Local Evidence-based Policy and Practice in Education

A survey on data brokerage and networking
in four medium sized European cities.

Report on peer reviewing by cities
including a practical toolkit.

January 2010 – March 2011

Gemeente Rotterdam

City of Gothenburg

UPPSALA UNIVERSITET

Universiteit Antwerpen

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How the politicians meant it

How the edu. dep. Interpreted it

How the Agency described it

How the municipa-lities implemented it

How the consultants explained it

How the process was documented

How the teachers implemented it

How the pupils experienced it

How it was being supported

What the pupils really needed

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The good news: This project learned policy makers and researchers to speak a common language. The bad news: it took us almost the entire project. So, this means that structural networks involving policy makers, practitioners and researchers are crucial in narrowing the gap between theory and practice in knowledge brokerage.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.   Overview

Medium-sized cities in Europe are often confronted with the same educational challenges: changing demographic evolutions, a high level of unqualified school leavers, the issue of quality in school management, etc. The projects described in the following chapters are just some examples of the projects that have been worked out within the participating cities regarding Evidence-based Policy and Practice. Since the above mentioned education related problems are very complex and "wicked", it is reassuring for the cities to notice that their problem is not an exception and to find (international) colleagues to work out various strategies to tackle these issues. It is also interesting for the cities to notice that the use of data is a tool that is gaining more and more importance in handling these issues, also at a local level of policy making. The need to form sustainable and solid networks within our cities and between the international partners (also after this one-year project) to exchange knowledge and tools has become obvious. The main goal and outcome of this project was the creation of a sustainable international network between cities and researchers in the field of evidence-based education policy and practices. We are confident that we achieved this goal.

We took a look at different strategies in different cities to tackle common policy issues and we studied how data management can be used as a tool and how networking can be assessed.

The project process was simultaneously inspired by creating and elaborating theoretical frameworks on data brokerage and networking. These frameworks together with the result of the field research are presented in chapters 2 and 3 of this report.

This project for the first time joined city administrations and research institutions in exploring data brokerage and networking initiatives by using peer reviewing techniques.

In December 2009 the city of Antwerp received a grant from the European Commission for the coordination of a project in the field of networks for developing knowledge brokerage initiatives (agreement 2009 – 11956). The project was to run 1 year (Jan – Dec 2010, later prolonged until March 2011). 6 medium-sized cities (Antwerp, Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Munich, Rotterdam and Stockholm), all members of the Eurocities Working Group for Education and Social Inclusion, and 5 research institutions (University of Antwerp, Masaryk University (Brno), Sola za ravnatalje (Kranj), Risbo (Rotterdam) and Uppsala University) (see attachment) formed an active investigation and development network to accomplish these above-mentioned goals. The city of Antwerp took the lead.

2.   The phases in the project

It is not new to base regional or European education policy on data. What is new is the growing awareness of the need of data driven local education policy on city and school level and of the need for good data brokerage to do so. Hence a strong interest in research on the role of cities in evidence-based policy and practice. In this one-year project, we tried to grasp the main characteristics of 'working with data' or evidence-based education policy and practice in medium-sized European cities.

In a first phase, we defined the whole process, from data gathering to data use in city and in school policy. We hope that the reader also will become inspired by the examples of data use in the various

cities. In the analysis of these examples, we used a method based on peer reviewing to search for the key success factors for the knowledge brokerage role of the cities. We also explored the networking context in which the data brokerage initiatives are taking place.

In a second phase we tried to find how we as cities can enhance the mutual learning between the involved cities, and we worked out a very user-friendly toolkit based on the peer review method. This is a pragmatic tool to improve the outcome of study visits between EU cities, in which both visitors as well as host cities can learn from each other and transfer the inspiration of the study visit into their home town situation.

Since the time to prepare this project before kick-off was very short, and since the involvement of the project members into this theme and into the project was very diverse, the project was characterised by an organic growth and a constant adjustment of the vision and the practical arrangements. In order to be sure to reach our goals, we dedicated several issues to certain managers who would take the lead of this theme. Instead of one task force working on data brokerage by cities, we also set up a task force studying the networking context of this brokerage role of cities since this networking context is a determining precondition for the way the brokerage role is worked out.

3. The project at a glance

The aim of the project was to develop a network in which both knowledge and experience related to evidence-based policy can be exchanged, in order to realize a more funded local education and training policy and to improve the exchange of data between researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. Local education policy makers played a brokerage role to facilitate knowledge sharing.

Three objectives:

1. **Networking**: during the project we reviewed networking initiatives involving brokerage of education data in 4 EU cities. As a result we also started a sustainable consortium in which the exchange of knowledge and experience related to evidence-based policy also in the future will be possible. During this project, 8 meetings were held, participants were actively building up knowledge and experience and a strategic plan has been worked out for dissemination of the results and possible future research by 'couples' of actual participants.

2. **Knowledge brokerage**: an existing model for accumulating evidence has been optimised and the matrix fields are filled with examples of good practice of each participating city (see appendix). Key elements of success are defined for local education policy makers to play a brokerage role in the information transition between the stakeholders in evidence-based policy and practice. The consortium further developed the model and collected examples of good practice. Moreover the project analysed them and came up with key elements of success in order to facilitate the transfer of innovation.

3. **Peer review method**: the partnership developed a toolkit for effective peer reviewing in local education policy. The toolkit is based on the results of desk research on literature about peer reviewing, on the results of previous EU funded projects and on the experiences during this project, also in the Eurocities meeting and a study visit between two partner cities. The use of the toolkit provides context information on the education policy in every participating city and a structure for study visits.

These key actions were taken by 2 task forces:
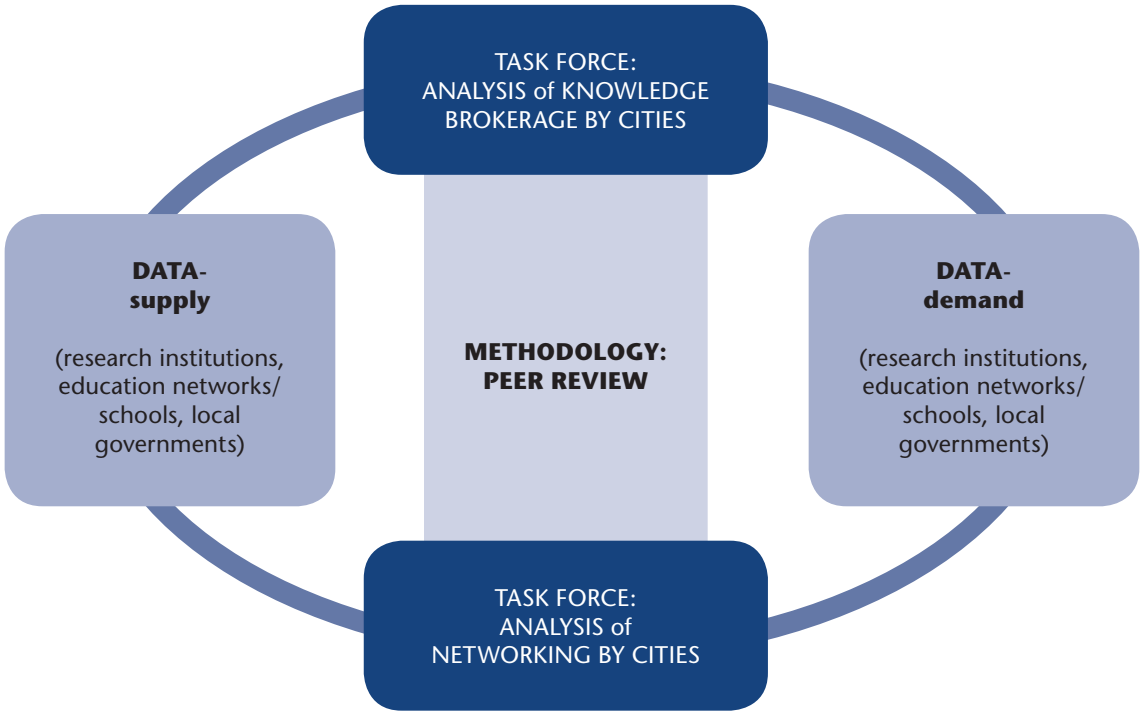
The task force that worked mainly on 'data brokerage by cities' focused on the process, the procedures and the results of data brokerage. The 'HOW' in other words. This group worked on:
- Listing inspiring examples of good data brokerage practices by cities
- Data brokerage activities
- Listing key success factors

The content was mainly focused on quality in school management because this is one of the main issues in education policy at the moment.

The task force that worked on practices in networking studied the 'WHO', the environmental infrastructure and the networking context in which the cities carry out the brokerage. This group worked on:
- Formal and informal networks
- Brokerage role of cities
- Cities dealing with wicked problems

The selected cases were focused on the issue of 'youth at risk' because this is one of the main wicked issues that schools and cities have to tackle.

4.   Results

In March 2011, after more than one year of research, we are proud to be able to distribute this report on our findings, and to announce the launching of the website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu.

In this report, you can find:
- Findings regarding networking and networking assessment (chapter 1)
- Findings regarding data brokerage at a local policy and school level, including good practices and key factors for success (chapter 2)
- Findings regarding peer reviewing by cities visiting each other with the aim of mutual learning, including a practical toolkit (chapter 3)

For your convenience, each of the chapters can be read and used independently according to your focus and interests.

The website includes a toolkit with guidelines for peer reviewing and a comparison of background information about the education policy of every visited city e.g. the completed templates with information about data brokerage projects of the cities. In the future we will also have the possibility to add tools based on the theory described in the reports, e.g. brokerage role of cities, networking etc.

*To build a sustainable network
the core partners should become friends
and critical friends.*

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated in the introduction the aim of the project was to develop a network in which both knowledge and experience related to evidence-based policy can be exchanged. This was done in order to realize a more funded local education and training policy and to improve the exchange of data between researchers, policy makers and practitioners. Out of that collaboration the knowledge and findings of our project are captured in the three chapters on networking, data brokerage and peer reviewing.

In each of the chapters, the reader can find the most important lessons to learn from our research.
- In the chapter on Networking you will find our conclusions helpful to avoid weaknesses and threats when starting networking to tackle or 'tame' wicked education problems.
- In the chapter on Data Brokerage you can find evidence of the current variety of educational brokerage activities by cities and illustrations of the potential and promising results of these activities. It also lists the facilitating and hindering factors that the project partners came across during their study of the four knowledge brokerage contexts.
- The chapter on Peer Reviewing shows you an overview of literature study including reference to former conclusions of the Inti-cities, Dive and Connections projects, characteristics and guidelines of this typical kind of study visits between cities and a toolkit with guidelines for peer reviewing.

This project clearly provided evidence for three lessons to be learnt: building trust, building capacity and matching demand and supply. In the grid below those lessons are formulated in the form of recommendations towards three key stakeholders: the EU DG Education and Culture, local policy makers in education and researchers.
- Trust refers to the recommendation to build a climate in which open communication, transparency and critical friendship add to goal realisation.
- Building capacity refers to building in guarantees to make sure that all stakeholders dispose of the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes and to ensure that stakeholders are promoters of the topic involved.
- Matching demand and supply refers to the recommendation to make existing knowledge demands and supplies explicit and to build in guarantees for matching both.

You can approach the grid from three angles
- Top-down reading is advisable when you are firstly interested in the recommendations of the project consortium concerning (one of) the specific themes of the project.
- Horizontal reading is advisable for those readers who feel addressed as one of the stakeholders, since their profession or function is related to one of the three target groups reached.
- People interested in one of the key lessons (building trust, building capacity and matching demand and supply) can focus on the background colour of the grid. Each lesson has its own banner colour.

	Data brokerage in local education policy context	Networking in local education policy context	Peer reviewing in local education policy context
Building trust			
EU DG Education and Culture	Think about creating a framework for validated educational data. This framework has to enable the identification of trustworthy data and comparisons (cf. benchmarks)	Set up a quality label for networking and for network partners without preventing valid new partners to take part in the network.	Stimulate the use of good and standardized peer review methodology for study visits
Local policy makers	Be transparent and open about your goals in using and distributing data. Not being explicit about them or not acting in line with them, leads to distrust and can threaten the success of the brokerage initiatives undertaken.	Use networking as the basis for building trust between stakeholders in implementing local evidence-based policy making and local governance.	Stimulate participation in international peer review on all levels of professional organisations: Even if they are not real peers as not doing exactly the same job, professionals are very well capable of doing a peer review when they are all professionals in a professional environment that's made comparable through shared peer review methodology and frameworks. Build trust by having the correct attitude: • Be transparent / honest about your goals • Be critical but friendly. Be friendly but critical. • Decide together on sharing of information and findings
Researchers	Be the validator of existing data; be critical in labelling the quality of data and data use practices. The aim for researchers should be to help policy makers and practitioners in judging the trust they can have in available data.	In building trust within networks, the role of the networker is important as well as the quality of the networking and the network. These subjects have to be studied / analysed.	Collect scientifical evidence to improve and to guide peer review processes. Deliver (background) data to inform peer reviewers.

	Data brokerage in local education policy context	Networking in local education policy context	Peer reviewing in local education policy context
Building capacity			
EU DG Education and Culture	Distribute good practices on international level. By exchanging successful practices and by building ready for use tools that support future data brokers, the necessary capacity can be developed.	Stimulate the sustainability of transnational networking: allow networks enough time to establish and become sustainable.	Stimulate the development and use of good and standardized peer review methodology for study visits
Local policy makers	Be aware of the possibilities of using data. Local policy makers are not all fully aware of the potential of data use. Capacity can be build up by identifying the own strengths and weaknesses concerning data use. Moreover, it is also recommended that local developers of data brokerage system also take the capacities of end-users into consideration. Try to broker data in a way that it´s possible for the users to understand / use them, taking into account personal competences and the quality / availability of soft- and hardware.	Facilitate existing networks and if necessary build new networks to create sustainable capacity for local evidence-based policy making and governance of 'wicked problems'.	Systematically implement the use of standardized methodology when organising and participating in peer reviews. Get inspired by www. CompareLocalEducation.eu
Researchers	Be aware that the presentation of data can also be (mis) used for other goals than the ones described in research. Therefore communication on research findings would benefit from taking a broad perspective towards the audience of reports. Researchers also can play an important role distributing their findings in a way that stimulates evidence-based policy making and practice.	Research the role and functions of networks, networking and networkers for building capacity. Create and distribute more tools to facilitate networking.	Elaborate and distribute process methodology that improves the quality and objectivity of observations and reporting in peer reviewing.

	Data brokerage in local education policy context	*Networking in local education policy context*	*Peer reviewing in local education policy context*
Matching demand and supply			
EU DG Education and Culture	Match demand and supply also at EU level in order to make sure that efforts made and supplies created contribute to addressing a relevant demand. In approving future projects the EU also has to ensure that these are built upon lessons learnt in former projects.	Bring researchers, policy makers and practitioners together in sustainable transnational networks.	Use the experience of peer reviewers to improve the quality of study visits.
Local policy makers	Create a local virtual market place to match demand and supply of knowledge. One of the main problems is that both suppliers and demanders of data are often not aware of what is already available and embedded in existing structures. The market place must be seen as a local meeting point in this regard.	Using the local virtual market place / meeting point as a starting point, create one or several established multi-stakeholder network(s) (MSN).	Make sure that the peer review is a win-win situation for both parties. Make use of and match the professions, interests, knowledge and competences of the peers in the reviewing process.
Researchers	Researchers must engage in meta-research that brings together the existing knowledge base. Based on such an analysis those in demand of evidence for setting up data brokerage systems will find that there is a supply of knowledge in terms of how to do so.	Identify the potential / existing results of networking and networks. Recognise the existing demand for multidisciplinary research and distribution of knowledge on networks / networking	Identify the added value of the interaction within peer reviewing (for the reviewees and the reviewers). Supply comprehensive and clear information to peers in balance to their demands and capacity to interpret.

As a consortium of policy makers and universities, working together in this project, sharing knowledge and data, discussing local educational issues and giving feedback on local practice, we also experienced the importance of the key elements from the grid ourselves. The validity of the conclusions is strengthened but also illustrated by the experiences of the project partners. It clearly turned out that also in this context the impact of building trust, building capacity and matching demand and supply has been crucial for understanding and explaining the process and results of the consortiums activities.

People and institutions involved in building similar consortia would therefore benefit from taking the above recommendation into consideration as well.

*We are always networking but since it is so common here we don't call it that. It was interesting to see our work through this focus.
(Stockholm)*

1. NETWORKING AND BROKERAGE ROLE OF CITIES

(Manager of the theme and author of this report: Marc Van Praet)

1.1 Introduction

Cities create policy governance networks with both public and private players with the aim of coming to terms with or tackling "wicked" problems such as unqualified school leaving and aggression in schools. Problems that cannot be solved, merely "tamed" and which demand joint efforts. Within these networks, cities have a crucial role in the brokerage of data and good practices to make evidence-based governance possible. To be successful in this brokerage role, cities also need to be well connected to the local education community and create trust between all stakeholders and thus a fertile soil for local policy network governance.

In this chapter we describe a theoretical framework for assessing education policy networking and some preliminary findings from some examples of local education policy making where European cities assume a brokerage role embedded in network governance. We try to define in which ways "light" peer reviewing could assess such policy networking and we provide a template for this which has been tested and revised in a number of European cities during the project. The template can be helpful to support and enhance the quality of study visits and to make comparison between the different cities and their networks possible.

Finally we express first conclusions and make suggestions for further research and development to improve the outcome of future network brokerage actions by EU cities.

1.2 Problem statement and project goals

In this project, we found it important to acknowledge the fact that the processes of gathering and analysing data on education in a local context and of creating strategies for coping with the challenges takes place in very competitive surroundings where market factors play an important role.

Although this competitive 'education market' is very different in the cities represented in our working group, local (city) policy makers appear to be quite successful in creating local policy networks to implement local education policy and to act as brokers between suppliers and users of educational and other relevant data. The cities studied in the project - Rotterdam, Stockholm, Antwerp and Munich – have created sets of strategic management instruments that might be useful in education governance in other regions and cities, and possibly also within other policy contexts.

We are confident that such strategic management instruments are also put in place in and by many other large and medium-sized European cities. We believe that local education policy makers in our EU cities could benefit more from reviewing each other's strategic settings and the instruments they have created if these review visits were carried out according to a certain preset methodology and generally agreed standards.

This of course needs longitudinal assessment, which could not be performed within the short time frame of this project. What we tried to accomplish was to set up a basis for further explorative action research within the context of European cities and to create some instruments to compare the findings.

Using a "light" version of peer reviewing, we tried to assess a number of networking initiatives taken by EU cities to tame wicked education challenges.

We looked for:
- Strengths in successful local education governance strategies of medium-sized EU cities
- Weaknesses that we could define in these governance strategies
- Opportunities pinpointed by the local representatives and/or reviewers
- Threats defined by the local representatives and/or reviewers

In our conclusions we try to define a number of
- Common denominators in local governance networking strategies that have proven to be successful/strengths
- Common denominators in local governance networking strategies that have proven to be less successful/weaknesses
- Common denominators for opportunities and
- Common denominators for threats

This was only a one-year project. Therefore we feel that many of our findings need to be assessed much more closely and in a wider range of cities in future peer reviewing. Furthermore, since networking governance has a cost, financially as well as in terms of input of personnel, we suggest that in follow-up of this project we should attempt to perform a benchmarkable cost-benefit analysis of such examples of local education network governance.

We hope that our findings will lead to optimisation of exchanges of good practices like is being doing in Eurocities and we are confident that the questions we have put to our peers have already proven to be an adequate basis for mutual understanding and that they lead to a more clear insight into each other's challenges and the way our cities try to cope with them.

1.3   Wicked problems

Policy networks are becoming standard practice for (local) governments to take care of policy issues, especially items that are considered to be `wicked issues' (Voets et al, Public Management Review, 2008). Poverty, environmental degradation and also education issues such as unqualified school leavers are classic examples of wicked problems as opposed to 'hard ordinary problems', which people can solve in a pre-defined time period by applying standard techniques.

Conventional processes not only fail to tackle wicked problems, but can also generate undesirable outcomes when used on wicked situations. Increasingly, these are the problems strategists face—and for which they are ill equipped.

Wicked problems were first described in a 1973 article in Policy Sciences magazine. Horst W.J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, professors of design and urban planning at the University of California at Berkeley described a wicked problem as a problem that has innumerable causes, is tough to describe and does not have a right answer (Rittel and Webber, 1973).

Wicked problems arise when organisations have to face unprecedented challenges or constant change. They occur in a social context and the greater the disagreement among stakeholders, the more wicked the problem becomes. The social complexity of wicked problems makes them tough to manage. Confusion, discord and lack of progress are telltale signs that an issue might be wicked (Camillus, John, 2008). Wickedness is not a degree of difficulty, John C. Camillus states. Wicked issues are different because traditional processes cannot resolve them. `Wicked' problems cannot be solved, but they can be tamed.

1.3.1   Taming of wicked problems not fitting into traditional planning strategies

In large enterprises as well as in government, contemporary strategic planning processes and models do not adequately take into account the complexity of the environment in which wicked problems have to be tackled. They cannot be solved, merely tamed. Thus it is not sufficient to define issues more clearly, to break them down into smaller problems, to gather data and to organise good brokerage. It is also necessary to create good hindsight of the environment in which the wicked problem exists and in which partners and their peculiarities have to be taken into account when discussing the challenge and creating a strategy to 'tame' it.

In the fields of public policy as well as in the fields of project design and software development, there is ample literature available on networks coping with wicked problems. In 1990 Peter DeGrace and Leslie Hulet Stahl published *Wicked Problems, Righteous Solutions: A Catalogue of Modern Software Engineering Paradigms* (DeGrace, P., Stahl, L.H., 1990). Jeffrey Conklin, director of CogNexus Institute, based in Napa, California, is the author of *Dialogue Mapping: Creating Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems* (Wiley and Sons, 2006). He has brought dialogue mapping to the World Bank, the United Nations, NASA, AOL, Verizon, BP and others. [3]

Policy makers on an international level have put this powerful concept to good use, but it has not yet been used in (local) policy strategy discussions.

1.3.2   Six characteristics of wicked problems

According to Conklin, wicked problems have six characteristics:

1. You don't understand the problem until you have developed a solution.

   Every solution that is offered exposes new aspects of the problem, requiring further adjustments to the potential solutions. There is no definitive statement of 'the problem': these problems are ill structured and feature an evolving set of interlocking issues and constraints.

2. There is no stopping rule.

   Since there is no definitive 'problem,' there is also no definitive 'solution.' The problem-solving process ends when you run out of resources such as time, money or energy, not when an optimal solution emerges.

3. Solutions are not right or wrong.

   They are simply 'better/worse' or 'good enough/not good enough.' The determination of solution quality is not objective and cannot be derived from following a formula.

4. Each is essentially unique and novel.

   No two wicked problems are alike, and the solutions to them will always be custom designed and fitted. Over time we can acquire wisdom and experience about the approach to wicked problems, but one is always a beginner in the specifics of a new wicked problem.

5. Every solution is a 'one-shot operation'.

   Every attempt has consequences. This is the 'Catch 22' of wicked problems: you can't learn about the problem without trying solutions, but every solution is expensive and has lasting consequences that may spawn new wicked problems.

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3   For more, visit www.cognexus.org

6. There is no given alternative solution.

A host of potential solutions may be devised, but another host is never even thought of. Thus it is a matter of creativity to devise potential solutions, and a matter of judgment to determine which should be pursued and implemented.

1.3.3   Many local education challenges are wicked problems

Education authorities in Europe are increasingly confronted with education challenges for which neither individual schools nor their school networks are well enough equipped to counter them. These challenges are more imminent and more urgent in cities than in more rural regions.

To name but a few:
- a high and sudden influx of immigrant youth, resulting in sudden changes in school populations;
- the high percentages of non-native speakers in compulsory education in our EU cities;
- the higher than average school failure of many of these young people;
- the linguistic and intercultural communication challenges due to different ethnical backgrounds of the pupils;
- the increasing segregation with migration to inner city, and to suburbia of those who can afford it, leaving the other deprived city districts with a higher than average number of `problem pupils`;
- the emergence of private schools for the financially well-off;
- truancy as a result and first sign of demotivation;
- a rising shortage of schools in these neighbourhoods and of teachers and principals willing to work in these schools;
- a high percentage of unqualified school leavers, especially with immigrant youngsters;
- high youth unemployment, again certainly with young people of an immigrant background;
- a high percentage of youth with defiant behaviour and rising youth criminality...

All these challenges are intertwined and have a high impact on each other. Each can be considered a `wicked problem` but the combination of them can be considered one of the most urgent education `wicked problems` that the EU and our national governments have to deal with. And our EU cities are at the epicentre of this challenge. Schools, parents and other stakeholders demand consistent answers to these wicked problems from the local authorities. Local authorities cannot cope with these challenges on their own. They need policy networks and they create them to do so.

1.4   Setting in which local education governance has to perform

For the descriptive survey of local education policy, looking for basic parameters we used two analysis frameworks provided by Noordegraaf (Noordegraaf, M., 2004) and Voets, Van Dooren and De Rynck (2008). Noordegraaf describes the setting in which contemporary public management needs to perform as follows:

Environment

Demanding citizens, powerful companies
Diffuse knowledge

Issues
Tangibility
Measurability
Accessibility

Management-
setting

Public managers

Instruments
Management awareness
Tools, models
systems

Institutions
Politics, democracy
Institutions, regimes
Routines, cultures
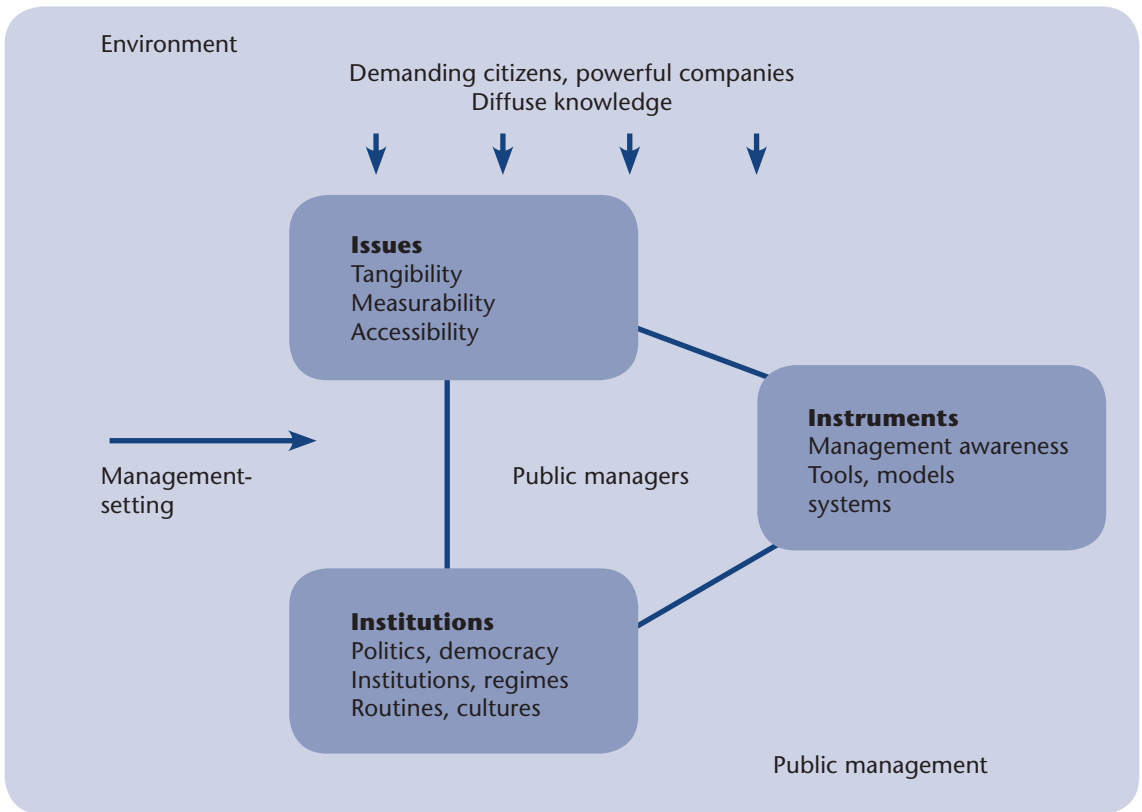
Public management

Noordegraaf argues that in ever more complex public environments (stubborn, demanding, ambivalent citizens; powerful companies and diffuse knowledge), policy makers need to make choices about the best possible public management adapted to these (local) circumstances.

