



Annual Report

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

2020



www.jacobscenter.uzh.ch

The Jacobs Center is growing



Prof. Dr. Michael ShanahanResearch Director



Prof. Dr. Cla FamosManaging Director

2020 was an impressive year for the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development (JCPYD). The following pages will shed light on the many positive developments that we have experienced.

In 2020 the number of staff employed at the JCPYD rose by 40 percent, and third-party funding for projects increased markedly. We were able to further strengthen our collaborative interdisciplinary work despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its massive impact on our research teams. The pandemic itself became the focus of a dedicated project, with researchers asking how the pandemic is impacting children and adolescents. You can read more about this project in this report, along with profiles of our new professors – Teodora Boneva, Kaspar Burger, Ana Costa-Ramón and Moritz Daum – and their diverse research interests.

We cultivated academic exchange through participating in interdisciplinary networks and working together with international guest scholars; due to the pandemic, however, most of this took place online. Thanks to the purchase of an MRI scanner funded by the Jacobs Foundation, we will also be able

to intensify our cooperation with the University Children's Hospital Zurich over the next several years. Finally, to round out the year, Dr. Marlis Buchmann, professor of sociology emerita and the founding director of the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development, received an honorary doctorate from the University of Bern. We would like to extend our congratulations to Dr. Buchmann, who was awarded this title for her groundbreaking social science research in the field of life course studies.

We are ready to take the next steps here at the Jacobs Center, as there is a lot of work that lies ahead. The large-scale inter-disciplinary BUNAVIA project, for instance, continues to develop in exciting directions. The growth of our staff has led to a need for more space that we have only barely been able to satisfy; more efforts certainly need to be made in this area for the upcoming years.

On behalf of the Jacobs Center team, we would like to thank the Jacobs Foundation and our alma mater, the University of Zurich, for their unwavering support.

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The Jacobs Center is a joint venture between the University of Zurich and the Jacobs Foundation.

Total financing: CHF 70 million over 20 years, borne in equal parts by UZH and the Foundation.

UZH and the Jacobs Foundation each contribute CHF 1.75 million annually.

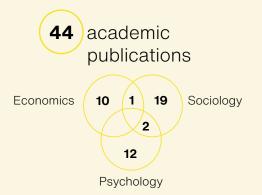
48 highly talented individuals

11 professors

7 administrative staff

(30) academic staff

We also work with nine professors from different institutes.



A word from UZH and the Jacobs Foundation



Prof. Dr. Gabriele Siegert

Deputy President of UZH and

President of the Jacobs Center

Steering Committee



Simon Sommer
Co-CEO
Jacobs Foundation

The Jacobs Center has evolved into a fully fledged organization, with professorial chairs across all disciplines held by highly motivated first-rate scholars carrying out exciting research. The Center can now wholly live up to its purpose of bring together on next line an interdisciplinary research institution whose research and teaching transcend disciplinary confines. But this doesn't mean the Center will rest on its laurels; on the contrary, it is now in a prime position to identify, tap into and amplify existing synergies. Given the current challenges, working together has become even more important and beneficial - how else are we to address the world's most urgent, complex issues? Child and youth development is challenging and not determined by any one single factor. Effective actions to support and encourage children and young people as they grow up can thus only emerge from broad interdisciplinary research cooperation. Thanks to the support of the Jacobs Foundation, UZH is proud to play its part in this important work for society.

In the foreword to the last annual report, I wrote that research on the development of young people is now more important than ever. This holds doubly true for an era defined by a global pandemic.

The growth and successes of the Jacobs Center in 2020 – not least in the recruitment of outstanding new researchers and in the acquisition of third-party funding – serve as a clear confirmation of this assessment.

But it would be wrong to attribute these successes to the coincidence of COVID-19. For what we read in this annual report is the result of a long and trusting collaboration between the University of Zurich and the Jacobs Foundation.

And it is the success of a team that has grown – and grown together – impressively in recent years. This has been particularly evident over the past year, in times that are challenging both on a personal and a scientific level.

The Jacobs Foundation would like to thank all employees of the Jacobs Center for their great commitment in 2020 and the University of Zurich for continuing our excellent cooperation.

In the media



SRF 1 05.11. "Einstein": Die Macht der Geschlechterrollen WEBLINK 7



Radio 1 20.08.

z-proso: Covid-Befragung MP3 (2876KB) 7



UZH Magazin 01.10. Theseus' Schiff WEBLINK 7



Geschwister - Geliebte Rivalen



BBC Newsnight | 22.05. Is coronavirus widening the gender divide and disadvantaging women?

WEBLINK 7

The Guardian

The Guardian 03.05.

"I feel like a 1950s housewife": how lockdown has exposed the gender divide.

WEBLINK 7

DER SPIEGEL

Der Spiegel 22.05.

Jung, motiviert - abgehängt? WEBLINK 7



The Washington Post | 12.04.

There are two paths out of this crisis. Which will we choose?

WEBLINK 7



The Economist 30.04.

The 90% economy that lockdowns will leave behind.

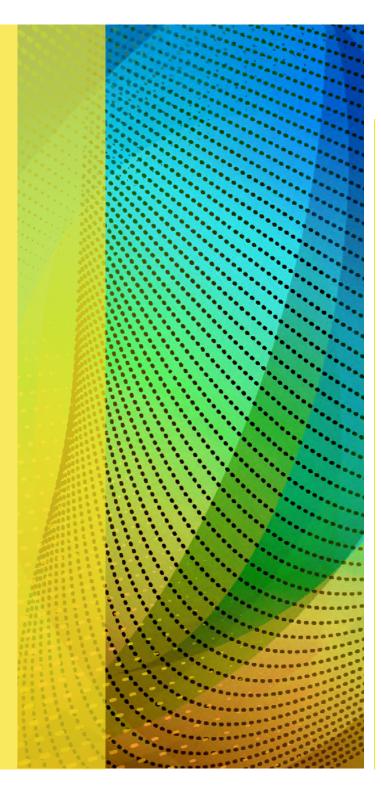
WEBLINK 7

SÜDKURIER

Südkurier 25.03.

Wie nehme ich meinem Kind die Corona-Angst?

WEBLINK 7



New acquired third-party funding

Does biobehavioural synchrony promote learning?

Project leader: Prof. Nora M. Raschle from the Jacobs Center together with professors Camelia E. Hostinar (University of California, Davis) and Carolina de Weerth (Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition & Behaviour, Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen, The Netherlands)

Start date: 1 January 2020

Third-party funding: CHF 120,000 from the Jacobs Foundation

This joint project investigates different forms of biobehavioural synchrony and how this synchrony influences learning and development over time. The project also strengthens the cooperation between the three universities, for instance by supporting research exchanges for doctoral students.

