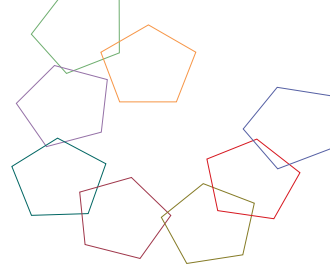


Foreword



The OECD Directorate for Education helps member and non-member economies to foster human and social capital skills and leverage education and training systems to shape dynamic and sustainable futures. This means preparing learners for more rapid change than ever before. Key questions concern how skills can be matched to new needs, how to foster innovation, how to equip teachers for the 21st century, and how to reinforce the positive social impacts of education. We encourage countries to compare their performance and experience, and to learn from each other.

Education has been part of OECD work since the organisation was created 50 years ago but its importance over that time has grown markedly, both within countries' policy agendas and within the OECD itself. This growing prominence lay behind the decision to create a separate Directorate for Education in 2002. As reflected in this report's different chapters, we follow a "lifelong" approach to education and training. Our work also has a strong focus on quality, skills, equity, and innovation.

Knowledge management plays a key role in a world of information overload and knowledge-based economies. Traditionally, as OECD analyses have shown, education has not been exemplar in its own knowledge management, despite "knowledge" being education's core business. Given the significant volume of publications we produce each year, it is even more important that we provide a coherent overview of their key messages. This report aims to present the key findings and orientations for policy in an accessible way so that they can be used by different audiences – our own national contacts, other sections of governments, experts, media and the wider public – who do not have the time to stay abreast of all of the OECD's work on education. It is designed to encourage readers who know about only one or two of our studies to look further into those that they have been missing so far.

We have chosen to limit the scope of this report so that it includes only published results and policy orientations, and those applicable to most OECD countries (rather than, for example, single country reviews). The coverage is limited to work produced by the Directorate for Education, but it includes some analyses that have been conducted jointly with other OECD Directorates. A recent example is the OECD's horizontal "Skills Strategy" to which the Directorate for Education made an important contribution regarding education and innovation for skills.

Education Today: The OECD Perspective is only one example of the priority we have been giving recently to weaving the different strands of the Directorate's analyses more closely together and to highlighting our main messages, in addition to our longstanding annual flagship publication *Education at a Glance*. As part of the new GPS programme which we are

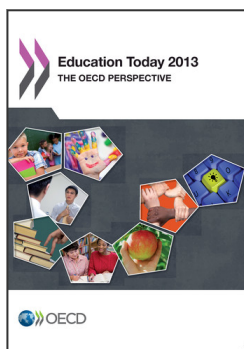
currently pursuing, we are establishing a knowledge management framework for our work on education, the integration of the evidence base from past and current analyses into this framework, and reinforcing the links between our education work programme and OECD's broader economic and social agenda. In 2009, we created an online collaborative space called *educationtoday* which offers relevant information, evidence and discussions on the impact of the crisis on education and related issues.

Following the positive response to the first edition of *Education Today: The OECD Perspective* published in March 2009, it was decided to make the report a regular feature and a second publication was released in October 2010. Within the Directorate for Education, this third synthesis has been undertaken by the Innovation and Measuring Progress Division with the text prepared by Marco Kools and David Istance, with the executive summary prepared by Sue Kendall (Public Affairs and Communications Directorate) and edited by Marilyn Achiron. Elisabeth Villoutreix and Elizabeth Del Bourgo were responsible for layout and proofreading, while Corinne Heckmann provided the statistical graphics and Amy Todd supported the data verification process. Cassandra Davis and Anne-Lise Prigent (Public Affairs and Communications Directorate) provided advice and co-ordination with the related dissemination activities within the Directorate.

The Directorate for Education is part of the OECD Secretariat and contributes to the Organisation's commitment to building a stronger, cleaner and fairer world economy.

We provide comparative data and analysis on education policy making to help build efficient and effective educational systems, and improve learning outcomes. We provide a forum where governments, business, civil society and academia can share best practices and learn from one another.

Our statistics and indicators provide a strong evidence base for international comparisons of all aspects of education systems. Our policy analyses facilitate peer learning across countries as new policy options are explored and experiences compared. Our future-oriented educational research helps shape policy agendas by identifying upcoming issues while drawing upon the overall breadth of the OECD's policy work.



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