To be able to make these choices, Noordegraaf describes four settings in which for each setting a different style/model of public management seems to be more appropriate:
- Situations with reasonably clear issues can be dealt with in a businesslike way (e.g. the organisation of public transport). Company management is adequate. Principles of New Public Management can be useful, but only for the management of the company, not the environment.
- Technically complex situations in organisations where one has to deal with (hard to manage) professionals (e.g. the police, education and healthcare). Here the best fitting model seems to be organisation management, which can create and sustain enough dynamism in the players involved (knowledge and attention) and gives enough space for decisions by these professionals to execute knowledge-intensive processes. This as an antidote to the oppression felt by these professionals when forced to work within (the inappropriate use of) business management and NPM.
- Complex policy situations with conflicting interests and views (e.g. strategic policy, large projects), where policy management is in order. Network management and process management will support the necessary interaction between the different (equal) partners.
- Politically sensitive situations, where power and media are important determining factors, require political management. Wicked issues are being put on the political agenda by society and by the media (as a result of incidents, sometimes of hype).

All four settings of public management as described by Noordegraaf are recognisably being observed in the local education environment in medium-sized EU cities, which makes comparative analysis possible.

> In the descriptive survey of cities' education policy networks, we decided that we should describe in a similar way the following:
> - The context in which local education policy needs to be deployed
> - The issues and challenges local education policy makers have to meet
> - The institutions that are determining/decreeing the available space for the local network
> - The instruments available for implementing the chosen policy

Starting from this general descriptive survey of active education policy networks in EU medium-sized cities, we can start to search for elements that can be used to audit strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and the threats of these networks.

1.4.1 General overview of the education context in the visited cities

The visited cities were Rotterdam (May), Stockholm (June), Antwerp (September) and Munich (December). In each of the visited cities, a general overview of the context was given where Noordegraaf's framework was used as a backbone for the description of the context, the management setting and the public management tools which are used in these cities. In this chapter, we give a brief description of some aspects of the visited cities' contexts that we considered to be relevant before the assessment of the networks in action.

The actual networks are also briefly described, but more information will be made available on the website. We used Youth at risk as an overall theme when choosing which policy networks to assess, since this is a common wicked problem for all cities. For more detailed information on the cities and the networks, please visit the website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu

1.4.1.1 The context and issues

The first questions try to provide information on how the context looks in which the cities' local education governance policy has to be applied:
- General information on the city and on the national education context
- How is the output of education measured and how is it related to international standards?
- What issues are considered most important, e.g. how do people relate to education/schools, how do companies/organisations/unions relate to education etc.?
- What are the local challenges that get the public's attention?

1.4.1.2 The management setting

The questions in this part provide answers on what the setting for local education management looks like in relation to other levels, what institutions are involved etc.
- What can be decided locally and what is decided at a national or regional level?
- Are there different school networks active in the city and how do they relate to each other?
- Are there private schools/school networks and how do they relate to the official schools?

- How is democratic decision-making embedded in education policy?
- Which institutions/pressure groups play an important role in influencing these decisions?

1.4.1.3 The public management of the cities' local education governance model

This part describes the actual local education governance and the tools in use.
- Is there a public manager or management body installed/appointed for the policy?
- Which instruments, tools and models can be used to create and implement local education governance?

Once this general overview was given, the interviews were conducted, reviewing local education policy networks and network governance. The method used is described in a separate chapter on peer reviewing.

1.4.2 Description of the cities' education context

1.4.2.1 Rotterdam

The context

In Rotterdam there are 250 primary schools, 75 secondary schools, 30 schools for special education and 50 locations for upper secondary vocational education. All together some 110,000 pupils follow lessons in 750 education buildings. They are taught by about 11,000 teachers and supporting personnel. In Pre-School (2 – 4 years of age) 3,000 children attend educational activities 3 or 4 times a week.

What is decided at national/regional policy level

Schools are free in choosing their educational and didactical methods, there is no national curriculum. The national government sets the targets and facilitates the control of the standards and the quality of education by the inspection. The national government is also responsible for the funding and quality control of upper secondary and higher vocational education.

Are there different school networks active in the city and how do they relate to each other?

In the Netherlands there is a "pillar system" in education. The schools are roughly equally divided into 3 pillars: Roman Catholic, Protestant and Public. The number of Muslim schools is slowly growing. These are all official schools, funded by the national government. Their boards cooperate at the local level in the Federation of School boards of Rotterdam. This Federation is negotiating with the City regarding the extra city money for education.

Are there private schools/school networks and how do they relate to the official schools?

There are hardly any private schools in the Netherlands; some private "top classes" offer their educational services in the upper class part of the secondary schools. Such classes have to be finished by a National Examination.

How the output of education is measured and relation to international standards

For primary education, there is a yearly national assessment in the highest grade, in secondary education the different school types are finished by a national exam. The results of the schools are centrally collected and monitored and compared on a national level. No direct comparison is made with international standards. On top of that, at the national level every 3 years PISA research is carried out. The Netherlands still has a high position in the ranking of European countries on Language learning and Maths, but is set back by upcoming Asian countries.

The local education management setting

Issues considered most important, e.g. how people relate to education/schools, how companies/ organisations/unions relate to education

The population of Rotterdam has a low education level, on average the lowest of the Netherlands. Nearly half the population is of non-Dutch origin; in primary school age the ratio is 60%. There are more than 170 nationalities in Rotterdam. The education results are also poor, the lowest of the 4 big cities. There are many disadvantages, especially in Dutch language. The dropout rate was nearly 30% some 10 years ago and has now been brought back to 15%. The aim is to bring this back down to 10% in a couple of years. So priorities in the new Rotterdam Education Policy, a 4-year agreement between city and school boards, are: "better education results (on Language and Maths)" and "preventing and diminishing early, unqualified school leaving". Furthermore there is a strong focus on unemployed youngsters. Agreements have been made with big companies for more traineeships and apprenticeships.

Challenges mostly reported on in the press

The number of officially indicated "weak schools", safety in schools, gangs in or around schools, etc.

What can be decided locally

The city has statutory tasks such as the housing and attendance of compulsory education. The city is responsible for Pre-School Education and the Brede School (extended curriculum). Schools have their own autonomous boards and receive basic funding from the national government depending on the number of pupils in the school. The local government decides together with the boards in a Rotterdam Education Forum with regard to the activities and plans that are funded by the city's contribution to education.

How is the democratic decision making embedded in education policy?

The City Council is elected every 4 years, a coalition of political parties which normally have a majority in the council agree on a college of Vice-Mayors, together with the Mayor, who is (non-democratically) appointed by the Queen. The Vice-Mayor for Education negotiates with the School boards in the Rotterdam Education Forum.

The public management of the cities' local education governance model

The Department of Education of the City of Rotterdam hosts the Program manager for the Rotterdam Education Policy Programme for Talents development. This is a new development and the manager is in charge of local policy implementation for the coming 4 years. The Programme consists of two main parts: "Better education results (on Language and Maths)" and "Preventing and diminishing Early, Unqualified School Leaving".

Youth at Risk

Over the last 4 years, the number of USL in Rotterdam has been reduced from 3,000 to 2,700 every year (!). In itself this is a good result, but it still means that more than 6% of all youngsters that start upper secondary vocational education at the age of 16 drop out in the first year and are no longer in education. Two factors are responsible for this high percentage of dropouts: 1) the transition between lower and upper secondary vocational schools, and 2) the lack of a good care structure. Dropping out of education means a high risk of dropping out of society. Many youngsters have to face a multi-problem situation (criminal activities, psychological or social problems, early pregnancy, financial debts, alcohol or drug abuse, etc.). So the strategy is to focus on prevention as well as cure. On the

prevention side, Rotterdam is working on the motivation of the pupils, on early intervention in case of truancy and on organising a care system that offers help before dropping out. On the curative side, many institutions and schools are involved to offer tailor made care and support, e.g. to find the way back to education, or to a job with in-service training. Or to help to solve acute problems which hinder a good educational career.

Networking

Because of the fact that the city of Rotterdam has no formal responsibilities in the primary (compulsory) educational trajectory (age 4-18), it focuses on the networking part to optimise conditions for good education results. Links with other policy domains for which the city does have responsibilities, such as youth policy, health, safety and employment. For the prevention of USL, a network has been set up with school boards: primary, secondary and vocational, with school attendance officers and with institutions and systems of preventive care. This network has already existed for more than 15 years and is the base of the steady but slow progress in education results and the diminishing percentages of USL. On the curative side, a new Network was started by the city of Rotterdam a couple of years ago, called the DOSA network. At district level a new formal network, an Organisation Comprehensive Approach (DOSA), has been set up for children/youngsters from 0 – 23 years in multiproblem situations. In this network there is cooperation on a contract base between Schools, Youth Care Agencies, Police, Centres for Youth and Families, Attendance Officers, Youth Counter (youth employment), Local Domestic Violence Teams and Social Work. The organisation is managed by the DOSA director, an officer of the city of Rotterdam. This officer is responsible for the treatment planning of each youngster with severe multi-problems. If no solution proves possible at the level of DOSA, cares are scaled up to the central Youth Consul, to force a breakthrough.

1.4.2.2 Stockholm

Stockholm was the second city to be visited, only two weeks after the Rotterdam visit, which was why we used the first template even though we had already pinpointed some issues to be altered in Rotterdam.

The context

In Sweden, schools are run by the cities/ municipalities. The overall goals, pedagogical and other goals, are set at the national level, like all laws and regulations. The inspection is also a national interest. But a city has quite a lot of freedom in deciding on policy issues. Independent schools have existed since the early nineties and their number is still increasing. In Stockholm, about 25% of pupils in compulsory education go to an independent school and about 50% of the pupils on the upper secondary level. Independent schools are publicly financed and extra fees are not allowed. This emerging market for education causes challenges in the municipalities' planning processes and requires negotiations with reps from the independent schools. In the nineties, most of the independent schools were the result of local initiatives from teachers and others with a specific pedagogical vision or with a specific profile. Today, the market is dominated by three major combines, which makes it somewhat easier for cities to know who to talk to even if this development has several other negative aspects. An association of independent schools also exists. Collaboration between Stockholm and the independent schools is most developed in the sector of upper secondary vocational education, for obvious reasons.

There is a free choice of schools in compulsory school (years 1 to 9), admission to upper secondary (year 16-19) is based on grades.

The organisational structure

The overall policy is made at the national level, but cities do have quite a lot of freedom in choosing how to implement this and even to make their own policy in certain areas.

The city of Stockholm is ruled by the City Council, the city's `parliament'; the `government' would be the City Executive Board. The political organisation also comprises eight governing Vice Mayors who are full-time politicians and heads of an administrative division. The carrying out of the policies and day-to-day operations are run by the various administrations and companies that are headed by politically appointed committees and boards, e.g. the Education Committee. There are also District Councils that are responsible for practically all matters relating to healthcare, social services etc. The Education Committee is the decision-making body for the public education system. It is important to stress though that the school principal carries extensive responsibilities. The day-to-day work and the implementation of overall policies are carried out by the Education Administration whose responsibility it is to offer education opportunities to all inhabitants regardless of provider, not only under its own auspices. The Education Administration provides compulsory and upper secondary education and is in charge of all financial compensation to other municipalities, to independent schools and private nursery schools. It is also responsible for the quality assurance reporting and inspection for all types of schools, user surveys, native language instruction, interventions and services to promote the health of students, particularly those with special needs, support in IT, school improvement and capacity building, media, library services and compensatory aids. There are currently 180 staff members working in the administration. Adult education and Swedish for immigrants lie within the boundaries of The Social Welfare and Labour Division.

The issues that are most discussed are the consequences of the free choice of schools in terms of equal opportunities, underachieving pupils with an immigrant background and how to improve the general outcome.

Youth at risk

There is no overall youth policy, which implies that young people are being treated like other citizens with a multitude of roles – they are pupils, consumers and producers of culture, music and sport where different administrations have the responsibility. But when a young person gets into trouble, a large number of players enter into action: the school, the social services, police etc., all handling their little piece of responsibility. This is why networking becomes increasingly important in trying to make the pieces not only fit together, but to form an entity that is greater than the sum of the parts, i.e. the partners in the networks.

Networking

It is important to stress that Sweden has a long tradition of consensus culture, which implies that working together and negotiating different perspectives are considered to be normal procedures. Collaboration in forms of networking is being done all the time, during and after making decisions or in policy making in general. For many Swedes, the concept of a network is a bit of an oddity and networking is not looked upon as something to be studied separately from day-to-day work. Some of the interviewees were not even aware of being part of a network before the interview.

In Stockholm, we looked at three networking initiatives working on curative measures and one on preventive measures. The city has the responsibility for the following up of young people up until the age of 20. The main instrument for this is called Gymnasieslussen – the Lock – where all young people that should be in school but are not are being tracked down and offered a multitude of education

alternatives. There are a number of smaller `schools', most of them independent, which have specialised in handling extremely demotivated youngsters. Up until 2011, the only possible upper secondary education was a three year long education which would give access to higher education. Pupils in practical programmes were supposed to take the same courses as the pupils in the theoretical programmes, which led to an unacceptably high number of dropouts and of pupils languishing for years in the formal education system without actually graduating.

The juvenile unemployment rate in Sweden is considerably higher than in other countries and there is much dispute about the reasons for this. One common explanation is the rather high threshold to the labour market. To tackle unemployment, there are a number of measures; one of them is the Jobbtorg – Jobs squares – where unemployed, usually unskilled people come for training, coaching, counselling etc. One of them deals only with young people and has a slightly different structure. The main purpose is to find job placements, but education is also an alternative. The Jobbtorgs are located in the deprived areas and function through networking with all possible stakeholders – the Public Employment Service, the social insurance offices, employers, larger enterprises, social welfare officers, NGOs, immigrant associations, sports clubs etc. The core of the Jobbtorg consists of a smaller number of officers who have a number of more project-like structures around them. This is often the case when it comes to wicked problems – you set up projects with good financing and with all the best intentions in the world, but there is no real plan as to how to implement the findings into the regular business of things. So when the project is over, there is little left. This would be unthinkable in most other areas like healthcare or fire brigades.

Networking activities take place in all these environments, both in a formal way, as with defined networks and in an informal manner.

Then there are the highly formalised networks that are imposed from above, by law as a means of institutionalising collaboration between stakeholders. In 2003 there was a new law stating the need for collaboration between the educating sector and social services around youth at risk. It stated that on city level there should be collaborative groups consisting of representatives from the education sector, social services and other stakeholders, and which would meet on a regular basis in order to collaborate around both preventive and curative measures. It was decided that in all city districts in Stockholm there would be the same structure of collaboration to ensure that all involved parties – from parents to teachers and social welfare officers – share the same views, tools etc. These signed agreements involve a structure for what questions to handle, what meetings are to take place, how often, what functions need to be represented and what follow-up is to take place. Interestingly enough, it took a great deal of informal networking to actually build these networks and create that kind of trust which is a prerequisite for a successful collaboration. In cities where these contacts did not exist, the setting up process took much longer, as did the actual functioning of the networks. This work has been studied thoroughly with regard to factors of success.

1.4.2.3 Antwerp

The context

Antwerp (Antwerpen) is a city and municipality in Belgium and the capital of the Antwerp province in Flanders, one of Belgium's three regions.

Antwerp's total population is 472,071 (1 January 2008) and its total area is 204.51 km², giving a population density of 2,308 inhabitants per km². The metropolitan area, including the outer commuter

zone, covers an area of 1.449 km² with a total of 1,190,769 inhabitants as at 1 January 2008. Antwerp is a long time important city both economically and culturally, located on the right bank of the river Scheldt, which is linked to the North Sea by the Westerschelde estuary. The city has one of the largest seaports in Europe and hosts the second largest cluster of petrochemical industries in the world.

The national environment in which Antwerp sets up local education governance policy

Since there is a law on compulsory learning between 6 and 18 but not on compulsory school attendance, parents can decide freely to enrol their children in schools or to have private teachers at home. Only a slight minority of children are in this situation, mostly because of language issues (international schools) because all teaching in schools subsidised by the Flemish Government has to be done in Dutch.

Education for the vast majority of children and young people is mainly organised by school networks and not by individual schools.

A brochure in English on the basics of education in Flanders can be downloaded through the link: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/eDocs/pdf/88.pdf.

More information on education networks in Flanders (in Dutch) can be found at http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/gidsvoorouders/notendop/netten.htm

Schools are free in choosing their educational and didactical methods, there is no national curriculum. The Flemish regional Government sets the targets and facilitates the control of the standards and the quality of education by the inspection. The regional government is also responsible for the funding and quality control of upper secondary and higher vocational education.

There is no national assessment of individual pupils, nor is there a national exam. The output results of the individual schools are not centrally collected or monitored/compared at a national (Flemish) level. No direct comparison is made with international standards.

However, in the 3 yearly PISA research, Flanders maintains a very high position in the world ranking on language learning and maths, but also ranks highest after Germany for the largest spread between the stronger and weaker pupils. We are very good in terms of using the talents of the strongest pupils, but rather weak in improving the educational outcome for the less talented or non-native speakers.

Output of education is measured through a compulsory 5-yearly audit ("doorlichting") of schools.

In this audit the Flemish Government inspectorate examines whether schools achieve their social mission: the pursuit of development goals, cross-curricular and cross-curricular attainment and achievement of learning outcomes and curriculum goals. Special education schools must achieve an action plan.

The new quality decree of 8 May 2009 changed the old style individual inspections into a joint screening of schools. The Inspectorate audits the schools, academies and centres based on their school profile. This school profile (based on a source analysis and a refinement on site) gives an estimate of the quality of the institution. Through interpretation and deliberation, the inspectors eventually choose an audit focus: what subject area, discipline or other aspect they will look into more closely at the actual review. Inspectors determine the focus relative (proportionally) to the assessed strengths and weaknesses of the school.

A team of inspectors carries out each screening. The duration of the actual review (three to six days) and the composition of the inspection depend on the size of the institution and the scope of the audit focus.

During a review, the inspectors audit the school through `CIPO-coloured glasses'. This means that inspectors collect data about the context, input, process and output of the School:

- **Context**: The information in and around the school that may affect the quality of education, but which schools have little control over. Is it a large or small school, a city school or a neighbourhood school?
- **Input**: the students (nationality, family situation) the school receives and the teachers (age, gender, special skills) who work there. The quality of its equipment (computers, sports fields), etc.
- **Process**: What happens in the classroom and the school? What efforts do the teachers and the school make to improve learning processes?
- **Output**: What is the result of all these efforts for the children/pupils? Are there many repeaters?

To learn as much as possible, the inspectors review the teaching materials, school calendars, student files and notes from students, class reports, etc. But they also talk with the director, teachers and a delegation of parents and pupils.

Each report ends with a recommendation to the Minister. There are three possibilities:

- A favourable opinion, advice (opinion 1)
- A favourable opinion, limited in time (opinion 2)
- An unfavourable opinion (opinion 3)

With an opinion 1, the inspectorate finds enough professionalism and readiness in the institution itself to continue to work on quality and its development and they do not perform follow-up audits.

With an opinion 2, after the period stated in the opinion, a follow-up screening will be held. During this follow-up review, the inspection will decide whether the institution has remedied the encountered established deficiencies. The progress report consists of a concluding section and a (favourable or unfavourable) opinion.

In an opinion 3, the inspectorate or the institution (with or without external support) should remedy the identified deficiencies. After an unfavourable opinion there always follows a new audit focused on the previously stated shortcomings. A joint board does this, within three months or within the last three months of the suspension period.

If a school fails again, its official recognition and its subsidising by the Flemish Government will be suspended or in the end terminated.

The local setting

In Antwerp there are (2010) 169 pre- and primary schools, 99 secondary schools and locations, some 20 schools for special education and 5 centres for secondary part-time vocational education. Some 100,000 pupils follow compulsory education (6-18 year olds) in over 300 school buildings.

Nought to three year olds can go to independent nurseries, official city organised day care centres and family organised private day care services. Whoever temporarily needs urgent care will find local services-oriented occasional childcare. Pre-school is not compulsory but children who do not speak Dutch as their home language have to prove pre-school attendance one year prior to the first grade of primary school. Over 95% of all 5-year-old children in Antwerp attend the third year of pre-school education.

Children within compulsory school age before and after school hours go to after-school care initiatives within their school or in independent centres (IBOs). There is also a wide range of care and activities during school holidays. For sick children there is home care and the children's hospital has an intern

school organised by the city school network. For the full range of childcare in Antwerp and activities during the holidays, visit http://www.antwerpen.be/kinderopvang

At the other end of the age spectrum, 23 centres for adult education and part-time education in the arts (organised by city, provincial, Flemish community and 2nd chance education) provide hundreds of long and short-time training and education courses, promoted on their joint website: http://www.voa.be/

The four major networks for organising education in Flanders are also active in Antwerp:

GO! Education of the Flemish community: http://www.antigon.be/ (Antigon school group)

Provincial Education Antwerpen: http://www.provant.be/leren/

City education Antwerp: http://www.antwerpen.be/ (check Leven/Onderwijs en Vorming)

Free Catholic Education network Antwerpen: http://ond.vsko.be/portal/page?_pageid=1528,1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL (Administration of Catholic Education in the Antwerp Diocese)

Smaller networks and independent school boards are united in "Overleg Kleine Onderwijsverstrekkers": (OKO): http://www.oko.be/

Antwerp has three international schools and a number of private schools, which are neither recognised nor subsidised by the Flemish Government.

Issues considered most important in Antwerp local education governance

Over 60% of all children in primary schools in Antwerp are non–native (Dutch) speakers. At home they speak the language of the > 170 nationalities that make up the population of Antwerp. Although the largest group of `immigrants' is of Dutch origin, by far the largest ethnic community in Antwerp is Moroccan Berber families, followed by communities of Turkish, Kurdish, Polish, African and Chinese origin. Antwerp hosts a very large Jewish community.

The average education results in Antwerp are poor when compared to the Flemish average. The dropout rate and unqualified school leaving are almost double the Flemish average. The aim of the city government is to bring this down to Flemish standard.

Challenges mostly reported on in the press are:
- The problematic situation of shortage of schools for primary education: Antwerp has for 6 years experienced an atypical demographic evolution compared with Flanders: the birth rate in Antwerp is approximately double the birth rate in Flanders
- "Concentration schools" (schools with a high number of pupils from an immigrant background)
- Weapons in schools, aggressive behaviour in and around schools and on the public transport system, etc.
- Early school leaving and youth unemployment
- Truancy

The organisational structure

Democratic decision-making embedded in local education governance

The City Council is elected every 6 years. A coalition of political parties that normally have a majority in the council install a college of Vice-Mayors presided over by the Mayor, who is appointed by the King based on a decision of the city council.

The city has its own city school network, which in 2009-2010 has been turned into a public company `Stedelijk Onderwijs Antwerpen'. The City Council decides on the yearly budget and on the mission statement and strategic goals of the company. The city government appoints the board. A general manager and a board of directors run the day-to-day business. The public company receives subsidies from the Flemish Government and extra yearly funding from the city government.

Local government has no say in the strategic or daily decision making of the other school networks. It can only influence the choices of the school boards through network governance.

Networking

The Department Antwerp Active City includes a department for general education policy, which hosts the Programme management for the Antwerp general education policy programme.

First attempts to install local education governance date from the early nineties when an NGO "OOPA" (Antwerp education supporting projects) was created to support mainly projects to avoid truancy and to find solutions for young people who were expelled from schools. In 1991 the city of Antwerp decided to create an NGO "TISO" (work experience initiatives of the city education department). Together with the Chamber of Commerce, the trade unions and the vocational training centres, this networking structure has since organised opportunities for work experience both in companies and in ESF funded "bridge projects". TISO organised coaching of the young people and of their employers and made sure that the youngsters were paid correctly and that the companies received the support they were entitled to. In cooperation the free Catholic school system created in 1996 a similar "sister" NGO TIVO and for many years both organisations worked with such a good mutual understanding and support that this first network called "Wonderwijs" (marvel education) became a model for this type of cooperation between school networks in Antwerp. Together every year they still organise work experience for over 1,500 young people in more than 30 different training programmes and in cooperation with over 300 companies. In 2009 TISO and TIVO merged into one NGO named "WELA" (Working and Learning Antwerp) which takes care of all pupils in part-time vocational training in the 15 – 25 year age group, thereby creating the first all-school networks governed NGO in Antwerp.

In the 1994 – 2000 city government's policy programme, the city council decided to establish a local "Antwerp education council" in which all stakeholders in education would take part to discuss challenges and opportunities in the city's education situation. Since 1998 this Antwerp Education Council has met on a regular basis with all school networks (city, provincial, Flemish governmental, free Catholic, Jewish, system and other schools) as well as the teachers unions, the chamber of commerce, the parents' organisations and representatives of the pupils and of the city administration.

As a result of this successful local education networking, in 2000 the city of Antwerp installed the nucleus of an "administration for general education policy" for the first time. In 2003 this became part of a new city administration "Educating City" (Lerende Stad). Since then the Antwerp Education Council has advised all strategic city education policy before the City College and Council put it into action.

In 2002 the Flemish Government voted a decree on equal opportunities in education (GOK - Gelijke Onderwijs Kansen decreet). This equal opportunities act aims to improve equal education opportunities for young people in compulsory school. The first part of the act ensures the right of pupils to be enlisted in a school of their parent's choice. In a second part the act describes and provides for integrated support for schools to give socially deprived young people extra support and care. To support the implementation of the act, the Flemish Department of Education created "LOPs" (Local education platforms) in every Flemish region.

Both advisory boards   the Antwerp Education Council and the LOPs   now co-exist in Antwerp. They have representatives on each other's boards and share out the tasks and responsibilities.

All extra financial support the city gives to schools of the various networks (including the own city schools) is given through an NGO, "Baobab", which is governed by representatives of all school networks and representatives of the City Council. The Antwerp model of "local general education policy" became, by Flemish decree, standard practice in all the larger Flemish cities.

