Contributors

Khyati Bakhai is a GP Partner at Bromley by Bow health partnership in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and also works with the Royal College of General Practitioners as an e-learning and development fellow. In 2013 she co-produced the health education project, DIY Health, with the aim of empowering parents of young children to manage childhood illnesses appropriately. Dr Bakhai was a Darzi Fellow, NHS London in 2012/13, working on strategies to improve delivery of end-of-life care.

Matt Barnard is the Head of the Child Outcomes Research Consortium in the UK, overseeing its research, practice, informatics, and communication and influencing projects. Previously, Matt was Head of Evaluation at the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, where he led one of the largest ever programmes of evaluation and learning in the children’s sector. This involved over 25 separate evaluations, including four randomized controlled trials, the comprehensive use of standardized psychometric measures, surveys, and in-depth qualitative case studies. He has authored or co-authored for Child Abuse Review (‘Strengthening the mother–child relationship following domestic abuse: service evaluation’, 2015) and Advances in Program Evaluation (‘Critical qualitative theory: Opening up the black box of criminal justice interventions’, 2012), among others.


Robert Boruch is University Trustee Chair Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, holding appointments in the Graduate School of Education and the Wharton School Statistics Department. He is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association, American Academy of Arts and
Contributors

Sciences, American Educational Research Association and the Academy of Experimental Criminology. He is recipient of the American Evaluation Association’s Myrdal Award, among other honours. His work has focused on randomized trials, ethics in research, international collaboration initiatives, and use of research and administrative records to inform policy.

Karen Nielsen Breidahl is a political scientist and Assistant Professor at Centre for Comparative Welfare Studies, Aalborg University, Denmark. She is the author of a number of articles and book chapters on welfare states, labour market policies and migration in the Scandinavian countries. She has written for the Journal of European Social Policy (‘The myth of unadaptable gender roles: Attitudes towards women’s paid work among immigrants across 30 European countries’, 2016); and ‘The developing trajectory of the marketization of public employment services in Denmark – a new way forward or the end of marketization’, in 2015 for European Policy Analysis.


Michael Calnan is Professor of Medical Sociology, SSPSSR (Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research), University of Kent, UK and is interested in the sociology of health, medicine and health policy. He has researched and published extensively on a wide range of health-related topics. He has authored or co-authored: Health, Medicine and Society. Key Theories, Future Agendas (Routledge, 2000); Work Stress: The Making of a Modern Epidemic (OUP, 2002), Trust Matters in Health Care (OUP, 2008), The New Sociology of the Health Service (2009) and Trusting on the Edge (Policy Press, 2012). His current research includes an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded study exploring the various aspects of uncertainty faced by the NICE (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, UK) medicine appraisal committees, the social mechanisms applied for coping with these and the influence of these processes on the outcomes of decisions.

Emma Cassells is a Patient First Project Manager in the NHS in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. She has an interest in co-producing
solutions to primary care issues including access, disease management and family health, working with and involving patients in the design and delivery of services.

**Massimo Costa** is Associate Professor (qualified for Full Professor) of Accounting at the University of Palermo, Sicily in the Department of Statistical, Business and Economic Sciences. His research mainly concerns accounting history, corporate social responsibility, and critical studies on accounting. Among other publications he contributed the entry on ‘Social return on investment (SROI)’ in the *Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility* (Springer, 2013).

**Peter Dahler-Larsen**, PhD, is Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, where he is the leader of CREME: Center for Research on Evaluation, Measurement and Effects. His research interests focus on the social and organizational aspects of evaluation and evaluation systems. He is past president of the European Evaluation Society and the author of *The Evaluation Society* (Stanford University Press, 2012).

**Christopher Deeming** is currently Senior Lecturer and Chancellor’s Fellow in Social Policy at the University of Strathclyde in Scotland, previously based at the Universities of Bristol, London and New South Wales in Australia. He holds a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Bristol and serves as the Reviews Editor for the *Journal of Social Policy*.

