

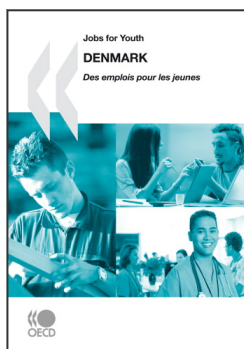
INTRODUCTION

Improving the performance of youth in the labour market is a crucial challenge in OECD countries. Declines in the number of new entrants to the labour market and ageing populations and workforces do not seem to have translated into much better labour market outcomes for youth. Thus it remains crucial to maintain or reinforce policies aimed at better equipping young people with the skills required by the labour market and helping them accomplish a successful transition from school to work.

The Danish government is particularly concerned about how well prepared young people are for the labour market. It is also aware of the need to develop labour market and welfare institutions that are likely to maximise youth opportunities. While Danish youth face a lower risk of unemployment than in many other OECD countries, the future economic outlook resulting from the global economic crisis is uncertain. Several barriers to youth employment persist.

On the (labour) supply side, some young people still lack the basic skills they need to succeed in a career. More generally, the proportion of young Danes entering the labour market with at least an upper secondary qualification is still lower than in most OECD countries. This could partially explain the intensity of the skill shortages the country was facing before the recent economic slowdown. Other barriers exist too. Students for instance probably also lack incentives to graduate quickly.

The purpose of this report is to examine all these barriers and discuss how education, training, labour market and social policies may help improve the school-to-work transition. Chapter 1 presents basic facts on the situation of youth in the Danish labour market. The role of education and training in shaping the transition from school to the labour market is analysed in Chapter 2. Demand-side barriers and opportunities to youth employment in the current downturn are explored in Chapter 3. Finally, Chapter 4 analyses the role of welfare benefits and the Public Employment Service in helping non-employed youth to get a job.



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