

EUROSTUDENT and the Social Dimension of European Higher Education – looking at the total student experience from a European perspective

14th CSSI Conference - Mind, body, spirit - the holistic approach to the student experience

19-20 June 2013, Dundalk Institute of Technology

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Social dimension: the problem

Educational success a confluence of three factors:

- student ability
- material and immaterial (e.g. social and cultural) resources
- opportunity

In particular, **non-academic factors** such as social background and aspiration, and study framework conditions (e.g. balance between work and studies) affect participation and success in higher education. Indeed, visible student ability may have been affected by a person's material and immaterial resources at a previous (e.g. secondary) educational level.

Social dimension: the European view

The **social dimension** entails looking at various stages of the education system and adopting measures, which can help individuals to overcome any barriers or disincentives to continue into and through higher education.

These populations might differ from country to country, in some there is a focus on students from certain socio-economic backgrounds, from certain regions of the country, of certain ethnicity or simply of different ages (e.g. mature students).

We see the social dimension as trying to make higher education as inclusive as possible.

European policy references (especially within the Bologna Process)

- London communiqué 2007 – participative equity
- Leuven communiqué 2009 – addition: maximisation of talent
- Bucharest communiqué 2012 – reference to financial crisis

(Social dimension): view in the USA

“Without question, higher education must change. For one thing, it must become **responsive to the needs** of a much wider range of students than ever before. The 21st century student population is **dizzily diverse** — racially, ethnically, socially, economically, and in terms of age and family situation. Clearly, **no one-size-fits-all** system will work for these students, and it won’t serve us as a nation.

So the higher-ed system must be **retooled and redesigned** to meet the needs of *all types* of students because we need these **21st century students to succeed** — without delay and in far greater numbers. In other words, higher education must become much more productive — educating many more people without increasing costs, and without compromising the quality of the credentials that students earn.”

