



Towards effective stakeholder participation in education policy making

In the countries and in the regions

Report of the seminar of the European Network of Education Councils

Madrid, 9-10 May 2023

Brussels, August 2023
EUNEC secretariat, Koning Albert II-laan 37, 1030 Brussels

www.eunec.eu



INTRODUCTION

EUNEC is the **European Network of Education Councils**. Its members advise the governments of their countries or regions on education and training. EUNEC aims to discuss the findings and recommendations of all European projects in education and training, to determine standpoints and to formulate statements on these issues. EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-actively towards the European Commission, relevant DGs and other actors at European level, and to promote action by EUNEC's members and participants at national and regional level. EUNEC also has the objective that the councils should put internationalisation and mobility high on the national agenda, that they should clarify the European policy in education and training towards all relevant stakeholders.

PROGRAMME

Venue: Consejo Escolar del Estado, Calle de San Bernardo, 49, 28015, Madrid

Tuesday 9 May 2023

Chair of the day: Manuel Miguéns, EUNEC president and secretary general of the Portuguese Education Council

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|---------------|---|
| 9.00 – 9.30 | Registration and Coffee |
| 9.30 – 9.50 | Welcome session <ul style="list-style-type: none">– By Manuel Miguéns, President of EUNEC– By Leen Van Heurck, Secretary General of EUNEC– By Encarna Cuenca Carrión, President of CEE |
| 9.50 – 10.10 | Round table with Spanish stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Begoña Ladrón de Guevara Pascual and José Antonio Martínez Sánchez, on "The search for consensus on proposals aimed to influence education policymaking."– Jesús Pueyo Val and Antonio Frías del Val on "Elaboration of reports over legislative projects in the Spanish Council."– Q&A |
| 10.10 – 10.50 | Exploring ways to establish structures allowing stakeholders involvement in education policies. <ul style="list-style-type: none">– By CONFEMEN (Conference of Ministers of Education of French-speaking States and Governments), Abdel Rahamane Baba-Moussa– Q&A |

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- 10.50 – 11.10 Short break
- 11.10 – 11.50 New Social Contract for Education: Strengthening the research, practice, policy nexus.
- by Dr. Anantha Duraiappah, Director of UNESCO MGIEP
 - Q&A
- 11.50 – 12.30 Policy advice, research findings and stakeholder involvement
- By Mirjam Van Leeuwen, Secretary Director of the Dutch Education Council and Karin Westerbeek, Senior Advisor at the Dutch Education Council
 - Q&A
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 – 19.00 Visit at the regional council of Castilla-La Mancha in Toledo, with presentations and exchange related to the Spanish model, with regional and national education councils
- Visit of the city of Toledo
- 19.00 Conference dinner in Toledo

Wednesday 10 May 2023

Chair of the day: Leen Van Heurck, EUNEC secretary general and secretary general of the Flemish Education Council

- 9.30 – 10:15 What does participatory evaluation bring to education policies?
- Paul Cotton, Phd candidate, teaching and research assistant, Sciences po Lyon
 - Q&A
- 10.15 – 11.15 Inspiring practices on involving stakeholders in the production of policy advice, part 1
- Consultation process leading to revision of Teaching Council standards of initial teacher education, by Brid Murphy, head of Initial Teacher Education & Introduction, Irish Teaching Council
 - Inspiring coeducational policies from the Spanish Education Council, by Pilar Ezpeleta Piorno, Director General of Universities in the Valencia Region, Spanish Education Council

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- Involving stakeholders in the preparation of a recommendation on a possible reorganization of the school year in Flanders, by Marleen Colpin, Flemish Education Council
 - Stakeholder involvement before, during and after the advisory process by Sandra Loois, Communications officer, Dutch Education Council
- 11.15 – 11.30 Short break
- 11.30 - 12.30 Inspiring practices on involving stakeholders in the production of policy advice, part 2
- Stakeholders' Involvement in Education Public Policies in Morocco : The role of the Higher Council for Education, Training & Scientific Research., Laila El Khamlichi, Project Manager, CSEFRS, Morocco
 - A scientific and participatory approach for building bridges in education, by Lucile Piedfer-Quênay, Project Manager, Cnesco, France
 - Stakeholder participation in the process of preparing and voting advice and recommendations, by Conceição Gonçalves and António Dias, Portuguese Education Council
 - School student participation on national level. Good practices from the Flemish School Students Union, by Frédéric Piccavet and Jesse Verbeeck, Flemish School Students Union
- 12.30 – 12.40 Closing words by the president
- 12.40 Closing lunch



Welcome session

Manuel Miguéns, EUNEC president and secretary general of the Portuguese Education Council

Manuel Miguéns welcomes all participants on behalf of EUNEC, and thanks the Spanish Council, which is one of the founding members, for hosting this event.

Manuel Miguéns stresses the diversity of the EUNEC members, showing a variety of advisory processes. Some councils base their recommendations mainly on expert input, other councils mainly on participation of stakeholders, whilst all councils combine both. The objective is to produce better advice in education policy making. This seminar will offer the opportunity to listen to experts in the field of stakeholder participation and to exchange inspiring approaches.

Leen Van Heurck, EUNEC secretary general and secretary general of the Flemish Education Council

Leen Van Heurck expresses her strong belief in the added value of international cooperation and exchange. She stresses the democratic principle on which all education Councils are built: give a voice to all stakeholders, build a vision together to make education stronger.

Encarna Cuenca Carrión, president of the Spanish Education Council

Encarna Cuenca, on behalf of the Spanish Council, is honored to host this international audience to share perspectives and experiences that can help foster stakeholder participation in the design of education policies. She refers to the celebration, today on 9 May, of 'Europe day', to foster peace and unity in Europe. The date marks the anniversary of the historic 'Schuman declaration' that set out his idea for a new form of political cooperation in Europe, considered to be the beginning of what is now the European Union.

To illustrate the importance of cooperation and exchange of perspectives, Encarna Cuenca reads a text by José Ortega y Gasset (*El tema de nuestro tiempo*, from 'Obras Completas', vol. III, *Revista de Occidente*, Madrid, 1966-1969). Below is the translation in English:

"From different viewpoints, two men gaze at the same landscape. However, they do not see the same thing. Their different positions mean that the landscape is laid out before each of them in a different way. What for one occupies their first impression and strongly accentuates all its details, for the other is considered of least concern, and remains dark and blurred. In addition, since items are placed one behind the other and are thus hidden in whole or in part, each of them will see portions of the landscape that the other does not. Would it make sense for each to declare the other landscape false? Clearly not. Each is as real as the other. However, neither would it make sense that, having agreed that their landscapes do not coincide, that they judge them to be illusions. This would suppose that there is a third authentic landscape, which is not subjected to the same conditions as the other two. Now, this archetypal landscape does not exist nor can it exist. Perspective is one of the components of reality."

Round table with Spanish stakeholders

Jesús Pueyo Val and Antonio Frías del Val on “Elaboration of reports over legislative projects in the Spanish Council”

The speakers explain how the Permanent Commission transfers the draft legislative projects from the Ministry to the Council. The Commission analyses the draft project and elaborates a first draft document, to be distributed to all members of the Council. The members then discuss and can amend the draft text; they can give their opinion, make their voice heard. All amendments will be included in the next document, leading to a final recommendation.

The speakers stress that the reports of the Council are just proposals, they are not binding. However, it is clear that the administration has taken into account an important percentage of the proposals.