SNSF research project: Understanding social gradients in education – A psycho-social-ecological framework

Project leader: Kaspar Burger

Start date: 1 June 2020

Third-party funding: CHF 1,338,142 from the Swiss National

Science Foundation

Research shows that non-merit characteristics such as social origin influence educational attainment. Social disparities in educational attainment are often considered a consequence of unequal opportunities and therefore deserve attention from both scientists and policymakers. This research project

aims to analyze determinants of social gradients in education from a cross-national and a longitudinal perspective. It seeks to determine how micro-level psychological characteristics, meso-level family and school characteristics, and macro-level factors such as educational policies and wider societal contexts affect social gradients in educational outcomes, and whether they interact in shaping these gradients. Furthermore, the project aims to advance methodological techniques to better account for the multidimensional nature and origins of social gradients in education.

SNSF project: Social Status and the Regulation of the Genome

Project leader: Michael Shanahan Start date: 1 September 2020

Third-party funding: CHF 1,105,153 from the Swiss National

Science Foundation

Social status refers to one's socioeconomic position as measured by education, income and occupation. Social status has profound effects on people's health, and it is important to understand how this happens. This study uses data from Switzerland, the United States and the Netherlands to examine how social status is related to gene expression (how "active" our genes are). We can examine genetic activity levels for the entire genome and also focus on genes related to specific diseases, aging and disease-promoting processes like inflammation and immunity.

SNSF project: Substance Use and Stress in Young Adulthood

Project leader: Lilly Shanahan Start date: 1 September 2020

Third-party funding: CHF 468,351 from the Swiss National

Science Foundation

Stress and substance use are major challenges for young people in Switzerland. To date, however, there have been few large-scale studies that have assessed biologically manifested markers of substance use and stress levels. This study is addressing this gap in research by drawing on the Zurich Project on the Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood (z-proso).

Prof. Lilly Shanahan is the principal investigator of this project, which is conducted in collaboration with Prof. Dr. Boris Quednow (Psychiatric University Clinic Zurich), Dr. Markus Baumgartner (UZH Forensic Pharmacology & Toxicology), Prof. Dr. Manuel Eisner (Sociology), Dr. Denis Ribeaud (Sociology), the EAWAG (Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology), and a team of PhD students and post-docs.

SNSF project: Continuation of the Zurich Project on the Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood (z-proso)

Project leader: Denis Ribeaud, Manuel Eisner, Lilly Shanahan Start date: 1 January 2021

Third-party funding: CHF 1,000,000 from the Swiss National Science Foundation

The z-proso study on the long-term development of violence, delinquency and problem behavior will be continued from 2021 to 2024. In 2022, we are planning to conduct a ninth wave of interviews of study participants at age 24, and in 2023 we

will conduct a file survey using the Zurich legal information system (RIS2).

The research team, organized under the banner of the z-proso International Research Network, meets annually and shares their recent research results in workshops.

The SNSF is continuing to support z-proso as part of the national research infrastructure from 2021 to 2024 with a contribution of CHF 1 million. The Jacobs Center is contributing around CHF 600,000 in funding, primarily for salary costs of the project direction team.

European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant

Project leader: Teodora Boneva Start date: 1 January 2021

Third-party funding: EUR 1,496,957 from the European Research

Council

Congratulations to our Jacobs Center economics professor Teodora Boneva, who is one of only three UZH scholars who were awarded an ERC starting grant.

In her research program, Professor Boneva will shed light on the role of beliefs, preferences, constraints and social norms in women's decisions about having children and returning to work after the birth of a child. "Given the importance of these decisions, it is crucial to understand what is driving them," she says. "We want to understand what factors play a role in these decisions." Boneva will collect extensive data sets from different countries to obtain detailed measures of individual beliefs and preferences using survey-based methods. The data will be combined with information on the current number of children, labor market decisions, and individually perceived constraints and social norms in order to determine the relative importance of the various individual factors.

Research cooperation between the Education Directorate, the Directorate of Justice and Home Affairs, and the Security Directorate of the Canton of Zurich: Zurich Youth Survey (ZYS)

Project leader: Denis Ribeaud Start date: January/February 2021 Third-party funding: CHF 253,000

The Zurich Youth Survey (ZYS) will be conducted for the fourth time in 2021 following survey waves in 1999, 2007 and 2014. Based on repeated, methodologically identical student surveys, the ZYS provides insights into the longer-term development of the real extent and structure of youth violence and its causes. As part of the ZYS, representative samples of 1,000 seventh graders, 2,500 ninth graders and 1,000 eleventh graders will be surveyed in 2021 in the Canton of Zurich using tablets in classroom settings.

The study is supported by the Education Directorate, the Directorate of Justice and Home Affairs and the Security Directorate of the Canton of Zurich with CHF 239,000 as part of a research cooperation. Other cooperation partners are the Federal Social Insurance Office (CHF 14,000) and Swiss Crime Prevention (CHF 5,000). The Jacobs Center is involved in funding this project by contributing approximately CHF 114,000 to the salary costs of the project management.

Teodora Boneva

Ambitious research to tackle inequality

After stints in Mannheim,
Cambridge, London and Oxford,
Teodora Boneva arrived in
Switzerland in April 2020.
The economist appears to feel
comfortable here in Zurich and
says that she got off to a good
start despite the pandemic.





Prof. Dr. Teodora Boneva Assistant Professor of Economics of Child and Youth Development Principal Investigator of Education Economics Research Area

After joining the Jacobs Center, Teodora Boneva quickly confirmed that her expectations of her new workplace were correct. The friendly atmosphere and interaction with people working on interesting issues outside her discipline hold a lot of potential when it comes to learning from others and forging beneficial collaborations.

Boneva's research has always been interdisciplinary in nature, so the interdisciplinary team and learning opportunities at the Jacobs Center were convincing reasons to make the move to Zurich. At the Jacobs Center she found a large group of researchers working on the same topics that have long held her interest: education, child development and social inequality.

Research priorities inspired by real-life

Boneva says she only later realized that her chosen area of research was not merely a coincidence. As a child, she was struck by the vast disparities between countries – partially from her own real-life experiences. With parents from Bulgaria and Russia, she knew what it meant to stand in a bread line for hours on end. "And all of that for just one kind of bread. No choice between one with pumpkin seeds or one with carrot flavor," she says. With these disparities in mind, she always asked herself what can be done about inequality. She did not yet find an answer to this question while studying for her economics degree. Her participation in a summer school on socioeconomic inequality led by economist James Heckman at the University of Chicago reawakened her interest in the topic. She found herself confronted with questions old and new: Why do children from disadvantaged families

have different chances in life? Where do some children find the motivation to achieve more? What is the value of education, and why would someone want to have more of it? "I had found my new topic and was fortunate to find others who were interested in similar issues," says Boneva.

An ambitious undertaking

In addition to conducting descriptive research, Boneva strives to find ways to directly address the potential problems and challenges of child development. Her goal is to do research that goes beyond mere findings and yields insights that can be translated into concrete recommendations for the real world. "This is highly ambitious and of course doesn't work out that way every time," she admits.

