

OECD Work on Education & Skills

Policy Products &
Services for Countries

Foreword

We have worked with over 50 countries to establish meaningful educational aspirations and accompanied them in the difficult process of making reform happen. Our global metrics help countries see what is possible in education and our independent analysis and advice offers options for effective policy design and implementation. We can draw on a global network of the world's leading policy-makers, experts and practitioners to provide a multi-disciplinary and whole-of-government perspective that is so crucial for building effective and lasting reforms. Our goal is to help every learner, every parent, every teacher and every policy maker see that only the sky is the limit to improving education – and that improving education is the key to a better and fairer society.

- Andreas Schleicher



Countries aim to achieve excellence, equity and efficiency in education, but do not achieve these goals as fully as they would like. The OECD Directorate for Education and Skills helps countries close the gap between educational aspirations and performance by providing advice that spans the policy process, from diagnosis to implementation.

We bring six key capabilities to all of our work:

- Wide and sustained experience analysing education policy for more than four decades, based upon collaboration with 35 OECD member countries – and more than 20 countries beyond the OECD – across a wide range of economic, social and cultural settings.
- A global network of collaborators and advisors that we engage in our work, including leading researchers and experienced practitioners.
- Independent, external analysis and advice delivered by an international organisation whose work is carefully grounded in evidence.
- Close collaboration with governments, whose policy experience we are able to engage and mobilise in peer reviews.
- Comparative data – such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), OECD Education Indicators and Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) – and international evidence that allows countries to learn more about their own education policies by comparing their experience to that of other countries.
- Integrated expertise that encompasses education research, policy and practice from early childhood care through adult education, and which is backed by expert statisticians, economists, and specialists from closely related fields, such as science, technology, and innovation; and labour and employment policy.

The products and services we offer are described below, organised by a stylised model of the policy process, in which policy diagnosis is followed by review, dialogue, and finally implementation. All services can be provided separately – or in combination – at the request of countries. Services can also be offered to support the work of subnational authorities, such as provinces or states.

Diagnosis

Develops understanding of how one's education system is performing, and its strengths and challenges.

Review

Provides custom, in-depth analysis and advice for policy development.

Dialogue

Engages stakeholders to deepen understanding or build agreement about policy challenges and options.

Implementation

Supports policymakers and educators in translating established policies into effects in the world of educational practice.

Closing the gap between aspiration and performance begins with understanding how one's education system is performing, where its strengths and challenges are, and what options for improvement exist – or, policy diagnosis.

Policy diagnosis puts national practices and performance in an international context to help countries understand how their education system is faring in comparison to peer nations; and helps countries learn about the policies and practices of high-performing nations, or identify examples from other countries that they can use as a resource for policy development and learning. We offer countries four options for policy diagnosis.

solution-oriented briefs (e.g. teacher careers in Chile). These briefs are suitable for countries that have clearly identified a key issue or challenge in their system and would like a quickly delivered summary of key evidence on this subject from an international perspective to inform the policy debate or selection of a policy response. The preparation of an Education Policy Brief involves desk-based analysis that draws upon the OECD's extensive data resources, its policy reviews and publications, and education research. The Education Policy Brief is prepared in co-ordination with country authorities, is published electronically, and is typically about 20 pages in length, and can be conducted in 3-6 months.

Education Policy Briefs are highly focused examinations of specific education topics. Countries themselves identify a topic, priority or policy challenge that is important to them, and the OECD brings together internationally comparable evidence and expertise about key comparator countries, providing

EDUCATION POLICY BRIEF

Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Customised or standardised output?	All topics or selected topics?	Country self-assessment required?	Principal source of evidence	Source of expert support?	Months from initiation to completion?
Single country	Customised report	Any topic	No	Desk-based research	OECD analysis and data	3-6 months

Education Policy Profiles provide a resource that permits OECD member countries to benchmark their performance and identify key challenges for the education system at the student, institutional and system level. Country profiles are based on an OECD-developed common comparative framework, or template, that examines national education policies in an international context, bringing together evidence from a wide range of OECD resources, including international assessments and surveys, education indicators, and education policy reviews. The

preparation of an Education Policy Profile involves the collection of information every two to three years from country authorities, who provide standardised information on countries' policy practices, reform initiatives and system performance. This information provides a comparative foundation for identifying policy challenges and reforms. An Education Policy Profile, typically about 30 pages in length, is prepared in co-ordination with country authorities, and contributes to mutual learning across countries on education policy reforms.