The Antwerp education policy network now has three pillars. Together they form the backbone of the City of Antwerp's education network governance:

a/ for advice: the "Antwerp Education Council" (over 70 representatives) and the LOPs (local education platforms for primary and for secondary education);

b/ to administer: an administration for general education policy ("AOBA" with over 100 employees);

c/ and for the "bottom up approach "a funding body "Baobab" providing project subvention for all schools in the city with an annual budget of 6.5 million euros. All funded projects are generated through "calls for projects" which have resulted in an abundance of sometimes very creative ways to cope with the schools' education challenges.

A Central Help Desk (Centraal Meldpunt) and a coaching network support schools and parents in dealing with pupils showing truancy and defiant behaviour.

The city also created a setting for the brokerage of ideas and research results of internationally acclaimed researchers by setting up an "academic Chair for education reform and cooperation within the urban context" [4] within the Association of university and university colleges of Antwerp (Auha).

As of 2010, the general education policy administration AOBA became part of a new city structure "Active City" together with the administrations for work and economy, thereby creating a basis for more synergetic co-operation between education and the labour market.

In the same period the city reorganised its own city school network "Stedelijk Onderwijs" and made it an "autonomous city company" with 257 school buildings and 5,800 employees, the largest in its kind in Flanders, thereby creating the necessary distance between the cities' "own" city school network and the cities' general education policy in which all networks are treated equally.

Network governance

The Vice-Mayor for Education negotiates a general education policy programme with the school boards in the Antwerp Education Council.

This programme is embedded in the cities' political agreement and strategic programme for the coming legislature. The programme is then made operational with a strategic plan put in place within the strategic decision-making cycle of the city.

Antwerp's education governance is influenced by the Antwerp Education Council and the Antwerp LOPs for primary schools and secondary schools through formal channels.

The LOPs (Local Consultation Platforms) are created by the Flemish Government and are by decree assigned to ensure the implementation of the GOK decree (equal opportunities act) and thus for instance the individual right of pupils on enrolment in a school. LOPs are installed in all regions of

4   Leerstoel voor onderwijsvernieuwing en samenwerking.

Flanders and have in their general assembly a representation of all schools within that region.

The city government installed the Antwerp Education Council to create a local governance instrument to tackle the challenges and wicked problems schools are facing in this typical city environment. All major stakeholders take part in the meetings of the council (the school networks, teachers' unions, chamber of commerce, parents' associations, pupils' representatives).

Semi-formally the "bureau" of the Antwerp education council advises on all education governance matters. This bureau (board) includes the vice-mayor, a representative of each of the four largest school networks and one for OKO, the coordination of smaller networks and independent schools.

Some of the members of the bureau also are member of the board of the NGO Baobab, in which all political fractions within the city council (majority and opposition) also have a representative.

The mission of the Antwerp General Education Policy department

'Every person in Antwerp gets and takes the opportunity to obtain a qualification that gives access to higher education or the labour market and that leads to an active and responsible citizenship and to a broad personality formation'.

In order to reach this goal, a department (AOBA) works on the aspects of networking, innovation and the extended curriculum. Actions and projects are set up in schools to enhance the quality in school policy. There are projects with social partners to prevent early school leaving, as well as with the labour market, with sports/cultural players etc.
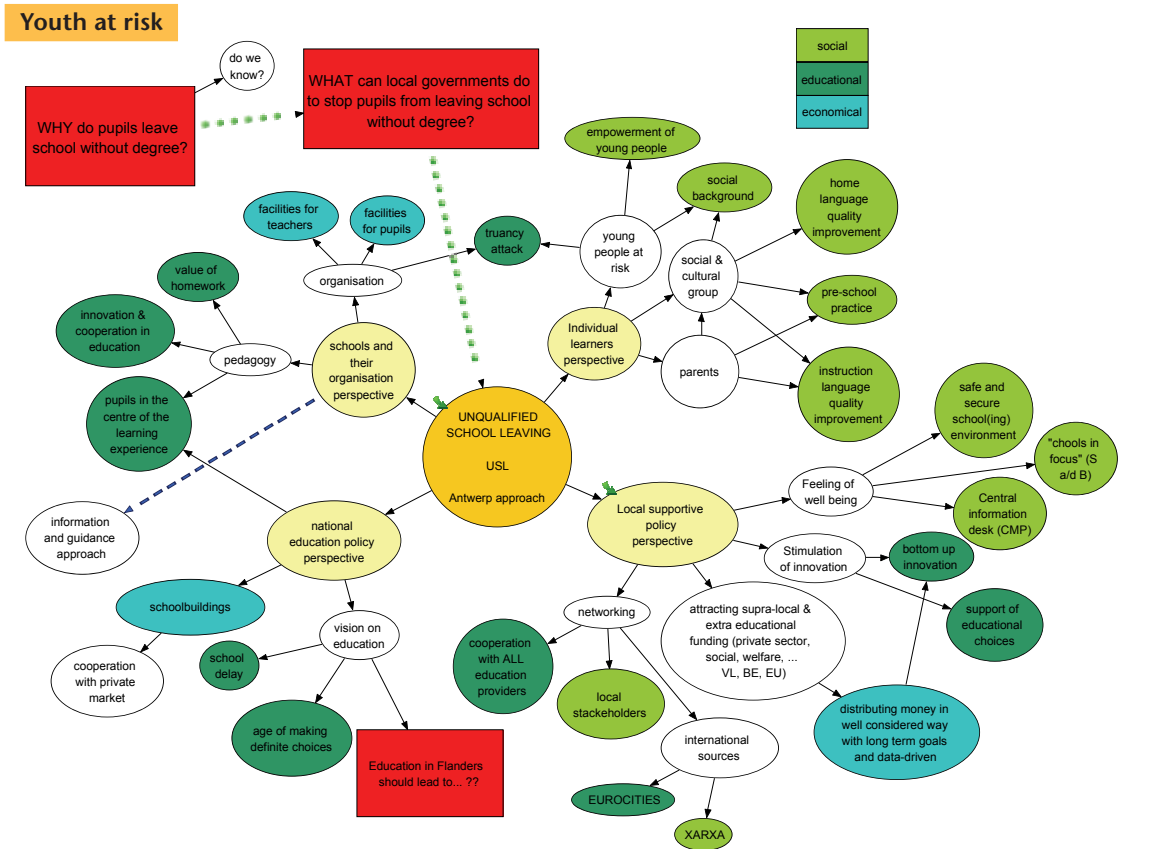
 The General Education Policy department also has a network specifically created to prevent unqualified school leaving. Within that network, a range of coaching and reception projects exist to take care of dropouts and young people who temporarily cannot attend school:

- **Dropout prevention network**: Pupils are increasingly experiencing problems in school in Antwerp. The Dropout Prevention Network is a partnership of the most important organisations, services and initiatives responsible for assisting school dropouts in the city. They take both a preventive and a proactive approach. The network makes agreements to ensure an optimal partnership, receives tips from the education and welfare sectors, and advises the city council and the General Education Policy department on the appropriate approach to young people at high risk.

- **Centraal Meldpunt voor Risicojongeren (CMP - Central Help Desk for youngsters at risk) and the truancy officer**: The CMP is an umbrella structure of the CLBs (centres for pupil guidance of all the school networks) that tries to minimise school dropout. The 'complaints office' is the single Central Help Desk and has an important hub function in Antwerp education policy within a network of socials assistants, the police, the public prosecutor's office, the CLBs, all reception projects and others. Students without a school and young people with behavioural and truancy problems are reported to CMP, which then organises personalised assistance for the young person in association with all stakeholders.

- **Young people coaching network coordinator**: The network coordinator's job is to set up a coaching network with strong links between education, youth and neighbourhood services, employment and welfare. School coaches, territorial coaches and school spotters fulfil a complementary role in this network.

- **Samen Werken Aan Toekomst (SWAT) (Working Together on your future):** SWAT is a cross-network reception structure for young people with serious but short-term behavioural problems. These are students on whom the repeated rule of order and/or disciplinary measures have failed to have the desired effect and who are permanently excluded from school. The aim is to help make youngsters ready to function properly at school at the earliest opportunity. SWAT is the Centraal Meldpunt's hub and is open to secondary school students in Antwerp, regardless of school network school or education form.

- **School aan de beurt**: Schools make up a balance of safety, respect and integrity in and around their school with city and non-city partners. Students, parents, neighbourhood residents and involved services enumerate their needs in terms of safety in and around school, the cleanliness and state of repair of the school buildings and premises, the sociability and social skills of the pupils.

- **Crisis support for schools**: Based on a step-by-step plan, schools can count on fast and efficient guidance in the event of serious incidents such as violence and bullying in school and on the street. The composition of the group of experts involved will depend on the nature of the incident.

The main effects of the network approach

All parties involved (parents, teachers, education administrators and politicians) are made more aware of the challenges in the education policy field.

An education policy across the school networks leads to better results in tackling typical urban education problems. Every school and every pupil receives the same opportunities regardless of the school involved.

For many years the national level considered Antwerp as 'always complaining about urban problems'.

Nowadays more often the city's education governance model is quoted as an example of how other urban centres can tackle wicked problems through networking. Since these problems are now expanding to other Flemish cities as well, this new concept of Antwerp ("the Antwerp model") is receiving growing attention.

During the visit to Antwerp within this project, reviews were made of the brokerage role of the city statistics department and the network initiatives "LOP" and "network of principals of secondary school". Within the Eurocities education working group, a review was carried out of the Central Help Desk (Centraal Meldpunt) and of the coaching network for pupils showing truancy and defiant behaviour.

1.4.2.4 Munich

Munich was the fourth and last city to be visited within this project. The visit was held in December 2010.

The context

Munich is the capital of Bavaria in the south of Germany. Its total population is 1.364 million and its total area 31.070 ha.

54,000 children in Munich go to kindergarten or nursery schools, 115,000 pupils follow lessons in primary and secondary schools, and there are 66,000 pupils in vocational schools. Furthermore Munich has 88,000 students in universities.

The population of Munich has a high education level. For the generation of 20-29 year olds, 65% have graduated, which gives them the opportunity to go directly from school to university (in German: Abitur or Fachabitur).

Munich has a very strong labour market and a low unemployment rate (less than 5 % in 2010). But there is a great difference between the districts (see below). About 50 % of the children in Pre-School Education have a migration background. The report on education in Munich shows that we had until now an education level for migrants that was somewhat lower than average but we can see a positive development.

Germany has 16 federal states that are responsible for education and the education system. As a result of this sovereignty, Germany has different school systems in the federal states. Bavaria is affected by the "dreigliedriges Schulsystem" which means that the children are taught in different school types from the beginning of the 5th class (10 or 11 year-old children): In the Hauptschule pupils stay until the 9th or 10th class, in the Realschule until the 10th class and in the Gymnasium until the 12th class.

With exams from the Gymnasium you can go to university or start a vocational training course. Pupils from Hauptschule and Realschule generally start vocational training if they don't go to school further on.

The vocational training is very much influenced by the Dual System. About 9 % of the pupils in the vocational system in Munich are part of the so called "transition system", a system which was installed for pupils who don't get an apprenticeship training position or the possibility to start a full-time vocational school, mostly because of the lack of a graduation.

In Bavaria we had a rate of 8.8% early school leavers in 2009. In special courses of the "transition

system" youths get the possibility to catch up on graduating from school and get orientation and training in social competences. The fact that each year a group of pupils fails to get an apprenticeship training position at a company is in contrast to the lack of engineers and other qualified personnel in special professions.

In secondary education the different school types are finished by Bavarian exams. In some federal states, the final exams differ from school to school. The education ministers of the federal states are discussing stronger standardisation e.g., general final exams for Germany.

At the national level, federal states and recently also some cities and rural districts use education monitoring. The skills of the pupils in subjects such as German language and mathematics are measured in Germany in the primary school (3rd class) and in secondary school (pupils at the age of around 15). The aim of this data is to compare between federal states and in the case of PISA also between OECD countries.

While in 2000 we had a so-called "PISA shock" regarding the bad results and big discussions in media and politics, now in the third circle of PISA we can see improvements and the position of Germany in the PISA ranking is in the upper section of the average of all measured countries.

Munich was the first city with a report on education on a city level in 2006. Its indicators are orientated on the indicators of the national report on education and are therefore comparable. The Munich report also looks at the district level concerning some important questions such as likelihood to go to the Gymnasium.

The results in 2007/2008 showed that in Munich there is, as in other German cities, a huge difference between the districts: The range is about from 15 to over 90%. This means that in some districts only 15% of pupils in the last class of primary school can go to the Gymnasium and the other pupils go to Hauptschule and Realschule. In some districts more than 90% of the pupils can go to the Gymnasium. A statistical significant explanation is that success in education is very much linked to the socio-cultural background of the pupils, which can be defined by a social index (definition: education background of the parents, their purchasing power and the percentage of migrants).

The management setting

As said before, the federal states are responsible for education and the education system. All schools have to implement the curriculum for Bavaria. The regional government is also responsible for the funding and quality control of school education.

Munich funds and governs Pre-School Education and runs a part of it. Other institutions are run by private organisations and NGOs such as the churches. Primary schools and Hauptschulen fall under the responsibility of the state. In general the cities and rural districts are responsible for school building but not for the teachers and the pedagogies in the schools. But in the case of Munich, the city has full responsibility for 119 schools in Munich (most of the Realschulen and a great part of the Gymnasien and all vocational schools) and like all cities Munich has building responsibility for the other 223 public schools. This mixture of responsibility causes quite a lot of coordination and problems.

Munich has quite a low rate of private schools: in 2008 only 14.8% of all pupils in general-educating schools went to private schools. After several years of running a private school successfully, the school gets funding from the federal state.

The public management of the cities' local education governance model

In the city of Munich, the Department of Education and Sports is responsible for Pre-School Education and the schools run by the city. The Department of Education and Sports gets instructions from the City Council and makes suggestions. The City Council is elected every 4 years. The City Council is also nominating the directors of the departments.

In 2006 the Department of Education and Sports created "The Munich Way" which is a governance approach to create commitment for education themes. Starting points are analysis for the players in the field of education, e.g. the report on education in Munich.

Since 2009 there has been a sub-department in the Department of Education and Sports called Management of Education in the City. Aims of this sub-department are organising, stimulating and coordinating overall responsibility for education. A data-based policy is as important as networking within the administration of the city but also with other institutions to improve the education situation for all Munich citizens.

One example for the consequences for Munich policy of the report on education in Munich is the "Förderformel", a new budgeting system for Pre-School Education. The budgeting depends on the district and the socio-cultural background of the children in the kindergarten. The report on education in Munich gives data for this budgeting system and is in this case the basis for education decision-making.

Youth at risk

There are several departments who are concerned with youths at risk: the Department of Social Services, the Department of Education and Sports and the Department of Labour and Economic Development. When a young person gets into trouble, a large number of players enter into action: the school, the social services, police etc. There are also special networks focusing on these youths.

Networking

In Munich networks for youths at risk exist on the level of the administration, e.g. a network working on the topic of disadvantaged youth under 25 as well as at the institutional level of teachers and social workers. There are regularly conferences of principals in all school types but not overall for the school types in general.

In selected city districts there are round tables with principals of more than one school type to strengthen the local neighbourhood. Furthermore there is an independent organisation in Munich called REGSAM, whose target is to improve the regional networks in city districts concerning social work. It is supported and funded by the Department of Social Services.

The sub-department "Management of Education in the City" is embedded in a project called "Lernen vor Ort" (Management of education in the city context).

This project is initiated by the federal Ministry of Education and Research. The main goal is a shared responsibility for Education in the city context within the borders of formal responsibility, e.g. to increase participation in education and the equality of education. To apply for this project, 14 strong partners in the education sector signed a letter of intent including the Munich employment agency, universities, chambers, trade unions and social organisations. Furthermore, Munich held an `education conference' to inform the public about the report on education in Munich, to involve important players and to create commitment. With this project the scale of overall commitment achieved by the different forms of networking is strengthened.

1.5 Theoretical framework for describing local networking initiatives

As a theoretical framework for assessment of education policy networks in European medium-sized cities, we made use of the framework that has been suggested in the article *A framework for assessing the performance of policy networks* (Voets, Van Dooren and De Rynck, 2008). We also used their definition of policy networks:

> *Policy networks are set(s) of horizontal relations with a certain stability, endurance and structure between multiple public and private actors who are relatively autonomous and resource dependent in processes of resource exchange through bargaining and negotiation to achieve public purpose.*

Contemporary governmental education policy is increasingly formed and executed within policy networks, especially in handling wicked issues. Government and networking actors within these policy networks become increasingly interdependent within what can be characterised as "the era of collaboration" (Agranoff & McGuire; Voets, Van Dooren and De Rynck 2008).

Research on performance traditionally is conducted on the macro level (country) and on the micro level (organisation, schools, classroom and individual pupils). Traditional approaches to assess performance do not take into account the different aspects that influence policy network performance. In performance assessment of course we do not only measure quantitative, but also qualitative performance, unlike with performance measurement.

Performance and performance assessment in the public sector

Performance in the private sector is mainly related to market mechanisms where the primary goal remains the creation of a financial profit, mainly measured by quantitative (financial) variables.

Performance in the public sector is the result of complex combinations of the market and environment factors, government policy, public organisation and culture and organisation and culture of the other network players, trying to reach multiple goals and not only to be measured in terms of financial return or efficiency gains but rather in realised public gains with as the ultimate goal `serving the public' (Moore, 1995).

Performance assessment has been researched thoroughly at macro level (e.g. supranational and national enquiries, statistics) and at micro level (e.g. balanced scorecards) but hardly at regional level (local government, networks). Performance assessment on this level needs to be researched on a multi-level and in a multi-dimensional way (Van Dooren, 2008; Voets et al., 2008).

According to Hood, research into network performance can be placed in a matrix on three performance dimensions (Hood, 1991), with for every dimension specific performance criteria and for each criterion assessment through the focus of three levels of network players. We decided to use this matrix in our study visits in the cities of Rotterdam, Stockholm, Antwerp and Munich.

Indicators for cost-benefit assessment of policy networks

Creating and sustaining a policy network has many different costs. These costs can, according to Voets , be related to three performance dimensions (product, process and regime performance) from the point of view of three levels of stakeholders: the individual stakeholder within the network, the network as such and the community.

We considered that for a policy network to be assessed as being successful, there needs to be a positive perception with all the players within the network of a positive balance between costs and gains.

Three focuses on product, process and regime performance

During our interviews, three performance dimensions of the local policy network(s) were to be assessed:

- Product performance: e.g. does the policy network reach its goals, does it provide products or services in an efficient way?
- Process performance: does the policy network create good governance (does it keep trust, does it give public account, does it respect ethical standards, does it have formal/informal legitimacy)?
- Regime performance: e.g. does the policy network facilitate the resilience and robustness of the local education policy, does it support and improve trust between the public and private partners, does it enable (local) government to deal better with future challenges, does it allow dense and multiple relations, does it create "groupware"(Agranoff and McGuire, 2001)?

These three dimensions of performance were assessed from three focal points (of three levels of players) within the network:

- Through the focus of the single organisation within the network
- Through the focus of the network itself
- Through the focus of the community

By comparing the results of the peer reviews we would try to make a joint SWOT analysis of the reviewed education policy networking initiatives of each visited city and ultimately try to define out of all our findings strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in general, when organising local education network governance initiatives.

Relation between local and higher policy engagements

In further development of the theoretical framework and the instruments for further research, we could take into account the research and findings of Damgaard (2006) on the relations between local and higher policy engagements as were shown in a longitudinal survey of five formal and informal policy networks in Denmark. Her findings suggest that:

- Locally imposed policy networks have more opportunities to link with local dynamics and thus success, when the higher imposed set of rules and regulations give enough space, is less detailed. In the cases she assessed in Newbury, there was no resistance against the concept of cooperation within the network itself but rather against the detailed superimposed obligations.
- On the other hand, when the goal of the constructed local policy network is to ensure the democratic decision-making processes or the empowerment of players within the network's field of action, overly structured and overly exclusive local patterns of cooperation can be counterproductive. In that case, she argues, more detailed obligations can act as a counter balance.

Pierre and Peters (2005) suggest that structures can formalise relations between players and in doing so can assure the democratic process. This argument could support the vision that the choice for the players to be put in the network should take place on a higher level.

- Even when formal networks are created, informal networks keep operating and the latter try to influence the formal networks to take over local traditions and power structures.

Since the structures and functioning of local policy networks are the result of vertically imposed rules and horizontally induced processes of adjustment to local circumstances, for the network to be considered successful, the players need to have a perception of a good balance between imposed rules and local freedom of action.

1.6   First attempt to operationalise policy network assessment

In this chapter, we describe the findings from our assessment of education policy networks in local city governing settings through "light peer reviewing" with the aid of a template. The method used and the templates are described in a separate chapter.

During the interviews, we focused on the questions that we distilled from the theoretical framework provided by Voets, Van Dooren and De Rynck (2008).

These questions form the basis for the two templates we produced and which were also kept in mind by the interviewers in discussing the local networking initiatives with the interviewees:

	Product performance	Process performance	Regime performance
Towards its individual members	(How) does the PN deliver a surplus to its members to attain their goal(s)?	(How) does the PN ensure democratic decision-making & accountability for its members?	(How) does the PN include/exclude members and/or their views?
Towards the network as a whole	(How) does the PN create efficiency in attaining its goals?	(How) does the PN create accordance within the PN?	(How) does the PN institutionalise?
Towards the community, the general public, politics & media	(How) does the PN `in the eye of the public' attain its goals in `taming the wicked problem'?	(How) does the PN legitimise itself towards the public, how does it give account & create consent?	(How) does the PN ensure capacity building and improve its relationships with government & the public?

In our evaluation of product performance, we tried to assess the level of intentional vs. unintentional output/outcome for the members, the network and the community. Sometimes we were able to discuss the level of external (intentional/unintentional) influence (socially, politically, culturally, economically, etc.) on this output/outcome.

- Legitimacy
- Accountability
- Cooperation and consensus

In the evaluation of regime performance, we searched for optimal balance between membership, network institutionalisation and network administration, the quality of relations within the network and the extent to which the network is adequately prepared to support the needs of changing policies within changing circumstances.

1.7 First overview of results of the conducted assessments

During the Antwerp seminar in September we tried for the first time to come to preliminary conclusions on what we had experienced during the previous peer reviews. For each of the tick boxes in our matrix, we tried to define strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats which we had noticed/discussed during our study visits. After the Munich study visit we completed the matrix in Gothenburg. There we also tried to define key factors for success when cities want to play a brokerage role through policy networking.

1.7.1 SWOT analysis of product performance

Product performance was being assessed in terms of how well the networks reach their goals, i.e. how they provide products or services, how efficient this delivery is, and to what extent they create trust as being an adequate answer to the wicked problem in the eye of the public opinion.

Product performance towards its members

Judging from the peer reviews performed, it was quite obvious that the representatives of individual partner organisations reported to reach better results if they coordinated their resources, however different their respective perspectives and interests might be. If the partners share the same perception of the wicked problem (e.g. early school leaving, or aggression in schools) they seem to be able to overcome the possible disadvantages of networking such as loss of autonomy to decide on the `own product' and, of course, the extra workload implied by participating in a network. This extra workload was reported to lead to loss of capacity to work on other things but was compensated by the experienced advantages. Another reported advantage is the fact that having access to different perspectives prevents `home blindness' and that this will lead to new insights. A possible threat would be if a partner were tempted to `hide' behind the network and thus avoid responsibility.

Product performance towards the network itself

The network also delivers surplus to the network in itself by keeping the work focused on the main goals, as the main product is joint commitment towards reaching these and finding win-win situations. A prerequisite for this is that the win-win situation applies to all members of the network and not just to the happy few, since that would jeopardise the joint commitment and goal attainment.

A possible weakness could be if the members of the network do not share realistic ambitions, that some might get overzealous. Another weakness would be that bringing all stakeholders together provides a collective picture of the problems, thereby making them look bigger (the more you know, the more you see). Succeeding in tackling the problems also increases expectations for results.

A threat could be that success has many fathers while failure might be made somebody else's problem instead of a common problem for the network. The one who takes the blame becomes the Black Pete (Svarte Petter, Zwarte Piet, Schwarze Peter, Sorte Peter). It is no coincidence that this identical name for a scapegoat within a group or network is used in all visited cities.

Product performance towards the public/political level/the media

This can be regarded in different ways depending on who is the public.

The most obvious strength would be the network's ability to produce a surplus in relation to the public, the media and the political level, best shown by the delivery of the expected `good solutions' which no single partner ever could deliver on its own, and thus to influence public opinion in a favourable direction.

Even if no final "good solutions" are being delivered, the network could give proof that the partners are getting a grip on the challenge and are reaching at least a positive output, measured as objectively as possible by the use of predefined and benchmarked indicators that would at least create public trust. The need for equal or at least fair distribution of means can become a threat if not politically backed up.

Intentional as well as unintentional outcomes can be both regarded as favourable or threatening outcomes by the media, the public and the political level.

1.7.2 SWOT analysis of process performance

Process performance towards its members

Joint awareness of the problems and of their position within the network seems to be the rule. Some would not want to be members since it then shows that they have a problem.

Process performance towards the network itself

Partners tend to place themselves in the middle of the network. Being a member can become very important: you become a partner that has to be accounted with. This can also create a threat for those who are not members. In some networks some members seem to be "more equal than others".

If the networking is too much based on trust between people and not between organisations it will make the network vulnerable.

Process performance towards the public/political level/the media

The life cycle of a network is different from the life cycle of projects. Group dynamics and multi-linkage to external structures and stakeholders make it a more organic living organism with longer life expectancy than the individual projects.

Trust and recognition by the public are necessary for the network to respond to the challenge of taming of the wicked problems. The public need to understand that these problems might not ever be solved, merely tamed and that networking amongst different stakeholders is necessary since no single partner could ever tackle these problems on their own.

The sum of the networking efforts is something more than the individual partners' efforts put together.

Since TRUST is so important, there exists a possible weakness of `sauna networking': if the network is not visible or transparent, it cannot be held accountable. Lobbyists can also become a threat for the image of a network.

1.7.3 SWOT analysis of regime performance

Out of the perspective of regime performance, we studied whether the policy network facilitates the resilience and robustness of the local education policy, or if it supports and improves trust between the public and private partners. We also examined whether the network enables (local) government to deal better with future challenges, or if it allows dense and multiple relations, if it creates `groupware'?

The education system in our countries is based on the fundamental confidence that the given framework and opportunities are utilised locally and that the individual school/institution is to create the best quality for pupils and students.

The national political authorities' primary task is to set education targets; the local political authorities' primary task is to set targets for support for the pupils to reach these targets and to establish a

framework for this work. Our study visits and peer reviews tend to conclude that this framework does not tame the wicked problems if not set within a network/networking environment.

The framework has to be filled out with networking by decision makers and employees operating in the field. Our findings also suggest that the expected outcome of this networking and brokerage should not only be decided at a national level, equal for cities and rural environments, but instead in co-ownership between the national and the local level.

