EUNEC

European Network of Education Councils

Are our education systems fit for the future?

Report of the seminar of the European Network of Education Councils

The Hague, 15-16 June 2022

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 internationalization and mobility high on the national agenda, that they should clarify the European policy in education and training towards all relevant stakeholders.

TOPIC

- ¬ The governance and organization of education and of the education system.

- ¬ How can education systems be organized so that they can react in a flexible way to future developments?

PROGRAMME

15 une 2022, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, The Hague

9.30 - 10.00   Registration

10.00 - 12.30   Plenary sessions, chaired by Mia Douterlungne, EUNEC secretary general

- ¬ Welcome speech by Edith Hooge, President of the Education Council of the Netherlands (10.00 – 10.15)

- ¬ Educational systems and the core tasks of education: what can we learn from comparative research?, by Professor Herman van de Werfhorst, Professor of Sociology of Education at University of Amsterdam and European Institute, member of the Education Council of the Netherlands (10.15 – 11.00)

- ¬ Trends Shaping Education 2022, by Marc Fuster, OECD (11.00 – 11.45)

- ¬ The Impact of Policy Responses on Education Innovations, by Professor Saule Maciukaite-Zviniene, Head for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Professor for Innovation at Vilnius University and President of the Lithuanian Education Council (11.45 – 12.30)

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.30 Design sessions in two rounds

In small groups we will discuss trends shaping education. Each group will delve into one trend to identify challenges to education systems and discuss possible

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responses to enhance their resilience, exchanging experiences and practices from participating countries.

15.30 – 16.00 Conclusions of the design sessions: pitches per group

16.00 – 17.30 Time to refresh yourself at the hotel

17.30   Social programme

> The Hague inner city walk, guided by Raymond Kubben
>
> or
>
> Walk at the Scheveningen beach, guided by Karin Westerbeek

19.30   Dinner for all participants at the seminar in restaurant WATERREUS at Scheveningen

The seminar is followed by a EUNEC **anniversary celebration on 16 June 2022, at the Kinderboekenmuseum, Prins Willem Alexanderhof 5, The Hague**

09.30 – 10.00 Registration

10.00 – 10.15 Welcome by Manuel Miguéns, President of EUNEC

10.15 – 10.30 Introduction by Professor Marleen Brans, Public Governance Institute KULeuven

10.30 – 11.30 Panel 1 **Education Councils as institutions**

> Moderator: Mia Douterlungne, EUNEC Secretary General
>
> Panel:

Elena Hadjikakou	Cyprus Pedagogical Institute
Carine De Smet	Flemish Education Council
Aistė Kairienė	Lithuanian Education Council
Manuel Miguéns	Portuguese Education Council
Maryse Lassonde	Higher Council for Education (Québec)

11.30 – 12.30 Coffee, followed by a musical and theatrical performance by high school students (Antonius College Gouda)

12.30 – 13.15   Lunch (including a 'meet & greet' with students from the Antonius College)

13.15 – 14.15   Panel 2 **Education Councils in the policy process**

> Moderator: Mirjam van Leeuwen, secretary of the Education Council of the Netherlands
>
> Panel:

Jean-François Chesné	Cnesco (France)

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Phil Fox	Irish Teaching Council
Raymond Kubben	Education Council of the Netherlands
Juan Francisco Gutiérrez Jugo	Spanish Education Council

14.15 – 14.30   Perspectives. Remuntada for the future of EUNEC, by Manuel Miguéns, EUNEC president

15.00   Closing drinks and networking possibilities

WELCOME SESSION

Edith Hooge, President of the Education Council of the Netherlands

Edith Hooge, professor of governance of education at Tilburg University, welcomes all participants on behalf of the Education Council of the Netherlands.

In the work of the Council, the voice of the pupils and students is heard: young people from 10 until 23 years gather within the Council to discuss and prepare input for recommendations. If children and young people are asked what they expect from education, from good schools, most of them mention three things:

- ¬ Room for playfulness;
- ¬ Structure: the best teachers are those who are kind and strict at the same time;
- ¬ Connection, opportunities to identify with others.

This illustrates how important the relationship is between education and social/societal life, and how important it is that education prepares young people for life. The mission of the Council, and the passion of the President, is to analyze and reflect, together with the staff and the members, how research and policy may foster quality education that is accessible for everyone. Education policy is dependent on the willingness of those who really shape education: school leaders, teachers, pupils, students, parents, .. It is crucial that they all perceive the added value of policy, and of change when needed.

Implementation means 'getting things done'. At the same time, 'good practices travel badly'. When we try to learn from each other, we have to dive deep into each other's policy, culture and context, so that we can extrapolate our own concerns. EUNEC offers the perfect setting for this kind of exchange.

Edith Hooge thanks the staff from the Education Council of the Netherlands for the preparation of this event, in front and behind the scene.

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

Manuel Miguéns thanks the Council of the Netherlands for their hospitality and welcomes the international audience.

Three years ago, the organizing committee decided about the theme of this seminar: 'Are our education systems fit for the future?'. Today, the complexity has enhanced, due to the COVID crisis: learning and developing of children has been under pressure; education was forced to adopt new strategies. The crisis has affected the most vulnerable pupils in society more than others. Moreover, due to the Ukraine crisis, the number of refugees is growing, bringing about new challenges. So the question is more than relevant: Are our education systems fit to overcome the challenges? To provide quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all?

Educational systems and the core tasks of education: what can we learn from comparative research?

Professor Herman van de Werfhorst, Professor of Sociology of Education at the University of Amsterdam and European Institute, member of the Education Council of the Netherlands

Professor van de Werfhorst brings an overview of recent insights in the debate of what are the core tasks of education, related to the issue of the design of education systems. It is not easy to say which policies work, it is not easy to make good policies travel.

The basic question is related to the question what societies expect from schools, to the three 'societal' functions of education:

- ¬ Optimize academic performance: '**Qualification**';
- ¬ Prepare for the labour market: '**Allocation**';
- ¬ Prepare for active engagement as citizens: '**Socialization**'.

In the debate to evaluate 'what is a good education system?', there are two distributional concerns:

- ¬ **Efficiency** (related to, for instance, high scores on PISA and low unemployment rates);
- ¬ **Equality** (related to the distribution of the outcomes of schooling: who is qualified, allocated, socialized?).

An efficient system is not necessarily the best system; an equal system either. Both objectives count.

The question whether educations systems perform well is often answered from the policy perspective, by looking at countries that do well: Finland first, now Estonia. This perspective might be too limitative. Rather than looking at one 'example' country, it is better to focus on the following three dimensions, to evaluate how the educational institutional structure affects efficiency and equality in the outcomes of interest:

- ¬ **Tracking:** the number of tracks available, the age of tracking, the rigidity of trackings;
- ¬ **Standardization:** the standardization of input (curricula, budget, teacher training,..) and of output (accountability, central testing, …);
- ¬ **Vocational orientation.**

The aim of the following scheme is to try to explore to which extent the policy decisions have effect, aimed or not, so that policy makers are more aware of the whole picture and of possible trade-offs. The scheme brings an overview of possible research questions. For instance: does early tracking effect on labour market readiness, in terms of efficiency and equality?

A heuristic framework for studying institutional effects

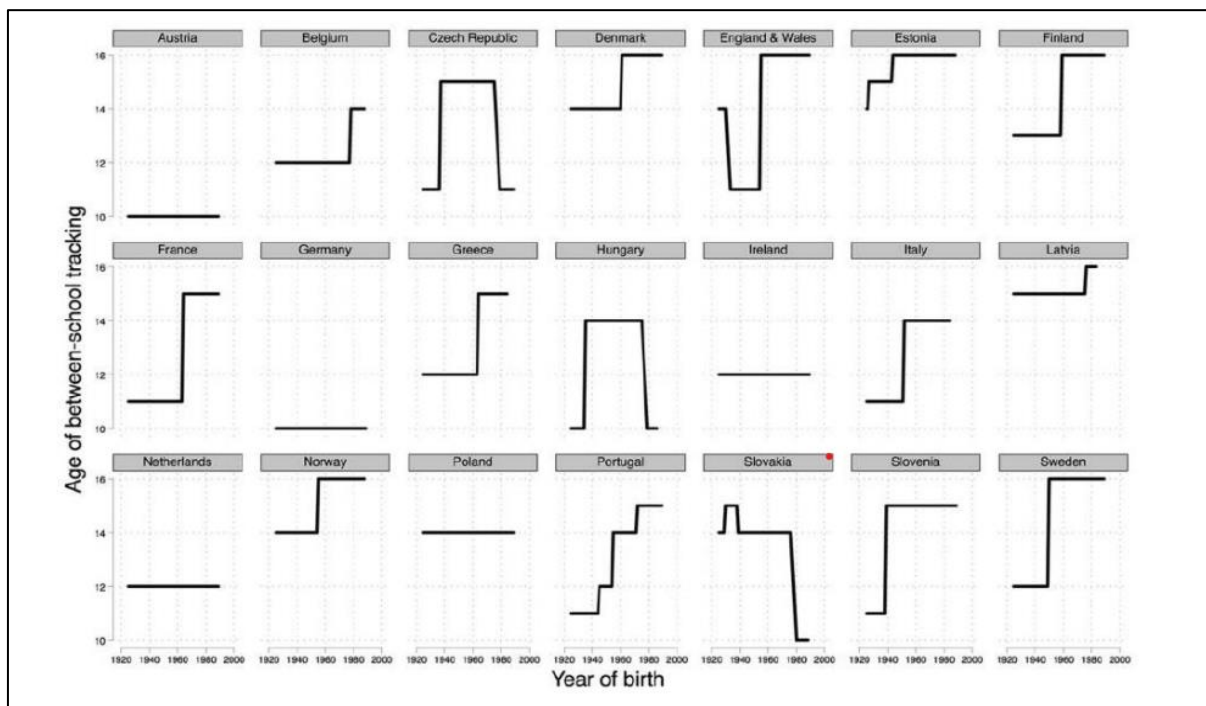|	School performance		Labour market		Civic engagement	
	efficiency	*equality*	*efficiency*	*equality*	*efficiency*	*equality*
Selection tracking	A	B	G	H	M	N
Standardisation of input (curricula) of output (centralized testing) Accountability	C	D	I	J	O	P
Vocational orientation Relative size vocational sector in education Relative size of dual system	E	F	K	L	Q	R

Four specific research questions are highlighted:

- ¬ Does later tracking increase equality of educational opportunity? Does that come at a cost in terms of efficiency?
- ¬ Does standardization reduce inequality of opportunity?
- ¬ How is early tracking related to civic engagement?
- ¬ Is a strong VET system still useful for a good transition from school to work?

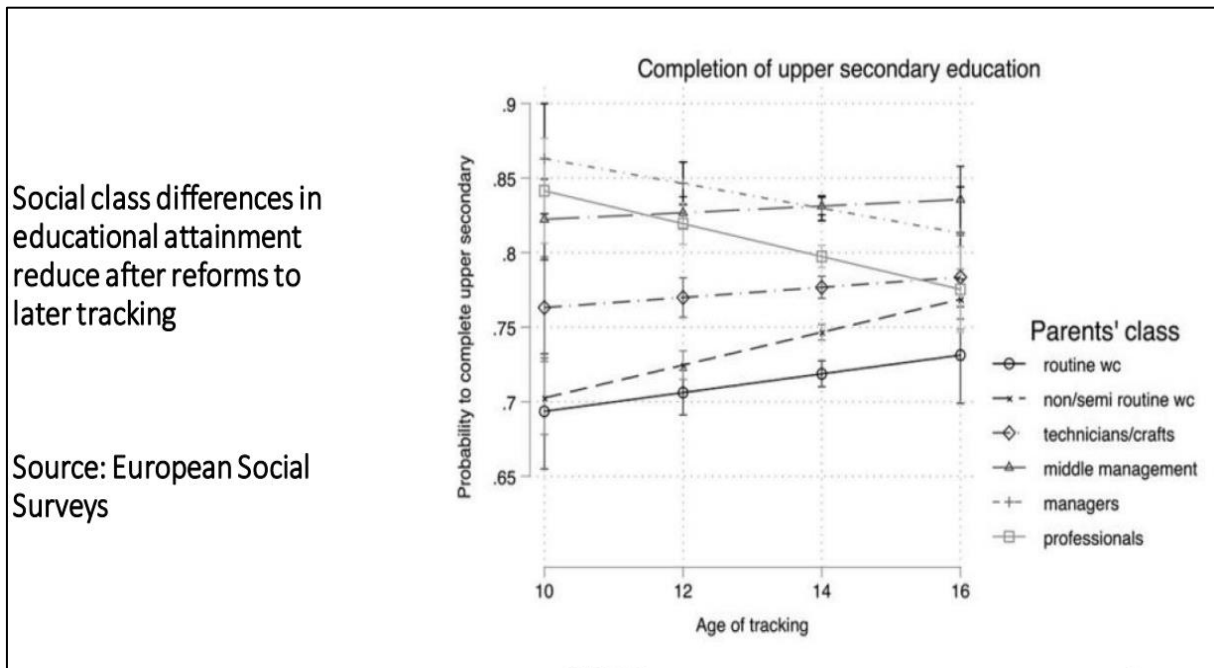### Later tracking and equality of opportunities

Later tracking is associated with greater equality of opportunity by socio-economic background.

