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"Efficiency and Equity in European Education
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PISA results: the absence of an automatic
efficiency-equity trade-off

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■ POLICY BASE: NATIONAL STRATEGY AND POLICY

- National knowledge strategy
- National long-term policy
- Clear decision-making system and division of responsibilities between actors
- Cooperation between the education sector and other sectors
- Broad commitment to the common policy



■ **SYSTEM BASE: INTEGRATED MODEL**

- Clear overall structure of the education system
- Comprehensive school reform in the early 1970s
- Dual system abolished; choices as late as possible
- Towards equality, 9-year comprehensive school for all
- All pupils together as long as possible
- Flexibility within classes



■ DEMANDING MODEL

- Great demands on the teacher (heterogeneous teaching groups)
- Requires capability to identify different learners and their abilities
- The school is not just teachers and pupils/students, but a multi-professional work community
- Need for cooperation between different sectors and professionals (classroom assistants, special-needs teachers, health personnel, social workers)
- The aim to give good education for all requires special focus on those in danger of falling behind and dropping out
- Pedagogical solutions must also be found for the talented children, to prevent them from getting bored



■ **FUNDING BASE: INVESTMENT GIVES VALUE FOR MONEY**

- Investment in basic education gives excellent returns
 - Cost per pupil in basic education c. €5200 a year
 - An excluded young person dropping out of school will later cost at least one million
 - It is a political choice when an investment in a young person is considered cost-effective



■ FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

- No single explaining factor, but a set of interlinked factors
- Teacher education is the key question: content, pedagogy, human relations and interaction skills
 - High level of education (Master's)
 - Class teachers, subject teachers, special-needs teachers, guidance counsellor teachers
 - Admission to teacher education through an entrance examination, including an aptitude test
 - Links with pedagogical research (Master's thesis)
 - Opportunities for continuing professional education (employer's duty to provide)



- National core curriculum: Balance between steering and freedom
 - General objectives and the minimum number of classroom hours determined centrally
 - A local curriculum based on the foregoing
- Responsibility for schools at the local level
 - Local authorities run schools
 - Local authorities can levy local tax
 - Shared financial responsibility: government 57%, local authorities 43%
 - Many local authorities spend more on education than their share of the overall unit cost (€5200)



- Large autonomy for schools and teachers
 - Schools and teachers free to choose their teaching methods and textbooks, no school inspectorate
- Reliable monitoring and evaluation system
 - Local and national authorities must know how the objectives have been achieved, what aspects need further development
 - Every school has a duty to evaluate its own operations and to participate in external evaluations



■ FUTURE CHALLENGES

- Will we be able to ensure efficiency and equity at the same time in the future?



■ YES, IF

- we can give all young people sufficient knowledge and skills in basic education for their further education and active life
- we can increase the share of people with top-level knowledge and skills
- we can develop pedagogy to respond to the needs of different learners
- we can continue to guarantee small differences in performance between schools



- we can keep the teaching profession an attractive career choice
- we can keep up the motivation of the local level to develop schools
- we continue to have strong political and economic support to education, especially making the point understood that early investment gives value for money



**QUITE A TASK BUT WE
HAVE TO SUCCEED IN IT**