One study where she did succeed on this point took place at 52 elementary schools in Istanbul. Teaching materials were prepared with the aim of improving students' perseverance when it comes to achieving goals: a trait that is said to have a big impact on children's later path in life. Animated videos and classroom activities conveyed the following messages: It is important to set goals. Success is not just based on genes or where you come from, but also on how hard you try to reach a certain goal. You can't give up immediately when experiencing setbacks or failures.

Students who went through this program achieved significantly better results on standardized tests, demonstrating the impact of the special curriculum. The effect could still be seen on standardized math tests taken 2.5 years later. Boneva and her two co-authors had found an inexpensive, easy to deploy intervention that actually benefited students.

Growing interest in inequality

Just like many others at the moment, Boneva has been giving a lot of thought to the coronavirus pandemic. In an ongoing project she is monitoring how pandemic containment measures are affecting the labor market and pre-existing inequalities.

This data is not only interesting in its own right but also holds relevance to Beliefs and Gender Inequality, a research program that she started in January. This project was made possible in part by an ERC Starting Grant that Boneva received from the European Research Council. Armed with around 1.5 million euros in funding, Boneva would like to investigate what drives the decision of mothers to re-enter the labor market – or not – following the birth of a child.

Some countries differ greatly on this point. "Take Denmark for instance, where almost three-fourths of mothers work full time again. In Switzerland it's far less," explains Boneva. "This can be influenced by the cost of childcare but also by what parents perceive as best for their children. If parents aren't convinced by the quality of daycare, for example, that definitely has a big impact on their decision."

The goal of the study is to systematically measure attitudes on the issue in order to find out if they can explain families' decisions on childcare and work. Boneva hopes to survey around 80,000 people in different countries for the project, so she and her team are currently doing everything in their power to develop the perfect questionnaire. It's a task that she'll be working on for some time to come. "It will for sure take some time," she says. "Later on it becomes difficult to iron out any mistakes that were made at the beginning."



New arrivals at the Jacobs Center

Kaspar Burger Spotlight on education

Kaspar Burger has been working as 2020 as an SNSF professor at the Jacobs Center at the University of Zurich.

He hopes his work can help improve the quality of life for children and adolescents.





Prof. Dr. Kaspar Burger SNSF Eccellenza Professor Institute of Sociology

Kaspar Burger's original discipline was psychology, and it was only later that he developed a research interest in education and the educational system – a background that enables him to study people from both a micro and a macro perspective. Burger is interested in people as individuals and also in the larger societal contexts in which individuals are embedded. His work at the Jacobs Center allows him to combine these two perspectives.

A good interdisciplinary fit

Burger's work at the intersection of educational science, sociology and psychology is an ideal fit for the interdisciplinary character of the Jacobs Center, which made the Center an obvious choice for his SNSF professorship.

Burger had already long been aware of the Jacobs Center and its work. He first heard about the Jacobs Foundation, which co-funds the Jacobs Center along with the University of Zurich, when he was a doctoral student at the University of Fribourg. At the time, the Foundation had commissioned a project to study the current status of early childhood education. "Over the years I've come into contact with the Jacobs Foundation in a variety of contexts," explains Burger. He recalls that the Foundation always took him seriously and appreciated him as a researcher. "It was a nice experience," he says. Before taking up the post of professor at the Jacobs Center, he had participated in workshops organized by the Center and realized that it was a good fit for his research interests.

Dead ends and stepping stones in education

Burger studies the educational paths of children who attend school in Switzerland. His research is based on the robust empirical finding that children from underprivileged families often start off their educational journeys at a disadvantage. Schoolchildren with good (informal) learning environments also have much better chances of having successful educational careers – in part regardless of their motivation or effort. In theory, the Swiss educational system offers options to change your educational path and go in another direction. However, according to Kaspar, this is so difficult to pull off that it rarely occurs in reality. "Some students in the Swiss educational system are simply pushed through the institutions," he says.

More tolerance for non-linear paths

Burger's work focuses on the various factors that shape the life course of children. On an individual level, psychological factors like self-esteem, self-concept (the subjective evaluation of one's own aptitudes) and self-efficacy (belief in one's own expected ability to succeed) play a crucial role. Beyond that, Burger considers familial influence – particularly parental expectations – to be a decisive factor. Peer groups and teachers' expectations can also have an impact.

Burger says that many additional factors play a role too, not least of which is achievement. "The question is always where this achievement comes from," he says. According to Burger, many people falsely believe that achievement potential is purely a matter of disposition, while in many cases it is a result of socialization and life experiences.

There are also consistent findings that the system has a role to play. Burger says that the school system acts as a filter: "If the filter is opened wider and there are fewer dead ends, you can make up for or minimize disparities that existed at the beginning." In Burger's view, it should be possible for people to take detours and find their way back into the system. If that's not possible, it becomes a vicious circle: People who started off at a disadvantage tend to be less successful later in life and vice versa. «If you reduce educational inequality, you can also reduce some general social inequalities as well," says Burger.

Serendipity and decision-making

Burger says that serendipity – the phenomenon of happy accidents – has certainly also influenced his research focus on educational sociology, educational psychology, life course studies and children's rights. While he of course made some decisions based on his own interests, he says that academic careers often take you to adjacent areas of study – and you end up staying there. Burger's openness and interest in new things have always accompanied him on this path.

Already as a child – after first wanting to be a confectioner and then a ship captain – he started thinking about ways to improve society and people's lives. He also took a strong liking to literature and could have seen himself being the brains behind a stage play. The decision to study psychology came later. "So maybe one thing led to the other," he muses.

While he can't exactly plan out the future, he does have a bigger intellectual project that drives his work. "This project consists of me trying to expand my horizons and generate new findings that can help shape sound empirical solutions to societal problems," he says.



Moritz Daum

Joining the Jacobs Center in the summer of corona

The cognitive development of children is the terrain of Moritz Daum, who is a member of the Jacobs Center for Productive Development since August 2020.

The developmental psychologist is looking forward to exchange across disciplines, prefers to wear one hat rather than two, and is currently conducting research with little world discoverers.





Prof. Dr. Moritz Daum
Professor for Developmental Psychology
Jacobs Center
Department of Psychology

Moritz Daum has been part of the UZH community for some time now, which made his move to the Jacobs Center an easy one. "[It was] a relatively gentle transition where not a lot really changed," he says. His existing contacts in the Jacobs Center team made it easier to deal with the lack of face-to-face contact during the corona crisis. This in-person interaction is something he misses very much at the moment, as he particularly values the diverse exchange of ideas with colleagues at the Center. "This palpable openness to think across disciplines is something I find very enriching," he says.

Two locations, one team

On paper, Daum's duties are divided across two roles: 50% at the Jacobs Center and 50% at the Department of Psychology. In reality, it's not that easy to split up his time so neatly. Holding dual roles can be challenging and makes it difficult to organize appointments – even though switching meeting rooms can currently "be done at the click of a button," as he puts it.

