



2022 | Impact
Report

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Introduction

As we step into 2023, CEPEO acts to guide policymakers towards a Britain with more equal opportunities

2022 has been another exciting year for CEPEO in many ways. We have continued our highly successful seminar series, attracting speakers from across the world and attendees from the worlds of academia, policy and education. We also have an exciting annual lecture planned, so watch this space!

This year, we also continued to make important evidence-led contributions to the major policy debates raised in the wake of COVID-19. This autumn, COVID Social Mobility & Opportunities (COSMO) study launched its initial findings from the first wave. Since then four briefings have been published, with more on the way.

A huge thank you to all of our followers and every single person who has read, shared or supported our mission. We are incredibly proud of our team and the response to our work continues to motivate us



We also continued to grow and change as a team. We were sad to say goodbye to our researchers, Erin Early and Stuart Campbell, and centre communications officer, Khrystyna Myhasiuk; but delighted to be joined by new members of the team. Dominic Kelly and Oliver Cassagneau-Francis have joined us as our new Research Fellows; Naomi Yohendran has also joined us as our centre's communications officer.

From all of us in CEPEO, we wish you a joyful holiday season and we look forward to working with you in 2023!

Professor Lindsey Macmillan

Director of the Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities (CEPEO)

Who we are

UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising

Opportunities is a research centre based in the IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society. We create cutting-edge research focused on equalising opportunities across the life course. Our work seeks ways to improve education policy and wider practices to achieve this goal.

Inequalities in educational attainment open early and widen throughout school, and this inequality has consequences for adult outcomes. But childhood circumstances still remain an important predictor of adult success, over and above educational attainment. Our research explores how the education system, and the wider practices of universities and employers, can be improved to equalise opportunities.

Our Research Themes

Early years

Our work in early years seeks to understand and evaluate how children and families can be best supported to develop their skills.

Schools

Our schools research explores how and why educational inequalities widen through the school years.

Tertiary

Our tertiary work stream focuses on the role of universities and further education providers in providing opportunities for all young people.

Adulthood

Our adulthood work stream aims to understand the nature and extent of inequalities in adult outcomes.

2022 in review

Parents maths anxiety can cripple children's confidence



Dr Laura Outhwaite suggests ways parents can better help children with their homework, particularly in subjects such as mathematics.

Eton to open admissions to selective sixth forms

Admissions policies for schools in Dudley, Middlesbrough and Oldham have been developed in conjunction with the Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities receiving Pupil Premium, Looked After Children, and those who would be "first in family" to attend university would be prioritised, as well as those who came from particular postcodes



Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Awards for journal articles

Dr Sam Sims has won 2021 BERJ Editors' Choice Awards, announced in February 2022, for their journal articles. His article looks at the relationships between teacher working conditions, job satisfaction and teachers' desire to leave their school.



Awareness of developmental Dyscalculia and Mathematical Difficulties toolkit

The top 25 maths apps for children under five-years-old do not reflect best practices on how children learn and develop their early mathematical skills, according to a new report led by Dr Laura Outhwaite

ADD UP

Awareness of Dyscalculia and Mathematical Learning Difficulties Toolkit

2022 in review

Autumn Seminar Series begins



Our Autumn Seminar Series began with Professor Ian Walker discussing the 'Earning differentials by degree class across cohorts'. CEPEO hosts a research seminar series where guest speakers present cutting edge research. We are joined by policymakers, researchers and practitioners to explore the pressing questions of our time in education policy and equalising opportunities.

COSMO Wave 1 data released

The study, led by Dr Jake Anders, has published its first set of findings, based on the cohort of young people who were in Year 11 in 2020/21, which show worrying signs of an enduring pandemic impact on young people. The data is now available via the UK Data Service.



Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

Inaugural Annual Lecture

Professor Susan Dynarski from Harvard University joined us for CEPEO's inaugural annual lecture. She presented her work on "widening access to higher education: reforms that work".