Begoña Ladrón de Guevara Pascual and José Antonio Martínez Sánchez, on “The search for consensus on proposals aimed to influence education policymaking.”

The speakers stress the importance of the annual report that is being prepared by the Council. The report brings an overview of the actual state of Spanish education and is approved by the plenary.

For the full report ‘El estado del sistema educativo’ 2022 (in Spanish) we refer to the website of the Council: [Informe 2022 sobre el estado del sistema educativo. Curso 2020-2021 - Consejo escolar del estado | Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional \(educacionyfp.gob.es\)](https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/informacion-y-comunicacion/informacion-y-comunicacion/2022/01/Informe-2022-sobre-el-estado-del-sistema-educativo-curso-2020-2021-consejo-escolar-del-estado)



Exploring ways to establish structures allowing stakeholders involvement in education policies.

By CONFEMEN (Conference of Ministers of Education of French-speaking States and Governments), Abdel Rahamane Baba-Moussa

CONFEMEN is the Conference of Ministers of Education of French-speaking States and Governments.



Professor Abdel Rahamane Baba-Moussa is secretary general of CONFEMEN.

The presentation consists of three parts:

- CONFEMEN, a Francophone reference institution for the education policies in the Francophonie;
- the strategic plan 2022-2026 to support the countries to realise SDG4 in 2030;
- a partnership for the transformation of education.

CONFEMEN, a Francophone reference institution to support the education policies in the Francophonie

CONFEMEN stands for the right to quality education for all in accordance with the international and constitutional commitments of the States. Global values of the Francophonie are the promotion of the French language, democracy and human rights, peace and citizenship, cultural and linguistic diversity, equality between women and men.

The mission of CONFEMEN is

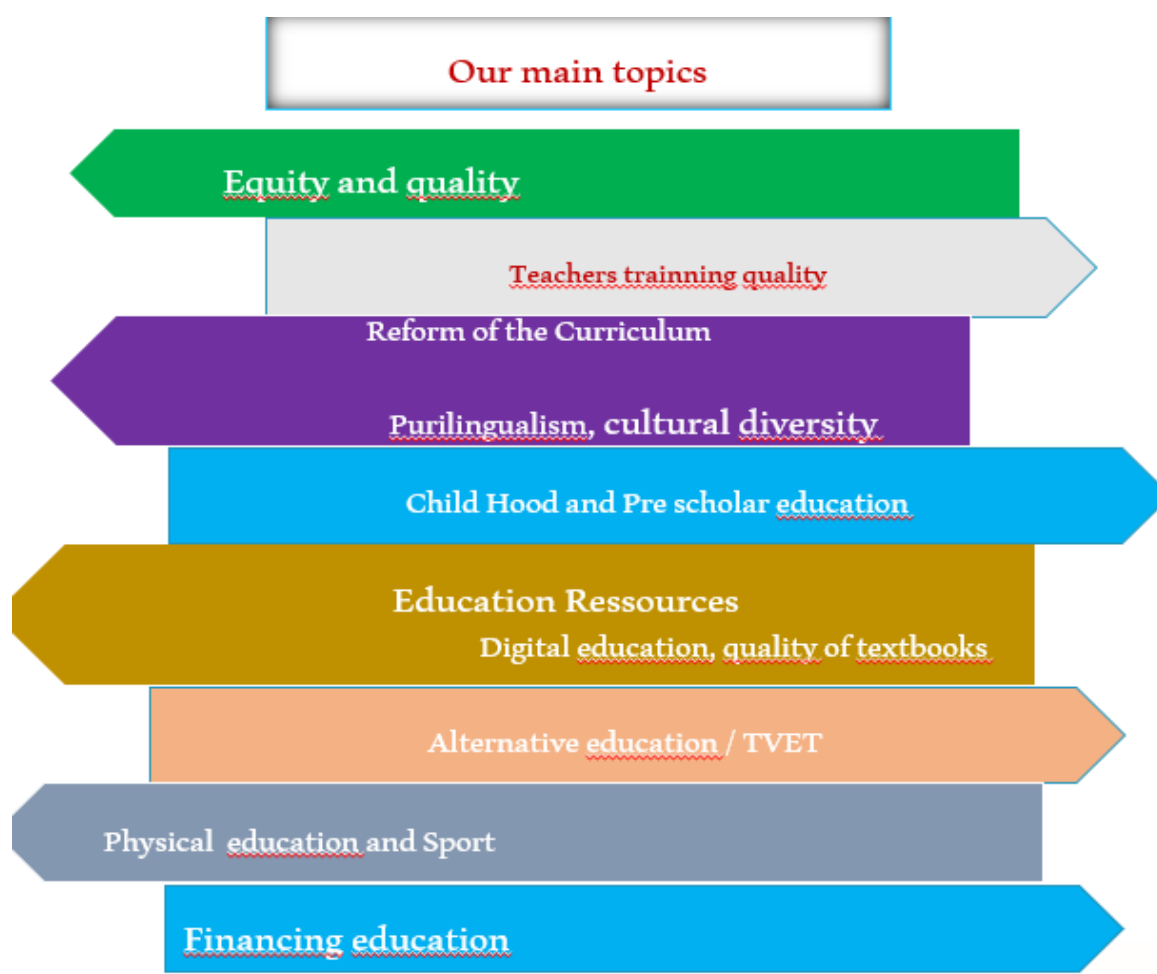
- to produce relevant and useful data to help decision-making;
- to facilitate policy dialogue between ministers, civil society and partners;
- to support education policies for a qualitative and inclusive transformation of education systems.

CONFEMEN committed to the following key issues:

- solving learning poverty in the country members;
- starting from the needs of the countries to help them achieve SDG4 in particular. A study has been conducted in 17 countries to see how they take into account SDG4 and how they implement policies to achieve the goal. It is clear that reaching SDG4 is not evident, that support is welcome.

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Below is an overview of the main topics addressed:



A strategic plan 2022-2026 geared towards achieving SDG4

The strategic plan has two complementary objectives:

- to support evidence-based education policies;
- to support pilot actions in countries to change, to transform education.

The objectives are realized by means of two main programmes:

- PASEC, the Programme for Education Systems Analysis; this programme intends to provide states with data for policy decisions on educational development. A number of national learning assessments has been conducted since 1991. CONFEMEN is the only organisation that conducts international assessments of learning outcomes in French-speaking countries in the South. Recently, 2 anglophone countries (non-members) have been participating in the evaluation, as well as some Spanish speaking countries.
- PACTE, the Programme of Support for Educational Change and Transformation; this programme intends to transform education through sharing knowledge, good practice and pilot actions.

A partnership for the transformation of education

CONFEMEN works together with a range of partners, public and intergovernmental agencies and NGO's, such as UNESCO, CNAM CNESCO (for the organisation of a first

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education stakeholders conference in Dakar), ADEA (for early childhood advocacy), Sightsavers (with the aim to adapt the methodology of PASEC for children with disabilities), ...

For the future, CONFEMEN is in search of new potential partners for their new projects in line with the real needs of the States. New projects often deal with vocational and technical education and training. This is a relatively new area, starting from the increasing need for professional skills. CONFEMEN calls for new ways of cooperation, not only in Europe, but globally.

We refer to [the presentation](#) of Abdel Rahamane Baba-Moussa at the EUNEC website.



A New Social Contract for Education: Strengthening the research, practice, policy nexus.

