

## **WG2 Meeting in Vilnius**

15 June 2023

9.00 – 17.00 EET

**AGENDA**

### **Join in person:**

Vilnius University  
Universiteto str. 3  
Room "Senato salė" (eng. Senate Hall)  
LT-01513 Vilnius, Lithuania

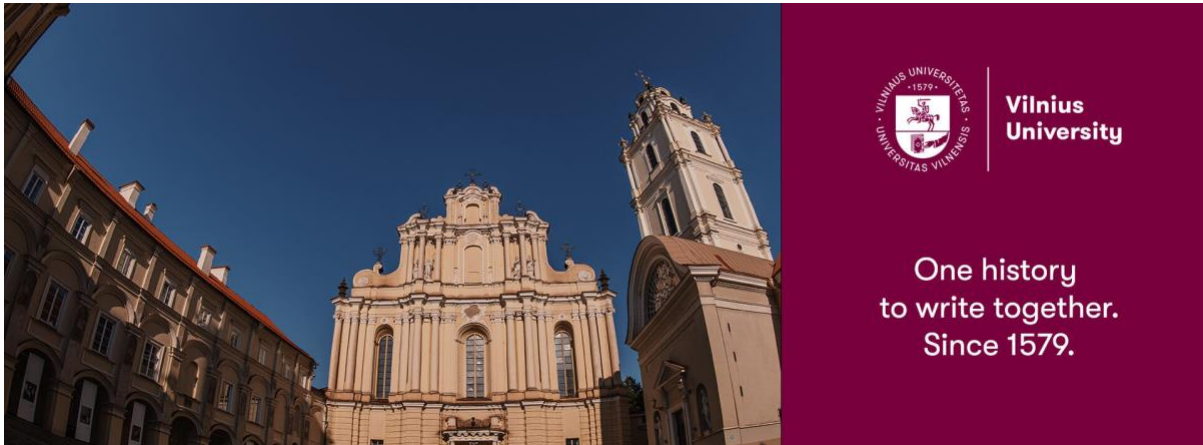
### **Join online:**

Microsoft Teams meeting  
Join on your computer, mobile app or room device  
[Click here to join the meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 371 233 585 459

### **Local contact person:**

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## WELCOME TO ENIS WG2 VILNIUS MEETING!



## Agenda

8.30 – 9.00 (All times in EET): Registration & welcome coffee

9.00 – 10.30 **Part 1: Welcome, Webinar, Policy Brief, joint projects**

- General opening and self-introduction
- Discussion on webinar and policy brief led by Rúna Vigdís Guðmarsdóttir
- COVID-19 review update by Joana Almeida
- Ideas/ topics for joint project applications

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 13.00 **Part 2: General review**

- General review update by Sylvie Lomer followed by Q&A
- Collectively review coding results and identify key findings by themes

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 **Part 3: Early career researchers' panel\***

- 14:00-15:00 - Presentations by Ying Yang, Zain Abdin and Nathalie Aerts
- 15:00-15:30 - General discussion moderated by Sanam Roohi

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee break

16.00 – 17.00 **Part 4: Keynote Address by Dr. Sylvie Lomer\***

Senior Lecturer in Policy and Practice at the University of Manchester

- 16:00-16.45 - presentation
- 16.45-17.00 - Q&A moderated by Irma Budginaitė-Mačkinė
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19.00 – 22.00 Dinner

\*Details in the following pages

## **INEQUALITIES IN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY**

**A Keynote Address**

**by**

**Dr. Sylvie Lomer**

Senior Lecturer in Policy and Practice  
Manchester Institution of Education  
University of Manchester



### **Synopsis of the address**

We are all here because we are deeply committed to the importance of understanding inequalities in international student mobility. Research on this topic, as we all know, is sadly limited. While our sociological, anthropological and economic understandings of broader concepts of inequalities have developed in wider fields of education research, the field of international student mobilities has remained constrained by conceptualizations of mobility as an exercise of elite privilege, or as an escape from underdeveloped domestic higher education scenario. These colonialist paradigms fail to represent the agency, intersectionality and structured nature of global inequalities that shape mobility. Systematic literature reviews on topics related to other aspects of international students experiences in the context of mobility such as pedagogies, practises, and policies of internationalisation show that while the research itself is burgeoning, it remains siloed, isolated and underdeveloped as a result.

In this talk I will revisit the stories that underpin our shared commitment to unravelling the complexities of inequalities in international student mobility. These are stories that we all know but find rarely examined in the context of international student mobility and therefore under represented in the scientific literature. I aim to bring together interdisciplinary conceptualizations as developed through core group conversations, and a wider range of evidence than we will consider as part of our joint effort in our systematic review, to highlight the importance of the task of this working group.

