



# PARTNERSHIPS FOR PATHWAYS TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT IN REGIONAL CLUSTERS OF OPEN SCHOOLING

## D 7.1 Compilation of Briefing Papers



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## Executive Summary

The implementation of Open Schooling as a strategy requires a process of institutional learning and a fundamental change in how schools are perceived by various stakeholders. In order to get their commitment, evidence needs to be based on authentic first-hand insight into well proven practices, as well as on a thorough analysis of policies and structures which are relevant for the school sector. For this reason, PHERECLOS has dedicated a separate Work Package to advocacy activities, delivering policy recommendations and supporting upscaling to ensure the long-term and widest possible impact of the project.

From the first quarter of the project, Advocacy Meetings are being arranged, rolled-out and documented in different stages of the project implementation (Starting phase, Interim Advisory Session, Summarizing Advisory Sessions - M6/M12/M24; and advocacy sessions during Implementation Webinars). The relations established in physical meetings is providing a basis for continuous peer counselling and monitoring by advocacy groups in order to inform LEC implementation from all stakeholder perspectives throughout the entire implementation phase in the most reliable and efficient way.

In addition to physical meetings and in order to support local advocacy work, concise and targeted briefing instruments, briefing papers have been prepared in order to address a wider range of LEC actors in the development process of innovative models of cooperation in education. The development of Briefing Papers in the current Compilation has been informed by the first Advocacy Meeting where local advocacy needs had been mapped.

This set of Briefing Papers has been developed in a way that can support local advocacy work towards various levels of policy making, focusing on thematic areas identified by LEC partners as possible barriers, but each taking the perspectives of main open schooling stakeholders: school students, teachers, school heads, parents and teacher training into account. Further on, the Briefing Papers and experiences of LEC partners with using them will provide a basis for the formulation of the Advocacy Toolkit and Policy Recommendations in the final stages of the project.

Based on input from LEC Partners the following thematic areas have been identified as relevant for local advocacy:

1. The Benefits of Open Schooling on STEAM learning
2. School Autonomy and Stakeholder Engagement in Open Schooling
3. School Leaders and Teachers in Open Schooling
4. Non-formal Education Providers in Open Schooling
5. 5. Financial Aspects of Open Schooling
6. 6. Physical and Legal Barriers to Student Participation in Open Schooling

As the Briefing Papers were developed during the global school closure period due to the COVID-19 virus, and additional Paper was added on Lessons Learnt from COVID-19.

Each Briefing Paper is an individual document that can be used separately for advocacy work. They were developed bearing in mind that LEC partners, or any advocate for the PHERECLOS model or open schooling in STEAM education for that matter, will use ones relevant in their context and not use others. This is why each paper is formatted separately and there is an extra section on PHERECLOS in each of them.

## The benefits of Open Schooling on STEAM learning

### Key messages

- ⇒ **Open schooling can support STE(A)M learning better for the majority of students than traditional methods**
- ⇒ **Open schooling brings the benefit of active citizenship through community engagement into STE(A)M education**

**Open schooling has been promoted as an approach that creates an engaging environment for children's learning while strengthening links to local communities. Local expertise and experience incorporated into learning at school, making links to the real world offers ways to learn more meaningfully and leads to better motivation of learners, but also of teachers. Open schooling brings the arts element into STEM learning in a natural way, and thus paves the way for higher levels of STEAM competences.**

The purpose of Open Schooling is to bridge the gap between formal, informal, non-formal; institutional and non-institutional education. The development of technology and infrastructure of our modern society is so fast that nowadays school systems are educating students for jobs that do not exist yet. Therefore, teaching cannot be based on knowledge alone, since this knowledge may be obsolete by the time the student enters a workplace. Transition towards a more contemporary and competence-based education system has been on-going in many countries for some years now. To achieve this, it has been crucial to redefine the framework for the education of children. Education needs to be engaged with real life and not isolated from it. This new educational landscape demands collaborations between members of local communities that traditionally were not involved.

A paradox of the open schooling approach lies in the meaning of the Greek word for 'School', which means "free from work" or "leisure". Open schooling in general is shift in paradigm from school as an isolated island, towards engaging

school in multiple ways with the local society and the world of work in the process of educating students. Although the benefits of open schooling constructions are widely accepted, there can still be several interpretations for the core values and objectives of concrete open school activities can be based on:

- 1) For some, external institutions the focus is on formation, and the aim is to prepare student to be critical thinkers and engaged citizens.
- 2) For others, an open school has a clearly defined and transparent learning objective, with summative assessments.
- 3) Yet others build on developing innovation and project competences, for example through the methodology of problem-based learning (PBL). eg. Learning STE(A)M by solving actual problems in local society.
- 4) Creativity as a single purpose for engaging in open school partnerships is also legitimized in several cases, eg. arts and crafts in focus. This is done without expectations of a certain learning outcome, since this kind of aesthetic process is a personal experience.

