



Policy coherence

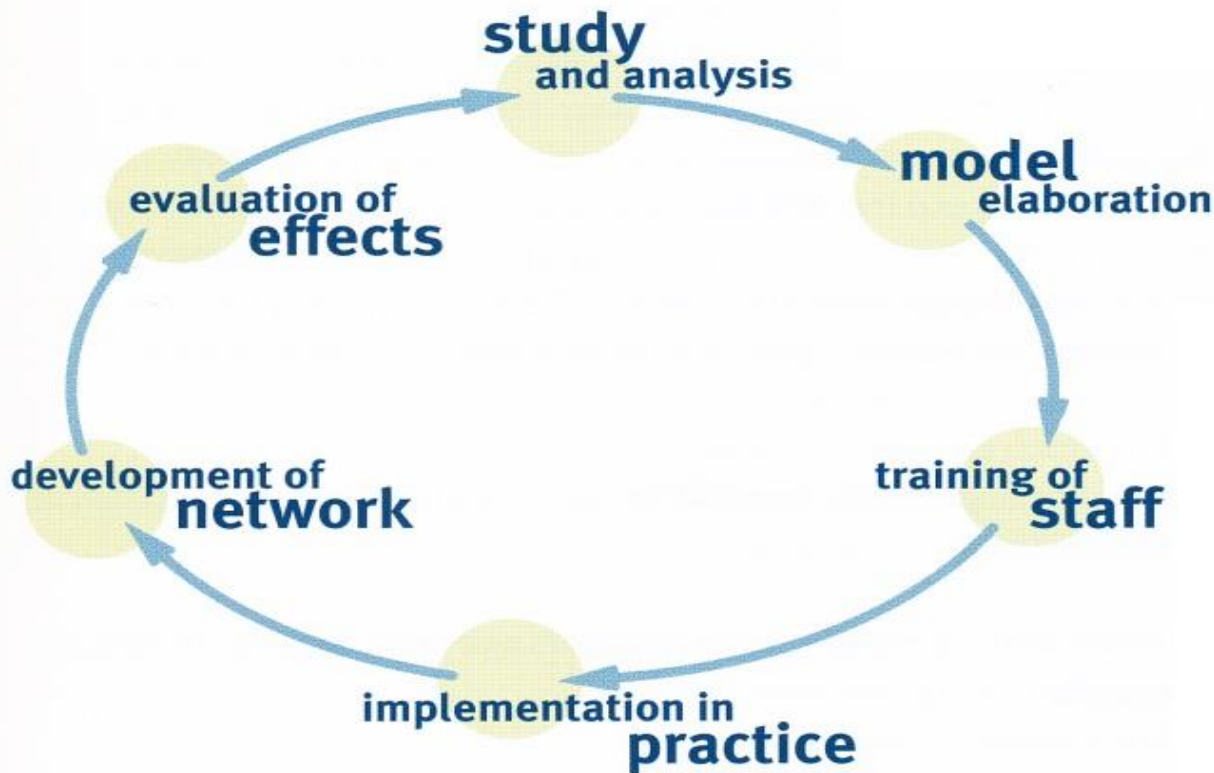
**Messages from the
Stuttgart Workshop**

Overview

- Overview of policy coherence-related discussions in Stuttgart
- Types of coherence: chronological, systemic, cross-organisational
- Challenges to policy coherence
- National/regional SWOT analyses
- Case studies: Be (FI), NL, NO
- Relationship between policy coherence and policy success factors: design, implementation, governance

Chronological coherence in policy design, implementation and governance

Development cycle of AL provision in Slovenia



Systemic coherence

- Progression: stepping stones from one educational stage to the next
- **Mannheim (Baden-Württemberg)**: “Schools and basic education” project
- Filling a gap between institutional levels of education
- Both in terms of level and institution: learners don’t need to change institution when they progress
- Institutional coherence provides coherence for learners

Basic Education
Literacy Course
Level 1-4

Project
(Main Part):

Link

School Education
Graduation
secondary school
(Hauptschule)

Professional
Education

Systemic coherence: other examples

- Integrating basic skills policy and programmes into other areas of adult education, e.g. VET
- **Be (FL):** “attention to basic skills will now be implemented in all curricula for normal adult education”

Cross-organisational coherence

- Cooperation, coordination and partnership with a range of organisations
- Both within government and outside it
- Vertical and horizontal
- Partnership, not just cooperation. The former implies shared ownership
- **Mannheim**: job centres partner w/ learning centres
- Around the globe, such partnerships have strengths and weaknesses

How to get policy partners on board?

- E.g. ministries of employment, health, social services
- Evidence of need (e.g. PIAAC)
- Evidence of impact
- **Be (FI):** Need to “brand” policy (make it understandable and attractive), both for the participant target group and for potential policy partners

Creating partnership

- What does each ministry / department / organisation stand to gain?
- Organisations outside government: NGOs, employers, etc. "Policy is not only made in ministries"
- Make clear to stakeholders what's in it for them – helps generate ownership
- **Be (Fr):** Literacy Steering Committee

How to establish agreement on policy objectives?

