

# Esther Mirjam Girsberger

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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Labour Economics, Development Economics, Structural & Applied Econometrics,  
Public Economics

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## CURRENT POSITIONS & AFFILIATION

Aug 2014 - **Postdoctoral Research Fellow:** University of Lausanne, NCCR Lives & Department of Economics  
Feb 2017 - **Part-time lecturer:** University of Lausanne, Department of Economics  
Nov 2014 - **IZA Research Affiliate:** Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn

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## EDUCATION

2010 - 2015 **Ph.D. in Economics:** European University Institute, Florence (Italy)  
Thesis title: “Essays on Migration, Education and Work Opportunities”  
Thesis committee: Jérôme Adda (advisor), Árpád Ábrahám (2<sup>nd</sup> advisor), Jeremy Lise, Ahu Gemici  
Date of defense: January 16, 2015  
Sep – Oct 2012 **Visiting Assistant in Research:** Yale University, New Haven CT (USA)  
Invited by Costas Meghir  
2009 – 2010 **M.Res. Economics:** European University Institute, Florence (Italy)  
2006 – 2008 **M.Sc. Economics:** University of Lausanne, Lausanne (Switzerland)  
2003 – 2006 **B.Sc. Economics:** University of Lausanne, Lausanne (Switzerland)  
2005 – 2006 **Erasmus exchange student:** University of Carlos III, Madrid (Spain)

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## WORKING PAPERS

### **Migration, Education and Work Opportunities**

[*Winner of the Young Economist Award of the SSES 2015, 3<sup>rd</sup> Best Paper Award Augustin Cournot Doctoral Days 2012*]

### **Wage and employment dynamics: The role of occupational skills** (with Miriam Rinawi, Matthias Krapf, Uschi Backes-Gellner)

[*Revise & resubmit at Labour Economics, resubmitted*]

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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**Educated Unemployment in urban West Africa: Why do educated workers not grade down?** (with Romuald Meango)

**How does Maternity Leave affect Women's Careers and their Families?**  
(preliminary title, with Lena Hassani and Rafael Lalive)

**Parental leave policies and family outcomes** (preliminary title, with Ylenia Brilli and Hugo Reis)

**Who gets hired and why?** (preliminary title, with Rafael Lalive and Fabienne Liechti)

## PUBLICATIONS (peer-reviewed)

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**On the economic impact of international sport events: microevidence from survey data at the EURO 2008**, with Michael J. Lamla and Martin Straub, *Applied Economics*, 2014.

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS (not peer-reviewed, in German)

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**Läuft die US-Konjunktur der Wirtschaftsentwicklung in Europa voraus?**, *KOF Analysen*, December 2008.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

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Feb – Aug 2017	Political and Institutional Economics, University of Lausanne, Master 1 <sup>st</sup> year. (Co-teaching with Alessandro Saia)
June 2013	Teaching Skills Week, European University Institute, Teacher Training for Higher Education
Nov – Dec 2010	Macroeconomics 1, European University Institute, PhD. 1 <sup>st</sup> year, Teaching Assistant for Prof. Russell Cooper
Sep 2007 – Feb 2008	Decision Analysis, University of Lausanne, Bachelor 2 <sup>nd</sup> year, Teaching Assistant for Prof. Natalia Karelaia

## PAST PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Jan – Feb 2009	<b>ANTBA</b> (local NGO for literacy promotion), Ougadougou, Burkina Faso, Volunteer
Feb – Dec 2008	<b>Konjunkturforschungsstelle der ETH Zürich (KOF)</b> , Research Internship Research on International Business Cycles, Economic Impact of International Sport Events
Sep 2006 – Aug 2007	<b>Swiss Federal Statistical Office (BFS)</b> , Research Internship Feasibility study on Implementing Globalisation Indicators in Switzerland

## PRESENTATIONS AT SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

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2017	<u>Conferences</u> : CSAE Conference, Oxford; Annual Congress of the SSES, Lausanne (scheduled); EALE, St. Gallen (scheduled).
2016	<u>Conferences</u> : European Winter Meeting Econometric Society, Edinburgh. <u>Seminars/workshops</u> : Ski & Labor Economics Seminar, St. Anton; Macro Workshop, Lausanne.

- 2015                    Conferences: CSAE Conference, Oxford; Annual Congress of the SSES, Basel; IZA/World Bank Conference on Employment and Development, Bonn; SOLE/EALE World Meeting, Montreal; European Winter Meeting Econometric Society, Milan.  
Seminars: University of Zurich; BEER Lab Meeting & Micro Workshop, Lausanne; CREST, Malakoff (Paris); Tilburg University; University of Geneva; Toulouse School of Economics; Bocconi University.
- 2014                    Conferences/Summer schools: IZA European Summer School in Labor Economics, Buch am Ammersee; Annual Congress of the European Economic Association, Toulouse; EUI Alumni Conference in Economics, Florence; Conference of Swiss Economists Abroad, Zurich.  
Seminars: Micro Workshop, Lausanne.
- 2013                    Seminars: Microeconometrics Working Group, EUI, Florence; IEMS Seminars in Health and Labor Economics, Lausanne.
- 2012                    Conferences: Augustin Cournot Doctoral Days, Université de Strasbourg.  
Seminars: 3rd year Researcher Forum, EUI, Florence; Development Lunch Seminar, Yale University.