### Inspiration #1 – Copenhagen Honours College

Copenhagen Honours College (CHC) is a new 2-year talent programme (started in 2018) driven by the University College Copenhagen for teacher training students. The program offers a small group of students the possibility to pursue certain extracurricular activities and, at the same time, provides a scholarship in order for the scholar to dedicate all available time to studying. The honour programme involves among other elements a journal club, project management education, tools in innovation processes and networking. The 30 ECTS given amounts to a semester, which is done on top of the mandatory college courses. As a part of the 2 year programme, all students are paired to a public school. There they focus on practical projects within the field of certain learning outcomes in line with the aims of CHC, eg. on developing sustainable and qualified open schooling activities. A recent project presentation from an intern has proven what the extra resource of having a CHC student at a school can achieve. The teacher training student developed two

partnerships, and planned, professionally defined and project managed the learning activities beginning to evaluation. The feedback from the mentor at the local school stated that the effort put in by the teacher training student was of great importance and a resource that really made a difference in order for these open schooling activities to happen. Teacher training students can make a significant difference and get valuable, on-the-job training experience, given the right conditions and motivation. ([More information](#))

There is not necessarily a contradiction between different motivations for engaging in open school programmes, and it is important to be aware of this pedagogical and didactic diversity. The combination of approaches and objectives will often be unique for the individual educational landscape, and also definitive for how the local collaborative strategy on open schooling is developed and implemented. The benefits of open schooling lay in this construction, getting it right for all by uncovering nearby educational resources and bringing them into play by local partnerships. In some cases, the external educational environments do not have pedagogical nor didactical competences, and yet they still represent an authentic framework for learning. Interaction between teachers as formal scaffolders of learning and the external agents/providers provides a potential cradle for innovative learning and education, also within the field of STE(A)M. An open schooling educational landscape has the potential for creating a broad framework of learning activities that accommodates the wide variety of ethnic, cultural and traditional backgrounds, approaches and perspectives, interests and motivations for learning among students. It also has a potential to meet the criteria of equity and inclusive education. Innovation, creation of new practices and reflections on the effects are core values in this transition from traditional formal education towards education in an open schooling environment.

Sources: OSOS, DPU

## Inspiration #2 – OSOS

The three-year (2017–2020) Open Schools for Open Societies (OSOS) project aimed to help a thousand European primary and secondary schools with opening up to its community. In this project, schools can count on support around curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Schools that participated in the first round of implementations, school year 2017–2018, acted as HUBs for the schools participating in the second round of this project. This method stimulated a growing support network between schools.

The OSOS model proposes a process and this process starts with the Change Agents who are becoming Inspiring Leaders of the school community. It supports school leaders to capture the needed steps for innovation with constant reflection being part of the process. The OSOS Open Schooling Model provides a powerful framework for school leaders to engage, discuss and explore how their schools need to evolve, transform and reinvent for personalized science learning and teaching; how schools can become innovation incubators and accelerators.

By the end of the project 1169 schools joined the movement, with 2222 teachers as part of the OSOS community over 1188 projects carried out. ([More information](#))

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More information: [www.phereclos.eu](http://www.phereclos.eu)



## Autonomy and Stakeholder Engagement in Open Schooling

### Key messages

- ⇒ **Successful open schooling initiatives in STE(A)M education require a certain level of autonomy in formal education**
- ⇒ **Various stakeholders with different roles and responsibilities are to be engaged in designing, implementing and evaluating open schooling initiatives**

**Open schooling has proven to be more successful when combined with stakeholder engagement in decision making. To create the link to local communities, their representatives need to be part of the planning and delivery processes. Teachers, parents and the students themselves are the first groups to engage, but other local stakeholders that can become part of the open schooling environment are also key. As open schooling reflects local needs, the school needs to have autonomy in designing their own network.**

Open schooling is per definition a local collaboration between the school and other stakeholders. To establish such relationships, the school needs to have a certain level of autonomy to decide on such partnerships, allocate necessary resources and arrange their activities accordingly. Open schooling initiatives are great testbeds for curricular experimentation, and thus a respective possibility for autonomous decision making is also desirable. Autonomy is to be accompanied by clear accountability settings by stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder engagement in open schooling requires an identification of stakeholder groups and a deep previous analysis of diverse expectations and needs. Engagement into developing, planning, implementing and evaluating creates a sense of ownership in any stakeholder group, and thus enhances the outcomes by sharing a close vision and common or parallel goals. Multiple viewpoints often result in thinking-outside-of-the-box solutions. What

potential role different stakeholders play in collaborative, open STE(A)M provisions?

First of all, school students will always be the end-user stakeholders. All schooling initiatives, and for that matter, all open schooling ones are supposed to be respondent to their needs. A "nothing about them without them" approach is to be implemented and there is a need to introduce age-appropriate methodologies for that.

Professional educators play a central role in providing quality instruction. Their engagement is crucial and needs to be supported by Continuous Professional Development as well as incentive evaluation and endorsement methods to ensure they excel in their job, bring in and embrace innovative practices.

