

29. Creativity measurement in the European Policy context

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The new strategic framework for education and training for 2020¹ singled out enhancing creativity and innovation as one of the strategic challenges. Change is a defining characteristic of modern life, and the best way to be able to adapt to changes is to be creative. Creativity allows individuals to find new and adequate solutions to problems. It is, therefore, crucial that European education and training systems promote creativity in the context to prepare the population for a constantly changing environment. This was acknowledged in the Council conclusions on key competences², where creativity cut across all the key basic competences.

The promotion of creativity and innovation in education requires having measures that can provide evidence on the progress made over the years. The European Union is making efforts in creating evidence-based policies for education and training. This necessarily requires of adequate measures that can tell us something in the progress achieved with the political decisions taken in Europe and will permit policy learning. This political approach at the European level, through the Open Method of Coordination and through the use of indicators and benchmarks, has proved to be crucial in assessing achievements, pitfalls and difficulties in the progress towards the Lisbon objectives of 2010.

It is, thus, important to develop adequate measures for new areas to support European cooperation and policy learning. Civic competence, learning to learn, language skills and now, creativity and innovation, are areas where the European Commission, and CRELL are engaged searching for ways of developing new measures.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:0010:EN:PDF>

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:en:PDF>

It is clear that the measurement of creativity is a long-term project that will take time and energy to materialise. It has been almost a year since the question 'Can creativity be measured?' was asked in relation to the planning of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. And now, after one year of work, we are starting to understand what possible ways we have to tackle this challenge.

We are probably still far from being able to provide an adequate measure. But this conference and this publication constitute a first cornerstone and show the path to follow in the near future. At national and regional levels, it is clear that there is some information related to creativity. This publication has shown existing indicators looking into innovation, entrepreneurship and other environmental characteristics associated with creativity such as culture, tolerance, heterogeneity or creative occupations. It is possible, thus, to develop a composite indicator related to creativity with existing statistical tools. Of course, the construction of such a composite would require more theoretical and statistical analysis, especially in order to integrate the different aspects into a single measure of creativity, but some of the presented indicators in this volume provide clear insights for policymaking. The involvement of all stakeholders and a wide European debate on the choice of indicators would be crucial to obtain a relevant measure, useful for policy.

At the individual level, the conference showed a great variety of approaches and techniques. Creativity is a complex construct that involves many different aspects that will require different measurement approaches. What seems clear to me, however, is that many of these aspects, clearly related to creativity, are possible to measure. As such, it should be possible to create an international survey to obtain information on analogical and divergent thinking, risk-taking or openness. This, as indicated above, will require a long process of consultation with experts and Member States representatives to agree on what are the defining characteristics of a cross-national construct of creativity.

The potential impact of such a survey should be tremendous. We are far from understanding how creativity can be taught and learned more efficiently, we know little on what is the role of formal, non-formal and informal learning in enhancing creativity and we have little information on how teaching and teachers can become more creative in their teaching to foster creativity in students. An international survey on creativity would not only help to answer some of these questions, it would initiate a debate around education and creativity of far-reaching consequences.