When it comes to projects, Daum tries to bring his research group – which is spread out across two locations – under one roof, so to speak. The challenge lies in preventing the formation of cliques, which can express itself in numerous little ways – for instance by referring to "the Jacobs Center people" or "the team at the Department of Psychology." These little nuances are very significant to Daum. "Language shapes thought by creating categories," he says. "That's why I want to avoid expressions like these. I see us as one team."

Research under lockdown

It's not surprising that language is so important to Daum: His research focuses on how infants and toddlers learn how to communicate and how communicative contexts impact their socio-cognitive development.

His ability to conduct research is very limited at the moment, however. "Even though it would theoretically be allowed to do on-site studies with children if we followed the hygiene regulations, we're currently avoiding this kind of lab research at the moment. For one thing, wearing a mask would directly impact our results, and also because we don't want to contradict the stay at home order by inviting children and their parents to come to campus. That would be sending the wrong message."

Despite the challenges, Daum is still carrying on with his research. Many students also rely on this kind of research data to complete their studies. "Students shouldn't need so much extra time to complete their degree programs that they start to suffer," explains Daum. "For this reason, we put a lot of effort into changing around Master's theses so that they're doable with the current restrictions." Some studies have been conducted online. In one such study, children received tasks from an on-screen presentation, and researchers monitored their reactions.

Little explorers



The kleineWeltentdecker (German for "little world explorers") app is still ongoing as well. The term "little explorers" has been in use at the Department of Psychology for some time now. It refers to the studies being conducted in Daum's research area and also serves as a convenient shorthand for communicating with the public. "Talking about 'researchers in infant and child developmental psychology' is awkward when we're recruiting parents for studies," explains Daum. "But if we can talk about little explorers, we have a snappy phrase that makes it easier."

The kleineWeltentdecker app provides parents with a diary to navigate their child's development for the first six years of life. Every few weeks, the app asks parents questions such as "Can your child already walk two steps backwards?" or "Can your child already pick up two objects with both hands?" Over a six-year period, parents answer over 1,500 questions about their child's motor skills, cognition, linguistic development and social and emotional behavior.

According to Daum, the app is a win-win situation. He says that that for one, it serves as a research instrument that allows the development of individual children to be tracked over a longer period of time: "By collecting data at home, we can measure how children develop in real time, across language barriers and with a big sample size. This illustrates the big differences between how individual children develop." Parents also benefit by receiving information about their child's developmental progress. The app makes them aware of changes or abilities that may have gone unnoticed and highlights the beauty of child development.

Making an impact inside and outside the university

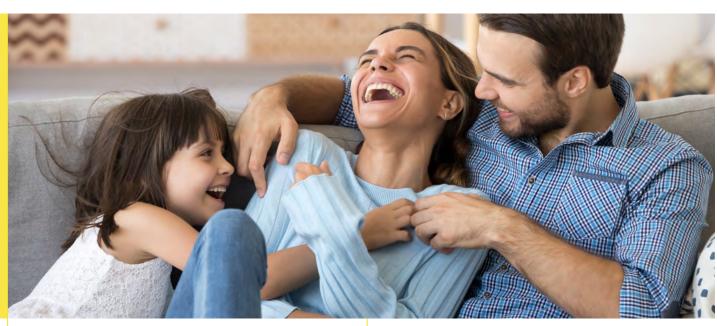
Daum hopes that his research will be well-received and can make an impact, even if only indirectly. "We conduct basic research," he explains. "Our findings won't be directly incorporated in pedagogical concepts or educational measures. But you can still communicate your findings in a way that piques the interest of the general public and that laypeople can also understand, not just specialists."

Daum would like to make waves within the research community too, for instance when it comes to the issue of developmental universals and specificities: In which ways do all people develop the same, and which ways are culturally specific? Answering this question is one of Daum's longer-term goals. "It's a vision that I'll be grappling with over the next several years, and it's something that I'll be glad to invest a lot of energy in," he says.

Ana Costa-Ramón

The economist helping children and families

Ana Costa-Ramón took up her post as assistant professor at the Jacobs Center in September 2020. The microeconomist conducts research at the intersection between health, family and gender.





Prof. Dr. Ana Costa-Ramón
Assistant Professor
of Economics of Child
and Youth Development
Principal Investigator
of Health Economics
Research Area

When Ana Costa-Ramón was applying to the Jacobs Center last year, she was struck by the breadth of the Center's team and the excellent interdisciplinary work that they were doing. "I immediately recognized that the Jacobs Center was a perfect fit for my research interests," says Costa-Ramón. Before joining the Jacobs Center, she completed her doctorate at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. Costa-Ramón was born on Ibiza, which she describes as one of the most beautiful places in the world.

Connecting the dots on children and health

Costa-Ramón studies how negative health experiences impact children's wellbeing and that of their families. To do so, she uses large sets of administrative data and applies a variety of economic methodologies.

In 2020 she conducted a study of how parents perform in the labor market if they have a child who becomes seriously ill. She compared parents of the same age whose children were born in the same year but who became ill at different ages. This led to the finding that in such cases, parents' earnings – chiefly that of the mother – experience a sharp decline. The child's illness takes a toll on the mental health of the parents as well.

Costa-Ramón also studies C-sections and how they impact children's health. She says she came across the topic when visiting an economics lecture and read about the enormous differences in cesarean delivery rates between hospitals. She looked into the topic further and discovered that there was a dearth of credible causal evidence regarding how cesarean sections impact children's health. "I knew that I wanted to research this issue when I started my doctoral thesis," she says.

Costa-Ramón carried out her plan, and she has brought her interest in the topic with her to the Jacobs Center. Her team discovered that doctors perform more C-sections at night and before weekends and holidays. According to Costa-Ramón's research, mothers who give birth during these times – and who are therefore more likely to have a cesarean delivery – are similar to mothers who give birth at other times when it comes to observable characteristics such as age or delivery complications.



The research team would now like to find out whether and to what extent these 'unnecessary' cesarean sections impact the health of the children over the long term. The project essentially concentrates on comparing similar births that differ only regarding the day or time of day that the C-section was performed. Costa-Ramón's team looked at the general health of the babies after cesarean delivery, whether they required artificial ventilation, whether they went into intensive care, and how high the mortality rate was. They were only able to identify a small negative impact linked to these points, but the picture looked different for long-term health consequences: C-section births apparently increase the risk of developing asthma as a child or adolescent. However, the team was not able to find a relationship between 'unnecessary' C-sections and other immune disorders that have been mentioned in previous studies.

Making an impact

For Costa-Ramón, working in applied microeconomics means choosing the right toolkit for dealing with qualitative data and empirical findings that are relevant from a sociopolitical perspective. Armed with this approach, she tackles issues at the intersection of health, family and gender that she finds especially interesting. "The most meaningful part of my work is knowing that it can have a direct, politically relevant impact," she says. "That's the real motivator behind my research." Costa-Ramón appreciates that researchers from very different backgrounds have come together at the Jacobs Center with the common goal of improving the lives of children and adolescents.

