academic ladder. In Germany in 2010 in particular, less than 25% of 450,000 researchers were women (Innovationsindikator 2011). Such limited participation of women can substantially weaken a nation's capacity for innovation (Bührer, Hufnagel and Schraudner 2009). Among participants of the WiNbus project, both young men and women were equally interested in the substance of scientific work. Simultaneously, many existing organisational structures, practices, and cultures still favour "stiff" and "linear" career formats by implementing biased HR policies and showing little tolerance toward employees' family responsibilities, which discourages career aspirations of many young scientists and women among them in particular (Matthies et al. 2001; Jaksztat, Schindler and Briedis 2010). In addition, the comprehension of the scientific landscape, in its entire complexity, often poses an unsolvable challenge to many of such scientists.

The author's core assumption was that such comprehension, in particular in earlier stages of one's career development, can substantially support such development and, ultimately, one's decision to stay in the system. Seeking to foster career prospects for young scientists in general and female PhD students in particular, *Fraunhofer's Creating Futures in Science* has developed an original career management methodology, which could help individuals refine their understanding of major elements of scientific careers and of their own career development options. The developed method draws from design know-how and is centred on a collaborative exploratory process, which is realised in a range of sessions within one workshop. In particular, this method brings "beginners" and "role models" together, provides comprehensive information, including exemplary career paths, and utilises original ideation and interaction formats such as scenarios and enabling spaces. In general, it supplements more conventional consulting and mentoring and can ultimately foster women's advancement in research and science and in STEM fields in particular. Up till now, four workshops were conducted – one at Fraunhofer Headquarters in Berlin, Germany, one at ETH Zurich in Zurich, Switzerland, and two at Tel Aviv University in Tel Aviv, Israel.

Student employees in research organisations constitute yet another source of largely untapped potential for German science. In its consideration on career support for young scientists in 2000, the German Research Foundation, DFG, recognised the value of students' contribution to research proposals and projects (DFG 2000; Scholz 2003). Many research organisations often employ students as potential candidates for future doctoral positions (Enders 1996; Matthies et al. 2001; Metz-Göckel & Selent, 2004). Simultaneously, the ninth survey of students, conducted by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, BMBF, indicated that students themselves often perceive such jobs to provide very limited professional opportunities (BMBF 2005).

In 2013, the author surveyed $N=3543$ student employees in one German non-university research organisation about their current professional situations and career aspirations, and factors that motivate them in their work. Almost 60% of respondents agreed that at the time of applying for their current position, they regarded it as *an opportunity to take a first step toward a scientific career*, which played an important or a very important role in their decision to accept that position. Simultaneously, only 34% of respondents mostly or completely agreed that they regarded their current position as a *good starting point for a scientific career* and only nearly one fourth of respondents intended to pursue a doctoral position after their graduation. The author was also able to establish certain gender-specific patterns. Significantly smaller proportions of female than male respondents ($p < 0.001$) and as many as 8% and 15% of female respondents aspired to *a doctoral position* and to *the development of their scientific competence* respectively. Less than a half of respondents and a significantly smaller proportion of female than male respondents ($p < 0.001$) agreed that they could find a sufficient number of *role models in their organisation*. These findings suggest that after some adjustments, the method developed by *Creating Futures in Science* might be ideally suited for supporting student employees in their career management.

In the proposed session, the author intends to present both the survey and *Creating Futures in Science* and to conduct a collaborative exploration of the developed method and of potential ways of its expansion with regard to student employees. In the first part of the session, the author will provide a comprehensive overview of the method and conclusions regarding its application, including organisational specifics. In order to refine their understanding of the method, to evaluate its different aspects, and to make suggestions for potential adjustments, conference participants will utilise the developed original formats in a joint exploratory process similar to those conducted in the workshops. In the second and final part, the author will present the findings of the survey and participants will jointly explore how the method can be expanded in order to accommodate student employees and develop potential recommendations for individuals, organisations, and politicians.

27.02.2015 | 09:00 – 10:30

TOWARDS A NATIONAL STRATEGY

The genesis and the development of concept of social dimension in the European higher education policy sphere
– K. MIKLAVIC

The *social dimension* of higher education appeared as a discursive regularity in the Bologna Process. The field study revealed that this was a constantly developing concept that considerably marked the first six years of coordinative sphere of the Process. In the endeavour to interpret of the ideations of higher education in modern Europe, I examined the origins and discursive use of this concept within the Bologna coordinative (policy) sphere. The proposed article argues that the concept of social dimension was devised to defend the traditional continental European institutional setting and underlying ideas on higher education against the advancing new ideational streams normalising the idea on instrumental role of higher education for the economic competitiveness.

