School Climate and Learning Environment in and around Schools.
Emotional-relational dimensions for the inclusion of marginalised students
Estonian Ministry of Education and Research Annual Conference,
'From Wellbeing to Learning Motivation'
Tartu, December 5th 2017

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Downes, P., Nairz-Wirth, E., Rusinaite, V. (2017). *Structural Indicators for Inclusive Systems in and around Schools.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

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Cedefop 2017 – Early Leaving from VET – Selfreflection Tool

The OECD's *10 Steps to Equity in Education* (2007, 2010) omitted a key range of dimensions with regard to prevention of early school leaving, namely, emotional-relational aspects (Downes 2010, 2011, 2017).

Key Guiding Principles (Downes Nairz-Wirth & Rusinaite 2017)

Holistic - Recognises the social, emotional and physical needs, and not simply the academic and cognitive ones, of both children/young people and their parents
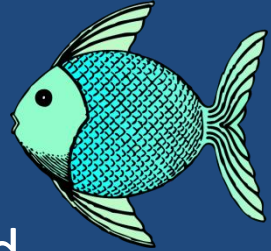
Systemic - Beyond individual resilience to **inclusive systems**

Differentiated – not one size fits all

Inclusive systems - Beyond Rutter's (1987) resilience in adversity (poverty, early school leaving, bullying, trauma) as Superman or Wonderwoman ! (Downes 2017)

Cultural Cognitive Bias: Individual Foreground Perception Neglects Background System Conditions

Masuda and Nisbett (2001) presented realistic animated scenes of fish and other underwater objects to Japanese and Americans and asked them to report what they had seen.

*The first statement by American participants usually referred to the focal fish ('there was what looked like a trout swimming to the right') whereas the first statement by Japanese participants usually referred to background elements ('there was a lake or pond').

*Japanese participants made about 70 percent more statements about background aspects of the environment.
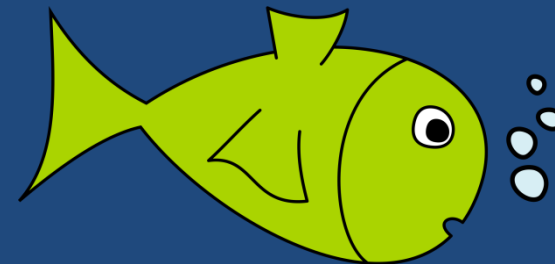
Foreground – Child
Background system - School

Holistic Systemic Issues: Percentage of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students who Agree/Disagree with the Following Statements: School Belonging and Feeling Like an Outsider (PISA 2012)
## (OECD 2012)

Countries	I feel like I belong at school, % Agree (S.E)	I feel like an outsider (or left out of things at school), % Disagree (S.E)
Austria	82 (1.6)	89.9 (1.1)
Belgium	63.5 (1.6)	88.4 (1.0)
Czech Republic	73.6 (1.9)	80.5 (1.6)
Denmark	69.3 (1.6)	90.3 (1.0)
Estonia	78.2 (1.8)	90.0 (1.3)
Finland	80.5 (1.1)	89.2 (1.0)
France	38 (1.7)	73.2 (1.8)
Germany	83.8 (1.6)	89.7 (1.4)
Greece	87.8 (1.2)	83.9 (1.4)
Hungary	83.5 (1.1)	85.6 (1.6)
Ireland	76.7 (1.5)	91.6 (1.0)
Italy	75 (0.9)	89.3 (0.6)
United Kingdom	74.9 (1.5)	86.9 (1.1)
OECD Average	78.1 (0.3)	86.2 (0.2)

Differentiated Strategies in Place - for Meeting Individual Needs at Different Levels of Need/Risk for Transition