Dr. Anantha Duraiappah, Director of UNESCO MGIEP

[MGIEP](#) is UNESCO's Category 1 Research Institute focused on Transforming Education towards SDG 4.7 through programmes that promote social and emotional learning, innovate digital pedagogies and empower youth. UNESCO MGIEP recognises the urgent need for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to be mainstreamed into education systems to transform education and shape a future that is geared towards providing peace and human flourishing. SEL can be described as learning that allows all learners to identify and navigate emotions, practice mindful engagement and exhibit prosocial behaviour for human flourishing towards a peaceful and sustainable planet.



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**Mahatma Gandhi Institute of
Education for Peace and
Sustainable Development**



Professor Duraiappah has been the director of MGIEP since 2014. A science-policy pacesetter, with over 33 years' experience, he now plays a key role in positioning UNESCO MGIEP as a leading research institute on education for peace, sustainable development and global citizenship.

UNESCO's new global initiative on the Futures of Education looks at 2050 and beyond and seeks to understand how education can shape the future of humanity and the planet. The initiative is catalysing a global debate on how knowledge, education and learning need to be reimagined in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and precarity. The initiative takes a deep dive into the state of education in the world and has the ambition to identify needs and to look for solutions.

The learning crisis was the focus of the World Development Report 2018 (pre-COVID) of the World Bank. The situation is scary. 1 child out of 10 is left behind in Europe, 3 children out of 10 are left behind globally.

Professor Duraiappah identifies a number of reasons for this global learning crisis:

- individual differences are ignored;
- meritocracy is used as an equalizer, but equity is ignored; the 'meritocracy trap' became stronger with the privatisation of education, but we tend to forget that primary conditions are different;
- the mother tongue is ignored;
- the whole brain approach is ignored. In our schools we encourage pupils to be on top, we tend to create 'predators' instead of flourishing adults. Humans are born

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with empathy and compassion; it is sometimes killed by education. It is important to be aware that cognitive and soft skills are connected, in the brains.

The bottom line is that there is a lack of science and evidence in decision making, and at the same time a lack of understanding the demands of the client. This crisis goes hand in hand with a crisis in the field of mental health (with, for instance, higher numbers of suicide with youngsters in India, after the exams, because young people fail to meet the expectations of the parents).

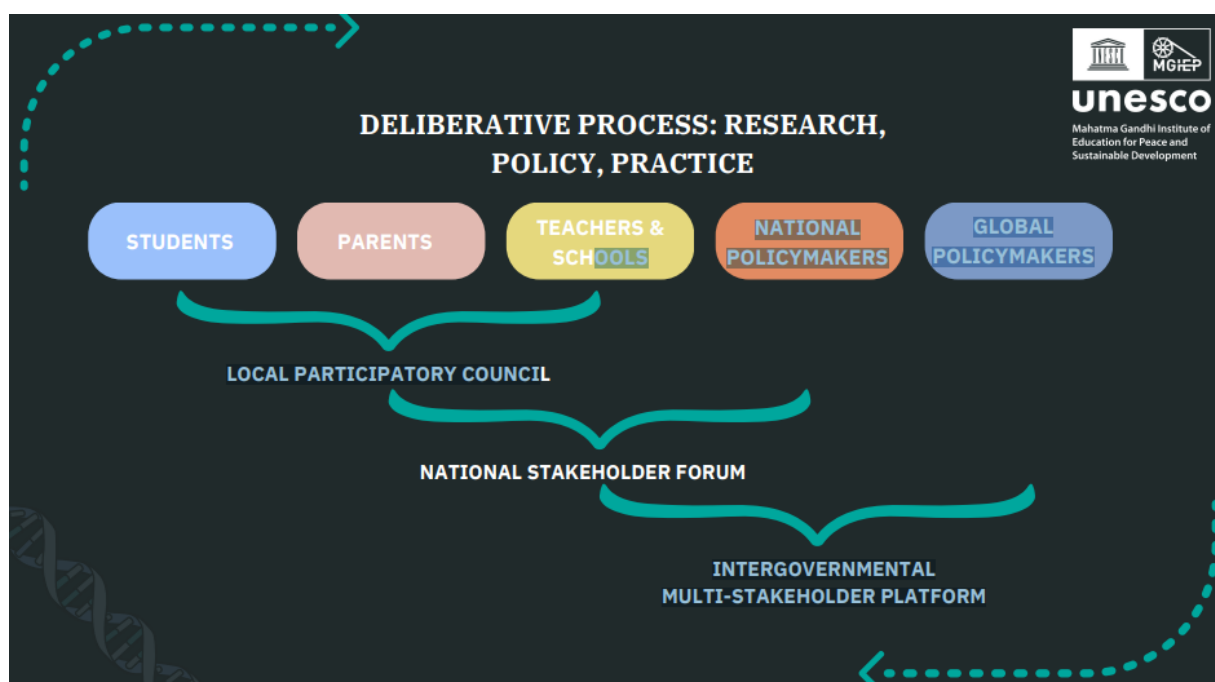
There is thus the need for a **new social contract for education**. A social contract is an agreement between members of a society, community, organisation, that spells out the obligations, functions and rights of each person agreeing to the contract. A social contract can be legalised or informal.

The following scheme illustrates how deliberative processes, involving all stakeholders, can contribute to better education policy. Professor Duraiappah refers to the introduction of today, where Encarna Cuenca stressed the importance of perspective thinking. Skills such as 'perspective thinking' (understand the other from his perspective), 'learning to listen' (attention regulation) can be trained effectively. All stakeholders mentioned in the scheme below have to be listened to: they are the 'clients' of education, they know what they want.

Pupils and students are not too young to know what they need. In the area of evaluation, for instance, they state that they are looking for other forms of evaluation than the traditional exams.

Parents need to be brought back to education. They need to be involved, they need to be listened to, they need to take their responsibility.

Teachers and school leaders are in the middle of the educational process: their voice is crucial, their needs have to be taken into account.



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This deliberative process plays at different levels.

- the level of an intergovernmental multi-stakeholder platform;
- the level of a national stakeholder forum;
- the level of local participatory councils.

How to set up these platforms remains an issue; there is work to be done to formalise and institutionalise the processes described, in order to have real impact at the level of decision making. Exchanges such as today's conference, between education stakeholders and members of education councils, can contribute to finding answers.

Education policy making needs to be science driven and evidence based. But these conditions are not sufficient. In addition, there is need for deliberative participation, for consensus decision making, and for what professor Duraiappah calls 'foundational competencies'. 'Social emotional learning' (SEL) can have a huge impact on (cognitive) school success, if it is integrated in the school system, and if it is based on evidence across countries.

For an overview of those foundational competencies, professor Duraiappah refers to the KISME framework, which is the result of a consensual process. The competencies can be clustered under five headers:

- kindness (there is evidence on how to learn to be kind);
- interpersonal communication (the ability to agree to disagree);
- social thinking;
- mental focus;
- empathy.

These competencies are a requirement to come to terms, to find solutions, in interplay between emotions and ratio.



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Professor Duraiappah stresses that there are two fundamental questions related to education, and that we need responses from all stakeholders to those questions:

- What do we want from education? Productive individuals or flourishing individuals?
- Can the current education systems fulfil these aspirations? Yes, or no?