The following scheme brings an overview of tracking age reforms by year of birth:
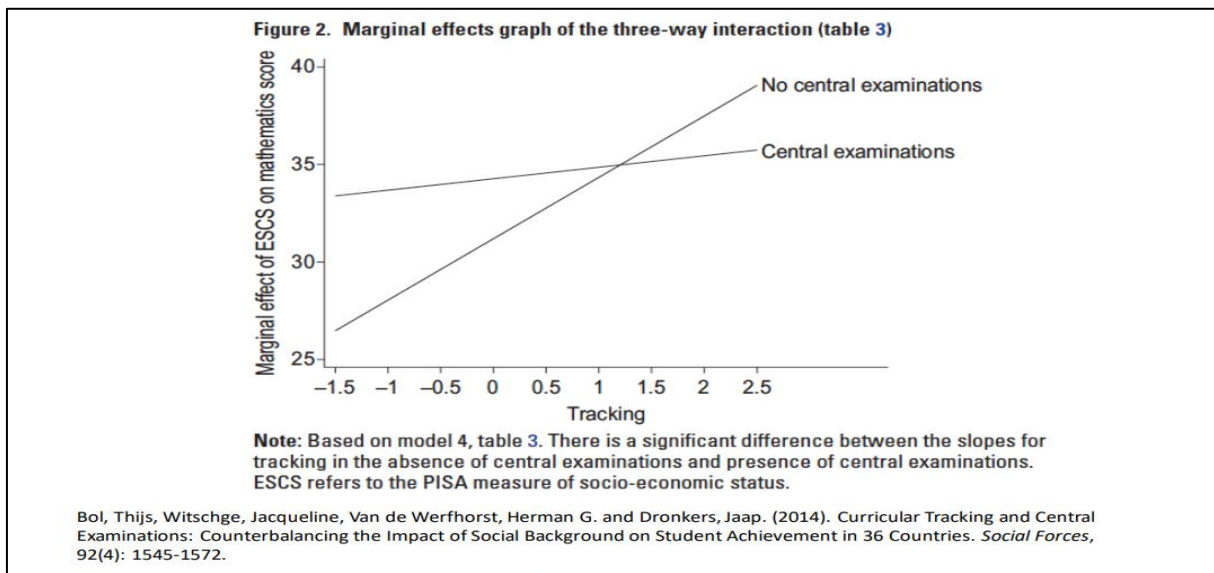
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The following graph illustrates that social class differences in educational attainment reduce after reforms to later tracking:

Completion of upper secondary education

Social class differences in educational attainment reduce after reforms to later tracking

Source: European Social Surveys

Parents' class
- routine wc
- non/semi routine wc
- technicians/crafts
- middle management
- managers
- professionals

Standardization and equality of educational opportunity

At the same time, especially in early-tracking systems, standardized exams reduce inequality by socio-economic background. The following graph shows that there is a significant difference between the slopes for tracking in absence of central examinations and presence of central examinations. (ESCS refers to the PISA measure of socio-economic status).

Figure 2. Marginal effects graph of the three-way interaction (table 3)

No central examinations

Central examinations

Note: Based on model 4, table 3. There is a significant difference between the slopes for tracking in the absence of central examinations and presence of central examinations. ESCS refers to the PISA measure of socio-economic status.

Bol, Thijs, Witschge, Jacqueline, Van de Werfhorst, Herman G. and Dronkers, Jaap. (2014). Curricular Tracking and Central Examinations: Counterbalancing the Impact of Social Background on Student Achievement in 36 Countries. *Social Forces*, 92(4): 1545-1572.

But the Dutch system of standardized tests also magnifies the 'meritocratic' expectations by teachers. This shows the potential downside of standardization. The figure below shows a strong effect of primary school performance on teacher expectations in the Netherlands (experiments among grade 5 teachers in three cities). With hypothetical,

fictive pupils its appears that the effect of SES is positive: pupils with high SES are expected to perform better. A self-fulfilling prophecy? Bias or realism?

Figure 2: Teacher fixed effect models, separately for each country
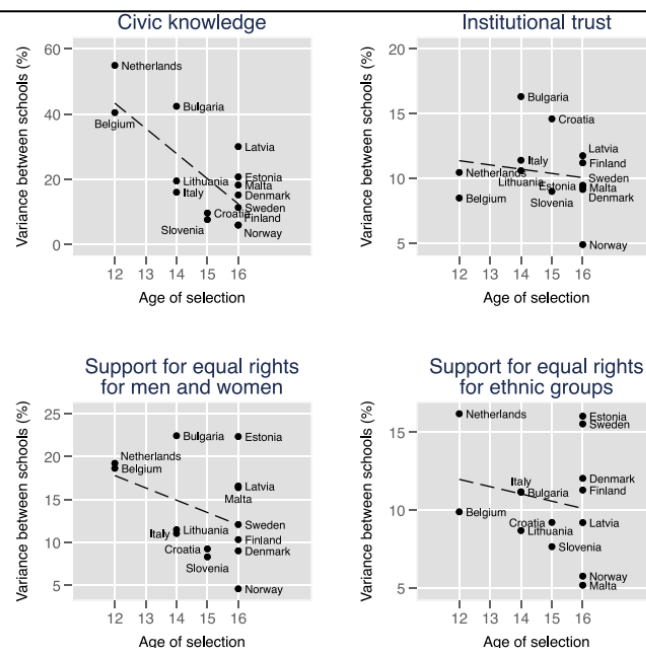
Tracking and civic engagement

In the case of earlier tracking, we see more between-school differences in civic engagement, and stronger civic and citizenship differences between education categories in young adulthood.

The figures below (findings from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Survey 2016, 8-graders) show that a school that brings more 'different' pupils together might be better for civic engagement:
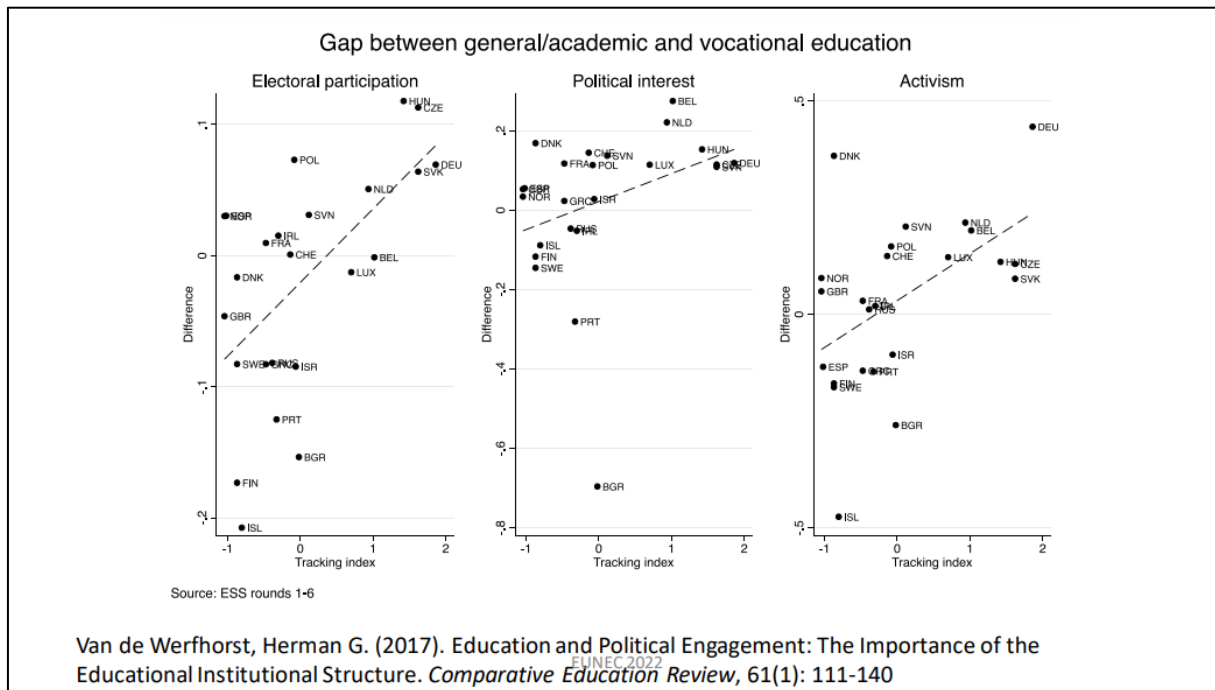
International Civic and Citizenship Education Survey (ICCS 2016) (8th graders)

Bron: Munniksma, Anke, Anne Bert Dijkstra, Ineke Van der Veen, Guuske Ledoux, Herman G. Van de Werfhorst, and Geert Ten Dam,. 2017. *Burgerschap in Het Voortgezet Onderwijs. Nederland in Vergelijkend Perspectief.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
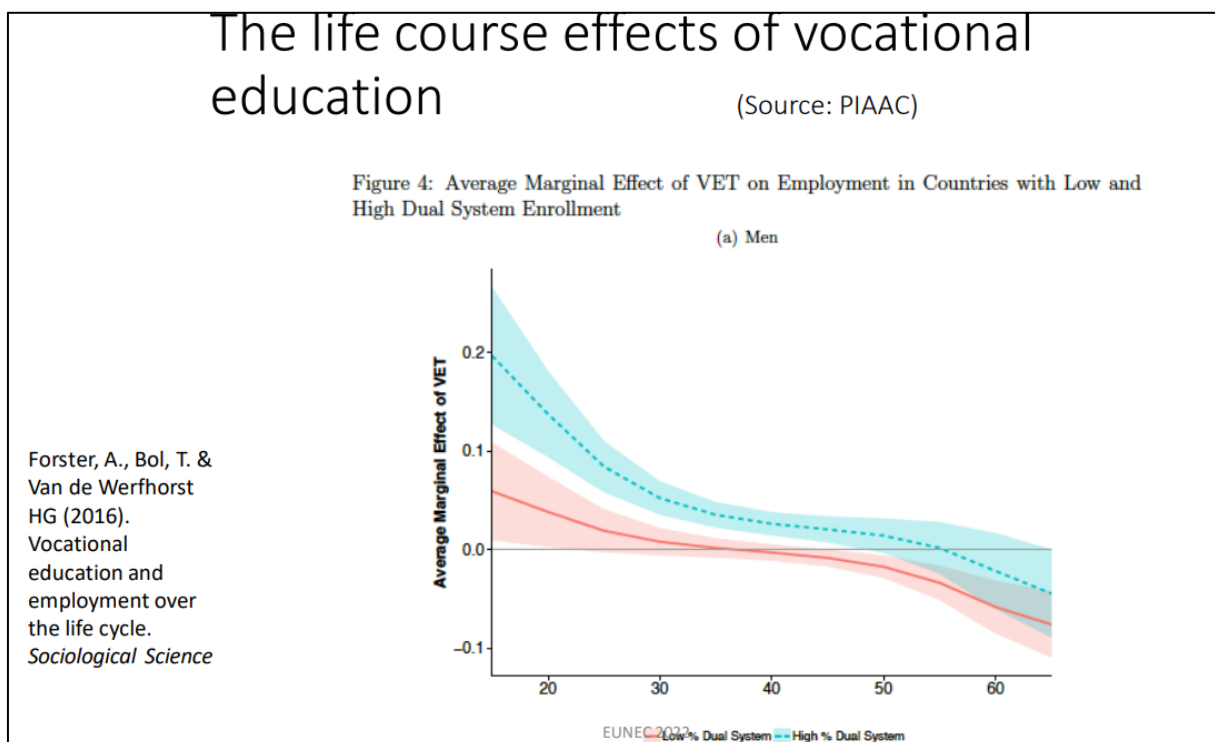
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The next figure shows the gap between general/academic and vocational education when it comes to civic engagement:

