

Foreword

*I*t is with great pleasure that we are publishing the first edition of *Job Creation and Local Economic Development*, a landmark publication for the LEED Programme. For over 30 years, the OECD Programme on Local Economic and Employment Development has worked to fulfil its mission of contributing to the creation of more and better jobs through effective policy implementation, innovative practices, stronger capacities and integrated strategies at the local level. For the first time, this publication brings together the most recent findings from LEED across the areas of employment and skills, entrepreneurship, social inclusion and local development in one place.

It draws from a variety of LEED's latest projects and studies, including "Local job creation: how employment and training agencies can help" and "Skills for competitiveness", which provide critical insights in the area of employment and training policy. "Accelerating local growth" (generating guidance on ways to boost high-growth firms); "Skills for entrepreneurship"; "Inclusive entrepreneurship in Europe"; and "Job creation through the social economy and social entrepreneurship" examine ways to nurture entrepreneurship including among disadvantaged populations and areas. "New growth and investment strategies"; "New economic leadership"; "Local economic strategies for shrinking and ageing labour markets"; and "Skills for greener jobs in a local labour market context" help to guide the design of integrated strategies that foster growth and resiliency in the face of modern challenges.

This publication comes at a critical time, and it is no coincidence that LEED's findings are increasingly feeding into international fora, such as the G20 Labour Ministerial in 2014. We still need to better understand the factors that led to the economic crisis. However, we also need to look forward to ensure that we do not falter in the recovery. Current unemployment rates reflect this transitional position. Unemployment has decreased since its peak, but we still have not reached pre-crisis rates, and it remains persistently high in some European countries as well as for youth. The key issue is how to build on these modest gains while also ensuring that we focus not just on growth, but also on inclusiveness, sustainability and resiliency. The findings presented in this publication suggest the importance of comprehensive approaches that are tailored to the local context and involve partners across employment, skills and economic development.

The importance of local partnerships and collaboration is also reflected in our own work, which would not be possible without the willing and capable co-operation of a wide variety of partners. I would like to warmly thank all the policy makers, practitioners, and experts from both OECD and non-OECD countries whose contributions were critical to our studies and projects. I would also like to thank the national statistics offices who played a crucial role in helping us to collect data for the country profiles presented in this publication.



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