EDUCATION POLICY PROFILE						
Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Customised or standardised output?	All topics or selected topics?	Country self-assessment required?	Principal source of evidence	Source of expert support?	Months from initiation to completion?
Voluntary country participation, with 33 participating countries	Standardised report based on common framework	Selected areas of focus at the student, institution, and system level	Self-assessment not required, but countries complete targeted survey	Desk-based research	OECD analysis and data	3-6 months, with updating every 2-3 years
http://oe.cd/education-profiles						

Diagnostic Policy Studies provide an in-depth diagnosis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats either in a single area of policy, such as initial teacher preparation, or for a cross-cutting policy issue, such as the integration of migrants into education and training systems, labour markets, and civic life. Diagnostic studies connect practitioners, researchers and policy experts from across the OECD, culminating in a report that assists countries in setting their own policy agenda and priorities for reform. Diagnostic policy studies are ideally suited to countries that do not seek policy recommendations, but do need a highly focused, deep and peer-engaged analysis of a longstanding policy challenge – delivered swiftly after an in-country study visit or workshop. An initial

teacher preparation study, for example, starts with a research-based conceptual framework and supporting data that are developed by the OECD, and a self-study produced by participating countries. This is followed by a rigorously structured and rapid in-country study visit to interact with national stakeholders. The study brings together a panel comprised of OECD experts and peer reviewers from other countries participating in the project. Countries receive a brief report with a diagnostic analysis made by the panel, which is delivered to an interactive microsite (i.e. dedicated group of webpages). New diagnostic topics may be proposed by countries, and if the scope of country participation is sufficient to support a peer learning community, new topics can commence.

DIAGNOSTIC POLICY STUDY						
Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Customised or standardised output?	All topics or selected topics?	Country self-assessment required?	Principal source of evidence	Source of expert support?	Months from initiation to completion?
Voluntary, multi-country activity based on shared interest	Shared conceptual framework and common report template	Selected topics (e.g. teacher preparation or migrant intergration)	Yes	Desk-based research followed by rapid country visit	OECD analysis and data and external experts	3-6 months

Policy and System Benchmarking provide policy makers and other stakeholders with a rigorous, data-based view of education system performance that they can use to identify strengths and challenges, and locate exemplars for peer learning. This benchmarking, first available to countries in 2018 for tertiary education, integrates a wide range of extant data resources and develops new indicators to assist countries in a richly multidimensional benchmarking of system performance, examining both performance metrics (e.g. completion rates, patents, level of expenditure) and policy characteristics (e.g. institutional funding models). Policy

and System Benchmarking is based upon a conceptual framework and measurement approaches that have been subject to careful and sustained consultation among countries. Participating countries designate a national co-ordinator who supports the activity by providing supplementary data in a range of policy areas. Countries receive a common, comparative report on agreed policy topics, as well as a national report benchmarking their system. New areas of focus for benchmarking may be proposed by countries, and if the scope of country participation is sufficient a new benchmarking activity may begin.

POLICY & SYSTEM BENCHMARKING						
Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Customised or standardised output?	All topics or selected topics?	Country self-assessment required?	Principal source of evidence	Source of expert support?	Months from initiation to completion?
Multi-country activity	Comparative report, and standardised national reports	Selected topic – e.g. tertiary education	No (participating countries submit supplemental survey)	Desk-based research	Analysis based upon OECD and other cross-national data	Variable
http://oe.cd/benchmarking-education						

Countries can benefit from external, expert and trusted advice on how to make improvements to policy and practice. We address this need by conducting Education Policy Reviews, which provide independent, in-depth analyses and policy recommendations. Two types of education policy reviews are available.

