

Discussion points from “Education policy around the world: Innovations in 14-19 Reform” seminar at Lancaster House, London on Wednesday 7 May 2008 are below.

How should policy makers respond to the challenges of globalisation?

The speakers originally addressed this in economic terms, referring to the challenges that globalisation posed to labour forces, but the original questioner - in response - clarified his question stressing that globalisation is not just about economic development but is also about trends that are sometimes thought to lead inevitably to westernisation. He was interested in the how those trends were likely to impact on education and what the educational role of national identity would be?

How important it is that local contexts are respected? Is it true that if they are not, change will not take root in an education system?

A number of participants welcomed the focus that speakers put on respecting the local context of education. This is a reflection of the debate around top down versus bottom up system reform. It is a difficult balance for governments to strike; on the one hand they must be proactive if they want to secure the advantages of educational change while on the other they must respect local circumstances.

How highly valued is the teaching workforce and the how much should be invested in their training?

Several participants said that this was actually the key to driving educational improvement. Does it really outweigh institutional factors – such as class sizes? Where should the balance be struck between in service training and full time prequalification training?