We refer to [the presentation](#) of Anantha Duraiappah at the EUNEC website

Questions and answers

- For Manuel Miguéns the two key take home messages are:
 - the importance of the combination of stakeholder participation and evidence in advisory processes;
 - the need to make stakeholder participation and deliberative participation institutionalised.
- The language in the presentation of professor Duraiappah is different than the language we are used to when talking about education. It is about 'kindness', about 'empathy'. In reality, there are a lot of tensions between education stakeholders. Education is not a world of peace. How to institutionalise peace in education? Professor Duraiappah agrees that, indeed, we have been talking about peace for ages, but we still have wars, and not only in education. He is convinced that building those 'foundational competencies' will help. MGIEP projects are designed based on those competences. After ten weeks of training, we do see results.
- This implies a big paradigm change. The question is whether school alone can go ahead with this change. Professor Duraiappah is convinced that school can create a safe space for young people, a peaceful and free environment. It happens!



Policy advice, research findings and stakeholder involvement



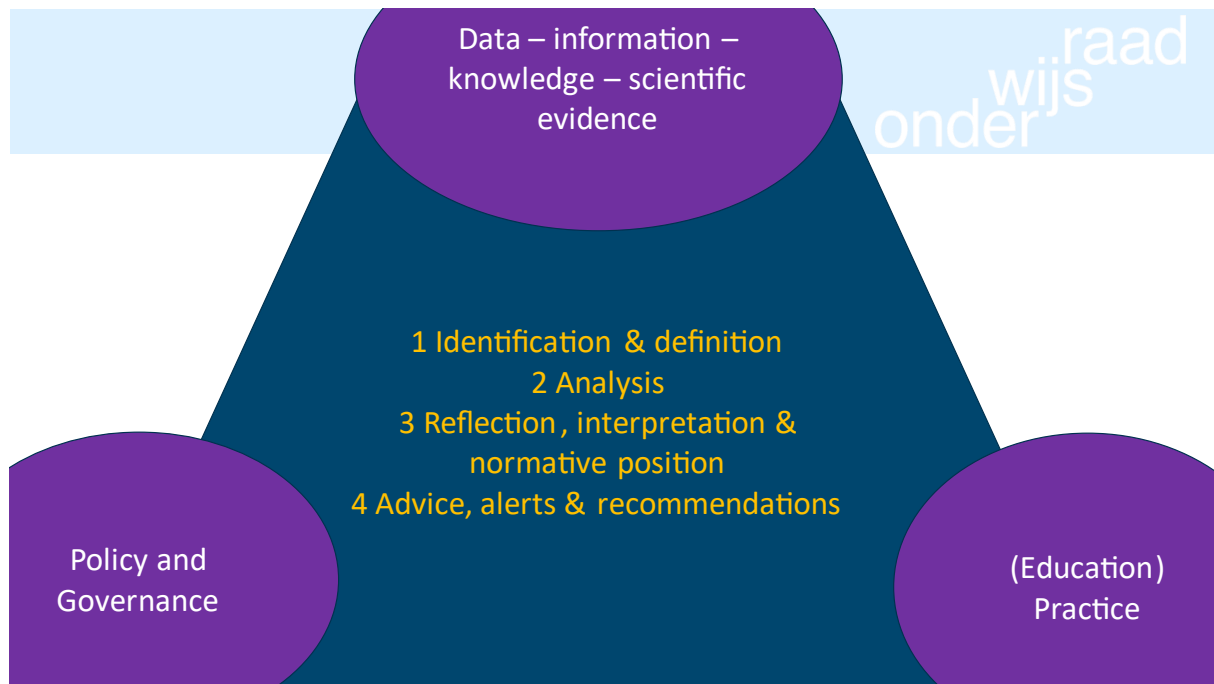
Mirjam van Leeuwen is Secretary Director of the Dutch Education Council



Karin Westerbeek is Senior Advisor at the Dutch Education Council

After a brief presentation of the Dutch Education Council, founded in 1919, Mirjam van Leeuwen and Karin Westerbeek explain the four fields of action situated in the triangle formed by data, knowledge, scientific evidence/policy and governance/education practice. Stakeholder involvement is important in all three domains.

- Identification and definition. What problems emerge? On what issues is our advice needed? How to frame the issue? In this phase, stakeholders are consulted for the view on trends and issues.
- Analysis. What is known about prevalence? About urgency? And from which sources? In this phase, every council member reaches out to his own networks, to collect facts and data, perspectives, information about policy and practice development.
- Reflection, interpretation, normative position. From which perspectives? Which values? When there is a lack of knowledge, extra knowledge is grasped by adding an expert, from the academic field or from educational practice.
- Advice, alerts, recommendations. Who should we address? Understanding of the political and governmental arena is key.



In those processes, the Dutch Education Council values the input by the Dutch Youth Education Council, experts by experience.

In the advice trajectory, the role of the Council advisors is important. How do scientific results, policy information and stakeholder views find their way to the Council? The Council advisors combine all this input to feed the Council members. The 11 advisors have a role as information managers 'We write, they decide'. They combine knowledge of research, policy and practice, with awareness of stakeholder interests and stakeholder views. For every advice a sub-commission (four members of the Council) is paired with a project team (four Council advisors). The head of this commission forms a tandem with the project leader.

Tasks differ depending on the stage of the advice trajectory. These are the four stages, that cover mostly about 9 to 12 months:

- orientation stage;
- outline stage;
- writing stage;
- publication stage.

In the following slide, more details are given for every stage about the product for the Council members and the goal of the stage.

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Stage	Product for the council members	Goal of this stage
Orientation stage	Information report	Provide an overview of knowledge available to help the council to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Come up with a precise advice question• Decide what kind of advice it should be• Gain state of the art knowledge of the particular advice topic
Outline stage	Advice outline = main message, supporting arguments and recommendations	Guide the council in developing the outline of the advice
Writing stage	First draft of advice report	Present a first complete draft to the commission and council, that can be discussed
Publication stage	Final advice report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finetuning of the advice• Enhancing impact

For every stage, the activities as information specialists are different.

- In the orientation stage, it is about broad desk research (analysis of policy document, academic papers, position papers, media, previous recommendations of the Council, analysis of stakeholders – which will be explained by Sandra Loois in the inspiring practices session). The desk research is complemented with interviews with experts in the field, visits of practice, panel discussions with stakeholders, and with the ministry of education.
- In the outline stage, calls for contributions are launched, if necessary, research is contracted, and a plan for communication is developed.
- In the writing stage, the information specialists continue in depth desk research and stay up to date with newly issued research, practice and policy documents.
- In the publication stage, if necessary, there will be additional contact with stakeholders and/or experts, and a publication strategy is developed.

Karin Westerbeek and Mirjam van Leeuwen identify a number of challenges for Council advisors:

- Council members from academia think that the answer is to be found in ever more (desk) research. We know that scientific findings never directly lead to policy advice. There are always values and perspectives to weigh.
- Or the opposite: stakeholders express strong views for which no evidence can be found.
- Stakeholders are indeed heard. But this does not mean that their position will automatically be written in the recommendation.

We refer to [the presentation](#) of Mirjam van Leeuwen and Karin Westerbeek at the EUNEC website.



Visit at the regional council of Castilla-La Mancha in Toledo

Presentations and exchange related to the Spanish model, with regional and national education Councils

The 17 Spanish autonomous regions all have their own regional education council. There is no hierarchic relationship between the national education council and the regional councils. The national 'Consejo Escolar del Estado' has a coordination role. All councils are different, but the debate is based on a common ground. All councils combine expert and stakeholder input in the production of policy advice.

Toledo is the home of the council of the autonomous region Castilla – La Mancha, one of the least habited regions in Spain, with 110 municipalities and only one city, Toledo.