Parents have proven to be crucial stakeholders being legally responsible for the education of their children, but also as the most impacting educators, having the largest influence on the learning outcomes and also learning mindsets of children with their previous and real-life experiences making them crucial for innovation.

School leaders at different levels of education are key for the success of any open schooling and/or STEM(A)M initiative being responsible for offering educational services and establishing competent and suitable learning environments.

Non-formal education providers are often provide methodologies and practices that engage more stakeholders in learning, have useful experience in working with diverse groups, in more flexible forms and settings, and also often more technologically savvy. They bring in more potential for innovation.

Local businesses play a dual role as providers of inspiration and resources. Having corporate responsibility for their local communities and being engaged in educating their future workforce and customers give them a high stake in education, while they often also possess suitable know-how.

Policy makers on national, regional and local levels are also crucial, creating the legislative and financial



framework for open education. The local level is often easier to engage in activities that target the local community they are responsible for.

Researchers, scientists and academia members can also be leading stakeholders in a number of areas of STE(A)M education, such as teacher training or policy advocacy. There is a global effort to bring research closer to the public, to promote citizen science and overall, active citizenship by this engagement.

### Inspiration #1 – White Paper on Schools

The White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All (2005) in the United Kingdom, proposed that schools and services must be 'opened up to new and different providers and ways of delivering services'. The aim was to enable successful schools to establish and manage entirely new schools and federations'. Schools themselves were encouraged to form 'foundation partnerships and federations that will work together to raise standards but also take on new responsibilities'. The business and private sector, in addition to the churches would not only extend their increasing control and provision of state schooling, but also play an emergent role in a new system of local governance, offering 'some local brokerage to make it work' as well as coordination to ensure joined-up provision. 'This cannot just be a partnership of state providers – the voluntary and community sector, business and private enterprises need to be a part of this partnership to provide joined up services.' ([More information](#))

Nevertheless, there are also a number of challenges that can arise from multi-stakeholder partnerships. The most common challenges arising from stakeholder governance are related to traditional power structures and the understanding of accountability. By stimulating broader decision making and promoting inclusive and participatory initiatives, some may argue that they can suffer from a potential weakening of traditional key stakeholders. Therefore, such structures need to be designed with care, and taking real accountability into consideration.

Sources: OECD, Scientix

### Inspiration #2 – the Netherlands

Compared to education systems in other member countries of the OECD, schools in the Netherlands operate in a highly autonomous policy context, based on constitutional provisions since 1917. Within a framework of learning objectives, standardized examinations, and block grants set by the national government, the administration of Dutch schools is highly decentralized, schools have been free to choose and follow their own pedagogical visions. In lower secondary schools, 86% of "key decisions" on matters regarding the organization of instruction, personnel management and resource management are made at the school level, as compared to the OECD average of 41%. Schools are free to decide what to teach and how to teach it, as long as they meet established quality standards and learning objectives. School autonomy is balanced by a set of standards, attainment targets, and a national examination system developed by the government. The Inspectorate of Education, under the responsibility of the Minister of Education, monitors both quality of education and compliance with statutory and financial rules and regulations. ([More information](#))

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## School Leaders and Teachers in Open Schooling

### Key messages

- ⇒ **Teachers and school leaders need professional autonomy for successful open schooling programmes**
- ⇒ **Appropriate training and support as well as remuneration are necessary factors for any education innovation to succeed**

**Teachers and school leaders are the cornerstones of introducing open schooling activities at any school. They need to have autonomy to make such decisions and they also need professional support – training, coaching, mentoring – to introduce new ways of teaching. Introducing and maintaining open schooling activities require time investment, and this needs to be acknowledged in their workload.**

While teachers have been identified as key actors in achieving the EU education targets and goals as well as Sustainable Development Goal 4, experience and statistics show that there are several aspects of teacher career paths that need to be addressed to overcome the main challenges in relation to attracting and retaining teachers for the goals to become reality. This is especially true in the context of open schooling delivery.

One of the most important aspects is training: initial teacher education is as crucial factor in assuring an effective functioning of an education system as Continuous professional development (CPD). Such programmes can be considered compulsory in all EU countries, but their extent varies from country to country. There are also major differences between time and budget provisions for CPD. Training needs are to be considered when developing open schooling programmes as a key element of success. Appraisal systems can also be considered as an incentive for open schooling and play a very important role in reviewing and determining professional development needs. Appraisal systems also have a role in detecting low performance and they lead to supportive/remedial measures.

Motivated teachers are inevitable for good school provisions. Financial benefits such as salary, pension and insurance are often mentioned in research as extrinsic factors motivating in-service teachers. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that teachers' overall workload is considered and remunerated, including extra effort in establishing and maintaining open schooling processes. At the same time, these direct factors are closely interrelated with elements such as 'the perceived benefits or convenience of teaching', 'the nature of teaching work' and 'the status of teaching'. A successful open schooling approach can greatly contribute to these indirect factors. A strong professional community and exciting working environment, along with stimulating and challenging colleagues, has also long been considered important by teachers.

