

OECD DeSeCo



*Definition and
Selection of
Competencies:
Theoretical and
Conceptual
Foundations*

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OECD Project DeSeCo

- under the auspices of the OECD (lead: Switzerland)
 - a research-oriented program with the aim to develop....
- ...an overarching framework for key competencies

Starting point:

What competencies are needed for a successful life and a well-functioning society?

Global and common challenges

- globalization, competition, liberalization
- new forms of communication and interaction
- substantial global inequality of opportunities
- ecological destabilization, climate change
- growing diversity
- large-scale value changes, instability of norms
- conflicts and new forms of violence
- poverty and population movements
- ...

Policy issues

Developing human capital

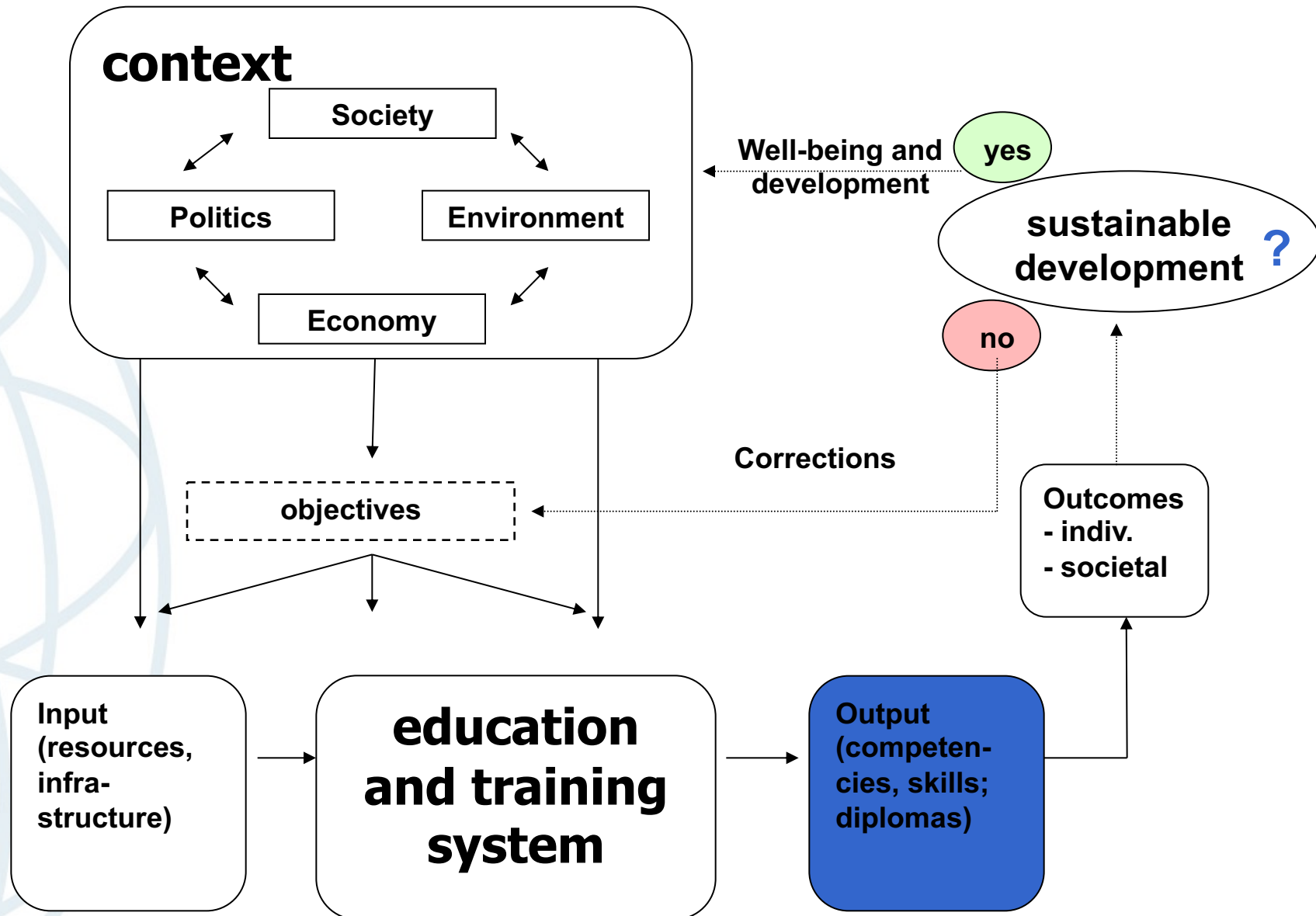
Raising the quality of education systems

Questions such as...

