

# Preface

The *New International Handbook of Globalisation, Education and Policy Research (Handbook)* presents an up-to-date scholarly research on *global* trends in comparative education and policy research. It provides an easily accessible, practical yet scholarly source of information about the international concern in the field of globalisation, education and policy research. Above all, the *Handbook* offers the latest findings to the critical issues in education and policy directions for the next decade, which were first raised by Coombs (1982). Back in the 1980s, these included:

1. Developing the new internal strategies (more comprehensive, flexible and innovative modes of learning) that took into account the changing and expanding learner needs
2. Overcoming ‘unacceptable’ socio-economic educational disparities and inequalities
3. Improving educational quality
4. Harmonising education and culture
5. International co-operation in education and policy directions in each country (Coombs 1982, pp. 145–157)

These educational and policy imperatives continue to occupy central place in educational discourses globally. Overcoming and reducing socio-economic and educational inequality is still on the policy agenda.

The *Handbook*, as a sourcebook of ideas for researchers, practitioners and policy makers in education, provides a timely overview of current changes in comparative education and policy research. It offers directions in education and policy research relevant to visionary and transformational educational leadership in the twenty-first century (Zajda 2010). Equality of educational opportunities, called by Coombs (1982) as the ‘stubborn issue of inequality’ (Coombs 1982, p. 153), and first examined in comparative education research by Kandel in 1957 (Kandel 1957, p. 2), is still with us.

The OECD’s reports on income inequality, *Divided We Stand* (2011), *Inequality rising faster than ever* (2013a), and *Crisis squeezes income and puts pressure on inequality and poverty* (2013b) documented that the gap between rich and poor in

OECD countries had widened continuously over the last three decades to 2008, reaching an all-time high in 2007. According to OECD report (2013a), economic inequality has increased more ‘over the past three years to the end of 2010 than in previous twelve’. The report also notes that inequality in America today ‘exceeds the records last reached in the 1920s. The United States has the fourth-highest level of inequality in the developed world’ (OECD 2013b). The widening economic and social inequalities in education are due to market-oriented economies, governance and schooling. Social inequalities, based on economic and cultural capital, and socio-economic status (SES) and exclusion, are more than real (Zajda 2011, 2014). A significant gap in access to early childhood education was documented in about half of the OECD countries back in 2001 (OECD 2001, p. 126). Access and equity continue to be ‘enduring concerns’ in education (OECD 2001, p. 26, 2013a).

The chapters in the *Handbook* are compiled into seven major parts:

1. Globalisation, Education and Policy Research
2. Globalisation and Higher Education
3. Globalisation, Education Policy and Change
4. Education Policy Issues: Gender, Equity, Minorities and Human Right
5. Education, Policy and Curricula Issues
6. Globalisation, Education Policy and Reform: Curriculum and Policy Change
7. Globalisation, Education Policy and Reform: Changing Schools

The *Handbook* contains 50 chapters, with each chapter containing 6,000–10,000 words. The use of sections served the purposes of providing a structure and coherence and sharing the workload between section editors. The general editors and section editors ensured that each draft chapter was reviewed by at least two (at times three) reviewers who examined the material presented in each manuscript for the content, style and appropriateness for inclusion in the *Handbook*.

The general intention is to make the *Handbook* available to a broad spectrum of users among policy-makers, academics, graduate students, education policy researchers, administrators, and practitioners in the education and related professions. The *Handbook* is unique in that it

- Presents up-to-date global overview of developments in education and policy change during the last decade
- Combines the link between globalisation, education and policy and the Knowledge Society of the twenty-first century
- Provides an easily accessible, practical yet scholarly source of information about the changing nature of knowledge, schooling and policy research globally
- Presents issues confronting policy makers and educators on current education reforms and social change globally
- Evaluates globalisation, education and policy research and its impact on schooling and education reforms
- Provides strategic education policy analysis on recent shifts in education and policy research

- Offers new approaches to further exploration, development and improvement of education and policy making
- Offers a timely overview of current changes in education and policy
- Has each chapter written by a world-renown educator
- Gives suggestions for directions in education and policy, relevant to visionary and transformational educational leadership, and empowering pedagogy in the twenty-first century

We hope that you will find it useful in your future research and discourses concerning schooling and reform in the global culture.

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