#### GRANTS & AWARDS

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- Aug 2016 – July 2017      Swiss National Science Foundation, 120% support grant (19,820 CHF, approximately 19,565 USD)
- Jan 2015 – July 2016      Swiss National Science Foundation, 120% support grant (15,967 CHF, approximately 16,128 USD)
- 2015                    Young Economist Award of the Swiss Society of Economics & Statistics (SSES)
- 2009 – 2014           PhD Scholarship, State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, Switzerland (SERI)
- 2004 - 2014           Fellowship, Swiss Study Foundation
- Sep – Oct 2012        Financial Support by the EUI for Visiting Assistant in Research at Yale University
- May 2012              3rd Best Paper Award, Augustin Cournot Doctoral Days, Strasbourg
- 2005 – 2006           Erasmus Student Exchange Grant

#### REFEREEING

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*Applied Economics, Applied Economics Letters, Journal of Population Economics, Labour Economics, Review of Economic Studies*

#### OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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- 2015 -                    Member of the FREE-Board of NCCR Lives

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

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MATLAB, STATA, JMulti (basic), EViews (basic)  
Office, LATEX

## LANGUAGE SKILLS

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German (native), English (fluent), French (fluent), Italian (fluent), Spanish (advanced)

## MEDIA COVERAGE

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“Migration, Education and Work Opportunities” mentioned in *Junge Welt* on February 10, 2015 (<https://www.jungewelt.de/2015/02-10/036.php>)

## REFERENCES

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### **Prof. Jérôme Adda**

Bocconi University, Department of Economics

Via Roentgen 1, 20136 Milano, Italy

[Jerome.Adda@unibocconi.it](mailto:Jerome.Adda@unibocconi.it)

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### **Prof. Árpád Ábrahám**

European University Institute, Department of Economics

Via della Piazzuola 43, 50133 Florence, Italy

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### **Prof. Rafael Lalive**

University of Lausanne, Department of Economics

Internef, Unil-Dorigny, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland

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## MIGRATION, EDUCATION AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES

### Abstract

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This paper studies individual location, education and work decisions in a dynamic life-cycle model in a developing context. I estimate the model exploiting long panel data on migrants and stayers in Burkina Faso, and cross-sectional data on permanent emigrants. I find that individuals self-select into migration and locations according to their education: those without education go abroad, while those with secondary and tertiary education migrate to urban centres. Differences in unemployment rates and returns to education across locations explain this pattern. I further show that large rural-urban and rural-international income differences dwindle away when the risk of unemployment and migration costs are factored in. Similarly, returns to education are not as large as measures on wage earners would suggest. I uncover that the unemployment risk for labour market entrants is hump-shaped in education, leading to a re-evaluation of net returns to education. Direct and indirect migration costs further lower net returns to education of rural individuals. Together with higher rural schooling costs they explain a large fraction of the rural-urban education gap. Counterfactual policy simulations show that a decrease in schooling costs in rural regions increases migration and leads to a re-direction of rural migration flows. Rather than migrating abroad, individuals now migrate to urban centres. Moreover, I find that migration prospects have a sizeable impact on educational attainment in rural regions.

## EDUCATED UNEMPLOYMENT IN URBAN WEST AFRICA: WHY DO EDUCATED WORKERS NOT GRADE DOWN? (joint with Romuald Meango)

### Abstract

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Unemployment rates in urban West Africa are increasing or inverse U-shaped in education. This is puzzling. Educated workers could take low-qualified jobs or go into self-employment to escape unemployment. In the first part of this paper, we show that the West African unemployment pattern is robust to different definitions and controls. We provide descriptive evidence on labour market entry and transitions between different sectors and how they vary across education levels. In the second part, we develop a search and matching model with three sectors (public, formal and self-employment), heterogeneous agents and an endogenous schooling choice. We calibrate a basic version of the model using data from the 1-2-3-Survey. Preliminary results indicate that productivity differences between the public/formal sector and self-employment are relatively large. Nonetheless, it is not rejection of self-employment opportunities but the relatively low arrival of these opportunities which explain why educated individuals do not downgrade. Also, we find that differential destruction rates across sectors and education levels contribute considerably to the observed unemployment patterns. In the last part, we use these results to analyse alternative education and labour market policies. We simulate how decreasing schooling costs, self-employment subsidies, minimum wage laws and the creation of public sector jobs affect educational attainment, unemployment and worker distribution across sectors.

## WAGE AND EMPLOYMENT DYNAMICS: THE ROLE OF OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

(joint with Miriam Rinawi, Matthias Krapf, Uschi Backes-Gellner) (R&R Labour Economics)

### Abstract

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We develop and estimate a simple search and matching model of the Swiss labor market for workers who graduated from vocational education and training (VET) programs. While the skill bundle acquired in a VET program is occupation-specific, single skills that are part of the training can be transferred to other occupations. Combining detailed data on skills acquired in VET programs with the Swiss labor force survey, we examine how interpersonal, manual and cognitive skills map into job offers, unemployment and wages. Assuming that the match productivity exhibits worker-job complementarity, we estimate the demand for interpersonal, manual and cognitive skills and other parameters. Our findings suggest that the demand for interpersonal skills exceeds the demand for other skills, whereas workers acquire more cognitive than interpersonal and manual skills.