Regime performance towards its members

Study visits and peer reviews show that working together to tame a wicked problem is the rule rather than the exception. On all levels it is in general accepted that networking provides added value in finding solutions, even if for the interviewees the fact of networking is sometimes so obvious that they are hardly aware of being part of a network (See Stockholm, Networking).

Peer reviews in Munich revealed examples of best practices at school level when the network is in balance and the individual network members are able to unfold their expertise. In all cities we saw both, more formalised in Rotterdam and Antwerp, less so in Stockholm because networking in Sweden is basic practice; even without the formal structures to do so.

One should bear in mind that individual members often mark standpoints referring to special group interests. It is of great importance that the goals of the network should be expressed and made clear to all members. Sometimes the goals can be very clear even without the network being officially structured.

Regime performance towards the network itself

Peer reviews in Antwerp and Munich revealed examples of formal network structures and informal networking as well. In Antwerp a powerful network constitutes itself as a legal and influential key player in local policy. No city legislation on education policy can be executed without consulting the network. This can be seen as an advantage for the quality in decision making and improvement for solutions.

Some examples of networking in the cities tended to be very loose. Some examples proved to be personally driven rather than driven on the basis of data or official political decisions. These kinds of networks often exist due to charismatic management. This can be an advantage when starting the network, but it also can become a threat when the informal leader is unable to let go and thus blocks further development. Such networks can collapse when the leader is no longer there.

Regime performance towards the public/political level/the media

In all cities involved policy networks exist at all levels. In Copenhagen, committees of representatives of local stakeholders within education exist to function as mediator for political and administrative decisions.

A prerequisite for successful policy networks is commonly accepted goals and plans for education development. A policy network can establish a link between education, welfare and youth.

1.7.4 Key factors of success, weakness, opportunities and threats in cities' brokerage networking

	Product Performance	Process performance	Regime performance
	(How) does the PN deliver a surplus to its members to attain their goals?	(How) does the PN ensure democratic decision making & accountability for its members?	(How) does the PN include/ exclude members and their views?
Towards its members	S: By coordinating resources, the individual partners can use the best resources to reach optimum results. The sum of the different perspectives prevents `home blindness'.	S: Strategically: process performance of its members is improved by creating awareness about different positions, different mandates and power relations.	S: Growing awareness that working together pays off.
	W: Loss of autonomy to decide on the `own product'. Working in PN also means extra workload: loss of capacity to work on other aspects.	W: lack of transparency if not all members are aware of what is going on in the network	W: Power balance can change when new members enter or members leave. Some partners are "more equal than others"…
	O: Learning from others is a gain in its own right.	O: Being linked to a network makes the partner more accountable/credible and improves status.	O: 1 + 1 > 2 and getting the support from the group improves the impact of the individual member.
	T: Individual partners can `hide' behind the network and avoid responsibility.	T: Being partner in a network can imply loss of individuality/loss of right to own standpoint or decision.	T: Growing awareness that in networking partners have to give up some of their independence: their views can become less clear, more blurry. Their link with/support by their own backing group can become less strong.

	Product Performance	Process performance	Regime performance
	(How) does the PN create efficiency in attaining its goals?	(How) does the PN create accordance within the PN?	(How) does the PN institutionalize?
Towards the network	S: Keeping the work focused on the main goals. The product of networking is joint commitment towards reaching these end goal(s).	S: Accordance through clear agenda setting and by regular meetings of people with a mandate to decide within the network. Preferably by consensus because commitment and trust are vital.	S: Structural problems get structural attention & means.
	W: Not sharing realistic ambitions. Getting overzealous.	W: Too many or too few members can influence the credibility of the PN and its impact. There is an `optimum' to be reached. If PN is imbalanced this can lead to the `explosion or implosion' of the network. Individual members can manipulate group decisions (with good or bad intentions).	W: The network as a structure can become the goal in itself: risk of `navel gazing'.
	O: Finding common win-win situations is a key factor for getting to the end goal.	O: If the right instruments/ structures are used, PN can lead to more external acceptance and support.	O: The network can attain more responsibility (and power/means) from (local) government.
	T: If the winning is only for the happy few it threatens the joint commitment and goal attainment.	T: Too much external influence (politics, other governance level, media) can threaten the network as a whole.	T: The network can become a `scapegoat' for lack of effective governance.

	Product Performance	Process performance	Regime performance
	(How) does the PN `in the eye of the public' attain its goals in `taming the wicked problem'?	(How) does the PN legitimise itself towards the public, how does it give account & create consent?	(How) does the PN ensure capacity building: improve its relationships with government & the public?
Towards the public / political level / media	S: giving proof that the network (and its partners) are getting a grip on the challenge and are reaching at least positive output, measured as objectively as possible through use of pre-defined and benchmarked indicators, will create public trust.	S: The life cycle of a network is different from the life cycle of projects. Group dynamics and multi-linkage to external structures and stakeholders make it a more organic living organism with longer life expectancy than the individual projects.	S: All kinds of public reporting to all the members and sponsor(s) of the PN supports their focus on the goals.
	W: If the objectives are set too high, the partners can get the feeling that all efforts are not leading to success and they can give up their efforts.	W: Network if invisible/ not transparent it does not have to be/cannot be held accountable. (`Sauna networking')	W: In networking in the end no one can be held individually responsible for the results.
	O: PN can influence public opinion by delivering the expected/requested `good product' which no single partner could deliver.	O: If all partners in the PN use the same data, they can create consent regarding the challenge and the possible solutions.	O: Although in many cases the network is not a public body, if it can show good results it can – as a pressure group - keep its goals as a public/political priority.
	T: Wicked problems cannot be solved, so `taming' them at most is the aim and PN can create awareness with the public that the problem will always stay there... This also can threaten the existence of the network, unless the public creates new opportunities for the PN to reach its goals and that again is a strength. If the PN is not recognised by public opinion, it cannot respond to the challenge.	T: Lobbyists can be a threat to correct networking.	T: `Sauna networking', `golf club or old boys club' informal networking can be a threat to official governance (and even to public officials if involved: corruption).

1.8 Methodology

A natural starting point was the peer review method developed within Inclusive Cities for Europe, a Eurocities initiative.

1.8.1 First review template: classic questionnaire and "light" peer reviewing

In a first attempt to create a peer review template and a methodology for the assessment of local education policy networks, we started from a template model similar to that created by the team focusing on data brokerage for the reviewing of good practices in data driven education policy making (see appendix). The templates were supposed to be filled in before the peer review sessions by the interviewees and copied so that all reviewers could use them as the basis for their interviews. This however proved to be difficult for most interviewees.

Before each reviewing interview, which was conducted by the whole team of reviewers together, some primary task agreements were made. For each interview a separate discussion leader was chosen (who was not to take part in the interview but was to keep the interview focused on the predefined questions), two observers/reporters were chosen to observe body language and write the session report; they could however engage in the discussions. The other reviewers were assigned to be the main interviewers and to get as much information out of the interview as possible to complete the network description. The interview had to stay focused but also had to be conducted in a peer like manner, not as an examination or a formal inspection. Attention was devoted to creating a relaxed atmosphere for the interview.

After the review almost all interviewees answered that the template had helped them to prepare for the visit of the reviewing team and in some cases had made their position within a network clearer to them than it was before. But although a lot of discussion and work was put into the creation of the template and the preparation of the interviews by the interviewees, this instrument had proven not to be very successful as a basis for the discussion itself.

From the point of view of the interviewees, many questions in the template were too difficult to fill in without proper instructions and explanations by the interviewers. But if they had been given too many explanations beforehand, the results would have been biased due to these explanations. On the other hand, from the point of view of the interviewers, the template was too detailed and too rigid to keep the interview from becoming an exam. And by avoiding the latter, the template apparently could never be completed leaving us with only partial data.

1.8.2 First SWOT analysis presented to the interviewees

At the second meeting, in Rotterdam, we introduced the presentation of a first attempt of a SWOT analysis made by the whole group of interviewers and presented to all the interviewees present at the concluding plenary meeting and dinner. This was regarded as very useful by the interviewers in order to arrive at a first common understanding of what they had learned during the visit and it was very much appreciated by the interviewees and members of the network.

They also concluded that apparently the questions put to them and the answers given had made it possible to pinpoint in a very short time some of the less obvious problems and challenges within their local networks.

1.8.3 Second review template: jointly completed slide show template

Since this first template did not suit the purposes, we decided to change it to its second form after the Stockholm meeting. This new template was a combination of a template for a slide show presentation

which could be prepared by the interviewees and which could be completed during the peer review discussion. This way, the template became more of a two-way interactive medium and much easier to handle for all. This was tried out for the first time during the Antwerp seminar and during the meetings of the Eurocities working group on inclusion following our seminar. In Munich we used the template for all networking interviews.

1.8.4   First results after using the second template

This instrument was more adapted to our needs: it helped the interviewees to focus on the peer review, and to keep the discussion focused. The questions were more open and with the extra explanation given with the blank slides they could apparently be more easily answered than those in the first questionnaire. Through joint completion of the presentation by the interviewees and the reviewers, all questions were able to be answered and thus benchmarking became more effective. The completion also became less time consuming.

In order to complete a joint SWOT, we added the three SWOT slides to the template that the interviewees received before the interview. They should not however show these slides at the end of the interview. Instead, they should come to their own decisions and fill in their SWOT slides. It can be very revealing to compare afterwards their SWOT analysis with the one presented by the reviewers.

After the trials with the second template, our overall conclusions were that using this type of jointly completed presentation templates not only makes benchmarking easier, but it also makes it more likely that the results of study visits will be transferred to colleagues who were not present as visitors in a much easier way.

But the main feature of this method is that it also provides a good mirror for those who are interviewed, a mirror that is held by `critical friends' in order to make a study visit into a learning experience for the visited party as well.

The filled in templates are available on the website.

1.9   Suggestions for further networking, research and development

1.9.1   Focus groups

The results of our first case studies and peer reviews, written down in this final report, give us an indication of the subsequently further to be defined qualitative and quantitative parameters which we could use in future assessment of the efficiency of local education policy networks.

In our product evaluation of Policy Network Assessment, we were unable to measure the cost of the desired output or outcome against the extent to which the desired interventions/changes have taken place. This would need a much deeper insight in the different networks' financial and HR budgets. This might however be interesting for future research. Such research should help us to create a predicting instrument for cost-benefit analysis for networking that cities (and other networkers) could use to assess in advance the balance between investment in time and funds and the possible output/outcome of the network initiative.

In future evaluation of process performance, we should be able to check on the balance between cost in time expenditure and financial input and the extent to which the policy network, according to the players, shows a sufficient return on their investment in the network. Also costs for network administration and costs related to/caused by the network players should be taken into account.

Policy networks also have a life cycle. Assessment of these networks will therefore need to be longitudinal and preferably cyclic to detect changes in assessment results over a longer period of time.

As a result of our first year's project, we suggest that in at least three of our participating medium-sized EU cities with a comparable socio-economic situation, similar focus groups of peers should be established to start a systematic survey of players who are active at different levels within the local policy networks to collect case studies and to conduct peer-reviews/supervision between colleagues using the template.

1.9.2   Research questions

Our case studies and reviews/supervision between colleagues gave indications on our first main research question: which factors in the dimensions product performance, process performance and regime performance are being considered as most determining for the level of success by the three levels of participants (individual organisations, the network, local government)?

Our second main research question in future could be which indicators can be used/which instrument can be developed to measure qualitative factors and quantitative factors in future benchmark assessment to make relevant statements?

1.9.3   Suggestions for further development of instruments and presentation

Complementary to our template for peer reviewing with standardised slide questionnaires, it would be interesting to complete these with participating observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis and graphic analysis of relations/interactions between players.

Also instruments to present the results in a clear way, using a static and if possible also a dynamic tool, can be developed.

Plenary meeting in Stockholm

1.10 Example of completed template
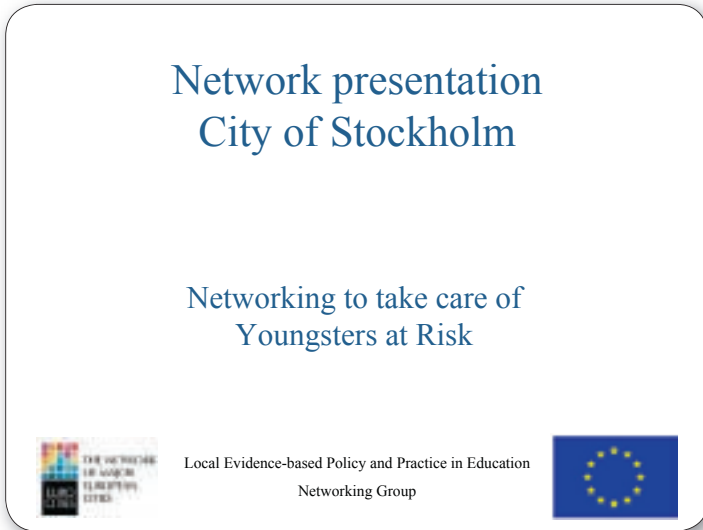
This power point template seeks to help us and you in gathering benchmarkable information on local (city) networking initiatives through which they try to cope with wicked problems and challenges in education. None of this information will be published without the consent of the interviewed participants.

Thank you for your efforts and your willingness to share your views and experiences with us.
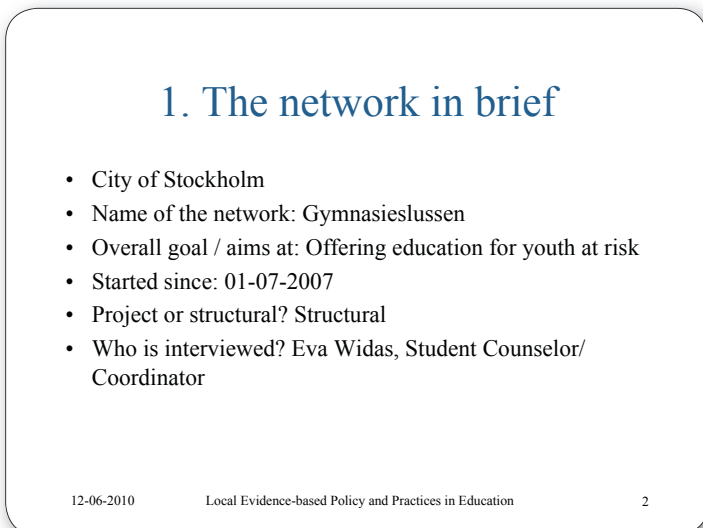
If the network has a name or logo, please include in the slide. If the network has no name or is "networking" but not an established network, please make a title that explains the nature of the network / networking. Overall goal /aim: explain in max one sentence the main goal of the network. Is the network a project (limited in time) or structural (no end date planned)? If necessary, add one more item / sentence to explain more precisely what the network does.

2. The "wicked problem"

- The network tries to tackle: Youngsters between 16-19 years old who have not found a place in Upper secondary school or any other kind of education, or abandoned an ongoing education
- Some figures, statistics, dates

  In the autumn of every year there are still 4000 of these kind of youngsters. In may there are only between 100-200 youngsters left who didn't found an form of education.

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Here you describe in a few key words the wicked (hard to resolve, ever returning) problem which the network tries to take care of. Give some figures, statistics, dates, … to explain the urgency, the wickedness, the need for solving the challenge.

3. Why networking and Who?

- We network because we need to strengthen the common understanding in order for each participant to reach their own goals and help other partners reach their goals.
- It was decided by the Government agency of education.
- The partners in the network are: Individual city wards, Socials services, compulsory schools, upper secondary school, local committees.

12-06-2010   Local Evidence-based Policy and Practices in Education   4

Why are you tackling this problem within a network? What is supposed to be the advantage? Who decided to start the network (e.g. national government, city council, district, non governmental organisations, …)? Who are the main (steady) partners in the network?

Here, if you have it, paste a map or drawing of the network, showing the partners and where you / your organisation is situated within the network.

List the partners and explain their roles in key words.

6. How: procedures and routines

- Gymnasieslussen is responsible for:
- - Information to schools
- - Approach 16-19 year olds who have not found a education program before 1 July
- How does Gymnasieslussen Work:

  -Register all 16-19 without education in Walter (info system)

  - Give information to all 16-19 year olds by letters and telephone calls and offer student counseling and when they do not react report them to city wards.

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What exactly do you do when trying to work on the wicked problem? E.g. which procedure is started by whom? Which routine(s) do you set in motion? Who meets who? What frequency? What happens after the meeting? …

7. Relations and balances

- Formal or informal network? Informal
- …. calls for the meetings
- Open or closed network?
- Minimum engagement of partners: Help find and locate youngster and offer them education of working experience
- Who decides on the budget? Government agency of education.
- Annual budget of the network

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Some of the questions you could answer here: What is the role of the city in the network? Is the network formally organized or rather informal? Who calls for the meetings? Who can join the network (is it open or closed to new members)? What is considered a minimum engagement for a regular member? Is there an annual budget for the network? Who decides on the budget?

8. Phases in building the network

- How long did it take to build the network? It is not ready yet
- How did you build the network?
- Phases in networking?
- Difficulties experienced?
- Tensions? Conflicts? Solutions?

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How long did it take to build the network? Is it still under construction? Can you pinpoint phases in the development of the network? Did you encounter difficulties? Tensions or conflicts? How do you take care of these?

9. Information brokerage

- Databases are very extensive throughout the whole of Stockholm Educational system.
- - Bosko for registering all compulsory students
- - Hanna for all Pupils within Upper Secondary school and Adult Education
  - Kir: Municipal Register
- - Walter: register for people without educational plans after compulsory school.

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How do the partners ensure the link between information need and information supply? E.g. which databases are used? Who collects which data? Who analyzes the data? Who can ask for / consult the data? Who can order an analysis? Are there special ways / examples of good practice reg. data brokerage you want to share with us?

10. Evaluation procedures

- The network reports to Government agency of Education and Local Committees who is financially and administratively responsible.

- …

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Who does the network report to? In what form? In what frequency? How is the effectiveness of the actions measured (e.g. indicators, goals to be achieved)? What are the critical factors (e.g. What makes it tick? What makes it not working?)

11. Critical factors / future plans

- The network's critical factors are the danger of politics changing their approach and priorities. Also the common understanding of the partners to work on one goal, if this fades away the network will dissolve.
- …
- …

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Can you list the most critical factors for future development of the network? E.g. budget, law and regulations, …

12. Example of Good Practice

- Example of good practice because:

- 3 Key words: Flexible schools

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Why do you consider this network / network initiative an example of good practice which you want to share with other cities?

Which are the 3 key words that can describe the network in a nut shell?

Thank you !!!

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This tool is still under construction. If you have any suggestions for improvement of this tool, please contact marc.vanpraet@telenet.be

1.11 Reader and references

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*This is the first time such an analysis is made
of our work, and it gives us a lot to think about.
I agree with the outcomes and they also
were an eye-opener.
(Rotterdam)*

2. LOCAL KNOWLEDGE BROKERAGE FOR DATA DRIVEN POLICY AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATION

(Management of the theme and authors of this report: Jan Vanhoof – Paul Mahieu)

2.1 Problem statement and project goals

In a context where schools and local authorities are held more and more accountable for the education they provide, data-driven decision making has become increasingly important. Individuals and organisations are increasingly confronted with data about their own functioning and with challenges in terms of interpreting and using such data. The goal is to provide them with better information to inform decisions related to planning and implementing strategies and to help them achieve worthwhile expectations (Harrington & Harrington, 1994). Although education partners (schools and local authorities) have been collecting data for many years, it has only been recently that the potential power of data for monitoring school and policy improvement has been discovered (Messelt, 2004). Increasingly, the management of data is recognised as an important aspect of organisational knowledge building for schools. There is a strong belief that basing decisions on data will improve practices in a way that no other reform can (Johnson, 1997). Implicitly there is a belief that data are important in guiding improvement and holding individuals and groups accountable (Marsh, Pane, & Hamilton, 2006). Policy makers, principals and teachers who ignore data or use data inadequately run the risk of making poor decisions. Research in a few best practice schools shows data use can indeed improve the functioning of schools in terms of increased student achievement (Lai, McNaughton, Timperley, & Hsiao, 2009). Data use therefore has the potential to influence education processes and outcomes at both school and local level.

In order to provide schools and local authorities with evidence for decision making, relevant data have to be made available. The concept of 'knowledge brokerage' focuses on promoting the integration of the best available evidence into policy and practice-related decisions (Dobbins et al., 2009). Knowledge brokering has to do with moving knowledge from one place or group of people to another and with creating an environment that stimulates innovation (CHSRF, 2003). In this study, emphasis is placed on the knowledge brokerage role of local authorities (particularly cities) in establishing data-driven policy making in schools. In education contexts, knowledge brokers are entities that facilitate the sharing of knowledge between education knowledge sources and education knowledge demands. Defining cities in which schools are embedded as knowledge brokers implies that cities can play a crucial role in translating and exchanging data available to schools. After all, researchers and policy makers produce complex data - often with uncertainty levels attached to it - that are not tailor-made for application by schools. As such the brokerage role of cities not only involves providing the managerial and physical tools to access available knowledge, but also implies that cities play a role in developing capacity for data-driven policy making within schools. This is due to the experience that a lack of knowledge and skills needed to process data is a major obstacle for data-driven policy making. School principals for instance do not usually receive training in carrying out research, collecting data, managing data or interpreting data. This lack of data literacy (Earl & Fullan, 2003) leads to valuable information often being neglected. Research reveals a need among school principals and teachers for support in both the interpretation and further use of data (Schildkamp, Visscher & Luyten, 2009; Zupanc, Urank & Bren, 2009).

Knowledge brokering is on the rise in a variety of areas but mainly emerged in the healthcare sector given its strong need to bridge the gap between research results and the use of these results for the benefit of patients (Meyer, 2010). It hasn't been until recently that it started growing in importance in education contexts. The field of data-based decision making in education policy making is also relatively new. This definitely holds for the brokerage role of cities. Many knowledge brokerage activities tend to happen implicitly and invisibly. As such, explorative research is urgently needed to grasp the potential and variation of local knowledge brokering initiatives and data use in educational settings. Knowledge brokering is still in its incipient stage and it is important to start documenting experiences (van Kammen, de Savigny & Sewankambo, 2006, p. 611). Equally important is that most studies on data brokerage are taking place within a single country. Therefore, increased interest exists in comparisons between countries (Creemers, 2006). Identifying which aspects of policy or practice with regard to data use have a positive impact in different contexts is important for the development of data use theories as well as for the development of brokerage initiatives aimed at stimulating data-driven education policy making.

Given the above considerations, the following set of project goals was set down. We distinguish between descriptive-oriented and explanation-oriented goals.

- **Descriptive**: We want to find similarities and differences in existing education knowledge brokerage initiatives in terms of the data used and how they are used. We want to explore the effectiveness of existing education knowledge brokerage initiatives (intended and unintended results).

- **Explanatory**: We want to gain insights into how differences in the effectiveness of education knowledge brokerage initiatives can be explained and to identify conditions (actors and factors) that have to be in place for data brokerage initiatives to yield worthwhile results.

The following report firstly elaborates the concept of data brokerage (see paragraph 2). Afterwards the project methodology is described (see paragraph 3) and a description of the data brokerage initiatives that were studied is given (see paragraph 4). Paragraph 5 reports on the project conclusions.

2.2   Mapping the conceptual terrain of data brokerage

The general conceptual framework of the project is visualised in figure 1. The model consists of
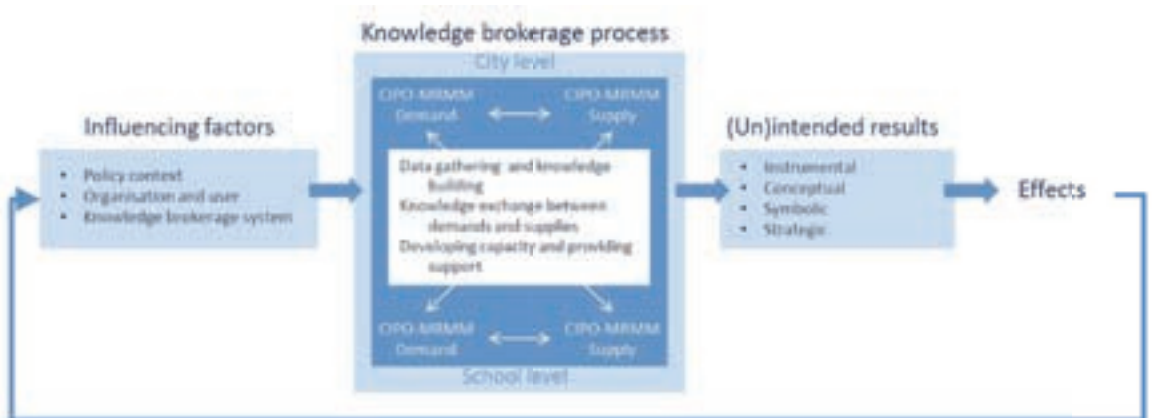

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

four constitutive parts that all need clarification. In the following paragraphs we first elaborate on the concept of `knowledge brokerage'. Then we look at the potential variety of knowledge demands and supplies in the brokerage process. Subsequently we focus on the possible results and effects of brokerage in terms of data-driven policy. And finally attention is paid to actors and factors that have an influence on the process and result of knowledge brokerage in education contexts.

2.2.1 Illuminating the concept of `knowledge brokerage'

Knowledge brokers are people or organisations that move knowledge around and create connections between sources of data and demands of data. They bring people and information together that otherwise would not have had any relationship. Knowledge brokers facilitate the sharing of knowledge between knowledge needs (demands) and knowledge sources (supply). This link between knowledge demands and knowledge supplies is central to the concept. A knowledge broker facilitates the creation, sharing and use of such knowledge (Sverrisson, 2001) and proactively ensures the interactions between research, policy and the education system (van Kammen et al., 2006). Classic examples of knowledge brokers are science shops, science journalists and consulting agencies. However, in theory every individual or organisation which has access to knowledge can act as a knowledge broker. This also applies for local education authorities.

Knowledge brokering often occurs in educational settings without people being aware of their brokerage role. Currently, most brokering activities are not systematically planned, are not deliberately assigned to well chosen individuals and mostly remain tacit. Therefore it is important to focus on activities and processes as well as on individuals (CHSRF, 2003). The role of knowledge brokers is far more extended than the mere communication of information. It has also to do with activities such as data need detection and analyses, identification and localisation of knowledge, the transformation of knowledge in order to be used by end users (for instance cities or schools) and support for end users to become more data literate. As we will illustrate in this study, brokerage activities look very different given the variability of types of data and the context-specific needs and expectations of knowledge users. The following list illuminates the various knowledge broker activities. Given that knowledge brokering is very context-specific, there is no one-size-fits-all set of activities and different brokering initiatives will focus on different activities. Therefore the following wide description of the concept of knowledge brokering is used:

> *Knowledge brokers are entities that facilitate the sharing of knowledge between knowledge needs (demands) and knowledge sources (supply). Defining an entity as a broker implies that it plays a role in gathering, building and exchanging knowledge and in developing capacity for data-driven policy making (within schools or other policy levels).*

a. Data gathering and knowledge building

Unlike the traditional broker in a real estate context, knowledge brokers are often the `owner' of the knowledge involved. As such, for many knowledge brokers the collection of data is an important activity. A city for instance can take the initiative to collect data on neighbourhoods and subsequently process relevant aspects of that data collection to the schools within its territory. Besides the collection and management of data, brokers are also involved in building knowledge out of the available data. Data are symbols or facts out of context and as such not directly or immediately meaningful. A possible knowledge broker activity is to make information out of the data by placing it within some interpretive context and by adding meaning and value to it. Finally there is the accumulation of information into knowledge by the selection of relevant information, by linking it to experience and other information and by making it actionable. In this context, activities such as making available

the necessary technological tools and expertise for knowledge building can also be regarded as being part of the brokerage process.

b. Knowledge exchange between demands and supplies

A common activity in many brokerage initiatives is the dissemination of available data. A knowledge broker therefore sets up processes of communication between the supply and demand side of existing knowledge. Facilitating communication, making data accessible and exchanging knowledge are typical activities of knowledge brokers. This can be done by setting up activities that range from writing and distributing accessible reports or booklets, setting up websites, distributing newsletters or organising lectures, workshops and conferences. Some of these activities will be deliberately designed with an individual or an individual organisation in mind, while others address end users collectively. These types of activities can be labelled `knowledge transfer' as they mainly consist of one-way approaches from the supply to the demand side.