Universal – *All*
Selected – *Some, Groups, Moderate Risk*
Indicated – *Individual, Intensive, Chronic Need*
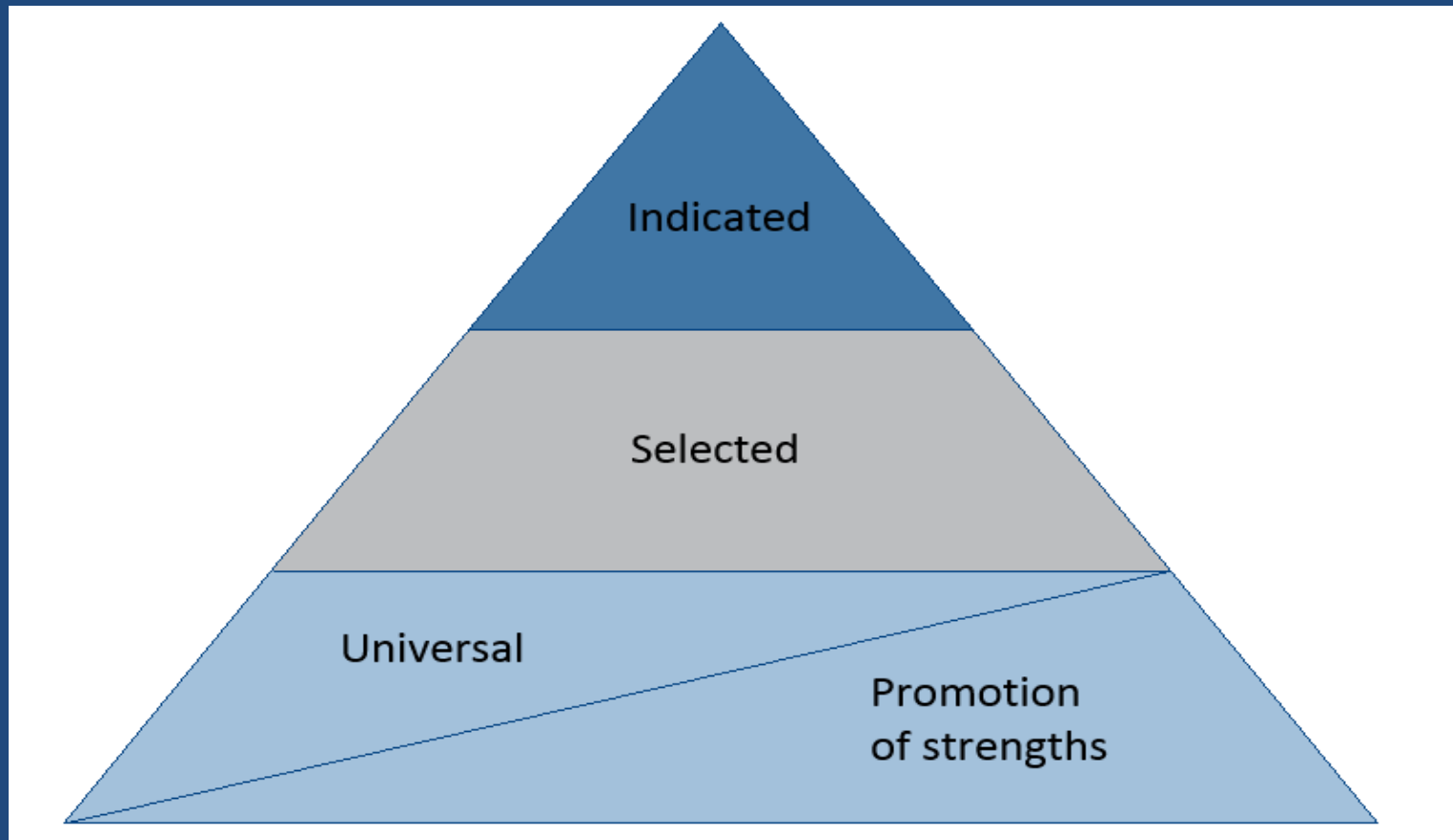
An Emotional-Relational Focus for Inclusive Systems (Downes, Nairz-Wirth & Rusinaite 2017) for ESL Prevention – There is _not_ 1 early school leaving problem !