Burning questions

The coronavirus pandemic has complicated Costa-Ramón's research work. She faced difficulties in getting new projects off the ground without having the usual interactions with other researchers at conferences and meetings. She says that given the situation, she is now particularly glad that the Jacobs Center and the Department of Economics offer such a high-quality research environment.

She also has concerns from an academic perspective about the social and economic consequences of the current situation. "The pandemic has highlighted the unequal roles of men and women when it comes to childcare and family responsibilities," she says. Costa-Ramón's research previously showed that mothers are more likely than fathers to reduce their workload or quit their jobs entirely when their children have serious health issues. In her view, this demonstrates the importance of developing strategies to mitigate the consequences of gender inequality when it comes to family and childcare responsibilities.

Events and news

2020

January

Talk by Prof. Dr. Sophie von Stumm



Predicting Children's Differences in School Performance

Children differ in the ability to learn, and these differences are both evident early in life and stable over time. As a result, children's differences in primary school performance have lasting influence on

all important later life outcomes, including socioeconomic status, health and well-being. The factor that is most strongly associated with children's differences in school performance is their family background, which includes both nature and nurture. In this talk, Professor von Stumm will share findings from a large-scale cross-cohort analysis that tracks the association between family background and children's school performance across the past century in the United Kingdom. Von Stumm and her colleagues find that the influence of family background on school performance has remained fairly stable over the past 100 years, seemingly unaffected by changing economic factors or education policies. Possible reasons for the pervasive, continuous influence of family background on children's learning outcomes will be discussed.

February

z-proso International Research Network Meeting, Córdoba, Spain

In February, the z-proso International Research Network (zIReN) met in Córdoba, Spain.

Researchers from around the world who work with the Zurich Study of Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood (z-proso) came together to share their latest findings, plan future data collection waves and collaborations and strengthen connections among the research teams. Many of the presentations focused on bullying/victimization, violent behaviors/ideation and substance use.

Talk by Dr. Tobias Hauser



Do We Need A Developmental Computational Psychiatry?

Many psychiatric disorders arise during adolescence, a time when the brain undergoes fundamental reorganization. However, it is unclear whether and how the emergence of mental health prob-

lems is linked to aberrant neurocognitive development. Tobias Hauser's presentation discussed why it is critical to understand (aberrant) cognitive and brain development if we are to better understand how mental health problems arise. Results were presented showing how psychiatric traits are associated with adolescent brain myelination, illustrating why computational neuroscience approaches could be important in understanding psychiatric disorders.

March

Talk by Dr. Lien Peters



Different Yet Similar: Exploring the Association Between Reading and Arithmetic

Reading and arithmetic are two of the most important building blocks of children's education and are crucial to their academic and life success. Research

thus far has mostly looked into identifying domain-specific correlates to explain individual differences in these separate domains of learning. Even though arithmetic and reading have largely been studied in isolation from one another, these academic abilities are in fact highly correlated and share both genetic and environmental influences. Additionally, learning disorders characterized by specific deficits in arithmetic (dyscalculia) or reading (dyslexia) frequently co-occur. Professor Peters presented data from a neuroimaging study in children with specific learning disorders, investigating the specificity of their neural correlates.

April

Webinar with Jacobs Center researchers: Social Distancing in the Pandemic – Policing & Compliance

z-proso researchers at the Jacobs Center and the z-proso International Research Network stayed busy in 2020 studying the experiences of young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Amy Nivette and Prof. Manuel Eisner presented their findings from the study "Who Complies with Social Distancing – and Who Breaks the Rules? First Results from a Longitudinal Study."

Dr. Peter Neyroud addressed in his presentation the issue of "Policing and Social Restrictions in the COVID Pandemic."

June

Advisory **Board** meeting

The Advisory Board met on 26 June (via Zoom) with Research Director Mike Shanahan and members of the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development.

The Advisory Board noted that significant progress has been made over the past year in building the Center's administrative structure, faculty and research portfolio. Research areas cover a broad range of issues and topics relevant to child and adolescent development, including genetics, individual differences, social-emotional learning, parenting, environmental influences and interventions to promote positive youth development.

According to the Board, the individual research projects and professors form the basis of a sustainable and strong structure for the centre. Ideally, the Jacobs Center should now subsequently enhance the value of each individual department by also creating an identity for the Center that transcends the individual departments.

The members of the Advisory Board are Ronald Dahl, Kenneth A. Dodge (Chair), Alexander Grob, Yvonne Kelly, Jens O. Ludwig and Ulrich Trautwein.

August

Professor Nora Raschle to join collaborative, interdisciplinary University Research Priority Program entitled Adaptive Brain Circuits in Development and Learning

The University of Zurich has introduced five new University Research Priority Programs (URPP) focusing on equal opportunities, human reproduction, rare diseases, digital religions and basic principles of learning. With these programs, UZH is opening new avenues for innovative research in areas relevant to our society. By linking up different academic disciplines, the URPP pave the way for a broader range of approaches and explanations. "With our URPP, we want to promote innovative research areas that are relevant for the future and help researchers break into new terrain," says Beatrice Beck Schimmer, Vice President Medicine and member of the Executive Board of the University. The latest series of URPP, which will kick off from 1 January 2021, represents the third generation of joint research projects at UZH.

September

Meeting of Interdisciplinary BUNAVIA Research Network

Jacobs Center professors and their collaborators held a socially distanced meeting to continue discussions on the design of the BUNAVIA project, a new interdisciplinary initiative from the Center. BUNAVIA aims to examine how children thrive in the context of school. The project is directed by professors Michael Shanahan, Moritz Daum and Laura Bernardi with Dr. Martin Kindschi and Dr. Doris Hanappi serving as project managers.

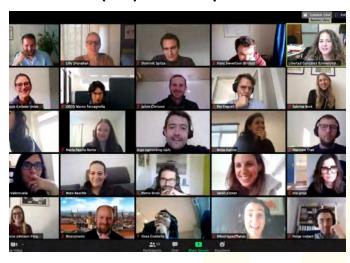
Jacobs Center Research Retreat



In the fall of 2020, we held a research retreat for our interdisciplinary team of Jacobs Center principal investigators. As the Center had added several professors of economics, psychology and sociology in the spring and summer of 2020, the research retreat was an exciting opportunity to learn about everyone's work, find common research interests and meet and mingle.

October

The Jacobs Center/Institute of Labor Economics (IZA) Workshop



This workshop on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child and youth development brought together over 80 participants from over 20 countries.

The event covered how the pandemic affects inequality in educational outcomes, youth mental health, parenting behavior and domestic violence.