CEPEO Inaugural Annual Lecture 2022



Professor Susan Dynarski
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Widening Access to Higher Education: Reforms that Work

Results 2022

CEPEO expert respond to A-levels results: Dr Jake Anders talks to BBC News about the unequal impacts of Covid-19 had on A-level results.



Dyscalculia

Dr Jo Van Herwegen and Dr Laura Outhwaite write about developmental dyscalculia, a persistent difficulty in understanding numbers and practical tips to support children with the disability.

Outreach and engagement

To deliver our aim of identifying and reducing inequalities in opportunities across the life course, UCL CEPEO disseminates its research and analysis to the general public, as well as researchers, policy makers, school and university leaders.

In 2022:

11

working papers

Our working papers demonstrate our research in progress. They are multidisciplinary, reflecting CEPEO's broad research themes.

12

blog posts

This blog is a forum for staff, students and guests to write about CEPEO's four thematic areas of research and engagement.

7

briefing notes

Our briefing notes aim to facilitate evidence-led policy-making and practice by providing accessible guides to research topics.

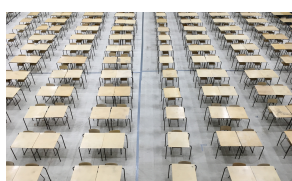
Some of Our Blog Posts



How might teacher shortages be reduced?

This blog highlighted the shortages of school teachers, caused by a long-term decline in the competitiveness of their pay as well as working challenges, are a global concern.

Asma Benhenda



Turbulence on the glide path: A-level results 2022

This blog looks at how the return of exams has affected A-Level pupils, whose GCSE exams were cancelled due to the pandemic

Lindsey Macmillan and Jake Anders



Skills are crucial to boosting productivity – but they cannot do the job alone

The blog discusses what skills businesses want and whether education and training systems are delivering them

Arun Advani and Claire Crawford



Understanding young people's unequal experience of the pandemic: now and into the future

This blog highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic has caused more inequality in terms of young people's life impacts.

Jake Anders

Outreach and engagement

In 2022:

253

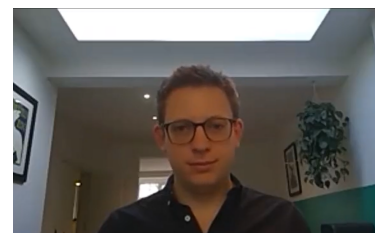
media
engagements

UCL CEPEO is regularly featured in the major media outlets including articles, TV, radio and podcasts. This year our researchers were featured in The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, THE, Bloomberg, Le Monde and many more.

25

policy and
community
engagements

Our researchers regularly engage in public lectures and panel discussions featuring experts from around the world. They participate in international conferences and work closely with local communities.



Some of Our Blog Posts



Levelling up education and skills: a recipe for success?

This blog examines what the government means by 'levelling up' in terms of both education and skills

Claire Crawford, Laura Outhwaite, Sam Sims and Gill Wyness



Financial Literacy Part 1: How unequal are children's financial literacy skills?

In this four part blog series, this blog discusses the importance of ensuring that young people develop a sound knowledge of financial issues and possess key financial skills

John Jerrim



What do we know so far about the effect of school closures on educational inequality?

This blog discusses how school closures has affected students from all over the world, especially in developing nations.

Jo Blanden, Matthias Doepke and Jan Stuhler



How has Covid-19 affected inequalities between state and private schools?

This blog highlights the differences in inequalities between state and private schools and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected this.

Jake Anders



About COVID Social Mobility & Opportunities (COSMO) Study

In Autumn 2022, COSMO launched the initial findings from the first wave of the study. The findings particularly focuses on young people's experiences of the pandemic, financial impacts in the home, disruption to schooling, and many more.

Since the data launch, COSMO has published four briefing papers. They are titled:

- Lockdown Learning
- Education recovery and catch up
- Future plans and aspirations
- Mental health and wellbeing

The first 'wave' of the study, which started in autumn 2021, recruited a representative sample of over 13,000 young people across England who were due to take their GCSEs in 2021. The study will follow them through the rest of their education and into the workplace. Wave two of the study will begin in Autumn 2022, when the cohort is in Year 13, or equivalent.