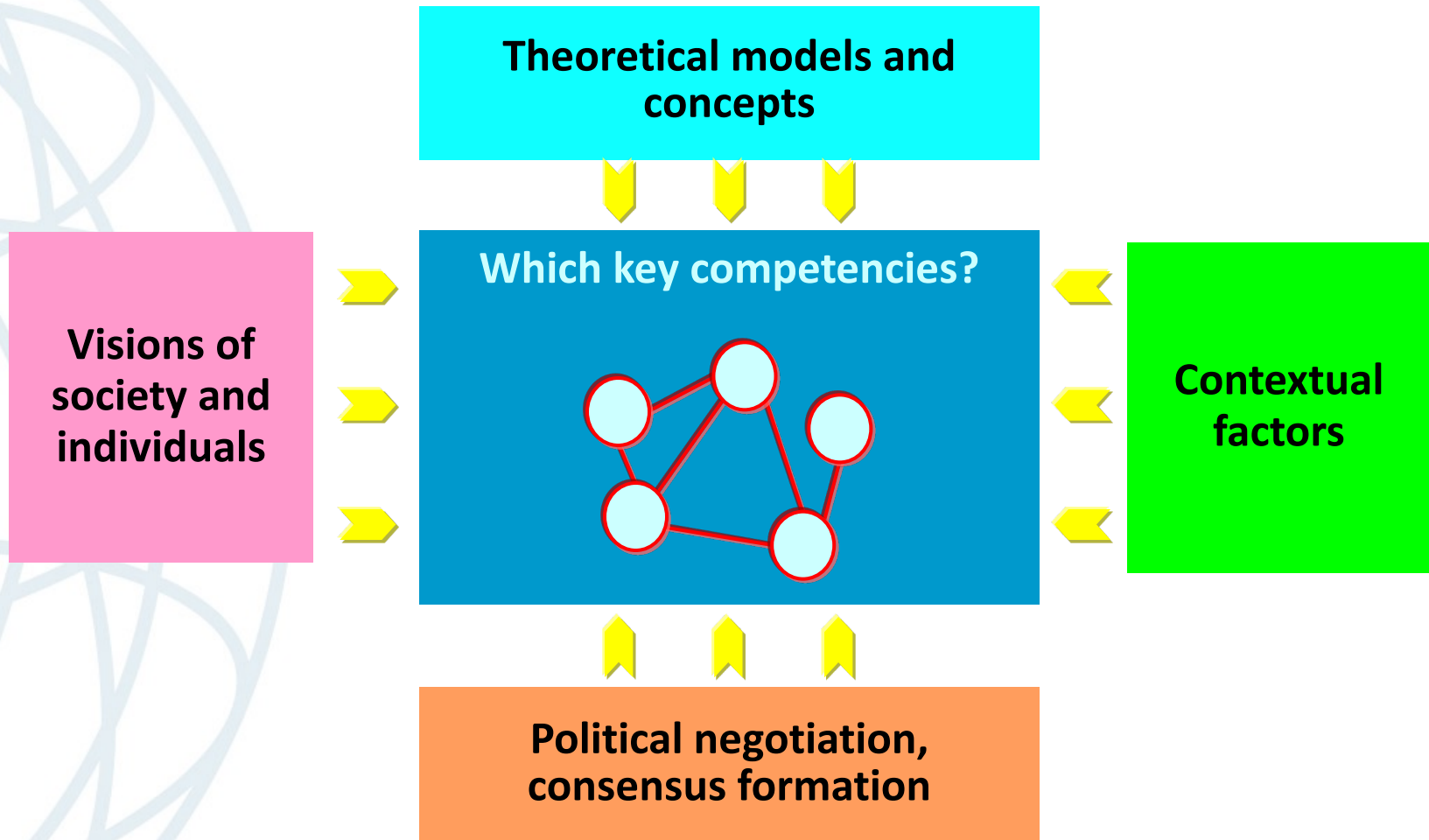
- Are individuals equipped with knowledge and skills needed to cope with the challenges in life?
- Do education and training systems generate the required competencies?

➔ interest in learning and education outcomes

A systemic perspective



Definition and selection process



An interdisciplinary perspective

sociologists
philosophers
Anthropologists
psychologists
economists
historian
education specialists

Defining key competencies requires
multidisciplinary perspectives and
interdisciplinary collaboration



What is a competence?

