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Integration by Education in the 21st Century – a Challenge for Public-Private-Partnerships



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Abstract

Immigration is a reality all OECD countries need to face in the era of globalisation. The integration of immigrants is a challenge mastered with varying degrees of success in the various OECD countries. Education is thereby the key to successful integration. At the same time, the level of education of the population represents an essential location factor in an emerging global knowledge society. It is particularly the education systems, though, that are very unequally prepared in the OECD countries. To benefit from the great opportunities that are presented by immigration, reforms are necessary in many education systems. These developments require a modification of the role of the state which is not in a position to accomplish the extremely demanding and wide-ranging tasks alone. Hence state, private enterprises and civil society need to enter into long-term strategic partnerships in which they share responsibilities. They all face the following three key tasks:

1. Innovation: development of new, creative models to meet future challenges
2. Implementation: practical testing and implementation of new models
3. Dissemination: a widespread distribution of successful pilot models and the amendment of system guidelines

These tasks are demanding and cooperation among different partners with very different operational procedures is by no means trivial. So it is all the more important for those countries in the OECD facing similar issues to systematically learn from hitherto experience and seek a sustained exchange on this broad issue.

Foundations already -often internationally- active as creative think tanks in the mentioned areas can play a pioneering role in the process. A prerequisite is a willingness to assume a greater share of responsibility for a lasting implementation of the reorganisation of public infrastructure.

1. Integration by education: an OECD issue of the future

Resulting from the global trend of a rapidly growing population in the southern hemisphere and the decline in population in the northern hemisphere, the OECD countries will either remain or become immigration areas in the foreseeable future, just like migration from south to north will persist. The extremely unequal distribution of essential resources mainly between those two hemispheres will remain a constant incentive for migration during the decades to come. Falling costs of mobility will strengthen international mobility; in a globalised world boundaries between educational and labour markets are fading, while state education and labour policies

tend to be overburdened. Evidently, challenges will emerge in different areas of society.

The major challenge posed by immigration is an increased need for creativity in education; after all, successful educational integration is the master key to successful integration also on the labour market. This is especially true for the OECD countries where human capital is becoming increasingly important as a production factor. In the long term, economic productivity will depend on a highly skilled working population as well as on flexible transnational logistics of knowledge. OECD countries, therefore, are faced with the task of having to increase education and qualification levels of their working populations. This issue calls for educational reforms, especially in view of the growing percentage of immigrant students and by promoting skilled immigration.

In terms of immigration policies, almost all OECD countries have now implemented measures to increase immigration, especially of highly skilled immigrants. The steering instruments employed range from point systems for a criteria-based selection of mainly highly-skilled immigrants in Canada and Australia through to time-limited and job-restricted visa and other admission systems like in France and Germany.

For some time now, the OECD countries have also started adjusting to the realities of global migration in education policies. This can, for instance, be seen in the rapid progression of the Bologna Process to standardise higher education within the EU, the Copenhagen Process to standardise vocational training at a European level as well as the growing compatibility of Anglo-American and Asian education systems. Within this context, the report of the Global Commission on Migration again emphasises that transnational educational migration, particularly between the USA and countries such as India, China and Taiwan has led to productive results for both the host and the home countries. Harmonising primary and secondary education systems, however, is neither easily feasible nor necessarily desirable. Here, the OECD countries need to adjust their education systems to the above-mentioned new demands at a national level.

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows, though, that some OECD countries are faced with a considerable backlog of overdue reforms. This applies, for example, to Germany, the Netherlands or France where the educational success of immigrant pupils clearly lags behind that of non-immigrant pupils. It is especially in these countries that many children and youths from immigrant families leave school without any qualification at all. Consequently, they end up with little or no chance in job training or hunting. The economic and social problems that ensue are manifold: human resources required in international competition remain unused, unproductive transfer payments become necessary and social cohesion and peace are placed at risk in the me-



dium term, as can be learnt by the example of the riots in French suburbs at the end of 2005.

