

ENSEC Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients

The ENSEC Lifetime Achievement Award was established to recognize individuals whose outstanding scholarship, leadership, and dedication have made a lasting contribution to the advancement of Social and Emotional Learning. Their work has influenced policy, research, and practice internationally, helping to create more supportive, inclusive, and effective learning environments for young people. While the award was not presented from the first ENSEC conference onwards, it has become an important tradition in honoring pioneers whose work has shaped the field and inspired generations of researchers, educators, and practitioners. ENSEC is proud to recognize these remarkable individuals and their enduring legacy within the international community of social and emotional education.

Over the years, the award has been presented to several distinguished scholars and leaders, including:



Sir Michael Rutter (1933–2021)

Recipient: 5th ENSEC 2015 Lisbon, Portugal

Sir Michael Rutter was widely regarded as the founding figure of modern child psychiatry and developmental psychopathology. As Professor at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, he pioneered research on child development, resilience, autism, family influences, and the impact of adversity on mental health. His groundbreaking studies transformed understanding of how biological, psychological, and social factors interact in children's development. Knighted for his services to medicine and child psychiatry, Rutter's work has influenced generations of researchers and practitioners worldwide. His contributions continue to shape contemporary approaches to children and adolescent mental health.



Dan Olweus (1931–2020)

Recipient: 6th ENSEC, 2017 Stockholm, Sweden

Professor Dan Olweus was an internationally recognized pioneer in bullying research. Based at the University of Bergen, Norway, he conducted the first systematic scientific

studies of school bullying and developed the highly influential Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. His work fundamentally changed how schools, policymakers, and researchers understand and address bullying worldwide. Through decades of scholarship and advocacy, Olweus helped establish safer and more supportive school environments for millions of children and young people.



Helen Cowie

Recipient: 7th ENSEC, 2019, Budapest, Hungary

Professor Helen Cowie is internationally known for her pioneering work on bullying prevention, peer support, youth mental health, and wellbeing. Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey and Fellow of the British Psychological Society, she has authored numerous influential publications on emotional development, cyberbullying, peer relationships, and school violence. Her research has emphasized the importance of student voice, peer-led interventions, and inclusive school communities. Through her scholarship and advocacy, she has made a lasting contribution to social and emotional education across Europe and beyond.



Roger P. Weissberg (1951–2021)

8th ENSEC, 2022 Suceava, Romania (Postmortem)

Professor Roger Weissberg was one of the world's leading advocates for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). He served as Distinguished Professor at the University of Illinois Chicago and as Chief Knowledge Officer and Vice Chair of CASEL. Weissberg's research and leadership were instrumental in establishing SEL as a major international field of educational research and practice. His work demonstrated the importance of integrating social, emotional, and academic development to promote

student success and wellbeing. His legacy continues to influence education systems around the world.



Maurice J. Elias

8th ENSEC, 2022 Suceava, Romania

Professor Maurice J. Elias is a leading scholar in social-emotional learning, character development, and educational psychology. Professor Emeritus at Rutgers University, he has dedicated his career to advancing evidence-based approaches that promote students' social, emotional, ethical, and academic growth. As a prolific author, researcher, and advocate, Elias has played a central role in translating SEL research into educational practice and policy. His contributions have helped schools worldwide foster positive learning environments and whole-child development.



Stephen N. Elliott

9th ENSEC, 2024 Chania, Greece

Professor Stephen N. Elliott is an internationally respected educational psychologist whose work has significantly advanced assessment, intervention, and inclusive education practices. His research has focused on academic competence, social skills, educational equity, and the development of evidence-based methods for supporting student success. Through his scholarship, leadership, and mentoring, Elliott has influenced educational psychology and contributed to improving outcomes for diverse learners across educational settings.