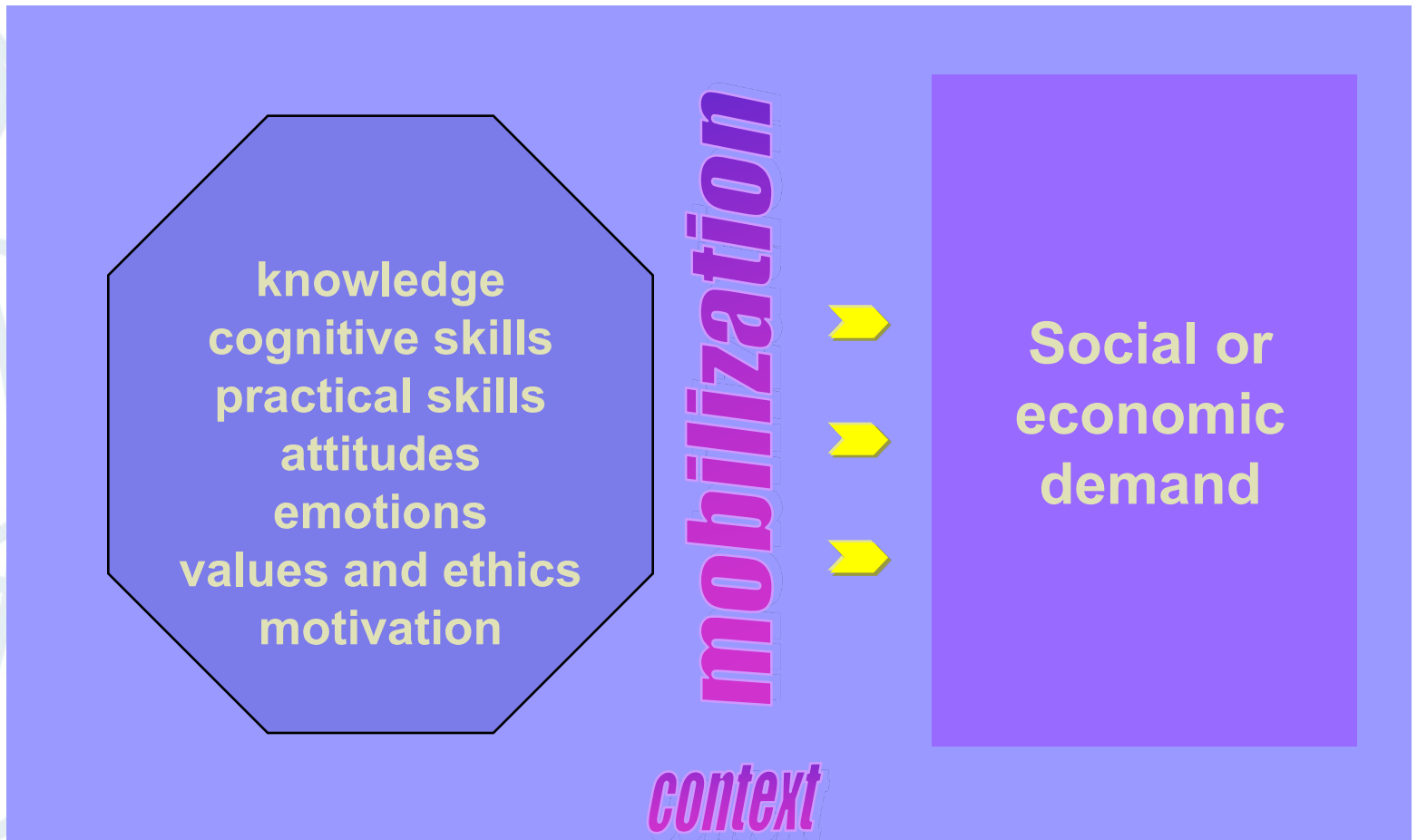
A competence is...

- the ability to meet (complex) demands
- a cluster of knowledge, cognitive skills, attitudes, values, motivation and emotions
- context-based
- learned



a dynamic and holistic concept

A competence is more than knowledge



Transversal competencies

What makes a competence a key competence?

Key competencies

- are important to all individuals
- help individuals meet important demands in all relevant fields of life (family life, workplace, political sphere, health sector,...)
- contribute to desired outcomes
 - a successful life
 - a well-functioning society