2. Are the OECD countries equipped to respond?

The extent to which the OECD countries are set to respond to these future key tasks in immigration, integration and education policies varies. As to immigration, some OECD countries base on more market-oriented social systems and active immigration policies and others on a more welfare state-oriented social system and reactive immigration policies.

The first group includes countries that promote an active immigration policy, such as the USA, Australia or Canada. These countries seek to benefit from immigration to solve their own labour market and population problems and have developed steering instruments to control immigration. Beyond that, they expect a high level of self-initiative of the immigrants to cope with the challenges of integration as an individual risk since public assistance benefits for immigrants are limited.

The second OECD group branches welfare states such as Germany, France or Sweden. In these countries, the risks that are associated with immigration are, for the most part, covered by social protection systems. Immigration itself is perceived less an opportunity for society than a development that can not necessarily be governed to the clear benefit of the host country.

Systematic and target-oriented immigration policies form the basis of successful integration policies since they contribute to preventing later integration problems. A point system, for instance, results in a positive selection of an increased percentage of highly skilled and socially adaptable immigrants more likely to meet the prerequisites for a successful educational integration. This is one of the reasons, why immigrant students in classical immigration countries like Australia, Canada and New Zealand pursuing an active immigration policy with such a targeted selection of skilled immigrants display only minor performance differences in comparison to non-immigrant students. But ultimately, this success also has to be ascribed to their very effective overall integration policies.

In contrast, marked differences are reported in educational performances of immigrant and non-immigrant students in many reactive immigration countries (such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria or Switzerland) (OECD, PISA 2003). As a result, educational reforms as a means of improved integration are currently under serious debate in these countries.

The key initiative goal in the process is language support for immigrants. PISA indicates that the differences in immigrant and non-immigrant pupils' performance are lower in countries such as Australia, Canada or Sweden - countries that have established language support programmes with clearly defined objectives and standards (OECD, PISA 2003).

Those countries without comparable programmes are currently discussing measures to introduce them. Early childhood development is thereby of particular importance. This discussion emerged against the background of the fact that in this early stage decisive developments occur that strongly influence success or failure in the individual education biographies (cf. OECD, Starting Strong II: Early

Childhood Education and Care). Early language learning in the host country can help to prevent later problems in social integration. The idea of introducing targeted support measures in nurseries, kindergartens and pre-schools is also under consideration. However, so far, Canada, Finland and the Netherlands are those OECD countries that have most comprehensively developed curriculum-based early language learning measures before primary level (cf. OECD, PISA 2003). A key factor for language education policies to be successful are systematic and continuous approaches that cover the whole educational career from Kindergarten to school and the transition from school to the working world.

Moreover, language support is a key factor in labour market integration. Besides inadequate professional skills, an insufficient knowledge of the host country's language is often the major reason for employment problems among immigrants in most OECD countries. This is where especially the English speaking countries, such as the USA, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and increasingly Canada enjoy the advantage of English being a global lingua franca. Among the OECD countries, labour market integration is particularly successful in Australia (cf. OECD reviews of immigrant labour market integration). Among other reasons, this can be explained by the country's selective immigration policy. In contrast, a 'catch-up integration policy' is necessary in many European countries that compensates for integration deficits by implementing targeted language support for immigrants and work-related training measures.

Though of varying scope and intensity, higher education is already under critical debate in the OECD countries (cf. for the following OECD, Education Policy Analysis: Focus on Higher Education - 2005-2006 Edition). An increasing number of OECD countries are now deciding to follow the approach applied by the classical immigration countries such as Australia, Canada and the USA: these countries not only attract highly skilled workers, but also pursue an active recruitment of foreign college students to increase the competitiveness of their own business locations ('skilled immigration approach'). Some countries have also established targeted scholarship systems for immigrants that have successfully completed school education in their host countries.

3. Public-Private-Partnerships as an institutionalised form of public-private cooperation

This brief overview has shown that complex and varied tasks await the OECD countries that cannot be fulfilled by state institutions alone. Early childhood development and care, for example, is largely in the hands of private institutions. In addition, school performance of immigrant pupils is influenced considerably by cultural settings and family environments that are largely beyond the scope of state intervention. The role model function of elites and the influence of immigrant organisations constitute a further key factor. The same applies to transition from school to higher education, or respectively, to the labour market. Here again, state intervention has its limits and the endeavours of private actors can be of high relevance.