Encarna Cuenca compliments EUNEC with the two books that have been published by the network:

- [Education Councils in the EU. Balancing expertise, societal advice and political control in the production of policy advice' | Eunec](#)
- [Education Councils in Europe. Going beyond the tensions' | Eunec](#)

She recommends both publications to the audience, and also refers to the EUNEC web page 'European heartbeat', where education policy makers and experts can find information about recent international education policy lines: [European Heartbeat | Eunec](#).

Manuel Miguéns stresses the double mission of education Councils, and of EUNEC:

- How to influence, as experts and stakeholders, European/international education policy?
- Have a clear view on how our regional/national education policy is impacted by European/international education policy.

Manuel Miguéns goes deeper into the big diversity of EUNEC members. There is a big variety in the extent to which stakeholders are involved, as demonstrated during this seminar. There are also big varieties in the level of independence of our member councils, and in the extent to which they have the right of initiative.

In her final reflection, Encarna Cuenca stresses the importance to listen to each other, from one person to another. Her final quote

"Nothing happens without people. Nothing lasts without institutions."



What does participatory evaluation bring to education policies?



Paul Cotton, Phd candidate, teaching and research assistant, Sciences po Lyon

Introduction and context

In 2021, Paul Cotton published, together with Clément Lacouette-Fougère, a paper with the title 'L'évaluation participative des politiques d'éducation: enseignements de la littérature'.

This work began with a request from Cnesco, a French organism which does studies about education practices and policies. One of its purposes is to provide solutions for a better education system for better scholar results, by enlightening good practices in France but also in other countries. Nathalie Mons, now replaced by Agnes Florin and André Trico, two professors of psychology, has been member of the EUNEC executive committee some years ago, and Cnesco is represented here today, as member of EUNEC.

The purpose of this paper was to clarify the concept of participatory evaluation, to be presented at an annual conference organized by the Cnesco.

During these conferences, members of the educational community and public decision-makers are brought together in participatory workshops to develop concrete recommendations on a chosen educational theme. These recommendations are often new public policies to implement, experiment, or adjust. And to draft these recommendations, the workshop participants rely on their experiences, but also on the scientific resources produced during the conference by researchers or by the Cnesco team. But sometimes, relying on scientific studies is not possible, due to a lack of research. In these cases, the Cnesco has to conduct scientific research on a specific theme.

For example, for the subject that interests us this morning, there were some relevant studies in France and in the international literature, but never with a clear focus on the issue of the conception, utilisation and contribution of this method to education public policies. Indeed, when you hear the word "evaluation" in education, you think of students or school programs rather than an evaluation on the public policies system itself. Or maybe, if you are a bureaucrat, when you hear "evaluation of the education policy" you will think of the PISA study - which has many qualities (and many defects), but not that of being a public policy evaluation.

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Something important to have in mind is that neither Clément Lacouette-Fougère, or Paul Cotton are specialists in education policy. They have worked on this subject from time to time in the context of previous professional activities as public policy evaluation consultants, but their research does not in any way focus on this theme. They are in fact currently preparing Phds in the field of political science, more focused on the evaluation of public policies as a general approach, in terms of methodological and developmental issues, and in the use of the results produced.

Method

Therefore, the starting point was the literature on public policy evaluation, but also literature about stakeholders' place in public policies. In these papers, a selected section deals with the participatory evaluation, a specific kind of evaluation commonly presented as the "mature kind" of evaluation. Only a few sections of these deal with the education field and are more a capitalisation of experiences rather than an academic discussion on methods or theories. So, it was necessary to complete the selection with papers focused on evaluation issues in education, and stakeholders' place in education policies and programmes. From these papers have been extracted all the points likely to clarify the issues and challenges of public policy evaluation in the field of education, and the challenge of combining this form of policy governance with stakeholder participation. At the end, the literature used is quite composite: more than 80 papers, one half focused on education policy, the other half on the methodological issues of evaluation and stakeholder involvement.

They have proceeded in three steps:

- comprehension of concepts and issues around the evaluation and the stakeholder involvement in education;
- focus on outputs and the added value of all theories and methods found;
- a look in detail at how these methods are applied and their contributions (or not) to improving public intervention. To this end, 6 "good practices" of approaches have been selected, that can be considered as "participatory evaluation", even if they do not always claim to be one.

Results

Participatory evaluation: what is it?

Sometimes described as an "innovative" approach, participatory evaluation came from participatory mechanisms in the US and international development aid programs in the early 1970's. It was mainly experimental or trial and failure approaches. During the 1980's / 1990's, some researchers tried to conceptualise several methodological approaches. This was a complex task: participatory evaluations differ from traditional summative evaluations in that they have a "value engaged" dimension. They start from the principle that any human intervention in a process is not neutral and conveys a frame of reference of values that helps to orient the results of the evaluation. This difference is found in the "active participation" of stakeholders in the evaluation process.

Stakeholders can be public decision-makers, operators in charge of implementation, direct and indirect beneficiaries, representatives of civil society and even "ordinary" citizens. They can be involved at different moments of the evaluation (we then talk about depth of participation): definition of the mandate, data collection, writing of recommendations. They can also have more or less strong roles in the process (we talk

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about scale of participation): decision-making power, level of involvement (simply listening for advice, or decision-making power on the whole process).

This shows the conceptual problem: there does not seem to be a magic formula. At what point does a true participatory evaluation begin? What depth and scale should be chosen? There is much debate in the literature on this subject. Still today, there are no standards, but evaluators agree on 3 points: to be a participatory one, the evaluation process has to:

- identify and select a diversity of stakeholders;
- involve them at different stages of the evaluation process (not only one);
- and give them the capacity to influence evaluation process and results.

What concrete methodological approaches have been put in place?

The idea here is to see what concrete forms this takes, and what the reasons may be for adopting one form or another.

In total, nearly 11 methodological "currents" have been identified. The oldest conceptual framework is the Rapid Rural Appraisal, developed in 1981. It is very specific and is based on the integration of peasant knowledge in the evaluation. This framework is also one of the most restricted. Gradually, more holistic and general approaches have been developed, such as "Empowerment Evaluation" or "Collaborative Evaluation". More recently, we have seen the development of practices that are again more specific, around the issue of minority inclusiveness. This is the case of culturally responsive evaluation, or the indigenous evaluation framework.

Paul Cotton goes deeper into the explanation of 3 relevant methods.

First, the **Collaborative Evaluation Approach** developed by Cousins and al. (CEA). It's one of the most complete. The purpose is to closely associate stakeholders in the evaluation process while ensuring the quality and utility of the results.