A. *Overcoming System Blockages in Communication: School Climate*

- Students' voices
- Authoritarian teachers and discriminatory bullying
- Emotional supports
- Bullying and Early School Leaving: Common Strategy
- Social and emotional education

B. *Overcoming System Blockages as Fragmentation, Resistance and Exclusion– linking health and education*
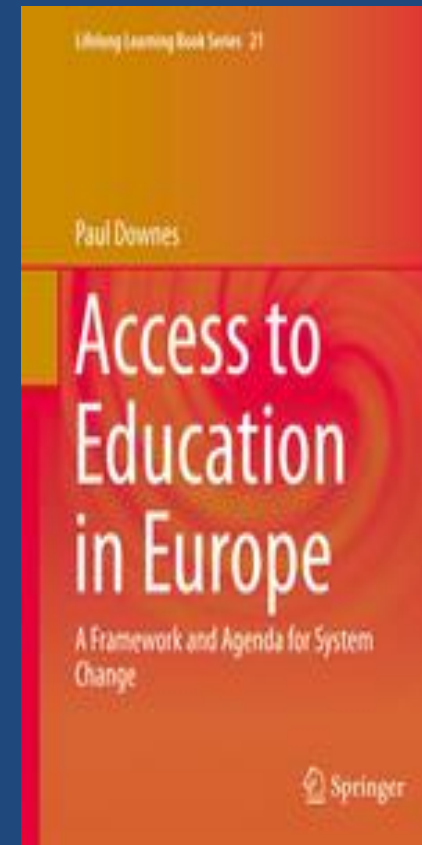
- Multidisciplinary teams
- Family support services and parental involvement

OVERCOMING SYSTEM BLOCKAGES (Downes 2014) IN COMMUNICATION
Inclusive Systems as Voice – Voices of Students

*In Iceland, Brigisdottir (2013) highlights a process of communication with those dropping out from school, whereby the students are interviewed individually by an education Ministry official to find out why they are leaving school early.

*Yet this dialogue with students arguably comes too late in the process and needs systematic expression at a range of earlier stages as part of a Europe-wide prevention focus (Downes 2013)

Lifelong Learning Book Series 21

Paul Downes

Access to Education in Europe

A Framework and Agenda for System Change

Springer

Students' Voices – A Clear Gap in the EU Council and Commission Documents (2011) on Early School Leaving Prevention

EU Commission Thematic Working Group on early school leaving report (2013):

"Ensure children and young people are at the centre of all policies aimed at reducing ESL. Ensure their voices are taken into account when developing and implementing such policies."

Authoritarian Teaching

In Poland (CBOS 2006), a national survey of 3,085 students, 900 teachers and 554 parents, across 150 schools
-Experience of school violence from teachers towards students was reported directly as being hit or knocked over by 6% of students with 13% reporting having observed this occur for others. Teachers' use of offensive language towards students was reported by 16% as having been experienced directly individually and 28% as observed towards other students.

Pyhältö et al. (2010) Finland, 518 students, 9th grade, 6 schools: 'unjustified and authoritarian behaviour that undermined pupil's agency was considered as a source of burden, anxiety, and anger'

Cefai & Cooper (2010), Malta review of qualitative research: 'the autocratic and rigid behaviour management approach adopted by many teachers in their response to misbehaviour. Their blaming and punitive approach was seen in many cases as leading to an exacerbation of the problem...It looks...that perceived victimisation by teachers was more prevalent and had more impact than victimisation and bullying by peers'

A number of US longitudinal studies provide evidence that a teacher's report of a supportive relationship with a student has positive effects on elementary students' behavioral and academic adjustment (Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz, 2009; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Hughes, Cavell, & Jackson, 1999; Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999; Meehan, Hughes, & Cavell, 2003; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, Swanson, & Reiser, 2008).

WHO (2012) Modifications that appear to have merit include:

• establishing a caring atmosphere that promotes autonomy;

• providing positive feedback;

• not publicly humiliating students who perform poorly;

• identifying and promoting young people's special interests and skills to acknowledge that schools value the diversity they bring

In the EU Commission public consultation 'Schools for the 21st century', classroom management strategies were raised as an issue needing to be better addressed by teacher initial education.

A school principal from the Estonian national report:

"schools can create circumstances where unwanted students feel that they have to leave... and they do..." (Tamm & Saar 2010, in Downes 2011).