### Inspiration #1 – E4F

Within the Education for the Future (E4F) project - a joint international Master's level in-service programme for teachers, school leaders and other educational specialists - has been developed, tested, evaluated, adapted and implemented. The programme created a context for supporting teachers, school leaders and other educational specialists to strengthen their leadership capacities and their expertise with respect to school development and innovation.

The programme was developed within a sustainable partnership between three universities and an educational authority in four different countries (Liechtenstein, Estonia, the Netherlands and Switzerland). The programme is unique because it brings together teachers, school leaders and other educational innovators as partners in innovation, by stimulating international exchange at a Master's level, by stimulating intensive reflection about national systems and school practices, and by combining both individual professional development of the participants and school development within their schools through small-scale innovation projects at local level. ([More information](#))

School leaders usually have a very important role in designing, organizing and evaluating open schooling programmes as well as in establishing, nurturing and maintaining partnerships, but most school head training schemes do not offer training in the field. What is more, research evidence shows that school heads are second only in school to classroom teachers in their influence upon student outcomes. The provision of appropriate CPD, together with mentoring and coaching schemes, for school leaders is of great importance, especially when it is considered that, conventionally, leadership rarely features in initial teacher education programmes, and the most common pathway to school leader positions originates from teacher positions.

### Example #2 – ELITE

The “Learning in Teaching via e-inquiries” approach for STEM teachers’ professional learning is based on the principle that the teacher teaches in such a way in which he/she was taught. Inquiry-based learning (IBL) has been identified as a powerful innovative teaching approach, providing opportunities to develop the scientific literacy of all learners. At the same time, teachers meet difficulties when implementing it in the classroom, due to missing experience in it, as, usually, the teachers’ professional development courses are conducted in a traditional way via lectures. The main assumption of the ELITE project is that the implementation of the IBL methodology in teachers’ competence development courses will provide them with real situation experience and know-how as well as with a reflection from ‘students’ point of view’. Something more – the IBL has a very poorly explored potential as an effective teacher training method, which can contribute to effective STEM teachers’ competence development.

The majority approaches in initial and continuous training programs focus on subject knowledge, pedagogy and classroom-based training, the ELITE approach addresses knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by teachers to address their challenging roles. The implementation is based on proven links between inquiry skills practice and STEM teachers’ competence development. Contextual aspects affecting effective provision of CPD in the above-mentioned countries have been taken into consideration, while challenges and needs in terms of renewing the thematic of STEM

teacher training have also been addressed. ([More information](#))

Autonomy is a main factor for both teachers and school leaders to be successful and motivated promoters of open schooling. When teachers are able to choose materials, teaching methods and determine classroom organization and discipline, their motivation is reportedly higher, however only if a high degree of continuous support exists. Research has shown that greater autonomy has a positive impact on the system level, students’ achievements are higher in systems with overall higher autonomy and where school leaders can be more independent in their responses to local conditions. One of the key elements in this success is the freedom to choose open schooling approaches in addressing student needs by entering into partnerships. It is also clear that as curriculum autonomy increases, teachers’ on-the-job stress decreases and as general teacher autonomy increases, their motivation, empowerment and professionalism increase. All these factors result in a better and more inclusive school climate and greater overall wellbeing of school staff and job satisfaction. However, it must be stressed that autonomy and accountability are interconnected, and that teachers and school leaders need to be empowered and supported in order to be effectively autonomous.

Sources: EACEA, EURYDICE, EEPN

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# Policy Brief #4

## Non-formal Education Providers in Open Schooling

### Key messages

- ⇒ **Non-formal education providers are to be considered as main partners in open schooling for better learning outcomes and catering for diverse student needs**
- ⇒ **Non-formal education offers more flexibility through its own structures while schools play a main role in setting safe frameworks**

**Local non-formal education providers are key stakeholders in open schooling. Non-formal education often already has a complementary role in the learning path of many students, and it makes them a natural ally. Non-formal education providers often have tools or methodologies missing from school, and provide a non-frightening learning environment. As they are embedded in the local community, they can also support the development of open schooling partnerships.**

Education is generally understood as a deliberate, intentional, purposeful and organized activity. Formal and non-formal educational opportunities share a main characteristic, namely that they have a lesser or higher degree of institutionalization. However, formal education is generally more traditional and to a certain extent rigid, offering a safe and reliable overall structure. At the same time non-formal education generally has more flexible structures, making them more suitable for innovative activities, answering immediate and diverse needs. A good partnership builds on the safety of formal institutions and the flexibility of non-formal partners for the overall goal of better learning provisions for diverse student needs.