**Tom Douglass** is a Doctoral Researcher in Medical Sociology at the University of Kent, UK. He is interested particularly in the sociology of pharmaceuticals and medicalization/pharmaceuticalization. His current research is focused on the implementation of cardiovascular disease primary prevention guidelines and the use of statins. He is also interested in trust relations within contemporary NHS settings.

**Julian Edbrooke-Childs** is a Chartered Research Psychologist with quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research skills, and experience in health, applied, and NHS research studies. He is Senior Research Fellow at the Evidence Based Practice Unit (part of the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families and University College London – UCL) and the Department of Health Child Policy Research Unit at UCL. He has authored or co-authored papers including ‘Using patient reported outcome measures to improve service effectiveness (UPROMISE)’, in *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 2016; and ‘The association between ethnicity and care pathway for children with emotional problems in routinely collected child and..."
adolescent mental health services data’, *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 2016.

**Werner Eichhorst** has a PhD in Political Science from Konstanz University in Germany. He joined the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) as Research Associate in July 2005, became Senior Research Associate in February 2006, Deputy Director of Labor Policy in April 2007, and Director of Labor Policy Europe in January 2014. His main research area is the comparative analysis of labour market institutions and performance as well as the political economy of labour market reform strategies. He also specializes in different aspects of the future of labour. At IZA he takes care of international and European policy–oriented research activities, addressing in particular EU-level employment policies.

**David Etherington** is Principal Researcher in the Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research (CEEDR), Middlesex University, London. His main interests relate to employment, skills and labour market policies. He has published widely in international peer review journals including *Journal of European Social Policy* and *Work, Employment and Society* and successfully completed a variety of research projects including for the European Commission, UK government departments and research grant–funded projects, including one led by Dr Anne Daguerre, Middlesex University, on the ‘Politics of conditional rights in social policy in the United States of America and the United Kingdom’. David has recently completed (June 2016) research on the devolution of welfare employment and skills policies in city regions in the UK.

**Sara Evans-Lacko** is Associate Professorial Research Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science and Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience at King’s College London. Her research focuses on the role of health services and social support in the prevention and treatment of mental illness and cross-cultural comparisons of this. She has a PhD in Health Policy and Management from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore.

**Jan-Eric Furubo** has held many different positions within the National Audit Office in Sweden. He is co-editor of the *International Atlas of Evaluation* (with Ray Rist and Rolf Sandahl, Transaction, 2002) and *Evaluation – Seeking Truth or Power* (with Pearl Eliadis and Steve Jacob, Transaction, 2011).

**Hansjoerg Gaus** is a Senior Researcher at the Center for Evaluation, Department of Sociology, Saarland University, and a Visiting Lecturer in
Consumer Behaviour at Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany. His research interests include the evaluation of social interventions, values research, and experiential consumption. He co-authored ‘Evaluating free-choice climate education interventions applying propensity score matching’ for Evaluation Review, 2011 and ‘Assessing the performance of the “counterfactual as self-estimated by program participants”’ for the American Journal of Evaluation, 2015.

Makeda Gerressu is a Research Fellow at University College London, in the Centre for Sexual Health and HIV Research, and specializes in qualitative methods. Her research interests include adolescent sexual health, ethnic variations in sexual health, intervention development and access to health services. She led the DIY Health health education project evaluation. Her co-authored publications include ‘Defining the content of an online sexual health intervention: The MenSS website’, JMIR Research Protocols, 2015 and ‘The importance of distinguishing between black Caribbeans and Africans in understanding sexual risk and care-seeking behaviours for sexually transmitted infections’, Journal of Public Health, 2012.

Helen Gleeson is a Research Assistant at Middlesex University, London in the Department of Mental Health, Social Work and Integrative Medicine. Helen received her PhD from NUI Galway, Ireland and has since worked on a range of research studies focusing on vulnerable adults, young people and families, and mental health and well-being services and impacts. As a research fellow at the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families, London, Helen led the evaluation of the Perinatal Mental Health Scorecard pilot project. In 2015 she co-authored “‘Some of them are alright’: The effects of experiences with community police officers on Irish young people’s attitudes toward the police’, Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies, and in 2014 authored The Prevalence and Impact of Bullying Linked to Social Media on the Mental Health and Suicidal Behaviour Among Young People for the Department of Education and Skills, Dublin.

