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Main policy lines in education and training

June – October 2012

OECD

1. Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives. A strategic approach to skills policies.

OECD, 2012

The OECD has put together a strategy that helps countries to transform skills into better jobs and better lives.

The strategy tries to formulate answers to the following questions:

- How can a country improve the quality and quantity of its skills?

A country has to encourage people to learn, by gathering and using evidence about the changing demand for skills, by involving social partners in education and training programmes, by linking the world of learning and the world of work, by removing barriers to investing in further learning, by promoting equity by ensuring quality education for all and by ensuring that the costs of education and training are shared.

A country has to encourage skilled people to enter the country by facilitating mobility for skilled migrants.

A country has to promote cross-border skills policies, by investing in skills abroad and encouraging cross-border higher education.

- How can a country activate skills in the labour market?

A country has to encourage people to use their skills by creating financial incentives that make work pay and by dismantling non-financial barriers to participation in the labour force, such as inflexible working conditions.

A country has to retrain skilled people, by discouraging early retirement (lifelong learning and targeted training can improve employability in later life and discourage early withdrawal from the labour market) and by staunching brain drain, providing incentives to stay rather than imposing measures to prevent emigration.

→ How can a country make the best of its talent pool?

A country has to ensure that people use their skills effectively by helping young people to gain a foothold in the labour market, by helping employers to make better use of their employees' skills, by providing better information about skills needed and available and by facilitating mobility.

A country has to increase the demand for high-level skills. Policies can also 'shape' demand, rather than merely respond to it. Entrepreneurship has to be fostered: entrepreneurs are made, not born.

The way forward

As a follow-up to formulating the Skills Strategy, the OECD will be devising guidance on how to develop national skills strategies and support countries in implementing them. The OECD Survey of Adult Skills can help: it provides a first-of-its-kind assessment of the skills individuals have, how these are used on the job, and the resultant economic and social outcomes. The first results will be published in October 2013 as part of a new OECD Skills Outlook. In addition, OECD is developing an interactive online portal for skills: <http://skills.oecd.org>.

[Read more](#)

Highlights of the strategy:

<http://skills.oecd.org/documents/SkillsHighlightsEnglish.pdf>

2. Learning beyond fifteen. Ten years after PISA.

OECD, 2012

Learning beyond Fifteen focuses on the development of reading proficiency during the transition from adolescence to early adulthood. It explores the results of a unique study in Canada that combines PISA data with a follow-up survey, the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS), and a reassessment of reading skills nine years after students took the PISA test.

The results show large improvements in reading proficiency among all Canadian youth between the ages of 15 and 24. This evidence highlights the importance of flexibility in educational systems. A second chance to continue their education

allows even those students who performed poorly at age 15 to acquire the skills they need to succeed in the workplace.

[Read more](#)

3. Education at a glance

11 September 2012

This annual report provides data from 34 countries including 21 EU Member States on performance in education. It provides information on the state of play in education, including the financial and human resources invested, student-teacher ratios, teaching hours, graduate numbers and results, access, participation and progression in education as well as data on the learning environment and organisation of schools. New indicators focus on the effect of the global economic crisis on education expenditure and the impact of education on macroeconomic outcomes such as GDP. It identifies several areas in European education that are likely to create challenges in the near future.

An ageing teaching force is one of them. Gender inequality is also a problem. Education at a glance also reveals that education spending in the 21 EU Member States is slightly below the OECD average. The financial return on tertiary education continues to grow. Europe continues to be the preferred destination for students studying outside their country.

[Read more](#)

4. Teaching Practices and Pedagogical Innovations. Evidence from TALIS.

This publication clearly identifies and arranges profiles in relation to two connected areas of professional teacher practices: classroom teaching practices and participation in professional learning communities. It identifies underlying profiles in teachers' classroom practices. A large set of variables about teachers, such as gender, training, subjects taught, but also their pedagogical beliefs, the degree of professional development, the amount of feedback and appraisal received, etc., were brought together and in each country different profiles of teachers were distinguished.

[Free preview](#)

The Teaching in Focus briefs shed new light on issues surrounding the teaching and learning environment in schools and teachers' working conditions. They present data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS).

Teaching in focus brief 1: [Are teachers getting the recognition they deserve?](#)

Teaching in focus brief 2: [What can be done to support new teachers?](#)

