



Results Call for Proposals Fall 2014

Next Call for Proposals: 5 April to 24 May

Anna Katyn Chmielewski

Anna Katyn Chmielewski is an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy in the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. She holds a PhD in Education and MA in Sociology from Stanford University. Chmielewski's research examines macro-level trends in educational inequality, both cross-nationally and over time. Specifically, she is interested in socioeconomic disparities in academic achievement, school segregation, curricular tracking/ability grouping and university access, as well as the consequences of childhood inequality for adult skills, educational attainment and income. Her research has been published in the American Educational Research Journal and the American Journal of Education. Chmielewski was a postdoctoral fellow in the Pathways to Adulthood program at Michigan State University and a visiting scholar at the Centre for Educational Science and Psychology at the University of Tuebingen, Germany.



Fellowship project:

Chmielewski's project will use PIAAC adult literacy data, linked with the two previous adult assessments, ALL and IALS, to study changes in educational inequality across birth cohorts in 16 countries. Educational access has broadened in most countries over the past 60 years, while income inequality has risen and national policies to facilitate the training and development of students and workers have varied dramatically across countries. An association between family economic background and cognitive skills, educational attainment and labour market outcomes remains in all countries across all time periods, representing the intergenerational transmission of inequality and a lack of social mobility. However, levels of inequality vary substantially across countries and over time, most likely as a result of differences in educational and social conditions and policies. This project will study variation in inequality in skills and educational attainment across countries and cohorts, while overcoming a shortcoming of previous research by exploiting the linkage between PIAAC and the previous adult assessments, ALL and IALS, to hold age constant while comparing across birth cohorts. This will make it possible to model the associations between inequality in a particular country and cohort and the social and educational policies and conditions experienced by that cohort. This research will produce valuable theoretical and policy insights into how educational and social conditions shape inequality.



Alper Dincer

Alper Dincer is the research coordinator of Education Reform Initiative at Sabancı University in Istanbul, Turkey. He is an education economist and holds a PhD. in Economics and Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Since 2008 he has been conducting policy-oriented academic research with quantitative research methods and large-scale surveys. Dincer's articles have published in World Development and International Journal of Educational Development. Dincer's research is at the intersections of economics of education and development. His research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between skills/learning/education, education-related decision making and its impact on human development. More precisely, he focuses on empirical evaluations of education policy interventions as well as intended and unintended consequences of these policies on human development. By primarily relying on quasi-experimental design, Dincer's objective is to produce reliable and robust insights to inform theory and policy-level decision makers.



Fellowship project:

The skills of the population are usually considered as an essential element of modern knowledge-based economies and individuals invest in schooling with the expectation of accumulating additional skills which, then, may be valued in the labour market and other domains of social life. However, very little is known regarding skill determination and the role of education systems in skill formation. Using data from PIAAC countries and the variation across countries and over time in the changes of minimum school leaving age, Dincer's research proposal aims to investigate the effects of schooling on skill formation and inequality.

The association between education and earnings has attracted enormous attention among economists and the empirical literature primarily focused on the estimation of returns to education. This line of research on the labour-market returns to education shows that returns to education exhibit considerable variation across countries and these differences cry for explanation. Differences in labour market structure such as union density, employment protection, and public-sector share may lead to differences in returns to education. On the other hand another possible channel may be differences in education systems. Individuals may accumulate different levels of skills via formal schooling under varying institutional settings and these differences may explain the observed cross-country heterogeneity of returns to education estimates. Given that skills matter in the labour market the objective of the proposed research is to provide an alternative explanation for the observed cross-country heterogeneity of returns to education estimates. Additionally, the proposed research may also reveal what types of institutional settings in education provision inhibit or instigate skill formation and inequality.



Jia HE

Jia (Jamis) He is a Ph.D. researcher in Tilburg University, the Netherlands. She obtained her M.A. degree in Intercultural Communication from Shanghai International Studies University, China. Her PhD project focused on the psychological meaning of survey response styles from a cross-cultural perspective. Her current research includes comparability, validity, and other methodological issues in cross-cultural research. She is also interested in modern research methods such as structural equation modelling, multilevel analysis, and Bayesian statistics.

Fellowship project:

Jia's project will investigate the extent of data comparability in international surveys and on solutions to overcome or pre-empt the effects of data incomparability. Data on characteristics of structures and processes and outcomes of teaching and learning from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) will be used to analyse measurement bias at different levels. The project will aim to find optimal psychometric methods to test measurement invariance and research the effects of respondents' systematic tendency to use certain response options in a scale (i.e., response styles) on the comparability of cross-country data. With a strong emphasis on policy relevance, this project is expected to provide a better understanding of data comparability, improve interpretability of cross-country differences, and offer solutions to enhance validity of estimates of country differences in extant and future international surveys.





Antonio Villar

Antonio Villar is a researcher in the field of welfare economics, dealing both with theoretical and applied aspects (distribution rules, welfare comparisons, income distribution, human development, equality of opportunity, education, design of social indicators). He holds a Doctorate in Economics from the University of Oxford and is full Professor at the Pablo de Olavide University (Seville) and Senior Researcher at the Instituto Valenciano de Investigaciones Económicas (Ivie). In 2010 he got the Andalusia Research Prize in Social Sciences and Humanities. He has published fourteen books and some 80 research papers. He also has a long involvement in the Spanish system of science and technology, mostly dealing with the evaluation of research proposals. He has been Visiting Professor at Stanford University, the European University Institute (Florence), the Institute for Advanced Studies (Vienna) and the University of Oxford, among other places. Personal web-page: <https://sites.google.com/site/avillarupo/Home>



Fellowship project:

This project focuses on PIAAC and PISA and aims at identifying some structural features of the educational systems, regarding the protection they provide for the citizens in terms of ensuring a minimal knowledge independently of the socio-economic status of the students. It is therefore an equity-based evaluation centred on the less able and/or the less well-off. There are two interrelated lines of research: Educational poverty and poverty bias.

Educational poverty deals with the study of insufficient achievements, by focussing on the population for which the educational system does not provide a minimum level of competence (those below level 2). Indeed, one of the most striking features of the results that appear both in PISA and PIAAC is the wide diversity of distributions across the six levels of competence defined by the OECD. Countries with similar average scores exhibit rather different densities regarding the distributions of those outcomes.

Poverty bias refers to the educational achievements of the students coming from poor families, defined according to the index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS), which summarizes the most relevant family traits (parents' occupation and studies, family wealth and educational resources and cultural possessions). This indicator permits one to study the relationship between the students' family background and their scholastic performance. Looking at the subgroup of families with lower socioeconomic status helps understanding the role of the educational system with respect to intergenerational mobility.