

Education and Capabilities: an international analysis

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Education is becoming important in economics and modern societies: it is crucial for medium-long term growth and reveals to be one of the main social elevators. Ensuring equal educational opportunities has become an important tool for policymakers to foster social mobility, freedom and efficiency. To investigate educational equality of opportunity we adopt the capability approach framework. This paper is an attempt to shed light on the phenomenon of resilient students: those who are characterized by a low level of family background and achieve very high school grades. Integrating the OECD PISA databases from 2003 to 2018 we obtain 1611832 observations of students from 59244 schools and 37 OECD countries. The present paper contributes to the existing literature providing new methodologies to identify resilient students and analysing how individual and social conversion factors influence students' resilience. We estimate a multilevel regression model with fixed school intercepts. Our initial findings are that public conversion factors such as school characteristics are the most important determinants for the success of disadvantaged students.