Structures and pathways to improve equity in education
Pointers for policy development

LIMIT EARLY TRACKING AND STREAMING AND POSTPONE ACADEMIC SELECTION

➢ Ensure that early tracking and streaming are justified by proven benefits, given the risks they pose to equity.

➢ Consider raising the age of first tracking in school systems that use early tracking to reduce inequities and improve outcomes.

➢ Use academic selection with caution, given its association with social differences between schools, and monitor its effects on equity as well as performance.

MANAGE SCHOOL CHOICE

➢ Manage school choice carefully to ensure that it does not increase differences in social composition of different schools.

➢ In systems with school choice and oversubscribed schools, provide ways to ensure an even social mix in schools such as:
  – using selection methods such as lottery arrangements
  – granting financial premiums to schools attracting disadvantaged pupils

IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL, PREVENT DROP OUT AND PROVIDE ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVES

➢ Support and engage those who struggle at school as well as those who excel.

➢ Link monitoring of those at risk - using information on attendance, performance and involvement in school activities - to interventions to improve outcomes and prevent dropout.

➢ Ensure that upper secondary education is attractive to all -- not only the academically-inclined -- by offering a range of good quality pathways without dead ends and with effective links to the world of work.

➢ Ensure smooth transitions to prevent school failure and dropout. Provide additional learning support at the end of lower secondary school to encourage students to stay in school.

➢ Provide good quality vocational tracks, remove academic hurdles from entrance to general upper secondary education, and allow access to tertiary education from vocational programmes

OFFER SECOND CHANCES TO GAIN FROM EDUCATION

➢ Develop programmes that provide second chances for adults and young dropouts who lack basic education and skills, including:
  – literacy training
  – primary and secondary education
  – work-based programmes
  – arrangements to recognise informal learning

FURTHER READING

These pointers for policy development are drawn for the Thematic Review of Equity in Education and the findings presented in *No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education*, published in 2007. Country background reports prepared by 10 countries, country reviews of 5 countries and other documents are on the OECD website www.oecd.org/edu/equity.