Dawid Gondek is a Researcher at University College London/ Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, coordinating evaluation of a large nationwide Situation Awareness for Everyone project, which aims to improve patient safety on paediatric wards through increasing situation awareness among staff. He has also been involved in research exploring potential advancements in mental health care, as guided by a person-centred approach, and looking at current mental health provision in schools across Europe. His co-authored papers include ‘Mental health provision in schools: Priority, facilitators and barriers in 10 European...

**Bent Greve** is Professor of Welfare State Analysis at Roskilde University, Denmark. He holds a Master’s in Economics from the University of Copenhagen and a PhD and a doctoral degree in Public Administration from Roskilde University. His research on the welfare state covers areas such as social security, the labour market, financing, tax expenditure, happiness and well-being. He has been the Danish expert in several European studies. He has published many books and articles, and is currently Regional and Special Issues Editor of *Social Policy & Administration*.

**Anniken Hagelund** is Associate Professor in Sociology at the University of Oslo, Norway. She is the author of *Immigration Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945–2010* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, with Grete Brochmann). Hagelund’s research is focused on policy change and policy implementation, mainly within the fields of immigration and integration policies and disability/sickness insurance in the Scandinavian countries. She has authored several articles in journals such as *Journal of Social Policy, International Migration, Journal of European Social Policy*, and *Social Policy & Administration*.

**Anne Halvorsen** is a sociologist and Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Agder, Norway. She is the co-editor of a number of books and the author of several articles and book chapters on evaluation, knowledge creation and service development in welfare services, for example, A. Halvorsen (2015), ‘Fagutvikling, faglig utvikling og utvikling av fag – et forsøk på presisering’ [Subject development, professional development and development of a subject – an attempt to define], in S. Nordstoga and A.B. Grønningsæter (eds), *Det kommunale barnevernet i utvikling – et nødvendig samarbeid mellom praksis og forskning*, Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, pp. 25–41; A. Halvorsen, E.L. Madsen and N. Jentoft (eds) (2013), *Evaluering. Tradisjoner, praksis, mangfold*, [Evaluation, Traditions, Practices, Diversity], Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

**Morten Balle Hansen** is Professor Public Administration and Management at the Department of Political Science, University of Aalborg, Denmark. He has done research in the fields of public administration and management, performance management and evaluation since the early 1990s and published widely in these research areas. He combines research in managerial behaviour in public organizations with research into policy processes, with particular emphasis on innovation, evaluation and

**Tina Haux** is a Lecturer in Quantitative Social Policy in the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research at the University of Kent, UK. Her research focuses on the roles, responsibilities and needs of parents within the current welfare and legal setting, with particular reference to post-separation families. In this context, she has published an article on the links between the policy and the research agenda in the *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*. As well as being one of the co-editors of *The Student’s Handbook of Social Policy* by Blackwell, she is the incoming Director of Q-Step at Kent, which is an initiative that aims to improve the numeracy and general capacity of social science undergraduates to produce and communicate high-quality (quantitative) research.

**M. Azhar Hussain** is an Associate Professor of Economics and Quantitative Methods in the Department of Social Sciences and Business, Roskilde University, Denmark. His research focuses on empirical analysis of welfare distributions in advanced economies as well as in developing countries, subjective well-being, and income distribution simulations using tax–benefit models. Presently he is engaged in the identification of robust and consistent rankings when multidimensional measures of welfare are applied using the so-called first-order dominance approach to ordinal welfare measures. Among his recent publications are ‘Intergenerational top income persistence: Denmark half the size of Sweden’ (*Economics Letters*), ‘EU country rankings’ sensitivity to the choice of welfare indicators’ (*Social Indicators Research*), and ‘Effects of food price shocks on child malnutrition: The Mozambican experience 2008/09’ (*Economics & Human Biology*).