Gap between general/academic and vocational education

Source: ESS rounds 1-6

Van de Werfhorst, Herman G. (2017). Education and Political Engagement: The Importance of the Educational Institutional Structure. *Comparative Education Review*, 61(1): 111-140
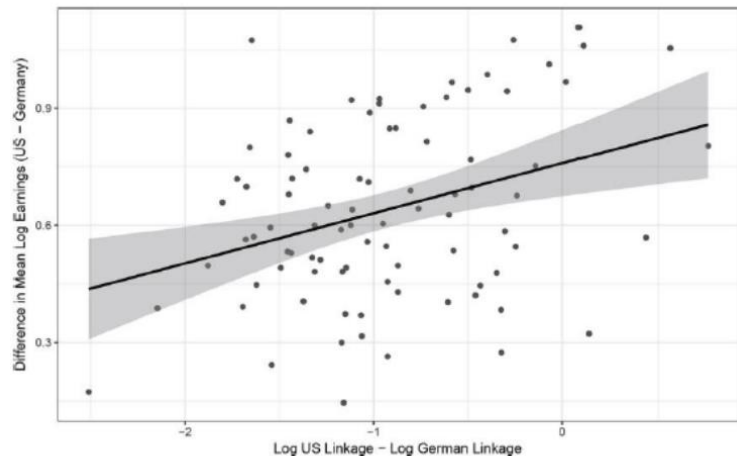
Vocational education and training and labour markets

It appears that a VET qualification is beneficial for a smooth transition from school to work. According to Hanushek this is only the case in the beginning of the career. However, the effect of a strong VET qualification remains positive, also at a later stage. The next graphs show the life course effects of vocational education. and how the stronger linkage between education and work is associated to higher earnings.

The life course effects of vocational education (Source: PIAAC)

Figure 4: Average Marginal Effect of VET on Employment in Countries with Low and High Dual System Enrollment

(a) Men

Forster, A., Bol, T. & Van de Werfhorst HG (2016). Vocational education and employment over the life cycle. *Sociological Science*

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Stronger linkage between schooling and work is associated to higher earnings

DiPrete, Thomas A., Thijs Bol, Christina Ciocca Eller, and Herman G. van de Werfhorst. 2017. "School-to-Work Linkages in the United States, Germany, and France." *American Journal of Sociology* 122(6):1869–1938. doi: 10.1086/691327.

FIG. 7.—Occupational mean earnings difference between the United States and Germany by difference in linkage strength. Data are from the Mikrozensus. Observations are limited to occupations with at least 50 full-time worker respondents in both the United States and Germany. Color version available as an online enhancement.

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For the full presentation by professor Herman van de Werfhorst we refer to the website: Education systems and the core tasks of education: What can we learn from comparative research? (eunec.eu)

Questions and answers

Participants exchange on the following topics:

- ¬ How to operationalize 'civic engagement': is it more about the vertical part (voting, trust in politicians) or about the horizontal part (engagement in civil society)?
- ¬ The question whether the advantages of VET demonstrated will last over 5 years or more, given the fact that the workforce now is very different from the workforce of the future. In theory, the skills acquired in VET might be outdated in a few years (although this is not clear in data yet) . On the other hand, in the middle of the debate on VET, we have seen that VET graduates came out the recent crisis quite well.
- ¬ How to find a way to overcome the polarization between the objectives of efficiency and social justice, given the fact that the balance between efficiency and socialization is moral?

Trends shaping education 2022

Marc Fuster, OECD
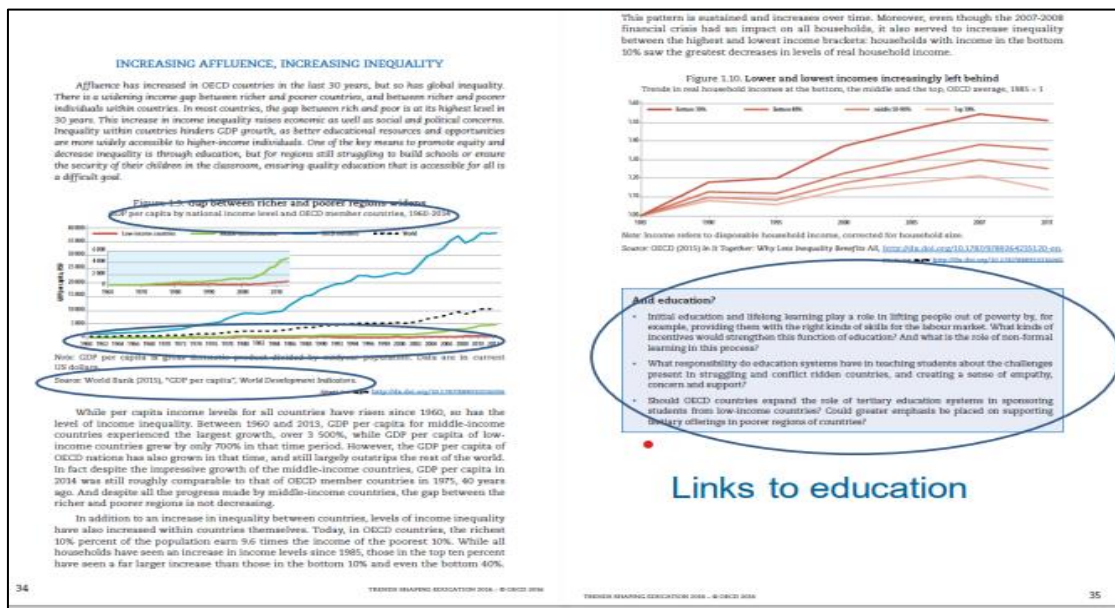
Trends Shaping Education: What? Why?

The intention and purpose of the report is to inform strategic thinking, to stimulate reflection about the future of education. 'Trends Shaping Education' is NOT a statistical compendium or prescription of policy.

The report aims to inform the following target groups:

¬ Policy makers (ministry retreats, strategic thinking workshops);

¬ Researchers, teacher educators (inclusion in teacher education curricula, education futures);

¬ Educational practitioners (futures thinking, global mega-trends);

¬ Students (tool in the classrooms, strategic thinking for associations).

Trends Shaping Education: How?

To be included in the report, data have to be internationally comparable, long term and robust, as illustrated in the page for the trend 'Globalisation': The figure shows internationally comparable data over years, with clear mention of the source. For every (sub)trend, links to education are highlighted.
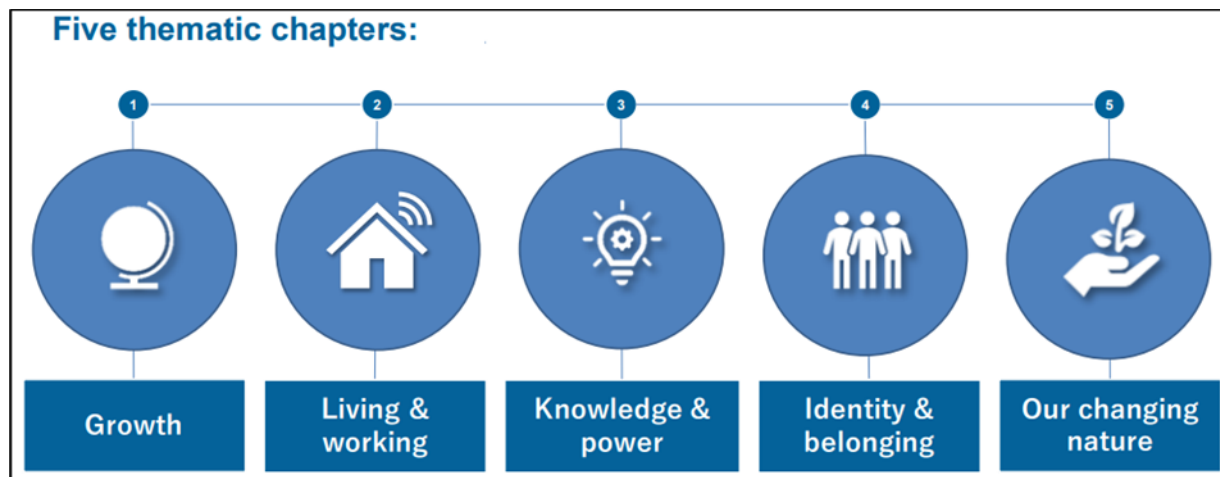
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At a first stage, OECD experts start brainstorming, and then selecting and compiling relevant data. Fact checking is done by OECD (11 directorates, units and partner agencies) and by the countries. For the specific links to the field of education, experts, countries, civil society representatives are involved. Future thinking is elaborated by OECD and (foresight) experts.

Trends Shaping Education: the 2022 report

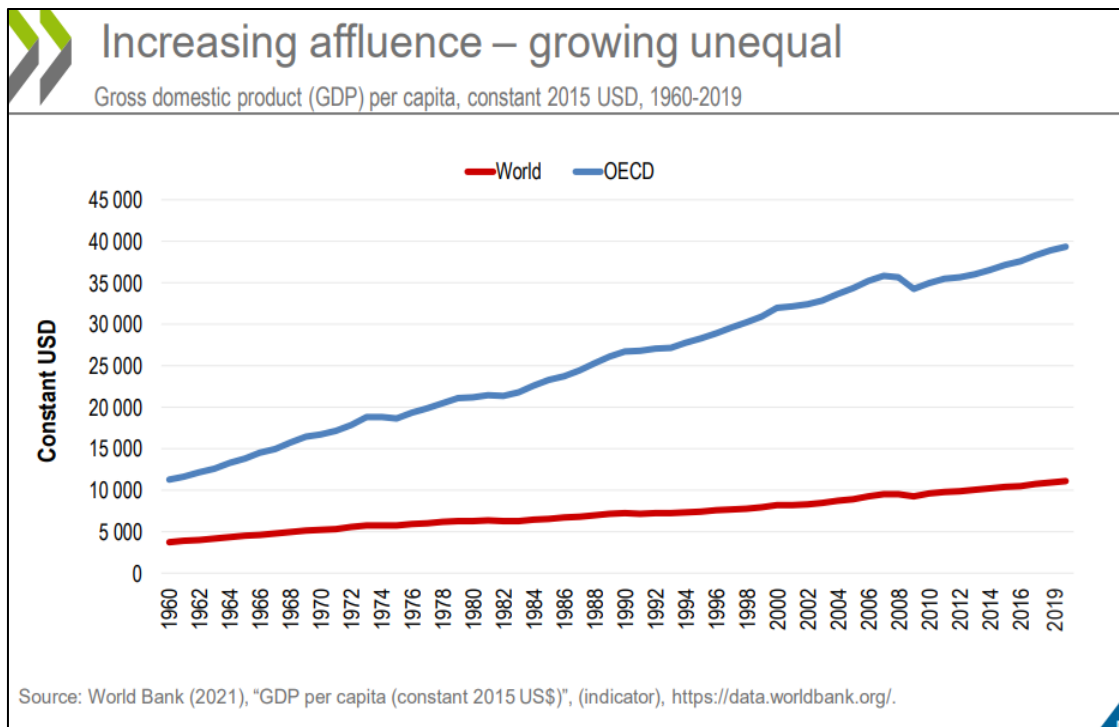The reports has five thematic chapters:

Five thematic chapters:
1. Growth
2. Living & working
3. Knowledge & power
4. Identity & belonging
5. Our changing nature

- ¬ Growth;
- ¬ Living and working;
- ¬ Knowledge and power;
- ¬ Identity and belonging;
- ¬ Our changing nature.

