

ful reading for those in the business of promoting democratic transition. The authors have codified the experience of dozens of participants in the coloured revolutions as well as their international supporters to show the nuts and bolts of a breakthrough election in a hybrid regime. One can only hope that the model is as useful and transferable as the authors claim.

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OECD: *Education at a Glance 2012:*

OECD Indicators

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The starting premise of this report is that 'investing in people, their skills and their education is key for inclusive growth and jobs—it is key for the success of economies, societies and their citizens' (p. 15). Thus, education is not just an individual characteristic, but is strongly correlated with health, labour market participation, active ageing and happiness. *Education at a Glance 2012* is already the 20th edition of the series, which aims to offer a broad set of cross-nationally comparable indicators to researchers, policymakers and leaders. Comparable data on the political economy of welfare states is often useful to investigate the role of inequalities in human capital and skill formation [Vanhuyse 2008]. The publication and the annually repeated collection of data can be considered an important contribution to improve national education systems.

The indicators covered here are built on a framework (p. 17) that takes into account three different dimensions: the different actors in education systems such as individual learners, teachers, educational institutions and education policy; the outputs and outcomes, as well as policy levers and antecedents and policy issues arising from a variation of dimensions one and

two. The first chapter focuses on the output of educational institutions, which is not just defined as educational attainment but also reviewed in the context of social mobility, labour market, social impact and economy. The following chapters then focus on the prerequisites of the output, namely, the investment in education, the access to education, the learning environment, and the education systems.

Although the presented range of data is very broad, most indicators focus on formal education and people of school and university age. However, a broad definition of education in principle may include a more differentiated approach that covers a broader target group—key word: lifelong learning—and settings outside schools and universities. Furthermore, education cannot only be pressed into formal educational certificates; an inclusive definition needs to cover informal educational components as well. The definition of education used in *Education at a Glance* is based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997), which does not include informal education and settings such as vocational training, adult evening classes, or other forms of education that do not fit into the classification of primary, secondary and tertiary education. However, the focus on formal educational attainment can be considered a trade-off in favour of annually updated and international comparable data. The data used for the indicators is quantitative, easily measurable and available on a regularly updated basis, which makes it possible to present an annually updated edition of *Education at a Glance*. On the contrary, this approach also suppresses other settings such as the role of families which are an important source for informal education. Evidence from comparative social policy analysis for example suggests that the setting at home may be more crucial than a deficient situation at school in explaining the educational success of children [Vanhuyse 2008].

The remainder of this review focuses on two specific policy-relevant issues. First, early childhood education and social mobility can complement the role of families and informal education. The social situation of children is often a mirror of their parents' situation. Especially in impermeable and inelastic social welfare systems, children are more likely to inherit their parents' educational background—social inheritance. In these welfare systems, children born in a low-educated household have less chance to attain a higher educational degree than children born in a household with higher social status. The correlation between educational attainment of older and younger generations is often very high [Nolan et al. 2010]. However, different welfare systems promote or rather prevent social mobility between generations differently. The educational disadvantage of children does not only start at school age but is already produced within the first years of life. Therefore, it is important to promote children's skills at an early stage, in order not to place them at a disadvantaged starting position when entering school [Heckman 2006]. The first years of life lay the foundation for later life. Thus, early childhood education and care programmes play an important role in the context of human capital policies, in order to decrease rising inequality and its social consequences [Vanhuysse 2008]. Drawing on the results of PISA, an international study, launched by the OECD to evaluate education systems, children who participated in early childhood education are shown to be more likely to produce better results in the survey at age 15 than children who did not participate [OECD 2010]. For the first time ever, the present *Education at a Glance* report dedicates one subsection to early childhood education and thereby acknowledges the importance of pre-primary education for learning opportunities later in school. Early childhood education is defined by the ISCED level 0 and enrol-

ment rates in early childhood and primary education are measured at the age of 4. Results of the indicator show that in 23 out of 38 countries, more than 80% of children at age 4 are in early childhood education programmes. Nevertheless, the variation of early childhood programmes for children at a younger age is relatively large as regards levels of participation, starting ages, and the length of programmes (p. 338). Furthermore, early childhood education for younger children often requires financial consideration, as the demand in many countries is higher than the available places and public funding is often limited.

Second, this report also discusses the impact of the global recession on education systems, which is rightly claimed to be an additional asset of the current edition. Specifically, many indicators are also analysed in the light of the onset of the global recession in 2009 and 2010 (p. 13). This is a risky endeavour, as the latest data that are used for most of the indicators are from 2009 or 2010. Thus, it is difficult to analyse the impact of the crisis in education systems. In section B, which presents indicators on financial and human resources invested in education, one indicator specifically focuses on the impact of the financial crisis by displaying the change in expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP from 2008 to 2009 (Box B2.1.). It shows that most countries did not cut down on investment in education, with the exception of Israel. On the contrary, public and private investment in education as a proportion of national income increased by 16% in Norway and by almost 10% on OECD average. However, due to a drop in GDP in most of the countries, an increase in expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP does not necessarily result in an absolute increase of expenditure on educational institutions. In addition, the indicator takes into account both private and public sources of funds, but the distribution of private and public

sources in 2009 compared to those in 2008 is missing. Thus, it is questionable whether nation states have implemented austerity measures on the costs of investment in education and higher private investments to compensate for it.

