

You are kindly invited to the public defense to obtain the degree of

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES**

of Ms. Alexis Nouvelle Joson

Which will take place digitally on Thursday, 01 December 2022 at 4 p.m.  
(Brussels time)

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**“WHEN PEOPLE BELONG, THEY INVEST”  
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE BENEFITS OF PLACE-  
BASED EDUCATION IN K-12 FOR BOTH LEARNERS AND  
THEIR COMMUNITIES**

**JURY**

**INTERNAL:**

**Prof. dr. Tom Vanwing, Chair,  
Dpt. Educational Sciences  
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**Dr. Maurice De Greef,  
Dpt. Educational Sciences  
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**Prof. dr. Joost Vaesen,  
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**EXTERN:**

**Prof. dr. Julie Ernst, College of Education, University of Minnesota Duluth**

**Prof. dr. Martine Baers, Department of Educational and Developmental Psychology,  
Erasmus University Rotterdam**

**PROMOTER(S)**

**Prof. dr. Koen Lombaerts,  
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## SUMMARY

The skills and experiences that young people gain early in their school life can empower their current and future decisions, behaviours, and actions and impact those around them. The central aim of this dissertation is to contribute to educational change and innovation by exploring and bringing forward “place-based education” in K-12 as an approach that can bring together and promote skills such as self-regulated learning, lifelong and life-wide learning, and digital competencies. The study consists of two sections, a conceptual and an empirical section, applying a qualitative approach using a systematic literature review, a conceptual note, and two forms of case studies, in which the designs were influenced by the onset of the global pandemic. The research results show that place-based education can serve as an integrating context for teaching and learning about the places that we live in through a dual emphasis on learning. In bringing forward place-based education to today's context and demonstrating its impact on academic and non-academic outcomes in K-12, this dissertation provided a foundation to explore place-based education's links to other very relevant skills. A closer look into the case studies showed promising moments of direct and indirect promotion of self-regulated learning in K-5. This inquiry also provided a rich insight and perspective into the challenges and opportunities of remote place-based education.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Alexis Nouvelle Joson holds nine years of work experience in for-profit, government, and private organizations in the fields of education, learning sciences, and international development in Asia and in Europe. She received a bachelor's degree in development studies (De La Salle University, Manila) and a master's degree in educational sciences (Vrije Universiteit Brussel). She started her career for a local political consultancy firm in the Philippines and at the Office of the President of the Philippines, focusing on research and communications. Her first full-time work was for an international development consultancy as a development data analyst. Wanting to put focus on her work in international development, she discovered education by working in primary schools in K-5 in China, Thailand, and Myanmar. Feeling the passion and commitment to continue empowering young people, her master's studies internship introduced her to STEM higher education and the field of EdTech start-ups in Amsterdam, discovering her doctoral thesis topic, “place-based education”, which she conducted during a 4-year scholarship at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

As she now attempts to bring together the fields of education and international development in her career, her current themes of interest span lifelong and life-wide learning, learning cities, and spaces, design thinking and educational change and innovation, sustainability, and the intersections of local and global development and education.