**Jordan M. Hyatt**, JD, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminology and Justice Studies, Drexel University in Philadelphia. His research focuses on the development and evaluation of correctional and re-entry programming, with an emphasis on randomized experiments. His work has appeared in *Crime & Delinquency* and *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, among others.

**Caroletha Irish** is Senior Public Health Commissioner at Haringey Local Authority, London. She is a Registered Nurse, midwife and an experienced
Community Public Health Specialist practitioner (Health Visitor). She completed a Darzi Fellowship (PGDip Clinical Leadership) with Leeds University Business School. She is also a Fellow of the Institute of Health Visiting. She successfully programme-managed the UCLPartners’ 0–5 project within the Children, Young People and Maternity programme.

**Jenna Jacob** is the Research Lead for the Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC), UK. Her particular research interests are in personalized care and outcomes for children and families, which includes goal-setting and tracking as part of shared decision-making. Jenna is interested in the direct application of research to impact the lives of children and their families experiencing the need for mental health and well-being support. She has co-authored ‘Measuring what matters to patients: Using goal content to inform measure choice and development’, *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2015, and ‘Interpreting standardized and idiographic outcome measures in CAMHS’, *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 2015.

**Hanne Cecilie Kavli** is a Senior Researcher at Fafo, Institute for Labour and Social Research in Oslo, Norway. Kavli’s research has focused on immigrants and integration policy measures, in later years with a special emphasis on economic integration among female migrants. She combines the use of qualitative and quantitative data and has authored articles in journals such as *Journal of Social Policy*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* and *Journal of European Social Policy*.

**Martin Knapp** is Professor of Social Policy and Director of the Personal Social Services Research Unit at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). He is also Director of the School for Social Care Research, a position he has held since the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) established the school in 2008. His current research is primarily in the areas of dementia, social care, child and adult mental health, and autism. Much of his work has an economic focus. He has published more than 500 papers in social policy, health economics, medical and other journals.

**Regina Konle-Seidl** has been working as a Senior Researcher at the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Department for International Comparison and European Integration, in Nuremberg, Germany. She has longstanding experience in comparative research on European labour markets as well as labour market and social policy. Her research focuses on comparative analysis of labour market institutions and labour market reforms, governance of employment services and activating labour market policy. She has published on these topics in a variety of journals and
co-edited the book *Bringing the Jobless Back into Work? Experiences with Activation Schemes in Europe and the US* (Springer, 2008). She has collaborated in EU-funded projects like the Reconciling Work and Welfare in Europe (RECWOWE) project ‘Regulating the Risk of Unemployment – National Adaptations to Post-Industrial Labour Markets in Europe’. More recently, she has published reports on job placement regimes and labour market integration of migrants and refugees in selected European countries.

**Monica Lakhanpaul** is a Professor of Integrated Community Child Health at the UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, and Head of the Population Policy and Practice. In addition she holds a position as Programme Director of the UCLPartners Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) Integrated Children and Young People’s Programme, responsible for Central, North and North East London as well as being an Honorary Consultant Paediatrician at Whittington Health and Great Ormond Street Hospitals. Her publications as co-author include (2014), ‘The use of a collaborative structured methodology for the development of a multifaceted intervention programme for the management of asthma (MIA), tailored to the needs of children and families of South Asian origin’, and *Health Services and Delivery Research: Talking about Medicines (TABS): Involving Children and Young People with Chronic Illness in Managing their Medicines*, NIHR Service Delivery and Organisation programme (2013).

**Kellie Liket** is a Postdoctoral Researcher from the Impact Centre Erasmus, Erasmus University Rotterdam. Dr Liket works with social sector organizations to gain perspective on and improve the impact of their organizations. She has published on the utility of evaluations, for example in her study on meaningful negotiations between non-profits and donors in the *American Journal of Evaluation*. Dr Liket is involved in numerous experimental impact evaluations in LDCs as well as the Netherlands.

