

Issues and Questions for the Symposium

The contribution of human and social capital to sustained economic growth and well-being

Session II (Conceptual and measurement issues)

- How should the concepts of human and social capital be defined and related to each other? Should a distinction be made between social capital and social capabilities?
- How can human and social capital be best measured?
- Are existing theoretical models for explaining economic growth and development adequate in terms of the role they accord to knowledge, human capital and social capital?

Session III (Empirical evidence)

- What is the evidence for the impact of investment in human and social capital on recent economic growth patterns across OECD countries? Are these likely to be more significant determinants of growth patterns across non-OECD countries?
- Is it possible to account for the returns to different types/levels of human and social capital?
- Is there empirical evidence that investment in human and social capital generates “non-market benefits”? If there is, how can such non-market benefits be integrated into a broader measure of the total social impact of such investments?
- Is there evidence for under-investment in human and social capital from a socially optimal point of view (arising out of externalities and divergences between social and private returns)?

Sessions IV and V (Pulling the strands together - the role of social arrangements, the balance between economic growth and other considerations and the response of policy)

- What are the main international measures of social well-being and progress in developed economies? To what extent are these measures reliably compared with economic growth trends?
- What can Governments do to promote, renew and conserve social capital as well as enhance the skills and competences of various groups?
- Can social policies to support learning, social engagement and labour market participation promote economic growth and social well-being?
- Can some types of public social policy impair the development of social capital by supplanting the initiative of families, local communities and other actors?

- Is there evidence that social capital and other aspects of social capabilities have declined or eroded for some OECD countries in recent decades?