

2019 Conference in Bulgaria on Educational Reforms

The Bulgarian Comparative Education Society is hosting a conference on the topic of *Thirty Years since the Fall of the Berlin Wall: Educational Reforms in Eastern and Central Europe and Eurasia 1989-2019*.

The conference will be held in Pomorie, Bulgaria **June 10-11, 2019**. More information available at <http://bcесconvention.com/>, including the call, available formats and period for submissions.

Introduction IEA: Researching education, improving learning

By Dr Paulína Koršňáková, Senior Research and Liaison Advisor, IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement)

IEA, or the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, is a nonprofit international scientific society that conducts comparative pedagogical research worldwide. Since 1958, IEA has measured students' achievement in subjects such as mathematics and science (TIMSS), reading (PIRLS), and **civic and citizenship education (ICCS)**, investigated students' computer skills (SITES and ICILS), and researched early childhood (ECES) and teacher education (TEDS-M). The goal of our research is to gain a better understanding of education systems and to use this knowledge to help improve education policies and practices worldwide.

More than 60 countries are represented in the IEA network, and over 100 education systems participate in IEA studies. These studies are designed by educators for educators to answer questions such as: What do students know and what can they do? Is student achievement improving over time? What practices and policies are associated with student achievement?

What makes IEA unique and relevant to CANDE?

The IEA's assessments are unique in the international study space because they are curriculum rooted and grade rather than age-based. This allows researchers to examine what students are expected to learn (intended curriculum), what is actually taught in schools and how (implemented curriculum), and student outcomes (achieved curriculum).

The national research coordinators of participating countries ensure that what is tested is appropriate for their students. In addition to reviewing study frameworks, instruments and reports, national coordinators write chapters for the Encyclopedias describing their national educational contexts.

Assessment questions are pre-tested (referred to as pilot or field testing) before the assessment is administered to ensure high-quality comparative standards. IEA studies also explore school, home and other factors related to learning by administering specific questionnaires to teachers, and school principals of the participating students.



Based on a successful CIVED study (1999-2001), IEA has continued in pursuing the International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS) at the 8th grade. Two cycles completed (2009, 2016), the third (2022) is currently under preparation.

Please visit the study dedicated webpage for more details: <https://www.iea.nl/iccs> .

IEA's publications, and working with IEA's data

All of IEA's publications are open access and our data are freely available to anyone interested in educational research.

Comprehensive study results are published in international reports while supporting publications help stakeholders to understand and work with these data. *User Guides* describe the organization and content of each database. This complements the *Assessment Framework's* theoretical overview of the study and the documentation describing the rationale for the techniques used and the variables created in the process of data collection and compilation (*Technical Report* or *Methods and Procedures*). Each study's *Encyclopedia* also gives information from participating countries on the structure of their education systems

and school curricula. To work effectively with any of IEA's data, it is necessary to consult these publications to understand the characteristics of the study.

The [IEA Data Repository](#) provides access to the data, accompanying documentation files and the major international publications of completed IEA studies, as well as IEA's International Database Analyzer (IDB) software tool which enables users to work with data from most large-scale assessments. The IDB Analyzer and accompanying video tutorials are available from the IEA website and IEA also offers regular workshops for those seeking additional information on how to work with international large-scale assessment data.

IEA produces a range of free, open source publications, offering valuable reference tools and materials for researchers, practitioners and policymakers. These include the [IERI Journal](#), [Large-scale Assessments in Education](#), and the [IEA Research for Education series of in-depth analyses based on IEA data](#), published in cooperation with Springer. We highly recommend colleagues to consider these as platforms for sharing their own research works.

In addition to our research publications, the [IEA Compass: Briefs in Education series](#) publishes topical, accessible articles addressing key issues of interest to educational stakeholders, especially those involved in influencing educational decision and policymaking. Each publication in the series uses secondary analyses of IEA data to connect study results to recurrent and emerging questions in education at the international and national levels. IEA regularly publishes calls for proposals, and always welcomes thought-provoking concepts for the IEA Research for Education series or suggestions for topics for future Compass briefs.

Opportunities for researchers

IEA is committed to encouraging and promoting high quality research based on IEA data. Our annual research awards recognize excellence in empirical research by graduate students, postgraduate students and established researchers working with IEA data. [Applications](#) are submitted by the end of March each year and authors of exceptionally innovative papers or theses may be invited to present their results at the prestigious IEA General Assembly meeting (the next one will be hosted by IEA's Slovenian member in Ljubljana).