

## **Togetherness as motivation - a 21st century skill OECD perspectives**

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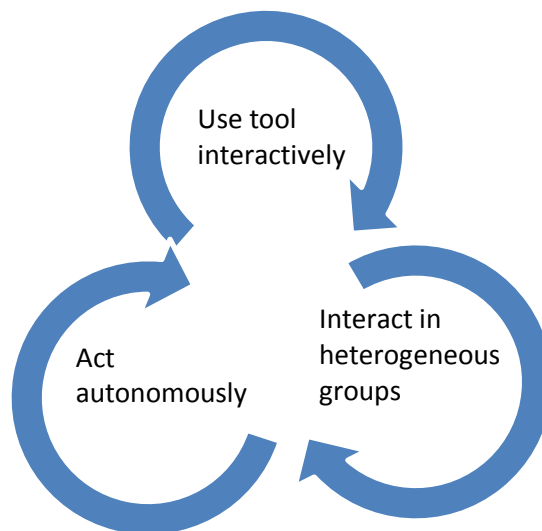
### **Challenges and opportunities of education today and tomorrow:**

Today, young people face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Globalisation may bring innovation and higher living standards, but it can also contribute to economic inequality and social division. Digitalisation opens the door to an infinite amount of information and facilitates connections. Young people are spending a significant amount of time alone in their rooms while simultaneously being connected to millions of people around the world. Migration and the influx of refugees has provoked the debate on integration of and cohabitation with people of different backgrounds and has forced us to ask ourselves to what extent we are ready to live in and contribute to diverse societies.

All these changes need to be reflected in the discussions on the role of education. What do young people need to learn in order to prepare for future study, work and life? How can they meet their full potential through learning? International educational debates have been shedding light on different perspectives on learning, and giving more weight to a holistic view of the expected outcome of education. In this context, the education community has been revising the question of what are 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

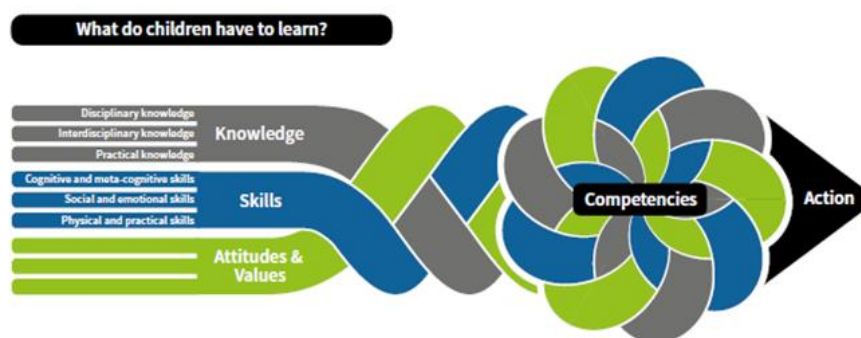
### **What should young people learn for the world of 2030?**

In the late 1990's, the OECD conducted a study to define and select key competencies which served as the foundation for the Programme for International Student Assessment. These competencies were selected for their potential role to i) contribute to valued outcomes for societies and individuals; ii) help individuals meet important demands in a wide variety of contexts; and iii) be important not just for specialists but for all individuals. The initiative identified three broad categories of competences as shown in the graphic below:



It has been more than fifteen years since this reflection on 21<sup>st</sup> century competences. The core principals of the framework remain relevant. However, taking into account the context of changing societies and economies, and giving a forward-looking reflection on the competences which would be important in another fifteen years to come, the OECD is currently revising the question through a project called 'the Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030'. Together with countries, including Denmark, and in consultation with experts, stakeholders, and resource persons, the project is exploring the question 'What should young people learn for 2030?'.

In the process of developing the learning framework for 2030, which will outline the possible outcomes of learning, three areas of learning domain are identified; i) knowledge, ii) skills, and iii) attitudes and values. The interaction of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values will lead to the development of competencies related to the willingness of students to take actions; actions for life-long learning, for enhancement of their own well-being, and for participation in the construction of a peaceful and sustainable world.



As is outlined in the conceptual image above, and as reflected in the work of other organisations such as the framework of competences for democratic culture of the Council of Europe, attitudes and values are considered an integral part of learning.

**‘Togetherness’ as motivation:**

The central theme of the conference, ‘togetherness’, could be a foundation on which above mentioned domains of learning are built. Togetherness could be a driving value for students and it will enable them to be more open to learning to live together with others from different backgrounds. Togetherness could empower students to be actors for change. It could also be a motivating factor for students to develop and exercise attitudes to be open to collaboration, communication, co-operation, or to demonstrate empathy towards others who have diverse needs. The concept of togetherness could also motivate learners to enhance the knowledge and skills which could serve them in becoming effective actors to make classrooms, schools, communities, and societies an environment which embraces diversity and promotes collaboration and co-operation. .

The concept of togetherness also reflects the emerging challenges of the world of work. In today’s economy, just being excellent in a specialised area or succeeding in occupation-related skills is no longer sufficient to be effective workers. The ability to work together with people of different cultures, languages, expertise and views is considered more important than ever. Collaboration, sharing knowledge, and problem solving or creating new ideas together are important competencies for innovation.

**What can we do together?**

The significance of the competence to live together is mirrored in the current debate on the Sustainable Develop Goals (SDG). The SDG for education, in particular target 4.7, calls countries to ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development. The concept of togetherness could be an illustration of the drive which motivates people to pursue life-long learning and to build a sustainable and peaceful world.

The OECD has been working with countries to monitor the progress towards the SDGs and to facilitate the evidence-based policy debate and peer-learning so that education systems offer the best possible

support for learners, regardless of their background, to achieve their full potential. In response to the need to have more explicit integration of the social and emotional dimensions of learning in the policy debate, PISA has been asking questions of students in order to understand their motivation, confidence, perception or well-being context related to learning. For example, the data shows that students from immigrant backgrounds have a different level of performance and diverse degree of sense of belonging to schools, depending on which country is hosting them. This means that education systems can influence how immigrant and refugee students are integrated into schools and receive necessary support to overcome their disadvantages.

In 2015 PISA conducted an assessment to understand to what extent students are able to and willing to collaborate with other students to solve problems together, and the results will be published in 2017. Currently, countries participating in PISA are working together to develop an assessment of Global Competence that will be conducted in 2018. The PISA assessment of Global Competence will provide a comprehensive overview of education systems' success in creating learning environments that invite young people to understand the world beyond their immediate environment, embrace diversity and support peaceful, sustainable and thriving communities.

The discussion on the challenges that countries are facing and that learning among countries building on their policy experiences could offer students a better chance to achieve their full potential. The OECD is keen to learn from Danish perspectives and experiences of 'Togetherness' as motivation for learning. I hope our exchange will feed into the future policy debate at international level.

OECD (2014), PISA 2012 Results in Focus: What 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know, OECD Publishing

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OECD (2003), The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies; Executive Summary  
<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf>

Council of Europe (2016), Competences for Democratic Culture: Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies