

## **Group 2: Access and Equity**

Clancy, Patrick - Ireland (Team Leader)  
Eggin, Heather - United Kingdom  
Goastellec, Gaelle - France  
Nguyen, Phuong Nga - Vietnam  
Yizengaw, Teschome - Ethiopia  
Guri Rosenblit, Sarah - Israel

This group is engaged in a comparative analysis of access and equity in higher education with a view to developing an analytical framework to understand how countries can best respond to the challenges of providing higher education for an every increasing percentage of the population. The methodology adopted is to start with individual case studies of the situation in a selection of at least 9 countries drawing on the contextual knowledge and expertise of group members from 6 countries (Ethiopia, France, Ireland, Israel, United Kingdom, and Vietnam), supplemented by our analysis of the situation in at least 3 other countries (Australia, South Africa and the United States).

These case studies will be framed by our preliminary identification of a set of key factors which impinge on access and equity. These include: identification of government policies and strategies in relation to access and equity, as reflected in the target groups chosen, the initiatives undertaken, and the admission policies pursued; analysis of historical and cultural context which impact on access and equity policy; and identification of the impact of globalization forces and third party actors, including international agencies, in relation to national policy. The case studies will also examine: national variations in higher education system structures relating to size, levels of differentiation by sector and program structure and evidence of the trade-off between concerns about access/equity and quality/excellence; the linkages between secondary and higher education; and the range of student and institutional support mechanisms which impinge on access and retention.

The initial focus on national case studies is designed to facilitate the development of a comparative analytic framework concerning access and equity. This framework will seek to account for common policy patterns and variations between countries in policy and achievement in relation to access and equity. A particular concern of the group will be to identify best practice and to formulate policy recommendations which will be helpful to national policy makers and to international agencies involved with governments in the development of higher education policy. In addition to the policy recommendations, which we plan to present to policy makers, a principal outcome of our work will be the publication of a book which will focus on the comparative analytic framework. While the preparation of the book will be informed by our analysis of the case study material it will also reflect our deepening understanding of the issues which emerge from our individual research projects and our wider reading.