For each chapter, Marc Fuster brings a brief overview of topics presented in that chapter, and the questions raised related to that topic.
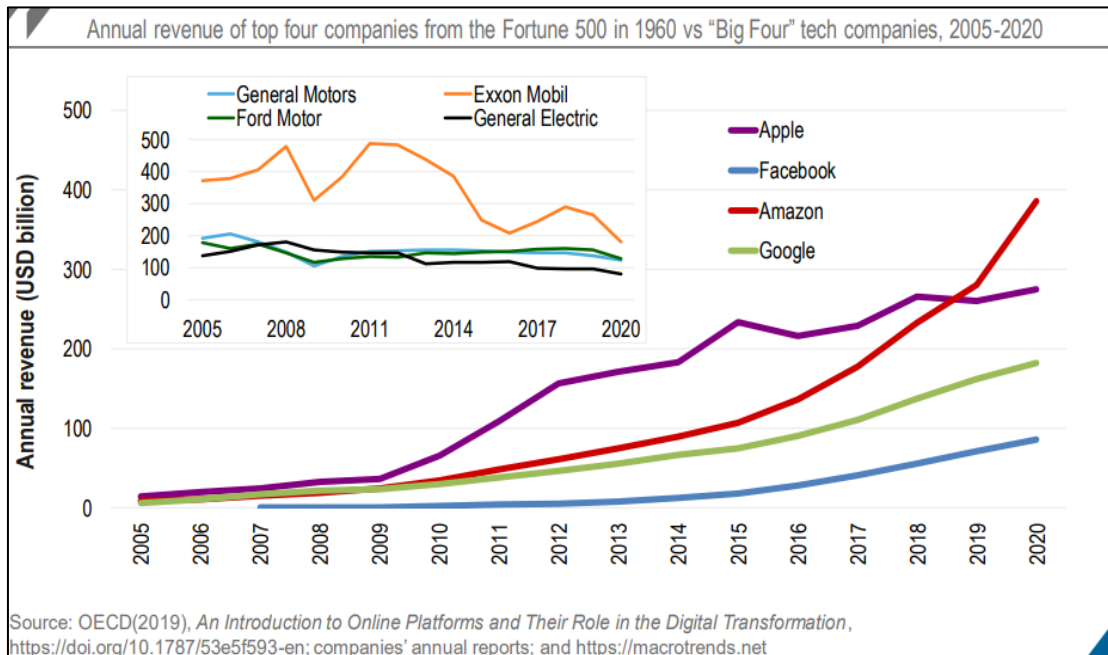
1. Growth

- ¬ **Growing prosperity**: How does increasing affluence affect inequalities?
  The graph below shows that, from 1960 until 2015, the gross domestic product (GPD) is growing, in OECD countries and in the world. The issues of social mobility and, at the same time, the 'meritocracy trap', relate to what has been demonstrated by professor van de Werfhorst.

Increasing affluence – growing unequal

Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, constant 2015 USD, 1960-2019

Source: World Bank (2021), "GDP per capita (constant 2015 US$)", (indicator), https://data.worldbank.org/.

¬ **A new source of growth**: In which ways are intangible assets driving innovation and productivity?

The graph below shows the annual revenue of companies that were top four in 1960 versus the 'big four' tech companies (2005-2020). Big Tech is rising, and the power of traditional companies is declining. This relates to the skills that are needed for the labour market and to the public purpose of education; the concept of accountability is changing in the digital era.

Annual revenue of top four companies from the Fortune 500 in 1960 vs "Big Four" tech companies, 2005-2020

Source: OECD(2019), *An Introduction to Online Platforms and Their Role in the Digital Transformation*, https://doi.org/10.1787/53e5f593-en; companies' annual reports; and https://macrotrends.net
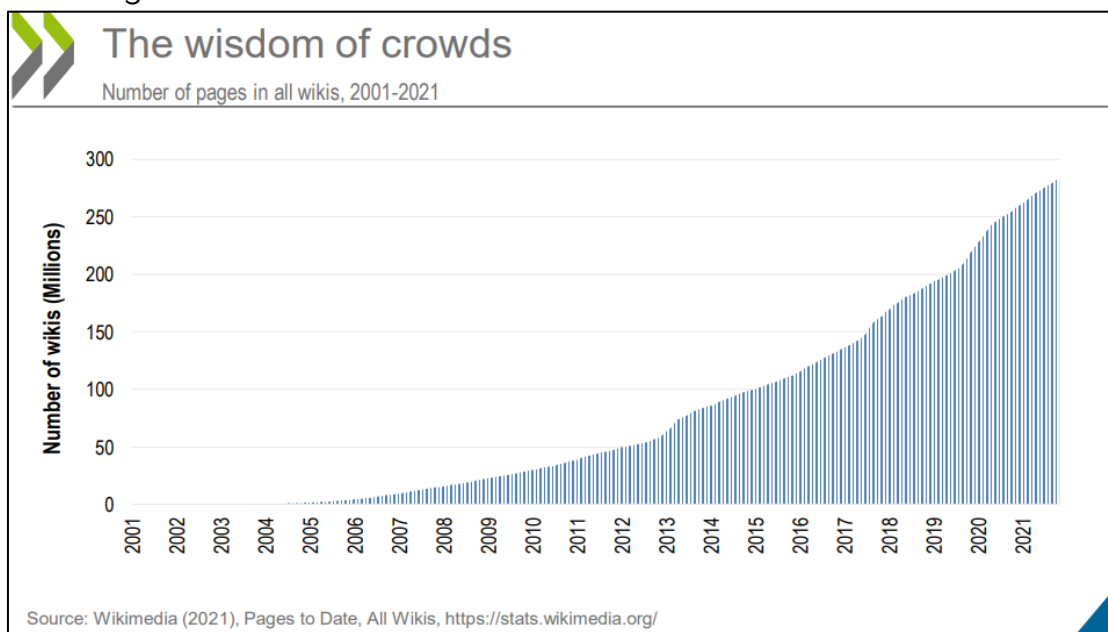
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- ¬ **Demographic pressures:** What are the impacts of population ageing on growth and living standards?
- ¬ **A growth revolution?** Can we reconcile prosperity and environmental sustainability?
- ¬ **To infinity and beyond:** What opportunities and challenges do new economies bring?

2.	Knowledge and power

- ¬ **Knowledge societies**: How do we get to know what we know?
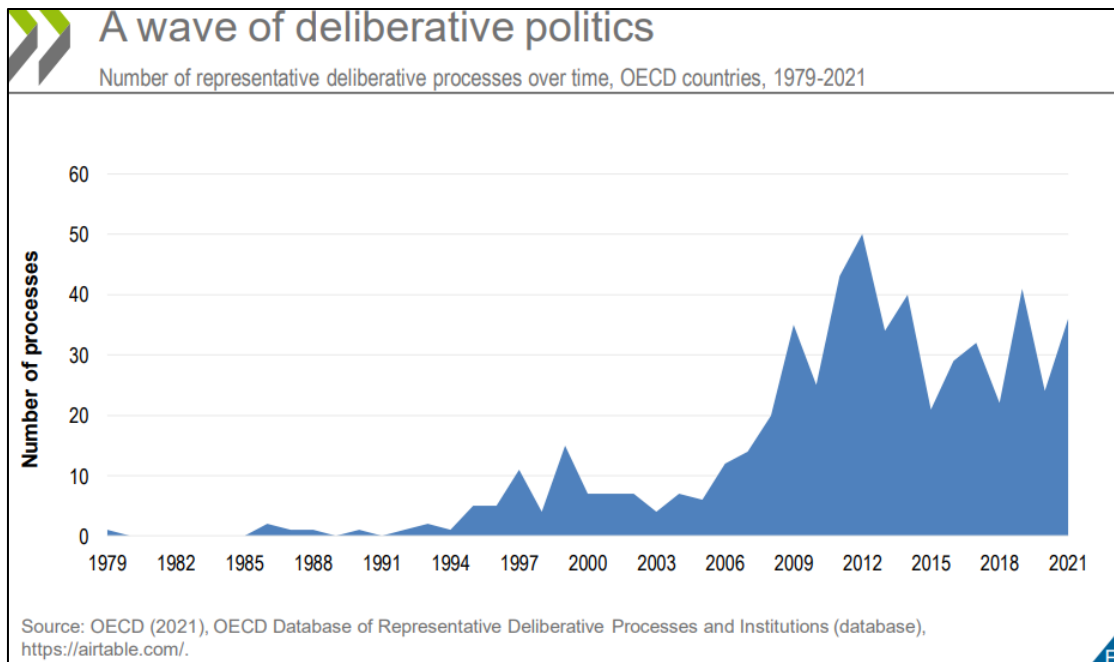 The graph below informs about the number of wikis, that is growing massively. It shows the power of cooperation and working together in generating and sharing knowledge.

The wisdom of crowds
Number of pages in all wikis, 2001-2021

Source: Wikimedia (2021), Pages to Date, All Wikis, https://stats.wikimedia.org/

- ¬ **Are the data too big to fail?** In what ways are AI and 'big data' affecting our decision making?
- ¬ **Opening up science**: How are digital technologies changing scientific practices?
- ¬ **Knowledge governance**: What impacts does knowledge production have on society?
- ¬ **Speaking truth to power:** What roles do expert and lay knowledge play in our democracies?
  The graph below shows the number of representative deliberative processes over time. It demonstrates a massive increase of political processes in which citizens participate actively, give their opinion after deliberation. These findings relate to the data related to civic engagement provided by professor van de Werfhorst.
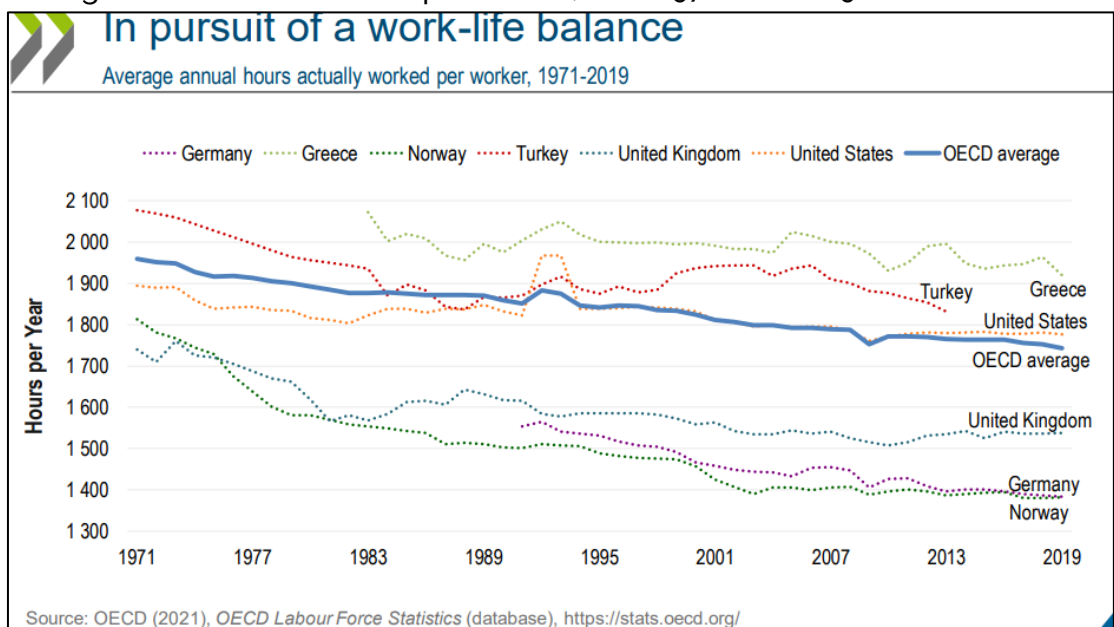
A wave of deliberative politics

Number of representative deliberative processes over time, OECD countries, 1979-2021

Source: OECD (2021), OECD Database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions (database), https://airtable.com/.

