

Group 2

Chair: Andris Kangro (Latvia)

Rapporteur: Margarita Peña (Colombia)

Pierre Brochu (Canada), Johanna Gubler
Santander (Chile), Paolo Sesito (Italy), Ryo
Watanabe (Japan), Gwo-Dong Chen (Korea),
Amina Kafai (Luxembourg), Hamda Al Sulati
(Qatar)

Topic 1: Working with international studies data

What is being done

Countries undertake diverse and in some cases similar activities to disseminate results, deepen understanding and influence policy

- ✓ National Reports
- ✓ Analysis and research
- ✓ Linkage with national assessments, both standards and results (two-way validation)
- ✓ Dissemination through the media
- ✓ Presentations to policy makers

However....

- Crowded assessment calendars: Countries participate in several studies during a same period of time, which in addition to national assessments leave no time for analysis beyond the national report (especially when a single agency is in charge).
- Weak capabilities for both analysis and research (particularly in certain countries).
- “Information overflow”
 - Limited capacity to absorb information which is scattered in different studies
 - Few conclusive information, policy issues not identified
 - Assessment fatigue affects motivation to participate
 - Decreasing interest and motivation to participate (both countries and schools)

What can be done (opportunities for improvement)

- IEA further support for the creation and/or strengthening of analysis and research capacity (e.g. IERI academy, workshops, with focus in regions and languages different from English)
- Develop more analytical reports and thematic reports focusing on selected issues: Reconsider use of Encyclopedia information, aim the reports at different audiences: policy makers, school communities and researchers (don't leave this to countries only), regional analyses (or comparisons between countries with similar socioeconomic characteristics); relate information coming from different studies, avoid fragmentation of information.
- Build upon IEA strengths to increase influence: Primary education assessment, curriculum approach, regional modules, innovative assessment topics (e.g. ICCS, ICLS)

Topic 2: Early Child Education

Assessment

Hot issues

- Fuzzy limits between care and education makes it difficult to select precise education outcomes. Physical development is a component of EC public policy in many countries (early childhood development). However, measurements of physical development might be seen as predetermining conditions and not considered in the evaluation of education policy.
- The relevance of a cross-country study of ECE is not entirely clear for everybody. Rankings are not recommended, and countries will look for a legitimate reason to participate. Identifying effective policies provides a good justification. In order to do that outcomes measurements should be required, not optional. IEA could work in adapting/developing appropriate instruments, based on expert recommendations on what should be included and how is to be assessed. Do not fear controversy.

Providers

- Difficult with identifying providers: Some countries have clear structures and well defined systems (European, Qatar....), others have less formal structure and regulations, and information is not always reliable.
- Differences as to what is compulsory makes difficult to define a representative sample population to compare across countries. Current proposal approach does not allow for capturing the extent and impact of home based childcare.

Implementation of the study

- Because of the focus on policy (and on cross country comparison), this study differs significantly from IEA traditional ones. It requires the establishment of rigorous standards and procedures to assure the quality of the information to be gathered. We may need to set up research groups within each country, rather than a single NRC usually associated with MOEs.
- The multiplicity of government agencies in charge of early childhood education/care requires the involvement of authorities other than the MOEs in the decision to participate and fund the study. This should be considered when inviting governments to join.

- Carrying out the study at the beginning of formal education could help overcome some of the difficulties identified,
 - One single authority (education) responsible for implementation
 - All children sampled, regardless of access to ECE
 - Impact of unequal access and quality could be established by collecting background information from families.
- However, some of the most innovative features of the study would be sacrificed, particularly the information on providers (affiliation, funding, caregivers/teachers profiles, services provided....). More importantly, if the study raises an issue, having detailed information on the ECE system will provide the information needed to inform remediation.