December

Honorary doctorate for Marlis Buchmann



We are exceptionally pleased to announce that Dr. Marlis Buchmann, Professor of Sociology emerita and former Director of the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development, received an honorary doctorate from the University of Bern. Dr. Buchmann was awarded this title for her outstanding and groundbreaking social science research in the field of life course studies, which focused on the life stages of childhood and adolescence. Her work also dealt with the labor market as well as the reproduction of social inequality. She currently serves as head of the Swiss Job Market Monitor (SJMM) at the UZH Department of Sociology.

Read the full *laudatio* (University of Bern, Faculty of Human Sciences) WEBLINK 7

December

Cooperation between University Children's Hospital Zurich and Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development: opportunity for other UZH Researchers and clinics



The hospital of the

Thanks to the generous support of the Jacobs Foundation for a new research MRI scanner at the University Children's Hospital Zurich, researchers at the Children's Hospital Zurich and the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development (JCPYD) will have exciting new opportunities for collaboration in developmental research.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) lies at the forefront of developmental imaging research, due to the noninvasive nature of the method and the rich and multifaceted nature of the data available, providing unique insight into the development of brain anatomy, physiology and cognitive function during childhood and adolescence.

With financial support for a new state-of-the-art research MRI scanner from the Jacobs Foundation, leading researchers at the University Children's Hospital Zurich and the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development will be able to work in partnership to harness these cutting-edge approaches to study the complex changes taking place during brain maturation.

This strong interdisciplinary partnership between basic and clinical research groups also provides an opportunity to foster links between different scientific disciplines, allowing research findings to be effectively translated into practice, to the benefit of young people and their families as well as society at large.

The novel joint research program will start upon installation of the scanner in the new University Children's Hospital building and will be managed by a joint committee (Betriebsausschuss). A new model for the shared scanner has been created to foster research collaboration between participating organizations.

In parallel with these UZH collaborations, the joint seminar will facilitate additional bilateral links between research groups at the JCPYD and the Children's Hospital, highlighting areas for potential collaboration on behavioral or other neuroimaging projects prior to and following the installation of the MRI scanner.

The scope of the collaboration will include all areas of cooperation on developmental research, both for projects involving imaging and for other (e.g. behavioral) studies, from the initiation of the first joint study until the end of the MRI scanner's life (approximately eight years). At the end of this period, the collaboration will be reviewed and prolonged if desired by both institutions.

Developmental researchers from both the JCPYD and the Children's Hospital Zurich are looking forward to embarking on this exciting new program of collaborative research.



z-proso

Longitudinal study with wide-ranging impact



Criminologists Manuel Eisner and Denis Ribeaud have generated a wealth of sociological data via the z-proso study, which has become part of Switzerland's national research infrastructure. Now that the eighth survey wave has come to an end, the future of the internationally renowned research project is at a crossroads.





Prof. Dr. Manuel Eisner
Principal Investigator
z-proso study
Professor of Sociology

For 20 years now, Manuel Eisner has been working on z-proso: the Zurich Project of Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood. The longitudinal study kicked off at the start of the new millennium after Eisner asked the Zurich City Council to fund his ambitious research undertaking. The goal was to invite all first graders in Zurich to report their experiences with violence – and not just once, but in regular intervals over the course of their entire time in school.

The effort has paid off. Researchers recently completed their eighth wave of surveys with participants, who were no longer first graders but young adults around the age of 20. Eisner and his fellow researchers have generated a treasure trove of psychological, educational and sociological data that has evolved beyond studying violence and now encompasses numerous research collaborations on a host of issues, both in Switzerland and abroad.

The collaboration with researchers at the University of Zurich, particularly those at the Jacobs Center, is especially close. In one project, sociologist Michael Shanahan is working with researchers to investigate whether childhood experiences of stress leave behind a lasting biological imprint. With its regular rounds of surveys, the z-proso study provides the required data on stressful experiences in childhood, and this data can then be combined with biological markers obtained from blood samples. Another project, this one led by neuroeconomists Todd Hare and Ana Cubillo, investigated the way in which violent childhood experiences impact neurobiological development, social behavior and learning behavior in adolescence. A third collaboration, led by psychologist Lilly Shanahan and pharma-psychologist Boris Quednow, is studying traces of drug use and stress via hair samples taken from z-proso participants.

The z-proso project is even being used to study the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Switzerland. A new collaboration between neuroscientist Nora Maria Raschle and the team led by Todd Hare and Ana Cubillo seeks to combine two neuroscience data sets in order to find out which social and neurobiological factors influence the extent to which young people struggle with pandemic containment measures and how they find productive coping mechanisms. Because z-proso has comprehensive data collected over the course of the participants' development, it offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity to better our understanding of the long-term impact of the corona crisis on the younger generation.

Next steps for z-proso

The project has already received funding for a ninth wave of surveys and will be led by Manuel Eisner, Lilly Shanahan and Denis Ribeaud, all from the Jacobs Center. The team has decided to pursue an ambitious research program for the current project period, with the focus remaining on illuminating various aspects of how young people grow up. One key question is which life experiences and personality traits lead to criminal behavior and how young people can find their way out of this lifestyle again. Researchers will also focus on the complex interplay between mental health, social ties and critical life events. One aspect that they intend to study is how relationships with parents and peers – along with positive or negative experiences such as divorce, bullying or happy romantic relationships - impact young people's psychological makeup. Additionally, the next phase of z-proso will pay closer attention to the social, cultural and educational integration of young people from immigrant families.

Existing z-proso collaborations will either be continued or reorganized. The project is now part of a broad global research network that encompasses Freiburg im Breisgau, Berlin, Utrecht, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Cordoba, Madrid and Barcelona. One particularly exciting project is currently in the works with University College in London. "We'd like to work with the research team there to find out if certain child-hood experiences make people more susceptible to believing conspiracy theories and whether this is connected to an increased tendency to be attracted to violent ideologies," explains Eisner. "At the moment, there are only cross-sectional surveys on this issue, but no studies that take the life histories of respondents into account and that have reliable life course information."

When it comes to these kinds of research collaborations, the z-proso team has to be careful not to wear out the patience of the participants. Every additional study or survey means more effort for participants, which increases the likelihood that some of them stop cooperating with researchers altogether. At the moment, however, there are enough young adults who are willing to participate in the next phase of z-proso, which Eisner is very much looking forward to. "I primarily see my role over the next few years as initiating projects where we can compare findings from z-proso with findings from similar studies from places like London or Pittsburgh," he says. "What differences and similarities will we find when we trace the development of Swiss, English and American teens into adulthood?"

Eisner also has plans for an ambitious personal project. He wants to turn his experiences with leading z-proso over the past two decades into a book: "For me, it's about exploring the relationship between cognition, emotions and moral decision-making in connection with violence. How do children learn to approach conflict in a cooperative and productive way? What do they think about fairness and 'might makes right'? What drives them to resort to violence in a conflict? The z-proso study has yielded a wealth of data to answer these questions, and this is something I'd like to share with the public."