With the use of discursive institutionalism (Viviane Schmidt), I examined the interactive process of discourse and the substantive content of the ideas around the development of the concept of social dimension of higher education. Similarly to *public good*, *public responsibility* and the multipurpose definition of higher education it can be interpreted as key element of a discursive strategy in the confrontation of ideas on higher education. The concept of Social dimension was used in discursive strategy by several actors. Amongst most notable were indeed the student representatives from ESIB/ESU. The concept followed a lengthy path of defining the meaning. This process was considerably contingent to the logic of communication within the Bologna coordinative sphere of discourse. Gradually, the Bologna policy arena developed a broad and complex conceptualisation of *social dimension* in dialectical relation with other discourses and ideas

Opening up Higher Education: Reflections on a German Initiative” – E. EPPING

The conference contribution aims to present the German Federal Government and the states (Länder) competition "Advancement through Education: Open Universities" (2011-2020). It is part of the wider federal Government and Länder qualification initiative "Advancement through Education", which was launched in 2008 in order to improve the citizens' employment opportunities. The competition can be considered a landmark and major reform in the German higher education sector also in terms of addressing and strengthening the social dimension of higher education.

In short, the competition has a volume of 250 Mio. € and seeks to encourage higher education institutions to put forward innovative, demand-based and sustainable concepts as to qualify individuals, secure the supply of skilled staff in the long term, improve transfer opportunities between vocational education and training and academic education and accelerate the transfer of new knowledge into practical applications. Thereby it strengthens the international competitiveness of the science system through sustainable profile development in lifelong academic learning. By means of that, the competition explicitly seeks to design lifelong academic learning for non-traditional students. In particular this refers to those returning to their careers, those with family duties, university drop outs, unemployed academics and those without a formal university entrance qualification. Over the two funding rounds, 73 (single and joint) projects develop concepts and methods for instance for part-time studies or certificates while being employed. Up to now, 115 higher education institutions receive funding as to develop new approaches and concepts for further higher education.

The competition as such and the development of lifelong academic learning is a novelty to German higher education and sets an example for co-operation with extra-mural institutions in a federal system. Other than that, the competition triggers questions concerning the formal qualifications needed to access higher education and makes institutions rethink. Many of the projects already developed new and creative approaches to allow non-traditional students access to higher education or to qualify them in a way of doing so (for instance preparatory courses, bridge courses etc.). Other than that the projects develop procedures to acknowledge and accept non-formal and formal, previously gained, qualifications. The measures developed by the projects yield added value to other countries as well and can be transferred to other national settings.

The contribution thereby seeks to present the national approach that is taken and focusses in detail on the measures and actions developed by the projects as to address and improve the social dimension of higher education.

The new Higher Education Reform and Higher Education Law in the “social dimension” perspective - the Albanian case - E. MEHMETI

Higher education and scientific research in Albania are not yet up to international standards, progress seems to have been somewhat disappointing in the last 14 years. Although the number of universities and students enrolled in higher education has grown rapidly, the quality assurance remains an issue. For this reason the government is undertaking a reform that involves higher education which is expected to bring a dramatic change in the structure of the higher education and soon in the outputs .

This new approach to higher education brought a lot of debates among the stakeholders of higher education and especially among students organizations.

In this context this paper focus the analysis in particular of 1. 1) How the social dimension of higher education is perceived in the higher education reform and the new higher education law 2. What are the specific actions undertaken by the government to improve the participation of under-represented groups in higher education.

This paper and the study of the higher education reform and law is part of my PhD thesis (which is in progress) which tends to open a discussion on the role that universities , as one of the main stakeholders of higher education, has in the albanian society.

27.02.2015 | 09:00 – 10:30

SPECIAL STUDENT GROUPS

Workshop: How do European universities follow the implementation of policies and strategies for lifelong learning? – H. SMIDT

The EUA Trends 2010* report showed that 39% of European universities had a strategy for lifelong learning. The upcoming Trends 2015** report indicates that this figure has nearly doubled over a five year period. The strategies usually consist of initiatives targeting specific student categories and initiatives that enhances access via the lifelong learning path.