When aiming at delivering on both global (Sustainable Development Goal 4) and European (EU2020, European Education Area) goals on quality, inclusive education, one of the main demands is to re-define responsibility for education as that of all, paving the way for a holistic approach and collaboration between formal, non-formal and informal education providers. Rethinking Education by UNESCO clearly demands for exploring new education ecosystems to be able to cater for diverse needs and educational goals. It also links all

education domains, including STE(A)M to well-being and humanistic approaches. With regards to migrant inclusion, the document demands for an open approach to alternative knowledge systems to ensure that Western cultures do not over-dominate education. This, in the reality of diverse societies, is only possible through a wide understanding of education providers and close collaboration among them. In their document, UNESCO proposes the establishment of learning space networks with the school being part with a well-defined role as a way to prevent them from becoming obsolete. The overall goal, according to this policy document, is to develop open and flexible lifelong learning systems from cradle to grave that are built in multiple learning spaces with formal, non-formal and informal education all acknowledged, valued and recognised.

### Inspiration #1 – Children's Universities

Since the early 2000s, Children's Universities were initiated at many universities around the globe. The initial intention was on low-threshold STEAM engagement, which enables encounters with role models at eye level, allows children to gain first-hand impression of the manifold forms of academic research and scientific thinking and links it with curiosity, interests and living environment of children. In the evolvement of the model, emphasis was put on social inclusion, acknowledgement of different viewpoints and critical thinking – and increasingly the impact on organisational development of universities and their role in the society around them (Third Mission) became evident. In reaction to that, the European Commission has supported the formation of a Europe-wide network (EUCU.NET), which now includes more than 80 partner organisations from 33 different countries.

Year by year, more than 500.000 children participate in CUs – and more and more universities are still embarking on a journey of opening their doors for children and enter in a dialogue. CUs are about exploring our world in an engaging and supportive way. Voluntary participation is key, irrespective of prior achievements in education or socio-economic background. CUs are perfect examples for learning at the overlapping edges of formal and non-formal education: some CUs work together with schools for





better reaching diverse groups of children; some integrate teachers in the didactical concepts or provide material for schools – and on the other end, the universities reacts to that paradigm shift as well, eg. when they integrate CU activities in curricula (eg. for teacher training students) or social skills trainings.

[\(More information\)](#)

The transformation of the educational landscape, the growing diversity of manifest needs, together with other factors, such as the impact of a global digital education market has resulted in an increasing recognition of the importance and relevance of learning outside formal institutions. Globally, we are witnessing a move from traditional educational institutions towards mixed, diverse and complex learning landscapes in which learning occurs through a variety of educational institutions – both formal and non-formal – and non-institutional providers. There is a need for approaching learning as a continuum, in which schooling and formal education institutions interact more closely with other, less formalized educational experiences from early childhood throughout life. While the role of formal education is to provide stability, non-formal providers are offering varied spaces, times and relations for learning to take place, and together they can establish a network of learning spaces where formal, non-formal and informal spaces of learning interact and collaborate for better learning outcomes. At the same time, non-formal providers' flexibility often makes them more capable to address specific needs, such as catering for rural as well as urban realities, diverse individual inclusion needs, or ethnic, cultural and traditional diversity.

### Inspiration #2 – Dragonfly

Dragonfly, an educational programme for elementary school children started in 2008 and it has cooperated with over 300 schools in Hungary, and Hungarian-speaking institutions in Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia, Slovenia and Serbia reaching thousands of teachers and over 10 000 students each year. The main goal is to provide schools with a visually attractive literary and ecological children's magazine for free and instructing the teachers about how to use it in their everyday work. The program's website provides over 6000 different auxiliary materials. Children and teachers have the

opportunity to take part in various creative competitions and quizzes. The programme fights for social equality by education, and has had several programs that targeted specific groups of disadvantaged people (disadvantaged teenagers, the homeless, the migrants, children living with disabilities). Based on a network of volunteers of several hundred teachers, professionals and NGOs all over Hungary and in the neighbouring countries, the programme is operated by Liget Műhely Alapítvány, a Hungarian public benefit organization.

[\(More information\)](#)

Countries approach partnerships between formal and non-formal education provisions in different ways varying from not prohibiting it to making it a desirable approach, and in many countries, there are legislative or financial incentives for formal and non-formal education providers entering into partnerships. The European Union funding opportunities have reflected EU policies on open schooling, and financial provisions are available for such initiatives.

*Sources: UNESCO, European Commission*

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# Policy Brief #5

## Financial Aspects of Open Schooling

### Key messages

- ⇒ **Open schooling initiatives need continued funding from their initial phases throughout the life of the programme**
- ⇒ **Funding can be allocated with the school or other actors of open schooling programmes, and need to ensure that families do not have related financial burden**

**Financial provisions for open schooling need to be designed in a sustainable way, and they need to ensure that open schooling activities do not create any extra financial burden for families. These are prerequisites of inclusive education provisions. This means that legislation has to be in place that either gives schools appropriate and flexible budgets to finance their activities, including open schooling ones, or there needs to be a fund available for other open schooling actors to provide their services free for the school. We need to consider it a reality that successful pilots are only sustainable if their operating costs are provided for.**

The fundamental rights of children to free, quality education are enshrined in legislation in all European countries through the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The European Union made a further commitment to deliver on the right to education and in particular on access to free compulsory education in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in 2012. This offers the legal basis to approaching the financing of open schooling and innovation in STE(A)M education. When implementing open schooling programmes, there is a need to ensure there is no financial burden on families thus it has a positive impact on equity and inclusion.