A **National Review of Education Policy** is a study undertaken to provide custom, in-depth analysis and advice for a single country (or a sub-national education jurisdiction). A National Review can examine a nation's entire education system, one level of education, or a policy area or educational process, such as evaluation and assessment within school education, or integrity in education. National Reviews of Education Policy use a mixed-methods approach, combining analysis of national and international data resources, analysis of national policy documents and research,

and intensive field-based interviewing by OECD review teams. Reviews begin with country self-assessments, as well as OECD desk-based research that uses OECD data resources, such as PISA and PIAAC, prior OECD studies, and scientific publications. Planning and fact-finding country visits follow, undertaken by a review team consisting of OECD analysts and leading international experts. A detailed National Review is drafted, reviewed and published, and typically accompanied by a major launch event in the host country.

NATIONAL REVIEW OF EDUCATION POLICY						
Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Customised or standardised output?	All topics or selected topics?	Country self-assessment required?	Principal source of evidence	Source of expert support?	Months from initiation to completion?
Single Country	Customised national report	All topics	Yes	Desk-based research followed by in-depth country visit	A team of OECD and international experts	12 months from planning visit to publication

Comparative Reviews of Education Policy offer countries an opportunity to build deep, cumulative and shared learning on a key dimension of education policy – such as school resources, evaluation and assessment, or integration of immigrant children, or an entire education subsystem, such as early childhood education and care, vocational education and training, or tertiary education. This is done by the OECD working with a group of participating countries on a project that adopts a common conceptual framework

and methodology. In contrast to National Reviews, countries participating in a Comparative Review are part of a multi-year project with many participating countries. They give advice to the project through a standing advisory body, and submit additional data for the wider comparative review. They receive a report on the topic under study that focuses on their country, as well as a final comparative report synthesising results across all countries participating in the project.

COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF EDUCATION POLICY						
Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Customised or standardised output?	All topics or selected topics?	Country self-assessment required?	Principal source of evidence	Source of expert support?	Months from initiation to completion?
Multi-country activity with advisory body offering individual reviews to volunteer countries	Comparative report, and standardised national reports	Selected topics	Yes	Desk-based research followed by in-depth country visit	A team of OECD and international experts	Same as national review, with comparative report at end of activity

<http://oe.cd/comparative-review>

Public deliberations – policy dialogues – that are grounded in expert knowledge and international practice and evidence provide national policy makers with an opportunity to build agreement about options for policy development or to develop public and stakeholder understanding needed to implement newly adopted reforms. The OECD organises both national policy dialogues that are grounded in its own studies and expertise and custom peer-learning activities that build on expert networks drawn from across the world – or a combination of the two.

National policy dialogues are based in OECD research and analysis and organised in collaboration with the OECD to bring national stakeholders together in meetings and workshops. The OECD provides national policy communities with an external, expert and independent presence that can help countries rethink and refocus national policy discussions, and can collaborate with national partners who are engaged in policy diagnosis, development or implementation. National

policy dialogues draw upon OECD policy reviews, surveys and analysis, and apply them to national contexts for country-identified policy challenges. They often follow Education Policy Reviews or Implementation Support Reviews, and can be organised to help further disseminate the findings and recommendations of a review. Alternatively, they may be a standalone activity providing original analysis that supports new discussions about policy challenges faced by countries.

NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE						
Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Customised or standardised output?	All topics or selected topics?	Country self-assessment required?	Principal source of evidence	Source of expert support?	Months from initiation to completion?
Single Country	Customised analysis and workshops	Any topic	No self-assessment	Desk-based analysis supported with country-hosted event	OECD	1-3 months

Peer-learning activities bring the OECD’s international network of practitioners, researchers and policy makers together to support policy learning across countries. Peer-learning activities can be custom events or analyses organised at the request of a country to address their specific needs, or an ongoing group regularly convened by the OECD bringing together several countries for peer learning. Custom peer learning is initiated to meet the knowledge needs of national stakeholders who want to understand how other countries are addressing policy challenges that they face, or the policy options other countries have debated and adopted. The OECD does this by planning and managing peer-learning events, such as focused seminars or workshops. Alternatively, it can provide peer-learning analysis, in which it

partners with countries to identify and guide experts from peer countries; plans and moderates the work of an international expert panel; organises ongoing virtual meetings with the panel; and synthesises the work in customised OECD product, such as a working paper. Ongoing peer learning is supported by peer groups organised by the OECD, such as the Network on Early Childhood Education and Care. This network assists countries by developing and disseminating information on the policy, research and good practice of countries; identifying topics where additional research and analysis is required to underpin effective policy development; and assessing and advising on data developments required to support effective policy development and implementation.