The secondary education system in Lithuania according to a school management representative:*"The attitudes towards students have to change and then they will feel better at schools. [...] at the moment students are selected under the criteria „good" and „bad" and those who get the „bad" label do not want to stay at such school – they leave it"* (Taljunaite et al 2010, in Downes 2011)

No sunlight ! (Downes & Maunsell 2007)

"I can't wait to leave, I would leave tomorrow if I had the choice because I get picked on by a teacher"

"No some[teachers] think they own the school"

Primary to Postprimary Transition: A Systems Problem

Dublin, Ireland survey (Downes et al., 2006) of students in 4 primary (n=230) and 2 secondary schools (n=162):

*Approximately 74% of pupils at primary level (6th class) and 55% of students at secondary level (first year) stated that they are treated fairly by teachers in school.

*Approximately 15% of pupils at primary level (6th class) state that they are not treated fairly by teachers in school, whereas 25% of students at secondary level (first year) state that they are not treated fairly by teachers in school.

*These differences between 6th class primary and 1st year secondary are statistically significant.

Downes' (2004) student centered research in Ballyfermot, Dublin, 12 focus groups and 173 questionnaire responses from secondary students:

"Have anger management courses for teachers" (female, focus group):

"The teachers shouting at you. That makes me really, really down" (Age 13, F)

"If the teachers didn't roar at you" (Age 13, F)

"Have an equal teaching system and sack ignorant snobby teachers...very harsh teachers usually make me stay out of school" (Age 16, M)

Classroom Climate and Bullying: Discriminatory Bullying

Elamé's (2013) 10 country European study regarding 'the fundamental importance' of teacher influence on discriminatory bullying
-Those immigrant and Roma students who think the teacher exhibits similar behaviour towards 'native' and immigrant and Roma children in the class are those bullied least in the last 3 months.

In contrast, 'those who declare that their teacher favours native children over immigrant/Roma students are more vulnerable to suffer some form of bullying.
Specifically less than half (48 %) of the 123 [immigrant/Roma] children [across the 10 countries] who sense bias in the teachers' attitudes towards native classmates declare to have never been subjected to violence' (Elamé, 2013).

A Holistic Curricular Focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) for Bullying Prevention: Emotional Awareness and Students' Voices

A study of more than 213 programs found that if a school implements a quality SEL curriculum, they can expect better student behaviour and an 11 point increase in test scores (Durlak et al., 2011).

The gains that schools see in achievement come from a variety of factors—students feel safer and more connected to school and academic learning, children and teachers build strong relationships.

Durlak et al. (2011) highlight a range of SEL benefits indirectly related to bullying and school violence, for outcomes on SEL skills, Attitudes, Positive Social Behaviour, Conduct Problems, Emotional Distress and Academic Performance.

INCLUSIVE SYSTEMS AS EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Poverty impacts on mental health, mental health impacts on early school leaving

- Mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, disruptive behaviour disorders, eating disorders, or post-traumatic stress disorder, can negatively impact on a child's school success, as well as general well-being (Kessler 2009; World Health Organization 2003)

- Children living in low-income families are especially vulnerable to mental health difficulties (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2009; US Department of Health and Human Services 2001).

Even apart from poverty related depression, emotional distress contributes to early school leaving:

A troubling number of adolescents showing serious emotional distress and depression symptoms are at risk for school failure and dropout (Quiroga, Janosz, Lyons, & Morin, 2012; Thompson, Moody, & Eggert, 1994; Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, & Sumi, 2005).

Quiroga et al. (2013)
"interventions that target student mental health and negative self-perceptions are likely to improve dropout prevention".

Emotional trauma (bereavement, rape, sexual abuse, bullying, family break up, sleep related problems) – supports needed to prevent early school leaving

Irish Parliament and Senate Report on early school leaving (2010): Case studies of those who left school early due to trauma factors of rape, bereavement, sexual abuse

Wider referral processes – reach withdrawn kids
-Evidence suggests that the emotional support needs of withdrawn students, who are at risk of early school leaving, may be missed by teachers compared with those students displaying and externalising problems through aggression (Doll 1996; Downes 2004).