**Neil McHugh**, PhD, is a Researcher at the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health at Glasgow Caledonian University, UK. His primary research interests include investigating associations between the use of fair-priced microcredit and health and well-being. His work touches on various issues relating to the third sector, including social impact bonds, and he also conducts research on eliciting social values in the context of health resource allocation. His recent publications include (with Stephen Sinclair, Michael Roy, Les Huckfield and Cam Donaldson) ‘Social impact bonds: A wolf in sheep’s clothing?’ *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice* (2013), and (with Morag Gillespie, Jana Loew and Cam Donaldson) ‘First
Contributors


Christoph E. Mueller is a Research Associate at the Institute for Regulatory Impact Assessment and Evaluation, German Research Institute for Public Administration, Speyer, Germany. His research focuses on the evaluation of interventions in the area of environmental sociology as well as on quantitative research methods and impact evaluation. His publications include (with H. Gaus) ‘Evaluating free-choice climate education interventions applying propensity score matching’, Evaluation Review, 2011, and ‘Assessing the performance of the “counterfactual as self-estimated by program participants”: Results from a randomized controlled trial’, American Journal of Evaluation, 2015.

Liz Richardson is Reader in Politics at the University of Manchester. Her work looks at shaping better public policy, innovative governance, and developing effective participatory approaches. With Catherine Durose she is co-author of Designing Public Policy for Coproduction: Theory, Practice and Change, published by Policy Press, 2015.

Ricardo Rodrigues, MSc, PhD, is Head of the Health and Care Programme at the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna. Ricardo Rodrigues has been carrying out comparative research on user choice and competition in health and long-term care, with a particular emphasis on market and quality outcomes. He has co-authored a number of publications on the subject, namely ‘The public gets what the public wants: Mapping public reporting in Europe’ in Health Policy, 2014, and ‘Choice, competition and care – developments in English social care and the impacts on providers and older users of home care services’ in Social Policy and Administration, 2015.

Michael J. Roy, PhD, is Senior Lecturer in Social Business at the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, Glasgow Caledonian University, UK. An economic sociologist and public policy specialist, his primary research interests include social enterprise and the social economy, and in particular how social enterprise can work to address various social determinants of health. Michael has published extensively at the interface of social enterprise and public health, including (with Cam Donaldson, Rachel Baker and Susan Kerr) ‘The potential of social enterprise to enhance health and well-being: A model and systematic review’ in Social Science & Medicine (2014); and (with Michelle Hackett) ‘Polanyi’s “substantive approach” to the economy in action? Conceptualising social enterprise as a public health “intervention”’ in Review of Social Economy (2016).

Katherine (Kat) Smith, PhD, is a Reader at the Global Public Health Unit in the School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh. Her research focuses on analysing policies affecting public health (especially health inequalities) and better understanding the relationships between public health research, policy, advocacy and lobbying. She recently brought some of this work together in a book entitled *Beyond Evidence-based Policy in Public Health: The Interplay of Ideas*, which is part of a new book series, *Palgrave Studies in Science, Knowledge, and Policy*, which she co-edits with Professor Richard Freeman. More recently, she was the Lead Editor of *Health Inequalities: Critical Perspectives*, published by Oxford University Press in 2016.

Trude Sundberg is Lecturer in Social Policy at the University of Kent, UK and is currently carrying out research on value systems, stereotypes and attitudes towards vulnerable groups in China, Singapore as well in Western Europe. Her research focuses on using innovative and participatory methods to analyse citizens’ views of groups that can be defined as vulnerable; that is, women, migrants, LGBTQIA+ individuals and other groups in need. Trude’s work and life is focused on projects aiming to achieve social change and for diversity both through academic and non-academic work. An important dimension going through everything she does is the aim to improve research methods and teaching, and in particular research methods related to the use and misuse of methods as well as evaluation methods such as systematic review methodology and the ‘what works’ tradition. Trude is also one of two co-directors of the University of Kent’s Q-Step Centre, a cross-faculty centre aiming to improve quantitative skills amongst social science students.