Linking producers and users of knowledge also means that interaction between both is pursued. Van Kammen et al. (2006) stress that creating knowledge and (data-driven) policy making are two different processes. As such, the focus of knowledge brokering ought to be on organising the interactive process between the producers and users of knowledge too. This can be done by organising and managing (local) networks, by setting common goals, illuminating information needs, identifying available information and by building relationships of trust. The process of linking knowledge demands and knowledge supplies therefore has to be purposefully designed and institutionally embedded.

c. Developing capacity–support to end users

Knowledge brokers can also engage in capacity building. This includes making partners sensitive to the possibilities of knowledge brokering and showing that the use of data in policy making can make the organisation more efficient. Capacity building of course also means investing in the necessary brokering skills of knowledge users. With reason most would spontaneously link this mainly to the capacities of end users. However, capacity building activities of knowledge brokers can also focus on researchers or others collecting data in order to stimulate them to engage in policy-relevant data gathering activities and to present their findings in a end user-friendly way.

Education research reveals that one of the main factors contributing to the use of brokered data is related to the support experienced by the users (Schildkamp & Teddlie, 2008). Interpreting data, diagnosing the results, discussing causes and setting up actions based on feedback results are not obvious processes. They require knowledge, skills and attitudes that cannot be expected to be mastered but must be developed (Visscher, 2002). School staff involved in training are more likely to read the reports and to adopt a more positive attitude (Tymms, 1995). The support can be supplied by internal or external parties, in a formal or informal way, via in-built support information in the reports, via a helpdesk, based on in- or on-service training, requiring extra resources and funding, etc. Support should go further than assuring a correct interpretation. Many principals for instance mention that they get stuck after their interpretation attempts. They are not acquainted with following steps to undertake; specifically when it comes to diagnosing the causes and circumstances and to coming to concrete actions (Verhaeghe, Vanhoof, Valcke & Van Petegem, Forthcoming).

Given the above considerations, schools and education authorities cannot neglect the importance of professional development and of providing external support. Internal professional development is based on school initiatives to promote growth in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of school principals and team members, including formal, informal, individual, and group-oriented activities. This starts with a clear reflection on the knowledge and skills of school team members (Schildkamp,

2007). Professional development also strengthens personal confidence and self-efficacy in coping with complex knowledge (Earl & Fullan, 2003). However, external support initiatives will also remain crucial. Since school needs differ, knowledge and skill needs differ and schools can be situated at different phases in their use of brokered knowledge; external support has to be tailored to the needs of individual schools. A sufficient level of goodness-of-fit is a requirement to achieve successful support (Nevo, 1995).

2.2.2 The variety of knowledge demands and supplies in the knowledge brokering process

While the concept of brokerage is often limited to the use of research findings, we take a broader perspective. Existing knowledge might also be the result of data gathering and analysis by (central or local) authorities or by education institutions themselves. In theory, schools and policy actors have access to numerous data sources to inform aspects of their functioning. First and foremost, spontaneously reference is made to school-level data in this respect. However, schools are obviously very interested in knowledge brokering on both their direct environment and on what happens in the classrooms as well. The relevance of brokered knowledge must accordingly be taken very broadly. This stimulates us to create a broad structural framework. This framework is based on two questions: (1) `Which topics can be distinguished in knowledge demands and supplies in educational settings?' and (2) `At what level are these knowledge demands and supplies situated?'

For the first part we make use of the CIPO model (Scheerens, 1990). This acronym stands for `context', `input', `process' and `output'. `Context' means the environment: all factors the school has to deal with without being able to directly influence them. `Input' is the way that environment enters the school: the nature of the pupils, teachers, parents and management. In short, this relates to the capacities and competencies of the people who together make up the school. The `process' refers to the way pupils, teachers, school heads and administrators work together. That process ultimately delivers results, referred to by the term `output'.

In the second part, we also distinguish four levels: `macro', `regional', `meso' and `micro'. By `macro' we mean all data relating to or generated at the international or national level. By `regional' we mean the local education level. That may be municipal, inter-municipal or provincial but may also refer to school communities or local consultation platforms. `Meso' is the school level. `Micro' is the most clearly describable: it is the world of the pupil in relation to the teacher: the class. But here, too, the class should certainly not be limited to the class as room.

The combination of these two criteria produces a framework that can be employed to structure knowledge demands and supplies (KD&S) (Mahieu & Vanhoof, 2010). The framework is visualised in figure 2.

	Context	Input	Process	Output
Macro	KD&S	KD&S	KD&S	KD&S
Regional	KD&S	KD&S	KD&S	KD&S
Meso	KD&S	KD&S	KD&S	KD&S
Micro	KD&S	KD&S	KD&S	KD&S

Figure 2: The CIPO-MRMM model of knowledge demands and supplies (KD&S)

In each cell of the grid there are demands and supplies. Matching both – this is the heart of the brokerage process – might happen within an individual education organisation. Some of the knowledge demands of schools can be met by existing knowledge supplies within the school. The same holds for a local education authority. However in some cases, addressing the knowledge demand of an organisation requires the deployment of the knowledge supplies of other organisations. This is for instance the case when a local education authority has data at its disposal that meets demands of individual schools and vice versa. In these cases, knowledge brokerage includes both the downloading and uploading of knowledge from one policy level to another (see fig 1.).

2.2.3   Results and effect of knowledge brokering

The ultimate goal of education knowledge brokering is of course that the information made available is put to use for the benefit of pupils. We refer to results of knowledge brokering when the process of knowledge brokering results in specific actions or changes in thinking and processes. As mentioned earlier, our general perspective in this regard is data-driven policy making. In order to distinguish between different types of worthwhile policy-related uses of brokered knowledge, we take the typology of Rossi & Freeman (1993) as a starting point. They state that an instrumental, a conceptual and a symbolic/convincing utilisation can be discerned. In addition, brokered knowledge can be used in a strategic way for accountability purposes as well (Visscher & Coe, 2003).

- *Instrumental use* of brokered knowledge serves as a starting point for immediate policy making decisions. The brokered knowledge is a basis for concrete actions and policy decisions by teachers, principals, administrators and policy makers. In the case of instrumental results, knowledge brokering results in specific changes in policy (for instance a reorganisation of rosters or of the number of lesson hours, the introduction of a new reading method, school building capacity enlargement or more intensive mentoring of junior teachers).

- A *conceptual use* does not result in concrete actions, but influences the thinking of decision makers, possibly influencing their actions in an indirect way. In the case of conceptual results, knowledge brokering results in a change in how users look at their own functioning and the functioning of their organisation (e.g. influences thinking with regard to how the pupils perform or how the school functions according to stakeholders or makes people sensitive to new information). Knowledge brokerage is for instance often seen as a mirror for looking at aspects of education policy and as a way to develop a better understanding of these aspects (within the school or local education authority). But in the case of conceptual results, this does not automatically have to result in (policy) actions. Conceptual results are often limited to the confirmation of existing intuitions (Verhaeghe et al., Forthcoming). As such, knowledge brokering does not necessarily have to lead to instrumental results to be worthwhile.

- If feedback does not influence one's conceptualisations, it can still affect the policy-making process in a *symbolic way*. This means feedback results serve to convince others of existing opinions and to support viewpoints in discussions (Visscher, 2002). This way the result of knowledge brokering is not instrumental or conceptual for those directly involved, but the brokered knowledge is nonetheless used. Brokered knowledge can for instance be a useful instrument to underpin existing points of view and to underline and stress some deficiencies in educational functioning. In this way it can be used to persuade and as an input for shared decision making.

- Finally, brokered knowledge can be used in a *strategic way* (Visscher & Coe, 2003). This firstly encompasses the use for accountability purposes, for instance by submitting brokered knowledge to the educational inspectorate. The available data can be used to be accountable to the inspection

authorities as well as to internal and external stakeholders. This is somewhat in contrast with the perception of most knowledge brokers, who focus on the use of knowledge in view of school or policy improvement.

The above list of possible uses of brokered knowledge differs from the ***effects of knowledge brokering***. The final goal of education knowledge brokering is school and policy improvement, ultimately resulting in higher learner performance. In this perspective the most typical effect of knowledge brokering refers to output indicators. However, the measurement of the effects of knowledge brokering does not have to be narrowed to output indicators. Improved educational processes are worth pursuing as well. As an example, we refer to the professional development of school teams, improved teaching methods, intensification of student guidance or increased willingness to cooperate and strengthen cohesion in the school. Unintended and undesirable results can occur as well, however. Examples are teaching to the test, data manipulation or fraud and demotivation of school staff who become overwhelmed by the amount of the data involved and the amount of time they have to invest (Fitz-Gibbon & Tymms, 2002).

2.2.4 Factors influencing knowledge brokering

Differences in the results of brokerage and data use initiatives can be attributed to a variety of factors. There is empirical evidence regarding the impact of the following sets of factors: policy context, organisation and user characteristics and features of the knowledge brokerage system. Insight into this set of factors helps us to explain why knowledge brokering initiatives are successful in some contexts or not successful in others.

a. Characteristics of the policy context

Context-related factors refer to educational policy strategies at regional and/or federal governmental level that impact data utilisation (Sun, Creemers & de Jong, 2007). For instance, the educational inspectorate can set forward clear expectations about concrete use of data from brokerage initiatives. The policy context can pressurise and/or support schools to make use of brokered knowledge. Furthermore, data use will also be very different in a context promoting school improvement, school accountability or a combination of both strategies (Vanhoof & Van Petegem, 2007; Visscher, 2002).

b. Characteristics of the users and their organisation

Organisation and user-related characteristics seem to be key variables explaining differences in the use of brokered knowledge. In the following, we focus first on the user level; afterwards we look at the impact of the organisation as a whole.

Acquiring the skills for identifying existing knowledge and for using it is not easy (Hargadon, 2002). Several studies report a lack of skills and confidence of school staff when using data for school policy purposes (Earl & Fullan, 2003; Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoio, Darilek & Barney, 2006). The importance of knowledge and skills is evidenced by the impact of data literacy on the process of data use (Webber & Johnston, 2000). Data literacy encompasses the strategies, skills and knowledge needed to define information needs and to locate, evaluate, synthesise, organise, present and/or communicate information as needed (Williams & Coles, 2007, p. 188). Data literacy is a condition for being able to convert data into valuable and usable information (Earl & Fullan, 2003). The current lack of know-how regarding the putting to use of information is a major obstacle in schools (Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoio, Darilek, & Barney, 2006). Not only there is a lack of capacities needed to interpret the data, there is usually also a lack of well-developed research skills such as the formulation of research questions and hypotheses (Earl & Fullan, 2003; Herman & Gribbons, 2001). An important distinction in this regard

concerns the actual knowledge and skills as can be measured on the one hand, and the level at which the users perceive their skills on the other. The concept of 'academic self-efficacy' can be used in this context, which is a person's belief that he or she can perform certain academic tasks to certain levels (Schunk, 1991). The process of academic self-efficacy focuses on the extent to which users think they have understood the terms, figures and tables used and the extent to which they believe they are able to find explanations for their results. It is important not only to focus on the actual knowledge and skills but also to record the level of perceived self-efficacy, given that this will significantly determine a person's motivations for his or her actions.

At the boundaries between the individual user and the organisation it has to be stressed that motivation to engage in knowledge brokering leads to different utilisations. Motivation for instance varies from internal quality development or external accountability to policy preparation. Individual users and collective institutions have to be aware of the importance and possibilities of knowledge brokerage in order to support data-driven policy in schools. The attitude towards brokerage and the institutional culture are a crucial factor in this. An attitude indicates how positively or negatively an individual stands with regard to a particular issue (Petty & Wegener, 1998). As is the case for other quality care activities, knowledge brokerage can only work if team members are positively disposed towards it (McBeath, Meuret, Schratz & Jakobsen, 1999).

The importance of a learning supportive organisation is also stressed (CHSRF, 2003). Operating an effective school policy is now less and less seen as a process of incorporating knowledge developed elsewhere into the specific approach adopted in the individual school concerned. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), for example, take the view that implementing innovation and policy in organisations depends on the capacity to create knowledge inside the organisation. An entity's capacity to develop and apply knowledge at all levels is increasingly regarded as a core organisational skill. With regard to knowledge development in schools there is, in other words, a change of emphasis from instruction (processing knowledge) towards learning (creating and brokering knowledge) (Donnenberg, 1999; Patriotta, 2004; Wenger, 1998). In order to understand why brokerage works in one condition and not in another it is also useful to look at the kinds of learning activities that take place in the organisation. Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) take the view that, in the Western world, there is often an excessive emphasis on explicit learning in the form of - for example - education and courses and that a greater value should be attached to `tacit' learning in which the use of experiences and tacit knowledge plays an important role. In order to bring about organisational knowledge creation, the accumulation of personal knowledge at individual level must be transferred to other members of the organisation through socialisation. If this does not occur, the existing knowledge base of the organisation will not be expanded (Simons & Ruijters, 2001).

In distinguishing between organisations in which knowledge brokerage is successful and those in which it is not, the concept of the school's policy-making capacities is also relevant. The concept can be applied very appropriately to different policy domains and policy activities in schools. For example, it applies to the implementation of quality control in general, but also to knowledge brokerage in particular. This means that aspects of policy-making capacities in schools can be proposed as a framework for investigating the quality of knowledge brokerage processes as well. Based on the existing corpus of international research on school effectiveness, we set forward eight aspects of policy-making capacities as key factors of promoting knowledge brokerage. Our hypothesis is that the quality of knowledge brokerage will be better in organisations that exhibit these eight aspects to a high degree than in those schools which do not exhibit these aspects or do so to a lesser degree. The following 8 aspects are crucial: (1) the effectiveness of communication strategies during the knowledge brokerage process (McBeath, 1999); (2) the professional support extended to members of the team

and cooperation within the team (Sammons, Hillman, & Mortimore, 1995); (3) the participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes (shared leadership) (Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob, 1988); (4) the extent to which the participants attain shared objectives and enjoy a shared vision on knowledge brokering (Potter, Reynolds, & Chapman, 2002); (5) the extent of the school's response to expectations and demands from its environment (Griffith, 2003); (6) the extent to which the school is capable of implementing innovations (Geijsel, 2001); (7) the extent to which knowledge brokerage actions in a particular school policy domain are informed by, and in line with, activities in other policy domains (Wikeley, Stoll, & Lodge, 2002); and, finally, (8) the school's capacity for reflection on its own knowledge brokerage processes (Levine & Lezotte, 1990).

c. Characteristics of the knowledge brokerage system

A third set of factors refers to characteristics of the knowledge brokerage system. At content level, knowledge made available has to be perceived as relevant, non-threatening and meeting actual information needs (Schildkamp & Teddlie, 2008; Van Petegem & Vanhoof, 2007). Information should also be up-to-date, reliable and valid. Fitz-Gibbon and Tymms (2002) also mention ethical issues. Knowledge brokering systems should be able to guarantee confidentiality in handling the information; thus being selective in who gets access to what, and assuring the anonymity of subjects and schools. Lastly, the availability of brokered knowledge cannot result in harming subjects or schools based on misleading information (Goldstein & Myers, 1996). It has to be stressed that it is the perception of the user regarding the above elements that will determine how successful the brokerage initiative will be.

The above framework was used to inspire and structure the activities of the project members. These activities aimed at exploring the theoretical concepts and relations in the conceptual framework. The hypotheses that can be derived from the framework were tested against experiences and empirical data that were collected during the project. In the next section, we explain the methodological approach that was used in order to do so.

2.3   Project methodology

In order to answer the questions derived from the project goals, a range of complementary data gathering activities took place. In general, for each of the three types of project goals a particular methodology was adopted. In order to describe the variation in potential data brokerage initiatives the project firstly made use of templates to look for traces of worthwhile data brokering in an education context. Based on these templates, a selection of interesting brokerage contexts was made for in-depth investigation. These contexts were the focus of case studies that aimed to identify how differences in the effectiveness of education knowledge brokerage initiatives can be explained. Finally, based on the results and conclusions of the two previous project phases, a developmental approach was adopted in order to come to guidelines for relevant stakeholders involved in future data brokering in educational contexts. Therefore focus group discussions were used. The methodological arguments and the practical approach during these activities are illuminated in the following paragraphs.

2.3.1   The use of templates: Looking for traces of worthwhile data brokerage initiatives

The first activity of the project members was describing examples of data brokerage in educational settings. Based on the filling in of a template, the documentation of a wide variety of initiatives that involve local authorities as knowledge brokers was aimed at. The brokerage initiatives were selected following the principles of a convenience sample: brokerage initiatives were only included if one of the project partners was able to provide the necessary input to document key aspects of the brokerage

initiative. Given the descriptive aims of the initial project phase, there was deliberately only a limited attempt by the project members to ensure that the sample was an accurate representation of some larger group or brokerage initiatives. The supposition behind this strategy was that by striving for a large set of brokerage examples, the natural variation in brokerage examples would be accounted for. As will become clear in the results section, this turned out to be the case. The template for describing the data brokerage practices was based on the conceptual framework. The central questions addressed in the template were related to the following topics:

1. Identification of the data brokerage project (name of the project, location (country, city), Responsible institution(s), involved partners, duration of the project, contact information)

2. Context and general features of the project (Situate the project in the local educational policy context. Describe the general features of the current functioning of the project.)

3. Aims and content of the knowledge brokerage system (What are/were the main goals for setting up the system? Who's and which knowledge demands were the reason for initiating the system? Provide a description of the indicators used in the system. Situate the indicators in de CIPO-MRMM-model. Illustrate how data are provided to policy makers and/or schools.)

4. Brokerage process (Illuminate the functioning of the brokerage system (who collects data, who analyses data, who distributes information?) Explain the role (functions, responsibilities) of the city in the knowledge brokering system (cf. data gathering and knowledge building, knowledge exchange between demands and supplies and/or developing capacity).

5. Evaluation (Why do you consider this to be a good practice? Why do you expect this data system to be instructive and inspiring for other partners? Is there information available on how the data system is used by policymakers and/or schools? (cf. (un)intended use (instrumental, conceptual, symbolic, strategic)?)

6. Additional information

For an example of a completed version of the template, we refer to the final alinea of this chapter. In total 14 templates were completed according to the quality standards set forward. They are collected on the website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu.

2.3.2 Case studies of interesting brokerage contexts

Besides describing the variation in data brokerage initiatives, the project also wanted to identify actors and factors that contribute to or hinder successful data brokerage. Therefore, from the long list of templates available, a selection of interesting brokerage contexts was made for more intensive case studies.

a. Selection of interesting brokerage contexts

In looking for cases for in-depth investigation, a shift from brokerage initiatives to brokerage contexts was made. A brokerage context refers to a particular city in which several brokerage initiatives can take place. Basically, the case studies had the broad city contexts as the topic of investigation, not solely one of the brokerage initiates, although this could also be the case. In general, the starting point for making the selection was the expectation that the selected context could contribute to answering the research questions set forward. In particular, the following set of criteria was used to make the selection and for ensuring variation in the brokerage contexts selected:

1. Giving clear information and suggestions on how to match information needs and supplies

2. Relevance for local stakeholders involved and for the network participants

3. Availability of evaluative information on the project itself

4. Number and variety of indicators and stakeholders involved

Based on the use of the above criteria and on the common interests of the project partners, the following brokerage contexts were selected for more in-depth case studies: Rotterdam, Stockholm, Antwerp and Munich. Rotterdam and Stockholm were not only selected because of their value based on the criteria, but also because they complement each other. Whereas the first strongly focuses on the process of brokerage and the use of data in schools, the second is more data oriented and an interesting example of the potential of integrating data in a large data system. The same holds for the Munich brokerage context. The Antwerp system was selected as the third because it is an example of several loosely coupled projects, because of the originality of the network in which data are brokered and also for practical reasons since a network meeting was scheduled in the city (cf. convenience sample).

b. Data gathering on interesting brokerage contexts

During the case studies a qualitative approach was adopted. The qualitative approach is appropriate since the project aims to develop a view on "naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what `real life' is like" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). It is recommended since we know that the knowledge base is limited and the nature of the variables, processes and interrelations is less clear (Maso & Smaling, 1998). The qualitative data gathering included the use of document analysis and in-depth interviews that were conducted during study visits of the selected brokerage contexts.

The case studies were firstly informed by the analysis of relevant written documents. Before the study visits took place, project members took the time to read the templates of the brokerage initiatives in the studied context. If available, documents on the educational (policy) context, on the use of available data for policy makers at city and school level and on evaluation of the various brokerage initiatives were also included in the preparation and analysis.

Data were also gathered on the basis of semi-structured in-depth interviews. This type of interview creates an informal relationship between the project members and the respondents, and allows a better understanding of perceptions, opinions and views of respondents to be developed. The interview questions were derived from the conceptual framework discussed above. Respondents were invited to describe their working situation in relation to data brokerage, to propose suggestions and to express their concerns. Respondents were selected in order to represent different stakeholders in the data brokerage context. During the four study visits, interviews were held with policy makers at city level, city administrators involved in setting up and maintaining the brokerage initiatives and end users of the brokerage system (at city level and/or school level). The number of respondents ranged from two to 8. If it turned out to be desirable, group interviews were also organised.

In order to be able to draw conclusions from the case studies, a brief report on the most relevant findings was written for each brokerage context studied. The focus of these reports was at the level of the brokerage contexts (i.e. the city level). The findings of different interviews were brought together in one integrated report. Next to inspiring the design of future data brokerage initiatives, the results of the case studies were expected to contribute to the evaluation of the theoretical framework presented above. This implies that the theoretical framework was confronted with the document and interview

data, leading to confirmation, negotiation, changes and/or elaborations. The reports were therefore as much as possible structured according to the insights of the conceptual framework. For an example of a case study report we again refer to the results section. In total four case study reports were written.

2.3.3 The use of focus group reflections with the project members involved

In the final developmental project phase, the conclusions from the descriptive and exploratory project activities were used as a starting point to identify important success factors and pitfalls that knowledge brokers have to take into account in order to contribute to successful brokerage initiatives. The conclusions of the previous project activities were confronted with the existing knowledge base consisting of previous experiences and insights of the project members. With this end in mind, focus group reflections were organised. Their aim was to explore points of view and to produce suitable information for the purposes of making future policy choices in the field of data-driven policy and practice.

In essence the technique of focus group reflections consists of consulting a group of experts. The members of the project group were regarded to be a group of experts with different international backgrounds and different fields of expertise (academic, policy, practice). Given this variation in the expert group, focus group reflections could be used to shed light on a maximum number of facets of data-driven policy and practice from a multiplicity of perspectives. It is after all the case that collective wisdom goes further than individual insights. The reflections enabled the collection and analysis of an array of perspectives, which in turn gave a more complete picture of the questions/project goals under scrutiny. The fact that an individual belongs to a particular category would lead one to expect that he or she will express exactly those arguments, points of view, expectations and wishes which are typical of that interest group. By representing various interest groups the complete picture thus emerges. However, working with experts can create problems of representativeness. Therefore it has to be stressed that the technique was not set out to arrive at representative statements and that we did not set out to reach a consensus among the group of experts. Our primary intention was to use the arguments and attention points supplied by the project members for the purposes of exploring data brokerage initiatives, hypothesis forming and the formulation of recommendations for policy and practice.

In the approach set forward, the project team wanted to guarantee that experts/project members would have at least one opportunity to re-evaluate the responses of the entire group, which meant that we had to distinguish between three phases in the focus group reflections:

1. The focus group reflection started with a pre-structured written small questionnaire submitted to the project members involved. The questionnaire was based on the conceptual framework.

2. Subsequently the results of the small questionnaire were integrated into the analysis of the templates and case studies of brokerage contexts. In this working paper a preliminary answer to all the research questions was given. The working paper was the basis for a seminar that aimed at reflection of the project group.

3. Based on the input of the project members during the seminar, the working paper was rewritten and its content was both deepened and widened. In the third phase of the focus group reflection, the draft report that combined the input of all information sources was made available to the project members to suggest additions or changes. Project members were asked for written comments.

The final result of the focus groups reflection can be found in the section labelled conclusions and discussion.

2.4   Results: Description of data brokerage initiatives under study

In this section the findings of the project activities will be reported. The overview of both the templates and the case study reports are presented in a descriptive manner. In the section 5 conclusions will be drawn from the presentation of the scrutinised data brokerage examples.

2.4.1   Overview of templates

An overview of the templates that were developed is given in the appendix and on the website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu. On the website you can also find the completed templates.

2.4.2   Overview of case study reports

After each study visit a city report was written by the project members. The project team decided not to include the full city reports in this report. The main reasons for this were the fact that statements by individual respondents can be traced and that the report points at weaknesses of the brokerage initiatives in the studied cities that were not suitable to be made public outside of the project context. Within the project city reports were disseminated and discussed, but always keeping in mind that some information was indeed sensitive and had to be handled with care.

In order to give an idea of the kind of information in the reports, the following extracts are helpful. References to countries and cities are replaced by `country' and `city'.

- `In the context of the `country' policy on education, the `city' first of all has the role of collecting data. As is clearly explained by the staff members of the statistics department, data is collected by the city administration and simply turned over to the `country' administration. The state needs this data for formal recognition and evaluation of its policy, but does not share any in-depth-analysis with the `lower' government. The state puts the data in their datasheets and afterwards the data `is simply returned' to the city government and individual schools. That ensures the quality of the data (it is official data, many indicators are standard indicators and the central statistical office is supposed to be very good at controlling the data and comparing the data quality with other data). However, this also means there is not much involvement of the city administration or the schools themselves in choosing the indicators.'

- `The respondents also stress a huge variety in competences in interpreting data, but see this also as an opportunity for them to play an important role as a local broker: having experts to help board members in schools to interpret the data.'

- `Another influencing factor which is important is at the level of the user or organisation. Users have to know how to handle the information. They have to be able to look at what is provided, but they also must have the skills to ask the right question. Furthermore, the data provided must be relevant and easy to access. This means real fine tuning between supply and demand.'