Downes & Maunsell (2007):
"Why do you think some people are dying ? Because there is no one to talk to"
- "we should do more personal development"
- "girls slit their wrists"
- "girls take tablets and slice their wrists"
- "girls sleeping around to hurt themselves, other ways instead of slitting wrists"

The downward spiral of mental disorders and educational attainment: a systematic review on early school leaving Pascale EschEmail author, Valéry Bocquet, Charles Pull, Sophie Couffignal, Torsten Lehnert, Marc Graas, Laurence Fond-Harmant and Marc Ansseau. BMC Psychiatry 2014 14:237

When adjusted for socio-demographic factors, mood disorders (e.g. depression) were significantly related to school dropout

Among anxiety disorders, after controlling for potentially confounding factors, social phobia was a strong predictor of poor educational outcomes

...as indicated by early school leavers themselves, were feeling too nervous in class and being anxious to speak in public, both representing symptoms of social phobia

Even apart from poverty related depression,
emotional distress contributes to early school leaving:
LONELINESS: Frostad et al. 2015 – intention to drop out

Heroin addiction and early school leaving in Estonia (Downes 2003)

Common system supports needed for bullying and early school leaving prevention (Downes & Cefai 2016)

School Climate, Teasing, Bullying

Cornell et al. (2013) "a climate of teasing and bullying in the school also deserves consideration. Notably, the increased dropout count that was associated with Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying was quite similar to the increases that were associated with FRPM [i.e., poverty] and academic failure".

Cornell et al. (2013) note that dropout programs often focus too narrowly on changes in individual students, without considering broader peer and school influences.

Inclusive Systems Approach (Downes & Cefai 2016): There is a striking commonality of interests with regard to strategic approaches for bullying prevention in schools and early school leaving prevention.

These include:
*direct and indirect effects of bullying on early school leaving relevant to perpetrators, victims and bully-victims (school absence, negative interpersonal relations with peers and conflict with teachers, low concentration in school, decreased academic performance, lower school belonging, satisfaction, and pedagogical well-being, with the effects of bullying exacerbated for those already at risk of early school leaving, negative school climate influences).

*teacher professional development and preservice preparation issues
*early warning systems to prevent the consequences of bullying through system level emotional, cognitive and social supports.

Common system supports needed for bullying and early school leaving prevention (Downes & Cefai 2016)

- Common systems of supports (transition focus from primary to post-primary, multiprofessional teams for complex needs, language support needs, family support services and education of parents regarding their approaches to communication and supportive discipline with their children, outreach to families to provide supports, addressing academic difficulties).

- Common causal antecedents (negative school climate, behavioural difficulties, trauma)

A Differentiated Approach to Involving Parents for Bullying Prevention: Family Support Services for High Risk Chronic Need

Systematic review by Lereya et al. (2013) involving 70 studies which concluded that both victims and bully/victims are more likely to be exposed to negative parenting behaviour, including abuse and neglect and maladaptive parenting.
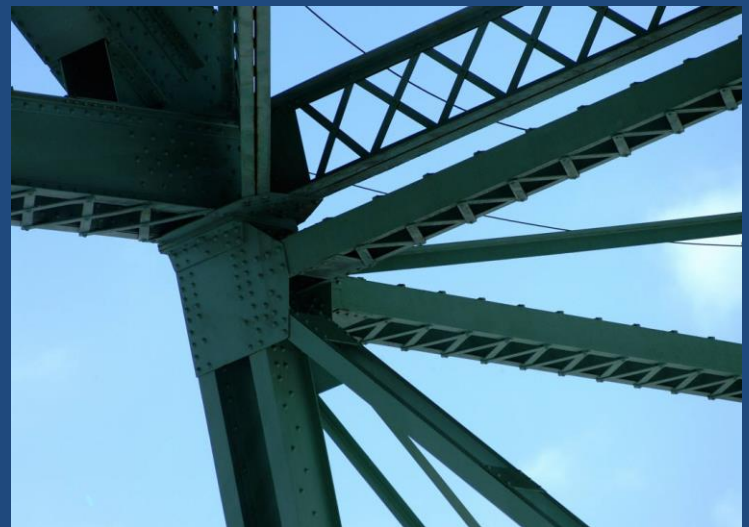
The *Alliances for Inclusion* report (Edwards & Downes 2013) reviewed the enabling conditions for the effectiveness of multidisciplinary teams and crosssectoral approaches for early school leaving prevention, building on 16 examples from 10 European countries.

