

Policy Research Alert

FROM FLASH-IT, A DISSEMINATION PROJECT RELATING EUROPEAN POLICY PRIORITIES TO EU-FUNDED RESEARCH IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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Improving Educational Trajectories: Toward Stakeholder Participation

A study of 10-16 year-olds in Europe highlights need to integrate students and parents into educational decision-making

GOETE¹, an EU-funded research project, spent three years investigating the complex decision-making process affecting educational trajectories among 10–16 year-olds. Surveying around 12,000 students, teachers, parents and experts in eight EU Member States, the project identified an urgent need for better coordination among the stakeholders in this process.

“Particularly, students and parents need spaces and rights for participation in decision-making on educational issues”, the consortium found. To help coordinate decision-making, the researchers called for an open dialogue, warning that “without proper coordination arenas, any top-down reform risks to fail, and conversely any participatory, bottom-up measures risk being ineffective.”

The project also highlighted the fact that educational decisions are not exclusively the purview of students, parents and the educational system. Complex negotiation processes involving politics, the economy and the media accompany such decisions.

Other key GOETE findings:

- Europe’s teachers are not prepared adequately for their role in counselling students.
- Students making educational decisions are more inclined to seek support from parents and friends than from teachers and school councillors.
- Parents do not feel respected by the school system.
- Students are primarily concerned with keeping options for choice open as long as possible (rejecting early adaptation to “realistic” educational and occupational goals).

While poor collaboration among professionals in the school and welfare systems was identified as “still a major problem”, the researchers concluded that “permeability, flexible support and higher expenses” are the conditions of success for more inclusive education systems.

¹ *Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe* (GOETE). Featuring fresh empirical data from Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and the UK. For more information about the project and its findings please visit GOETE’s website at www.goete.eu