The z-proso study has changed markedly over time, which is related to the different developmental phases of the children being surveyed. When the children were still schoolaged, researchers focused their questioning on the causes and dynamics of bullying. When the children reached age 11, researchers began posing questions about legal and illegal drug consumption in order to be able to record any early-onset problems.

Current interdisciplinary research project

BUNAVIA On the right path

How can young people optimally develop their individual learning potential?
With the BUNAVIA project and researchers from various disciplines, the Jacobs Center is creating new knowledge for integrated and inclusive support.
The project uses longitudinal surveys and targeted interventions for children in elementary and primary school in order to significantly improve opportunities for the next generation.



Prof. Dr. Michael Shanahan, Dr. Doris Hanappi and Dr. Martin Kindschi provided insight into the current status of the project for this article.

Humans are eager to learn and develop. Learning how to learn is in no small part an important socialization and identity-forming process. The mechanisms of learning and development are not only subject to evolutionary influences but have also constantly been adapting to different sociocultural contexts over the past millennia. The ways in which people interact with one another and the social backdrop of these interactions also influence the ways in which we learn. This is a process of adaptation that continues until this day: Mechanisms of learning and development in modern times are also in constant flux due to the pace of digitalization, demographic change, the shift of societal structures into the virtual sphere, and the increasing importance of individualistic values.

This tension between existing mechanisms of learning and development, the time structuring of daily life, and the social, demographic, as well as technological change of our society is the starting point of the BUNAVIA project.

In the first phase of the project Jacobs Center researchers held several expert discussions and conducted a qualitative study on young people's personal and social skills, with children, parents, teachers and policymakers as participants. The aim was to show what skills are needed to keep up with learning progress at school and beyond, to achieve better academic success and to better cope with significant events in life. Researchers used the findings to identify three areas of investigation. The first area – structure and health – aims at finding out more about the diverse array of healthy learning behavior. The second area, values and identity, is intended to yield insight into how identity and feelings of belonging develop in connection with learning outcomes. The third area, environment and sustainability, is chiefly concerned with the analysis of three points: raising awareness, promoting sustainable behavior and using networks.

Steps and phases for the entire project

Phase 1

REVIEW OF THE STARTING SITUATION AND ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- Compile information to describe the challenges faced
- Online survey of teachers regarding resources and requirements
- Overview of existing structures/educational measures within a defined city/metropolitan area
- Evaluation of research on successful support and intervention programs

Findings from the comparison of points 1, 2, 3 and 4



Phase 2

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COORDINATED SET OF MEASURES

- Deploy a local working group
- Use existing resources
- Activate process of group learning across organizations (schools)
- Intensive project development with representatives from all stakeholder groups
- Review interventions at the individual, family, school and recreational level
- Agree in writing to objectives and expected impact

Phase 3

ACCOMPANYING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION OF SUBPROJECT 2

- Longitudinal survey of children
- Starting at age 5
- Several survey waves, to be conducted every
 12 months
- Identical survey of a control group in a structurally similar context
- Survey teachers and parents in parallel
- Monitor measures that have been implemented



Phase 4

IMPLEMENTATION AND PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

- Review effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis
- Synthesize findings from accompanying research
- Suggestions for designing a coherent, process-oriented support/intervention model

For the second phase of the project, there are plans to develop measures for low-threshold interventions that can be implemented at the child, parent and teacher level. Researchers would also like to sketch out how children from low-education families develop basic learning skills, healthy daily routines and feelings of belonging with the rest of their classmates.

Several accompanying projects are envisioned for phase three. Researchers plan to conduct comparative and longitudinal studies in order to obtain a nuanced view of how learning is organized in families from all social backgrounds across different schools and periods of time. The aim is to uncover unmet needs to organize learning using an evidence-based approach that allows researchers to improve and evaluate the long-term effects of interventions at the child, parent and teacher level. Phase four will be a synthesis of the scientific findings, a cost-benefit analysis of the interventions that were studied, and extended remarks on conclusions for practitioners.

Current research

COCON News from the COCON study

COCON Competence and Context Schweizer Befragung von Kindern und Jugendlichen Engulete suisse zur lee enfants et les jeunes Swiss Survey of Children and Youth

Exploring the dynamic interplay of parental educational aspirations and children's academic self-concept in the context of ability-tracked educational transitions.





Prof. Dr. h.c. Marlis Buchmann
Principal Investigator
COCON study
Professor of Sociology



Dr. Jeanine GrütterPostdoctoral Research
Associate
COCON study

Previous research has provided ample evidence that both parental educational aspirations and children's academic self-concept matter for educational success. Little is known, however, about how parental educational values and children's academic competence beliefs reciprocally relate to each other across childhood (age of 9) and adolescence (age of 15) and whether together they form a process in the sense of a dynamic interplay. How these dynamics unfold in the context of an educational system characterized by ability-tracked transitions, such as the Swiss one, is particularly intriguing, as these transitions represent times of heightened academic pressure, that are likely to affect children's competence beliefs and parental aspirations for their child.

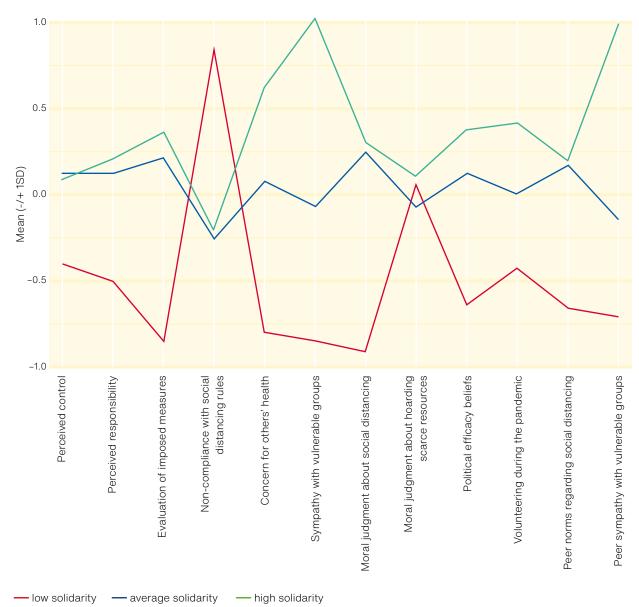
Analyses of COCON data document that in anticipation of an upcoming ability-tracked transition, time-specific higher-than-usual levels of parental academic aspirations were associated with children reporting academic competence beliefs higher than their own usual beliefs at the same time point. Most importantly, higher-than-usual parental academic aspirations at a given time point predicted a higher-than-usual children's academic self-concept at the next time point and vice versa. These findings attest to the dynamic interplay of parental educational aspirations and children's academic competence beliefs in light of ability-tracked educational transitions that affect future educational opportunities.