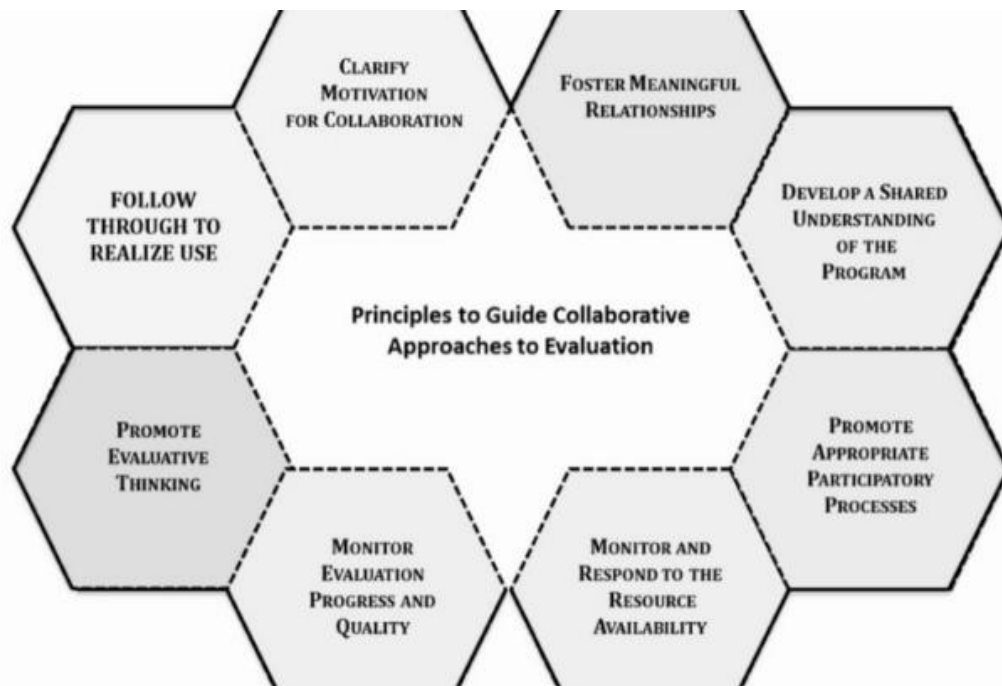
This approach is based on many steps:

- Clarify incentives to collaborate: This is to ensure that all associated stakeholders understand and are sincerely involved in the evaluation process. This limits the possibility of intentional sabotage of the process by one of the stakeholders. One way of enabling this involvement is to give stakeholders a role in the design and framing of the process (objectives, methodology, etc.).
- Promote constructive relationships: the most important thing is to succeed in building trust between evaluators and the stakeholders involved. The authors emphasize the importance of "cultural" skills and the evaluator's ability to quickly integrate into the stakeholder ecosystem and appropriate its codes so as not to appear "outside" the process.
- Work toward a shared understanding of the programme being evaluated. This principle can be embodied in the involvement of stakeholders during the time of understanding and review of the policy or program being evaluated (for example, detailing the objectives together).
- Promote and facilitate appropriation of the participation process. One of the challenges for the evaluator is to understand the power asymmetries between stakeholders and to succeed in mitigating them. For example, this means ensuring

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that everyone has the same amount of time to speak and that the debate is open to all points of view.

- Secure the availability of resources and data: The evaluator's role here is to consider the limitations of access to data and resource persons.
- Pay attention to the quality of the evaluation process. Although the evaluation process may evolve as it is deployed, the evaluator should not ignore the quality and robustness of the study. For example, just because a consensus emerges among the stakeholders does not mean that he or she automatically considers the data presented. The role of the evaluator is to recall these analyses and to seek to challenge the findings of the participants.
- A principle directly related to the previous one: promoting evaluative thinking. Participants are not necessarily aware of the ins and outs of an evaluation process! It is up to the evaluator to explain them whenever necessary.
- Ensuring follow-up and use of results. The evaluation does not end with the final report, and the evaluator may still have a role beyond that. For example, by promoting the report or the method. However, this is complicated because the relationship between the client and the provider often limits the diffusion of studies.



Second, the **Empowerment Evaluation**. This kind of evaluation aims to empower stakeholders by transferring evaluation activities from an external evaluator to stakeholders. It is typically conducted in four steps (Fetterman 1994):

- review the program and determine where it stands, including its strengths and weaknesses;
- set goals for the future with an explicit focus on improving the programme;
- develop strategies to help participants to identify their own strengths that they can use to achieve the program's goals and activities;
- help program participants to decide and collect the required evidence to demonstrate their progress on achieving their goals.

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Third, the Méthode « Cnesco », also described as "**Participatory Action Research**".

Two principles guide this method: reliance on scientific work and the inclusion of stakeholders in the evaluation process. In this sense, Cnesco plays an ideational broker role from one field to another, considering academic knowledge and practical knowledge as complementary.

On the one hand, this involves the production and provision of knowledge. On the other hand, it involves the realisation of participatory moments. For example, setting up consensus conferences, led according to the "world café" method. This is a method where participants rotate between different thematic workshops, with a correspondent at each workshop to make the link each time a new group comes.

There are in fact 5 steps.

- first, the production of scientific knowledge;
- then an enrichment of this work by diagnosing the needs of the actors in its network;
- then the organization of exchanges between experts, decision-makers and members of the educational community to propose avenues of improvement that cross the practical knowledge and scientific knowledge;
- a wide dissemination of these results to the general public and to the network;
- finally an accompaniment and training of the actors in the implementation of the results.

It is undoubtedly on this last point that the method is most interesting, because thanks to the original positioning of Cnesco, at the center of the network, it can go beyond the study and lead the use of the recommendations.

Outputs in general

Paul Cotton lists some of the most notable "added values" that have been put forward by the Plottu couple. He insists more in detail on two contributions that justify the interest of using this type of approach.

First, there is an added value for **the quality of the evaluation**. Although Plottu explains that there is a risk of low expertise, the approach does not allow key issues to be missed. It anchors the evaluation in the real world and draws on the expertise of users who often know much more than evaluators. This approach also gives stakeholders the opportunity to reappropriate the public policy being evaluated, to better understand its governance, and thus to be better able to identify blockages and appropriate solutions.

Moreover, there is an added value for **the decision process and transformation of public policies**. But only if it is applied to small-scale programs and mechanisms. Participatory evaluation is more appropriate when the number of actors is limited, the objectives to be achieved are clear, and the rules of the game are accepted. There is a real risk of participation bashing. In France, a well-known author who works on participation in general even speaks of "participatory authoritarianism", with the example of major consultations in France such as the Grand Débat National, the Citizens' Convention on Climate Change or recently the Citizens' Convention on the end of life. The political interests take over the citizens' proposals, and then the citizens are instrumentalised to justify decisions that were already taken beforehand.

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Outputs on education policies

In the 1990s, Lorna M. Earl and J. Bradley Cousins conducted a comparison of 26 participatory evaluations in the educational field. They observed 6 categories of effects, quite similar to the previous ones. Except that in addition, there are two effects specific to education:

- the tendency for teachers to transform their teaching practice and to refer more to academic work, and to develop a reflection on their own practice;
- and a strengthening of partnerships between high schools and universities.

For this to work, Earl and Cousins and others after him have identified several prerequisites that must be met. The main ones are:

- On the one hand, on the part of the decision-maker and the administration, there is a sincere desire for a "value" evaluation. That means to be sincere in the process, and to be comfortable with the idea that something must be changed in public policy.
- On the other hand, having qualified evaluators. This is a big issue, which runs through evaluation in general, but even more so in the participatory field. Except for a few countries, anyone can call themselves a public policy evaluator. But in this case, we don't need to focus on evaluators who are skilled in data analysis. Rather, we need evaluators who are trained to have a good posture, who can listen to others, who know how to translate evaluation methods and processes into accessible terms. Pedagogy is very important, the ability to motivate the troops, as well as a tolerance for imperfection.

Two case studies

The participatory evaluations studied were selected according to criteria of diversity, mainly in the method used. Particular attention has been paid to highlighting cases that deal with different objects, temporalities, and perimeters.

Paul Cotton presents 2 cases.

Case study 1 No Child Left Behind, Etats-Unis (Collaborative Evaluation Approach)

NCLB was a reform of the education system in the US, in 2001. The purpose was to oblige schools to report their activities in order to improve student's performance. Before NCLB, many schools didn't focus on the progress of disadvantaged students. Sharon Rallis and Matthew Militello propose a comprehensive approach to assist U.S. educational stakeholders in these new responsibilities, based on the CAE.