**MEET
PRINCIPAL
INVESTIGATOR**



Dr Jake Anders

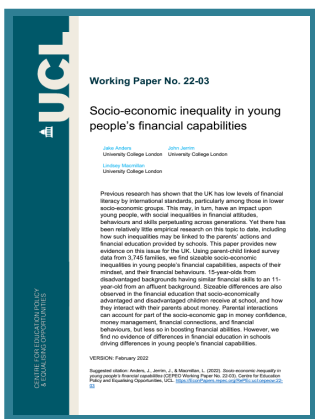
Associate Professor of Quantitative Social Science and Deputy Director of the UCL CEPEO. He is also Head of Research for the Department of Learning and Leadership at IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society.

FURTHER READING



Socio-economic inequality in young people's financial capabilities

J. Anders, J. Jerrim, L. Macmillan



The study shows that four-fifths (80%) of the study's 12,828 participants, who are due to complete A-levels and equivalent qualifications in summer 2023, believe their academic progress has suffered because of the pandemic – with half saying they are now less motivated to study and learn.

The authors found that almost half of young people have accessed no catch-up learning and a large majority have not accessed tutoring. The most available option – extra online classes – was offered to just half of the study's participants and taken up by less than a third.

Despite extra tutoring being a core element of the government's catch-up strategy, independent school students are more likely to have been offered this than those at comprehensive schools (52% vs 41%) and are more likely to have taken part in additional online classes. However, when extra tutoring was offered to those at comprehensives, they were more likely to take this up than their independent school counterparts.

The findings show the pandemic has also had a major impact on young people's plans. Of those who had previously made plans, almost two thirds (64%) say these have changed because of the pandemic and three in five (60%) have changed their future career aspirations.

Girls, young people from disadvantaged family backgrounds, and those attending state comprehensive schools were more likely than their counterparts to have changed their plans. Young people who had 'long COVID' or ill health, who were asked to shield or who experienced economic hardships were also much more likely to have done so.



COSMO is providing vital new evidence on the effects of the pandemic on the lives of young people, with strong signs that it has severely widened existing inequalities – this has not been fully addressed by our policy response.

“And these short-term effects are just the start. We aim to continue following the lives of this cohort over the coming years. Whether or not we think of the pandemic as over, its effects will continue to cast a long shadow, and COSMO will help us to understand this in the years to come.

~ Dr Jake Anders, COSMO Principal Investigator



The study also tracks the mental health, wellbeing and educational outcomes of their study participants. It highlights that a significant proportion of young people are experiencing poor wellbeing, with 44% of young people scoring above the threshold for ‘probable mental ill health’, indicating generally high levels of psychological distress. This is up from 35% in 2017 and 23% in 2007, pointing to a steady decline in the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

Being infected with Covid-19 was also linked to poorer mental health. The study found that young people were more likely to report high psychological distress if they had been infected (47% versus 41% for those who had not had Covid), currently had or had recovered from long Covid, at 55%, or had severe long Covid that affected their ability to carry out daily activities (66% versus 42% with mild long Covid).

The pandemic has been a generation-defining challenge, and its impact on young people’s lives has been unprecedented. School years are a crucial stage of development, and the disruption to learning that we have seen is likely to have profound long-term effects on the life chances of this generation.

COSMO Partners

COSMO is a collaboration between the UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities (CEPEO), the Sutton Trust, and the UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies, with fieldwork led by Kantar Public.

The first wave was funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) (Ref ES/W001756/1) as part of its COVID-19 rapid response fund, and the second wave is funded by the UKRI Economic and Social Research Council.



Can Maths Apps Add Value to Young Children's Learning?

A team led by CEPEO academics Dr Laura Outhwaite and Dr Jo Van Herwegen found the top 25 maths apps for children under five-years-old do not reflect best practices on how children learn and develop their early mathematical skills.