Stakeholder conflict

- Across organisations – who drives the agenda? (To discuss later in this ppt)
- Within programmes (internal coherence) – E.g. what if teachers prioritise outcomes such as improved confidence and attitudes to learning, while policy funders emphasise skills gains or credentials?
- Accountability regimes can be used to incentivise internal coherence, but can give rise to tensions and may consume valuable resources

How to establish agreement on policy objectives?

- Some countries need more attention to teachers as partners in policy delivery
- **Slovenia**: teachers involved from the policy design stage. Conducted needs analyses in local communities. Helped build a sense of ownership

Vertical coherence

- Vertical: central-regional-local
- **Netherlands**: With devolved governments, ownership / responsibility can be shaped by how the problem is framed.
- E.g. education (national gov't) or social welfare (local gov't)

Challenges to coherence

Lack of coherence between local projects and national policy

- Unfortunate cycle: Local projects arise, do well, run out of funding, close down (or begin devoting too many resources to pursuing funding)
- How do projects arise? What happens after project funding ends?
- How to upscale small local projects into national/regional programmes?
- Sustainability

Challenges to coherence

- Joined-up policy making is very difficult, even with the best will in the world: huge institutional barriers
- Even harder in a marginal policy environment?
- Who drives the agenda if a policy has educational, employment, health-related and social welfare aspects and outcomes? (External example: ***Australia***)
- Who funds the policy?
- Difficult to rigorously study/evaluate policy coherence

SWOT analyses: strengths

- **Slovenia:** "education and labour sector cooperation"
- **Be (FI):** "Involvement of many stakeholders"
- **Serbia:** "political and stakeholder consensus"
- **Poland:** "lifelong learning strategy and inter-ministerial cooperation"
- **Austria:** involvement of 4 ministries

SWOT analyses: weaknesses

- **Slovenia:** “awareness of policymakers, stakeholders, social partners in different sectors “
- "Links among social partners/stakeholders“
- **Be (Fr):** "Lack of formalisation of partnerships... Tensions between stakeholders... Each organisation has its own priorities and perspectives“
- **Be (FI):** "Awareness and cooperation could be better"
- (These can also be seen as opportunities)

SWOT analyses: opportunities

- **Be (Fr)**: Has just appointed a national coordinator
- **Be (Fl)**: "Improved working with companies... and other stakeholders"
- **Serbia**: "Strategy 2020... Interest of other ministries i[n] adult basic skills"
- **Slovakia**: "stronger involvement of relevant social partners/stakeholders"
- **Poland**: "development of local and regional governments"

SWOT analyses: threats

- **Serbia:** " Marginalisation of adult education"
- **Slovakia:** "Lack of political interest in adult learning... Fragmentation of public services"
- **Austria:** "Budget crisis... Funding only for quick results"

Case study: The Netherlands

- Sought to learn from other countries' experiences
- Government works closely with an NGO (the Read Write Foundation) to design, implement and govern adult basic skills policy and programmes
- Communication across ministries to achieve political consensus
- Involvement of employers and unions
- Use of professional teachers and volunteers

Case study: The Netherlands

- An example of another type of coherence: coherence between objectives and resources
- SMART not SMURT
- Avoid overpromising
- (Attractive at first because it helps recruit policy partners, but then those partners what to see the promised results, and may not understand how complex the challenge is.)

Policy implementation

What were the key strengths and challenges of the implementation of your policy?

- *High organizational capacity of implementing partner*
- *Commitment of stakeholders at regional level*
- *Focussed in scope, targeted in space*
- *Steering difficulties for policy makers because of autonomy [of] implementing partner*
- *Balancing between quantitative political demands and qualitative objectives*

Be (FI) example

- *5 year government plan on improving basic skills*
- *Cooperation with other stakeholders is key*
- *All departments and a lot of stakeholders are in the steering group*
- *Companies, unemployment service, social services, integration services, libraries, educational guidance services, etc*

Be (FI) example

- *Adult education centres are "starting point for cooperation with stakeholders"... They coordinate the cooperation*
- *Work together with centres for adult education, social services, and the unemployment services on integrated courses – and to identify adults with literacy problems*
- *Also work with libraries, e.g family learning/reading*

Norway: Basic Competencies in Working Life (BCWL)

- *Because most adults with low basic skills are employed, workplace learning is essential*
- *Firm and learning provider discuss, agree and apply for funding*
- *Very few barriers for companies – streamlined process, on-line applications – but strict auditing*
- *Strong political consensus around the BCWL programme*

Success factors: policy design

- Clear policy purpose, agreed by all
- Policy owners/partners share a common understanding of policy aims
- Sustainable funding
- Systemic links between basic skills initiatives and broader adult learning policies

Success factors: policy implementation

- Sustainable structures
- Integration with other public services, e.g. welfare, family, health, employment, prison
- Integration with other phases of the education and training system

Success factors: policy governance

- Effective cooperation between all stakeholders
- Coordinated steering at all levels of government
- All stakeholders clear about their own responsibilities and what they stand to gain
- Trust
- Networks as a basis for collaboration, consensus and trust
- All stakeholder groups involved in cycle of design, implementation, review