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3. Living and working

¬ **Work to live or live to work?** How is our work-life balance evolving?
This trend has a big impact on the organization of the school year and on the organization of the school day. The graph below shows the evolution of the average annual hours worked per worker, form 1971 until 2019.
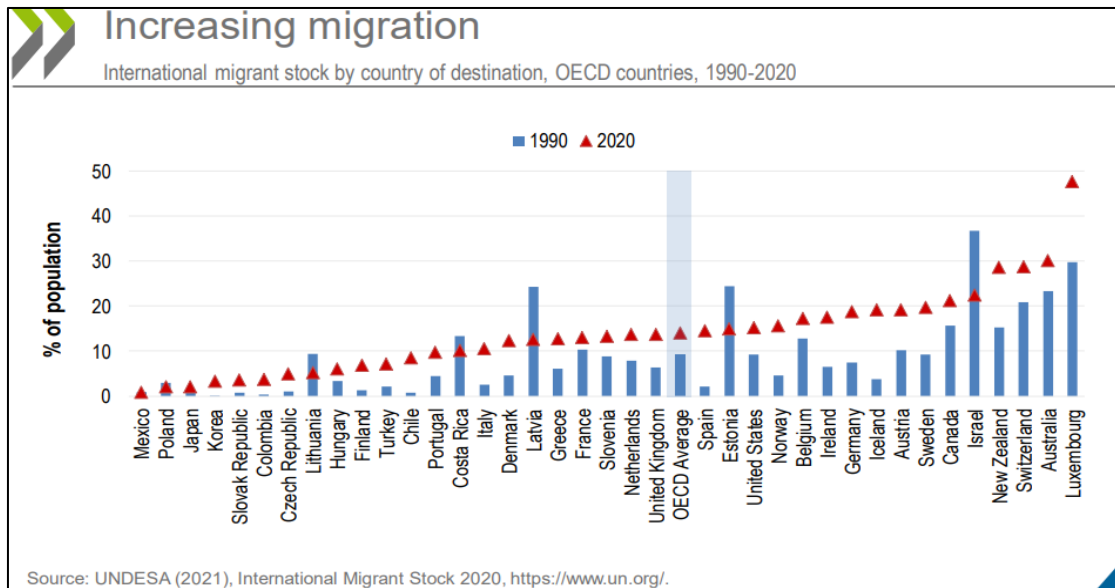
In pursuit of a work-life balance

Average annual hours actually worked per worker, 1971-2019

Source: OECD (2021), *OECD Labour Force Statistics* (database), https://stats.oecd.org/

¬ **New employment for a new age?** What are the impacts of new working arrangements on our well-being?

¬ **21st century families**: How are family structures and roles within the family evolving?

¬ **Quality of life:** How are personal safety and housing trends changing?

4.	Identity and belonging

- ¬ **You can go your own way:** What role do social institutions play in our individualizing world?
- ¬ **It's a small world after all:** How are we diversifying, nationally and in our multilateral systems?
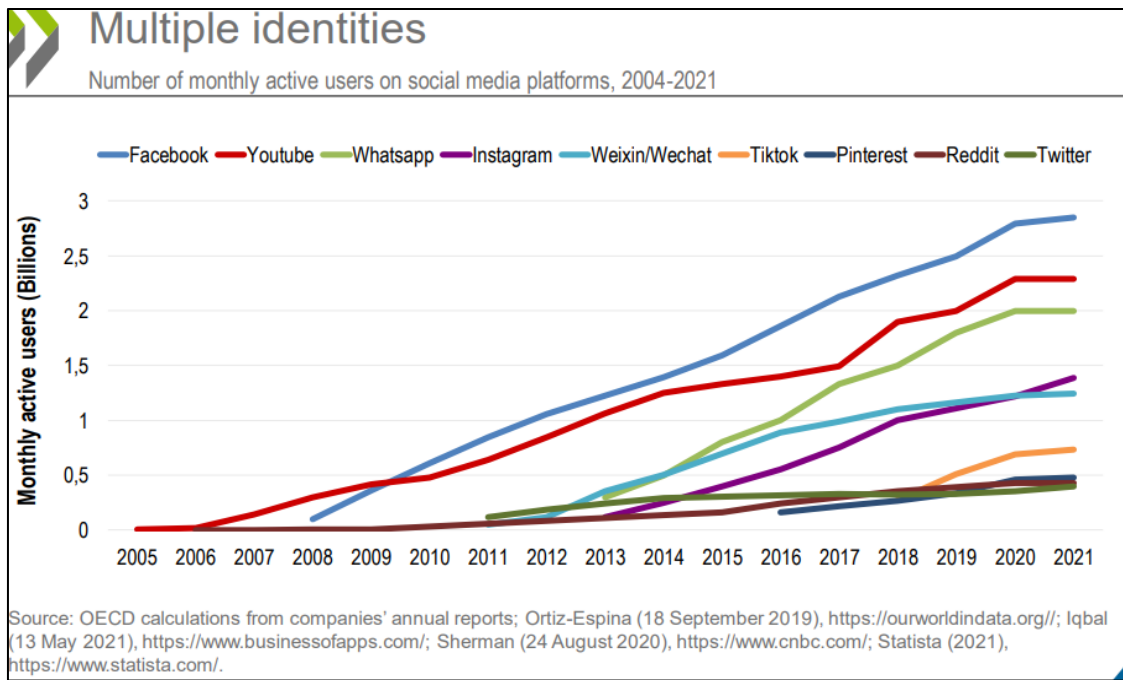 The graph below shows the international migrant stock by country of destination, from 1990 until 2020.

- ¬ **Speak your mind:** How are the interests, behaviors and demands of citizens changing?
- ¬ **All for one, one for all:** Where are we in the fight against discrimination and social exclusion?
- ¬ **The many profiles of us:** How is the digital world changing identity exploration and development?
  The following graph below shows the number of monthly active users on social media platforms, from 2004 until 2021.
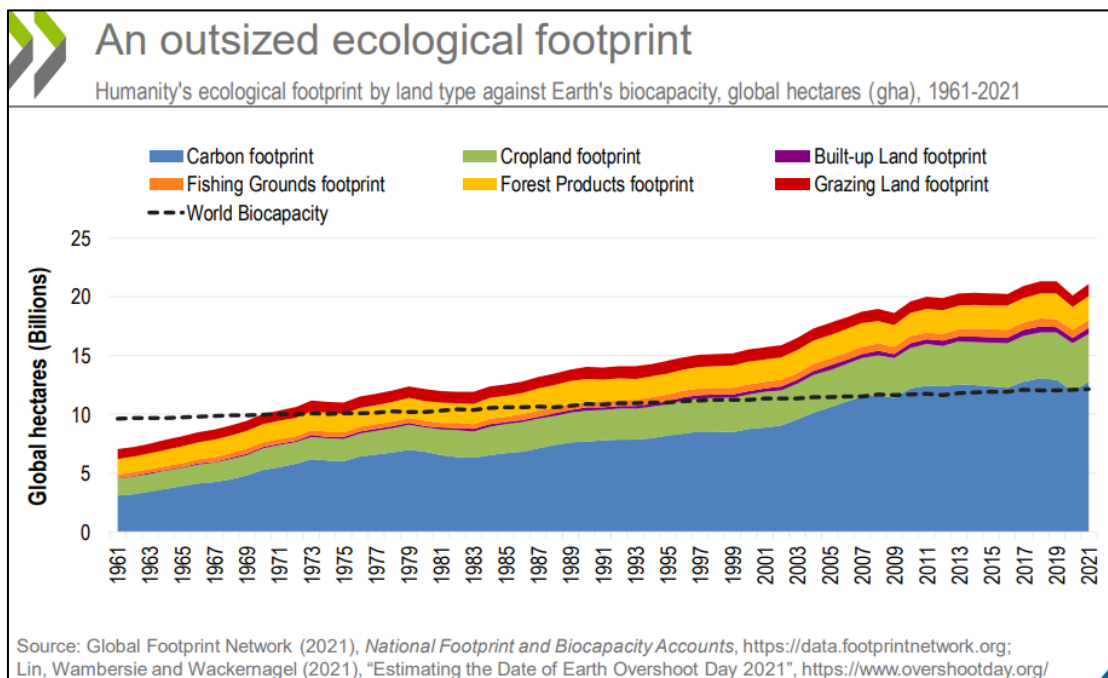
Multiple identities
Number of monthly active users on social media platforms, 2004-2021

Facebook — Youtube — Whatsapp — Instagram — Weixin/Wechat — Tiktok — Pinterest — Reddit — Twitter

Monthly active users (Billions)

Source: OECD calculations from companies' annual reports; Ortiz-Espina (18 September 2019), https://ourworldindata.org//; Iqbal (13 May 2021), https://www.businessofapps.com/; Sherman (24 August 2020), https://www.cnbc.com/; Statista (2021), https://www.statista.com/.

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5. Our changing nature

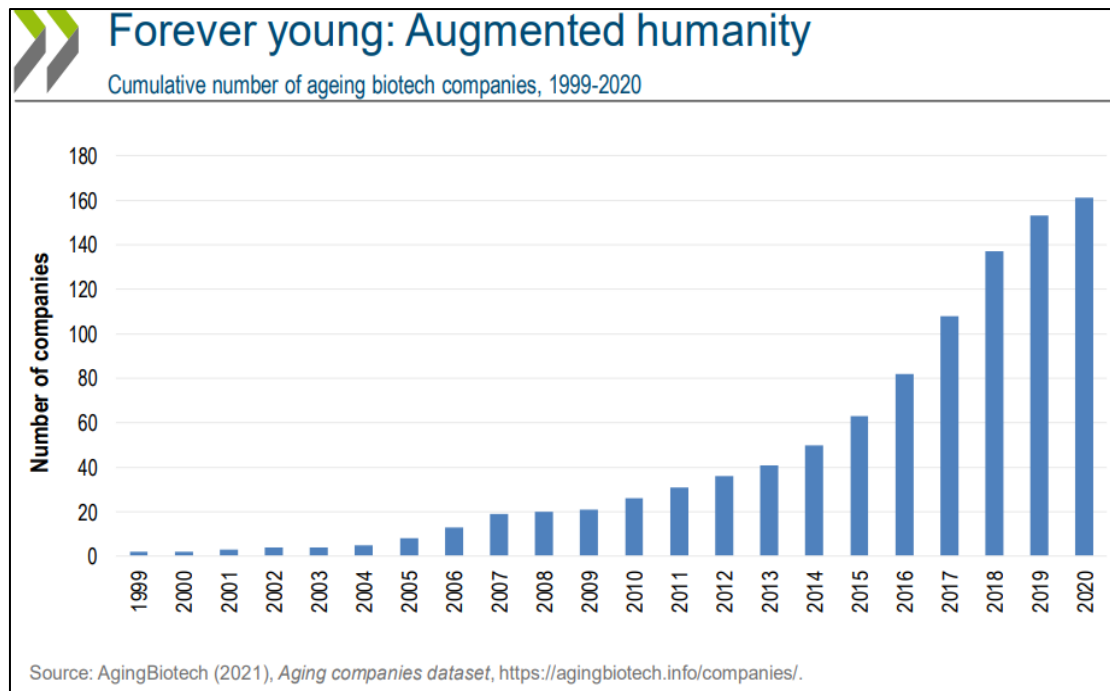¬ **There is no Planet B**: Is the pace at which we are using our planet's resources sustainable?
The graph below shows human's outsized ecological footprint by land type against Earth's biocapacity, global hectares (1961-2021)

An outsized ecological footprint
Humanity's ecological footprint by land type against Earth's biocapacity, global hectares (gha), 1961-2021

Carbon footprint   Cropland footprint   Built-up Land footprint
Fishing Grounds footprint   Forest Products footprint   Grazing Land footprint
– – – World Biocapacity

Global hectares (Billions)

Source: Global Footprint Network (2021), *National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts*, https://data.footprintnetwork.org;
Lin, Wambersie and Wackernagel (2021), "Estimating the Date of Earth Overshoot Day 2021", https://www.overshootday.org/

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- ¬ **The natural world**: How is our relationship with the natural world evolving?
- ¬ **Food for thought:** How is food production and consumption affecting our well-being?
- ¬ **Our human body**: Are we moving towards a new paradigm of human enhancement?
  The trend to avoid illness and ageing is illustrated by the graph below:

Forever young: Augmented humanity
Cumulative number of ageing biotech companies, 1999-2020

Source: AgingBiotech (2021), *Aging companies dataset*, https://agingbiotech.info/companies/.