Developmental antecedents of adolescents' solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic: the role of childhood sympathy, social trust and social acceptance

Expressing solidarity in times of a global health crisis with severe disruptions to everyday life is challenging – and even more so for young people, as they have been identified as a source of asymptomatic transmission but are not at high risk themselves. Adolescents face strong restrictions on their social life in a time when peers serve to explore one's identity and provide crucial sources for belonging. Thus, solidarity during the pandemic involves accepting shorter-term restrictions to personal freedom for the sake of longer-term alleviation of severe health complications, over-crowded hospitals and other social and economic consequences.

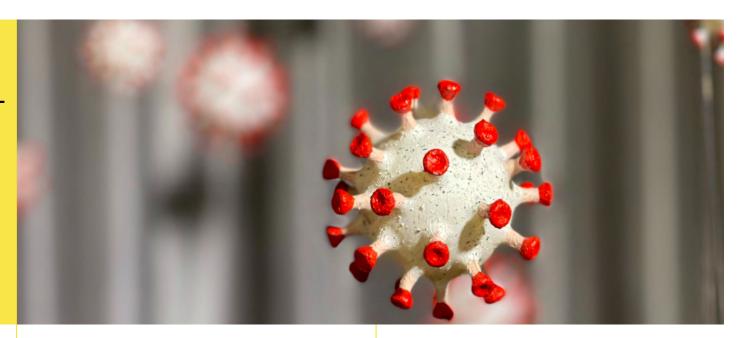
In this study, we identified three solidarity profiles (shown on the chart) that represent subgroups of adolescents characterized by low (23%), average (54%) or high (23%) solidarity during the pandemic. Based on the COCON data, we were able to show that the chance of belonging to high solidarity profiles relates to sympathy and social trust developed in childhood. Thus, if adolescents were able to feel concern and trust for others already in late childhood, they were more likely to show solidarity during the COVID crisis. In addition, if adolescents experience higher social acceptance during secondary school, they become more likely later on to show solidarity.

Solidarity profiles



The Jacobs Center investigates the corona crisis

Children want to understand what the coronavirus is all about while adolescents have to deal with restrictions on their social lives. Meanwhile, adults are battling uncertainty in their careers. The Jacobs Center has started to study the social and economic impact of coronavirus on different age groups.



Talking to children about the coronavirus can be a challenge for adults. Jeanine Grütter, postdoc at the Jacobs Center, offered tips in several interviews with the media: Be honest and offer explanations without being dramatic. If children aren't interested in learning more, adults shouldn't force any information on them.

Grütter worked together with Marlies Buchmann, principal investigator of the COCON study, to research the effects of the pandemic on adolescents and young adults, a group whose social lives were hit especially hard. In 2020, maintaining social ties to peers and leaving the nest were only possible to a limited extent. The two researchers put out a brochure offering tips and describing how adolescents can adjust to the new reality. A study conducted as part of the z-proso project revealed that a majority of young people in Zurich found the Federal Office of Public Health's coronavirus measures to be appropriate during the first lockdown. Their willingness

to maintain physical distance from friends and colleagues quickly diminished, however.

The Jacobs Center summarized all results concerning children and adolescents in its own workshop and on a platform of the Conference of Education Sciences, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and the EPFL.

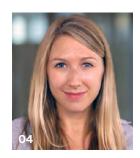
Other Jacobs Center researchers have been working on studies the effects of COVID-19 and its associated limitations on psychosocial limitations on variables of psychosocial functioning or functioning or mental well-being in children, adolescents, adults in children, adolescents, adults, families, or the like. Included will be topics such as stress, anxiety, and socioemotional functioning during COVID-19 in children and adults will be explored. Additional questions are asked about the use of emotion regulation strategies on mental health during the pandemic. Furthermore Studies on the once again increased digitization of higher education were launched.

The Jacobs Center team





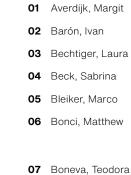








































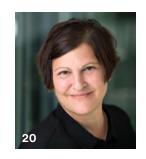


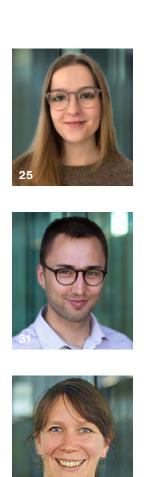




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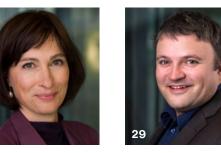


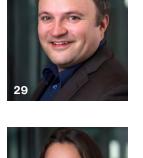




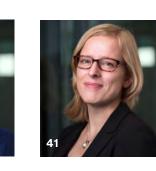
















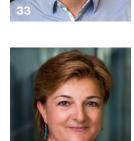






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Organizational chart Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development (JCPYD)







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Office

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Management Committee

Managing Director = Chair of the Management Committee | all chairs of the three departments at JCPYD: sociology/psychology/economics | representation of passive members (advisory function)

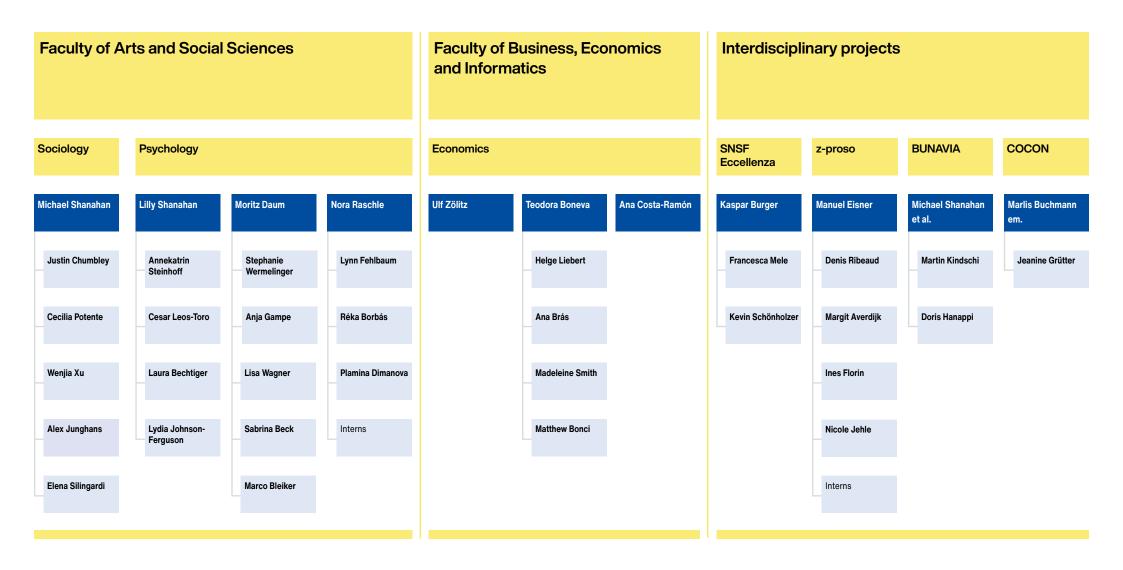
Sociology

Psychology

Economics

Professorships and teams

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development (JCPYD)







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Pictures

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