Simply relying on further state interventions in education and integration policies will do as little justice to the situation as a one-

sided hope for a greater shift of educational and integration-related tasks to private actors: calling for the state to help in times of tight public budgets in many OECD countries is a call with very little prospect of being heard.. Moreover, in the majority of the European countries, education is a fundamental and historically evolved state responsibility that cannot simply be transferred to private institutions.

On the basis of these facts, it makes sense to consider an increased cooperation between public and private actors in education and integration policies. Such efforts have already proven successful under the label of ‘Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)’. In principle, they describe ways of cooperation between the state, private enterprises and civil society and aim at providing public services in areas that have traditionally been in the hands of the state.

There are two areas in which such partnerships are highly promising. First, joint responsibility needs to be assumed at the interfaces of the state system, that is to say, to intervene where state competence, but not state responsibility, ends. One field of activity, for instance, could be the dual apprenticeship system in Germany. Another would be the cooperative improvement of the state system quality itself by innovative pilot projects. In case of such Public-Private Partnerships, it is especially the cooperation with foundations which are active in both fields that bears great potential.

PPPs in the field of educational integration can thereby build on proven structures, knowledge and experience that have been gained in other fields. Such a proceeding will also help to overcome the unavoidable ‘culture shocks’ that are bound to arise on both sides during cooperation between public and private actors. It is highly unlikely that rather output-oriented organisations like companies and procedure-oriented organisations such as administrative bodies and public authorities would be able to cooperate successfully and efficiently without a certain period of acclimatisation.

In other fields where PPPs have already been established, the following points (among others) are reported to be key factors leading to successful strategic partnerships between private and public actors:

- Clarity of the objectives and target-oriented implementation
- Support from political decision-makers
- A communication network for all partners
- An understanding for the different methods and the operational or organisational procedures of partners.

However, in all phases of cooperation, Public-Private Partnerships in education should be guided by monitoring and evaluation to reflect on the performance of the respective project and to correct deviations from the target at an early stage.

4. Setting up Public-Private Partnerships in education and integration

Setting up innovative partnerships can be well-manageable. The private actors in early childhood development and care are often foundations active in quality development of kindergartens, in promoting training measures for nursery school teachers or in designing models for the transition from kindergarten to primary school.

There is an equal potential for changes in elementary, primary and

secondary education to meet with the urgent need for systematic language support in many European immigration countries. Here, supporting teaching staff in acquiring intercultural communicative competence as well as advancing individual children and youths – for example by language education, mentoring systems, support for the highly gifted or occupational orientation - is of great value.

There are also various cooperations among state, private enterprises and civil society actors in vocational training. Here, corporate actors could be more involved in facilitating the transition processes to the labour market. This has been practised in Germany for a long time in its dual apprenticeship system. Young immigrants are often at a disadvantage compared to non-immigrant youths during the critical passage from school to the labour market. An institutionalised form of vocational training support organised by a Public-Private Partnership would be very promising like the City of Hamburg has already proven by its successful integration project for youths with an immigrant background: labour unions and private enterprises such as German Lufthansa and Daimler Chrysler AG cooperate effectively and fruitfully with state authorities.

5. Scope and boundaries of Public-Private-Partnerships in education and integration

Successful partnerships in education and integration should not merely serve to compensate for the withdrawal of public funding. It is far more helpful if these partnerships are perceived as complementary schemes and are set up in specific, clearly defined problem areas by

- testing innovative solutions and approaches in model projects and then applying them on a broader scale following the pilot phase;
- optimising the interfaces between state, private enterprises and civil society;
- highlighting blind spots in the system and identifying international best practices as role models to support national development.

Likewise, to avoid costly and ineffective ‘flash in the pan’ effects, it is essential that suitable models are designed for medium-term or, optimally, for long-term programmes including a methodologically sound scientific evaluation.

