What is the Strength through Diversity project?

OECD countries, particularly those more strongly affected by the current refugee crisis, face the challenge of developing policy responses to tackle the immediate needs of large numbers of new arrivals, while putting in place or scaling up integration policies that will have long-term implications.

The *Strength through Diversity - the Integration of Immigrants and Refugees in School and Training Systems* project aims to identify a new set of indicators that are relevant to examine how societies have responded and are responding to the risk to social cohesion posed by international migration to: create improved data infrastructures that support the development of strong evidence, analyse existing policy responses and the conditions under which they achieve their objectives, and stimulate a discussion among key stakeholders on opportunities for peer learning and collaboration.
What are the aims of the Project?

The *Strength through Diversity* project combines in-depth data analysis and indicator development with thematic workshops and country reports of policies and practices in three key areas:

- **Integration into Education**: Migrants’ integration processes into education systems
- **Integration through Education**: Links between education and training systems, and skill development, an important determinant of migrants’ ability to integrate into their host communities
- **Education for Social Cohesion**: The role of education systems in promoting social cohesion
The *Strength through Diversity* project combines **IN-DEPTH DATA ANALYSIS** with **THEMATIC WORKSHOPS** and **COUNTRY REPORTS** of policies and practices in three key areas: Integration into Education, Integration through Education, and Education and Public Perceptions.
Data Analysis and Indicator Development

The *Strength through Diversity* project aims to develop more detailed and fine-grained indicators on the academic and non-academic outcomes of immigrant students, on the information processing skills of foreign-born adults, and the role education plays in shaping attitudes among host communities. In-depth data analysis of OECD-led data initiatives such as PISA and PIAAC and other international social surveys will be used to develop analytical reports and papers on:

- **The resilience of immigrant students:** Risk and protective factors that shape immigrant students’ well-being

- **The labour market and well-being outcomes of foreign-born adults:** Evidence from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills

- **Education for resilient societies:** the association between education and public perceptions on social diversity
The resilience of immigrant students

Risk and protective factors that shape immigrant students’ well-being

Co-funded by the European Union, the report aims to provide strong evidence to countries, local governments and education practitioners on factors that help immigrant students develop academically, socially and emotionally. This way, actors at all levels in education systems can have a better understanding of which dimensions immigrant students struggle with and which factors can help ease their journey towards integration, under what conditions they thrive and what initiatives have been successful in tackling their challenges while at the same time promoting their potential.

The report will classify countries according to their ability to promote the overall well-being of immigrant students, considering differences across countries in the make-up of their immigrant student population. By focusing on resilience across multiple dimensions, the report will move from a model in which immigrant students are perceived as a liability for host communities to a model that recognises the potential of individual students.
The labour market and well-being outcomes of foreign-born adults

Evidence from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills

Adults with higher proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments tend to have better outcomes in the labour market than their less-proficient peers.

The report will present evidence on the literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills of foreign-born individuals in PIAAC participating countries and whether migrants’ skills are comparable to those of native-born individuals. The report will examine factors that determine skills proficiency among migrants in particular as well as factors that are common determinants of skill proficiency among both migrants and native populations.

A specific focus of the report will be to identify the specific challenges and opportunities faced by highly-skilled and low-performance migrants as well as young migrants. Key barriers to skill development, economic and social integration considered will be: i) language proficiency, ii) access and participation in adult education and training, iii) job placement and skills mismatch. The report will measure broader aspects of well-being beyond labour market participation and performance, including overall health, trust, civic participation and political efficacy.
Education for Resilient Societies
The association between education and public perceptions on social diversity

Increasing diversity in OECD societies is challenging the traditional building blocks of social cohesion. Building fair, cohesive societies that promote a new growth paradigm based on social equity cannot ignore the importance that attitudes, dispositions and perceptions have for the creation of social inclusion.

Education for Resilient Societies work will examine if and how education can promote trust, tolerance and openness to diversity. Work will analyse how societies have responded to the challenge of maintaining and developing social cohesion in the presence of increasing diversity by developing analyses of:

- The relationship between education and self-reported interpersonal trust, with a specific focus on the role of cognitive skills
- The relationship between education and attitudes towards migration
- Migrants’ own attitudes and dispositions
- Students’ civic knowledge and openness to diversity
Thematic Policy Forum Series

Results obtained in the data collection, indicator development and data analysis strand will form the basis for discussion in a series of Thematic Policy Fora. The Fora will provide a venue for interested countries to be able to identify and discuss country-specific challenges, policy responses and implementation strategies aimed at ensuring that education systems effectively integrate migrants and refugees in schools, and advance broader social integration and social cohesion goals. This identification will be based on input from international experts, OECD Secretariat analysts and stakeholders from other participating countries who have been involved in similar integration-related decisions.

The aim of the Thematic Policy Forum Series is to:

- Identify country-specific challenges
- Suggest promising practices and innovative approaches used by countries
- Identify policy levers that could re-think how schools and education systems can help countries respond to migration challenges
- Facilitate peer-learning both within and between countries

For each Policy Forum, a background paper will be developed in consultation with subject-matter external experts. Participation in the forum series will be sought from innovators at different levels of government and from different OECD countries. Six policy fora on a range of topics will be organised over the two years.
Country Spotlight Reports

The reports will draw on OECD data including PISA, PIAAC and EAG, as well as other available data sources. In order to identify a defined set of policy challenges for participating countries, the OECD Secretariat will first develop a short country note with key indicators on the outcomes of migrant students in the countries’ education systems and on integration relevant indicators. This exercise will consider indicators that relate both to the challenges countries face in integrating migrants into education and the challenges countries face in promoting integration through education. The initial phase will review policy evidence and statistics from OECD and other relevant data sources, to engage in a discussion with the country to agree on a specific set of challenges the country faces when considering education responses to migration flows and the current refugee crisis.

Based on initial data analysis and desk research, the OECD team will propose up to three key challenges, which will then be discussed and refined in consultation with country representatives. One workshop will be organised in the country and the OECD will work with country experts and international experts to develop a country spotlight report.

The report will be made available in English as well as the national language (if different) and the OECD will support national dissemination efforts. Work will require around 5 months.
## Timeline and Deliverables

The *Strength through Diversity* project will deliver a series of in-depth analytical reports, short policy briefs and issue papers as well as country specific material. A key outcome of the project will be the promotion and facilitation of peer-learning through the Thematic Policy Forum Series. Proceedings from the meetings will be made available to ensure that discussions and lessons learnt are widely disseminated.

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OECD and the Directorate for Education and Skills

The OECD provides a setting where governments compare policy experience, seek answers to common problems, identify good practices and co-ordinate domestic and international policies. It brings together countries committed to democracy and the market economy from around the world to:

- Support sustainable economic growth
- Boost employment
- Raise living standards
- Maintain financial stability
- Assist member and non-member countries’ economic development
- Contribute to growth in world trade.

In today’s globalised economy, education is a major driving force for growth and development. The OECD Directorate for Education and Skills focuses on current key challenges facing education systems including how to improve the quality of teachers, teaching and learning in order to provide the knowledge and skills needed in the 21st century.
For more information on **Strength through Diversity: Integrating Migrants and Refugees through Education and Training Systems** visit:

www.oecd.org/edu/school/strength-through-diversity.htm

If you have questions, you can reach us at

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