CUSTOM PEER-LEARNING ACTIVITY							
	Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Customised or standardised output?	All topics or selected topics?	Country self-assessment required?	Principal source of evidence	Source of expert support?	Months from initiation to completion?
EVENT		Customised event			In-person event – workshop or seminar		
	Single Country	Customised analysis and workshops/ seminars with a range of publishing options	Any topic	No	Desk-based analysis virtual workshops and meetings	OECD plus external experts	Variable
ANALYSIS							
ONGOING PEER LEARNING							
	Multi-country activity	Standardised report for all participating countries	Selected topics	No self-assessment required	Desk-based analysis	OECD plus external experts	Ongoing
http://oe.cd/education-network							

Educational reform and improvement do not end with policy recommendations or with legislation. Successful reforms require effective policy implementation, which translates intentions into effects in the world of educational practice.

Policy implementation may not succeed. Evidence and theories of action upon which policies are based may be incomplete. Your stakeholders may not understand or embrace reforms. Organisations may lack the capacity or leadership for effective implementation, and policy makers may find they have a shared policy vision, but lack agreement about what actions need to be taken, and by whom. OECD's education governance case studies can help countries systematically understand the governance challenges they face in implementing education reforms, while its policy implementation reviews and support can help them tackle the challenge of change management, and move successfully from diagnosis and recommendation to educational improvement.

Policy implementation reviews and support are based upon dialogue with countries (or subnational jurisdictions), and draw on

OECD's knowledge base, independent analysis, and an international network of experts. **Implementation reviews** take stock of where you are, and – if implementation is underway – they offer rapid feedback on what progress has been made. More broadly, reviews also identify what options, pathways and challenges are ahead as reform implementation is initiated. **Implementation support** facilitates and supports the implementation of education reforms. Through leadership seminars and other facilitated activities we build shared understanding among stakeholders and help you to develop implementation action plans. Implementation reviews and support can be provided separately or in combination. For example, Schools as Learning Organisations provides countries with a “stock-taking” review and support for implementation through facilitated workshops and leadership seminars.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION REVIEWS & SUPPORT

	REVIEW	SUPPORT
Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Single Country	
Customised or standardised output?	Customised – taking stock of where you are, what progress has been made, and what options, pathways and challenges are ahead	Customised – through leadership seminars and other facilitated activities we build shared understanding among stakeholders and develop implementation action plans
All topics or selected topics?	Any schooling topic	Any implementation topic
Country self-assessment required?	Yes	No
Principal source of evidence	Country visit	Country-based, ongoing support
Source of expert support?	OECD (optional external experts)	OECD plus external experts
Months from initiation to completion?	3-12 months	Variable

Education Governance Case Studies provide countries with an opportunity to reflect on and share the governance challenges they face in implementing education reforms. The studies focus on a reform in a specific education system and analyse the entire reform process, from the genesis of the idea and goals to implementation and evaluation, drawing upon guided contributions of national experts who work within an OECD-developed analytic framework. The Governing Complex Education Systems case studies

provide insights to questions of education governance, in particular how to implement education reform successfully. They examine how central governments design, organise and steer education systems across complex multilevel governance arrangements; how stakeholders are engaged and supported in policy reforms; how knowledge is developed and used to guide reforms; and how central and the local governments work with one another, managing conflict and establishing relationships of trust and co-operation.

EDUCATION GOVERNANCE CASE STUDIES						
Provided to single country, or is a group required?	Customised or standardised output?	All topics or selected topics?	Country self-assessment required?	Principal source of evidence	Source of expert support?	Months from initiation to completion?
Single Country	Customised reports	Any topic	No self-assessment	Desk-based research	OECD and country experts	Variable
http://oe.cd/case-studies						

Countries may also choose to participate in a **National Skills Strategy** project. These are collaborative projects with inter-ministerial national project teams that use public engagement and analysis of comparative data to

provide a strategic assessment and recommendations to improve national performance in developing and using skills, and to strengthen national skills systems.

For more information about our work

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