

Foreword

In 2022, global disruptions and longer-term transformations revealed or intensified many new pathways for people and societies. Global disruptions made it again all too clear that “business as usual” is not a luxury that education systems can afford. While some countries have managed to reduce the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, other disruptions have emerged, such as those caused by Russia’s large-scale aggression against Ukraine. This illegal war has, first and foremost, meant the loss of too many innocent lives and the greatest refugee surge to OECD countries and economies since World War II. It has also translated into people around the world seeing their everyday food and energy prices rocketing, with the most disadvantaged being once again the most fragile.

But all this has been happening at the same time as other deep transformations occupy greater space in our lives. Technology keeps evolving, with mass media giving a voice and eyes—and possibly wings—to people in ways that we would not have imagined 30 years ago. New jobs also emerge, while others disappear, and all this also happens as learners enter education and before they leave for the labour market. Changing jobs or reconvertng into a whole different profession may soon become the new normal for everybody, while older people also stay in the labour force for a longer time, either by choice or by need. In the same way, with digitalisation permeating all aspects of life, both the young and the old interact differently with others as members of society and citizens. All these disruptions and transformations bring challenges and opportunities, with new pathways that people may follow as lifelong learners, as countries strive for fairer, greener and more resilient societies.

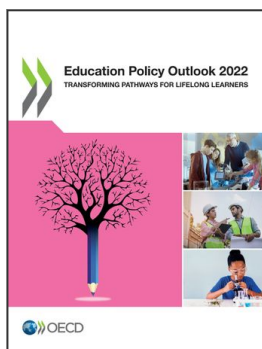
Are education systems succeeding in empowering people to embark upon, and navigate, these pathways? Education is becoming less about what you learn, and more about what you do with what you know. This means that education systems must provide learners with the opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills that they require as they progress through these pathways. To achieve this, we need learner-centred systems that evolve around their contexts, needs, interests and passions, and not the other way around. The bigger issue is how to give people greater ownership over what they learn, how they learn, where they learn and when they learn over their lifecycle. Only by doing this will countries achieve resilient learners, but also resilient societies and economies. Much remains to be done for education systems to get to that point.

By looking into recent policy efforts underway since the beginning of the pandemic and up to 2022 in over 40 education systems, the *Education Policy Outlook 2022: Transforming Pathways for Lifelong Learners* investigates ways in which countries have been working to help people to learn, unlearn and relearn dynamically, as they experience work and learning throughout their lives. This report analyses policy efforts to enhance the relevance of the education offer that education systems can provide to respond to learners’ needs, as well as easing transitions throughout learners’ personal pathways throughout life, and nurturing learners’ aspirations. There is still a way to go, but the only way is to help learners become the crafters of their own pathways.

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