The workshop will - against the background of the seemingly successful development - look at institutional approaches for following the implementation of lifelong learning policies and strategies. Which processes need to be in place for tracking which students are accepted, how they progress and how they succeed after graduation? How can the knowledge inform not only strategic development, but also the development of teaching and learning and support structures, and the quality of the student experience for an ever more diversified student population?

The workshop will present and discuss examples of activities collected through the EUA reports: *Tracking Students' and Learners' Progression Paths TRACKIT*, *Engaging in Lifelong Learning: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies*, the EURYDICE report on *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, retention and employability* and practices in number of Swedish universities. The workshop will allow for an in-depth discussion on data collection, targeted support structures, activities for increasing the employability of students and how these can enhance the student experience.

* Sursock, A. and Smidt, H.: *Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher*

**Trends 2015 will be presented at the Ministerial Meeting in Yerevan in May 2015

27.02.2015 | 09:00 – 10:30

RETENTION & SUCCESS

Higher Education: Making the paradigm shift – G. LAYER

This paper looks at how a university can approach influencing social and economic change through developing a holistic, evidence based approach to influence the local economy. This paper will look at how the current strategic plan for the University of Wolverhampton, the 'University of Opportunity', was developed to allow the University to be central in the economic development of the region it sits within; a region with high levels of unemployment, a low skilled economy, poor school achievement and limited aspiration. The University has one of the highest proportions of low income students, a high proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and one of the largest groups of deaf students in the UK. The 'University of Opportunity' concept was developed with a clear rationale to provide higher education that makes a difference.

The University evaluated the nature of its student body, examined the economic and social position of the region and set its objective to grow higher education by making it accessible. The framework used was based on the social model of disability set within a student lifecycle approach. The student lifecycle is based on the interventions an institution can make at different stages of an individual's life from pre-entry, the move into higher education, supporting learners during their time in study, and the moving on phase and employability. The use of the student lifecycle has led to a planned approach addressing all aspects of the students' interaction with the higher education, allowing the University to significantly impact on individual life chances.

By establishing a strong evidence base, and using that evidence to influence change, the University has developed policies, interventions and investments throughout the lifecycle at the University, ranging from taking over schools to improve attainment, investing in new types of student support to help students on courses, and growing graduate jobs and employability. By doing this, we see economic regeneration.

The paper will explain the measures used and look at progress over three years

Learning Matters: An alternative perspective on the value of the social dimension – B.FLEMING, R. WYNNE

Short abstract

This paper draws on research on over 700 adult learners taking part in Lifelong Learning courses in an Irish university. The research interrogates the nature of that experience and considers what makes the learning experience work. The study takes place at a time when the social impact of learning has been somewhat diminished or overlooked by policy rhetoric. The focus on upskilling has subsumed the wider benefits of learning. This paper offers an alternative view by capturing the voices of learners in a research study on 'Learning Matters'. The research captures the value learners place on the social value of their learning.

Outline

This paper offers an alternative perspective on lifelong learning in higher education. It reports on a research study conducted on students participating in part-time unaccredited learning. The study offers an outlook on students' motivations and experiences of adult learning. It further interrogates what makes a learning experience exceptional.

This paper affords us an insight into the nature of learning when there is no other agenda or reward except the learning experience itself. It poses several questions about the nature of higher education and the relative value of learning for learning's sake.

It offers evidence of the potent and engaging nature of adult education in animating, informing, engaging and enthusing learners to be lifelong learners and engaged citizens. The students indicate the impact of social connections for them in their learning and emphasise the value of the social context to their learning.

The lessons learned from this study have application across the sector. This 'social factor', interpreted as meeting people and having a participative learning environment, were established as the primary motivation for learners in participating and persisting with their lifelong learning. Social connections gave people an identity as a student and habitualised them to a learning environment. This provided a foundation for persistence with lifelong learning and a facility for engaging with learning.

Learning from this study will be briefly cross-referenced with an earlier study in the same university with a larger group of undergraduates. That study indicated the value of friendship in helping students persist with their studies. The social dimension was attributed as critical in an environment where there is relative homogeneity in the student population. In that case mature students and other students reported needing additional support and opportunities in fostering social connections.