- ¬ **No one lives in cyberspace**: How is digitalization changing communication and social interactions?

For the full presentation we refer to [the presentation of Marc Fuster](#) at the EUNEC website. More information can be found at the book page ([Trends Shaping Education 2022 | en | OECD](#)) and at the project's website ([Trends Shaping Education - OECD](#)).

And the future?

COVID appeared to be an accelerator of trends, raising a number of questions for the future:

- ¬ Will the pandemic further accelerate open science trends? Increased funding, open access and data, and fast-track publication accelerated COVID-19-related scientific production. Over three in four of all COVID-19 publications are open access.
- ¬ Crises disproportionately affect the most vulnerable. Will we be more resilient for the next one? The pandemic interrupted more than two decades of continuous progress in poverty reduction. While extreme poverty is once again declining, almost 100 million more people were pushed into poverty in 2020.

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- ¬ As the economy recovers, will it break with an unsustainable model? OECD and key partner countries deployed unprecedented economic recovery packages. Despite the urgency of action on climate, about one in three measures with direct environmental impact are expected to have negative or mixed effects.

There are signals that trends, mainly in the field of communication and energy, might have disruptive effects. The policy environment is becoming more uncertain and more complex. It is now crucial to join forces in order to have a sustainable plan.

Questions and answers

Participants exchange on the challenge of evidence-based or evidence-informed decision making in the field of education. The question is what counts as evidence? What counts as knowledge? And who is to decide what counts?

OECD has the objective to try to gather good research results. The CERI-project '21st century children', for instance, looks at different aspects of today's childhood, such as physical health, mental health, digitalization, screen time, social media, ..(21st Century Children - OECD).

Teachers play an important role as mediators. How can they validate the knowledge they gather via different channels, such as Wikipedia, Pinterest, open science? How to reconcile research and practice is at the core of the work of CERI, as demonstrated in the recent report 'Strengthening the impact of educational research' (Strengthening the Impact of Education Research - Background - OECD).
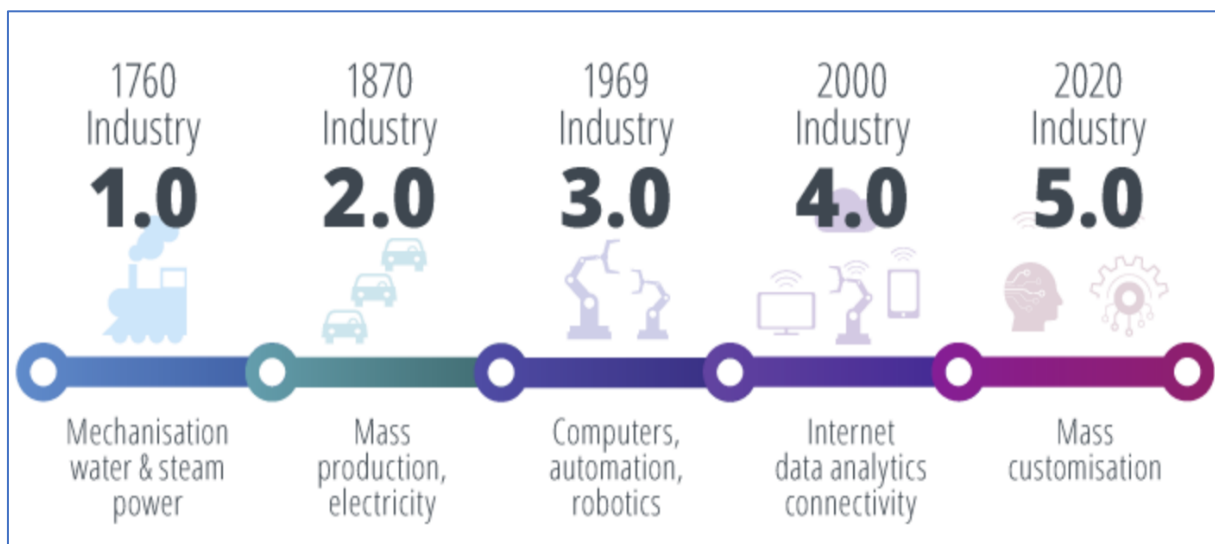
The Impact of Policy Responses on Education Innovations

Professor Saulė Mačiukaitė-Žvinienė, Head for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Professor for Innovation at Vilnius University and President of the Lithuanian Education Council

Professor Saulė Mačiukaitė-Žvinienė goes into changes in education over the centuries, with the aim to feed the discussions amongst members of education councils during the design sessions.

This scheme describes the evolution from education 1.0 to education 5.1 and beyond, from the 18th century until the 21st century.
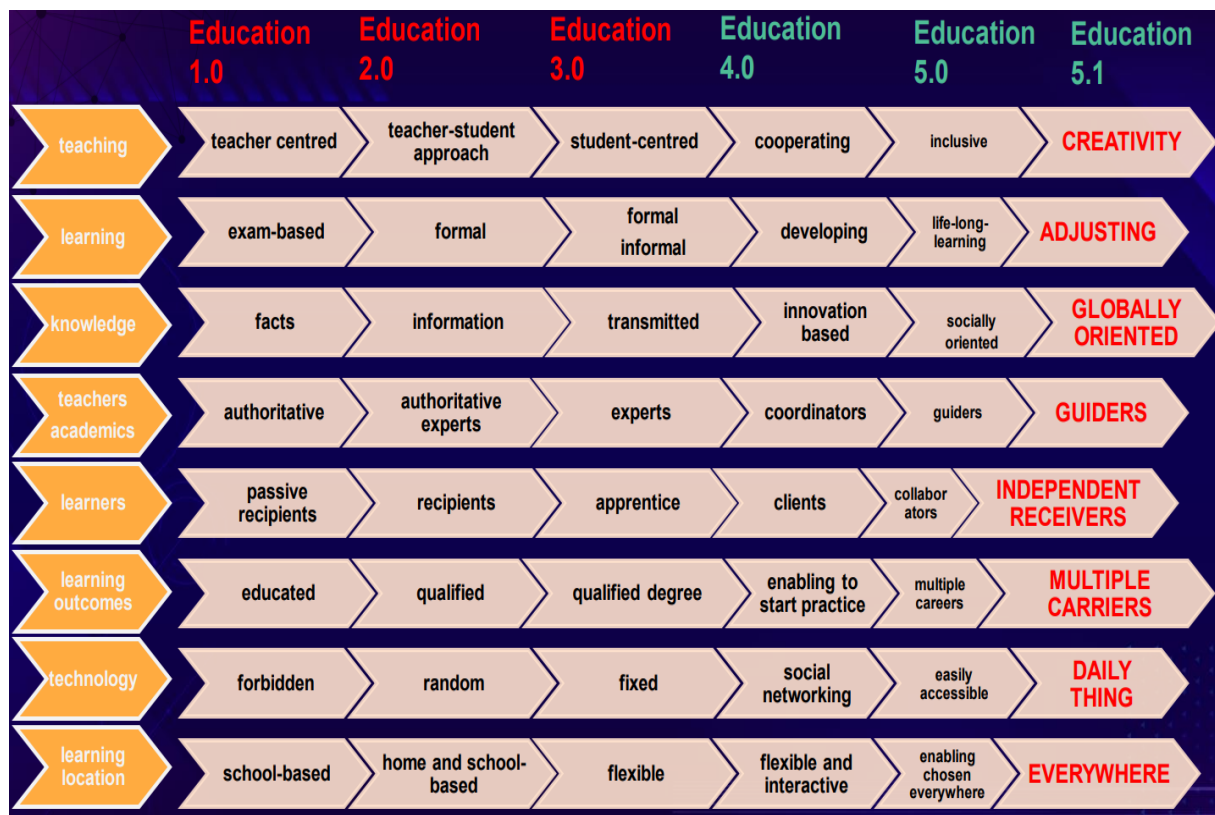

Education technology is not to be mixed up with education innovation. Ed Tech is about, for instance, digital text readers, 3D printing, virtual reality, video games, cloud technology, AI. Ed Innovation is about, for instance, free higher education, 'forest' Kindergarten, 3D learning, autonomy of the teacher/professor, class without paper, community decision making, student unions.

The extensive scheme below describes the evolution over the centuries, from education 1.0 until education 5.1 in the field of

- ¬ Teaching;
- ¬ Learning;
- ¬ Knowledge;
- ¬ Teachers/academics;
- ¬ Learners;
- ¬ Learning outcomes;
- ¬ Technology;
- ¬ Learning location.

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The overview is based on different resources. The column 5.1 refers to the situation impacted by the COVID-crisis.

	Education 1.0	Education 2.0	Education 3.0	Education 4.0	Education 5.0	Education 5.1
teaching	teacher centred	teacher-student approach	student-centred	cooperating	inclusive	CREATIVITY
learning	exam-based	formal	formal informal	developing	life-long-learning	ADJUSTING
knowledge	facts	information	transmitted	innovation based	socially oriented	GLOBALLY ORIENTED
teachers academics	authoritative	authoritative experts	experts	coordinators	guiders	GUIDERS
learners	passive recipients	recipients	apprentice	clients	collaborators	INDEPENDENT RECEIVERS
learning outcomes	educated	qualified	qualified degree	enabling to start practice	multiple careers	MULTIPLE CARRIERS
technology	forbidden	random	fixed	social networking	easily accessible	DAILY THING
learning location	school-based	home and school-based	flexible	flexible and interactive	enabling chosen everywhere	EVERYWHERE

It is important to realize that a lot of education systems are still responding to the characteristics of education 3.0 or 4.0. There are tremendous differences in approaches across countries. Those differences relate to initial phases of problem definition and how new education policies are implemented: agenda setting, policy design, official adoption of quality-enhancing reforms etc. Similarities in the experiences across countries lie in the nature of the political benefits and costs of distinct policy rules and in the ways in which national education problems become recognized (Hickey, Hossein, 2019; Kumar, 2021; Malik, 2021).

Since the year 2000, new drivers are impacting on education policy:

- ¬ New groups step into education policy forming;
- ¬ Direction of international discourses on education;
- ¬ Available data about failures of prior policies;
- ¬ Comparative data across countries;
- ¬ Pressures from groups favoring change.

It is not clear yet how the influence of international organizations works on education: there is no formal set of rules, there is no formal hierarchy of relations, relations are only dynamic.

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When we look at the challenges for education in 2000 and in 2021, we see that there is no sufficient difference in those challenges; the challenges form 2000 remain the challenges in 2021 (sources: European Commission, OECD, United Nations, World Bank):

- ¬ Social exclusion in all levels of education;
- ¬ Differences in achievements among students (in schools, in vocational education institutions, in higher education institutions);
- ¬ Inefficient use of funds in education and science;
- ¬ Mismatch between skills demand and supply.

There are no sufficient differences in strategic goals either:

- ¬ Equality in all levels of education;
- ¬ Quality and market orientation in vocational education;
- ¬ Higher education institutions that are strong in diversity but similar in scientific potential.