- `We found that an absence of `trust' can block good brokerage of data. This was shown in the reluctance to collect data linked to individuals, even when made anonymous in the published dataset. In that way, it was not possible to have full information about the number of youngsters not attending school, just as it was not possible to link data about school enrolment to data about the actual inhabitants of the city. Insufficient trust between partners was one of the reasons for not sharing data between partners. Insufficient trust in the use of certain data by other stakeholders, such as parents in the process of choosing a school, or governments in allocating school funding, seems to be one of the reasons to keep information about pupils' performance `secret'.'

2.5   Conclusions

The conceptual framework – presented in Figure 1 – shows crucial concepts and relations in the field of data brokerage for educational policy and practice. In this section this model is used to present an answer to the project goals that were set forward. These project goals were threefold: descriptive, explanatory and developmental. Therefore we firstly (see 5.1) describe the similarities and differences in existing knowledge brokerage initiatives in terms of the data used and how they are used. The descriptive part also looks at the effectiveness of the studied knowledge brokerage initiatives by describing their (un)intended results. In the second paragraph (see 5.2) we will focus on how differences in the effectiveness of educational knowledge brokerage initiatives can be explained. In this section we will come to conclusions on the conditions that have to be in place for data brokerage initiatives to yield worthwhile results.

2.5.1   Descriptive results

In describing the data brokerage findings, we make a distinction between the types of brokerage activities found (see a) and the results and effects of these activities (see b).

a. On the types of brokerage activities

We defined knowledge brokers as entities that play a role in gathering, building and exchanging knowledge and in developing capacity for data-driven policy making. We will use this definition to structure the variety of data brokerage activities that were found throughout the project. In general, we conclude that examples of the three kinds of data brokerage activities can be found. Both cities and schools are becoming more and more aware of the importance of investing in these activities.

- Data gathering and knowledge building

  All cities participating in the study are involved in data brokerage initiatives. Several initiatives to gather data were found. To some degree these activities are often perceived as something self-evident for many policy makers and practitioners. Often respondents were found to be knowledge brokers without them being aware of the fact that these initiatives can be labelled data brokerage.

  In theory, schools and policy actors have access to numerous data sources to inform aspects of their functioning. This is also mirrored in the templates and study visits. A close look at the templates on data brokerage initiatives reveals a large variation in examples of data gathering and knowledge building. Typical examples are the collection of statistical information, organisation of surveys and the disclosure of existing databases.

  In terms of content, the variation of examples of data gathering and knowledge building can be illuminated using the CIPO-MRMM model. Almost all boxes in the model were covered in the project. Based on the templates that were gathered in the project, we can illustrate the potential content of all boxes in the model by referring to one example of existing data supply.

	Context	Input	Process	Output
Macro		Number of pupils with special educational needs		
Regional	Demographic evolutions	Estimations of pupils that (will) need a school place	Truancy numbers	Early school leaving in city districts
Meso	Social welfare in the neighbourhood of the school	Parents' income in the catchment area	Efficient use of learning time in the school	Pupils' perceptions on safety in the school
Micro		Performances of pupils on class entry	Pupils' wellbeing	(Central) examination results

Figure 3: Examples of the content of the different brokerage examples in the project

Most data come from central (macro), local (regio) and school (meso) level. Data on what is happening at class level and/or at the level of individual (and groups of) pupils or parents (micro) were less present in the studied brokerage initiatives. However, given the focus of the project it is not surprising that the regional and meso level were most often found. The following set of examples on data gathering and knowledge building illuminates the variation in data gathering activities by different stakeholders: carts with social information on neighbourhoods', school and city reports on dropping out and unqualified school leavers, instruments describing and analysing the capacity of schools in terms of (potential) pupil population, yearly reports at school and city level about characteristics of staff and pupils, school self-evaluation initiatives looking at school management and pedagogical approaches and the writing and availability of inspection reports. These examples show that numbers and figures are provided on several education (related) issues. These data are obtained from central data gatherings (such as central examinations, regional statistics) from the schools themselves, from the inspectorate (this information is in most contexts publicly available), and sometimes even from commercial companies (in Munich for instance data on consumer behaviour are used to inform educational matters). It has to be added that data can indeed be objective, hard figures but that subjective interpreted information also has to be considered. An example of the latter are for instance lessons learned from interviews or conversations with stakeholders, or observations of teacher activities. This means that both quantitative and qualitative data are brokered.

Gathering data and building knowledge out of the available data was found to be an activity that is mainly expected to contribute to the own organisational functioning. At the city level for instance, initiatives to build knowledge for other organisations (such as schools or local advisory boards) are still to a lesser extent seen as a key task of the city itself and are mostly left to the responsibility of the other potential data users concerned. In stating this we make a clear distinction between making data available on the one hand and building knowledge out of the data on the other hand. This does not mean that building knowledge for use beyond the city level is considered to be unimportant by the studied cities. City administrators welcome the idea of being able to build knowledge for other stakeholders, but at this moment in time this is not as

much the case as is desired. However, as was shown, some interesting and promising examples were found.

To get a full view of the variation in terms of data gathering and use, two additional remarks have to be made. Firstly, it has to be stressed that examples of data gathering do not necessarily have to be strongly embedded and/or centrally coordinated. The study visits also revealed the existence of practitioners developing an own method of gathering, analysing and reporting school data. Data gathering examples that start with a single question from one school can develop over time experiment-wise in involving other schools in sharing data on more topics. This teaches us that data brokerage can begin to develop from very local and specific initiatives if someone is willing to engage and able to inspire. Secondly also examples of educational policy and practice were found where data gathering does not play a (significant) role. In some cases this is simply the result of the fact that relevant data to inform policy and practice are currently not available. In other cases the non-use of data however has to be explained by the negative attitude of key actors towards data use. Some practitioners are apparently convinced that data use cannot supplement and even threatens existing engagement, vision and successes. Logically in such cases the gathering of hard data is not an issue or policy concern.

• Knowledge exchange between demands and supplies

As was illustrated in terms of data gathering, a lot of data brokerage initiatives can be found. However, the match of knowledge demands and supplies is also crucial in the concept of data brokerage. This explorative study firstly shows that the match of demands and supplies is mainly realised in a horizontal way. This means that cities (but also schools) are primarily occupied with their own knowledge demands and take initiatives to supply relevant information for these demands. Data brokerage in a vertical way — for instance cities explicitly supplying data to meet demands in schools (or vice versa) — is found still more rarely. In cases where knowledge is brokered vertically this is currently often characterised by its accidental and non-systematic nature. However, examples that show differently were also found (for instance the truancy mirror).

When we look at data brokerage as the exchange between demands and supplies, we have to conclude that in a considerable amount of cases there is much supply that is not directly demand related. The case study in Stockholm for instance showed valuable possibilities for the gathering, presenting and use of data, but when it comes to actually involving stakeholders in using the brokered data results are still rather poor. In some contexts there are no data demands expressed by the stakeholders at all. In the studied examples it is often the city that takes the initiative and the responsibility to collect data. We have to be aware of the fact that at the level of the central or local government, policy makers are not always interested in the same data as policy makers at the school level. The vertical match of demand and supply is therefore something that needs explicit attention. The exploratory nature of this project makes it impossible to come to generic statements however. It has to be stressed that in the case studies it often remained unclear what the main data demands of end users are and what schools do with reports including brokered data. There are strong indications however that the high expectations towards data brokerage are currently not yet met. Is some cases schools are not even aware of the fact that they receive data. In that case there is supply but no demand and we cannot conclude that successful brokerage is taking place. (Vertical) communication concerning demands and interaction aiming to identify demands is not seen as a means to improve data brokerage so far. Exemplary is for instance the finding that the goal and rationale behind the use of data by central or local governments is sometimes found to be unclear for the schools involved, despite the fact that it is obligatory for

schools to collect and provide the data. In Flanders no data on student achievement at city level are available, the city of Munich only has data on the results of municipality schools and not from the national governed schools.

The negative picture has to be nuanced since some promising examples were also described. The findings reveal that networks are potentially very powerful instruments that can bring about good data brokerage. In some cities platforms exist that bring together the expertise and resources of relevant partners to contribute to the quality of educational policy and practice. For instance the Local Consultation Platforms in the city of Antwerp are a good example of how knowledge exchange between demands and supplies can be ameliorated by adopting a network perspective.

The case studies also challenged the ideas behind the concept of `data demand'. In terms of supply and demand some experts stress the importance of being prepared for the questions of the future. In their view the supply must sometimes be ahead of a concrete demand. Thus data gathering does not necessarily have to meet a concrete actual demand. This demand can also lie in a future use of which not all stakeholders and partners involved are yet aware (e.g. demographic prognostication). In some cases this perspective can help explain why a particular supply is not experienced by all stakeholders as matching a relevant demand.

Although this project mainly focused on data exchange between demands and supplies at school and city level, parallels with data brokerage between the city level and central level were also found. For instance, the Bavarian state is without question a big demander of data on schools, although the collecting of the data itself is mainly done by city administrations and schools. The Bavarian state is said by respondents at city and school level to decide about the kind of data they request without much dialogue with other stakeholders. The Bavarian state uses data for formal recognition and evaluation of its policy, but does not share any in-depth analysis with its city administrations or schools. As a consequence, demand and supply in that case do not match over these levels. In all cases the consultation of different stakeholders in choosing indicators is found to be crucial in guaranteeing knowledge exchange over educational levels.

The project findings also clearly indicate that data supply is not a sufficient condition for data-driven policy and practice to occur. On the contrary, too much supply can also be a problem. In some cases, when end users look at too many factors the richness of available data can muddle the main focus of their data use. Again, the clear identification of knowledge demands and a well focused answer in terms of data supply turn out to be prerequisites. This means that the process of data brokerage covers more than the factual exchange of data demands and supplies. For instance, to some extent cities can also play a broker role without actually providing data. This is for instance the case in the Rotterdam ISO project where the city tries to enable schools to bring together existing data to answer school-specific questions. One could call this matching demand and supply a kind of data brokerage too. Some respondents indeed consider providing expertise to help end users use data as an important role for a local broker. As such brokerage can also refer to joint data-based goal setting or joint data-based identification and discussion of strengths and weaknesses. In these cases a particular kind of knowledge demand is matched by a specific supply of knowledge. Additionally, reference is also made to activities such as stimulating awareness for strategic data-based planning and giving feedback on the performance of management teams in terms of data-driven policy and practice. In Stockholm we saw the city administration playing a role in helping schools to analyse data and to ask the right questions. In the interaction between city departments and school principals some significant steps can be made in closing the gap between supply and demand. However, as we will illustrate in the next section, such data

brokerage activities are very closely linked to developing capacity and supporting end users in arriving at data-driven policy and practice.

• Developing capacity–support to end users

The experiences of the respondents interviewed during the project indicate that data use requires knowledge, skills and attitudes which cannot be expected to be mastered spontaneously but must be developed. The need for training and support by end users and the conviction of data brokers that support is indeed crucial appears to be growing. Nevertheless, developing capacity is still seldom seen as an inherent activity of entities involved in data brokerage. In most cases the conviction is not yet translated into the setting up of training and support initiatives. Worthwhile examples can be found however. The Rotterdam ISO project for instance can be considered to be an example of developing capacity, though not solely focused at data-driven policy and practice. The central goal of the project is to support weak schools, including a focus on quality care and data use in this regard. As said, in that perspective, the project itself has a brokerage role.

From this exploratory study we cannot conclude that data expertise is not available in the examples studied. Within the project several examples of people having a high level of expertise in collecting and handling data were found. These people are mostly situated in statistics departments of the city administration (or in universities). Although this expertise is inevitable in building data systems, there might also be a potential risk involved. Due to the growing complexity of data systems set up by these experts, it might become more and more difficult for other potential end users (for instance politicians or schools) to use the available data systems.

b. On the results and effects of brokerage activities

It has to be stressed that the data brokerage examples that we described must be seen as a mean to realise worthwhile results and effects and are not a goal per se. In this section we therefore report on the results of the studied data brokerage initiatives. The findings discussed in relation to the first question do of course have implications for the impact of current brokerage activities. Based on the present findings, we have to conclude that the availability of data and attempts to broker the available data do not automatically lead to valuable results in most cities and schools. However, some interesting and promising results of data brokerage are found. The following examples are presented by using the distinction between an instrumental, a conceptual and a symbolic/convincing utilisation of brokered data.

We found that data are mostly used as a mirror image. In those cases, a better understanding of the own functioning (as city/school) is aimed for. Such data use does not automatically lead to (policy) actions and as such this can be labelled as conceptual use of brokered data; it leads to reflection, even when the results confirm prior findings and impressions. One of the main conceptual results of creating data brokerage systems is a growing interest of schools and policy makers in using the data available to inform policy and practice. The existing systems seem to contribute to a growing awareness of the possibilities of data use in terms of monitoring the effectiveness of policy measures. Existing examples of data brokerage are said to create more openness about sharing and comparing data at the school and city level. The studied examples created possibilities to talk about educational matters on city and school level in a more evidence-based manner. As such in most cases a conceptual result could be observed: data were used to confirm, complement or contradict intuition and to strengthen or challenge existing ideas. Discussing data with colleagues or external partners for instance helped to identify areas for improvement and needs for professional development.

Illustrations of instrumental data usage were rare. Some respondents stated that the brokered data did not offer enough starting points to direct actions. However, in some cases actions were taken, such as the control and (re)distribution of resources and also the activation of existing networks of stakeholders working together (for instance to encourage youngsters with a migrant background to enrol at university). At school level instrumental use in the context of selecting teachers was also mentioned. Instrumental use in schools still turns out to be strongly pupil oriented. If data on the level of individual pupils are available, these data are indeed often used instrumentally for monitoring and guiding individual pupils. The same data aggregated to class or school level are used less intensively or not at all. We have to keep in mind, however, that the fact that respondents don't report intensive instrumental use of the studied brokerage initiatives might also have to do with the complex nature of data-driven policy and practice. Often data have no clear implications and in order to inform policy choices, data from different sources have to be brought together. A consequence might be that in the perception of data users the link between particular data and a particular instrumental use is blurred.

Respondents mostly indicated that brokered data were seen as a useful instrument in highlighting existing opinions and underlining various problems in the functioning of schools and cities. Data were used as an input for shared decision making at city and school level without immediately leading to concrete actions. For instance, examples were found where data served as a means to convince others of existing or new viewpoints. In these cases the data did not influence the conceptualisations of the users, but affected the policy-making processes in a symbolic way. In several of the studied contexts available data and reports were used as a means to create a sense of urgency in order to make clear to others that changes were needed.

Examples of strategic data use refer to the use of data for the preparation of documents to be submitted to the education inspectorate. For instance in the Flemish context, schools were found to address specific data and support requests to the city administration in order to afterwards be able to convince the inspectorate that the monitoring of their educational functioning is an embedded activity. Whether such initiatives only lead to strategic use or also contribute to other types of use could not be determined given the exploratory nature of the case studies.

By looking at the above examples of results of data use, a pessimistic conclusion seems to be in place. This has to be nuanced however. The fact that the studied data brokerage initiatives do not yield many results so far does not imply that there is no data-driven policy and practice in place. Given the broad scope of the interviews, the focus during the interviews was not very intensively on the results of data use. It did however become clear that respondents currently do not spontaneously refer to data use results. The findings that most policy makers and practitioners do not talk about data use unless explicitly asked for do not imply that no data use is in place. Another interesting finding is that schools are very critical about data use at city level and vice versa. For instance internal stakeholders (such as head teachers, teachers and social assistants) report more intensive and more varied use of data in schools than external stakeholders. It seems that people are to some extent quite unaware of the data brokerage initiatives that exist at other educational levels. This can also contribute to an overly pessimistic view.

Some unintended types of data use were also found. Often reference is made to the possible disadvantages of information on individual schools entering the public domain. Such examples strongly illustrate the conceptual complexity in making the distinction between intended and unintended effects. For example, in some contexts city policymakers do not intend student performance data (which do not take into account the student background) to serve as a basis for school choice whereas more and more parents in the same context ask for the publication of such information on individual schools.

2.5.2 Explaining differences in the results of data brokerage

In the conceptual framework, different factors/conditions were discerned that explain differences in the results of data brokerage. The analysis of the project findings empirically supports the relevance of the three clusters of factors that were set forward: the policy context (see a), the users and their organisation (see b) and the knowledge brokerage system (see c). If the following features of these three factors are present the project findings indicate this is expected to facilitate successful data brokerage, if this is not the case the features can help explain why the process and results of data brokerage are still rather limited.

a. Characteristics of the policy context

Looking at the broader policy context in which data brokerage takes place again, three crucial elements have to be stressed: a context of trust, a context that stimulates data use and a context that provides the necessary resources.

- A context of trust

  In all case studies respondents stressed the importance of a context of trust. In many examples trust was reported to be a hindering factor for the brokerage process. Data brokerage is often related to an accountability perspective and this threatens the developmental approach that policy makers and practitioners find important for stimulating data use. Examples of lack of trust and its impact are quite diverse. Insufficient trust between partners is one of the reasons for not sharing data. It leads to a concern on the part of the stakeholders involved that data will be used detrimentally by other stakeholders (parents in the process of a school choice, governments in the process of allocations of funds). In some contexts a fundamental lack of trust is translated into a reluctance to collect data linked to individuals, even when made anonymous in the published dataset. In that way, it is not possible to have full information about the number of youngsters not attending school, as it was not possible to link data about school enrolment to data about the actual inhabitants of the city. As we will argue later, the argument of trust is closely related to the anonymity and confidentiality that characterises the data brokerage initiatives. For instance, grade retention data are in some contexts not compared between schools because both privacy issues and distrust between competing schools hinder practitioners and policy makers from being open about themselves.

  Decisive in building trust is guaranteeing transparency in the data brokerage process. In some contexts the different roles of cities in the education system can impede transparency. Sometimes it is for instance not clear whether the city as a broker is acting like an organising body of the school, as a regional policy maker, as a spokesman of public interest or as a political opinion maker. Transparency also means that data are only used as is officially announced. In one context a regional administration for instance did compare schools to inform the administration's policy, whereas schools were told data would not be used in order to compare schools.

  It has to be stressed that international cultural differences strongly influence how issues of privacy, accountability, trust and public availability of information are experienced. In the Netherlands and Sweden much openness in terms of data exchange and a quite commonly accepted accountability culture was found. This apparently goes together with a strong focus on output measures. The availability of (published) national test scores seems to be an objective and functional tool to follow up quality in the Dutch educational system. The Netherlands (and also Sweden) are much more open than Flanders and Germany concerning the public communication of information about individual schools.

- A context that stimulates data use

  Apart from the issue of trust, the policy context can also have an impact on data brokerage in several other ways. The legislative framework for instance can hinder or facilitate evidence-based policy and practice. For instance, laws that protect the rights of individuals can prevent the collection of data on relevant educational issues at micro, meso, region and macro level. Legislative frameworks were also found to differ strongly in terms of what is expected from schools and cities when it comes to data-driven policy and practice. In the Netherlands the central government is creating openness through the obligation to publish data in inspection reports, public reports, school brochures and on websites. In Flanders there are almost no incentives on the part of the government in this regard. If accountability procedures do not stimulate, follow up and/or sanction school managers and cities that are doing poorly in terms of data use, this can have a negative impact on the motivation to do better. Legislative differences also refer to the existence of free school choice in educational systems. Some respondents see the existence of free school choice as a stimulus for schools to stay competitive and to monitor their processes and output. As such, the limited kinds of data use at city and school level in some contexts seem to be caused by the absence of successful accountability measures. Needless to say, stimulating is not only a matter of creating enforceable expectations. A stimulus can also be the result of central and regional governments that serve as inspiring partners. If data-based policy is not aimed for/realised on the `above school levels' it will be difficult to build a shared awareness and to stimulate schools to invest in data-driven policy and practice. In addition, by building vertical and horizontal data brokerage networks the educational context can facilitate and stimulate data-driven policy.

  As can be read above, the two first principles, creating trust and stimulating data use by putting accountability measures in place, can be contradictory to some degree. Therefore one of the main concerns of policy makers is said to be realising a good balance between both autonomy and local development initiatives on the one hand and accountability on the other hand.

- A context that provides the necessary resources

  To summarise simply, many of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned that, as with every policy and management measure, improved use and distribution of data needs to be supported by the needed (financial and knowledge) resources.

b. Characteristics of the users and their organisation

Differences in data-driven policy and practices were also found within particular policy contexts. This means that characteristics of the users and their organisations also have to be taken into account in order to understand why data brokerage initiatives are or are not successful. The case studies provide evidence for the impact of data literacy, data culture, the organisations' policy-making capacities and a sense of urgency.

- Data literacy

  One major obstacle is the lack of knowledge and skills with regard to how to work with data. For experts brokered data are usually readily understandable but naturally data also have to be handled professionally by end users. Speaking in general terms we found that policy makers in schools and at city level are not (well) trained in data use. The interviewed stakeholders remark that the data brokerage initiatives produce data that is often too complicated to be used without the mastery of necessary skills. Many respondents in the process of data producing and use indicated that many of their colleagues in management positions have a lack of skills for the interpretation of statistics

and other kinds of data. We conclude that many educational policy makers and practitioners have little experience in using quality indicators. They often do not understand the underlying statistical analyses, and this can endanger the correct interpretation of the indicators. All too often this lack of data literacy means that valuable data are left underused or unused. Sometimes difficulties with even relatively simple statistical terms are reported. As such data literacy has to be a major concern. Training in the use of data should therefore be stressed more, since this knowledge is not self-evident. This support ought to focus not only on the correct interpretation of the indicators but also on the appropriate use of the data to evaluate the own processes and results. The correct interpretation is only a first step towards successful data use.

The importance of data literacy does not imply that all partners involved have to become statisticians at an expert level. To some extent the variation in competences in interpreting and using data that is found in all brokerage contexts does not necessarily have to be problematised. By joining forces and expertise different stakeholders can bring in their own expertise and opportunities. For the LOP case in Antwerp for instance it was very convenient that the city has a well developed research centre that is capable of handling and analysing data and writing reports. This had great influence (in terms of support) in how the LOP itself was able to have evidence-based discussions on educational matters on their agenda from which the city benefits as well.

• A culture of data use

Many respondents state that educational institutions still lack a strong culture of data use. Policymakers and practitioners in all cities argue that they use data more and more as a basis for policy and practice. However they also indicate that very often decisions are still largely based on intuition and experience, rather than on available evidence. Currently the use of data is not systematically embedded in education policy and practice. The current attitude towards data use is also illustrated by the existing reluctance to share information. Individuals, groups and organisations can only learn on the condition that they are prepared to reflect on their own functioning. Too many potential end users of data still regard the reflection which data use requires as a form of external control. There is often a lack of openness and an absence of willingness to engage in critical reflection with respect to their own functioning. This is not only a matter of data users fearing a negative evaluation. The case studies showed that sometimes the non-sharing of data can also be the result of colleagues who do not want to brag about their good performances. Low self-esteem can be a reason too. Many data users are not willing to show off with their good practices according to some respondents. Regardless of these remarks, data communication within and between schools is said to be very useful, but not enough head teachers and partner organisations appear to be willing to exchange data. Often there is no systematic exchange of data between schools, institutions and social organisations. Data and statistics are still experienced by some respondents as something suspicious. Some indicate that statistical questions often only bring up the socially desirable answers. In other words, some believe that you can prove everything with statistics, their attitude is that data are often primarily used to prove what is wanted to be proved.

• Policy-making capacities

Only when team members are convinced of the possibilities offered by data brokerage, can genuine progress be made towards data use in a worthwhile and productive manner. Moreover, it has been suggested that general characteristics of organisational functioning can have an impact on the use of data relating to said functioning. As such data brokerage also depends on the policy-making capacities of the organisation using the data. In the theoretical framework

we set forward eight aspects of policy-making capacities as key factors of promoting knowledge brokerage. The case studies provide empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that the quality of knowledge brokerage will be better in organisations which exhibit these eight aspects to a high degree than in those which do not exhibit these aspects or do so to a lesser degree. For instance a lot of remarks by respondents concerned the school culture in which strong leadership, shared goals and ambition and openness to data and to discussing strengths and weaknesses seem to be important characteristics. The impact of the school principal concerns the extent to which he or she succeeds in creating an open data culture which is a prerequisite to the facilitation of data brokerage. The impact of professional relationships between data users also has to be understood from this perspective. It is firstly up to the schools and cities themselves to create opportunities for reflecting at regular intervals on their own responsibilities and on the way in which these are performed in the light of the available data. Again, there is an important role for the management team in making collaboration with regard to data use a regular and organised practice. Equally, it is up to individual teachers and administrators to break through the isolation of day-to-day practice and commit themselves to collaborative forms of data use. As shown previously, these responsibilities have to be complemented with the availability of a set of (external) support initiatives.

- A sense of urgency

In some contexts we found that the use of data was initiated after a crisis situation. It seems that being confronted with a context that threatens the existence or the core functioning of a school or a city can be a stimulus for engaging in activities that contribute to data-driven policy and practice. Examples of such contexts at school level are a negative report by the inspectorate, complaints by parents or a large fall in the school population. At city level the growing interest for data brokerage was also introduced by the growing sense of urgency resulting from the changing educational and social contexts. The case studies indicated major structural challenges (migration, unqualified school leaving and unemployment) that are similar in different cities and that have a strong impact on the performance of (individuals in) education systems. Being confronted with such challenges is expected to contribute to the engagement of individuals and organisations in data brokerage initiatives that question the effectiveness of existing working methods.

Finally, we want to remark that the reasons for not using data are often situated outside characteristics of the users themselves and of their own organisation. Principals for instance refer to the complexity of the data system which makes it hard to interpret data and to the fact that they lack the time and resources to invest in data use. However some end users do succeed in using the existing knowledge brokerage systems without `complaining' about these external problems/restrictions. This implies that characteristics of the knowledge brokerage system are sometimes referred to in order to hide and minimise one's own shortcomings as an individual and as an organisation. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that some characteristics of the knowledge brokerage system have to be in place to facilitate the use of the system.

c. Characteristics of the knowledge brokerage system

To explain differences in the effectiveness of data brokerage systems, we must also take the characteristics of the knowledge brokerage systems themselves into account.

A first decisive feature of data brokerage is content related. Brokered data should be informative on themes that are considered to be relevant by the end users themselves. This requires a balanced battery of available indicators and benchmarks that enables data users to focus on those particular elements

which they perceive to be most relevant. Data users not only have different priorities, perceptions and cultures but also different problems and – as a consequence – different solutions. This makes it advisable to give data users the opportunity to choose (to a certain extent) the indicators that are of special interest to them. Data brokerage systems should invite schools to be selective and to make flexible use of the data. The challenge is to put together a balanced set of indicators. Additionally, respondents in the case studies stress the importance of having the opportunity to compare with similar contexts (schools or cities) and to compare over time. According to respondents, commitment of end users in the selection of data to be brokered on various levels facilitates data collecting and thus also data-driven policy making. This is also expected to contribute to the transition of data over different levels.

In order to be informative, indicators in a knowledge brokerage system also have to be valid and reliable. Although respondents do not always use the appropriate terminology in voicing their opinions about these requirements, they are aware of the relevance of the underlying principles. Most respondents however express their confidence in the validity and reliability of the indicators given in the existing knowledge brokerage systems.