Beside financial issues, the global recession needs also to be discussed in the light of unemployment and especially youth unemployment rates. Many young people are hit by the crisis, as it often limits their chance to find a job after having finished their education. In the public discussion, these young people are often characterised as a 'lost generation', as the economic and social consequences of this experience might cause a lasting and accumulative damage to their life [see, e.g., ILO 2013]. The OECD states that the crisis has had a twofold impact on educational attainment rates (p. 26). First, the unsecure labour market situation in many countries provides motivation for many people to improve skills. Second, it increases the motivation to remain in education as the costs of education (e.g. foregone earnings) are reduced and creates incentives to attain tertiary education rather than to enter a precarious labour market. The presented data show that the economic crisis has hit people with an educational level below upper secondary more than people with higher educational attainment. The unemployment rates of 25–64 year olds with tertiary education is on OECD average 4.7%, with upper secondary education 7.6%, and below upper secondary education 12.5% (A7.4a). Younger people (aged 25–34) with lower educational attainment are more affected by the crisis than older people (aged 55–64) with the same educational degree.

The publication touches upon relevant factors in the context of education that need to be considered when analysing the effects of the global recession. Although, the data basis for the current edition does not allow for an evaluation of the effects of the recession, it lays the ground for a more

in-depth analysis in future editions of *Education at a Glance*.

In sum, the indicators on education collected and presented here have ramifications for many wider sociological issues, including health, labour markets, income and well-being. This 2012 *Education at a Glance* edition manages to present a very broad set of indicators and an extensive collection of international comparable data. The reader is guided through the publication by a good explanation of concepts, frameworks and additional information and analysis within highlighted boxes. Indicators are phrased as questions and enable the reader to grasp the idea of the indicator at one glance. Each indicator is presented in the same structure and alternative presentation of indicators such as trends and the disaggregation of data offers additional information.

Unfortunately, the report does not link outcome and input indicators. Although, correlations of the presented input indicator with a relevant output indicator may be helpful for policymakers to understand the policy relevance and relationship of the two. Nevertheless, this report partly also presents very differentiated analysis, such as an indicator on immigrant students performance and various measures of student concentration in schools (A5.1). This indicator clearly shows that the correlation between performance at school and the education of the mother is stronger than the correlation between performance and migration background. *Education at a Glance* deals, at least to some extent, with often misinterpreted results and contributes to a better understanding of the performance of education systems.

Education at a Glance is an important source of international comparable data on education systems and their outputs. The rich collection of data sheds light on differences in education systems, although on a very narrow definition of education. It shows the complexity of education re-

search, as education is not only an individual good but also an investment of welfare societies. Future work in the sociology of education may fruitfully fill some of these gaps, by focusing on individual experiences, on how institutions influence and stimulate educational developments, and on the structure of relations between social and educational institutions. This report is a valuable starting point for more in-depth sociological research explaining the deeper social mechanisms behind the evidence presented here.

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Paul Seabright: *The War of the Sexes. How Conflict and Cooperation Have Shaped Men and Women from Prehistory to the Present*

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Economic relations between men and women are unequal today. Women are severely under-represented in many (high-status)

professions and earn less than men in comparable positions. The top layer of the labour market remains clearly male-dominated. For instance, only 1 in every 40 chief executive officers affiliated with Fortune 500 companies is a woman. These inequalities endure even though formal barriers to women's employment were lifted decades ago—often in the second half of the 20th century—while female labour force participation rates have converged towards men's. Women have reached par or even outnumber men in the most recent cohorts of university graduates in many Western countries. Why then do economic inequalities between men and women continue to persist? The economist Paul Seabright puts forward an interesting thesis: Today's inequalities are rooted in our biological inheritance which we need to appreciate in order to understand the present.

In the second part of the book, Seabright reviews other possible explanations. He takes up (and later rejects) the argument that inequalities between men and women are driven by differences in talent (Chapter 5). Measuring talent is challenging, yet if cognitive abilities and personality traits (the 'Big Five') are taken as valid indicators, the minor sex differences that appear to exist do not warrant the large gaps in economic returns. But while averages between the sexes are close, men show a higher degree of variation in certain traits. Tending to more extreme behaviours, they are more often found both at the top and at the bottom (in prisons and among the homeless) of society. It is, however, implausible that a certain measured talent would uncover the particular and complex talents needed in order to perform a job well and, empirically, talent explains economic outcomes only partially. In sum, Seabright dismisses an explanation based on talent as entirely unconvincing.

He instead turns to the argument that discrepancies in economic rewards between men and women are due to differ-