-A policy focus is needed to go beyond multiple agencies -Need to minimise fragmentation across diverse services 'passing on bits of the child' and family (Edwards & Downes 2013)

-the multi-faceted nature of risk requires a multi-faceted response that needs to go beyond referrals to disparate services resulting in this 'passing on bits of the child'

For genuine interprofessional collaboration for early school leaving prevention, for example, between schools and multidisciplinary teams of outreach care workers, therapists/counsellors, nurses, speech and language therapists, social workers, occupational therapists, policy-led co-location is not sufficient.

Efforts are needed to support inter-professional collaborations and overcome resistance. (Edwards & Downes 2013)

OVERCOMING SYSTEM BLOCKAGE : FRAGMENTATION – Teams within one or two organisations not disparate agencies

From Multiple Agencies to Cohesive Multidisciplinary Teams for Early School Leaving Prevention

If possible, no more than two agencies to limit fragmentation and provide shared goals focus – restructure agencies for greater focus (Downes 2013b)

-Emotional support
-Outreach family support
-Speech and language

Parental Involvement (Downes 2014a): Structural Indicator - Availability of School Site After School Hours for Lifelong Learning Classes for Parents

Country	On a scale of 1-3 where 3 means at least 80% of schools in your municipality open their doors after school hours for lifelong learning classes and 2 means at least 30% of schools do so and 1 means less than 30% of schools do so – which number best describes the situation in your municipality?
The Hague	3
Gijon	3
Tallinn	2
Stockholm	2
Antwerp	1
Usti	1
Munich	1
Nantes	1
Sofia	1

Fig. 1 Diametric Dualism

Fig. 2 Concentric Dualism

Move from Diametric Spatial-Relational Systems of Assumed Separation to Concentric Spatial-Relational Systems of Assumed Connection

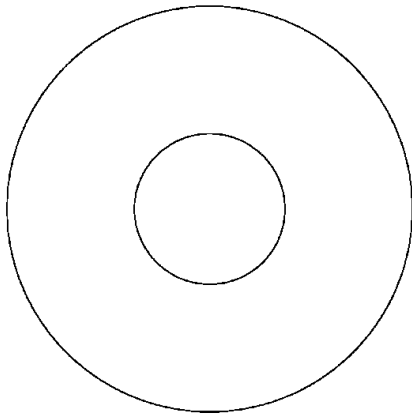**Assumed connection and assumed separation**

Concentric and diametric spaces: Foreground-background interaction (openness) versus non interaction (closure)   (Downes 2012, 2013, 2016)

Fig. 1 Diametric Dualism

Fig. 2 Concentric Dualism

Diametric spatial systems: mirror image inverted symmetry (Levi-Strauss 1963, 1973)

Mirror image reversals:
- powerful/powerless – hierarchy systems of splitting
- 'Good/bad' student framing

Need to shift to concentric spatial-relational systems of assumed connection, openness and from diametric spatial systems of assumed separation, splitting, hierarchy, fragmentation, closure (Downes 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017)

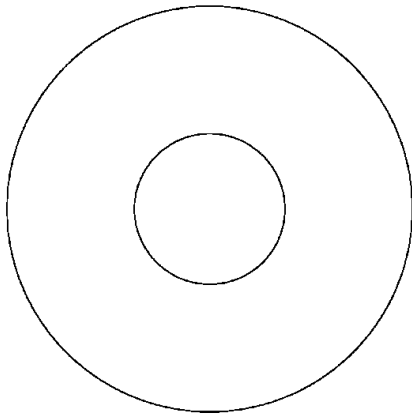Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2009). 2009 Kids count data book: State profiles of wellbeing. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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