As to the actual phase of implementation, it is worth noting that poor performance and school failure of immigrant pupils frequently occur when they are not in a position to personally commit to the degree required in the respective education system and the existing support systems fail to encourage them. Early language support, for instance, essentially is still a private matter of immigrant families but decisive for building school success. Other areas affecting school success in a number of countries are insufficient language support for immigrants during elementary, primary and secondary education, the lack of supervised homework in countries without full-time schools and insufficient educational counselling services for parents across all educational phases.

Yet the findings of immigration and education research show that the problems can neither be solved by public organisations nor by



private foundations alone. The immigrants themselves must become actors of change in the process. They need to be involved in cooperation (via immigrant organisations for instance), and models encouraging their own creative initiative will prove beneficial.

6. Résumé: Public-Private-Partnerships can serve as an innovative education and integration strategy for reforms

The varying needs for reforms in immigration, integration and education policies in the OECD countries pose a great challenge to the joint efforts of state, private enterprises and civil society actors.

PISA has drafted various paths to a successful integration policy in education. 'Best results' for the educational integration of second generation immigrants are achieved both by countries with more privately-oriented education systems such as Australia and Canada and by a more welfare state-oriented country like Sweden. In view of the highly complex issue, one-sided generalisations that favour a superiority of more 'state' or more 'private' integration, education systems and actors need to be ruled out.

In the light of a global knowledge society, the intelligent and target-oriented partnership of public and private actors and solutions is far more decisive for a successful reform of national integration and education systems. Hence Public-Private Partnerships open up new promising paths to success. Their chances and limits are, of course, subject to the respective underlying national immigration, integration and educational groundwork.

7. Recommended courses of action for OECD countries

- We are currently experiencing the evolution of a global knowledge society. Education and training are thereby the key resources of the 21st century for the majority of the OECD countries. Hence we need to ensure the creation and implementation of comprehensive concepts for an educational landscape that can outlast the new era.
- Immigrants are a chance for their host societies and often hold unused potential. Schooling and training children and youths from second and even third generation immigrant families is a promising form of action. The state, private enterprises and civil society are called upon to act together to increase prospects they would not have on their own.
- Private actors, and foundations in particular, can assume a special role in Public-Private Partnerships. They are more flexible and faster than state systems and are in a position to take greater risks. They can respond to and handle new developments and challenges promptly and provide temporary bridge solutions on the way to reforms of state institutions.
- In turn, state actors who operate within fixed structures and budgets are in a position to ensure project sustainability. Taking over time-related responsibilities of project work could constitute a convenient model for Public-Private Partnerships: Foundations could initiate projects and, in case of success, public actors could ensure their continuity and sustainability. Next to

providing the innovative impulses, foundations should then assume an increasing responsibility for the implementation of long-term state supported programmes.

- Immigration and integration processes are long-term developments that sometimes even span generations and essentially develop their own momentum. To guide them constructively, it is crucial that all involved actors develop effective concepts that are sustainable over time; success has to be measured by scientific evaluation and cannot be reliably measured over short-term phases.
- Education and integration should not primarily be viewed as cost factors, but rather as political fields with a distinct investment character. Both require an adequate level of basic funding before they can achieve an intended success. This is yet another area in which state and foundation activities can complement each other.
- In spite of the growing pressure to take action, there are still considerable knowledge gaps on the development conditions for building successful immigrant careers. Empirical research on education needs to be strengthened in these areas.
- There are varying degrees of knowledge on the implementation of Public-Private Partnerships in education and integration in the various countries. Hence knowledge exchange on country-specific structures and fields of action and best practice experience is highly recommended. Moreover, to encourage partnerships these should be exemplified by impressive models that have already proven successful.
- Since foundations are in a position to assume a transnational perspective they are not restricted to their own national box. They can set up information networks for the topics that are useful to all partners. It is advisable, therefore, to install such transatlantic networks or a permanent discussion platform for the OECD world based on existing structures and incorporating the essential stakeholders in all relevant fields.

The advisory board, based on a paper by Prof. Dr. Klaus J. Bade in cooperation with Dr. Uwe Hunger (University Münster) and Dr. Holger Kolb (IMIS, University Osnabrück)

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