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Main policy lines of international organisations, relevant for education councils

State of affairs January - May 2010

OECD

1 The High Cost of Low Educational Performance

January 2010

This report uses recent economic modelling to relate cognitive skills (as measured by PISA and other national instruments) to economic growth. The relationship indicates that relatively small improvement in the skills of a nations' labour force can have very large impacts on future well-being.

A modest goal of having all OECD countries boost their average PISA scores by 25 points over the next 20 years implies an aggregate gain of OECD GDP of USD 115 trillions, over the lifetime of the generation born in 2010.

Bringing all countries up to the average performance of Finland (OECD's best performing in PISA) implies a gain of USD 260 trillion.

The report also shows that it is the quality of learning outcomes, and not the length of schooling which makes the difference.

There is uncertainty in these projections, but nonetheless, even reducing the projections to allow for plausible minimal estimates, suggests very large implications of improved cognitive skulls and human capital.

Changing schools and educations institutions is a difficult task. Moreover, countries that have attempted reforms of schools, often find that results in terms of student achievement are relatively modest. But, at the same time, the results form countries achieving high and equitable learning outcomes in PISA (Finland in Europe; Canada) or from those that have seen rapid improvements in the quality of schooling (Poland) underline that doing better is possible.

Policy conclusions: There are enormous gains to be had by OECD countries that can improve the cognitive skills of their populations. The gains far outstrip the value of short-run business-cycle management.

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/28/44417824.pdf>

You can see Andreas Schleicher highlight the key messages from this report at the Lisbon Council on youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsthK7oWpi0>

2 TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey)

Data are now available for all countries combined as well as for individual countries.

<http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TALIS>

3 Educating Teachers for Diversity. Meeting the challenge.

19 March 2010

This publication explores the concepts underlying diversity in various contexts and the challenges involved in creating an evidence base to guide policy makers.

The issue of education teachers for diverse classrooms must be addressed urgently.

http://www.oecd.org/document/38/0,3343,en_2649_35845581_44572006_1_1_1_1,00.html

4 Are the New Millennium Learners Making the Grade?

15 April 2010

What is the relationship between technology use and educational performance in science?

The OECD PISA 2006 provides a source of evidence for the analysis of this relationship.

This report presents the main findings and policy implications of this analysis. This work was carried out under the umbrella of the CERI's New Millennium Learners project.

One of the most striking findings of this study is that the digital divide in education goes beyond the issue of access to technology. A new second form of digital divide has been identified: the one existing between those who have the right competencies to benefit from computer use, and those who don't. these competencies and skills are closely linked to the economic, cultural and social capital of the student.

http://www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3343,en_2649_35845581_45000313_1_1_1_1,00.html

5 Closing the gap for immigrant students: policies, practice and performance.

2010

The OECD reviews of migrant education were designed to help policy makers develop and implement migrant education policy that will make a difference.

This book offers comparative data on access, participation and performance of immigrant students and their native peers and identifies a set of policy options. It can be of special interest of teachers, school leaders, parents and all those who are active in immigrant communities.

http://www.oecd.org/document/53/0,3343,en_2649_39263231_44870901_1_1_1_37455,00.html