

Executive summary

OECD-Tlaxcala collaboration on the OECD Skills Strategy project

This OECD Skills Strategy project provides Tlaxcala (Mexico) with tailored findings and recommendations on its skills performance from an international perspective. The project was launched during a virtual Skills Strategy Seminar in July 2020, which was followed by two online workshops in October 2020 (the Assessment Workshop) and December 2020 (the Recommendations Workshop). During each of these workshops the OECD engaged with more than 100 governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. These discussions were complemented by further virtual bilateral and group meetings. This process and Tlaxcala's remarkable stakeholder engagement provided invaluable input that shaped the findings and recommendations in this report.

Skills matter for Tlaxcala

Skills are vital for countries and individuals to adapt to and thrive in an increasingly complex, interconnected and rapidly changing world. As megatrends and the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic reshape societies and economies, getting skills policies right becomes even more crucial for increasing productivity and promoting inclusive and sustainable growth.

Tlaxcala's economy has experienced robust growth since 2011, driven largely by growing economic output in the manufacturing, construction, mining and automotive industries, as well as inflows of foreign direct investment. However, Tlaxcala's sustained growth has been radically interrupted by COVID-19, which has arrived amid uncertainties related to the impact of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) on trade.

Tlaxcala will need to provide its youth with high-quality opportunities to develop relevant skills that will support their smooth transition into the labour market, as well as foster a culture of adult learning that can facilitate youths' adaptability to changes in the economy. At the same time, Tlaxcala will need to foster greater participation in adult learning to help adults upskill and reskill in response to changing labour market needs, and thus boost their employability. In order to raise productivity and swiftly recover from the COVID-19 crisis, Tlaxcala will need to support its people to use their skills more effectively. Robust governance arrangements, underpinned by a whole-of-government approach, active stakeholder engagement and high-quality information on changing skills demands, will be more important than ever in helping Tlaxcala successfully navigate the rapidly changing skills environment.

The key findings and recommendations in each of these areas are summarised below and elaborated in subsequent chapters, which also have detailed policy recommendations.

Strengthening the skills of youth

Foundations for success in skills development and learning are laid during childhood and youth. Providing youth with opportunities to develop relevant skills, therefore, contributes to a strong basis for economic growth, social cohesion and well-being. Skills development during early childhood is linked to higher

graduation and completion rates across all levels of compulsory education. It also supports smooth transition into the labour market and fosters a culture of adult learning that can facilitate adaptability to changes in the economy. In order to strengthen the skills of youth, Tlaxcala should boost access and quality in pre-primary education, build a strong teaching workforce, and strengthen the responsiveness of secondary vocational and education training (VET) and tertiary education institutions to labour market needs.

The main recommendations are:

- Gather and centralise the recently acquired pedagogical knowledge and lessons learned from in-service pre-primary teachers on how to effectively engage with students and parents during the pandemic.
- Identify the key aspects of high-quality initial teacher training, and standardise these aspects across all initial teacher training institutes.
- Harmonise and simplify the process for opening, closing or adjusting VET and higher education programmes and specialisations.

Fostering greater participation in adult learning

Participation in adult learning of all forms can help adults upskill and reskill in response to changing labour market needs, and thus boost their employability. Adults' continuous engagement in learning activities will therefore be of paramount importance in the years to come, especially as digitalisation, globalisation and population ageing, compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, continue to rapidly reshape the quantity and quality of existing jobs, as well as the type of skills required to perform these jobs. To foster greater participation in adult learning, Tlaxcala should increase adults' motivation to participate in remedial education and provide incentives for adults to participate in training that responds to labour market needs.

The main recommendations are:

- Provide vocational and combined streams in upper secondary remedial education to help adults earn a formal VET qualification.
- Expand the information and guidance provided by the National Employment Service of Tlaxcala's (Servicio Nacional de Empleo de Tlaxcala, SNET) career guidance services.
- Allow informal workers to benefit from the training provided by SNET's Employability Support Programme (Programa de Apoyo al Empleo, ACE) and by the Supérate programme.

Using people's skills more effectively to raise productivity

Skills development policies will only achieve desired productivity gains if they are accompanied by simultaneous actions to boost the effective use of skills. Effective skills use raises the return on the initial investment in the development of skills, and limits the depreciation and obsolescence of acquired but unused skills. When skills are effectively put to use, workers, employers and the broader economy all benefit. In order to use people's skills more effectively to raise productivity, Tlaxcala should foster entrepreneurship and support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as promote the adoption of high-performance workplace practices (HPWP).

The main recommendations are:

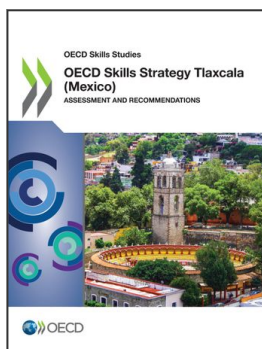
- Create industry-specific channels for communication to help female entrepreneurs create business networks and integrate with existing supply chains.
- Expand the geographic coverage of the Secretariat of Economic Development (Secretaria de Desarrollo Económico, SEDECO) to alleviate connectivity issues and extend SME support to rural or marginalised municipalities.
- Strengthen the provision of managerial skills training to support the adoption of HPWP.

Strengthening the governance of the skills system

The success of skills policies typically depends on the responses and actions of a wide range of actors (e.g. government, educators, workers, employers) that have to effectively work together in a constantly shifting environment characterised by significant uncertainty. Therefore, well-functioning governance arrangements are essential to support Tlaxcala's performance in developing and using people's skills. To strengthen the governance of the skills system, Tlaxcala should increase co-ordination in adult learning across the whole of government, and maximise the potential of skills data to foster responsive policy making.

The main recommendations are:

- Foster better alignment between the State Development Plan (Plan Estatal de Desarrollo, PED) and municipal development plans (*plan de desarrollo municipal*, PMD).
- Expand the implementation of impact evaluation for adult learning programmes.
- Introduce Tlaxcala's own Skills Needs Survey to regularly survey employer's needs.



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