Herbert (Herb) Turner III is an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education’s Quantitative Methods Division and Principal Scientist and President of Analytica Inc. He has contributed to innovative initiatives designed to transform education research into an evidence-based, scientifically valid field including the
Campbell Collaboration (C2), the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), the Investing in Innovation (i3) programme and the Social Innovation Fund (SIF). His publications can be viewed on his faculty website.

**Wim Van Lancker** is a multimedia specialist turned social scientist, holding a Bachelor’s degree in Multimedia and Communication Technology (University College West-Flanders, Belgium) and a Master’s degree in Political Sciences (Ghent University). Currently he works as Lecturer and Postdoctoral Research Fellow of the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), affiliated with the Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy at the University of Antwerp in Belgium. His main research areas are family policy and its social distribution, child poverty and social inequality, the design and effectiveness of social policy measures, and the social investment state. Recent publications have appeared in *Social Science Research* (‘Universalism under siege? Exploring the association between targeting, child benefits and child poverty across 26 countries’, with Natascha van Mechelen) and in *Social Indicators Research* (‘Horizontal and vertical equity objectives of child benefit systems: An empirical assessment for European countries’, with Gerlinde Verbist).

**Aidan R. Vining** is the CNABS Professor of Business and Government Relations in the Beedie School of Business, Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia. He obtained his PhD in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley in 1980. He also holds an LLB (King’s College London) and an MBA and MPP. His research is broadly in the areas of public policy analysis, including cost–benefit analysis, privatization, corporatization and public–private partnerships. His most recent book is *Investing in the Disadvantaged*, published by Georgetown University Press, written and edited with D. Weimer. Recent articles have appeared in the *Annals of Public and Co-operative Economics* (2014), the *Journal of Public Policy* (2015) and *Regulation & Governance* (2016).

**Jon Warren** is a sociologist who is currently a member of the Department of Geography at Durham University, UK. His research interests are work, employment, social policy, disability and the industrial history of the North East of England. Jon is involved with methodologically innovative research and is currently involved with projects using qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and visual methods. He has published work in the fields of disability studies, public health policy and the sociology of work. Recent publications include co-authored works: ‘How can integrated services help sick and disabled people remain in employment? Findings from an evaluation of an in-work support service project in the North of England’, in *Work, Welfare and Disabled People: Is Employment Really...
Handbook of social policy evaluation


Isabelle Whelan is Research Editor and Writer at the Evidence Based Practice Unit at University College London and the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. She has ten years’ experience in professional and academic editing in higher education and international development, including for the United Nations in Jerusalem.

Jonathan Wistow is Lecturer in Applied Social Sciences, School of Applied Social Sciences, Durham University, UK. His research interests include health inequalities and health and social care adaptation to climate change. His interest in health inequalities centres on the implications of both methodological and ideological framings for how this issue is understood and addressed. His research focuses on the application of both complexity theory and qualitative comparative analysis to health inequalities and links to broader debates about governance and public policy implementation.

Miranda Wolpert is Professor in Evidence Based Practice and Research at University College London and Director of the Innovation, Evaluation and Dissemination Programme at the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. She is also Director of the Evidence Based Practice Unit (EBPU), which is part of both UCL and the Anna Freud Centre, and the Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC), the UK’s leading membership organization that collects and uses evidence to improve children and young people’s well-being. Miranda is co-author of ‘A general psychopathology factor in early adolescence’, British Journal of Psychiatry (2015) and ‘Internalizing symptoms and body dissatisfaction: Untangling temporal precedence using cross-lagged models in two cohorts’, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry (2015).

Rui Yang is a Researcher at the American Institutes for Research. He specializes in the theory and application of various quantitative methods, including hierarchical modelling, social network analysis, item response theory, and structural equation modelling. He has served as a reviewer for multiple journals and his research is published in Educational Researcher and Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness. He earned a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in Policy Research, Evaluation, and Measurement.