Financial provisions for education, their amount, allocation and the level of autonomy of schools in the field of budget greatly varies from country to country. In general, school systems have limited financial resources with which to pursue their objectives, thus funding policies and schemes play a key role in ensuring

that resources are allocated in a way that ensures necessary changes and development. When implementing innovative programmes, such as open schooling in the field of STE(A)M education, there is a need to differentiate between provisions for designing and setting up an innovative partnership and maintaining it. Successful open schooling initiatives are only possible in financing environments that provide funding not only for initial phases of such programmes, but also consider and provide for the costs of sustaining it.

### Inspiration #1 - Rødovre

In Rødovre, part of greater Copenhagen, there is a systematic open schooling strategy on municipal level. The strategy is inspired by the Norwegian “cultural ruck sack” and involves both STEM-oriented and cultural activities. This strategy is implemented through a new programme for every school year. It contains compulsory open schooling activities for all grades from kindergarten to 9th grade at the seven public schools in Rødovre. These activities are publicly funded  $\frac{1}{3}$  from local school budgets and  $\frac{2}{3}$  from the municipal school administration budget. In Denmark, it is not allowed to charge parents for students’ school activities. The compulsory open schooling programme is discussed every year and decided on by the municipal administration and representatives of local schools together. It must be emphasized that the compulsory program is a minimum criterion, and is implemented to ensure all pupils are given the opportunity to participate in open schooling activities, regardless of individual teacher preferences. This still leaves plenty of room for teachers to allocate other curricular activities into to an open schooling framework. The municipal open schooling consultant also provides free in-service training to the teachers on open schooling didactics, and thus these activities often get integrated in general learning plans instead of becoming stand-alone visits. In some cases, the municipal administration has co-financed offer by external providers of open schooling activities in order to make the content match local didactical strategy of e.g. innovation and technology competences.

[\(More information\)](#)



In the reality of schools, different bodies are involved in raising, managing and allocating budgets. A growing number of school systems is characterised by multi-level governance, with a growing set of actors including different policy levels, schools themselves and private providers involved in school funding. Central governments should continue to provide the majority of financial resources for schools as it is part and parcel of their legal obligation to provide free education. The responsibility for spending these funds is shared among an increasingly wide range of actors in the spirit of stakeholder involvement and collaborative leadership. In many countries, the governance of school funding is characterised by increasing fiscal decentralisation, placing considerable responsibility on local school stakeholders over budgetary decisions. This generates opportunities for implementing open schooling programmes and establishing partnerships, but also poses challenges for schools, and thus require adequate institutional arrangements. To support effective school funding and avoid adverse effects on equity in changing governance contexts, there is a need to ensure that roles and responsibilities in decentralised funding systems are well aligned; to provide the necessary conditions for effective budget management at the school level; and to develop adequate regulatory frameworks for the incorporation of private funding into budgets in a way that prevents direct interference.

science and technological domains, connecting the school with the Society, enhancing some values like solidarity and volunteering and the European dimension of education.

CAF the set of activities designed to ensure the monitoring of students in the 1st cycle of basic education before and or after the components of the curriculum and the AEC, as well as during periods of school interruption. ([More information](#))

There is a need for well-designed funding formulas in distributing funding for current expenditure in a transparent and efficient way. Providing funding to the school directly or financing the costs of non-formal provisions are equally effective and appropriate as long as it is arranged in a well-planned and reliable way for sustainability. Governments should ensure a stable and publicly known system to allocate public funding available for open schooling in order to support the achievement of equity objectives through school funding mechanisms. Funding schemes need to be aligned with strategic targets and priorities. At the same time education budgets should also be flexible enough to respond to new priorities and unforeseen circumstances as well as providing incentives for efficiency, but through transparent regulation and not on an ad hoc basis.

*Sources: OECD, European Commission*

### Inspiration #2 – AEC, Portugal

In Portugal the Government supports this free program – AEC: Atividades de Enriquecimento Curricular (Curriculum Enrichment Activities) They are part of a broad strategy of articulation between the school and the organization of social responses into the field of family support. This strategy is based on three main strategies: Animation and Family Support Activities in Pre-School Education (AAAF); Curriculum Enrichment Activities (AEC); Family Support Component in the 1st cycle of Basic Education (CAF).

AAAF are designed to ensure the monitoring of children in pre-school education before and or after the daily period of educational activities and during periods of interruption of these activities.