**Dr Sylvie Lomer** is Senior Lecturer in Policy and Practice at the University of Manchester, where her research expertise focuses on international higher education. Her first book, *Recruiting International Students in Higher Education*, critically examined UK policy on international students. Follow-up work on blended learning pedagogies led to an interest in how deficit narratives of international students shape pedagogic practices. Recent research funded by the Society for Research in Higher Education and the British Academy/Leverhulme has explored the perceptions of teachers and staff involved with institutional internationalisation/global engagement policy enactment. She is currently building on her expertise in documentary and secondary data analysis to develop creative methodologies in relation to international students as knowledge collaborators. As Programme Director for the MA International Education and the PostGraduate Research Departmental Co-ordinator for the Manchester Institute of Education at the University of Manchester, Sylvie has also had first-hand insight into the dynamics of both professional practices in relation to admissions, teaching and assessment, and to the valuable but often invisible research conducted by postgraduate international students on their own experiences. Sylvie contributes as reviewer to several leading journals in higher education and is Associate Editor for the *Higher Education in Research and Development Journal*. She founded and co-convenes the Higher Education Research and Scholarship Group [HERE@Manchester](https://www.here.ac.uk/).

### Early career researchers' panel

#### **COMBATTING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN ACCESSING / DURING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY**

**Panelists:** Ying Yang, Zain Abdin and Nathalie Aerts

**Moderator:** Dr. Sanam Roohi

#### **1. Ying Yang, PhD researcher, Manchester Institution of Education**

**Title:** The role of education agents in the marketised international higher education sector: Chinese international students' reflexivity in their position takings

**Abstract:** Education agents/ agencies function as intermediaries between international students and overseas higher education institutions (HEIs). The use of education agents becomes a common practice for both potential international students and the universities in a host of countries, particularly in many of the key sending countries, such as China and India (Nikula, Raimo & West, 2023; QS, 2021a, 2021b; Roy, 2017; Department of Education and Training, 2019). However, our understanding of the actual functioning of education agents in international students' choice-making is still limited (Nikula, Raimo & West, 2023). Archer (2007) argues that the subjective powers of reflexivity mediate the role that objective structural or cultural powers play in influencing social action and are thus indispensable to explaining social outcomes' (p. 4-5). In this sense, apart from established studies about objective social (structural and cultural) influences on international students' choice-making, it is worth discussing their reflexivity in the position takings of overseas university application game, such as to further understand the role of education agents in international students' application and recruitment. This project demonstrates that many Chinese agent-user students are the first generation in their families to apply for higher education overseas, resulting in being independent from their families in terms of choice-making and propelled to develop do-it-yourself and tightrope biographies concerning study abroad. Using an education agent for their overseas application is not a taken-for-granted choice. Chinese students' reflexivity plays a significant role during their choice-making process. Many Chinese agent-user students tend to prepare their applications and approach education agents early, which facilitates the development of their ability to reflect on the rules of the application game and desired position takings. Early preparation allows applicants to have time to continuously adjust their projects and accommodate themselves to the rules of the application game. Hence, time is a significant social condition for influencing Chinese students' reflexivity and the effect of education agents on their application. In addition, education agents' involvement per se works to facilitate the development of Chinese agent-user students' personal power of reflexivity in courting the scope for their choice-making.

#### **2. Zain Abdin, Doctoral researcher, University of Eastern Finland**

**Title:** The Enabling and Disabling Role of Gender in Student Migration and Remittances: Investigating South Asian Students in Finland and Sweden

**Abstract:** To understand how international student migration can alter gender-induced inequalities within South Asian households, this study analyses the migration and remittance behaviour of 40 Indians and Pakistanis in Finland and Sweden. Through semi-structured interviews and participant observation conducted in Helsinki, Turku, Stockholm, and Gothenburg, the study reveals that South Asian parents and society are less encouraging of female emigration for study. Some parents even encouraged their daughters to migrate with a male companion due to concerns for their safety while travelling alone. These concerns are also the reason why parents send their daughters larger sums of

money after they have successfully immigrated, or why the daughters are exempt from repaying received support once they secure a job. In comparison to male respondents, who regularly remit higher portions of their incomes, female respondents either do not send remittances, remit meagre amounts or have special reasons for remitting despite their handsome earnings.

### **3. Nathalie Aerts, Humboldt University**

**Title:** Exploring the Intersection between Gender and Migration Background as a Mechanism for differential study abroad Intentions. A case Study of Germany

**Abstract:** Over the years, the number of students engaging in study abroad opportunities has increased steadily. However, these opportunities are not accessible for all students, as study abroad participation is heavily dependent on specific sociodemographic characteristics. Although the academic literature on international student mobility is growing, major caveats in explaining the overrepresentation of women and ethnic majority students remain. Drawing on gender role theory and gendered acculturation patterns, this thesis aims to narrow down this research gap by investigating the intersection between gender and migration background to explain differential study abroad intent. More specifically, a novel theoretical perspective will be tested arguing that female students with a second-generation migration background intend studying abroad to escape from parental monitoring. Using data from the 21<sup>st</sup> Social Survey, the findings show results in opposite directions. Men are significantly more likely to intend studying abroad, and women with a second-generation migration background have lower study abroad intentions as they have the strongest wish to live with their parents. Implications of the findings and suggestions for future research are given in the conclusion.