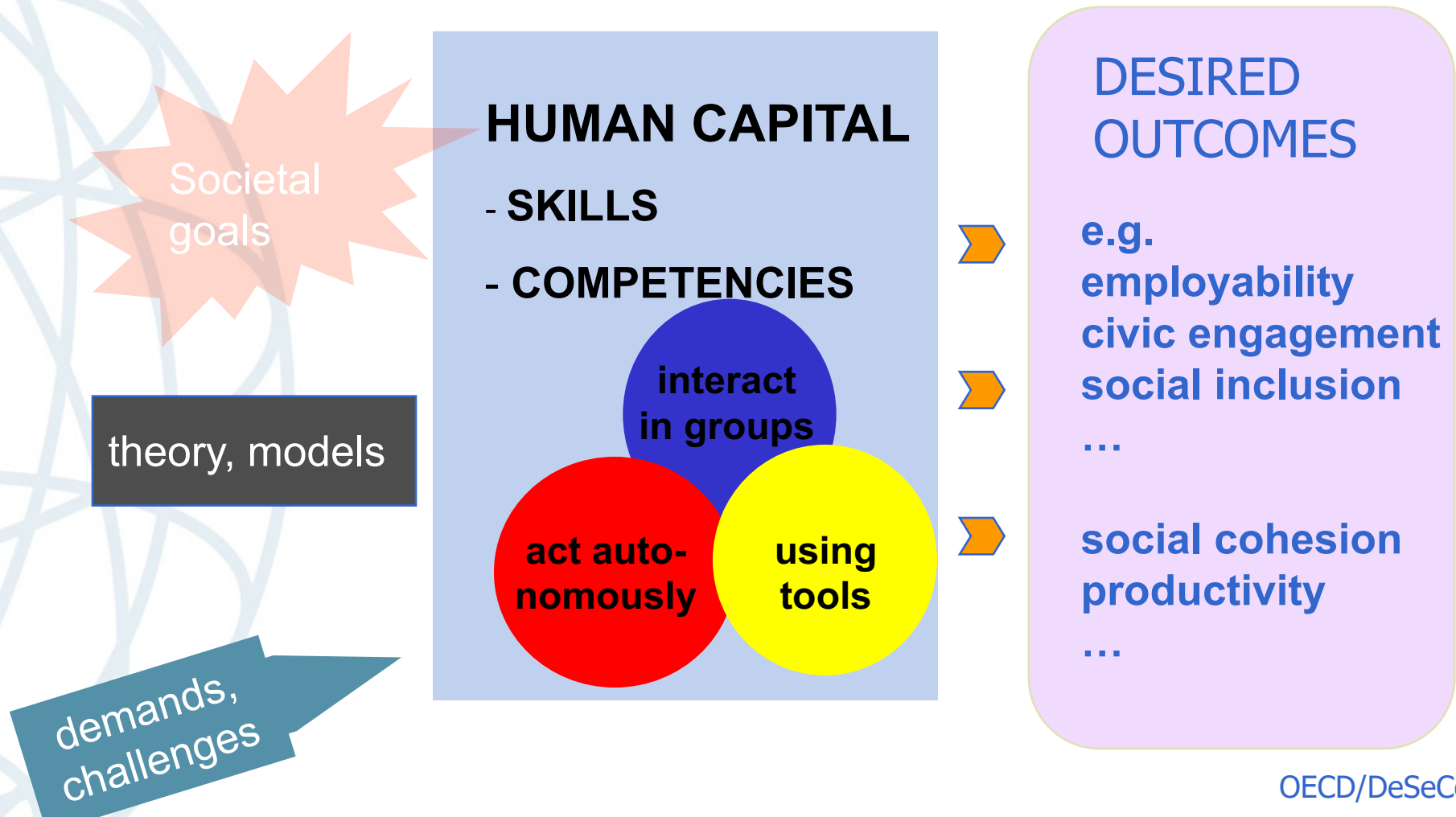
Collective goals

- sustainable development
- democratic values and processes
- respect of human rights
- equity and equality
- ...



International conventions, national constitutions
and agreements

Framework for competencies



Three categories of key competencies

- Using tools interactively
- Acting autonomously
- Interacting in socially heterogeneous groups



a conceptual basis for identifying and mapping important competencies

Interacting in heterogeneous groups

Focus: interaction with the different other

- living in multicultural/pluralistic societies
- need to deal with diversity
- empathy is an important prerequisite



Interacting in socially heterogeneous groups includes...

the ability to...

- relate well to others
- cooperate, work in teams
- manage and resolve conflicts

Acting autonomously

Focus: personal identity/relative autonomy

- need to build one's identity (including a value system)
- exercise control over living and working conditions
- understanding one's environment and its functioning

Acting autonomously includes...

the ability to...

- act within the big picture / the larger context
- form and conduct personal projects / life plans
- defend / assert rights, interests, limits

Using tools interactively

Focus: interaction with the world through tools

- Familiarity with the tool
- Adapt tools to own purposes
- Awareness of new forms of interaction
- Accommodation to the potential



Using tools interactively includes...

the ability to...

- use language, symbols, and texts interactively
- use knowledge and information interactively
- use (new) technology interactively

8. Challenges for education systems

- a long term perspective
- focus on access, equity and quality
- lifelong learning (initial and adult education)
- a holistic and inclusive approach is needed

➔ education as a total experience (around „4 pillars“: *learning to know, do, be, and to live together*)

- an enabling environment is a prerequisite

➔ critical role of the government, economic sector, school, family, workplace, mass media, NGOs, cultural organizations,...

Publications

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