Now that education is becoming more open, distant and digital, the impact of international organizations is becoming more important. But even before the interconnected digital society, there were strong arguments to view the educational practice as an international playing field, where practices and norms are being discussed and negotiated. Reports such as OECD's 'Education at a Glance', UNESCO's 'Global Education Monitoring Report', the European Commission Country Reports and Framework Programmes can be a starting point for countries and regions to become a learning society. There remain of course differences between countries and regions, but we see the emergence of a kind of 'standard model' for schooling, universities and science.

The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nationals contribute to produce the 'worthy citizen', capable of contributing to economic prosperity. Two SDG's relate directly to education:

- ¬ SDG 4: 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. This goal will not be reached unless innovative solutions are designed. In 2018, some 773 million adults, two-thirds of them women, remained illiterate in terms of reading and writing skills. The global adult literacy rate, for the populations 15 years of age and older, was 86 % in 2018, while the youth literacy rate, for the population 15-24 years of age, was 92 % (Orr, 2021).
- ¬ SDG 9 relates to industry, innovation and infrastructure. Although neither distance education nor online learning was mentioned explicitly in the Qingdao Statement (UNESCO, 2017), 'fostering digital innovations for education' is agreed on. In 2016, medium-high and high-tech sectors accounted for 48 % of the global manufacturing value added. Medium-high and high-tech products continued to dominate manufacturing production in Northern America and Europe, reaching 47 % of the manufacturing value added in 2016 compared with 10 % in least developed countries. Almost all people around the world now live withing range of a mobile-cellular network signal, with 90 % living within range of a 3G-quality or higher network (Orr, 2021).

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International organizations can impact on education innovations along 4 paths:

- ¬ Ideation: stimulate national or regional initiatives through ideation and policy exchange;
- ¬ Digital infrastructure projects: contribute to the development of digital solutions, which are by their nature global, but can be harnessed in a local setting;
- ¬ Multi-stakeholder networks: orchestrate a mixture between local and global solutions through internationals partnerships;
- ¬ International networks, endorsed by international organizations.

A new dynamic was brought to the expectations of digital learning by the pandemic. Online learning was then seen as the only game in town. A way to fast-track digital technologies are part of the new normal for learning delivery. The policy response continues to play a key role in service delivery and the formation of digital learning as a public good; private players in the market are not dominating.

Questions and answers

Participants exchange on the link between the concepts of 'education innovation' and 'technology'. It is clear that digital technology is not a synonym of education innovation. If we speak about the impact of digitalisation on the learning process (f.i. digital platforms, the use of mobile phone), it can lead to innovation.

DESIGN SESSIONS

In small groups members discussed trends shaping education. Each group delved into one trend to identify challenges to education systems and discuss possible responses to enhance their resilience, exchanging experiences and practices from participating countries. Below are the summarized results of the design sessions.

EUNEC design session on digitalisation

In this session the participants had a very interesting and lively discussion on digitalisation, in particular about the identification of the main related challenges. Many themes were mentioned, like participation & access, downtime/dependency/addiction, more lifelong learning and distance learning, shadow education, loss of meaning and motivation, costs, digital skills of (older) teachers/culture shock, law lags behind, selection of equipment, deep changes in education, infrastructure/upgrading/software updates, security.

In the end, the group chose loss of emotional contact and personal contact, socialisation and inclusion as main topics. Other themes that resonated well were equality & ethics, personal paths, procurement & pedagogy, digital waste/energy use/obsolescence, high demands on teachers, changing teacher approaches/methodology, teachers role/mediator, privacy, information overload/information->knowledge, cyberbullying and fake news/checking the sources.

The following question was formulated for further exploration: How might we use digitalisation in education without putting inclusion and socio-emotional aspects at risk? In the final part of the session, some good practices from different countries were shared: taking the role of parents into account (Estonia); means testing & providing and eTwinning (Malta); guaranteed access, teacher differentiation, not exaggerating distance learning and promoting collaborative work (Portugal).

EUNEC design session on Internationalization and complexity

This group focused on the trend internationalization and complexity in education. Through education students are being prepared for an internationalized, culturally diverse environments in work and society in which increased connectivity, economic integration, and migration take place. First, the group identified a key problem for this trend in order to work with a common understanding, and the challenges it posed to education systems. One of the main problem identified was that the out-of-date education systems of the EUNEC participants in this session (Portugal, Spain, Flanders and the Netherlands) were not adequately prepared for the recently new developments such as internationalization, digitalization and migration. It followed by each participant sharing their country experiences. For example, both Spain and Flanders emphasized their strong regional approach to their education system, while in the Netherlands and Portugal the education system was governed on national level in close corporation with the institutions. A lively conversation followed, which lead to the problem statement: How should national and regional education systems answer to the challenges of increasing change, uncertainty and transnational influences? Group 3 came up with 4 ideas to address this statement: 1. more flexibility in the education systems to deal with (new) complexities; 2. include stakeholders and experts during the policy making phase; 3. Come up with a common and more inclusive language to also include institutional and

regional perspectives, and 4. Periodic curriculum revisions in order to remain up-to-date and to tackle the trend of internationalization and complexity in education.

EUNEC design session on equity and inclusion

In this session we formulated ideas and solutions for the problems of inequality/unequal opportunities in education. We also discussed how education systems can be more inclusive with respect to people with disabilities, people from migration communities, and people from families with a lower social economic status.

First the group worked at a common understanding of the trends and the challenges equity and inclusion pose to education systems, to define a key problem. The challenges in the EUNEC countries are diverse: differences in quality and accessibility between private and public schools, unequal access to higher education, 'shadow education' (forms of additional, privately-funded educational support), a shortage of specialised provision for children with special needs in mainstream schools and teachers without the competencies to deal with diversity. In some West-African countries the problems are even more severe: hundred children in a classroom with one teacher, deficient secondary education for girls and a lack of specialised education for children with disabilities. Despite the different problem in every country, the group identified a common challenge: 'How might education treat children differently in order to reach the full potential of every child?

In the second stage of the discussion the group searched for ideas to address this challenge. Most participants agreed that teacher training is the key factor. The initial teacher training should be improved and prolonged. Subsequently continuous learning of teachers is needed. For this there should be a support service for professional learning, including the professional learning for teachers in the area of special educational needs. The second action the group agreed on, is the allocation of specific teaching support for children with special needs as much as possible within the mainstream school. The support can consist of extra assistants, speech specialists, co-teaching, etc. The third action concerns the early childhood education. This should be free, of high educational quality and accessible for all young children. The fourth action concerns policy and funding. Governments should formulate a clear and evidence based policy on education and diversity and provide appropriate services and funding.

EUNEC design session on labour market dynamics and global markets1

In this session we formulated ideas and solutions for the problems of the labour market dynamics and the global markets in education. We also discussed how education systems can, on the one hand, prepare for the labour market but also prepare for life. How do we ensure that the focus on the labour market in education does not lead to early tracking? At what age should vocational training begin?

First the group worked at a common understanding of the trends of the labour market dynamics and the global market to define a key problem. The challenges in the EUNEC countries represented in the group were very similar. For example, teacher shortage was a big problem in every country represented in group. The group decided to focus on the following question: 'How can the education system and the labour market work better together. The group discussed the various policies of the different countries.

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This lead to four recommendations:

- ¬ A dual system for vocational education is key. All countries in the group have some sort of dual system for vocational education. Learning the profession both in school and in practice is needed to make sure that future professionals have the skills the labour market demands.

- ¬ Practical labs, all countries have schools or centres where students can also learn practical skills within school. Most of the time these labs are al collaboration between the schools and businesses or for example a hospital. These labs are important for developing skills in a realistic setting and to make sure that what you learn in school is in alignment with the current professional practise.

- ¬ Teacher – Practice exchange. Make sure teachers get the opportunity to work in the field of their expertise to experience what skills are required on the job and to develop a better sense of what professionals life outside school demands. Also give professionals from practice the chance to work in schools and share their expertise. This exchange can be very inspirational and educational for both sides and help close the gap between education and labour market.

- ¬ Provide a system for recognition of diploma's and skills in Europe. Like in higher education it should be possible in vocational education to study for example to be a nurse in one country and after obtaining your diploma start to work as a nurse in another country. Facilitating mobility of students and workforce should not only be possible for higher education but also for vocational education. This mobility of students and workforce demands that diploma's and skills are recognized internationally.

EDUCATION COUNCILS AS BOUNDARY ORGANIZATIONS

At the occasion of the 22th anniversary of EUNEC, member panels discussed the role of education councils in the policy process, inspired by the EUNEC publication 'Education Councils in Europe. Going beyond the tensions.'

Professor Dr. Marleen Brans and Dr. Ellen Fobé, Public Governance Institute, KULeuven, engaged to introduce the topic. They have written the introductory chapter for the publication, and are at the same time the authors of the EUNEC 2010 study: 'Education Councils in the EU. Balancing expertise, societal advice and political control in the production of policy advice'

Even though neither could physically make it to this anniversary celebration, due to COVID, Marleen Brans and Ellen Fobé expressly thank the president and the organizers for the opportunity to present here today, as well as for being able to contribute to EUNECs 20 year celebratory volume. Carine De Smet, EUNEC secretariat, brings a short presentation, based on the PowerPoint prepared by Marleen Brans and Ellen Fobé.

Before reflecting upon the activities and roles of education councils as boundary organizations, the presentation starts with a short introduction on policy advice and policy advisory systems.

Policy advice is defined (Halligan, 1995) as 'Information, knowledge and recommendations for future courses of action'.

The definition is short but at the same time quite broad. In this way, the definition allows scholars to consider the wide variety of actors who provide policy advice, extending far beyond those actors who are traditionally associated with policy advisory activities, such as civil servants. The goals of policy advice are to make better decisions, strengthening policy analytical capacity, and to ensure public participation, through democratic policy processes and empowerment.

So who are all of these actors that provide policy advice?

Public advisory scholars situate them within the *policy advisory system*, which is depicted as a multi centric model where three different arenas compete and interact with one another.

In the internal government arena one can find civil servants as policy advisers. The two external arenas are, on the one hand the academic arena which includes universities and
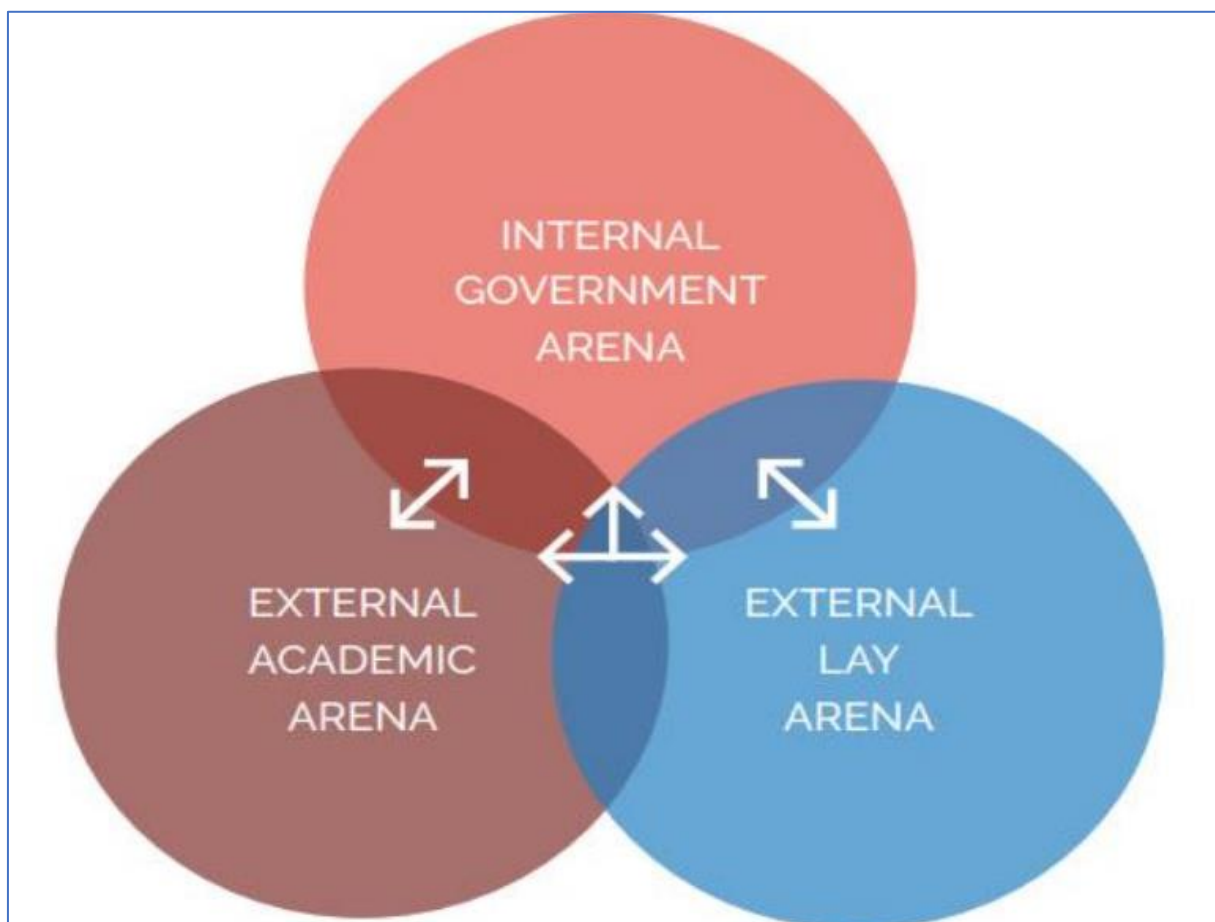
university research institutes as well as individual academics. On the other hand, we can find the external lay arena – called lay because of its non-academic nature. This arena houses advisers in NGO's, business associations, labor unions etc.