They set up a new community of practice composed of the different stakeholders in education policy at the local level. A network is created with district leaders who will meet for six years to answer simple questions in succession. For example: What can we do differently? What data should be collected to analyse the action? Is it working? They call it a collaborative inquiry cycle. On a regular basis, this small group meets to move forward on these topics. It is a form of evaluation along the way, which is totally connected to the decision-making and implementation process.

The study points out many effects for school directors and bureaucrats involved in this evaluation. They are more attentive to their environment, better adapt procedures to the realities of the field, are more open to criticism and ready to develop new practices that

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challenge previous ways of doing. So, there is also an improvement effect on students' learning conditions.

Case study 2 Dispositif « envie de bouger », Belgium (Empowerment)

The programme "Envie de bouger" in Belgium refers to the empowerment model that I introduced before.

The evaluation was to assess the quality of care for young children in preschool settings. The context was tense, since the debate was raging between judging the quality of childcare according to a normative approach (based on standards and qualifications) or according to a relative approach (and integrating the values and subjectivity of the actors). Participatory evaluation was chosen here to arrive at a truly shared judgment and to avoid conflicts over the evaluation.

The evaluation was based on the constitution of 5 evaluation teams, composed of professionals from the sector. These teams were assigned to at least one component of the action being evaluated, according to their wishes. The people were thus able to address the subjects that seemed most important to them, without restriction. The work of the people involved was flexible: depending on their availability and their wishes, participants could take part in only a few work sessions, or become much more involved in the evaluation process by, for example, carrying out data collection (mainly interviews and observations). Motivation was therefore maintained, as the risk with participatory approaches is that the process will run out of steam.

During the process, an expert was available to frame the work: at the beginning to talk about the issues, during the process to answer technical questions, or at the end of the process to be the "privileged witness" of the process. There was also a management team to assist the participants. It played the role of transmitting information between the teams, could go in search of information requested by the group, and could also propose reformulations of the analysis at the request of the participants.

As a result of the evaluation, solutions were proposed to improve the care of young children. And what is interesting is that the participants went further than the initial process, by directly experimenting with the solutions. There were even working groups that were set up at the end of the evaluation to go further on certain subjects, at the initiative of the participants. For example, a workshop to explore why some families had different views on education, a workshop to explore the issue of young children's health, etc.

In short, there are also effects on the development of professionals' skills and on collective learning. Here, the lesson to be learned is that it is quite possible to put professionals in "research mode", provided that they are given the time and resources available (in this case mainly resource persons) to assist them. What is interesting is that we really have empowerment here, and we can see this with the overcoming and appropriation of the evaluation beyond the expectations with the construction of work groups.

Conclusion

So, what can we learn from all this? First, we can see that no matter what method we use, **evaluation is a real empowerment lever for all the people involved in the process.** And this is why it is much more used when the objective is to build a shared vision on a public policy rather than to produce the best evaluation possible. We are far from the very

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technical evidence-based evaluation, and rather on a form of agreement-based evaluation or accordance-based evaluation. We are really on a policy making oriented evaluation, whose first ambition is to make things happen rather than to produce pure and perfect knowledge. But all this is complicated, and perhaps even more so in the field of education: participatory techniques in the field of education are competed with (not to say disqualified by) more rigorous forms of experimental evaluation or international comparison studies that claim to act for citizens rather than by or with citizens. Because behind participation there is also something uncertain: there is uncertainty about the result, uncertainty about the length of time it will take (often several months or even years), and total uncertainty about what the stakeholders in the evaluation will do. For a public decision-maker, this is something very difficult to assume, because it means delegating his decision-making power to other people, over whom he usually has authority.

The development of this kind of approach is also complicated by the fact that it is not very visible. In the literature review, several dozens of approaches have been identified, that were more or less similar, but that did not claim to belong to the same school. Very often, theoretical frameworks that are rarely applied: it was sometimes difficult to find published examples of application. And this is also a real issue.

Recommendations

If you want to engage in participatory evaluation and act, these are four points of attention:

Number 1, ask what sincere goals you are seeking. If you want an indisputable quantitative scientific study, just to be accountable, then maybe don't do it. In fact, in participatory evaluation, it is more the process than the result that counts. So **don't expect too much** from the result, or at least don't set overly ambitious goals.

Number 2, **connect with existing methods and frameworks**. As said, one of the difficulties in developing participatory evaluation is that it is difficult to capitalise on it: each time, the approaches start from scratch. For good practices, it has been difficult to find cases that are linked to theoretical frameworks and that propose improvements or reinforce them. And this is a pity both for the validity of the work, because often limits could have been removed beforehand, and for the credibility of the evaluation practice undertaken.

Number 3, **go one step at a time**. It is not because we take an existing theoretical framework and apply it that it will work! Each approach is situated in a particular context and issues. Sometimes, it can be worth testing a framework, to see if it can work; if it doesn't work, I take another one and go forward like that by trial and error. It is precisely the flexibility of the practice that makes it an interesting approach. Take the time you need to experiment.

Number 4, **evaluation on the evaluation**. Finally, in a more general way, once participatory evaluations are launched, it may be worthwhile to evaluate these evaluations. This is what we call meta-evaluation. This is very, very rarely done, even in non-participatory evaluation, and yet it can be rich in lessons learned, both to improve future approaches and to share what we have learned with others.

We refer to [the presentation](#) of Paul Cotton at the EUNEC website.

Inspiring practices on involving stakeholders in the production of policy advice

Consultation process leading to revision of Teaching Council standards of initial teacher education

Brid Murphy, head of Initial Teacher Education & Introduction, Irish Teaching Council

Abstract

In preparation for its second cycle of professional accreditation of programmes of initial teacher education in Ireland, the Council's policy on standards for ITE programmes was reviewed and redrafted. The Council initiated a comprehensive three phase consultation process involving:

- Phase 1: (2015), a survey of HEIs and Review Panel Chairs, as well as collation of feedback offered by Panels with regard to national issues, they encountered in their review of ITE programmes in cycle 1 of professional accreditation
- Phase 2 (2017–2018) involved the analysis of feedback from Phase 1 and an Impact Consultation Exercise (ICE) to ascertain the impact of the reconceptualised programmes as experienced at individual, school, and system levels
- Phase 3 (2019–2020) involved a series of 12 consultation sessions where key national stakeholders and partners were invited to discuss and offer feedback on draft iterations of the revised standards document including an external review of written submissions sought and received from stakeholders.

These three phases informed the policy: Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education.

[Presentation](#) available at the EUNEC website

Inspiring coeducational policies from the Spanish Education Council,

Pilar Ezpeleta Piorno, Director General of Universities in the Valencia Region, Spanish Education Council

Abstract

The Spanish Council has just published the Guide to Coeducating Schools Councils, the result of the work and joint effort of the members of the Coeducation Committee of the Spanish Council and the collaboration of the Autonomous Participation Board and that of educators and educational centers throughout the country.

[Presentation](#) available at the EUNEC website

Involving stakeholders in the preparation of a recommendation on a possible reorganization of the school year in Flanders

Marleen Colpin, Flemish Education Council

Abstract

In June 2022 the Flemish Education Council (Vlor) delivered a recommendation on the opportunity of a reorganization of the school year and the school holidays for the Dutch speaking education system in Belgium. The occasion for that recommendation was the decision to reorganize the school year in the French speaking education system, holding a shorter summer holiday and a more logical rhythm of alternating school and holiday weeks throughout the year. The Flemish minister of education asked the Vlor to investigate the level of support among the educational partners.

