Equity Access:
An international comparison – the German perspective

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- Basic facts about the German education system
- Challenge I: socio-economic status and achievement
- Action taken: school reform
  Panel discussion

- Challenge II: migration
- Action taken: special focus on language
- Challenge III: students with special needs
- Action taken: inclusion
  Panel discussion
Some basic facts

- The right and the *obligation* to attend school extends to all children, residents in Germany. Compulsory education ends at the age of 16.

- The education system is within the responsibility of the 16 federal states.

- The traditional German public school system divides the students at age 10 or 12 (two states) to one of 3 different school tracks. Only one school type, the *Gymnasium*, leads to the *Abitur*, the entrance requirement for universities.

- Private schools have been almost irrelevant in the past but there are increasingly more private schools founded now. Although they are partly state funded there are tuition fees which foster segregation.
## Educational mobility

### Educational Mobility Leaves Room for Improvement

% of 25-64 year-olds whose educational attainment is higher than that of their parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mobility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD Average</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2014
Socio-economic status and achievement

**PISA 2012 Program of International Student Assessment**

- **Socio-economic status:** In Germany a student scores on average 43 points higher in mathematics than a less-advantaged student - in the U.S. it is 35 points. (The OECD average is 39 points– the equivalent of one year of schooling, OECD, 2013).

- Between 2003 and 2012 the differences in students’ socio-economic status decreased by 7% Germany and by 4% in the US, the OECD average decrease is 2% (OECD, 2013b).

- After the “PISA shock” in 2000 this was a crucial issue in Germany
- Both countries successfully took efforts to narrow the gap
Challenge

- The division into three groups is supposed to be based on performance alone, but studies show that the parents' social status plays an essential role.

- In principle it is possible to switch between schools, but especially upward mobility is difficult and relatively rare (downward mobility is 4 times as likely as upward mobility).

Which action is being taken?

- Recently, a number of states, including Berlin, have changed to a 2-track high school system with both tracks offering (in principle) the opportunity to graduate with the Abitur.

- There are a number of alternative tracks to the Abitur.
Which action is being taken?

Transfer opportunities and various educational pathways
Panel discussion
Further challenges

- There is an increasing number of students with a migrant background, particularly in metropolitan areas.
- With the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), ratified in Germany in 2009, German schools have to open up to all children.

> The German education system needs to address the specific educational needs of every individual child and to deal with cultural and linguistic diversity.
Percentage of migrants in Germany by age

- 65 Jahre und älter: 8.8%
- von 55 bis unter 65 Jahre: 15.5%
- von 45 bis unter 55 Jahre: 16.4%
- von 35 bis unter 45 Jahre: 22.3%
- von 20 bis unter 25 Jahre: 22.4%
- von 25 bis unter 35 Jahre: 25.1%
- von 15 bis unter 20 Jahre: 27.1%
- von 10 bis unter 15 Jahre: 29.5%
- von 5 bis unter 10 Jahre: 32.7%
- unter 5 Jahre: 34.9%


- In some metropolitan areas the number of children with a migrant background is up to 70% (Frankfurt, Berlin: 50%)
PISA 2012

- **Immigrant students**: In Germany the achievement gap between immigrants and non-immigrants is 54 points, in the U.S. 13 points.
- It decreases to only 25 points (U.S. -15 points), however, after accounting for the socio-economic status.

- Difficulty to define “immigrant status”
- The immigrant status and socio-economic status strongly overlap
- Social determinants and the language spoken at home currently play a more decisive role in the German discourse on education equity than the immigrant background
Which action is being taken?

Special focus on language

- Pre-testing in kindergarten
- special support for GSL-learners: combining language learning with subject learning
- „Welcome Classes“

- In teacher education we prepare teacher trainees for their work with culturally and linguistically diverse students
Inclusion - Germany is trailing behind

Placements of children with social, emotional, linguistic and learning difficulties
Which action is being taken?

_Inclusion_

- Theory of **one** heterogenous group (many majorities and minorities)
- Learning together and individually for all children
- Individualized curriculum for all
- Resources for the whole system (classrooms / schools)
- Special educators to support diverse classrooms
- Synthesis of special education and general school pedagogy