We can note that there may be stark differences between states as regards the composition of their policy advisory system. In addition, such national varieties often tend to hide important sectoral variations. Needless to say that the composition of the advisory system in the field of education will be different from that in other policy areas, such as economic or environmental policies.

Education councils as boundary organizations

Institutionalized advisory bodies, such as EUNECs education councils take up a special position in the advisory system. They are considered as boundary organizations.

Boundary organizations operate at the boundaries of two or more arenas in the policy advisory system. And through their activities, specific membership composition and working methods they are able to span or to bridge those boundaries and cater to the needs of different types of principals. Successful boundary organizations please multiple principals, or multiple audiences, and through their independence they can behave in an entrepreneurial way (adapted from Guston, 2000).

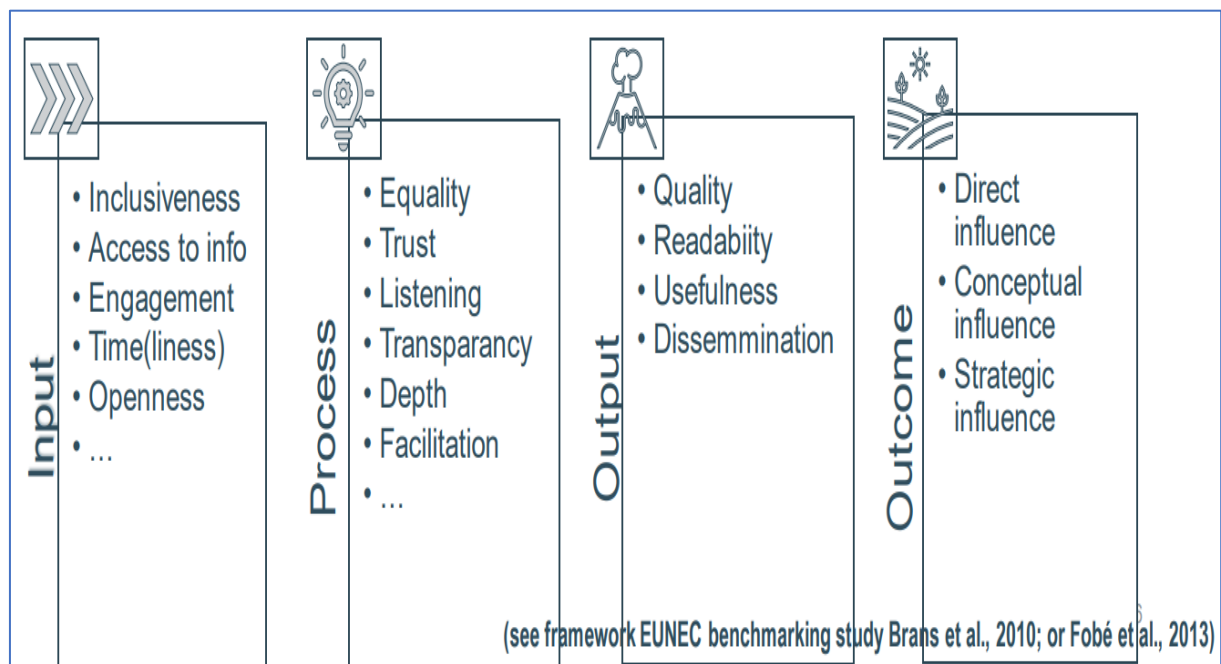# Are our education systems fit for the future?

We can say that institutionalized advisory bodies are widespread. Ellen Fobé would even dare claim that one could find hundreds if not thousands of institutionalized advisory bodies at every level of government in nearly any country in Europe…and even beyond European states in other democratic as well as non-democratic regimes.

Because governments make widespread use of institutionalized councils to gain input for their policies they are often established actors in the policy advisory system.

Notwithstanding their widespread and often well-established nature, institutionalized advisory bodies are only rarely the subject of academic research. In fact, the academic community knows very little of the many thousands of advisory bodies out there. Especially international and comparative studies are lacking.

Marleen Brans and Ellen Fobé had the opportunity nearly twelve years ago to conduct a comparative study on European education councils, commissioned by EUNEC in light of its 10 year anniversary then.

Below is a scheme of the framework they used in their study here. It provides the basis for a comparative assessment of the characteristics of the advisory councils themselves, their advisory production process, the advice that they produced and the use of that advice.

Input
- Inclusiveness
- Access to info
- Engagement
- Time(liness)
- Openness
- …

Process
- Equality
- Trust
- Listening
- Transparancy
- Depth
- Facilitation
- …

Output
- Quality
- Readabiity
- Usefulness
- Dissemmination

Outcome
- Direct influence
- Conceptual influence
- Strategic influence

(see framework EUNEC benchmarking study Brans et al., 2010; or Fobé et al., 2013)

As far as the authors are aware, the study commissioned by EUNEC is one of the first and certainly one of the few truly international comparative works on advisory bodies.
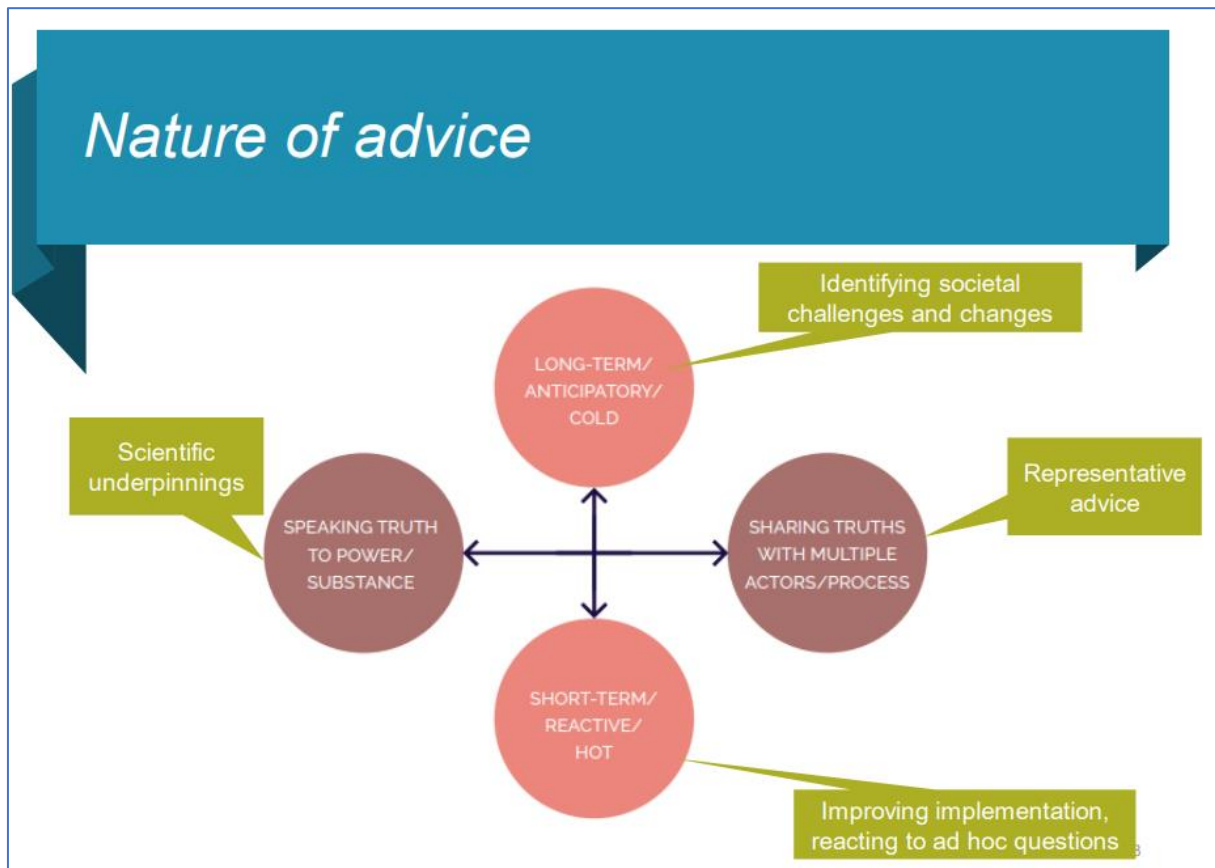
Marleen Brans and Ellen Fobé draw on the framework in this benchmark study on education councils to make observations on the current functioning of the education councils in the EUNEC network.

They focus on two particular issues, namely the type of advice and the aspect of use of advice or influence.

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The nature of advice

Firstly as to the nature of advice provided by the education councils, they observe two tensions.

The vertical axis depicts the tension between short term, reactive advice on the one hand and on the other hand advice that is anticipatory in nature and that takes the longer term into account. Both types of advice require a certain amount of capacity and the allocation of resources, and it may be challenging for education councils to find the right balance in this.

Equally challenging, on the horizontal axis, is the tension between advice that speaks to policy makers *because of its substantive quality*, and advice that speaks to policy makers *because of the way it was produced and who was involved in that process*. We can observe that education councils that strive for strong scientific underpinnings of their advice still feel the need to somehow also involve a representative sample of stakeholders in order to strengthen their claims of providing quality expert advice. In a similar way, we can observe that education councils that proud themselves on providing representative advice seek to involve scientific experts or integrate scientific expertise into that process, again to substantiate the claim of providing quality advice.

The influence of advice

A second observation Marleen Brans and Ellen Fobé make regards the influence of advice.

In comparison to their research more than ten years ago, they find that the education councils have managed to approach this issue in a variety of ways.

Indeed, influence is a multidimensional concept and it would not be optimal to *only* consider influence as 'direct influence'; that takes place 'immediate and on the short term'

There are many more aspects to the notion of influence than that.

Nonetheless, it remains challenging for any council to pay attention to this variety of ways in which it can maintain its relevance. And it is equally challenging for researchers to find ways to assess the wide variety of influence the advisory bodies such as education councils may have.

Conclusion

The authors would like to conclude by emphasizing the need to continuously pay attention to the functioning of advisory bodies. This seems an obvious piece of advice to provide, but it is certainly not self-evident. It requires continuous self-reflection and willingness to learn.

To Marleen Brans and Ellen Fobé it is clear that EUNEC serves as an important platform – not only to facilitate dialogue and interaction, but also to enhance comparative evaluation and learning processes. In this way, it can be considered an example to many other policy fields.