In most case studies concerns about the public availability of data are raised. The finding that comparable data are asked for does not imply that data users have to compare themselves with other identifiable schools. Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality is an important issue. Respondents indicate that data brokerage processes preferably have to take place in an environment that is free of the involvement and pressure on the part of the public. Making brokered data public could jeopardise the expected positive results in terms of internal quality improvement initiatives. As mentioned earlier, cultures in the studied countries differ in this regard. While an individual identification number for pupils is commonplace in some educational contexts, it is highly contested in other contexts. On the one hand respondents state that privacy is an important right, on the other hand they argue that respecting privacy principles is hindering data brokerage.

The fear of league tables is also a big obstacle. In many educational contexts, relevant data are delivered to schools but comparisons between schools are often still feared due to the expected consequences of ranking schools. When it comes to comparisons of schools, several approaches are found in the studied knowledge brokerage system: no comparison, comparison with a mean (for instance city level), comparison with similar, unidentifiable schools and comparisons with other identifiable schools. Many (local) governments are actively seeking methods of `constructive comparison' (not shaming and blaming) and benchmarking (data comparison with peers in comparable situations).

Suggestions for further research and development

As a general recommendation, we suggest that a standardised tool should be created. This tool based on the theoretical framework can help people to think about their role in data brokerage. This tool would also build up evidence so that benchmarks and standards can help to evaluate data brokerage in education.

A first overall basic design of this tool is provided in the figure below:
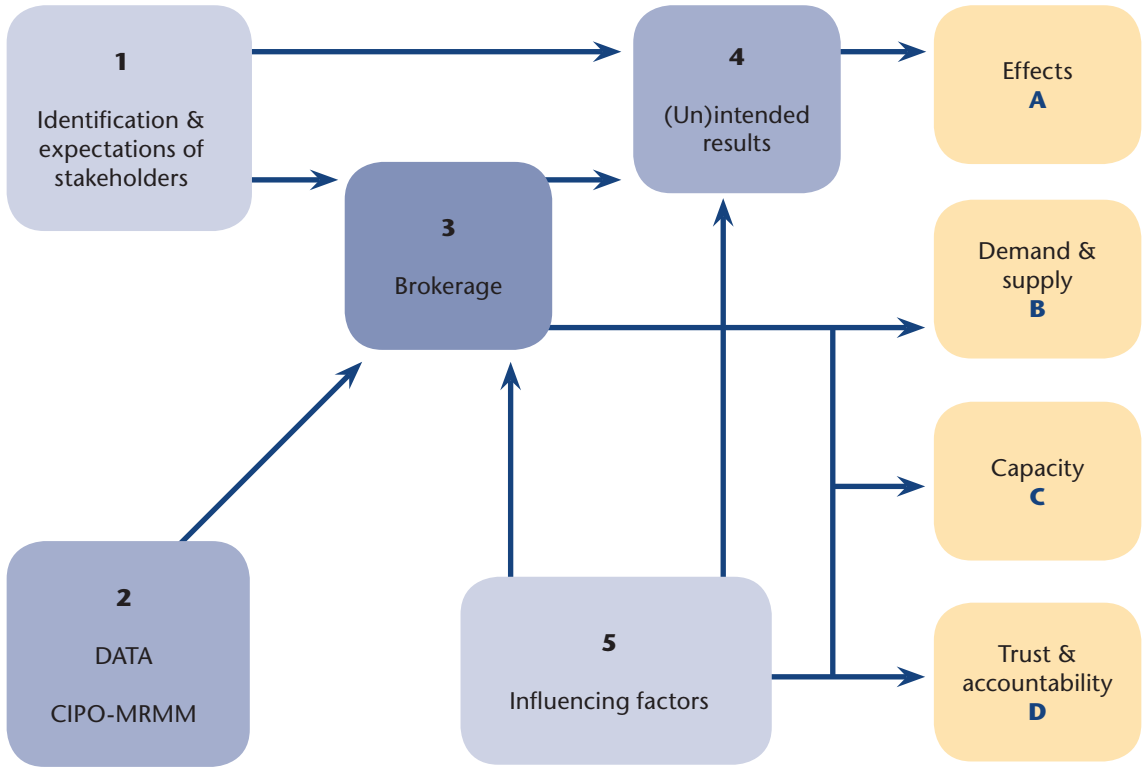
Working on the CIPO-MRMM model during the Rotterdam meeting

2.6   Example of a completed template

An overview of the templates that were developed is given in the appendix and on the website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu. On the website you can also find the completed templates. Here below you can find an example.

Project description

Good Practices in Data Driven Educational Policy Making

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1. Identification of the Project

Name of the project: Central Help Desk (= for Reporting School Truancy and Disruptive behavior of pupils) (in Dutch: "Centraal Meldpunt")
Location (country, city): Belgium, Antwerp
Responsible institution(s), involved partners: Schools, School networks, Pupil Guidance Centers, City of Antwerp, Local Police, justice system
The project exist since: 2003
Duration of the project: ever lasting
Contact information (for additional information about the Project): Bram Wellens, +32478782443 , bram.wellens@stad.antwerpen.be

2. Context and general features of the Project

Situate the project in the local educational policy context. Describe the general features of the current functioning of the project.
The general educational policy of the city of Antwerp aims at designing and managing cross-association structural cooperation and educational projects. The underlying aim through all our actions and projects is making sure that all the city's children and young people leave education with a qualification giving access to higher education or to the labour market. School truancy and other disruptive behaviour are commonly seen as symptomatic for low motivation of pupils and the risk of unqualified school leaving. The cooperation between school networks in this shared Central Help Desk is not only exemplary for the way schools and school networks work together in Antwerp, but also an incentive for outreaching collaboration and data-sharing and analyzing.

3. Aims and content of the knowledge brokerage system

What are/were the main goals for setting up the system? Who's and which knowledge demands were the reason for initiating the system?
Getting a global and school- and neighbourhood specific view on disruptive behavior of school pupils. The Central Help Desk is not only gathering the data from schools, the city statistical service, etc., but also an active networking agency from where school policy is driven, on the meso- and microlevel. The goal is to work structurally together to handle behavior of youngsters with all stakeholders together in a coherent, multilevel approach.

Provide a description of the indicators used in the system?
- days of unlegitimated school absence: when a pupil has been absent at school for more then 10 half days during the school year, this is reported to the Central Help Desk (whereas the standard for worrying absence at school in Flanders is generally set at 30 half days). - Disruptive behavior: When pupils because of their behavior have to be sent on a "time-out" this is also reported to the Central Help Desk. The Central Help Desk network searches solutions on the individual level for the worse cases and coordinates the access to time-out-programs.

Situate the indicators in de CIPO-MRMM-model

	Context	Input	Proces	output
Macro				X
Regio	XX	X	XX	XX
Meso	X	XX	X	XX
Micro			X	X

Illustrate how data are provided to policy makers and/or schools (preferably in attachment)?
- by yearly general reports - by school truancy mirror reports ("spijbelspiegel"= "truancy-mirror-reports" about truancy in this school. The reports are made up together with schools to get a view on the data of the specificity in school truancy in their school)

4. Brokerage process

Illuminate the functioning of the brokerage system (who collects data, who analyses data, who distributes information?)
- Collecting of data: Central Help Desk (city administration), city statistical service, Flemish dept. of education. - Analysis: Central Help Desk, city statistical service, cabinet of education. Distribution of the data: city administration + LOP - Distribution: Central Help Desk (school reports, one-to-one communication, feeding the Central Help Desk-network itself), cabinet for education (press reports, policy planning), City education council and school networks

Explain the role (functions, responsibilities) of the city in the knowledge brokering system (cf. data gathering and knowledge building, knowledge exchange between demands and supplies and/or developing capacity)

City gathers all data from own sources (e.g. demographic data, data on housing, data on city development) and from external sources (e.g. school / pupils related data from dept. of education, …)
City analyses the data.
City distributes the information.
City creates awareness about the challenge(s)

5. Evaluation

Why do you consider this to be a good practice? Why do you expect this data system to be instructive and inspiring for other partners?

The Central Help Desk provokes data driven policy and acting on different levels, for the city education policy in the way it supports schools. It inspires the macro-level for further legislative and policy initiatives, but also on the meso-level of the schools and the micro-level in the way teachers and coaches cope with disruptive behavior.

This is worth a lot in a rather scattered educational landscape, whereas the school system in Flanders in general is based on a huge freedom in the organization of education and a lot of different partners are involved, also on the micro-level where many institutions and functionaries are involved in the coaching of youngsters.

Is there information available on how the data system is used by policymakers and/or schools? (cf. (un) intended use (instrumental, conceptual, symbolic, strategic)?

- School reports
- annually reports on school truancy
- statistics about the use of time-out programs
- Flemish legislation and action-plan on school truancy

6. Additional information

If available, list interesting sources for additional reading on the Project ((online)references, documents uploaded to the Google Site, …)

http://www.antwerpen.be/eCache/OND/80/22/329.html
http://www.klasse.be/leraren/archief/13915

A visited school in Rotterdam

2.7 Literature

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*The SWOT analysis by our "critical friends" will
be helpful to develop our local education governance.
(Munich)*

*To our surprise the SWOT about our networking
after only three days was like a mirror for us.
(Rotterdam)*

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES FOR MUTUAL LEARNING BETWEEN CITIES, BASED ON PEER REVIEWING, TO REVIEW LOCAL POLICY AND PRACTICES

(Author of this report: Marleen Baillieul)

3.1 General information and context

3.1.1 Literature and definition of `Peer Review'

The definition of the term Peer Review in the present context has not been specifically defined.

However, the expression has a shared meaning when reading reports, documents etc.

> Peer review is basically a systematic examination and assessment of the performance or practices of a specific unit of governance by a group of other units of the same level and range or by an international network of experts.

The aim is to help the reviewed unit to improve its policy making, adopt best practices and comply with established standards and principles. The examination is conducted on a no adversarial basis, and it relies heavily on mutual trust among the cities involved in the review, as well as on their shared confidence in the process (Pagani, 2002).

Colleagues who work on similar projects but in different cities meet and evaluate one another's projects or policies. In doing so, they learn about how others are tackling the situation and can see their own work in a new light. [3]

The most elaborated version of peer reviews in the context of study visits is provided by the toolkit developed by the Inti-Cities project (part of the `Eurocities' programme). The process includes seven steps, divided into three sections (preparation, assessment and reporting). [4]

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3   Inclusive cities for Europe, Toolkit for mutual Learning.
4   Cf: Benchmarking Integration Governance in Europe's Cities. Lessons from the Inti-cities project.
        EUROCITIES 2009. Available online:
        http://www.eurocities.eu/minisites/dive/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=62&Itemid=70

Preparation
Step 1: Defining the benchmark and the indicators. Deciding where the input of peers could add value, setting standards and formulating indicators.
Step 2: Training for peer review teams. An opportunity to clarify key concepts, for host cities to learn about preparing an initial report, and for the peers to practice interviews.
Step 3: Host city's "initial report". The host city teaches the peers about the context in which it operates and evaluates itself against each of the benchmark.
Assessment
Step 4: Peers desk review, the initial report. They evaluate performance, develop a hypothesis, and decide what they still need to know and who they need to meet.
Step 5: Peer review visit: Peers interview relevant municipality staff, politicians, partner organisations, migrant groups and service users to cross-check their initial hypothesis and develop their assessment.
Step 6: making an assessment. Peers begin to develop an assessment based on the evidence they gather through each interview.
Reporting
Step 7: feedback. Peers report on headline findings at the end of their visit. They produce a comprehensive written report, and present it to the host city.

Tomislav Tudjman (2010), consultant at Risbo and member of this EBPP project, provides a similar model reflecting the experiences of the peer reviewing process of the Connections Project (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities):

Graph 2: Six Phases of a European Peer Review

Graph: cf. Tudjman 2010

1. The preparatory phase

   The first phase of the review often consists of background analysis and some form of self-evaluation by the country under review. This phase includes work on documentation and data as well as a questionnaire. The questionnaire, which can be a sophisticated instrument, is sent to the country for responses by the competent authorities or as an agenda for a dialogue in the next phase. Peers must be recruited and trained.

2. The consultation phase

   In this phase the peer review visit takes place. Peers visit the city and carry out their consultation. This part contains a tour of the premises (on-site visits), and interviews with different groups of stakeholders (such as interest groups, civil society and academics etc). At the end of this phase, the reporter prepares a draft of the final report, which usually follows a standardised model comprising an analytical section, where the country performance is examined in detail and individual concerns are expressed, and an evaluation or summary section setting forth the conclusions and recommendations. The secretariat — in most peer review processes, but not always — shares the report in draft with the examiners and with the reviewed country and may make adjustments it considers justified before the draft is submitted to the members of the body responsible for the review.

3. The assessment phase

   The draft report is discussed in the plenary meeting of the body responsible for the review. The examiners lead the discussion, but the whole body is encouraged to participate extensively. Following discussions, and in some cases negotiations, among the members of the body, including the reviewed state, the final report is adopted, or merely noted, by the whole body. Generally, approval of the final report is by consensus, unless the procedures of the particular peer review specify otherwise. In some cases, the procedures may call for the final report to state the differences among the participants. In some cases, NGOs also have the opportunity to influence the discussion by submitting papers and documents. As already mentioned, the final report and particularly its recommendations form an important basis for follow-up monitoring of the performance of the state and, ultimately, for a subsequent peer review.

It must be noted however that as opposed to the current project, the `Connections' project had a focus on the concrete adaptation of policies whereas the current project is instead working on building a network, finding good practices, improving cooperation and creating learning opportunities. The project partners have to evaluate the functionality of the instruments applied and adapt them to the needs and possibilities of the study visits.

3.1.2   Peer review in this Evidence-based Policy and Practice Project

In this EBPP project, we studied education practices in several European middle-sized cities, based on a defined and systematic review structure. The participants were prepared and the exchange was carefully structured: good practices in the field of data brokerage by cities were gathered, some cities were selected based on pre-defined criteria, templates were drawn up to prepare the review and other templates to run the review, each review exercise resulted in a report that assessed accomplishments, spelled out shortfalls and made recommendations. "Peer review is characterized by open dialogue and interactive (mutual) investigation and learning. It does not have a punitive dimension and cannot serve as a method to resolve disputes" . [5]

....

5   DAC/UNEG, 2007

The reason why the elaboration of a method for study visits has such an importance in this project is because of the possibilities for improvement of the quality of study visits in which the project members have been participating for years. Peer review seems to be a method that can contribute interesting aspects to these – until now rather open-ended – visits.

Literature study teaches us that peer review can be used in a broad range of areas, from human rights to democratic governance and social affairs. In each of these fields, peer review, directly or indirectly, can serve the following purposes [6] :

- *Policy dialogue*: during the peer review process, countries/cities systematically exchange information, attitudes and views on decisions and their application. This dialogue can be the basis for further cooperation.

- *Transparency*: the reviewed city has the chance to present and clarify national rules, practices and procedures and explain its policy. It can add relevant documentation to it.

- *Capacity building*: peer review is a mutual learning process in which best practices are exchanged. The process can therefore serve as an important capacity-building instrument – not only for the city under review, but also for the peer reviewers participating in the process.

But on the other hand, the theoretical peer review methodology also has some characteristics that are not easily compatible with the context of the study visits as we know them through the meetings between the middle-sized cities visiting each other's education practices. The theoretical peer review methodology comprises too many processes to be carried out in visits of just one or several days, by a group of participants who sometimes do not know each other beforehand and have various interests in executing a real peer review or in the projects. Often the added value is limited to the personal development of the individual participating in the visit. The organising of a study visit is therefore often seen as hard labour with limited `results'. Nevertheless, these study visits are important and needed. During the project, we noticed how a well conducted peer review process can make a big difference between catching a glimpse of another project and really understand what's it about and which lessons every participant can translate to his hometown situation!

For these reasons, we gather the characteristic aspects of this typical setting into a toolkit that must be applicable to study visits between cities that would like to give insight into each one's city policy and practices in the field of education. We may not lose sight of the fact that this toolkit must be in the first place a very practical toolkit, since the study visits count with typical characteristics in the field of employees involved, the expertise of the delegation members and peers, the agenda, the expectations of the visitors etc. This means that crucial aspects of the peer review method are abandoned in favour of the practical applicability of the toolbox.

To comply with the initial EU goals connected with the Call for proposals, the peer review concept applied in the project `Evidence-based Policy and Practice' must satisfy the following demands:

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6   Tudjman, T., Peer review: literature. Working paper. 2010

The peer reviews must deliver the following **results**:

- help to bridge cultural and structural differences between the different models of education in the participant's home cities;

- facilitate knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer regarding good education policy and practices at a local government level;

- provide learning opportunities for the visiting city as well as for the host city (two-way communication);

- allow each participant to draw conclusions as to the transferability of innovative knowledge brokerage initiatives to his or her home city situation.

3.1.3   Methodology

The methodology used by the two task forces of the EBPP project (Networking and CIPO/brokerage) has been described in the respective chapters of this journal.

In the current chapter we develop a general toolkit for study visits based on peer reviews, where cities meet and evaluate one another's projects or policies and learn from each other. The methodology is an adaptation of methods that have been developed and tested in previous projects, in the EBPP project and during several visits in the margin of this project [7] between member cities of Eurocities. The principles of `best practice' in peer review (or `most suited' practice for this kind of visits) will be listed here. In this process several aspects of peer review turn out to be a good method in helping to organise and structure study visits at city level.

3.1.4   The end products to create

The development and adaptation of the peer review method must lead to four end products. In order to obtain these different results, we create two tools: a website and a toolkit for peer reviews.

1. a **website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu** with information about

   a. The differences in the educational structures of each city. Objective information about the school structure (cf. Eurydice [8]) can be complemented with subjective information about the experiences of the peers in that city and their findings. This information forms a large part of the self-assessment information, the first step in the peer review technique. How is the educational system of a specific country/city structured? To explain this, each partner provides a short description and further references to texts and Internet files explaining the system. Since this might not be enough to understand the underlying reasons of this structure, further exploration might be necessary. With personalised stories we try to bring the unknown realities to life.

   b. Good practices of each city in the field of Early School Leaving, Quality in Education, Preschool and Parental Involvement and Vocational Training and Education (Labour market). These fields are the workshops of Eurocities Working groups.

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7   Eurocities meeting in September 2010, and a one-week study visit by a delegation of Gothenburg and Stockholm to Antwerp October 2010

8   http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php

c. The toolkit to organise a study visit by cities learning from each other's practices in education, and in which both visiting and host city must receive the benefits of this visit.

2. A **toolkit** containing guidelines for peer reviews. This toolkit must be a very practical guide, easily adaptable to a situation in which two or more cities meet to learn from each other's practices in education. The toolkit will also appear on the website mentioned above.

3.2   Towards a toolkit of mutual learning based on peer reviewing, in order to review local policy and practices

If you ask the participants of the Evidence-based Policy and Practices projects if they are convinced that they did a peer review, most of them will hesitate. Participants of the two task forces of the Evidence-based project speak about `light' *peer reviewing, study visits with in-depth interviews* or about *mutual learning*, but they try to avoid the word 'peer reviewing'. The reason is that peer reviewing has a strict theoretical framework and is often described in literature as a methodology with pre-defined steps to follow. The kind of study visits we undertook in this EBPP project or in Eurocities meetings, are of a different kind.

Moreover, since there is no pressure from politics, authorities or money to make an elaborate study of the visit they make, this kind of visit will always be characterised by a certain `open-ended atmosphere'. However, to come to an inspiring environment of mutual learning for both visitors as hosts, we elaborate this toolkit with practical advice to improve the quality of this study visits. That is what characterises the differences between theoretical frameworks of peer reviews in a structured and closed setting, and on the other hand this kind of meeting between cities where the main goals is to learn from each other, and not to follow strictly pre-described procedures.

In this chapter, we try to capture the characteristics of the kind of study visits for which we are setting up guidelines in order to improve the quality of these visits. These findings are based on the experiences in the EBPP project and also in peer reviews during the Eurocities meeting in Antwerp (Sept 2010) and a study visit by Gothenburg and Stockholm to Antwerp (Oct 2010)[9].

3.2.1   The characteristics of study visits of local education policy and practice

The characteristics of the above-mentioned study visits of local education policy and practice can be summarised as follows:

- Delegations where the participants hardly know each other;

- Where the level of knowledge and expertise of the visitors in the visited themes varies significantly => a strict match cannot be found between 'supposed peers' but there is a mutual sense of learning from each other, adding relevant knowledge and evaluation to each other's practices;

- The level of language knowledge varies;

- Restricted possibilities for the host city to organise these study visits (staff, time, etc.);

- A lack of time in the agenda of the visits to include several preparatory meetings, analysing meetings or feedback sessions with the peers that were reviewed before;

- Most of the visitors come from abroad and prefer to make a physical visit instead of a review in a closed room

9   Cf: Tesseur, Luc: Peer Review, and EBPP LukkiWikki, Peer Review

3.2.2   Guidelines: General remarks and lessons to learn

Lessons we learned from the mentioned peer reviews:

ORGANISATION

- It takes time to organise peer reviewing!

    Host cities must be aware of the amount of work the organisation of such visits means. Not only the logistical organisation takes time, but also the communication beforehand with the peers and with the participants takes a lot of time, peers have to prepare presentations and information, and on the day of the visit all peers are involved in the programme. The preparation phase is very loaded and takes a lot of time and energy. But the better the peers and participants are prepared, the easier the reviews go.

- Provide a process manager.

    Both Eurocities members as members of the Gothenburg/Stockholm delegation mentioned that they would have liked the presence of a kind of process manager: a person who not only introduces the method to the participants, but also supervises the process during the visits, participates in the agenda setting of the visits, leads the analysis and feedback sessions, supervises the translation of the host situation to the home town situation of the visitors, etc.

    Different participants of the EBPP project mentioned they would like to give advice and consultancy in the peer reviewing by other cities. Please contact the project members for more information.

- Work with small groups of reviewers

    A respondent mentioned the number of max. 8 participants

- Focus on unique projects, few peers and specific questions

    It can help to focus the group and to come to joint conclusions that the visitors can translate to their home town situation.

- Divide the programme per visit into small parts of about 30 minutes

    Meeting different speakers and focusing on different aspects of the main theme can help to keep all participants on board, including those who do not have as much expertise in this field.

- Think now about the way the analyses of the visits will be carried out

    Will you carry out an analysis after each visit? Then you will have to provide the time in your programme. Or do you analyse all visits at the end of your meeting, or each evening at dinner time? Can you carry out an analysis during dinner or do you need a meeting room with beamer? Etc.

- Do not lose too much energy in finding or gathering the very right peers.

    In this kind of meetings, there are always visitors with very divergent expertise and interests per visit.

- Visit projects on the ground

    Most of the participants prefer to go to visit a project; even it is an empty classroom, instead of review peers in a closed room. They argue that you have to speak with people on the spot, in a combination of informal contacts with different stakeholders of the same project at the same

time. They argue that visits stuck longer in their mind than reviews.

- Provide enough informal time (with peers or amongst the visitors)

Participants of the Eurocities meeting mentioned that they would have liked more time for informal talks.

PREPARATION the day before

- Use a step-by-step peer review instruction and explain it in detail to all visitors

In the Eurocities meeting, participants mentioned that they got an insight into the meaning of these reviews, but acted like they used to do before". This has been tackled by a good introduction in the Gothenburg/Stockholm meeting.

- Divide roles (moderator, secretary and reporter) to help the delegation to keep focused. If more visits are planned, these roles can change per visit.

In the EBPP project, we also used the role of the `spy': when meeting the peers after the review in an informal environment (dinner, reception), visitors kept on the conversation of the `official' review. Sometimes the information was now put in another light with more personal thoughts or unofficial arguments. These conversations can of course not be part of the analysis, but sometimes help to understand why things happen the way they do.

- Inform about the feedback that is asked by the projects to visit.

THE REVIEW

- Send a template of a slide show presentation to every project that will be visited.

Out of the networking task force of the EBPP project, we learn that using a slide show template for the presentation of their project makes it easier for the project to prepare the presentation, it keeps the focus on the main goals of the review, and makes it possible for the visitors to analyse and compare the different projects/presentations.

- A slide show presentation as introduction to a project/visit has to be `to the point', `enthusiastic', `distinctive', `giving a view over the main topics of the project' and must certainly `not be overly elaborate'.

- Working with different communicative methods helps to get an open dialogue between peers and visitors.

ANALYSIS

- Make time for the analysis in your programme.

If not it will be forgotten immediately after the visit!

- Choose the right method to make the analysis before you start it.

E.g. making a SWOT with the visitors, simply write down the most important observations or make an elaborated analysis on a prepared template.

- Translate this project to your home town situation.

Is this possible or not? Why? This exercise may be a good starting point to give feedback to the project or to initialise a two-way communication.

- Exchange contact details of peers and visitors.
- Provide enough time in the programme for analysis of the reviews.

GENERAL INSIGHTS

Although every setting is different, we are convinced that the above mentioned guidelines can be helpful in a lot of situations where the peer review methodology is used as a tool for study visits. Reactions from different reviewees were that *'The SWOT analysis by our "critical friends" will be helpful to develop our local education governance', that '(to our surprise) the SWOT about our networking after only three days was like a mirror for us' or that 'This is the first time such an analysis is made of our work, and it gives us a lot to think about. I agree with the outcomes and they also were an eye-opener'.*

Since the difference between a normal study visit and a peer review lies in the elaboration of the two-way communication and the creation of a win-win situation, the basis for a successful peer review is trust between the reviewers and the reviewed projects. This can be obtained by creating a critical friendship and an open communication, focusing on the topics that were agreed on and by transparency in the topics that are discussed and in the procedure. Creating trust can be reached by e.g. providing a good acquaintance procedure, providing enough information about the procedure or the background information about the project.

That leads us immediately to the major importance of a good preparation: Matching demand and supply, working out a standardized procedure and providing background information. For almost all participants, this was the first time they were 'prepared' when they went to visit a project. The fact that people are already informed about the basic information of the project, does not only create trust between reviewers, but also gives self-confidence to the reviewers in order to be able to carry out the peer review.

Despite these guidelines and insights, carrying out a peer review is not always easy to do. Therefore, several members of the EBPP-project are willing to help other cities with the preparation of peer reviews. You can contact the project members for more information.

3.3   The ICEA toolkit, based on the characteristics and guidelines of this kind of study visits

We named this set of guidelines the ICEA guidelines: "I see Ya = I see you" = International Critical Education Assessment. This is meant to be a toolkit for critical colleagues in qualitative study visiting helping future study visits to perform better when it comes to outcome and results.

The toolkit exists out

- An overview of the steps to take when organising a peer review, with indication of the tasks of the host city, the projects to be visited, and the visitors.

- Questions that should be asked by one of these three involved partners and templates that can be used for presentation or assessment. The exemplary questions in each phase of the process should be seen just as examples, not to limit the use of the guidelines for other topics.

Peer reviewing

ICEA toolkit with guidelines

ORGANISATION

1/2

It takes time to organise peer reviewing!
- Host cities must be aware of the amount of work the organisation of such visits means. Not only the logistical organisation takes time, but also the communication beforehand with the peers and with the participants takes a lot of time, peers have to prepare presentations and information, and the day of the visit, all peers are involved into the program. The preparation phase is very loaded and takes a lot of time / energy. But the better the peers and the participants are prepared, the easier the reviews go.

