Educational Pluralism in International Context

A Look at Seventeen Countries

Joanna DeJong VanHof | October 2025

Key Points

- Educational pluralism is a system of education in which the government funds and regulates, but does not necessarily deliver, the education.
- Robust systems of educational pluralism are characterized by availability, accessibility, and accountability.
- This paper offers metrics by which educational pluralism can be assessed across countries, and it applies these metrics to seventeen OECD countries.
- The top-line findings of this study are:
    - Countries can provide significant scope for pluralist education while also maintaining a commitment to academic quality for all students.
    - Most countries studied have policies that support accessibility, especially for underprivileged communities.
    - Each country studied has some accountability structure in place for independent schools.
- The paper notes that accountability and freedom can come into conflict. Public policy regarding school accountability should be developed carefully to preserve the freedoms for education expressed, for example, in international human rights documents.

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For the full publication, see DeJong VanHof, Joanna. "Educational Pluralism in International Context: A Look at Seventeen Countries." Cardus, 2025. https://www.cardus.ca/research/education/reports/educational-pluralism-in-international-context/.