

OECD SYMPOSIUM

From Inclusion and Equity in Education to Social and Economic Prosperity

**Organised in the context of the second annual meeting of
the Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship and Alumni Association**

Introduction

1. The goal of this OECD symposium on inclusion and equity in education is to explore links and interrelations among education, social and economic prosperity, inclusion and equity.
2. The symposium is organised by the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills under the auspices of the Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship and Alumni Association and in collaboration with the OECD Directorate for Labour, Employment and Social Affairs, the Statistics Directorate, UNESCO and Open Society Foundations and other projects working on inclusion and equity, such as the OECD New Approaches to Economic Challenges initiative, and the OECD Centre for Opportunity and Equality. The OECD and its partners can use the Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship to broker a dialogue between policy makers, civil society, researchers, academics and funding organisations.
3. The symposium will be held at the OECD Headquarters in Paris on 16-17 June 2016 following the PISA Governing Board meeting scheduled from 13-16 June 2016.

Purpose of the symposium

4. The purpose of the symposium is three-fold:
 - A. To bring together efforts to better understand patterns and trends relating to economic and social inclusion and equity, particularly interactions between gaps in education, skills, employment and wages.
 - B. To open a dialogue between researchers, including Thomas J. Alexander Fellows, different OECD initiatives and policy makers from OECD member countries, notably participants to PISA Governing Board.
 - C. To define a policy research agenda for the future, including for the Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship and its Alumni Association.

Background: inclusion and equity in education - findings from the Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship

5. “Lack of a quality education is the most powerful form of social exclusion, preventing people from benefitting from economic growth and social progress” argued OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría during his opening remarks at the launch of the OECD Education at a Glance 2015 report, underscoring inclusion and equity in education as one of the key challenges for policy makers to address.

The Education Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 commits the international community to ensuring that by 2030 no-one is left behind or prevented from accessing a quality education leading to at least minimum levels of proficiency in reading and mathematics literacy.

6. The OECD is at the forefront of the debate on the causes and consequences of economic and social exclusion and inequity. For education in particular, research supported by the OECD Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship programme demonstrates how evidence can help policy makers address the challenge of inclusion and equity in education and beyond.

7. Building on data from the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), [research](#) by Thomas J. Alexander fellow John Jerrim found that income inequality is associated with gaps in educational attainment, wages, and returns to education, and argued that educational inequality is a key factor explaining the Gatsby curve, which relates social mobility and income inequality. But inequalities are not set in stone; policies shape how inequalities evolve over time, as Alexander fellow Katyn Chmielewski describes in her research on cross-country trends in education inequality over a period of 60 years across countries and birth cohorts using data from all available adult skill assessments (PIAAC, ALL and IALS). For example, Thomas J. Alexander fellow Alper Dincer produced evidence showing that increasing the age of compulsory schooling by one year is associated with increased achievement levels and smaller inequalities in skills among adults.

8. Research on PISA 2012 suggests that education policy can help improve education quality and increase access to schooling at the same time. For example, [the Brazil PISA 2012 National Report](#), produced by Alexander fellow, João Galvão Bacchetto, helped put in context Brazil's improvements in PISA. By 2012, not only had Brazil managed to achieve one of the largest increases in average mathematics performance since PISA 2003, it had done so in a context of increasing access to schooling and reductions in grade repetition. In short, in the last decade more Brazilian 15 year old students managed to stay in schooling, progress steadily across grades and accumulate more knowledge and better skills than ever before.

9. Understanding the drivers of inequality in performance remains a key question. When analysing the contribution of differences in mathematics content on performance gaps Thomas J. Alexander fellow William H. Schmidt [found](#) that performance inequalities are strongly related with unequal schooling opportunities. Across OECD countries, a third of the differences in mathematics performance observed between advantaged and disadvantaged students can be ascribed to differences in the mathematics content they are exposed to at school, not socioeconomic differences. The mathematics taught at school is something policy makers can tackle more easily than socioeconomic inequalities.

10. A critical challenge for policy makers and researchers is how to produce evidence that supports improvement. A [new tool](#), developed by Thomas J. Alexander fellow Przemyslaw Biecek, made it possible for anyone to study in detail differences in mathematics performance by parental occupation using PISA 2012. Results of this analysis, highlighted in a [PISA in Focus](#), showed that all students, including the children of blue-collar workers, can achieve high levels of performance in PISA.

11. Beyond socio-economic inequalities, research from Thomas J. Alexander fellows Joel Rapp and Alvaro Choi, shows that policies can address persistent gender gaps among students and adults. In particular, Alvaro Choi provides a lifetime perspective on gender gaps and studies how differences in early formative years relate to skills later in life. Thomas J. Alexander fellow Barbara LeRoy examines issues related to the implementation of PISA for students with special educational needs, including equity, access and accommodation considerations for more inclusive policies. Her work argues that more inclusive policies have to consider special needs students.

12. The question of efficiency of educational systems is at the centre of research by Thomas J. Alexander fellows Tommaso Agasisti and Daniel Caro. Tommaso Agasisti examines trade-offs between school equity and efficiency. Daniel Caro examines the question of efficiency in emerging economies to identify the teaching practices associated with better results among emerging countries. He also developed data visualization tools for making his work more appealing to policy-makers and the general public.