Provide a process manager
- Both Eurocities members as members of the Gothenburg/Stockholm delegation mentioned they would have liked the presence of a kind of process manager: a person that not only introduces the method to the participants, but also supervises the process during the visits, he participates in the agenda setting of the visits, leads the analysing- and feedback sessions, he supervises the translation of the host situation to the home town situation of the visitors,…
- Different participants of the EBPP project mentioned they would like to give advice and consultancy in the peer reviewing by other cities. Please contact the project members for more information.

Work with small groups of reviewers
- A respondent mentioned the number of max. 8 participants

Focus on unique projects, few peers and specific questions
- It can help to focus the group and to come to joint conclusions that the visitors can translate to their home town situation.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

ORGANISATION

2/2

Divide the program per visit into small parts of about 30 minutes
- Meeting different speakers and focusing on different aspects of the main theme can help to keep all participants on board, also the ones that don't have so many expertises in this field.

Think now about the way the analyses of the visits will be done
- Will you make an analysis after each visit? Then you will have to provide the time in your program. Or do you analyse all visits at the end of your meeting, or each evening at dinner time? Can you make an analysis during dinner or do you need a meeting room with beamer? …

Don't loose too much energy in finding or gathering the very right peers.
- In this kind of meetings, there are always visitors with very divergent expertise and interests per visit.

Visit projects on the floor
- Most of the participants prefer to go to visit a project; even it is an empty classroom, instead of review peers in a closed room. They argue that you have to speak with people on the spot, in combination of informal contacts with different stakeholders of the same project at the same time. They argue that visits stuck longer in their mind than reviews.

Provide enough informal time (with peers or amongst the visitors)
- Participants of the Eurocities meeting mentioned they would have liked more time for informal talks.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

ORGANISATION

1/5

The goals of the preparation phase are:
- Selection of the projects
- Explanation of the goals to the projects
- Information to the participants about the selected projects
- Checking of the choices of the participants
- Information to the project about the interests of the participants

The host city asks <u>the visitors</u> for their specific goals. E.g.:
- ✓ To share expertise about certain themes with other cities (which are confronted with the same amount of problems)
- ✓ Development of collaborative projects to enhance knowledge on education topics
- ✓ Network analysis (partners: who, why, what)
- ✓ Objectives of the project
- ✓ Target groups
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Use of evidence in policy
- ✓ Seeking opportunities for cross-border collaboration
- ✓ Inspiration to shape the project
- ✓ Other:

Some of the main issues or questions that will be discussed are …

HOST CITY

ORGANISATION

2/5

The host city asks <u>the projects</u> for their specific goals E.g.:
- ✓ To share expertise about certain themes with other cities (which are confronted with the same amount of problems)
- ✓ Development of collaborative projects to enhance knowledge on education topics
- ✓ Network analysis (partners: who, why, what)
- ✓ Objectives of the project
- ✓ Target groups
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Use of evidence in policy
- ✓ Seeking opportunities for cross-border collaboration
- ✓ Inspiration to shape the project
- ✓ Other:

Some of the main issues or questions that will be discussed are …

HOST CITY

ORGANISATION

INFORMATION

3/5

- The host city presents the main social and political characteristics of its education policy on the website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu or by mail.
- The visiting city provides this information to the participants of the visit. The visitors are supposed to be prepared for the visit.
- The host city sends a template to the projects in PowerPoint format that they can use for the presentation of the project during the review. In this PowerPoint the main items of the review (see goal setting and matching) are presented (see below). The projects use these PowerPoint files to make their presentation. The fact of working with PowerPoint templates makes the reviews comparable to each other, gives structure to the review and takes care of keeping close to the theme during the review.

- Items of the PowerPoint template can be:
  - The wicked problem the project works on …
  - The project tries to tackle ….
  - Some facts & figures
  - The project in brief + Why this project?
  - How? Procedures and routines. Who decides on what? Financials? Etc
  - Phases in the project. How has the project grown?
  - Critical factors/future plans
  - Extra information
  - SWOT analysis of the project

HOST CITY

ORGANISATION

MATCHING

4/5

- The host city informs the visited projects about the goals of the visit, the functions and special interests of the visitors, the feedback they can expect (SWOT analysis, formal feedback meeting, informal feedback at a reception, etc.)

ORGANISATION

- The host city provides enough time in the programme for the preparation of the visits, the writing of the reports, and the formulation of the analysis and feedback of the visits. They also provide enough time where visitors and visited people can meet a second time in a more informal way to talk about the feedback.

HOST CITY

example

Programme for Stockholm's visit to Antwerp

Day 1
9am: Information on Education in Flanders and in Antwerp
10am: Introduction to the peer review method
10.30am: The visitors prepare their visits

Afternoon: visits

Diner: meeting between the participants before the dinner to resume the most important ideas. One participant is secretary: he/she takes notes and takes some short minutes of these findings.

Day 2 - ...
Visits with regularly meetings between the participants to resume the most important ideas.

Last day

Meeting between the visitors to resume all findings of this week. Composition of a SWOT per visit or for the general meeting.

Feedback moment where the visitors inform the host city about the findings. Discussion.

Informal meeting (e.g. walking diner or reception) with all the participants: host city, project members and visitors.

HOST CITY

ORGANISATION

1/2

The visitors inform the host city about their goals:

To share expertise about certain themes with other cities (which are confronted with the same amount of problems)
✓ Development of collaborative projects to enhance knowledge on education topics
✓ Network analysis (partners: who, why, what)
✓ Objectives of the project
✓ Target groups
✓ Finance
✓ Use of evidence in policy
✓ Seeking opportunities for cross-border collaboration
✓ Inspiration to shape the project
✓ Other:

Some of the main issues or questions that will be discussed are ...

VISITING CITY

ORGANISATION

VISITING CITY

INFORMATION

- The visitors read the main social and political characteristics of the education policy of the host city on the website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu or by mail.
- The visitors are supposed to be informed before the visit.

MATCHING

- The visitors inform the visited project about their functions, specific knowledge and special interests concerning this visit.

ORGANISATION

ORGANISATION

VISITED PROJECT

✓ **One of the main differences between a one-way study visit and a peer review lies in the active role for the visited project.**

ORGANISATION

2/3

INFORMATION
- The visited projects send information to the visitors (via the host city) regarding their expressed interests.
- The visited projects send their main question or item for feedback to the visitors.
- The visited project informs the visitors about their expectation regarding feedback and analysis of the project.

- ✓ To share expertise about certain themes with other cities (which are confronted with the same amount of problems)
- ✓ Development of collaborative projects to enhance knowledge on education topics
- ✓ Network analysis (partners: who, why, what)
- ✓ Objectives of the project
- ✓ Target groups
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Use of evidence in policy
- ✓ Seeking opportunities for cross-border collaboration
- ✓ Inspiration to shape the project
- ✓ Other:

Some of the main issues or questions that will be discussed are …

ORGANISATION

3/3

MATCHING
- The visited projects select the best matched colleague to do the review with the visitors.

ORGANISATION
- The visited projects receive a template of a PowerPoint presentation from the host city. In this PowerPoint the main items of the review (see goal setting and matching) are presented (see below). The projects use these PowerPoint files to make their presentation. The fact of working with PowerPoint templates makes the reviews with the different projects comparable to each other, gives structure to the review and takes care of keeping close to the theme during the review.
- Items of the PowerPoint template can be:
    - The wicked problem the project works on …
    - *The project tries to tackle ….*
    - *Some facts & figures*
    - The project in brief + Why this project?
    - How? Procedures and routines. Who decides on what? Financials? Etc.
    - Phases in the project. How has the project grown?
    - Critical factors/future plans
    - Extra information
    - SWOT analysis of the project

To be clear: The last item, the SWOT analysis, can also be filled out by the project. We suggest that the project not present its analysis in the presentation, but keeps it out of sight of the reviewers. After the review, the visitors can make their SWOT and the two analyses can be compared with each other.

PREPARATION just before the review

1/1

Use a step-by-step peer review instruction and explain it into detail to all visitors

- In the Eurocities meeting participants mentioned they "got an insight in the meaning of this reviews, but acted like they used to do before". This has been tackled by the introduction in the Gothenburg/Stockholm meeting by the attachment 2 which has been perceived as the format we need for quality visits to each other.

Divide roles

- The roles (moderator, secretary, reporter) to help the delegation to keep focused. If more visits are planned, these roles can change per visit.

- In the EBPP project, we also used the role of the 'spy': when meeting the peers after the review in an informal environment (dinner, reception), visitors kept on the conversation of the 'official' review. Sometimes the information was now put in another light with more personal thoughts, or unofficial arguments. This conversations can of course not be part of the analysis, but helps sometimes to understand why things happen the way they do.

Inform about the feedback that is asked by the projects to be visited.

Example

9am: Information on Education in Flanders and in Antwerp

1/2

- The host city provides a short sparkling presentation about the education system in this city and the choice of the projects that will be visited.

- The host city can find the information on the website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu and should speak about

- The national context of education – main issues, setting, characteristics, Eurydice overview, etc.
- The local challenges: social economical influences, specific issues, etc.
- The way local education policy tackles the challenges: who does what? How?
- Specific items such as youth at risk, Education – Labour Market, etc. if this is important in the framework of this visit.
- Etc.

Example

10am: Introduction to the peer review method

2/2

✓ Presentation of reviewers to the rest of the peer review team (function, interests, what do you want to know after this review? Etc.)

✓ In order to obtain two-way communication, decide which contribution you can make to the project

✓ Divide the roles in the review team: moderator, secretary and reporter. Who will ask most of the questions?

✓ Decide which questions will be asked

✓ Decide which output is desired by the team members:
    ✓ Will there be a written report?
    ✓ Is this only written for the visitors or also for the host city or for the visited project?
    ✓ Will an analysis be made? E.g. SWOT
    ✓ Will this analysis be used by the visitors or also by the host city or the visited project?

HOST CITY

THE REVIEW

1/1

Send a template of a (power point) presentation to every project that will be visited.
- Out of the networking task force of the EBPP project, we learn that using a ppt template for the presentation of their project makes it easier for the project to prepare the presentation, it keeps the focus on the main goals of the review, and makes it possible for the visitors to analyse and compare the different projects/ presentations.

A (power point) presentation as introduction to a project/visit has to be 'to the point', 'enthusiastic', 'distinctive', 'giving a view over the main topics of the project' and may certainly 'not be too elaborated'.

Working with different communicative methods helps to get an open dialogue between peers and visitors.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

THE REVIEW

- The review takes place as prepared by the host city and with the questions and role division as prepared by the visitors.

- It is preferable that the host city provides:
  - A process manager: a person to be on stand-by to help visitors with logistics issues
  - One person to assist visitors for the whole week and who can provide more background information when confusion or questions crop up.

HOST CITY

THE REVIEW

- The interviewed person joins the group.

- A round table as an introduction to the people (background) and roles in the interview (moderator, secretary, reporter)

- It is good to speak individually with each person and not with a group of interviewees, so as to avoid role conflict.

VISITING CITY

THE REVIEW

1/1

- The review takes place as prepared by the host city and with the questions and role division as prepared by the visitors.

ANALYSIS

1/1

Provide time for the analysis in your program.
If not, it will be forgotten immediately after the visit!

Choose the right method to make the analysis before you start it.
E.g. making a SWOT with the visitors, simply write down the most important observations, or make an elaborated analysis on a prepared template.

Translate this project to your home town situation
Is this possible or not? Why? This exercise may be a good starting point to give feedback to the project or to initialise a two-way communication.

Exchange contact details of peers and visitors.

Provide enough time in the program where projects and visitors can meet each other again after the review

ANALYSIS

The host city gives the following questionnaire to the visitors of the project for discussion.

The CONTENT OF THE REVIEW
What are the first conclusions?
What do you want to remember of this interview?
Will conclusions be written down in a report, minutes, Etc.?
Who are the receivers of this report/the minutes?
Will the report and/or minutes also be sent to the project or be discussed with it? Has the project any possibility to correct falsely interpreted information in the report OR to receive some information of the reviewer's project? With which goals do you want to share your findings with the project?
Did you as reviewers speak with the project about the future? Will some people stay in contact?
How do we transfer the conclusions to our home town situation? How can this visit influence our daily work at home?

THE PROCESS OF THE REVIEW
The questions you asked in the interview: tips? Did you ask what you prepared? How did the interview go?
Did the reviewers give information to the project? Was there a two-way communication?
Could every participant fulfil his role?
How did the review analysis go?
Other tips?

HOST CITY

The CONTENT OF THE REVIEW
What are the first conclusions?
What do you want to remember of this interview?
Will conclusions be written down in a report, minutes, Etc.?
Who are the receivers of this report/the minutes?
Will the report and/or minutes also be sent to the project or be discussed with it? Has the project any possibility to correct falsely interpreted information in the report OR to receive some information of the reviewer's project? With which goals do you want to share your findings with the project?
Did you as reviewers speak with the project about the future? Will some people stay in contact?
How do we transfer the conclusions to our home town situation? How can this visit influence our daily work at home?

THE PROCESS OF THE REVIEW
The questions you asked in the interview: tips? Did you ask what you prepared? How did the interview go?
Did the reviewers give information to the project? Was there a two-way communication?
Could every participant fulfil his role?
How did the review analysis go?
Other tips?

GENERAL FEEDBACK ON THE VISIT PROGRAMME:
Was this a good programme? What was good, what could be better?
Was this the right selection of projects to be visited?
Did these visits give you answers to the questions you prepared?
Did you receive enough/the right introduction/information about the selected projects?

VISITING CITY

ANALYSIS

2/2

After the programme, the report writer takes time to write the reports and summaries of the interviews.

VISITING CITY

Consultancy in peer reviewing:

For more information about the consultancy the EBPP members can offer you, please contact

onderwijsbeleid@stad.antwerpen.be

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Peer review Kicki Tepphag-Olson

Making the SWOT after the review

412B Data

APPENDIX

- Names and organisations of participants

- List of good practices in data brokerage

Names and organisations of participants

place	Partner organisation	First name	Family name	Official title
CITIES				
Antwerp	Stad Antwerpen - Kabinet schepen Onderwijs, Werk, Economie en Middenstand	Marc	VAN PRAET	Chief of staff of the vice-major for education, economy, work and self employment of the city of Antwerp
Antwerp	Stad Antwerpen - Kabinet schepen Onderwijs, Werk, Economie en Middenstand	Bram	WELLENS	Adviser of the vice-major for education, economy, work and self employment of the city of Antwerp
Antwerp	Stad Antwerpen - Algemeen Onderwijsbeleid	Marleen	BAILLIEUL	Project leader EBPP project and project coordinator at education policy division
Antwerp	Stad Antwerpen - BAOBAB vzw	Koen	BASTIAENS	Project manager EBPP project and Senior Expert International Relations
Copenhagen	Kobenhavns Kommunes Ungdomsskole	Kim	BRYNAA	Head of Unit
Copenhagen	Kobenhavns Kommunes Ungdomsskole	Jorgen	HANGHOJ	Officer
Copenhagen	Kobenhavns Kommunes Ungdomsskole	Michael	HOUGAARD OLSEN	Officer
Goteborg	Göteborgs Stad - Utbildning	Karin	ASPLUND	Education Officer
Goteborg	Göteborgs Stad - Utbildning	Åke	HALLBERG	Education Officer
Goteborg	Göteborgs Stad - Utbildning	Ann-Marie	LOSENBORG	International Coordinator
Goteborg	Göteborgs Stad - Utbildning	Göran	OHLSSON	Head of Unit
Munich	Stadt München Institute for Teacher Development, International and European Exchanges & Projects	Mathias	MARSCHALL	Project Coordinator / Deputy Director (Oberstudienrat)

place	Partner organisation	First name	Family name	Official title
Munich	Stadt München	Wolfgang	BREHMER	Project Manager „Lernen vor Ort" (Studiendirektor)
Munich	Stadt München	Yvonne	MAIER	Staff Member, Project „Lernen vor Ort" / Subproject „Transition Management"
Rotterdam	Stad Rotterdam - dienst Jeugd, Onderwijs, sociale zaken	Paul	HOOP	Co-ordinator International Affairs
Rotterdam	Stad Rotterdam - dienst Jeugd, Onderwijs, sociale zaken	Olga	VAN BEEK (Treep)	Senior Policy advisor
Stockholm	Stad Stockholms - Utbildningsförvaltningen	Cecilia	GÖRANSSON	International advisor
Stockholm	Stad Stockholms - Utbildningsförvaltningen	Gunnar	KRIEGHOLM	Officer
Stockholm	Stad Stockholms - Utbildningsförvaltningen	Pär	LUNDSTRÖM	Senior project manager
RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS				
Antwerp	Universiteit Antwerpen	Paul	MAHIEU	Professor
Antwerp	Universiteit Antwerpen	Jan	VANHOOF	Assistant professor
Brno	Masaryk University	Petr	NOVOTNY	Associate Professor of Education
Brno	Masaryk University	Milan	POL	Professor of Education
Kranj	Sola za ravnatalje	Justina	ERCULJ	Senior Lecturer
Kranj	Sola za ravnatalje	Alenka	JURIC RAJH	Lecturer
Rotterdam	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam - Risbo	Willem	DE VOS	Senior Consultant
Rotterdam	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam - Risbo	Tom	TUDJMAN	Consultant
Uppsala	Uppsala University - Department of Studies in Education, Culture and Media	Kristina	MALMBERG	Senior Lecturer

List of practices in data brokerage

During the project, the participating cities used a template to describe their examples of brokerage activities. Here below you can find an overview of the practices. For more information about these projects, you can find the full description of the practices on the website www.CompareLocalEducation.eu.

Or mail to onderwijsbeleid@stad.antwerpen.be

city	project name	contact
Antwerp	**Point of Access**	Luc Claessens, Luc.Claessens@stad.antwerpen.be
The general educational policy of the city of Antwerp aims at designing and managing cross-association structural cooperation and educational projects. The underlying aim through all our actions and projects is making sure that all the city's children and young people leave education with a qualification giving access to higher education or to the labour market. School truancy and other cross-boarder behaviour are commonly seen as symptomatic for low motivation of pupils and the risk of unqualified school leaving. The cooperation between school networks in this shared Point of Access is not only exemplary for the way schools and school networks work together in Antwerp, but also an incentive for outreaching collaboration and data-sharing and analyzing.		
Antwerp	**Contextual Analysis Antwerp Schools**	Paul Mahieu, paul.mahieu@ua.ac.be Marleen Baillieul, marleen.baillieul@stad.antwerpen.be
The aim of the (legally obliged, but Local Consultation Platform is free to decide about topics and format) analysis is to inform and support local governments, school boards, school leaders and stakeholders about the state of the local educational community.		
Antwerp	**Truant Report and Truancy Mirror**	Luc Claessens, Luc.Claessens@stad.antwerpen.be
Students that are unjustified absent at school during 10 half days per year, are considered truants. The Flemish norm for truancy is 20 half days. By early detection and managing, the city of Antwerp tries to avoid worse. 1/ One of the partners reports a student with a truancy problem. The functionary of truancy searches for a solution (coaching, a social project, …) 2/ Registration in the mirror of truancy: - Provides a statistic overview of truancy in Antwerp (truant report) - Gets insight in which schools have more problems (truant mirror per school) - The functionary of truancy contacts those schools and provides actions and a truancy policy for them.		
Brno	**Annual report on municipal school system in Brno-city**	http://skoly.brno.cz/
Annual report on municipal school system in Brno-city. Based on document Municipal school system in Brno – city and directions of its development until 2013 (elementary and basic schools)		

city	project name	contact
Munich	**Report of Education in Munich**	Rudolf Genster, rudolf.genster@muenchen.de

The report of education in Munich is showing data from nursery school to advanced training. The aim is to show the educational situation more or less from 0-100.
The data are based on indicators which are accepted all over Germany and which are used by the national report of education as well. We are able to compare these data with the national level. The catalog with indicators („Anwendungsleitfaden zum Aufbau eines Kommunalen Bildungsmonitorings" see below) is always improved with a big support of the federal ministry of education and research. Within the project "Lernen vor Ort" which is initiated from this ministry more and more cities create a report of education on the city level. The Monitoring on the city level is getting a more and more important role in Germany.

| Rotterdam | **Annual Quality Report Rotterdam** | www.jos.rotterdam.nl |

The aim is to report on the quality of Rotterdam schools as an input for the discussion about quality at city level, at school board level and on school level.

| Rotterdam | **Community Schools in Rotterdam** | www.jos.rotterdam.nl |

In 1996 the city of Rotterdam (department of Youth, Education and Society => JOS) developed, together with schools, policy of so called community schools in primary and secondary education. The main goal of this policy was to improve the situation of students in under-privileged inner city areas. Schools were asked to start offering extended programs in cooperation with surrounding organizations (sports clubs, churches, organizations for performing arts, health institutes etc). Besides the purpose of giving pupils a broad view on participation in society, it was supposed to improve the school climate and ultimately, students' performance and opportunities in their school careers. Other objectives are the improvement of the effectiveness of time that children study, enlarging the competence of children and reducing behavioral problems.
However, in terms of its effects on students, there is a remarkable lack of research on the effectiveness of community schools. Most studies have focused on the implementation and the activities offered. The present studies aims to fill this gap and describe the effects on students of extended school programs in Rotterdam schools for primary and secondary education. Longitudinal analyses are conducted to find out in what ways the extended programs have impact on performance levels, study progress and levels of social competence. The control group schools will be compared to the extended program (community) schools on all dependent measures and secondly the types of programs will be compared to each other (for example: the schools focusing on social competence will be compared to the other schools in terms of their
average scores on social competence of their students in the passed five years).

| Rotterdam | **Intense School Development** | www.jos.rotterdam.nl |

To improve the quality of a specific group of Rotterdam primary and secondary schools who in some cases already fail to meet the standards of the inspectorate or who in other cases are about to fail to meet the standards of the inspectorate (this is to the schoolboard to decide)

city	project name	contact
Gothenborg	**Skolplatsen - Absence reporting**	Ake Hallberg, ake.hallberg@educ.goteborg.se

Web based absence reporting means that teachers and pupils simply can register absence in a web based system and also can follow-up their pupils. The pupil/student alone can follow his/her absence statistic and study his/her schedule. Parents can also get access to the system and to study statistics and information about their childrens' school time. The follow-up is presented both in figures and in diagrams. Both teachers and parents get a good basis for deliberations in the school and in the home about the education - a condition for that the pupil will take responsibilities for his/her studies.
Using of data system to provide fast information to parents via e-mail and SMS will give the school fast feed back from the parents.

Copenhagen	**Copenhagen Barometer**	Michael Hougaard Olsen, micols@buf.kk.dk

The Copenhagen Barometer is an extensive electronic survey of how pupils from 4th to 9th grade in all state schools (public schools) in Copenhagen experience their educational environment. The survey is conducted once a year and helps to identify problems in the local schools and gives an overall picture of the state of the schools in the municipality and as such it works as a management tool to improve schools performance and measure if the initiatives are effective.

Copenhagen	**Safe City Copenhagen**	Kim Brynaa, kibryn@buf.kk.dk

In Winter and Spring 2008 City of Copenhagen experienced disturbances and rows amongst youngsters. As in other cities young people, especially boys, are over-represented in the crime statistics of which a smaller group of 3-400 young people are very criminal. 38 pct. of the charges are made against young people under the age of 18 with another ethnical background than Danish. 26 pct. of young people in Copenhagen under the age of 18 have another ethnical background than Danish. Though in general the crime rate is decreasing, there has been an increasing number of gross violence among 15 to 17 years olds. Of the 149 young people coming up before the judge in 2008 101 had another ethnical background than Danish. Studies show that the level of crime is similar to cities such as Oslo and Göteborg and considerably lower than many other comparable cities.

More than 480 people are directly working with criminal prevention in the city. 2.687.246 €
are spend each year on crime prevention work in Copenhagen and in 2009 and 2010 an extra 9.404.936 € is provided in the budget. No one really knows for sure what works and what does not. Therefore the city started an extensive analysis of its crime preventive work which showed that there was a need for greater overview and coordination of the many initiatives in the area. For that reason City of Copenhagen decided to set up the coordinating unit "Safe City", that works to enhance the quality of the initiatives and suggest new activities to make Copenhagen a safer and more secure city.

At the same time the city started to set up an evaluation design intended to be elaborated in cooperation with institutions, key staff members and employees. Documentation and evaluation were not imposed on the key actors by some administrative bureaucrats. On the contrary, the key actors are seen as experts and therefore were invited into the processes.

city	project name	contact
Kranj	**National external assessment of knowledge**	Alenka Juric Rajh, alenka.juric@solazaravnatelje.si

In Slovenia, we have a national assessment of knowledge (NAK) which is an external written examination of pupils' knowledge in elementary school at the end of the second and third Periods. Pupils from Year 6 (aged 11 and 12) apply of their own accord. At the end of the third Period, NAK is obligatory for pupils from Year 9 (aged 14 and 15) and adults involved in elementary school education. Pupils carry out the NAK at the school where they are enrolled (Elementary School Act, Article 64).

| Stockholm | **Data Driven Policymaking (DDPM)** | Gunnar Kriegholm, gunnar.kriegholm@utbildning.stockholm.se |

This isn't exactly one project. It's more a way to combine different data sources for different purposes. You can see this "project " as divided into four parts presented below. There are different databases built up in Stockholm. For example we have two systems for registering students. BOSKO for the primary school and HANNA for the upper secondary schools. These databases consists of students adresses (GIS), results on national tests, reading and literacy skills, parents education, income and support by the social wellfare system etc. From theese system and other sources we are now trying to gather all data and information in one database(LIS) to facilitate an easier way to use the data.
The data are used on different levels.

1. The education administration use them for planning building of schools, to see how the students are moving between different schools using GSI (geographic information system) , to find out where there are over- or lack of capacity in buildings.

2. The education administration also use them for their pedagogical rewievs of the schools. They have developed a "tool for school improvement". The purpose of the tool is to provide education administration with a transparent and user-friendly tool in its discussions about how schools meet the educational requirements set. This tool is based on compliance rate factors (grades and national tests), Economics, Satisfaction among students and guardians (Pleased Student Index), and Satisfaction among employees (Employee Satisfaction Index). These factors are weighted together to a total rating for the school, but can also be studied separately. The tool is designed to be filled with new values for existing variables in coming years and be developed with more factors.

3. The education administration uses them for their resource allocation or budgeting to the schools where parents education, how long students with foreign background has been studying in the swedish school system are essential variables.

4. Now the city is expanding their management and informationsystem (LIS) and combine data from different databases. The purpose was primarily to gather data for comparative analysis, but has come to evolve into a system to support school principals and school boards to be more active in analyzing their results and data. Past experience points out that school boards in the first place is quite good at presenting different kinds of results but they are limited in doing more advanced analysis of their data. To make it easier for schools to use their own data the education administration recently has develloped an application built on GapMinder wich now is a free resource for schools to build their own databases out of LIS and presenting their data for discussions and analysis among staff and/or parents.

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