The Learning Matters research study stresses the importance of social cohesion and the value of fostering these dynamics in class. The participants in the study stressed the value they place with being treated with respect, enjoying a climate of participation and collaboration. These findings have a relevance to the broader higher education sector. It suggests that such learning offers an alternative perspective on the socially cohesive nature of lifelong learning. It offers an alternative view on the value of learning and how 'learning matters' to us as social beings.

The development of a national ‘quality label’ to enhance equity and social inclusion in higher education: Insights from Croatia – L. THOMAS, N. SCUKANEC

The ‘social dimension’ is an issue of great importance in higher education in Europe, being a key plank of the Bologna process since 2007. The challenge however is how to embed an inclusive approach across the institution, that not only enables greater equity in participation in higher education, but in outcomes too.

This paper discusses the concept and development of a quality label to improve equity and social inclusion in higher education (HE) through inclusive learning and teaching. It draws on two relevant European examples to illustrate the concept and practice of using a ‘quality label’ to promote the social dimension, which we understand as equity and social inclusion in terms of participation in and outcomes from higher education. The paper draws on these two evaluated examples to identify the benefits and challenges of a quality label, and the key decisions that have to be made in taking forward such an initiative at the national level.

The paper then focuses on the issue of standards, capacity and guidance. How prescriptive should such a quality label be, and how can it be used to develop institutional capacity, while maintaining objectivity and rigour? These are challenges faced by other quality labels, and in the Croatian context a ‘self-evaluation tool’ has been developed to provide guidance and support, and develop capacity, while contributing to the standards of the award. This tool will be presented.

This initiative is being developed as part of the *E-Quality: Linking quality and social inclusion in higher education in Croatia* project, funded by the European Union, through the European Social Fund (IPA for Human Resources Development Component in Croatia 2007 – 2013; “Integration of Disadvantaged Groups in Regular Education System”). The paper has been written in consultation with the project Advisory Group, and the ideas were tested out and refined following feedback from across the HE sector at the project conference, 21 January 2015, University of Rijeka.

What are main dropouts factors in the University of Oviedo? – L.J. RODRIGUEZ-MUNIZ

In this communication we present the result of a research performed over the first cohorts of students in the degrees within the EHEA in the University of Oviedo. The goal of this research was to identify main factors in the dropout of our students. Data were obtained by performing a survey over the students who had abandoned their degree in the academic years 2011-12 and 2012-13. Questions in the survey asked about different facilities they could find or they have missed in their university experience: expectations, counselling, housing, etc.; as well as other academic questions: former studies, admission to university, matching between their intentions and the degrees they finally entered, etc. We have essayed two different type of analysis. The first one is based on statistical hypotheses whereas the second one is based on more relaxed hypothesis and performed by using machine-learning techniques. We show the results of both analyses and we demonstrate they are consistent. On this communication we focus on the machine-learning approach, by using rules generation.

We have identified several main factors that can predict the dropout rate: the necessity of a proper counselling before entering and during the university life, the adequate matching between their expectations and the studied degree, a proper academic background fitted to the target of the degree, and a high rate of attendance to classes. Nevertheless, the main predictive factor is the student's records in his/her previous studies (in Spanish, Bachillerato). We have built some rules that can help stakeholders to make decisions about admission strategies for the future.

27.02.2015 | 09:00 – 10:30

THE EUROSTUDENT NETWORK

Being a student in a post-transition country – Insights from student surveys in new EUROSTUDENT countries

The session hosts a panel of experts from teams that have implemented the EUROSTUDENT survey in their countries for the first time. These newcomers are several EU-candidate countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia) as well as four post-soviet countries (Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine). The presentations will highlight major outcomes of these studies and outline some of the methodological peculiarities of conducting the survey in these countries.

Chair: Dr. Alexander Chvorostov (Austria)

- Ivana Zivadinovic
(Centre for Educational Policy, Serbia)
- Ksenia Kizilova
(Kharkiv National University, Ukraine)
- Lusine Fljan
(Yerevan Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences)
- Tatiana Larina, Anastassia Tertyschnikova
(Russian University of People's Friendship / RUDN, Russia)
- Mzia Tsereteli
(Ministry of Education and Science, Georgia)
Marina Mchedlishvili
(IPM Research, Georgia)



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THE SOCIAL DIMENSION IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION
25 – 27 February 2015, University of Economics, Vienna

Web: <https://socialdimension-he.eu/home.html>



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