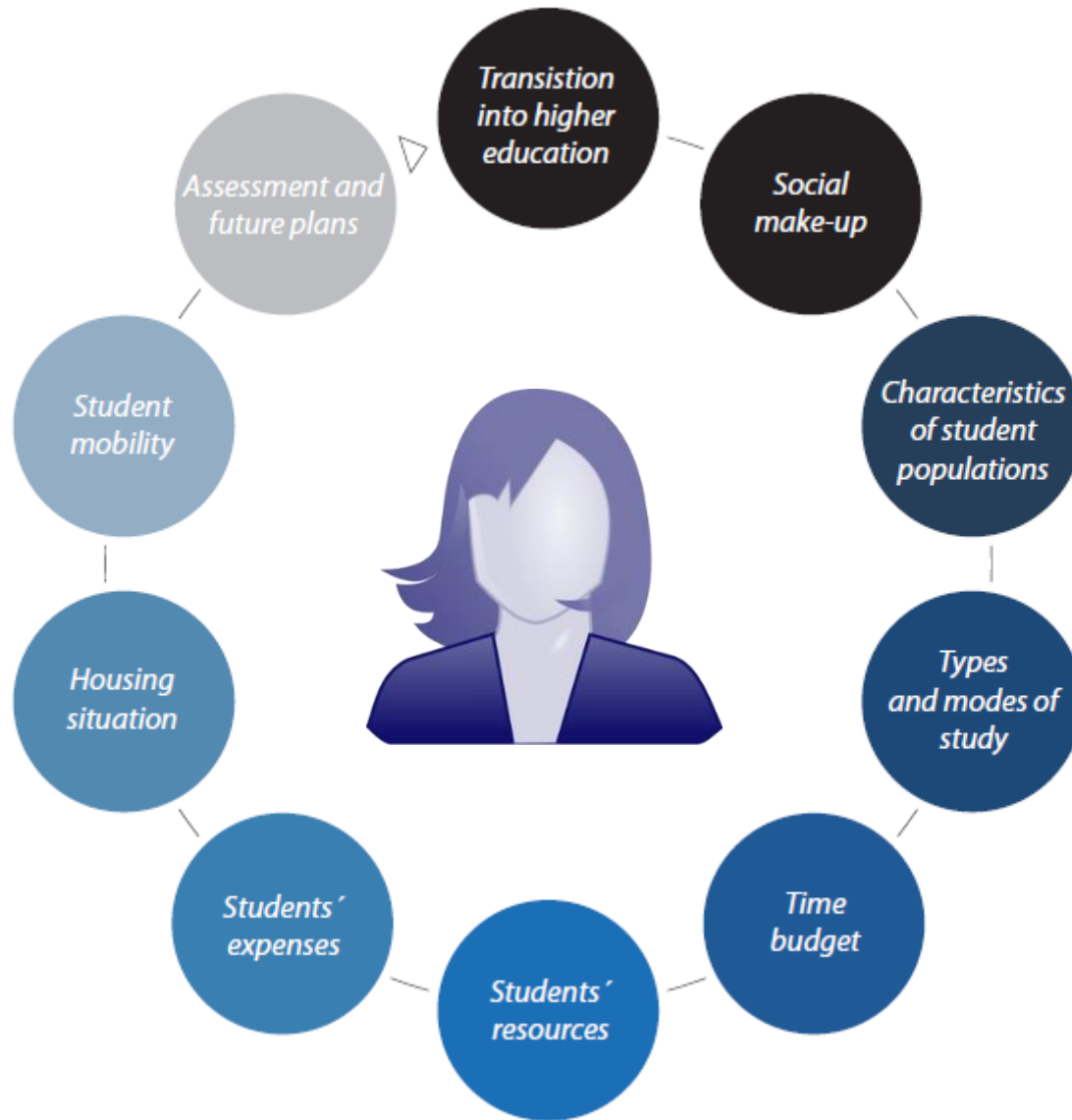
Jamie P. Merisotis

President and CEO Lumina Foundation, USA

March 2012 in “A stronger nation through higher education”

<http://www.luminafoundation.org>

EUROSTUDENT: data set of student life in 27 countries



EUROSTUDENT: the new study in Ireland (HEA & insight)



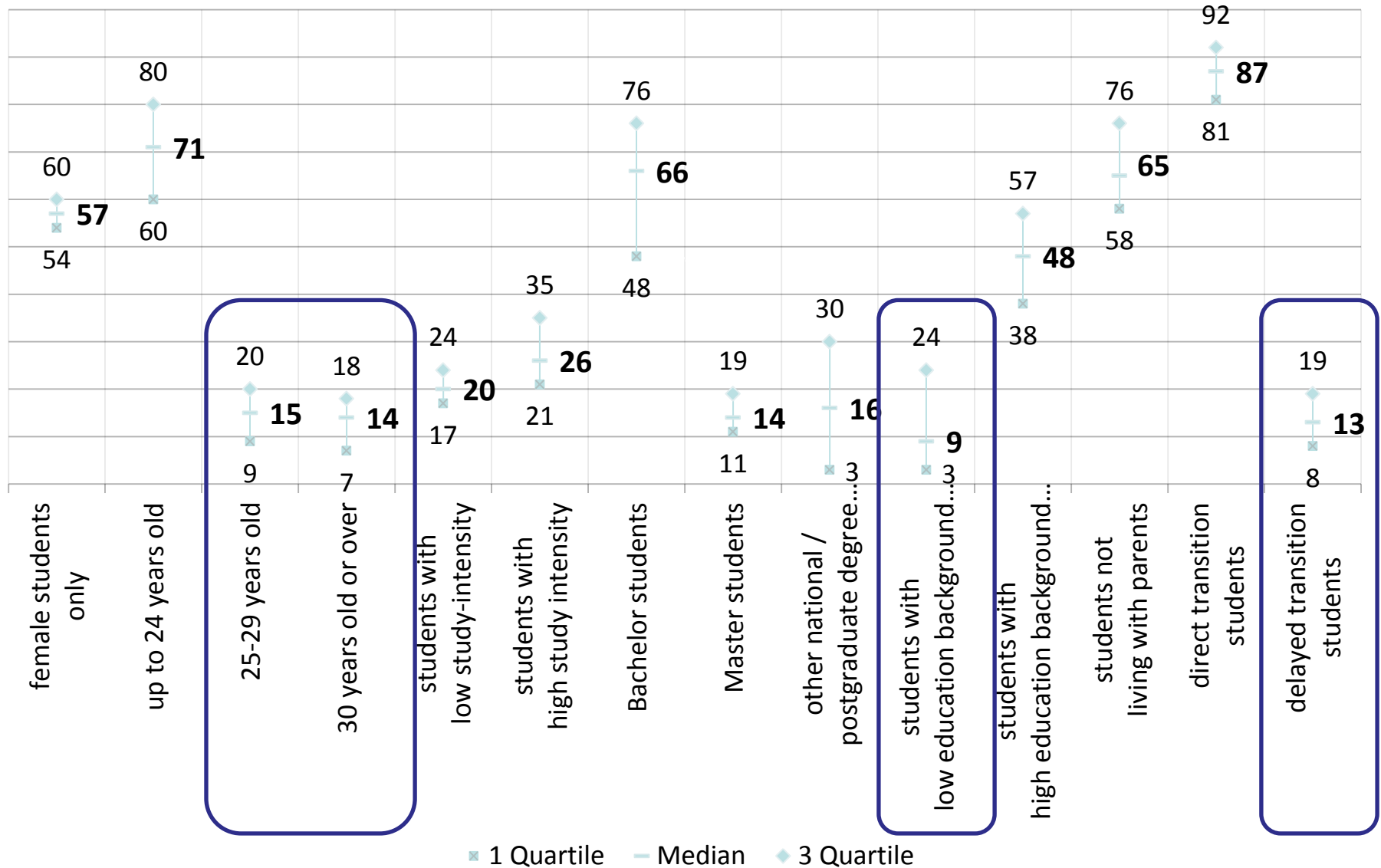
euro student Eurostudent Survey 2013 for Ireland shared a link. May 31

