Dutch National Knowledge Centre for Mixed Schools

How can research, policy and practice cooperate effectively?



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Content of the presentation

1. Introduction

of the Dutch National Knowledge Centre for Mixed Schools

2. Reflection:

How does the set up of the Centre affect its functioning and role, its succes and failure?

1. Introduction



Dutch National Knowledge Centre for Mixed Schools

- Founded in 2007
 - on request of the four biggest Dutch cities
 - by the Ministry of Education (tendering)

- Funded by
 - the Ministry of Education (initially for 4 years)
 - assignments of local authorities and schools/schoolboards

Knowledge Centre

- Aims and purpose:
 - Dissemination of knowledge
 - Pushing for action.

- Target audiences:
 - Local and national governments
 - Schools and schoolboards
 - Parents.

Activities of the Centre

- Building a knowledge base
- Disseminate state of the art knowledge
 - Write and release manuals on how to create and maintain mixed schools
 - Publish a newsletter and reports
 - Provide a website & LinkedIn group
 - Organize national and local meetings
- Support (12) pilots in local communities
- Advise municipalities, parents, schools and their boards

Methods

We need to link research, policy and practice

in order to be able to reach our goals.

Examples:

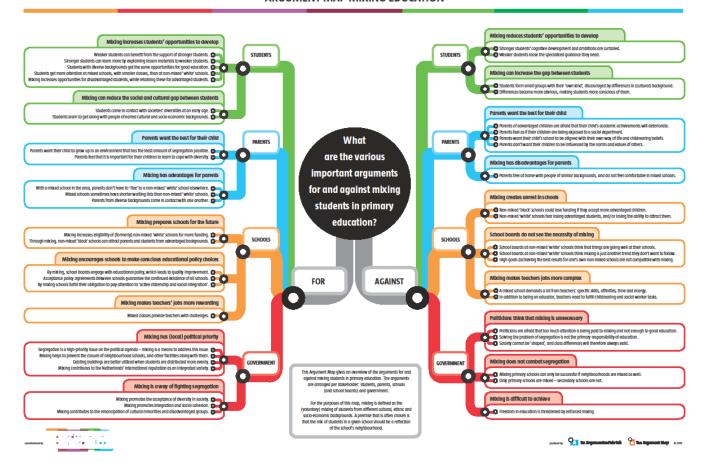
- we organise 'knowledge workshops'
- we made an Argument Map
- involving research, policy and practice.

Example: argument map

- Overview of arguments for and against mixed schools
- Usefull for discussions, e.g. with parents

- The Knowledge Centre
 - aims at a dialogue with parents and professionals about mixed schools,
 - and respects the informed choice of parents

ARGUMENT MAP MIXING EDUCATION



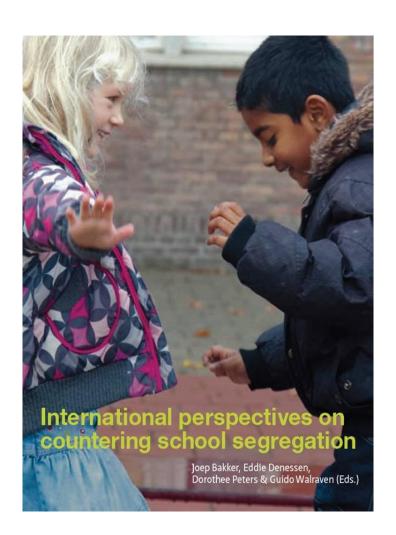
Knowledge base

 Independent evaluation of the 12 pilots (Regioplan, 2012)

 State of the art manuels for promising interventions, developed by the Knowledge Centre in cooperation with stakeholders (website, 2012)

International knowledge base

- We can learn from other countries
- Therefor the Centre explored the international knowledge base
 - About 'what works, for whom and why?'
 - About the context for implementation
 - About factors facilitating success
- Together with colleaugues we produced a book on almost 20 countries and regions (Bakker et al, 2011; compare our paper)



2. Reflection



What have we learned?

There is no magic bullet, no easy solution.

- There are promising interventions:
 - Types of controlled choice
 - Parent intitiatives
 - Information for parents (including brochures, websites, school tours)

However: we need more research

What types of research?

- Independent evaluations of the process and the effects
- Qualitative and quantitative research

- Research with 'practice based evidence' -using the experience and [tacit] knowledge
 of policy and practice
- Research focused on utilisation

How to cooperate effectively?

"old" model

- Motto: speaking truth to power
- Research vs application
- Focus on 'truth'
- Technical rationality
- Hierarchical organisation

"new" model

- Motto: knowledge as co-creation
- Research involves policy and practice
- Focus on utilisation
- Reflective practitioner
- Learning organisation

Effective policy and practice

- The 'new' model fits best with
 - school effectiveness and improvement
 - evidence informed educational policy

Because of: ownership

To be matched with: empowerment

What makes a difference?

- Political will and enthusiasm of
 - local stakeholders (schoolboards, elderman)
 - the national minister (top-down)
 - groups of parents (bottom-up)

 Because: none of the stakeholders has the power to force a decision, consensus is needed ('polder model' or Dutch dilemma)

Information & contact

www.gemengdescholen.nl (with page in English)

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