The composition of the Vlor is based on representation and most recommendations are formulated through consultation and discussion of representatives of all the educational organizations: trade unions, organisers of education, parents, pupils, a.s.o. But in the case of this recommendation, we decided to organize a broader and more direct consultation of all the stakeholders. We asked the member-organizations of the Vlor to arrange a survey among their members, in order to get a clear view on the viewpoints on this matter among the education field.

We learned different lessons from this process. The most important conclusion is that the secretariat should have coordinated the process more strictly in order to avoid the great differences in the way the surveys were formulated, carried out and reported by the member-organizations. These differences made it difficult to compare the results and create support in de Vlor.

[Presentation](#) available at the EUNEC website

Stakeholder involvement before, during and after the advisory process

Sandra Loois, Communications officer, Dutch Education Council

Abstract

"Context matters. We cannot advise properly without knowing this context, listening and connecting with our stakeholders. They are of great importance for our work in order to address the relevant topics, to get useful input, to manage expectations and to make impact", says Sandra.

In order to make impact with their advice reports, the Dutch Educational Council involves stakeholders at different stages in the advisory process. In her presentation, Sandra Loois will focus on why the council considers stakeholder involvement a crucial part of the advisory process, and how it is done in the Netherlands, before, during and after the advisory process.

For the Dutch Education Council it is common practice to carry out a stakeholder analysis in the orientation phase of each advice. Therefore, Sandra developed a tailor-made

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method. In four steps, this method helps to get a clear overview of the relevant stakeholders on a topic, their points of view and their common or conflicting interests.

[Presentation](#) available at the EUNEC website

Stakeholders' Involvement in Education Public Policies in Morocco: The role of the Higher Council for Education, Training & Scientific Research

Laila El Khamlichi, Project Manager, CSEFRS, Morocco

Abstract

The Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research (the Council) is a constitutional advisory body. Its missions consist of issuing policy advice and recommendations on national challenges pertaining to education, vocational training and scientific research, as well as public interests related to these sectors.

The diversity of its organisational structure as well as its membership enables critical thinking around matters of education and training. Therefore, the Council's outputs (assessments/evaluations, policy advice, surveys ...) are a powerful source of ideas that brings a creative perspective to inform public policies in the fields of education and training and scientific research.

Such a collaborative approach is characteristic of the spirit and the modus operandi prevailing within the Council. This approach, involving all relevant institutions operating in the areas pertaining to the Council's work, is reflected in its ranking by the Constitution among institutions of good governance, promoting human development and collaborative democracy.

To illustrate this approach, and the involvement of all stakeholders, the consulting campaign launched by the Council, before the inception of the Strategic Vision of the reform 2015-2030, is a good example of the above-mentioned modus operandi including various stakeholders in the process to promote ownership of both the process and the outcome.

The example which constitutes the heart of the proposed presentation, that is the process of the design of the Strategic Vision of education reform (2015-2030) as the main framework that guides the whole reform process in education in Morocco for the next 15 years. Such a framework is articulated around three overarching pillars: education quality, equity as well as the promotion of individuals and society. The last but not the least, in an attempt to assess how the Vision actually guides ongoing education reform, the presentation will also include some elements on how the education reform roadmap (2022-2026) has been inspired by the strategic framework elaborated within the Council.

[Presentation](#) available at the EUNEC website

A scientific and participatory approach for building bridges in education

Lucile Piedfer-Quêne, Project Manager, Cnesco, France

Abstract

Since its creation, the French Centre for Education Studies (Cnesco) has been pursuing the same goal: to create dynamics of change in education policies, school leadership and classroom practice, for the benefit of students. To this end, the Cnesco has designed an original method, both scientific and participatory, which relies on widely shared observations such as the limited use of research findings - in policymaking, but also in professional practices - as well as the need to create spaces for dialogue between researchers, members of the educational community and policy makers.

A brief presentation of the roots of the Cnesco's approach provides a better understanding of the two main formats developed by the Cnesco, Consensus Conferences and International Comparison Conferences. These conferences illustrate the essential missions of the Cnesco: scientific production, dissemination of research findings and stakeholder involvement in the formulation of recommendations.

Since 2019, the French Centre for Education Studies has broadened its missions. It now accompanies recommendations resulting from conferences and supports changes in practice by co-constructing innovative training schemes with local training stakeholders. It is also developing international partnerships to share its methodology and support the organisation of participatory and scientific conferences abroad. The implementation of these new activities is an ongoing process that itself illustrates the Cnesco methodology.

This presentation is an opportunity for the Cnesco to take stock of its achievements and highlight potential obstacles that can inform the discussion on how to promote more effective stakeholder participation in driving change within education systems.

[Presentation](#) available at the EUNEC website

Stakeholder participation in the process of preparing and voting advice and recommendations

Conceição Gonçalves and António Dias, Portuguese Education Council

Education is a plural endeavour, based on diverse visions of society and of what is important for each generation to learn. In addition, it involves a variety of stakeholders with different perspectives.

Education goals and policies should then be built upon a common understanding of our future.

In preparing recommendations and advice, the Portuguese National Education Council summons this diversity, calling to the discussion the various stakeholders, which are Council members. Simultaneously, for each recommendation issued, the Council builds a framework, taking into account national and European educational policies on the topics under discussion. It also calls for the most recent trends set out in the literature.

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To this end, it usually prepares technical reports and convenes policymakers, administration staff, specialists and practitioners.

In this presentation, we will share the process of preparing a recommendation on *The Voice of Children and young people in Education (2021)*, as an example of the guiding principles described above - representative diversity and conceptual and prospective grounding.

In order to identify the multiple aspects covered by students' voices, their purposes, processes and effects, the Council's technical and scientific staff swept the national and international literature on the subject and explored the possibilities for students' intervention defined in national laws. Moreover, hearings were carried out, involving students, teachers, school principals and educational administration leaders. Furthermore, a seminar was held with experts and practitioners. Thus, the recommendation was composed as an intended effort to foster *Stakeholder participation in the process of preparing and voting advice and recommendation*.

[Presentation](#) available at the EUNEC website

School student participation on national level. Good practices from the Flemish School Students Union

Frédéric Piccavet and Jesse Verbeeck, Flemish School Students Union

Every school student has an opinion about what happens in and around the school. The art is to collect those opinions in a meaningful way. "School student participation" is the practice of involving school students in all relevant decision-making processes. As the official body for the representation of school students in the Flemish Community, that's exactly what we, VSK (the Flemish School Students Union), work on.

Our presentation aims to illustrate our two guiding models for meaningful and quality school student participation. Our first model revolves around the participation pyramid (Mita, 2005) and consists of the four elements 'to know', 'to do', 'to act', 'to decide'. Our second model is contained within our mission and consists of "from, for and by students'.

By means of two concrete examples, we will point out how we put our models into practice. Our project around menstruation poverty, our first example, intends to support school student councils in the fight against menstrual poverty. We develop and distribute dozens of menstrual starter packs for +60 schools, designed for and by students. Our second example gives a sneak-peak into the process and end product of our political manifesto for the 2024 elections. We explain how we easily gathered both the opinions of 20.000 school students (quantitative goal) and the under-represented group of school students from vocational and technical schools.

Overall, VSK's approach to school student participation involves empowering school students to have a say in their own education and creating opportunities for them to actively participate in decision-making processes. By doing so, VSK hopes to foster a more inclusive and representative school community.

[Presentation](#) available at the EUNEC website

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