"Currently it is very difficult to be a student in Ireland. The financial struggle that every student is currently experiencing makes it very hard to remain a student. The majority of students are finding it hard to feed and pay for transport to and from college." (Eurostudent 2013 comment)

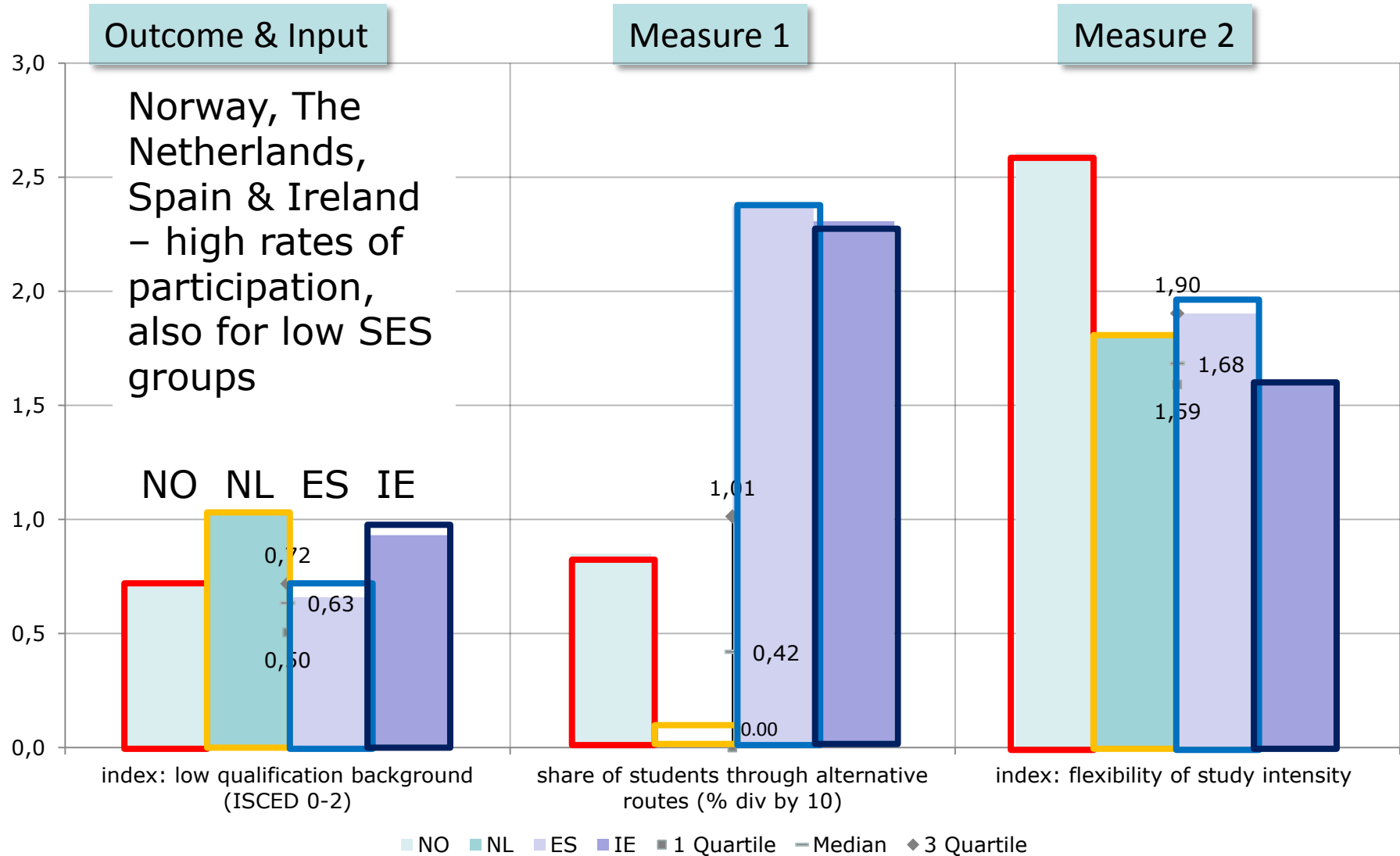
euro student Eurostudent Survey 2013 for Ireland shared a link. May 29