The report throws into light the lack of governance and regulation for 'educational' apps. It reveals that only one of the top 25 apps, ranked by popularity in the iOS Apple App and Google Play Stores, had been formally evaluated to see whether they had any impact on children's maths learning. The study was funded by the Nuffield Foundation.

As part of the study, the researchers synthesised 50 research studies from 18 countries around the world which evaluated 77 educational maths apps during the first three years of school. They found that 90 per cent of studies showed that maths apps had some benefits for supporting young children's mathematical learning and development.

“Educational technology and apps have become a huge part of our everyday lives, particularly since the Covid-19 pandemic. But with over 200,000 educational apps available, it can be tricky to know how to decide which ones to use and which ones will best support children.

~ Dr Laura Outhwaite

In particular, learning with maths apps was maximised when the apps provided a personalised learning journey for children and gave them feedback explaining why their answers were right or wrong, as well as giving them praise and rewards. However, few of the top 25 maths apps included features that could do this.

The researchers argue that their findings demonstrate a lack of high-quality maths apps currently available for parents and teachers and highlight the need to improve the meaningful categorisation of educational apps on the app stores to facilitate parent and teacher choice.

Of the top 25 apps in the study that did include maths content, 68 per cent focused on number skills and 64 per cent on counting – yet these skills were often introduced in isolation from other maths skills and experiences. Other skills important for children’s mathematical development, such as basic arithmetic and shape, patterns, and measurement, were less frequently found.



Dr Laura Outhwaite

Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities at IOE, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society.



Dr Jo Van Herwegen

Associate Professor at the Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities, IOE, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society.

Can Maths Apps Add Value to Young Children’s Learning? A Systematic Review and Content Analysis

L. Outhwaite et al



Promoting academic debate

The Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities (CEPEO) hosts a seminar series where guest speakers present cutting edge research. We are joined with policymakers, researchers and practitioners to explore the pressing questions of our time in education policy and equalising opportunities.

From immediate acceptance to deferred acceptance: effects on school admissions and achievement in England
Dr Camille Terrier (University of Lausanne and LSE)

Measuring and improving the quality of teaching: Evidence of impact
Professor Jenny Gore (The University of Newcastle, Australia)

The efficacy of nudge-like information-provision outreach intervention
Dr Sonia Ilie (University of Cambridge)

Do Management Practices Matter in Further Education?
Professor Sandra McNally (University of Surrey)

Who counts as socioeconomically disadvantaged for the purposes of widening access?
Professor Vikki Boliver (Durham University)

Grades and grade inflation in higher education
Professor Ian Walker (Lancaster University)

Smart matching platforms and heterogeneous beliefs in centralised school choice
Professor Christopher A. Neilson (Yale University)

College education, intelligence, and disadvantage: Policy lessons from the UK in 1960-2005
Professor Andrea Ichino (European University Institute)

The scarring effect of graduate underemployment: Evidence from the UK
Dr Matt Dickson (The Institute for Policy Research, University of Bath)

Methodological problems for evidence-informed policy
Dr Tom Perry (University of Warwick)

Who defers and delays entry to primary school? Evidence from the English National Pupil Database
Dr Tammy Campbell (London School of Economics)

Research highlights

Sims, S., Anders, J. & Zieger, L. (2022) The Internal Validity of the School-Level Comparative Interrupted Time Series Design: Evidence From Four New Within-Study Comparisons, *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 15:4, 876-897.

Monnet Marion (2022), " Benhenda A., (2020), All good teachers: A social choice [No Bad Teachers: A Societal Choice], Paris, Fayard, 168 pages", *Population* , 2021/4 (Vol. 76), p. 683-684

Anderson, O. (2022). Walking the line: Does crossing a high stakes exam threshold matter for labour market outcomes? (No. 22-05). UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities.

Benhenda, A. (2022). Absence, substitutability and productivity: Evidence from teachers. *Labour Economics*, 76, 102167.