AEC happens in the 1st cycle of basic education. The activities are optional and can have playful, formative and cultural nature that focus, namely, in sports, arts,

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**More information:** [www.phereclos.eu](http://www.phereclos.eu)

# Policy Brief #6

## Physical and Legal Barriers to Student Participation in Open Schooling

### Key messages

- ⇒ **Accessibility is a complex issue of legal and physical considerations should be the highest priority in open schooling**
- ⇒ **Accessibility is a complex issue of legal and physical considerations should be the highest priority in open schooling**

**Open schooling has to be accessible for all students, and thus needs to be implemented with inclusion at the heart of activities. It is only possible if legislation supports such activities. While there is legislation in most countries on accessibility for disabled students, there are barriers, especially due to regulations regarding the organisation of school activities outside of the school or activities within the school that involve external people.**

Accessibility is a major factor in equitable education provisions. It is ensured by anticipating and mediating social/environmental barriers to enhance access for all learners. The most important element of accessibility is often financial provisions, and this is tackled in a separate PHERECLOS brief. Most education systems require schools to be barrier free for various special needs. This spirit and approach need to be maintained when designing and implementing open schooling initiatives. While courses, technology, and student services are often designed for the narrow range of characteristics of the „average“ student, the practice of universal design in education (UDE) considers people with a wide range of characteristics for all educational products and environments. UDE goes beyond accessible design for people with disabilities to make all aspects of the educational experience more inclusive for students, parents, staff, and other stakeholders with a great variety of characteristics. These characteristics include those related to gender, race and ethnicity, age, stature, disability, and learning style. UDE can be promoted as a general approach to accessible, equitable education provisions, and open schooling programmes are especially suitable for providing for these diverse needs. At the same time, accessibility needs to be in the heart of designing open

schooling programmes, both in and outside the school building.

### Inspiration #1 – AKIM Israel

AKIM Israel is the national organization for people with intellectual disabilities and their families, operating as a person-oriented organization that upholds human rights and freedoms. Since its founding in 1951 the association acted to realize the rights, promote better quality of living and improve the welfare of people who have IDD and their relatives, using legal and advocacy work. The organization nowadays represents some 34,500 people with IDD, and approximately 140,000 family members and legal guardians. AKIM works towards inclusion of people with IDD in the community, empowerment of people for self-advocacy and integration into society. Based on its vision, the association promotes integration of positive attitudes towards the people through AKIM's headquarters, 64 branches and activity centres deployed in 87 towns and communities in Israel, in both Jewish and Arab sectors, managed by parents and volunteers.

Part of their overall aim is to promote and support the collaboration between schools, museums and historic sites for accessible and inclusive education at these non-formal education sites. AKIM has initiated and leads a national programme to make museums and historic sites cognitively (as well as physically) accessible. They wish to make education more inclusive by offering new services to the intellectually disabled, support the social inclusion of these people by this and to help bring the level of education to the level of intellectually disabled people. The programme, first implemented in 4 sites was a pilot for legislation that is now in place. It has two main paths: one is training - of staff at the museums and sites, in initial teacher education, social workers to educate hundreds of trained education coordinators; the other is developing aids that the museums and sites can use in their daily education practice. As a pilot it resulted in new policy and legislation. Museums and historic sites all over the country are now using this methodology to become accessible and inclusive, and thus making collaboration with local schools. It is a wide collaboration in which a

specialized NGO brings knowledge and innovation to museums and historic sites that work together with inclusive schools in their respective local communities, teacher training to ensure the availability of experts on the long run, and it is embedded in a government commitment towards inclusion and rights. In many countries, schools are obliged to be inclusive but often lack tools to include all children. This initiative is inspiring as it shows how a non-formal provider can help adjust the level of education to the needs of children. It is a programme that caused a snowball effect by causing mindset change that means little to no funding is necessary for sustaining and widening the network. ([More information](#))

One of the considerations, often related to age, is the accessibility of external education sites for all students. When designing open education programmes that require external participation, schools need to find a healthy balance between protecting access rights with safety. For policy, there is an important message to be conveyed: the spirit and letter of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides children of all ages the freedom of movement and ban any arbitrary restriction of liberty. Thus national regulations preventing children from leaving a place, such as a school without adult supervision or written consent of their parents and guardians can be challenged on the basis of the UNCRC. At the same time, schools and other open schooling partners are responsible for educational measures that ensure the safety of children as well as providing information about their whereabouts to their parents and guardians.

Safety and counter-terrorism concerns have also led to the introduction of measures that may prevent open schooling providers from entering school premises. As open schooling is an approach based on community needs and community provisions, it is necessary that school leaders enjoy a sufficient level of autonomy in making decisions regarding child and school safety in this respect. Legal restrictions that oblige school stakeholders to obtain external permissions for participating at school activities easily lead to major bias in access to best education provisions.