13. Lastly, Thomas J. Alexander fellow Antonio Villar has developed a methodology for exploiting the wealth of information in PISA to develop country rankings that combine average results with equality of opportunity. The resulting PISA rankings are richer, highlighting differences across countries in performance, inclusion and equity.

DRAFT AGENDA

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16-17 June 2016
OECD Headquarters
Paris, France

Objectives

- A. Bring together efforts to better understand patterns and trends relating to economic and social inclusion and equity, particularly interactions between gaps in education, skills, employment and wages.
- B. Open a dialogue between researchers, including Thomas J. Alexander Fellows, different OECD initiatives and policy makers from OECD member countries, notably participants to PISA Governing Board.
- C. Define a policy research agenda for the future, including for the Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship and its Alumni Association.

Participants

- **OECD:** Directorate for Education and Skills, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs and its Centre for Opportunity and Equality, Statistics Directorate, and NAEC .
- **PISA Governing Board** members
- **Open Society Foundations Education Support Program:** Mary Metcalfe, Hugh McLean and Daniel Pop
- **Program specialists from Open Society Foundations in the following countries:** Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine.
- **Thomas J. Alexander Fellows:** Alper Dincer, Alvaro Choi, Anna Katyn Chmielewski, Antonio Villar, Barbara LeRoy, Daniel Caro, Darleen Opfer, Denise Reis Costa, Ellen Boeren, Fabian Barrera-Pedemonte, Gabriela Miranda Moriconi, Henry Braun, Jia He, John Jerrim, Nicholas Spaul, Przemyslaw Biecek, Samuel Greiff, Seong Won Han, Tommaso Agasisti, William Smith, William H. Schmidt

Thursday 16 June 2016 Room CC4

13:30 – 14:00 *Welcome coffee and registration*

1. From inclusion and equity in education to social and economic prosperity

Following introductions by the OECD and the OSF, a plenary session will offer an overarching view on different sources of inequalities and how these evolve over the life cycle.

14:00 – 14:30 Introductions

Opening remarks from Juan Yermo, Deputy Chief of Staff, OECD

Opening remarks from Andreas Schleicher, Director, OECD Directorate for Education and Skills

Opening remarks from Hugh McLean, Program Director for the Education Support Program, Open Society Foundations

14:30 – 16:15

- [Marius Busemeyer, International Panel on Social Progress and University of Konstanz](#)
- [Antonio Villar, Thomas J. Alexander fellow and Universidad Pablo Olivade](#)
- [Bill Schmidt, Thomas J. Alexander fellow and Michigan State University](#)

16:15 – 16:30 *Coffee break*

2. Panel discussion: The policy impact of OECD work on inclusion and equity

A panel discussion session among countries, researchers and OECD representatives, will provide an opportunity for a dialogue between different initiatives working on inclusion and equity at the OECD, independent researchers and countries.

16:30 – 17:45 Panel discussion chaired by Mary Metcalfe, Chair of the Advisory Board of the Education Support Program, Open Society Foundations

- [Andreas Schleicher, Director, OECD Directorate for Education and Skills](#)
- [Martine Durand, Director, OECD Statistics Directorate](#)
- Mark Pearson, Deputy Director, OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs
- [Manos Antoninis, Senior Policy Analyst, UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report](#)

17:45 – 18:00 *Conclusions*

Room: George Marshall *Cocktail reception – 18:00 – 20:00*

Friday 17 June 2016

3. Different forms of exclusion and inequality

The first breakout session will offer two different workshops identifying different kinds of inequalities and exploring the interconnections in between them.

Room: CC16 *Inclusion and gender*

9:00 – 10:30 Session chaired by Susanne von Below, European Commission

- [Thomas J. Alexander fellow Seong Won Han, SUNY Buffalo](#)
- [Angelica Salvi del Pero, Senior Advisor, OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs](#)

Room: CC20 *Inclusion of immigrants*

9:00 – 10:30 Session chaired by Pierre Brochu, Canada

- [Thomas J. Alexander fellow Ellen Boeren, University of Edinburgh](#)
- [Cécile Thoreau, Policy Analyst, OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs](#)

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee break*

4. Topics on inclusion and equality

The third and last breakout session will focus on consequences of inclusion and equality in education and beyond.

Room: CC16 *Efficiency, mobility and equity*

11:00 – 12:30 Session chaired Claudia Serrano, OECD Ambassador, Chile

- [Thomas J. Alexander fellow Tommaso Agasisti, Politecnico di Milano](#)
- [Thomas J. Alexander fellow John Jerrim, Institute of Education, University College of London](#)
- [Ji Eun Chung, Analyst, OECD Directorate for Education and Skills](#)

Room: CC20 *Teachers and teaching*

11:00 – 12:30 Session chaired by Anne-Berit Kavli, Norway

- [Thomas J. Alexander fellow Darleen Opfer, RAND](#)
- [Montserrat Gomendio, Deputy Director, OECD Directorate for Education and Skills](#)

12:30 – 13:30 *Lunch break*