Benhenda, A. (2022). Post-pandemic funding for SEND pupils: is it enough? (No. 16). UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities.

Outhwaite, L., Ranzato, E., & Van Herwegen, J. (2022). Raising mathematical attainment from the Early Years. *Impact: Chartered College of Teaching*, 16, 63-66.

Brewer, M., Cattan, S., Crawford, C., & Rabe, B. (2022). Does more free childcare help parents work more?. *Labour Economics*, 74, 102100. doi:10.1016/j.labeco.2021.102100

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Sims, S., Anders, J., Inglis, M., & Lortie-Forgues, H. (2022). Quantifying "Promising Trials Bias" in Randomized Controlled Trials in Education. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 1-18. doi:10.1080/19345747.2022.2090470

Henderson, M., Anders, J., Green, F., & Henseke, G. (2022). Does attending an English private school benefit mental health and life satisfaction? From adolescence to adulthood. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 1-15. doi:10.1080/0305764x.2022.2040951

Our community

We would like to acknowledge and thank all those in our CEPEO community who have contributed to our work in 2022.

Our team

Prof Lindsey Macmillan
Director

Dr Claire Crawford
Associate Professor

Dr Laura Outhwaite
Senior Research Fellow

Xin Shao
Research Fellow

Shola Adesanya
Centre Manager

Prof Gill Wyness
Deputy Director

Dr Jo Van Herwegen
Associate Professor

Dr Asma Benhenda
Research Fellow

Claire Tyler
Research Fellow

Alice De Gennaro
Research Assistant

Dr Jake Anders
Deputy Director

Dr Samuel Sims
Lecturer

Oliver Cassagneau-Francis
Research Fellow

Dominic Kelly
Research Fellow

Naomi Yohendran
Communications
Officer

Affiliates

Dr Jo Blanden
University of Surrey

Professor Simon Burgess
University of Bristol

Dr Matt Dickson
University of Bath

Dr Catherine Dilnot
Oxford Brookes University

Professor Emla Fitzsimons
IOE, UCL's Faculty of
Education and Society

Professor Alissa Goodman
IOE, UCL's Faculty of
Education and Society

Professor Colin Green
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Professor Paul Gregg
University of Bath

Professor Colm Harmon
University of Edinburgh

Dr Susannah Hume
King's Policy Institute

Professor John Jerrim
IOE, UCL's Faculty of
Education and Society

Professor Ruth Lupton
Honorary Professor at
University of Manchester

Professor Lee Elliot-Major
University of Exeter

Professor Sandra McNally
CVER, London School of
Economics

Dr Richard Murphy
University of Texas at Austin

Dr Michael Sanders
King's Policy Institute

Dr Luke Sibieta
Institute Fiscal Studies and
Sibieta Economics of Education

Professor Emma Tominey
University of York

Our community

Advisory group

Osama Rahman

Director of the Data
Science Campus

Tom McBride

Director - Ending Youth
Violence Lab

Becky Francis

Chief Executive, Education
Endowment Foundation

Torsten Bell

Chief Executive, RES
Foundation

Lynn Ang

Pro-Director Research and
Development, IOE, UCL's
Faculty of Education and
Society

Susan O'Neill

Head of the Department of
Learning and Leadership
(DLL) at IOE, UCL's Faculty
of Education and Society

Carl Cullinane

Associate Director of
Research and Policy,
Sutton Trust

Tom Richmond

Director, EDSK

Tim Leunig

Senior Policy Advisor to
the Secretary of State,
Department for Health &
Social Care

Li Wei

Director and Dean of the
IOE, UCL's Faculty of
Education and Society

Jennifer Hudson

Dean of UCL Faculty of
Social and Historical
Sciences

Jonathan Simons

Partner and Head of
the Education Practice at
Public First





Contact us

Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities (CEPEO)
Department of Learning and Leadership
IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society
University College London
20 Bedford Way
London
WC1H 0AL

email: cepeo@ucl.ac.uk

twitter: [@CEPEO_UCL](https://twitter.com/CEPEO_UCL)