## Inspiration #2 – Open School Doors

Open School Doors (OSD) is a programme developed in order to support suitable school and parent partnerships for open schooling. In an OSD school doors should be literally open. In an ideal case it means that parents and other stakeholders are welcome there at all times. Teachers receive training to be more aware of diversity, the needs and role of parents, and the role of family and community in education in general. They are also aware of specific needs of children and parents of migrant background, but they are also trained to consider individual needs rather than generalise. You can expect the school and its teachers to treat parents as an equal partner, to seek their knowledge and expertise in the school. Parents' personal experiences are important for them, and they encourage working together for the best learning and development of children as well as the interest of society and local communities. ([More information](#))

Accessibility is also a consideration when engaging stakeholders, especially parents and the students themselves into open schooling activities. In this sense, potential linguistic and cultural barriers need to be assessed and tackled.

Sources: UDE, UNICEF, IPA

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# Policy Brief #7

## Open Schooling Lessons Learnt from COVID-19

**Key messages from the #Ed2030 Global Forum by OECD (19-20 May 2020):**

- ⇒ **The current COVID-19 reality is clearly challenging for everyone involved in education, but also provides us a unique opportunity to learn from each other – H.R.H Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands**
- ⇒ **We can use the momentum from the crisis to reshape curricula and learning environments to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – Andreas Schleicher, OECD Director for Education and Skills**

**The experiences of school closures starting in March 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic has some elements open STEAM schooling initiatives can use as leverage. The active use of digital tools is just one aspect. If we want to use these experiences, we need to focus on other elements such as new ways of assessment, playfulness, collaborative learning methodologies, intergenerational learning, focus on arts and life skills, or the secondary nature of academic content.**

The education research community has reacted quickly and there are several ongoing or already finished research activities and evidence related to the impact of school closures due to COVID-19 published by May 2020. Researchers call for a stark differentiation between digital or online learning and provisions due to school closures, but there are research results that can be useful for designing open schooling activities in regular times.

It is important to stimulate innovative teaching and learning practices that enhance educational projects, adapted to a mixed and differentiated teaching system, focusing on: the diversification of pedagogical methodologies, in particular active methodologies, expanding and deepening project-based ways of learning and teaching; intensifying self-directed learning, team work and other forms of learning; and the creation of inclusive and non-discriminatory environments, adapting time schedules, reconfiguring, within the legal limits, the existing teaching loads.

There is a need to develop programs to enhance skills for the future (as part of the post-COVID approach) through peer learning sessions for professionals. These activities should stimulate dialogue and the sharing of good practices among institutions at national and international levels, making the possible scaling of innovative projects a reality. It can also be an opportunity to develop and consolidate institutional partnerships at European level.

Online provisions can enable the flexibility of teaching and learning anywhere, anytime, and this has been very well received by both students and their families. For teachers, however, balancing work and family life has proven to be challenging. Online learning also carries a stigma of being lower quality than face-to-face learning, despite research showing otherwise. These are significant considerations when designing open schooling as teacher well-being is as important a consideration as that of learners. When designing open schooling provisions, there are the highly variable design solutions that have been developed and implemented: distance learning, distributed learning, blended learning, online learning, mobile learning, and others. It is crucial to understand their characteristics and benefits when designing open schooling.

As Janet Goodall[1] has put it, the current situation makes it possible for all school stakeholders, but especially school leaders “to consider what’s really important in schooling – to think about what schools are for, and to concentrate on that. Schools were originally set up to enable groups of children to learn the things that society deemed were important for them to know (Goodall, 2017), and have come a very long way in being able to do that, mainly through the dedication and professionalism of the staff within the school walls.

Now, though, we need to get back to those basics, to become radical if you like (the word means ‘root’) – what’s really important for our children to learn? To do, to be, to become? And how can we help families support that learning? Now, more than ever, we need to see growing partnerships between school staff and other families – and I say ‘other’ because one facet of the whole debate that seems to be ignored is just how many school staff are themselves parents or carers.”



Non-formal education providers have made a vast amount of content and tools available for free, and have gone a long way curating content to support emergency remote schooling, proving to be suitable partners in open schooling.

Child mental health experts have urged governments to prioritise children's play and socialising with friends over formal lessons and academic progress when schools reopen. At the same time there is long-established evidence about the benefits of playfulness in learning, as well as gamification methodologies supporting iterative learning. Open schooling in STE(A)M can support the implementation of diverse methods more beneficial for deep learning than traditional school instruction. In a recent research by Scientix a grim picture has been drawn about the use of non-traditional, non-frontal methodologies in STEM teaching in Europe, while their benefits have proven to be widely known.

Last, but not least, current experiences also made education stakeholders rethink the role and use of digital technology, to understand the difference between passive screen time and using the screen for being active and to evaluate the benefits against potential risks. Open schooling partnerships can contribute to finding a healthy balance between digital and traditional education having partners more proficient using technology than the average school teacher. Maintaining the use of digital alternatives can also help reduce pressure on the environment by making choices between necessary and not-so-necessary travel, while keeping a healthy level of physical interpersonal contacts. Open schooling programmes can also support teachers to become more proficient using digital platforms and tools.

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[1]  
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