

International conference

Call for papers

# Assessing the social investment strategy

Lausanne, 10 and 11 April 2014

Over the last few years, the notion of social investment has gained prominence in debates on social policy and welfare reform. This perspective has informed many recent debates and reforms in several European countries, and is actively supported by international organisations such as the OECD. Recently, it has received a renewed impetus with the adoption of a “Social investment package” by the European Commission.

One key specificity of “investment” oriented social policies is the fact that they are based on a life course perspective on social problems. Unlike traditional policies, which are based on interventions “here and now”, social investment policies focus on the roots of social problems emphasising prevention rather than cure, prepare rather than repair, hence the emphasis on support for children and investment in human capital.

The social investment strategy has been endorsed by many social policy experts. However, in recent years, a few studies have also pointed to its limitations. For example, it has been shown that many of the interventions associated with social investment, such as childcare or training for instance, are benefitting individuals already in employment more than those out of employment. There is a suspicion that social investment policies are more useful for middle class individuals and families than for the poorest ones. In addition, it has also been argued that gender equality is often forgotten in the various social investment concrete proposals or implementation.

Against this background, the conference aims to bring together scholars who have studied the various aspects of the social investment strategy and advance our collective understanding of the issues at stake. The format of the conference is based on a combination of plenary conferences given by key contributors (both favourable and critical) to the idea of social investment, and paper sessions where senior researchers, postdoc and doctoral students are invited to present their work.

Plenary speakers will include:

- Bea Cantillon, University of Antwerp, Belgium
- Gøsta Esping-Andersen, University Pompeu Fabra, Spain
- Ludwig Gärtner, Swiss federal office of social insurance (TBC)

- Anton Hemerijck, VU University Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Lieve Fransen, Director for Social Policies at the European Commission
- Bruno Palier, Science Po Paris, France
- Frank Vandenbroucke, KU Leuven, Belgium

We invite submissions of papers that analyse the policies and politics of social investment. More specifically, we welcome papers on:

- General studies of the reorientation of social policies towards social investment
- Studies of the politics of social investment policies
- Impact studies of selected social investment policies, such as childcare, active labour market policies, retraining programmes, etc..
- Studies of social interventions in a life course perspective
- Assessments of the social investment strategy as a whole
- ...

The conference is organised jointly by the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration (IDHEAP), the National Centre of Competence on the life course and vulnerability LIVES, and the Institute of Social Science (ISS), all based at the University of Lausanne. The conference will take place on the campus of the University of Lausanne in a lovely setting next to lake Geneva.

Paper submissions should consist of a title, an abstract (300 words max.) and full contact details of all authors. They should be sent to [socialinvestment2014@idheap.unil.ch](mailto:socialinvestment2014@idheap.unil.ch) no later than 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

A limited number of travel grants are available for scholars who do not have access to institutional funds for travel. These will be assigned in priority to doctoral students. Please mention in your abstract submission that you wish to apply for a travel grant.

The scientific committee:

Giuliano Bonoli, University of Lausanne  
 Cyrielle Champion, University of Lausanne  
 Anton Hemerijck, University of Amsterdam  
 Daniel Oesch, University of Lausanne  
 Bruno Palier, Sciences Po, Paris