

Foreword

One of the crucial issues for OECD countries is how to deliver high quality, efficient, equitable and innovative education in increasingly complex education systems. A number of intersecting trends contribute to this increasing complexity: decentralisation has allowed local authorities, school boards and schools a greater degree of freedom to respond to local demands. Parents in OECD countries have become more diverse, individualistic and highly educated. With more readily available evidence about school and student achievement, stakeholders have also become more demanding towards schools to cater to students' individual needs. Education systems are now characterised by multi-level governance where the links between multiple actors operating at different levels are to a certain extent fluid and open to negotiation.

The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)'s Governing Complex Education Systems (GCES) project focuses on which models of governance are effective in complex education systems and which knowledge systems are needed to support them. Its focus on complexity is connected to a broader organisational reflection on New Approaches to Economic Challenges (NAEC), which seeks to renew and strengthen the OECD's analytical frameworks, policy instruments and tools. A key element of this reflection is understanding the complex and interconnected nature of the global economy to allow for identifying synergies (e.g. between growth, inequality, stability and the environment) and strengthening the ability to manage policy trade-offs.

The GCES project has identified three themes vital for effective governance and successful reform: accountability, capacity building and strategic thinking. Accountability addresses the challenge of holding different actors at multiple levels responsible for their actions. Capacity building focuses on identifying gaps, skill needs and dynamics of implementation on individual, institutional and system level. Strategic vision pertains to the development of a long-term plan and set of common goals for the educational system among a broad array of actors. It requires aligning the different perspectives and time-horizons so that everyone involved can act together.

Creating the open, dynamic and strategic governance systems necessary for governing complex systems is not easy. *Governing Education in a Complex World* challenges our traditional concepts of education governance through work on complexity, change and new modes of decision-making. In doing so it sets the agenda for thinking about inclusive, adaptable, and flexible accountability and governance, necessary for governing complex systems in today's world. It offers examples from Austria, England (United Kingdom), the Netherlands and the United States, and ends with a suggestion for a way forward.

This publication is the first volume in a set of two. The second volume synthesising the findings from the six case studies carried out in the Governing Complex Education Systems project will be published later in 2016.

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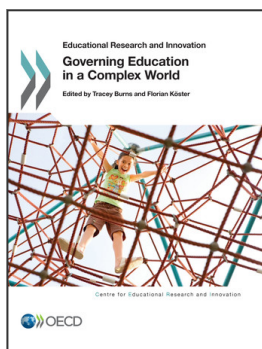
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