"many mature students are trying to battle childcare costs/opening times etc just to make it to lectures and there is little time to study at home with children and little money to allocate to nice treats in the shopping or days out, thus making college very stressful from the perspective of trying to get work done and also trying to be a good parent" (Eurostudent 2013 comment)

EUROSTUDENT: emerging non-traditional students



Selected data results on: Inclusiveness, routes into HE and flexibility of programmes



10 challenges for higher education provision based on policy discussions and measures in the 4 countries

Access	Study conditions	Successful completion
Challenges		
1. Facilitate participation in HE	5. Flexible provision for variable study intensity	10. Facilitate the transition of graduates to the labour market
2. Facilitate participation in the best courses at the best colleges / universities	6. Assure the commitment of new types of students to their programmes	
3. Facilitate participation in supplementary experiences, esp. mobility programmes	7. Provide teaching and learning according to new pedagogical concepts	
4. Support prospective students in making the 'right' choices	8. Provide incentives for colleges / universities to retain students and increase completion rates	
	9. Provide counselling and advice during study period	

What we still don't know – activities and measures



Interventions and measures taken are often not visible on a European (or even national) level and present a **gap** for further improvement.

This has been recognised by the ministers responsible for higher education, who state in the Bucharest Communiqué from 2012:

- *“We encourage the use of peer learning on the social dimension and aim to monitor progress in this area”*


PL4SD is adopting this initiative to facilitate peer learning for the social dimension of higher education.

Collecting good examples: Peer Learning for the Social Dimension



[home](#) [database](#) [country reviews](#) [the social dimension](#) [pl4sd project](#)

about the database



The ministers responsible for higher education in the European Higher Education Area committed in the Bucharest Communiqué from 2012 to collect and share data on the social dimension of higher education ("we encourage the use of peer learning on the social dimension and aim to monitor progress in this area"). The PL4SD database addresses this need.

content and objective of database

The PL4SD database collates and catalogues policy measures in the European Higher Education Area that address the social dimension of higher education.

The database presents measures which share the common objective of reducing barriers to higher education access and of providing a conducive study environment for all students that can lead to their successful completion of higher education.

By presenting measures from different national higher education systems within the European Higher Education Area, the aim of the database is to facilitate a "peer learning" process. Peer learning enables countries to exchange knowledge and experiences in a given area, compare and contrast different policy approaches and identify best practices for addressing specific problems.

The database is therefore intended to serve as resource for policy-makers, practitioners, researchers and students who are committed to the improvement of the social dimension of higher education.

[about the database](#)
[search database](#)
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www.pl4sd.eu